

**Walking Together on the Way: Learning to Be the Church—  
Local, Regional, Universal**

**An Anglican Commentary**

**The Revd Dr James Hawkey**

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## Preface

*Walking Together on the Way: Learning to Be the Church – Local, Regional, Universal* (henceforth, *WTW*), the first Agreed Statement of the third round of the Anglican–Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC III), consciously builds on the high level of doctrinal consensus and real-but-imperfect communion which already exists between the Roman Catholic Church and the Anglican Communion. It responds to the challenge laid out in the 2006 Common Declaration of Pope Benedict XVI and Archbishop Rowan Williams to examine the fundamental nature of the Church as Communion,<sup>1</sup> and within that reality to explore how ethical teaching might be discerned in both the local and the universal Church. From the beginning of the Co-Chairs’ Preface, this document is identified as the first part of that very major project.

From its inception, the ARCIC process has sought to explore theological issues in a way which seeks to approach contested questions from fresh, shared perspectives. Well beyond historical caricature and the polemic of the past, two previous ARCIC phases have produced a series of diverse reports (listed in full in §2) which express a remarkable level of agreement on many matters once considered Church-dividing. In 1980, Pope John Paul II praised this methodology as being ‘to go behind the habit of thought and expression born and nourished in enmity and controversy, to scrutinize together the great common treasure, to clothe it in a language at once traditional and expressive of the insights of an age which no longer glories in strife but seeks to come together in listening to the quiet voice of the Spirit’.<sup>2</sup> The ARCIC process and its statements are extraordinary fruits of the Spirit, compelling Anglicans and Roman Catholics towards deeper communion in Christ.

This document takes us a step further. The title itself speaks of the whole Church *in via*—not as a perfect society, but in language familiar to both communions as a pilgrim people. The metaphor of a joint pilgrimage is a dynamic and pastoral one. It has profound implications for much of what we say about one another and how we say it. As the Co-Chairs put it, this is a task of conversion and renewal for both partners, not a simple return to unity or uniformity, but rather an organic growth into ‘the fullness of communion in Christ and the Spirit’. The remaining questions of ethics—how to live—and authority—how to live *together*—should be seen in this context.

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<sup>1</sup> Pope Benedict XVI and the Archbishop of Canterbury, His Grace Rowan Williams, ‘Common Declaration’ (23 November 2006), available at: [http://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/speeches/2006/november/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_spe\\_20061123\\_common-decl.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/speeches/2006/november/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20061123_common-decl.html).

<sup>2</sup> Address of John Paul II to ARCIC I, Castelgandolfo, 4 September 1980, available at: [https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/speeches/1980/september/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_spe\\_19800904\\_cattolici-anglicani.html](https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/speeches/1980/september/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_19800904_cattolici-anglicani.html).

