A Pathway to Deeper Unity in Mission for Old Catholics and Anglicans in Continental Europe

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In this paper I attempt to respond to the challenge of drawing the threads of the conference discussion together, responding to the papers that others have given at the conference and outlining a way forward for deeper unity in mission between Anglicans and Old Catholics in continental Europe. The paper is structured by four questions: 1. Our situation: where are we situated, socially and culturally speaking, in Western Europe in the second decade of the twenty-first century? 2. Our calling: what are we called to be and to do as the Church in this environment? 3. Our unity: what does it mean theologically and in practice for Old Catholics and Anglicans to be in communion? 4. Our pathway: what is our goal – how can we describe it – and how can we move towards it?

In offering this final paper of the conference, I feel that I am in a privileged but also in a vulnerable position. I have been asked to draw together what are clearly quite diverse presentations. My role here is to bring out the coherence of the conference material and to see where it is pointing us. That involves engaging with what others have brought to the table and perhaps taking the logic of the argument a bit further. That is clearly a privileged role; but it is also a vulnerable one – it will be a personal statement and I cannot expect everyone to agree with everything that I say, anymore than I can be expected to agree with everything that others have said. And, unfortunately, there is always the risk of misunderstanding what others have said and so debating with 'a man of straw'. However, I will do my best.

1. Where are we, socially and culturally speaking, in Western Europe?

In attempting to understand the social and cultural environment of mission in Western Europe we need to engage with the concepts of secularization and secularism. This problematic is a battlefield for professional sociologists of religion, and a minefield where we as theologians – and amateur sociologists – venture at our peril. The idea of secularisation is a highly contested one, embedded in ideological stances, and it has a range

of meanings. I recall an occasion some years ago when Professor Grace Davie and I were giving some seminars together on this subject to a conference of British Army Chaplains. Grace was pressed to give a concise definition of 'secularisation' ('What exactly is it?'), but she resolutely refused to do so and I can understand why. I think we do well to beware of cloudy generalisations, of expansive verbal gestures, such as, 'We live in a secular society,' or 'Britain [or Germany] is now a secular state'. Journalists, pundits and politicians go in for these tendentious slogans (as – regrettably – do some church leaders), but the reality is much more complex. The awkward truth is that, in Western Europe, we live in a mixed, diverse, complicated and changing environment, one that it is hard to get a handle on. Our society contains pre-modern, modern and post-modern elements. Some aspects of our historic institutions, such as those that concern the law, the universities and the legislature, derive from the pre-modern period. Other aspects of society, such as the transport system, law-enforcement agencies and methods of defence, are typically modern. Elements of the post-modern are to be found particularly in communication technology and leisure activities.

In order to respect the complexity that exists in relation to the question of secularisation, we may need to distinguish, within each country, state or nation (they are not always coterminous), between culture, society and the constitution. In the United Kingdom, for example, aspects of culture (some newspapers, TV, advertising) are almost devoid of a religious reference; they inhabit a secular world. When we look at social patterns – how people interact with each other, how they spend their time when not at work, their beliefs and values – we find a mixed picture, where the situation with regard to the place of religion is better described as pluralist rather than secular, but it is one that is not particularly encouraging for the churches. The constitution of the UK, on the other hand, remains fundamentally Christian. The constitutional position can still be described truthfully as government by 'the Crown in Parliament under God'. The two established churches – the Church of England and the Church of Scotland (which is Presbyterian) – are linked with the monarchy in different ways, while the Church of England is also connected to Parliament. So, while I think that aspects of life in the UK are accurately described as exhibiting a 'post-Christian culture', it would be quite wrong and a constitutional *faux pas* to say that the UK is a secular state. In fact, I doubt whether that description would be true of many of the states represented at this conference. In many of the countries represented here the churches

enjoy various forms of recognition, support or privilege on the part of the state. In several European countries there is no rigid separation of church and state, but instead a degree of mutual recognition and cooperation.

