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Unity and Communion, Mystical and Visible

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1. Introduction

I have been asked to reflect on the unity and communion of the Church, mystical and visible, in the context of course of the focus of this conference. To consider these themes in a thorough and systematic way would take me far beyond my competence or my allotted time. I shall therefore try to make a specifically Anglican contribution based largely on publicly stated Anglican ecumenical commitments and to such statements and actions which may be taken to express the official positions, most particularly the resolutions of the Lambeth Conferences.

That introduction may itself call for a certain justification, since, as is well known, it is by no means easy to say what is or is not the official Anglican position on anything. That is not a characteristic bit of Anglican – or even English – breast-beating, but a rather serious comment about the coherence of the Anglican Communion in the early years of the third millennium. For evidence, we need do no more than ask 'what is it that holds the Anglican Communion together?' The very fact that different answers might be given to the question is itself illuminating, not least as it suggests that different Anglicans may understand differently the basis or bases of their fellowship.[1]

Methodologically, we also have to decide whether what holds a particular church, denomination or world 'communion' or confessional family together can in principle be different from what holds the Church, the *una sancta,* together. To add to what is required for Catholic communion would imply that Catholic communion is not enough for the visible unity[2] of the Church; on the other hand, if it were less than that, it would indicate

[1] In using the words 'fellowship' and 'communion' I am conscious that English suggests a nuance of difference which does not appear in all languages. As a translation of *koinonia,* 'communion' is a strong word, implying the actual sharing participation by different partners in a common reality; 'fellowship' by contrast suggests something less binding, more a partnership or relationship of collaboration between those who freely choose to collaborate.

[2] I am assuming that in the context of a conference involving Anglicans and Old Catholics, it can be taken for granted that the unity of the Church must be visible.

either that the body in question is ecclesially defective in some way or that intrinsically a particular church may not be regarded as 'the' church in the fullest sense. In turn, of course, this raises the question of what constitutes Catholic communion.

I hope the challenge of these questions to Anglicans and Old Catholics is obvious enough. Indeed it is one of the central ecumenical questions of our day, especially within the Roman Catholic Church, not least in the context of its principal concern for the re-establishment of full visible communion with the ancient churches of the East. I am of course aware also of how important this theme has been in the Old Catholic-Orthodox dialogue; neither has it been absent from the Anglican-Orthodox dialogue. It is vital to find agreement about the relationship between the particular church, in the stricter sense of the local eucharistic community, or even in the looser (and arguably less ecclesial) sense of a denomination or confessional family, and the universal church. It is no compromise of the important principle that each eucharistic community is the catholic church, to argue that communion between particular eucharistic communities (i.e. churches) is an essential part of their catholicity. Even in a divided Christendom, the desire for that communion may be one of the tests of catholicity. In this way no community can fully be the church purely on internal criteria, but equally communion with no particular see (Rome, Canterbury or Utrecht) can theologically have the same weight as the mutual communion of local churches one with another (or, as I have argued, the desire for it).

2. What holds the Anglican Communion together?

'Bonds of affection'

So, I return to my particular question, 'what is it that holds the Anglican Communion of churches together?'[3] Quite often in recent years the expression 'bonds of affection' has been used. As long ago as 1984 it was

[3] It is important of course not to speak of 'The Anglican Church' or 'The Old Catholic Church' except in the context of particular eucharistic communities. Even there, however, ecclesiological issues arise about the orientation of these communities with other separated Christians in their own neighbourhood, which should take theological priority over their relationships with churches of the same denominational or confessional family elsewhere in the world.

the title given to the Proceedings (the *Acta*) of the sixth meeting of the Anglican Consultative Council held that year in Nigeria. At first glance, there is an attractiveness about this as a description of what unites Christians. It sets a priority of the personal over the institutional, the affective over the juridical and the relational over the narrowly doctrinal. On closer examination, however, harder questions must be asked about these 'bonds of affection'. Are they indiscriminate? May a 'yes' to one potential partner imply or even require a 'no' to another? Are there criteria for these bonds? In short, does the superficially attractive notion of 'bonds of affection' have enough content to sustain Catholic communion? Or are they rather a 'soft' and emotional alternative to doctrinal rigour? That we feel affection for one another is a reassuring human experience, but how does it compare with the love God showed in sending his Son to be the sacrifice who takes our sins away? In a nutshell, is 'communion' a description of human fellowship or of a more substantial and even ontological mutual belonging? Theologically it is important to stress the relationship between the love which binds Christians to each other and the love of God for the human race expressed in the sending, the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. This is not the place to develop this, but I hope I have said enough to indicate that 'bonds of affection' may indeed be enough, provided 'affection' is understood in terms of the costly love of God in Christ creating new possibilities for human relationships which then become marked by the same costly love. I doubt however whether it is always understood in this sense.

Current questions

In this connection I should state the obvious, that there is not a single 'Anglican' church as such, but rather the 'Anglican Communion of churches'. It is no secret that Anglicans worldwide are currently asking themselves some serious questions about the nature of this communion and its ecclesial implications. Central to this are the continuing debates about such gender-related issues as the ordination of women and same-sex relationships.

Although Anglicans appear to have agreed that the ordination of women is not a 'Communion-dividing' issue (in the sense of an issue that must necessarily divide the Anglican communion of churches), judgment is not passed on whether it is a Church-dividing issue. Despite the theologically dubious nature of this distinction, it has provided a basis for individual

Anglican provinces to come to different decisions about the ordination of women, whether to ordain women or not, whether to ordain women as deacons (but not priests or bishops), whether, if women may be ordained to the priesthood, to see this as including the episcopate or not (with all the implications of different answers for the theological understanding of priest and bishop), whether provinces in which women may not be ordained do (or do not) recognise the orders of women ordained in other provinces. This may either be a model of ecumenical toleration while God sifts the church, or it may be a recipe for confusion!

No such compromise appears likely, however, over the closely related question of same sex relationships, and specifically whether these may be 'blessed' by formal liturgical rites or whether those involved in sexually active homosexual relationships may be ordained or should be subject to disciplinary action. Here too, at something of a distance from the fundamental rights and wrongs of the issue, we are faced with a question about the freedom of particular provinces[4] to take actions which touch the Anglican Communion as a whole.