Anyone who has ever made a pilgrimage in the company of others knows how belongings sometimes get mixed up on the journey. Indeed, what was considered private property at the outset often becomes communal by the end. The exchange of theological gifts which has characterized ARCIC's rich theological dialogue since 1970 has been mirrored by a sharing of symbolic gifts. Most famously, the newly refreshed relationship between our churches is rooted in the gift of Pope Paul VI's episcopal ring to Archbishop Michael Ramsey in Rome in March 1966. On one level, this recognition of a form of apostolic ministry by Pope Paul imaged the Second Vatican Council's commitment to the 'special place'<sup>3</sup> occupied by the Anglican Communion. Others have compared this gesture to the sign of a betrothal. Other gifts followed over the subsequent years, including pectoral crosses to bishops and stoles to clergy. Most recently, on 5 October 2016, at the church of San Gregorio al Celio in Rome, the very site from which Pope St Gregory the Great sent St Augustine to England, Pope Francis presented Archbishop Welby with a replica of a pastoral staff which had, by tradition, belonged to St Gregory. Very movingly Archbishop Welby then carried this crosier at an ecumenical Evening Prayer alongside the Cardinal Secretary of State the following evening. After Pope Francis had given Archbishop Welby the crosier, the Archbishop employed a symbolic gesture of his own, removing his own pectoral Cross of Nails<sup>4</sup> and giving it to Pope Francis. Commissioning nineteen pairs of Anglican and Roman Catholic bishops from the International Anglican–Roman Catholic Commission for Unity and Mission (IARCCUM) for joint mission in their own contexts, fifty years after that first historic meeting, Pope and Archbishop stood alongside one another as ministers of reconciliation within and between their communions. As a symbol of joint ministry in the contemporary world, these IARCCUM bishops were each given a Lampedusa Cross by Pope and Archbishop, fashioned out of the timbers of wrecked boats which had once carried refugees across the dangers of the Mediterranean Sea. This weighty language of symbols needs to be read and understood alongside the ARCIC process as a profound counterpoint, underpinning, explaining, and developing the pilgrim journey of communion. There have been symbolic visits as well as gifts—each Archbishop of Canterbury since Geoffrey Fisher has visited the Pope (often frequently), cardinals have attended Lambeth Conferences, and Anglican bishops have sometimes accompanied their Roman Catholic counterparts on *ad limina* visits to Rome, something which many hope will become a normal feature of such occasions, and which was recommended in *The Gift of Authority* (1999) and is recalled in *WTW* (§147). When Pope John Paul II visited Canterbury in 1982, he prayed alongside Archbishop Runcie at Canterbury Cathedral, the Mother Church of the Anglican Communion, and during his State Visit to the United Kingdom in September 2010 Pope Benedict co-presided at Evening Prayer in Westminster Abbey with Archbishop Williams. The two prelates prayed alongside one another in the Shrine of St Edward the Confessor, and jointly gave the blessing at the conclusion of the liturgy, having also addressed a joint gathering of Anglican and Roman Catholic bishops earlier that day.

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<sup>3</sup> Decree on Ecumenism *Unitatis Redintegratio* §13, in *Vatican Council II: Constitutions, Decrees, Declarations*, ed. Austin Flannery OP (New York: Costello, 2007), p. 513.

<sup>4</sup> The Coventry Cross of Nails is made from three nails from the roof of the bombed cathedral. It has become an international symbol of peace and reconciliation. Today's Community of the Cross of Nails is a network of individuals and institutions inspired by the story of Coventry's destruction and renewal, committed to reconciliation. Reconciliation is one of the three priority areas for Archbishop Welby's ministry, alongside prayer and the religious life, and evangelism and witness.

It would be a profound mistake to see this document—different in character and style from the rest of the ARCIC corpus—as a step back from the goal of full ecclesial communion. *WTW* is honest about remaining areas of difference between our two communions, some important, some surely adiaphora. But this pilgrimage is not a wandering perambulation. Rather it is, as the full title suggests, a journey ‘on the Way’ to full communion. The early Christian communities were frequently themselves described as *tes odou*—the Way, probably through association with John 14.6, where Jesus describes himself as such. We recognize this ‘Way’ in one another, as Christians together, seeking deeper unity through a deeper implication in Christ, and expecting to receive gifts from one another’s traditions.

*WTW* illustrates how the cultural, social, and structural challenges of living together in Christ are shared challenges in which our churches can learn from one another. The methodology of the document is profoundly shaped by the insights of receptive ecumenism, pioneered and developed by Professor Paul Murray (a Roman Catholic member of the Commission), and initially unfolded at a conference in Durham in January 2006. Very simply, this method does not allow for the ecclesial self-sufficiency of any church, and contributes towards our deeper reception of a communion theology. The first question for one Christian partner approaching another in dialogue is not ‘What can the other learn from us?’, but rather ‘What can we learn or receive from the other?’<sup>5</sup> At a Bible study at the first receptive ecumenism conference, Philip Endean reflected, ‘The *communio* of the Church, its unity in diversity is not something complete ... Rather God’s subversive touch is always opening that communion more widely.’<sup>6</sup> Dialogue is itself a means of reconciling grace, and of discovering what fresh gifts the Holy Spirit has in store for each to receive from the other.