Sometimes, especially when we have personally experienced the oppressive hand of ecclesiastical authoritarianism, we are tempted to feel that we would welcome living in a secular state, but I think that to jump to that conclusion would be a serious mistake. A secular state is, of course, not necessarily a tolerant state. The terms 'secular' and 'tolerant' are in no way synonymous. Toleration of belief and practice, freedom of expression, of worship and of association are not part of the definition of a secular state. Albania was a secular state under the atheistic Stalinist regime and the churches were almost completely erased. It is easy to think of other examples much closer to home. I wonder whether those of us who warm to the idea of 'a secular state' really mean a 'neutral' state, a state that is not confessional and does not favour or privilege any particular belief system or community of faith, but rather provides a 'level playing field' for them all. On the face of it, that seems an attractive scenario and I will consider its merits and shortcomings soon.

Other, non-Christian faiths, who are in a minority position in Europe, fear the consequences of a secular state and, in the UK, they tend to support the establishment of the Church of England as a bulwark against the threat of a secular state. They recognise that a tolerant and compassionate form of Christianity, such as the Church of England generally represents, committed to working for the common good, provides protection for them that would probably not be available under a secular state, one that by definition did not recognise the place of faith and communities of faith in national life. I guess that what many of us really desire is a fundamentally Christian state that is also tolerant of those of other faiths or none. A Christian state need not be the same as a confessional state where a particular church has a virtual monopoly of religious allegiance or at least a set of constitutional privileges that are experienced as exclusive and oppressive by other churches and faith communities.

But I think that we are deceiving ourselves if we imagine that a state can be 'neutral' about its values and ethics, simply holding the ring for competing world-views. A state that was neutral with regard to belief-systems, including ethics and human values, could not exist: it would not have anything to hold it together. There is no such thing as 'the view from

nowhere'. If a state does not draw its values from Christianity, where is it to find them? No, the idea of a neutral state is a chimera.[1]

Meanwhile, however, we can exercise care about the way that we use our terms.[2] First, we should distinguish between 'secularisation' and 'secularism'. Secularisation refers to a socio-economic process that affects the place and influence of institutional religion in the modern world; we shall look at this idea more closely in a moment. Secularism, on the other hand, is the name that is often given to an aggressive ideology that has no time for Christianity, or indeed for any other religious faith. Secularism does not recognise a transcendent or sacred realm and is innately hostile to those ideas. It believes that this world and this life are all that there is; it is fundamentally materialistic. It is often allied with the militant scientism ('Science can explain everything') of the Richard Dawkins variety. Secularism is not tolerant and will not be satisfied until religion is eradicated. Christianity cannot make any accommodation with secularism. Secularism is a prescriptive rather than a descriptive term, an ideological construct that is implacably opposed to a spiritual view of life.

It is understandable that the two terms 'secularisation' and 'secularism' are sometimes confused or run together. The original 'theory of secularisation' was hostile to organised religion and sympathetic to secularism. It predicted the continuing decline and eventual demise of religion and was committed to the belief that this process was inevitable. This 'classical' theory of secularisation held that religious faith and practice could not thrive under the conditions of modernity and that modern life was antithetical to religion.

Global developments in the past two or three decades have called these assumptions into question. While, according to many indicators, religious observance has continued to decline in Western Europe and to some extent has retreated from the public into the private sphere, awareness of the sacred, experience of the transcendent and the deep religious orientation of many people remain steady. Although 'religion' has acquired a bad

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[1] For further discussion of these points see P. Avis, *Church, State and Establishment* (London: SPCK, 2001). Prime Minster of the UK, David Cameron, rejected the idea of a neutral state in a speech to Church representatives in Oxford on 16 December 2011; see http://www.number10.gov.uk/news/king-james-bible/

[2] For a fuller treatment of the following points see Paul Avis, *A Church Drawing Near: Spirituality and Mission in a Post-Christian Culture* (London: T&T Clark, 2003), chapter 3 (pp. 50–81).

name, 'spiritual' is still a term of honour. Prayer continues to have a place in the lives of many people. Visiting churches and cathedrals, and even going on a pilgrimage, is increasingly popular. Opinion polls are notoriously clumsy and sometimes inept, but they do not show that Christianity is about to disappear in Western Europe.[3] Modernity in itself does not sound the death-knell for religion.