The Windsor Report

It is at this point that I want to welcome, albeit with reservations, the work of the Lambeth Commission on Communion under the chairmanship of Archbishop Robin Eames. The Commission worked under extreme pressure in the face of a crisis which centred very specifically on the problem of the local and the universal. The *Windsor Report* was not the first attempt to help the Anglican Communion face some of the inherent problems of its emerging ecclesiology; the *Virginia Report* had already addressed these themes in a more systematic way, but for various reasons has not been

[4] I hope the anomaly is noticed by which some Anglicans who take very seriously the local church as the 'locus' of the catholic church and tend to favour a eucharistic ecclesiology in practice subordinate any actual, visible, eucharistic community gathered around its bishop to the more juridical structures of the province of the 'national' church. I am also acutely aware of the challenge this poses to the large dioceses inherited in some churches from the Middle Ages in which the sense of being the local church is pretty tenuous and may be in danger of replacing the Eucharist by the bishop as the centre of catholic communion. I confess there are 500 churches and nearly 400 parishes in my diocese! We need to be honest about the problems caused for our theology by our practice. Old Catholics have similar challenges to face, not least where a diocese serves a whole country.

thoroughly considered and debated.[5] Perhaps, as so often in the history of the Church, it takes a crisis to concentrate minds! I think the *Windsor Report* is a remarkable achievement[6] and its reflections on autonomy and communion are particularly helpful:

> 75. The word 'autonomy' represents within Anglican discourse a far more limited form of independent government than is popularly understood by many today. Literally, 'autonomous' means 'having one's own laws' *(auto – self, nomos – law)*, and the autonomy of a body or institution means '[t]he right of self-government, of making its own laws and administering its own affairs'. In the secular world it is well settled that 'autonomic' laws are those created by a body or persons within the community on which has been conferred subordinate and restricted legislative power. Autonomy, therefore, is not the same thing as sovereignty or independence; it more closely resembles the orthodox polity of 'autocephaly', which denotes autonomy in communion.
> 76. A body is thus, in this sense, 'autonomous' only in relation to others: autonomy exists in a relation with a wider community or system of which the autonomous entity forms part. The word 'autonomous' in this sense actually implies not an isolated individualism, but the idea of being free to determine one's own life within a wider obligation to others. The key idea is autonomy-in-communion, that is, freedom held within interdependence. The autonomy of each Anglican province therefore implies that the church lives in relation to, and exercises its autonomy most fully in the context of, the global Communion.

This is, as I have already indicated, far from being a purely Anglican problem. Within the Roman Catholic Church there is a debate about the relationship between the universal church and particular churches, including the competence of episcopal conferences. The Lutheran World Federation now describes itself as 'a global communion' and other world confessional families are beginning to see themselves in more than merely pragmatic terms.

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[5] Cf. 'The Virginia Report. The Report of the Inter-Anglican Theological and Doctrinal Commission', in: *The Official Report of the Lambeth Conference 1998* (Harrisburg PA: Morehouse Publishing, 1999), pp. 17–68; The Lambeth Commission on Communion (ed.), *The Windsor Report* (Harrisburg PA, London: Morehouse Publishing, 2004).

[6] It is probably a pity that the Commission chose to illustrate the suggestion of an 'Anglican covenant' with a particular example, the complexity and many of the details of which led some negativity about the whole idea of a covenant and even the Report as a whole.

Even if the Anglican Communion cannot be described as a 'Church' in any simple sense, Anglicans do however see their communion as a manifestation of the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church. Such a fellowship should not, therefore, on its own terms, exhibit less than the features of the *Una Sancta* as a whole. This is why the present intra-Anglican debates about provincial autonomy and the need for effective structures of mutual correction and oversight at the universal level are so important ecclesiologically. The churches of the Communion are united by a common adherence to the elements of the Lambeth Quadrilateral, including the historic episcopate and the threefold ministry, by common bonds of historic affection and tradition, by much shared liturgical and canonical material and some generally recognisable characteristics of theological method. The fellowship of Anglicans is also served by a number of international 'instruments of unity',[7] and by a personal relationship with the Archbishop of Canterbury. Beyond the Scriptures and the Catholic Creeds there is however no universal confessional statement to unite Anglicans and the authority of the 'instruments of unity' is unclear. This is however currently under review as it has become increasingly apparent that the Communion at present lacks sufficient cohesion to counteract the centrifugal tendencies of provincial autonomy. Thus there is discussion about whether some body of canon law for the Communion is needed, whose incorporation into the canon law of the various provinces might become a fifth instrument of unity. One of the foremost Anglican canon lawyers, Professor Norman Doe, has recently written that 'the materials for such a body of communion law are abundant'.[8]

3. The Lambeth Conferences and the Ecumenical Movement

Introduction

Among the structures that already serve the Anglican Communion is the Lambeth Conference, and in what follows I shall offer a brief survey of what Lambeth Conferences have said about unity and its requirements. Although opinions vary about the desirability of a clearer canonical au-

[7] The Archbishop of Canterbury, The Lambeth Conferences, The Primates' Meetings, The Anglican Consultative Council.

[8] Norman Doe, 'The Anglican Covenant proposed by the Lambeth Commission', *Ecclesiastical Law Journal* 8 (2005), pp. 147–161.

thority for Lambeth Conferences, their decisions must at least be supposed to have a considerable moral and theological weight coming as they do from the consultative assembly of the bishops of a worldwide communion of episcopal churches.

A comparison between the resolutions of Lambeth Conferences and the development of Anglican ecumenical practice illustrates that this has indeed proved true, and, although there have been some anomalies, for the most part Anglican churches have proceeded in line with principles they have articulated in common. Even though, as we shall see, the Conferences have given strong encouragement to regional developments in different parts of the world, this has been on the basis of common principles. As the ecumenical movement has itself grown in maturity, these principles have themselves been increasingly developed in an ecumenical context, on the one hand through the work of Faith and Order and the ecclesiological statements of successive assemblies of the World Council of Churches, and on the other through dialogue between the Anglican Communion and other world confessional families, especially the Roman Catholic and Orthodox Churches and the Lutheran World Federation. Examples of regional agreements based on global dialogues are the recent Covenant between Anglican and Roman Catholic Churches in Papua New Guinea, which would have been inconceivable without the work of ARCIC (Anglican – Roman Catholic International Commission) and its reception, and the making of a number of regional communion agreements between Anglican and Lutheran churches in different parts of the world.