Since the sixteenth century, Anglicanism has frequently made use of this kind of receptive learning, borrowing from other traditions and integrating such borrowings into its own life. That is the way of things in a church which is profoundly shaped by the cultures in which she is set, and which is consciously both Catholic and Reformed. In their Preface to *WTW*, the Co-Chairs remark that the final meeting of the Commission was in Erfurt, where Martin Luther was ordained. Primarily for reasons rooted in British politics,<sup>7</sup> Luther was not quite as influential on early Anglicanism as his French contemporary Jean Calvin. But in his profoundly influential book *The Gospel and the Catholic Church*, Archbishop Michael Ramsey claimed that the whole Church—Catholicism—‘always stands before the door of Wittenburg to read the truth by which she is created and by which also she is judged’.<sup>8</sup> Both in the pontificate of Pope Francis and in the contemporary Anglican Communion, we see much evidence of the outworking of such a reforming dynamic in the Church’s life. For us as fellow pilgrims, the profound truth of grace as limitless, transformative, free gift is one which the

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<sup>5</sup> For a full exposition of the receptive ecumenism method and rationale, see Paul D. Murray (ed.), *Receptive Ecumenism and the Call to Catholic Learning* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

<sup>6</sup> Philip Endean SJ, ‘Prologue to Part One’, in Murray (ed.), *Receptive Ecumenism*, p. 3.

<sup>7</sup> Henry VIII engaged in detailed theological controversy with Luther. He responded to Luther’s attack on the Catholic Church in *De Captivitate Babylonica* (‘On the Babylonian Captivity’) with his own *Assertio Septem Sacramentorum* (‘Defence of the Seven Sacraments’). Henry was rewarded for his opposition to Luther by Pope Leo X with the title *Fidei Defensor* (still used by British sovereigns today).

<sup>8</sup> Michael Ramsey, *The Gospel and the Catholic Church* (London: Longman, 1936), p. 180.

whole Church is summoned to learn again and again. *WTW* reminds us that we see such grace in the other, and it prompts us to ensure that our mutual learning is as graceful as the gift we ultimately long to receive. The hope of ARCIC III is that this Agreed Statement will not live in a bilateral vacuum, but might contribute towards the wider ecumenical journey. As with the great Lutheran–Roman Catholic bilateral *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification*, this document and its methodology are to be celebrated and received by a wider ecumenical audience, inspiring a joyful humility on the part of each communion in learning from the other, and inspiring greater confidence in Christ who calls us to encounter him and one another in the refashioning depths of paschal communion.

This commentary will now proceed following the structure of the Agreed Statement itself.

## I. Introduction

Right from the start, as the document gives the reader an overview of what has been achieved so far (§§1–4, 15–16), the final goal of the dialogue is made explicit. That gift, which we receive together from the heart of the Trinity, is nothing less than full visible unity. The last couple of decades have frequently been described as an ‘Ecumenical Winter’, but this Introduction details the work completed by the Commission since 1971 and reveals significant convergence on the essentials of shared faith and life.

The ‘gift exchange’ is a frequently used metaphor in ecumenical dialogue,<sup>9</sup> helping us to understand both the need for receptivity to one another and the profound theological truth that Christian unity is primarily a gift to be received from God, in Christ and through the power of the Holy Spirit for the whole Church.<sup>10</sup> Thus, we participate in receiving that gift, and mediate it to one another. We never build the unity of the Church in our own strength.

One of the most profound developments in ecumenical theology over the last twenty years has been a move from the language of ‘unity’ to the more dynamic language of ‘communion’. Previous ARCIC documents, notably *Church as Communion* (1991), *Life in Christ* (1994), and *The Gift of Authority* (1999), have contributed to this move, and have helped to reframe broader ecumenical conversation. While the documents of ARCIC II have not been formally ‘received’ by a Lambeth Conference, ARCIC I’s ground-breaking work on eucharistic doctrine, ministry, and ordination was judged by Lambeth 1988 as ‘consonant in substance with the faith of Anglicans’.<sup>11</sup> The response from Anglican provinces to the 1976 and 1981 work on authority was generally warm, although many requested further work on primacy, collegiality, and the role of the laity. This challenge was answered by ARCIC II with work on primacy and collegiality, and arguably *WTW* opens the door to a much deeper theological reflection on the role of the laity in the life of both communions while admitting that there is very much more to be learned.