We do not simply need to look to America for evidence that religion and modernity can co-exist: in parts of Africa (specially Nigeria), parts of Asia (e.g. Korea) and much of Latin America (Pentecostalism) the remarkable growth of Christianity has gone hand in hand with modernisation and westernisation. Religious fundamentalism, whether Christian or Islamic, makes use of the tools of modernity to spread its message. Religion is once again a factor to be reckoned with socially, politically and economically. The sociological prophets of inevitable secularisation have had to think again and a more neutral, descriptive and somewhat chastened meaning for secularisation is now current. The title of a recent collection of studies of the profile of religion in western culture sums up this point: *The New Visibility of Religion*.[4]

Against that background, I think it is best to use 'secularisation' as a value-neutral term that refers to the reducing place and influence of organised religion in public life. There are identifiable socio-economic factors behind this process that could be explored if we had time. A key factor is the differentiation of institutional aspects of life through specialisation of function: where the Church was once responsible for education, health care and social discipline, as well as for worship and religious instruction, these are now the responsibility of other state or civil agencies. Another identifiable factor is the dispersed organisation of society, in the form of geographical and social mobility, with the resulting loss of local connection, rootedness and conformist patterns of behaviour such as churchgoing, and moral accountability to the community. Impersonal modes of communication, especially through information technology, replacing

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3   See further PAUL AVIS, 'The State of Faith' in P. Avis (ed.), *Public Faith? The State of Religious Belief and Practice in Britain* (London: SPCK, 2003), pp. 123–39.

4   GRAHAM WARD and MICHAEL HOELZL (eds.), *The New Visibility of Religion* (London: Continuum, 2008); 2004 conference proceedings http://www.art.man.ac. uk/reltheol. See also GRACE DAVIE, 'Religion in Europe in the 21st Century: The Factors to Take into Account', *Archives of European Sociology*, XLVII, 2 (2006), pp. 271–296.

face to face encounter and personal engagement, also contribute to secularisation. Finally, the culture of individual consumer choice – of lifestyle as well as of retail products – reinforces these trends.

Understood in this sense, secularisation is not something to be for or against, but a phenomenon to be taken seriously as a challenge to mission and evangelisation. The factors that I have mentioned – differentiation of institutions, fluidity of social structures and patterns, instant communication, consumer preference – mean that the Church is placed firmly in the market-place of competing values, rival beliefs and different life-style options. It must promote its 'product' (which is really a gift!) by all the appropriate methods that are open to it. This is both a daunting challenge and also a wonderful opportunity.

2. What are we called to be and to do as the Church in this environment?

That question can be answered very simply: we are called to be the Church – with all that that implies. So the next question is: What is the Church? What does 'Church' stand for, what does it mean? We could answer that question by drawing on the New Testament's metaphors for the Church: the Church is the living body of Christ, his immaculate bride, the people of God, a royal priesthood and the temple of the Holy Spirit. But, for our purposes, I want to pick up the saying of Dietrich Bonhoeffer in *Sanctorum Communio* that one of our speakers, Keith Clements, mentioned: 'The Church is the community that hears the word of God.'[5] Similar statements are found in Bonhoeffer's *Life Together*[6] and Karl Barth speaks the same language.[7] Of course, neither Bonhoeffer nor Barth suggest that the Church's relation to the word of God is exhausted by 'hearing' it. They insist that the Church responds to the word and makes it known. So Barth speaks of the Church that hears and proclaims the word of God.[8] Neither do they suggest that the Church can be exhaustively defined by

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[5] DIETRICH BONHOEFFER, *Sanctorum Communio. A Theological Study of the Sociology of the Church;* DIETRICH BONHOEFFER, *Works,* English Edition, vol. 1 (Minneapolis MN: Fortress Press, 1998), pp. 221, 269–71. I owe the precise reference to Keith Clements.