Anglicans have over the years built up a substantial corpus of principles and approaches to questions of church unity which, taken together, suggest a more coherent and developing view than is often recognised. In this the interrelationship between the universal and the regional is fundamental both to Anglicans' self-understanding and to relations with other Christian communities.

Ecumenical commitment

So let me now turn to the main themes which emerge from the Lambeth Conferences. Researching this material for this paper made me quite proud to be an Anglican. There were 13 Lambeth Conferences between 1867 and 1998, passing a total of 212 resolutions (or, in the case of the second Conference, recommendations) on ecumenical relations which reveal the commitment of the bishops of the Anglican churches to Christian

unity from the very beginnings of our dawning self-consciousness as a Communion. Two characteristic themes already occur in Recommendation 6 of the second Lambeth Conference:

> ... as our divine Lord has so closely connected the unity of his followers with the world's belief in his own mission from the Father, it seems to us that intercessions for the enlargement of his Kingdom may well be joined with earnest prayer that all who profess faith in him may be one flock under one Shepherd.

I hope you will notice the intimate link between unity and mission, and the central role of prayer in the process. Implicit also in this approach is a refusal to separate ideas about Anglican unity from their ideas about the unity of the Church as a whole. In other words, although Anglicans have never claimed to be the whole of the Church or even its purest manifestation, they have been pretty consistent in asserting that Anglican ecclesiology is an authentic representation of the Catholic doctrine of the Church, and therefore that the unity between Anglican churches must not betray any essential principle of ecclesiology as they see it.

The 'Appeal to all Christian People'

This becomes particularly important when we consider the most famous expression of Anglican ecumenical principles, the so-called Lambeth (or Chicago-Lambeth) Quadrilateral, contained in Resolution 9.VI of the 1920 Lambeth Conference, commonly known by its introductory words as an 'Appeal to all Christian People'. The members of the Conference declared their belief that

> the visible unity of the Church will be found to involve the wholehearted acceptance of: The Holy Scriptures, as the record of God's revelation of himself to man, and as being the rule and ultimate standard of faith; and the Creed commonly called Nicene, as the sufficient statement of the Christian faith, and either it or the Apostles' Creed as the baptismal confession of belief; the divinely instituted sacraments of Baptism and the Holy Communion, as expressing for all the corporate life of the whole fellowship in and with Christ; a ministry acknowledged by every part of the Church as possessing not only the inward call of the Spirit, but also the commission of Christ and the authority of the whole body.

This 'appeal' was based on an earlier statement by the 1888 Lambeth Conference (Resolution 11) which formulated the last article, concerning the ministry, in a rather more restrictive way:

> 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.

It was, relevantly, this earlier formulation which was reaffirmed by the latest, 1998, Lambeth Conference.

The importance of the 1888 Conference for Anglican ecumenism cannot be overestimated. Resolution 12 used the terms 'corporate reunion' and 'organic unity' to describe the Anglican vision of the goal, while Resolution 14, in taking the first steps in relation to the Nordic churches towards what would eventually lead to the Porvoo Agreement, expressed the hope that the Scandinavian and Anglican Churches might ultimately establish 'intercommunion ... on sound principles of ecclesiastical polity'.

At this stage a word of explanation is necessary. The expression 'intercommunion' had not been previously used by Anglicans to refer to eucharistic fellowship or hospitality between churches of different confessions, but had been restricted to that between the various churches of the Anglican Communion. In other words, this openness towards the Scandinavian churches expressed in 1888 was based upon the hope that a real common ecclesial identity might be discovered. Indeed the 1930 Lambeth Conference declared that 'as a general principle ... intercommunion should be the goal of, rather than a means to, the restoration of union' (Resolution 42).

Consistency between ecumenical dialogues

It was in 1897 that the expression 'visible unity' first appears in a Lambeth Resolution (34), and it is noteworthy that this is described 'a fact of divine revelation' – in other words not a pragmatic or political reality but a matter of God's will appertaining to the very reality of the church itself. This has been a consistent theme, reaffirmed at many Conferences, including the most recent 1998 (IV.1). In the light of this vision of the goal, the 1908 Conference stated that

> in all partial projects of reunion and intercommunion the final attainment of the divine purpose should be kept in view as our object; and that care should be taken to do what will advance the reunion of the whole of Christendom, and to abstain from doing anything that will retard or prevent it (Resolution 58).

This makes clear the Anglican conviction that any steps along the road must be compatible with the ultimate vision. Being clear about this frees

us for some flexibility about steps along the road. The 1998 Lambeth Conference used the expression 'bearable anomalies' to describe irregularities which can be tolerated provided there is agreement not only in theory but also in terms of practical next steps about the goal of visible unity.

This all implies the need for consistency between ecumenical dialogues so as not to play off one set of relationships against another. This is particularly important for churches which are committed to 'all round ecumenism', and seems to me to be one of the critical methodological ecumenical questions of our own day. Anglicans are of course notorious both for their own internal diversity and for the pride they take in this 'comprehensiveness'. Although generally speaking they no longer hold the somewhat arrogant understanding of themselves as in some sense a 'bridge church', their history does give them a tendency to look in different directions simultaneously. This is partly for the somewhat negative reason that Anglicanism is itself an uneasy coalition of different tendencies whose respective adherents feel themselves drawn to one or other of the other identifiable confessional traditions of Christianity. There is a more positive evaluation however. Despite these internal tensions, Anglicans have for many years remained in full sacramental communion with each other even across some of the huge fault-lines which are the legacy of the break-up of western Christendom since the Reformation. Whether this attempt to be both catholic and reformed is sustainable is precisely one of the issues facing the Anglican Communion at the moment.

It is certainly the case that we have not always been very good at explaining where we stand either to ourselves or to our friends. This failure does not, however, alter the ecclesial facticity of the matter. Although some Anglican national churches are relatively monochrome, most are in fact communions in which catholic, protestant and liberal strands do more than coexist, but are in active, lively and above all living fellowship with each other. Of course we are not the only churches with a diverse internal character or with a commitment to all-round ecumenism, but these are some of the ways history has shaped modern Anglicanism and forces our own ecumenical approaches to be 'all-round'.