*WTW* is honest and realistic about matters which remain communion-dividing. There is still ‘distance to be travelled’ (§5). But the context of that remaining pilgrimage is one of what has sometimes been described as ‘money in the bank’.<sup>12</sup> New issues which have arisen, not necessarily anticipated during those hopeful early years of the ARCIC process, such as the inclusion of women in the three orders of ministry in many provinces of the Anglican Communion and the development of conversations surrounding sexuality and gender, have posed new challenges. The document is keen

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<sup>9</sup> This mechanism is described as part of the inner-dynamic of the Church in *Lumen Gentium* §13 (see *Vatican Council II*, ed. Flannery, p. 17).

<sup>10</sup> *WTW* §13 for a short unpacking of this theology of gift in the ARCIC context.

<sup>11</sup> Lambeth 1988, resolution 8.1, in *The Lambeth Conference: Resolutions Archive from 1988*, available at: [www.anglicancommunion.org/media/127749/1988.pdf](http://www.anglicancommunion.org/media/127749/1988.pdf).

<sup>12</sup> ‘ARCIC—Dead in the Water or Money in the Bank?’ was the title of Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O’Connor’s Richard Stewart Lecture at Worth Abbey in 2009. The full text can be found at: [www.catholicnews.org.uk/Home/News/2009/Cardinal-Cormac-Murphy-O-Connor-delivers-lecture-on-ecumenism](http://www.catholicnews.org.uk/Home/News/2009/Cardinal-Cormac-Murphy-O-Connor-delivers-lecture-on-ecumenism).

to point out that these issues not only are not problematic in themselves, but also highlight questions of authority. For Roman Catholics and others, it is perhaps hard to see how one communion can contain such diversity of practice, while for many Anglicans, provincial authority and a developed sense of *adiaphora* are sufficient to justify such difference.

However, the Anglican Communion is hardly blind to the many questions its own practice highlights. *The Virginia Report*,<sup>13</sup> *The Windsor Report*,<sup>14</sup> and the process surrounding a potential Anglican Communion Covenant are all responses to dealing with the ongoing question of the limits of diversity within a communion ecclesiology. How theological developments are ‘received’ *within* a church is as important a question as how they are received *between* churches. Some of the challenges of different views between and within churches might be characterized as more cultural than theological. But we should perhaps resist coming to one or other conclusion too swiftly, as issues of theology and culture are so frequently knotted together.

*WTW*’s honesty about the remaining areas of difference between Anglicans and Roman Catholics is matched by its honesty about similarity and difference in our churches’ historic and cultural experience. We live together in a globalized age, sharing a mixed inheritance of colonialism and expansion, and exposure to radically different particular cultures which impact in diverse and complex ways. ‘Given this new global context’, the document says, ‘the tasks of engaging with cultures, religions, and stark social inequalities take new forms. Anglicans and Catholics alike need to develop local and trans-local structures which enable them to draw closer to one another as they engage with the challenges of a new age’ (§7). The point is that neither of our communions can simply rely on traditional models or ways of dealing with newly arising cultural issues. Neither of our churches can claim that everything can be neatly sorted out. The challenge which *WTW* begins to present is how we can learn from one another on the way as we commit together to deeper Christian faithfulness.