[6] DIETRICH BONHOEFFER, *Life Together,* ET (London: SCM, 1954), pp. 35–41.

[7] KARL BARTH, *Church Dogmatics,* ET ed. G. W. Bromiley and T. F. Torrance (London: T&T Clark, 1936 ff.), IV, 1, 59 (p. 347).

[8] BARTH, ibid.

reference to the Word of God. Bonhoeffer in particular makes no separation between word and sacrament; both are manifestations of the presence of Christ in the Church for our salvation. In words that Anglicans and Old Catholics, as well as Lutherans like Bonhoeffer, could surely embrace, Bonhoeffer writes: 'This one, whole, person, the God-man Jesus Christ, is present in the church ... as Word, as sacrament and as community'.[9]

Nevertheless, Bonhoeffer's terse statement, 'The Church is the community that hears the word of God', is helpful in our context because it points to the centrality of the Scriptures for the Church's life. I do not equate the Bible and the word of God in a univocal and un-nuanced way, but there is no word of God to us that is not grounded in the Scriptures and there is no way for us that leads to God's word that does not take us to and through the Scriptures.[10] The dictum, 'The Church is the community that hears the word of God', powerfully reminds us that we need to orientate our teaching and practice completely to Jesus Christ, the incarnate Word of God, as he is made known to us in the Scriptures.

However, I have to say that, as a definition of the Church, it is incomplete and one-sided. I would extend it like this: 'The Church is the community that hears the word of God and proclaims it in word, sacrament and compassionate action.' The Church proclaims the word of God as the good news (gospel) by its words and worship, its deeds and example. In the work of mission the Church makes known the gospel principally in word and sacrament, communicating it by every available means for the salvation of all. Alongside word and sacrament must stand the Church's ministry to the poor, the dispossessed and the marginalised – a ministry motivated by justice and compassion – and its witness to the responsible care of the natural environment.

At the same time it is vital for us to make it unambiguously clear why we are committed to these things. People outside the Church cannot deduce the gospel of Christ purely from the fact that the Church is on the side of the oppressed. Agnostics, atheists, humanists and caring people of other faiths are also often committed to these causes. So, to some extent at least, we need to wear our hearts on our sleeves, so that no-one can remain

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[9] DIETRICH BONHOEFFER, *Christology,* trans. John Bowden (London: Collins/Fontana, 1971), p. 49.

[10] I think it would be helpful if the study of the Scriptures had a more central place in our deliberations at these conferences, perhaps in the form of a daily Bible study or Bible reading, by a noted biblical scholar, on the theme of the conference.

ignorant for long of what we stand for. And we do not stand for ourselves or even for the Church, much as we love her. As St Paul says, 'We do not proclaim ourselves: we proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord and ourselves as your slaves for Jesus' sake' (2 Corinthians 4.5).

The task of proclaiming Jesus Christ as the word of God, the gospel, can be broken down into three aspects, which can be mentioned here in a purely programmatic way.

1. Evangelization, or spreading the gospel among those who have not yet received it. There are many vehicles for evangelization and the 'fresh expressions' movement is discovering new ones, but it always includes preaching or proclaiming (*kerygma*) and teaching or catechesis (*didache*), as the twin forms of the communication of Christian truth, adapted to the spiritual condition of the hearers. In the rites of Christian initiation we have a means of evangelization that is pastorally sensitive and connects with human experience and concerns. The sacraments of baptism and confirmation, leading to first communion at the Eucharist, draw individuals and often their families into the life of grace in the Church. The Church is perhaps at its strongest and most convincing when it is doing evangelism in the pastoral mode.