Examples of 'all-round' ecumenism

Anyway, it was in the light of this desire to see the Church of Jesus Christ whole and entire that Anglicans took their first formal steps toward rapprochement with particular other churches. Others have spoken about the

history of Anglican-Old Catholic relations, so I shall largely concentrate on Anglican attitudes towards other ecumenical partners.

In 1888 the possibility of 'intercommunion' with the Church of Sweden and the Old Catholic Churches was hinted at, and even with the reformed episcopal churches just then emerging in Italy, France, Spain and Portugal, although this was provided they adopted 'sound forms of doctrine and discipline, and [secured] such Catholic organisation as will permit us to give them a fuller recognition' (Resolution 15). In 1908 it was agreed to offer baptism in cases of emergency to the children of Eastern Orthodox Christians on the clear understanding that they would not subsequently be rebaptized; eucharistic hospitality was also offered to communicant members in good standing of the 'Orthodox Eastern Communion' when they are deprived of the ministrations of a priest of their own Communion. The same Conference envisaged the same hospitality being offered to members of the Oriental Orthodox churches if after suitable investigation their Christological affirmations were found adequate (Resolutions 63 and 64). The Conference went further still in permitting Anglicans to communicate in those churches.

It was however recognised at the same time that anything which went further than that might have consequences for existing relationships and the Conference therefore declared that no more far-reaching agreements would take place without 'previous communication with any other Church which might be affected thereby' (Resolution 65). This reflects two important principles: first, that there can be different stages of communion with other churches and second that existing ecumenical partner churches may be affected by new dialogues or agreements and should be consulted if new ecclesial relationships are being considered. Also in 1908 the possibility was raised of Anglican participation in the consecration of Moravian bishops, although this was rescinded in 1920 when it became clear that the Moravians continued to allow deacons to preside at holy communion and confirm. A remarkable resolution of the same Conference (75) began to sketch out an approach to the reconciliation of Anglican and Presbyterian ministries in a way which would honour both the Anglican convictions laid down in the 1662 Ordinal and Presbyterian convictions about their ministries.

Faith and Order – Life and Work – mission

Nor, in the midst of this heavily (as we would describe it) 'faith and order' agenda, were issues of life and work or partnership in mission forgotten. The 1908 Conference resolved, for example, that

> Every opportunity should be welcomed of co-operation between members of different Communions in all matters pertaining to the social and moral welfare of the people (Resolution 76).

I have already referred to the 1920 'Appeal to all Christian People'.[9] The following resolution (10) recommended the authorities of the churches of the Anglican Communion 'in such ways and at such times as they think best', formally to invite other churches within their areas to join in discussion along the lines of the principles laid out in the Appeal. This resolution envisages a 'variable geometry' in ecumenical relations as differing circumstances suggested different applications of the same principles. This led to the encouragement of regional agreements alongside the establishment of universal principles, thereby paving the way for schemes such as the Churches of South and North India, of Pakistan and Ceylon and eventually the Porvoo Agreement. Resolution 11:

> The Conference recognizes that the task of effecting union with other Christian Communions must be undertaken by the various national, regional, or provincial authorities of the Churches within the Anglican Communion, and confidently commits to them the carrying out of this task on lines that are in general harmony with the principles underlying its Appeal and Resolutions.

The question of consistency was again to the fore, and, conscious that some of its recommendations might be thought by some to stretch Anglican polity to its limits, the Conference went on to state that it could not 'approve of general schemes of intercommunion or exchange of pulpits', and also expressed other significant reservations.

The first seven Conferences also show a consistent attempt to balance the concerns of Faith and Order, Life and Work and the wider concerns of world mission. So it was that Anglicans warmly welcomed the establishment of the World Council of Churches in 1948 with a special regard for the continuing distinctive role of Faith and Order, whose centrality to the

[9] Resolution 9. See Appendix 1 for the full text of the resolution.

work of the WCC remains critical for the Church of England's confidence in the Council. Anglicans were later to welcome the adherence of the Orthodox churches and the missionary movement to the Council as well as the new opportunities for dialogue with the Roman Catholic Church, all of which were signalled at the New Delhi Assembly of 1961. New Delhi also articulated a vision of unity particularly welcome to Anglican ears. Usually cited as 'all in each place united to all in every place', the New Delhi statement deserves fuller quotation:

> ... as all in each place who are baptized into Jesus Christ and confess him as Lord and Saviour are brought by the Holy Spirit into one fully committed fellowship, holding the one apostolic faith, preaching the one gospel, breaking the one bread, joining in common prayer, and having a corporate life reaching out in witness and service to all and who at the same time are united with the whole Christian fellowship in all places and all ages in such ways that ministry and members are accepted by all, and that all can act and speak together as occasion requires for the tasks to which God calls his people.

Episcopal and non-episcopal ministry

In pursuit of this goal, I have already mentioned the encouragement given by Lambeth Conferences to regional developments. This encouragement had already borne fruit in the Indian subcontinent. Another event relevant to our purposes was an Outline of a Reunion Scheme for the Church of England and the Free Churches in England published in 1938. This scheme for a 'united Church of England' was overshadowed by the Second World War and, almost immediately after it, by a suggestion by the Archbishop of Canterbury (Geoffrey Fisher) in 1946 that the English Free Churches might 'take episcopacy into their system'. This appeal could be heard in different ways. Some, who evaluated it positively, saw it as a practical step towards aligning the structures of the divided churches in order to make further steps towards fuller unity possible. Others, more negatively, saw it as an attempt by Anglicans to impose their own polity on others, or as a means of correcting supposed defects in the ministries of other churches.