All of this leads into the real heart of ARCIC III’s work so far. How can we, within such a context, articulate the relationship between the local churches and the universal Church, and thus come to some conclusions about how authoritative teaching might work? Alongside the traditional two ecclesiological categories of local and universal, *WTW* introduces the very helpful third category of the regional: groupings of local churches confined to particular geographic areas. A focus on the regional opens up an interesting set of coordinates for the Church as the space in which the local and universal really meet. Some consideration of this theme has already occurred in other dialogues,<sup>15</sup> but *WTW* is extremely helpful for gaining a theological sense of the value and symbolism of the ‘trans-local’—defined in the document glossary as ‘any expression of church life beyond the level of the diocese’—beyond its usefulness for straightforward sociological analysis. Do regional bodies have an ecclesiological value beyond that of utility? What weight ought to be given to local

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<sup>13</sup> Inter-Anglican Theological and Doctrinal Commission, *The Virginia Report* (London: Anglican Consultative Council, 1997), available at: [www.anglicancommunion.org/media/150889/report-1.pdf](http://www.anglicancommunion.org/media/150889/report-1.pdf).

<sup>14</sup> Lambeth Commission on Communion, *The Windsor Report* (London: The Anglican Communion Office, 2004), available at: [www.anglicancommunion.org/media/68225/windsor2004full.pdf](http://www.anglicancommunion.org/media/68225/windsor2004full.pdf).

<sup>15</sup> For example, *WTW* notes the 2007 Ravenna Statement of the Roman Catholic–Orthodox dialogue.

synods, to their consideration of controversy and development? Might controlled, localized controversy have a great value for the universal in helping to discern, for example, whether a new development might ultimately be received by the whole Church?

There is a remarkable statement—a significant achievement—in paragraph 12 that ‘Dialogue within our respective traditions about such difficult matters as the proper place for decisions on questions of ministry and human sexuality should be welcomed rather than feared.’ For Anglicans, this is an encouraging and timely evaluation of our internal situation which reminds us that theological discernment can never be a zero-sum game. It is also perhaps a fruit of a Jesuit papacy, in which Pope Francis is encouraging all Christians to speak openly and honestly. Beginning from a situation of fragmentation ‘*between* our traditions and ... *within* them’ (§13), the document offers a road map for the second part of the mandate, which is to consider precisely how ethical discernment can occur. *WTW*’s insistent point is that such discernment will be strongest when it is pursued together, because the life of the Church is a dynamic expression of and sharing in communion. To allow for this kind of deep discernment, our structures need to be evaluated to ensure that they are maximally able to serve such work.

The *Windsor Report* of 2004 introduced the concept of adiaphora to contemporary Anglican theological reflection. Simply, there are some issues of diversity which should not be considered communion-dividing. As the *Windsor Report* puts it, ‘Anglicans have always recognised a key distinction between core doctrines of the church ... and those upon which disagreement can be tolerated without endangering unity.’<sup>16</sup> However, the Anglican Communion is not alone in being far from clear in discerning what might and what might not be considered adiaphora, and how far the concept might be stretched. In his 2009 Willebrands Lecture in Rome, Archbishop Rowan Williams developed this notion in the arena of Anglican/Roman Catholic discernment by posing important and challenging questions in the context of ARCIC’s ‘money in the bank’. Dr Williams said, ‘... the major question that remains is whether in the light of that depth of agreement the issues that still divide us have the same weight ... When so very much agreement has been firmly established in first-order matters about the identity and mission of the Church, is it really justifiable to treat other issues as equally vital for its health and integrity?’<sup>17</sup> *WTW* asks whether divisive issues should be revisited if ecumenical engagement is rooted in ‘explicit ecclesial self-critique’ (§14). Such receptive learning has the capacity to remove the sting from the way we evaluate one another as Christian communities. It is a cry for grace, because it first recognizes our own incompleteness. That is the context for the ‘re-reception’ (§16) of the deep truths of the faith, and of the fresh insight into that truth which the Holy Spirit always offers the whole Church.

At the end of the Introduction (§21), we are presented with a distilled theological methodology which underpins the receptive ecumenical process. Put simply: Christian churches live alongside one another in similar cultural contexts all over the world. Every context will throw up particular challenges which demand careful discernment so that the Church may be faithful to God and to

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<sup>16</sup> Lambeth Commission on Communion, *The Windsor Report*, sect. A, §36.