2. Apologetics (*apologia*). This is perhaps a slightly less familiar aspect of proclamation, but one that I believe is now more necessary than ever in face of hostile criticism and mockery of Christianity by secularists and atheists and the collusion of much of the mass media. Apologetics refers to the defence and exposition of Christian belief in relation to current worldviews or alternative belief systems, especially when they are hostile to Christianity or critical of it. Apologetics aims to remove prejudice, to clear up misunderstandings, to deal with stumbling blocks and to commend the Christian faith in a persuasive and attractive manner, but without watering it down or making gratuitous concessions to its critics. In Britain some of our most able theologians – Keith Ward, Alister McGrath and David Fergusson – have recognised the priority of apologetics and have turned their energies and scholarship to it in recent years. I expect that that development can be paralleled in other European countries.[11]

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[11] For a helpful recent exploration of the methodology, rather than the content of apologetics see ANDREW DAVISON (ed.), *Imaginative Apologetics* (London: SCM, 2011).

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3. Public doctrine. Jesus Christ as God's word to humankind is a universal truth, not a private opinion. So proclaiming Jesus Christ must take place in the public square, not merely behind closed doors, among 'consenting adults', so to speak. And one aspect of public proclamation is contributing to the climate and content of open public debate about the aims and means of society by articulating a Christian, theologically coherent vision of the common good and of the Christian ethical principles that help to shape it. To pick up a point from my first section, public doctrine is not neutral. It shapes legislation and funding priorities, setting the direction for the development of society. The Christian contribution to public doctrine has special relevance at the present time in relation to ethical issues around the beginning and the end of life. Various communities of belief compete and contend to shape public doctrine because they have a vision of how life should be ordered and because it has a direct effect on their members. Here Christianity is right in the centre of the market-place and needs to devote its best voices and skills to public witness.

I have said, very simply, that we are called to be the Church. But as Anglicans and Old Catholics we are also called to be Catholic Christians. The expression 'Catholic Christian' is almost a tautology – saying the same thing twice, in different ways – because to be Catholic (Greek *kat' holou*, according to the whole) means to belong to the universal Church; and could one be a Christian without belonging to the Church universal? To be Catholic, rightly understood, is to be Christian. A sense of catholicity means a concern for the unity, continuity and sacramentality of the Church. As Old Catholics and Anglicans we cannot rest content in ideas of autonomy or independence (though the Bonn Agreement uses that language). Catholicity calls us towards a deeper unity. So I believe that there is an imperative to go 'beyond Bonn' to a more richly textured form of communion that makes the unity of the Church more visible.

Speaking of visibility, how can the Church, with all the flaws and failings – and sometimes much worse – of its institutional expression, be transparent to Jesus Christ, or perhaps we should say, to God the Holy Trinity? The Church is transparent to God – God's character shines through the Church – in many ways, especially in the goodness and selflessness of its members, particularly the saints, but also, I would emphasise in this context, in its worship. In Catholic worship, infused with a sense of the unity, continuity and sacramentality of the Church, people are enabled to glimpse the divine and at that point the Church becomes trans-

parent to God. This points us to the doxological character of mission and to the insight that we best convey the truth of Christ when we proclaim not ourselves, but give glory to God, as we do in God-centred, Christ-focused, Spirit-inspired worship. Catholic worship in 'the beauty of holiness' answers to the longing for the mystical and the spiritual in many people today in our western European culture and so can be seen as an instrument of mission – provided that we do not hide ourselves away but make our worship and ministry as public and open as possible.

3. What does it mean to be in communion as Old Catholics and Anglicans?

The first thing to say about communion between Christians and between churches is that it is not a human construct but a divine gift. We find ourselves, not of own choosing, in a relationship of communion and acknowledge thankfully that God has placed us there. How do we respond to that gift that is also a responsibility?