Both reactions miss the point. The Lambeth Conferences and Anglicans involved in ecumenical dialogue always tried to hold on to their vision of the full visible unity (sometimes described as 'organic' or 'corporate') to which their understanding of Scripture and Tradition led them but also to the need to take seriously the anomalies into which history, experience

and divergent interpretations had led Christians, including those which had resulted in apparently very different articulations of the Church. This approach had a long pedigree. As early as the Conference of 1908, the opinion was expressed

> that, in the welcome event of any project of reunion between any Church of the Anglican Communion and any Presbyterian or other non-episcopal Church, which, while preserving the faith in its integrity and purity, has also exhibited care as to the form and intention of ordination to the ministry, reaching the stage of responsible official negotiation, it might be possible to make an approach to reunion on the basis of consecrations to the episcopate on lines suggested by such precedents as those of 1610 [when the episcopate was restored temporarily in the Church of Scotland through the agency of three bishops consecrated in England]. Further, in the opinion of the Conference, it might be possible to authorise arrangements (for the period of transition towards full union on the basis of episcopal ordination) which would respect the convictions of those who had not received episcopal orders, without involving any surrender on our part of the principles of Church order laid down in the Preface to the Ordinal attached to the Book of Common Prayer.

This approach could be judged one-sided, but was balanced in 1920 by the affirmation

> that for all, the truly equitable approach to union is by way of mutual deference to one another's consciences. To this end, we who send forth this appeal would say that if the authorities of other Communions should so desire, we are persuaded that, terms of union having been otherwise satisfactorily adjusted, bishops and clergy of our Communion would willingly accept from these authorities a form of commission or recognition which would commend our ministry to their congregations, as having its place in the one family life. ... It is our hope that the same motive would lead ministers who have not received it to accept a commission through episcopal ordination, as obtaining for them a ministry throughout the whole fellowship. In so acting no one of us could possibly be taken to repudiate his past ministry. God forbid that any man should repudiate a past experience rich in spiritual blessings for himself and others. Nor would any of us be dishonouring the Holy Spirit of God, whose call led us all to our several ministries, and whose power enabled us to perform them. We shall be publicly and formally seeking additional recognition of a new call to wider service in a reunited Church, and imploring for ourselves God's grace and strength to fulfil the same (1948, 9.III).

The Conference of 1948 was concerned that this proper concern for an appropriately integrated ministry should not obscure wider ecclesiological principles and declared that

> The integral connection between the Church and the ministry should be safeguarded in all proposals for the achievement of intercommunion through the creation of a mutually recognised ministry (1948, 56.c).

Anglican ecumenical principles

I have traced the story in some detail up to the seventh Lambeth Conference, because it was during that period that the main lines of what would become the general Anglican contribution to the ecumenical movement were laid down, although today it seems incredible that it was not until the 1930 Lambeth Conference that anything positive was said about relations with the Roman Catholic Church or anything at all about the Methodist or Evangelical Free Churches in England or the Church of Scotland. Nonetheless, these Conferences reveal not only some general principles but also significant developments in thinking and an opening up of horizons. Evolution in ecumenical policy and practice are thus another feature of this first period.

Although Anglicans have not always been as clear in explaining their position as they should have been, several principles can be inferred from this record:

- the historical episcopate (however locally adapted) is part of the fullness of the Church and its unity;
- that in the present divided state of the church the lack of the historic succession should not be understood in itself to call into question either the spiritual fruitfulness nor, within their own jurisdictions, the authority of duly called and ordained ministers;
- that ministry and church must not be separated, with the result that the reconciliation of ministries and that of churches belong together;
- that in the process of redressing the wrongs of the past, some principles of economy may apply, provided the goal is clear and agreed.

These principles taken together help explain the position that Anglicans have tried to take in their various ecumenical relations. It illustrates why, for example, Anglicans could by and large welcome the establishment of the Church of South India but had an uneasy ecclesial relationship with it for a number of years, why this experience led to a rather different approach in the case of the Church of North India and the differences between the Porvoo Agreement on the one hand and the Meissen and Reuilly Agreements on the other.

4. Not always straightforward

At the global level, an important step forward was taken in Anglican-Roman Catholic relations with the establishment, in 2000, of the International Anglican Roman Catholic Commission on Unity and Mission (IARCCUM) charged to prepare a

> Joint Declaration of Agreement, and promote and monitor the reception of ARCIC agreements, as well as facilitate the development of strategies for translating the degree of spiritual communion that has been achieved into visible and practical outcomes (12).

This commission was set up following a recommendation from a meeting of 13 pairs of Anglican and Roman Catholic bishops from different parts of the world, convened in Mississauga in Canada by Cardinal Cassidy and the Archbishop of Canterbury, that a practical implementation group was required alongside the on-going theological work of the ARCIC. The meeting came

> to a clear sense that we have moved much closer to the goal of full visible communion than we had at first dared to believe. A sense of mutual interdependence in the Body of Christ has been reached, in which the churches of the Anglican Communion and the Roman Catholic Church are able to bring shared gifts to their joint mission in the world (6).

The Statement from the meeting also articulated the commitment of both communions to 'all-round' ecumenism:

> At this meeting we have naturally focused on the special relationship between the Roman Catholic Church and the Anglican Communion as expressed in the Decree on Ecumenism of the Second Vatican Council. We also recognized the progress which has been made in our relations with other Christians and we recommit ourselves to the ecumenical endeavour with all Christian churches (3).[10]

I mention this part of the ecumenical story because it also provides an example of the way in which some apparent progress over the past ten years has not achieved all we hoped for it. It is, I suppose, well-known that

[10] Cf. *Communion in Mission. Statement from Missisauga Meeting, May 2000* (http://www.anglicancommunion.org/ecumenical/dialogues/rc/iarccum/acns2137.cfm – 7.12.2006 [UvA]).

as result of the actions of certain Anglican churches, the Vatican in 2003 suspended some of the work of IARCCUM.[11] In other words, while the background doctrinal discussions (ARCIC) continue, the Roman Catholic Church asked Anglicans to demonstrate more clearly that they share sufficient common faith among themselves for practical steps towards closer ecclesial fellowship to be taken.