<sup>17</sup> Rowan Williams, Willebrands Lecture, Rome, 2009, available at: <http://aoc2013.brix.fatbeehive.com/articles.php/766/archbishops-address-at-a-willebrands-symposium-in-rome>



God's people. This discernment is not always straightforward, and our different theological traditions and ecclesial structures may not always allow for unified, simple answers. However, the Anglican–Roman Catholic pilgrimage, underpinned by a very high level of agreement on the fundamentals of the faith, is an intensification of unity despite difference. The communion we already share and which is increasing by degrees is robust enough to deal with this. That is itself a powerful witness. Such communion—*koinonia*—is always evangelistic, reaching beyond itself, but it is also didactic in a broader sense, showing a fractured and fracturing world how unity in diversity can be modelled. It is the vocation of both our churches to now unpack and interrogate the implications of these insights.

## II. The Church Local and Universal in the Apostolic and Post-Apostolic Periods

The initial formal divisions of the English Reformation were structural. They also included tensions between contrasting views of the relationship between the local and universal Church. During the Henrician period (1509–47), structural and canonical changes in England preceded wider formal doctrinal and liturgical reform. However, more than four centuries of separated ecclesial life have led to diversity in structures which both reflects and creates differing patterns of authority and governance. Before moving into analysis of how these patterns have settled into recognizable and describable contours in our contemporary communions, *WTW* has a brief exploration of the diversity of Christian life in its earliest years.

Paul Minear's seminal work *Images of the Church in the New Testament*, first published in 1960, offers ninety-six images of the Church from the pages of Christian Scripture.<sup>18</sup> *WTW* chooses to focus almost solely on one—*ekklesia*—to unpack what the New Testament means when it speaks of the gathered Christian community. This word is often used interchangeably to describe local or individual Christian communities as well as for the increasingly dispersed communities of Christians which make up the whole body of Christ. This simple fact helps to underpin the document's conclusion in paragraph 31, reminiscent of other ecumenical agreements, that 'Each local church that is in communion with other local churches is the Church of God in that place.'

*WTW* has a rich theology of the Church, illustrated in this section by reference to Scripture, and building on substantial agreement in other phases of the ARCIC dialogue, which often relies on diverse scriptural images. The Church's mission, rooted in Jesus' own command to make disciples of all nations, is international and inter-cultural. Christian disciples are to reach out to all in the knowledge that Christ's saving and sanctifying grace is for all people, who should be gathered into the community which is Christ's body.

Much is made in the early part of this section of the role of Jerusalem and its Church (see §§25, 32, 33, 35, 37). As well as being the locus of Jesus' passion and resurrection, Jerusalem has a broader, dynamic typological resonance in the Bible. Not only was it the heart of Jewish worship, but it was also seen as the ultimate pilgrim destination, and the sacred site which would gather all people on the last days. Jerusalem is often portrayed (especially, for example, in Psalm 87) as a mother, generating as well as gathering children. Jerusalem is a place for all places, in a way not dissimilar to

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<sup>18</sup> Paul Minear, *Images of the Church in the New Testament* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1960), p. 24.

how the Church understands Jesus as a human for all humans:<sup>19</sup> Jerusalem is a priestly city, and a priestly church, which has a strong eschatological dynamism, as *WTW* points out, even after its destruction in AD 70 (§37). The book of Revelation, with its visions addressed to particular churches—Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, and so on—culminates in a vibrant vision of the New Jerusalem, with its gates continually open (Rev 21.25), so that all who worship the Lamb may enter. Each of these particular churches has an angel,<sup>20</sup> to whom a message is delivered by the seer. In Patristic tradition these angels are often described as bishops, a theme developed in much Anglican commentary and preaching of the seventeenth century. There are clear scriptural building blocks here for later reflection on communion between bishops, who are depicted as representing their churches.