There are degrees of communion, from the 'real albeit imperfect communion' (as Vatican II puts it: UR 3)[12] between all who have been baptised into Christ, to the organic unity that we experience when we become one church. As Anglicans and Old Catholics we are not yet one church, but we enjoy what is sometimes called 'ecclesial communion'. I suggest that there are three elements in ecclesial communion:

1. mutual recognition of churches and their ministries of word, sacrament and oversight, and their sacraments;
2. mutual commitment to act as one, especially in mission and evangelization, wherever possible;
3. mutual participation in the sacramental life of the Church, including an interchangeable ordained ministry and a common celebration of the Eucharist.

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[12] AUSTIN FLANNERY, O.P. (ed.), *Vatican Council II: Volume 1: The Conciliar and Post-Conciliar Documents* (Northport NY: Costello; Dublin: Dominican Publications, 1975), p. 455: 'For men who believe in Christ and have been properly baptized are put in some, though imperfect, communion with the Catholic Church.' Cf. Latin: 'Hi enim qui in Christum credunt et baptismum rite receperunt, in quadam cum Ecclesia catholica communione, etsi non perfecta, constituuntur.'
http://www.ewtn.com/library/councils/v2ecum.htm

The Bonn Agreement is strong on the first (recognition of churches and ministries) and weak on the second and third (commitment and participation). Bonn lacks formal structures or instruments of communion; it does not provide the elements of a common life and mission; it does not have much momentum to carry us forward. Hence the theological conferences and our concern for 'further convergence' in theology and practice. As I have already suggested, I think we should look for a 'thick description' of what communion means, a richer texture of relationship.

In terms of shared mission – acting as one in the evangelization in Europe – we can pick out three aspects:

1. co-discernment by bishops and those who advise them of the needs and opportunities that face the Church; seeking God's will and guidance together;

2. co-decision making by bishops and synods to respond to those needs and opportunities;

3. co-deployment of church resources of personnel, plant (buildings, facilities) as we implement those decisions concerning the mission and minstry of the Church.

Let me emphasise that this is not a recipe for a monochrome unity or a uniformity across our churches, because we will always be different and we will sometimes experience sharp disagreements and we need all the more to respect the good faith of the other church and the other person when we do. What is needed is a vision of communion-in-diversity, and for that we must work for a common understanding of those areas where we need to be agreed, that is to say in the essentials of faith and order – and increasingly, in the present climate, in the fundamentals of Christian ethics – and those areas where difference does not affect our unity.[13]

The present relationship of Old Catholics and Anglicans in Europe amounts in practice to not a great deal more than friendly mutual co-existence and some cooperation (which is very welcome where it occurs). What I believe we should be looking for in the future is a real lived communion. We should *live and act as one* because God has made us one.

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[13] For a discussion of the contemporary significance of ethics for ecumenical agreement, see PAUL AVIS, *Reshaping Ecumenical Theology* (London: T&T Clark, 2010), chapter 9: 'Ethics and Communion: The New Frontier in Ecumenism' (pp. 158–184).

4. What is our goal and how can we move towards it?

So what is our goal in realizing more fully our communion? Our ultimate vision and goal must continue to be the full visible unity of the one Church of Jesus Christ. But as we work and pray towards the realization of that goal, we should take whatever steps we can to bring it closer. So what can Anglicans and Old Catholics do to help to bring about the unity that God wills for God's Church? There are many small steps that we could take and I will give some examples shortly. But as far as the strategic vision is concerned, I will go straight to the point. I suggest that the goal to aim at should be nothing less than a united Anglican – Old Catholic church in continental Europe: that is to say, a united church, made up of churches, just as the Union of Utrecht and the Anglican Communion are each made up of churches. Such a church will embrace the distinctive traditions of its members and will be in communion with the Anglican Communion and also open to other ecumenical relationships.

I would like to offer several points of clarification about this vision of a united church.