Similarly, in Anglican-Lutheran relations not everything has been straightforward. Developments in Europe and North America have led to agreements which do not always reflect the same understanding of full communion, although the Lambeth Conference of 1998 managed to welcome both![12] In the light of this, the Anglican Consultative Council and the Lutheran World Federation included in the mandate of their new international commission to

> continue to monitor and advise upon the development of Anglican-Lutheran relations around the world, having regard to their consistency with each other and with the self-understanding of the two communions, give attention to the impact of different ecumenical methodologies, and to clarify questions of transitivity (i.e. the consequences that an agreement reached in one ecumenical relationship may be seen to have for other relationships).[13]

5. Conclusion

It is clear that the divisions in the church, which arose in a largely untidy way over many centuries, will only be healed in an untidy way, even if we may hope it will not be over many centuries. During the course of the twentieth century ecumenical movement there was development not only in the broad principles of ecumenism, but also in both the language used about the goal and in the very concept of the goal. This has sometimes

[11] Cf. *Ecclesiological Reflections on the Current Situation in the Anglican Communion in the Light of ARCIC* (http://www.anglicancommunion.org/ecumenical/documents/pdfs.cfm?fname=200406iarccum – 7.12.2006 [UvA]).

[12] Resolution IV.16 (h): '[This Conference] rejoices not only in *The Porvoo Common Statement* between the Anglican Churches of Britain and Ireland and the Lutheran Churches of the Nordic and Baltic region, but also in *The Meissen Common Statement* with the Evangelical Church in Germany, which includes Lutheran, Reformed and United Churches, and looks forward to the proposed agreement between the Anglican churches of Britain and Ireland and the French Lutheran and Reformed churches.'

[13] See Appendix 2 for the full text of the mandate.

led to confusion. I have already mentioned the changing use of the term 'intercommunion' in Anglican texts. Originally, it was applied to relations between Anglican churches. Then the 1958 Conference recommended

> that where between two Churches, not of the same denominational or confessional family, there is unrestricted 'communio in sacris' including mutual recognition and acceptance of ministries, the appropriate term to use is 'full communion', and that where varying degrees of relation other than 'full communion' are established by agreement between two such Churches the appropriate term is 'intercommunion'.[14]

I give this example to illustrate the importance of clarifying ecumenical terminology. If, as I have shown, this can be a problem even within one confessional family, the danger is even greater in dialogue between churches. Can we be sure that we understand the same concept even when we use the same words? Or could it be that different expressions may sometimes conceal an underlying agreement? Over the years it has been almost taken for granted that 'full visible (or organic) unity' and 'unity in reconciled diversity' are alternative and incompatible aims for the ecumenical movement and models of unity. This idea has been sustained by the further assumption that 'visible unity' must mean a monolithic and institutional uniformity while 'reconciled diversity' is a recipe for mere peaceful coexistence and avoids the real challenges of mutual belonging and accountability.

It is interesting and understandable how the rather haphazard growth of the Anglican Communion has created a need for structures of accountability and governance, with an increasing preoccupation with juridical norms for unity. This task cannot be avoided, but it must be conducted properly. It is, I suppose, obvious that ecclesiastical structure should reflect or embody sound theology; there should be a coherence between

[14] When *The Bonn Agreement* of 1931 was being discussed by the Bishops of the Church of England, one of the bishops criticised it on the grounds that it proposed communion but not union. In response the Bishop of Lincoln said that intercommunion was union, the only sort of union they wanted, the only sort of union that was possible; see Claude Beauford Moss, *The Old Catholic Movement, its Origins and History* (London: SPCK, 1964[2]), p. 348. That of course was in 1931 and much has changed in the meantime, but the exchange still seems significant to me. Dr Scayne, the Bishop of Lincoln, clearly thought peaceful coexistence was enough. To him 'intercommunion' was not only the maximum desirable, it was also the maximum possible.

what a church believes and the way it is ordered – Faith and Order belong together. There is however a more fundamental challenge to those who concern themselves with these matters. Particularly at times of tension, it is tempting for church leaders and bureaucrats to confuse the external ordering of the Church with its mystical reality. There are tendencies in several parts of the Anglican world today for more time and effort to be devoted to matters of canonical and property rights, territorial jurisdiction and institutional authority than to the 'life hid with Christ in God' which they are intended to serve. In this world there will always be a tension between the 'outward and visible sign' and the 'inward and spiritual grace'. The answer lies in the mystery which lies at the heart of the Church, and in which the visible and invisible are wonderfully united. The rediscovery of the eucharistic ecclesiology of the early Church is already opening eyes to new possibilities for transcending old divisions.

I give the last word therefore to the report of an earlier commission led by Archbishop Robin Eames,[15] in which we read,

> The Church's life of communion is centred upon, and built up, in the Eucharist. Gathered together in eucharistic worship Christians encounter together the apostolic Tradition received in word and sacrament. In a single eucharistic life they are united and stamped with their Christian identity. The concerns of the world are drawn into the celebration foreshadowing a wider unity. In celebrating the eucharistic meal the Church becomes identified with, and prefigures, that communion with God and creation which will one day come when the reign of God is finally and fully established, when all will sit down together at the messianic banquet.[16]

Appendix

(1) 1920 Lambeth Conference: Resolution 9

> The Conference adopts and sends forth the following Appeal to all Christian people:
> An Appeal To All Christian People from the Bishops Assembled in the Lambeth Conference of 1920

[15] On women in the episcopate.

[16] *First Report* §25, in: *The Eames Commission: The Official Reports. The Archbishop of Canterbury's Commission on Communion and Women in the Episcopate* (Toronto: Anglican Book Centre, 1994), p. 16–17.

We, Archbishops, Bishops Metropolitan, and other Bishops of the Holy Catholic Church in full communion with the Church of England, in Conference assembled, realising the responsibility which rests upon us at this time, and sensible of the sympathy and the prayers of many, both within and without our own Communion, make this appeal to all Christian people. We acknowledge all those who believe in our Lord Jesus Christ, and have been baptized into the name of the Holy Trinity, as sharing with us membership in the universal Church of Christ which is his Body. We believe that the Holy Spirit has called us in a very solemn and special manner to associate ourselves in penitence and prayer with all those who deplore the divisions of Christian people, and are inspired by the vision and hope of a visible unity of the whole Church.

I. We believe that God wills fellowship. By God's own act this fellowship was made in and through Jesus Christ, and its life is in his Spirit. We believe that it is God's purpose to manifest this fellowship, so far as this world is concerned, in an outward, visible, and united society, holding one faith, having its own recognized officers, using God-given means of grace, and inspiring all its members to the world-wide service of the Kingdom of God. This is what we mean by the Catholic Church.