Rome also features significantly in this section. It was the centre of the ancient world and of the imperial cult, and the preaching of St Paul right at Rome's heart in the Acts of the Apostles is St Luke's final statement of the universality of the Gospel. The change in emphasis from the authority of the Jerusalem church to that of Rome was an important development during the post-Apostolic period, and one which would benefit from further elucidation. How and why Rome became the arbiter of orthodoxy, with traditions developing around the martyrdoms of Peter and Paul, the increasing dominance of the mission to the gentiles, changes in the Roman Empire, and the wide geographical spread of the Christian faith by the end of the second century, is a complex story. For Anglicans, further reflection on the relationship between Jerusalem and Rome could raise interesting questions about communion and the focus of unity. In particular, the emergence of the figure of Peter and his relationship with the other apostles is of great importance. Although Roman Catholics are bound by the dogmatic definitions of universal jurisdiction and infallibility, Pope John Paul II's remarkable plea in *Ut Unum Sint* of 1995 for 'patient and fraternal dialogue' with ecumenical partners on the role and nature of the papacy is an essential encouragement in considering church structures.<sup>21</sup> Classical Anglican texts of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries make a characteristic point that they object not to the authority given to Peter as Bishop of Rome per se, but rather to the privileging of Peter (as they see it) beyond the wider episcopal college. This is rooted in scriptural critique: many Anglicans would argue that Peter's *faith* is the rock on which the Church is built, and that the Petrine commission of Matthew 16 needs to be balanced with the wider scriptural witness and the commissioning of the whole apostolic college.

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<sup>19</sup> Gregory of Nazianzus famously wrote in his Epistle 101, a critique of Apollinarius, 'For that which he has not assumed, he has not healed.' This is a central tenet of Christian teaching about the Incarnation of Christ.

<sup>20</sup> In Revelation, the seer is commissioned to communicate with the 'angels' of particular churches.

<sup>21</sup> Pope John Paul II, *Ut Unum Sint*, Encyclical on Commitment to Ecumenism (1995), §96, available at: [http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_enc\\_25051995\\_ut-unum-sint.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_25051995_ut-unum-sint.html). The Church of England's response to *Ut Unum Sint*, *May They All Be One*, House of Bishops Occasional Paper (London: Church House Publishing, 1997), highlights the need to look afresh at the structures of the first millennium of Christianity, and also to examine the current needs of the Church to discern what kind of universal primacy might be needed for unity, and how it might be exercised in relation to other structures in the Church.

From paragraph 29 onwards, the document builds from Scripture the ecclesial categories of local, trans-local, and universal, pointing to diversity within the local, but also to a unity of faith, behaviour, and purpose within the universal. Scripture and the earliest traditions show that churches such as those of Jerusalem and Antioch generate other families of churches (§30), such that early ‘instruments of communion’ emerge. This notion of families of churches is perhaps one which should come to the fore as our communion ecclesiology begins to mature, and is developed later in *WTW* as the Commission reflects on how national or regional churches might find a clearer voice.

The document’s work on decision-making and the maintenance of communion necessarily compresses a lot of complex detail into several paragraphs. While the history of the early Church is one of the maintenance of communion, it is also one which interrogates and tests the robustness of that communion. The famous disagreement between Peter and Paul at Antioch recorded in Galatians 2 perhaps deserves a little more focus in the overall context of this section. It is hard for contemporary Christians to understand the sheer weight of the issues at stake here,<sup>22</sup> and the precariousness of the early Church’s mission as a result. There is conflict and disagreement right at the heart of the earliest Christian witness over matters which were regarded as ‘Church-dividing’. Most modern editions of the New Testament end Paul’s speech to Peter in Galatians 2 at verse 14. However, New Testament Greek does not include speech-marks, and many commentators think that Paul’s speech concludes at the end of Galatians 2. If so, Paul’s angry rhetorical outburst to Peter, in which he accuses him of promoting justification through the Law, ‘Then Christ died for nothing’ represents a threat to the fabric of Christian communion if ever there was one.