First, I can envisage the coming together of the Old Catholic Churches of the Union of Utrecht with the Church of England's Diocese in Europe and (if possible) the Convocation of The Episcopal Church to form a united church which would also be a 'member church' of the Anglican Communion. The Diocese in Europe already includes many Anglicans from other parts of the Communion: its actual character as a pan-Anglican community would be recognised if it gained 'provincial' status – but it is unthinkable that it should take that step without doing so in unity with the Old Catholic Churches.

Second, we need to recognise that it is not necessary for a church to be Anglican by tradition in order to be in communion with the Anglican Communion, in the way that all Anglican Churches around the world are, and to share fully in such 'instruments of communion' as the Lambeth Conference and the Primates Meeting. The United Churches of South Asia are in that position – and they are members of those other Christian World Communions that are represented in their make-up too – as are the two small churches of the Iberian Peninsula.

Third, I do not envisage a mainly top-down approach to this, but rather a growing together at every level of the life of our two churches. The journey towards a united church must be progressive and step by step. Each aspect of convergence needs to support the other aspects. Thus there

is a need for the collegiality of the episcopate to redress and make up for the weaknesses at the parish level – and vice versa wherever possible. I suggest that we might hope for 'further convergence' in several areas.

(a) Convergence in ecclesiology. Here two ideas suggest themselves. First, a research project – probably by an individual – on the papers of the joint conferences that have been held since the 1950s, asking what lines of direction and of convergence emerge. Second, a study – by an individual researcher or a working party – of the dialogues that we have each had with other traditions, particularly the Roman Catholic and Orthodox Churches, again looking for common ground and ecclesiological convergence.

(b) Convergence within the episcopate. Old Catholic and Anglican bishops can be a catalyst for our growing together into a united church. They can model communion through collegiality for their clergy and people, setting an example of a lived communion that respects differences and does not gloss over them. Perhaps, as a step in this direction, the Anglican and Old Catholic bishops in continental Europe could make a personal covenant, one with real 'bite', a meaningful commitment that makes a difference in practice. Perhaps they could issue a joint pastoral letter to the faithful of both communities, affirming our shared faith, guiding them about some topical issues affecting Europe today, and pointing the way to a more united mission.

(c) Convergence between the parishes. Tensions are to be expected when parishes or congregations of the two traditions are encouraged to express their unity in worship and outreach. There are differences of belief, practice and culture. But there is already scope for local sharing of pastoral responsibilities, leading to joint mission planning, possibly joint church planting. Also, jointly planned induction into each others' traditions for clergy wanting to serve in the other church – mutual formation – would promote the meeting of minds. In England, churches that are very different have succeeded in coming together in mission and evangelization activities and this inevitably makes them pray together.

In conclusion: we are already in communion as churches: what does our relationship of communion require of us as Old Catholics and Anglicans? I think it says to us: 'Become what you are!'

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Deutsche Zusammenfassung

Dieser zusammenfassende Beitrag wurde auf Bitten der Organisation der Konferenz verfasst. Er versucht, aufgrund des bei der Konferenz Gesagten Schritte in Richtung auf die Einheit im Zeugnis von Altkatholiken und Anglikanern in Kontinentaleuropa aufzuzeigen. Der Beitrag ist nach den folgenden vier Fragen gegliedert: 1. Unsere Situation: Wo befinden wir uns – sozial und kulturell gesprochen – in Westeuropa? 2. Unsere Berufung: Zu welchem Sein und Tun sind wir als die Kirche in dieser Umgebung berufen? 3. Unsere Einheit: Was bedeutet es für Altkatholiken und Anglikaner, miteinander in Gemeinschaft zu sein? 4. Unser Weg: Was ist unser Ziel, und wie können wir es erreichen? Zur Beantwortung dieser Fragen werden theologische und praktische Empfehlungen formuliert. Der Beitrag endet mit der Vision einer vereinten Kirche – bestehend aus verschiedenen Kirchen – in Kontinentaleuropa und mit ein paar Vorschlägen für weitere Initiativen theologischer und praktischer Art.