II. This united fellowship is not visible in the world today. On the one hand there are other ancient episcopal Communions in East and West, to whom ours is bound by many ties of common faith and tradition. On the other hand there are the great non-episcopal Communions, standing for rich elements of truth, liberty and life which might otherwise have been obscured or neglected. With them we are closely linked by many affinities, racial, historical and spiritual. We cherish the earnest hope that all these Communions, and our own, may be led by the Spirit into the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God. But in fact we are all organized in different groups, each one keeping to itself gifts that rightly belong to the whole fellowship, and tending to live its own life apart from the rest.

III. The causes of division lie deep in the past, and are by no means simple or wholly blameworthy. Yet none can doubt that self-will, ambition, and lack of charity among Christians have been principal factors in the mingled process, and that these, together with blindness to the sin of disunion, are still mainly responsible for the breaches of Christendom. We acknowledge this condition of broken fellowship to be contrary to God's will, and we desire frankly to confess our share in the guilt of thus crippling the Body of Christ and hindering the activity of his Spirit.

IV. The times call us to new outlook and new measures. The faith cannot be adequately apprehended and the battle of the Kingdom cannot be worthily fought while the body is divided, and is thus unable to grow up into the fullness of the life of Christ. The time has come, we believe, for all the separated groups of Christians to agree in forgetting the things which are behind and reaching out towards the goal of a reunited Catholic Church. The removal of the barriers which have arisen between them will only be brought about by a new comradeship of those

whose faces are definitely set this way. The vision which rises before us is that of a Church, genuinely Catholic, loyal to all truth, and gathering into its fellowship all 'who profess and call themselves Christians', within whose visible unity all the treasures of faith and order, bequeathed as a heritage by the past to the present, shall be possessed in common, and made serviceable to the whole Body of Christ. Within this unity Christian Communions now separated from one another would retain much that has long been distinctive in their methods of worship and service. It is through a rich diversity of life and devotion that the unity of the whole fellowship will be fulfilled.

V. This means an adventure of goodwill and still more of faith, for nothing less is required than a new discovery of the creative resources of God. To this adventure we are convinced that God is now calling all the members of his Church.

VI. We believe that the visible unity of the Church will be found to involve the wholehearted acceptance of: The Holy Scriptures, as the record of God's revelation of himself to man, and as being the rule and ultimate standard of faith; and the Creed commonly called Nicene, as the sufficient statement of the Christian faith, and either it or the Apostles' Creed as the baptismal confession of belief; the divinely instituted sacraments of Baptism and the Holy Communion, as expressing for all the corporate life of the whole fellowship in and with Christ; a ministry acknowledged by every part of the Church as possessing not only the inward call of the Spirit, but also the commission of Christ and the authority of the whole body.

VII. May we not reasonably claim that the episcopate is the one means of providing such a ministry? It is not that we call in question for a moment the spiritual reality of the ministries of those Communions which do not possess the episcopate. On the contrary we thankfully acknowledge that these ministries have been manifestly blessed and owned by the Holy Spirit as effective means of grace. But we submit that considerations alike of history and of present experience justify the claim which we make on behalf of the episcopate. Moreover, we would urge that it is now and will prove to be in the future the best instrument for maintaining the unity and continuity of the Church. But we greatly desire that the office of a bishop should be everywhere exercised in a representative and constitutional manner, and more truly express all that ought to be involved for the life of the Christian family in the title of Father-in-God. Nay more, we eagerly look forward to the day when through its acceptance in a united Church we may all share in that grace which is pledged to the members of the whole body in the apostolic rite of the laying-on of hands, and in the joy and fellowship of a Eucharist in which as one family we may together, without any doubtfulness of mind, offer to the one Lord our worship and service.

VIII. We believe that for all, the truly equitable approach to union is by way of mutual deference to one another's consciences. To this end, we who send forth this appeal would say that if the authorities of other Communions should so desire, we are persuaded that, terms of union having been otherwise satisfactorily adjusted,

bishops and clergy of our Communion would willingly accept from these authorities a form of commission or recognition which would commend our ministry to their congregations, as having its place in the one family life. It is not in our power to know how far this suggestion may be acceptable to those to whom we offer it. We can only say that we offer it in all sincerity as a token of our longing that all ministries of grace, theirs and ours, shall be available for the service of our Lord in a united church. It is our hope that the same motive would lead ministers who have not received it to accept a commission through episcopal ordination, as obtaining for them a ministry throughout the whole fellowship. In so acting no one of us could possibly be taken to repudiate his past ministry. God forbid that any man should repudiate a past experience rich in spiritual blessings for himself and others. Nor would any of us be dishonouring the Holy Spirit of God, whose call led us all to our several ministries, and whose power enabled us to perform them. We shall be publicly and formally seeking additional recognition of a new call to wider service in a reunited Church, and imploring for ourselves God's grace and strength to fulfil the same.

IX. The spiritual leadership of the Catholic Church in days to come, for which the world is manifestly waiting, depends upon the readiness with which each group is prepared to make sacrifices for the sake of a common fellowship, a common ministry, and a common service to the world.

We place this ideal first and foremost before ourselves and our own people. We call upon them to make the effort to meet the demands of a new age with a new outlook. To all other Christian people whom our words may reach we make the same appeal. We do not ask that any one Communion should consent to be absorbed into another. We do ask that all should unite in a new and great endeavour to recover and to manifest to the world the unity of the Body of Christ for which he prayed.

(2) Anglican Lutheran International Commission: Mandate

The Anglican Consultative Council and the Lutheran World Federation, in accordance with the resolutions of the Twelfth Meeting of the Anglican Consultative Council in Hong Kong in September 2002, and the commitments of the Tenth Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation in Winnipeg in July 2003, approve the establishment of a new Anglican-Lutheran International Commission (ALIC), with the following mandate.

That the Commission shall:
a. provide guidance regarding the evaluation and implementation of the Report of the Anglican-Lutheran Working Group (1999–2002), *Growth in Communion,* with a view to co-ordinated decisions by the governing bodies of both communions, in co-operation with their member churches,

b. continue to monitor and advise upon the development of Anglican-Lutheran relations around the world, having regard to their consistency with each other and

with the self-understanding of the two communions, give attention to the impact of different ecumenical methodologies, and to clarify questions of transitivity (i.e. the consequences that an agreement reached in one ecumenical relationship may be seen to have for other relationships),

c. explore the possibility of common actions and statements, and, in particular, seek ways to promote joint study projects of issues relevant to Anglican-Lutheran relations,

d. consider ways to engage with and promote the wider ecumenical movement, and, in particular, give consideration to the ecumenical role and contribution of Christian world communions,

e. report to the relevant bodies on both sides on the progress of work, and ensure consultation on emerging developments in regional Anglican-Lutheran relations.

Deutsche Zusammenfassung

Die Frage, wie und anhand welcher konstitutiven Kriterien die Ortskirchen, die ja in der Regel faktisch schon in unterschiedlich intensiv geregelten Gemeinschaften von Ortskirchen leben, zu einer verbindlichen und sichtbaren universalen Gemeinschaft kommen, durchzieht die meisten heutigen kirchlichen Dialoge. Sie lässt sich im Blick auf anglikanisches ekklesiologisches Denken zunächst auch anhand der speziellen (und derzeit unterschiedlich beantworteten) Frage diskutieren: Was hält die *Anglican Communion* zusammen?

Bisweilen ist in diesem Zusammenhang von den «Banden der Zuneigung» *(bonds of affection)* die Rede, aber es ist nicht immer deutlich, ob dies auf mehr als einer nur mitmenschlichen affektiven Basis beruht. Die unterschiedliche Praxis und Beurteilung in Sachen Ordination von Frauen zu Priesterinnen oder gar Bischöfinnen, welche derzeit die *Anglican Communion* kennzeichnet, kann sowohl als Zeichen der Toleranz oder der Konfusion gewertet werden. Keine derartige Toleranz scheint allerdings in Sicht in Sachen Segnung von gleichgeschlechtlichen Paaren und Weihe von offen homosexuell lebenden Menschen. Deshalb ist die Frage der Gemeinschaft von lokalen Kirchen (Kirchenprovinzen), die aufgrund ihrer kirchlichen Autonomie zu Entscheidungen kommen, mit anderen lokalen Kirchen, welche diese Entscheidungen nicht mit ihrem Verständnis von Kirchengemeinschaft vereinbaren können, zu einem Anstoss zu ekklesiologischer Reflexion über das Verhältnis von «lokal» und «universal» geworden, wie sie im Windsor Report von 2004 vorliegt. Für die *Anglican Communion* darf es nicht weniger gemeinschaftskonstitutive Elemente geben als für die *Una Sancta* als Ganzes; daher ist die (sich derzeit zentrifugal auswirkende) Autonomie der Kirchenprovinzen im Rahmen von gemeinschaftsstiftenden Elementen zu diskutieren.

Dabei kann auf grundsätzliche Einsichten und Feststellungen der Lambeth-Konferenzen zurückgegriffen werden, die seit 1867 im Kontext von ökumenischen Beziehungen der *Anglican Communion* formuliert worden sind (bisher in insgesamt 212

Resolutionen und Empfehlungen) und auch bei zunehmend regional beschränkten zwischenkirchlichen Vereinbarungen vorausgesetzt werden. Da ist etwa von dem engen Zusammenhang von Einheit und Mission die Rede, der auch bei aller Hochschätzung der Arbeit im Kontext von «Glauben und Kirchenverfassung» nicht vergessen werden darf. Es ist wiederholt die Rede von «organischer» oder «korporativer» und von «sichtbarer» Einheit als Endziel, das auch bei vorübergehenden «tragbaren Anomalien» nicht aus dem Auge verloren werden darf; solche betreffen etwa die schwierige Integration von bischöflich ordinierten und nicht bischöflich ordinierten Amtsträgern in eine neue Form kirchlicher Gemeinschaft. Ebenso ist bei einer gewissen Tendenz zu einem *All-round*-Ökumenismus, zu dem manche anglikanischen Kirchen auch dank ihrer bekannten unterschiedlichen Ausrichtungen (katholisch, evangelikal, liberal) leichten Zugang finden, stets darauf zu achten, dass neue kirchliche Beziehungen mit einer Seite ältere Beziehungen mit einer anderen nicht beschädigen, was eben vielfältige Konsultationen auf unterschiedlichen Ebenen erfordert. So ergeben sich als konsistente Grundsätze: 1. Der historische Episkopat gehört zur Fülle der Kirche Christi und ihrer Einheit. 2. Das Fehlen der historischen Sukzession in einer Kirche sollte in der heutigen Situation der getrennten Kirche nicht von vornherein den geistlichen Segen und Auftrag der betreffenden Amtsträger in Zweifel ziehen. 3. Kirche und Amt gehören zusammen, was sich auch im Vorgang der Versöhnung zeigen muss. 4. Im Prozess der Aufarbeitung von Fehlentwicklungen der Vergangenheit legen sich Grundsätze der «Ökonomie» nahe, vorausgesetzt das Ziel ist klar und anerkannt. Freilich gibt es Rückschläge, wenn in bilateralen Beziehungen die eine Seite eine neue Entwicklung der andern angesichts bislang erreichter Gemeinsamkeiten nicht mehr mitzutragen vermag oder wenn in bilateralen Beziehungen regional unterschiedliche Weisen, Kirchengemeinschaft zu verstehen, ans Licht kommen (so in den Beziehungen mit Rom bzw. lutherischen Kirchen).

Es ist damit zu rechnen, dass die Spaltungen in der Kirche, die über Jahrhunderte auf eine ungeordnete Weise entstanden sind, auch auf eine ähnliche Weise wieder geheilt werden. Umso mehr ist darauf zu achten, ob Terminologie und Begriffe (z.B. «Intercommunion»), die in Dialogen mit verschiedenen Partnern und zu verschiedenen Zeiten verwendet werden, stets dasselbe meinen oder von allen Beteiligten gleich verstanden werden. Angesichts der letztlich ungeplanten Art und Weise, wie die *Anglican Communion* entstanden ist, sind Bemühungen um gemeinsame Normen von Leitung und Rechenschaftsablegung für die Aufrechterhaltung der Gemeinschaft verständlich. Bei allem darf aber nicht vergessen werden, dass der eigentliche, mystische Grund der Gemeinschaft in der Feier der Eucharistie aufleuchtet und zu finden ist.