Similarly, the document helpfully refers to the problem of eating idol meat recorded in 1 Corinthians (§36), where those who are ‘strong’ are urged to check their own practice for the sake of the ‘weak’. Some Anglicans have drawn an analogy between this situation and the principle of ‘gracious restraint’ urged in the drafts of an Anglican Communion Covenant, and in the letter of the Anglican Primates from their 2009 meeting in Alexandria.<sup>23</sup> The final paragraph of this Primates’ letter places the call to such gracious restraint alongside that of deeper communion.

More detailed work on the diversity of Church life in the apostolic and post-apostolic periods might be helpful for the ongoing dialogue. In particular, it could be particularly fruitful to reflect on the Johannine voice, particularly in the Johannine letters, where clear comparison is made between the love revealed in the nature of God and the ideal relational model of the Church.

Themes of conciliarity and synodality emerge towards the end of this section, properly alongside reflection on the role of the bishop and the primacy of the Bishop of Rome. At this point in the

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<sup>22</sup> This is a key moment in Christian origins, as the earliest Church moves away from an exclusive Jewish matrix and the demands of that context regarding circumcision and certain dietary restrictions. A so-called ‘two-missions’ hypothesis, initially proposed by F. C. Baur in the mid-nineteenth century, received its fullest and clearest exposition in Michael Goulder’s *A Tale of Two Missions* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1994). This binary is not accepted by most Scripture scholars today, but the general thesis is helpful in giving a sense of complex diversity within the earliest Christian communities.

<sup>23</sup> Primates of the Anglican Communion, *Deeper Communion; Gracious Restraint: A Letter from Alexandria to the Churches of the Anglican Communion*, available at: <http://anglicancommunion.org/media/68372/Pastoral-Letter.pdf>.

document, the emergence of the monarchical episcopate is slightly assumed without comment, and although the emergent pattern of bishops in communion is not in any doubt, a reference to how *episkope* was modelled in different ways before a settled, normative structure emerged would be a helpful strengthening of other bilateral reflection on the nature of episcopacy.

This section prepares the ground for the sections which are to come. It reflects on a 'pluralist model of witness and authority' (§45), the rootedness of the early Church in relationship with the risen and ascended Christ, guaranteed through the Church's apostolicity, and the experience of robust disagreement within Christian *koinonia*. Using the scriptural witness, it portrays communities which are recognizable to one another in faith and love, because they preach the same Gospel. Two millennia on, our divisions have themselves become structured and formalized. The deep scriptural well is one we need to drink from together, as we recognize one another in its pages.

### **III. Ecclesial Communion in Christ: The Need for Effective Instruments of Communion**

This section is in three subsections. First, paragraphs 46–50 introduce the relationship between the local and the trans-local. Second, paragraphs 51–61 offer a beautiful synthesis of agreed teaching on the nature of baptism and the eucharist as the fundamental sacraments of initiation and ecclesial reality. Third, paragraphs 62–79 provide an introduction to different Roman Catholic and Anglican approaches to how the local is related to various levels of the trans-local, and an initial reflection on how such relationships are maintained and curated at various levels in each of our churches.

The first subsection reminds us that baptism is our common and fundamental entrance into the life of grace. Because of this shared rooting in Christ's death and resurrection, which necessarily impels us to 'eschatological communion, anticipated in eucharistic communion' (§46), Christian divisions which emerge from this point must be considered sinful. Church structures, and by inference what we refer to as instruments of communion, have a vocation actively to 'promote life in the fellowship ... of the Holy Spirit' (§46). This is the first glimpse of an extremely helpful assertion which is voiced several times in this section. Instruments of communion, so often conceived as modes of control, are strongly interpreted in *WTW* as instruments 'to serve the unity and the diversity ... of the Church' (§57). The emphasis is not on an enforced regimented uniformity, but rather on shaping a communion of love which is consistently geared towards the wholeness, health, and holiness of an interdependent body. The opening paragraph 46 itself admits that all structures themselves are by definition 'more limited than the life of grace'. What follows is then a sophisticated analysis not primarily of institutions, but rather of relationships.

It is in this context that we begin to consider autonomy and interrelatedness. For Anglicans, the ecclesiology of *WTW* is as helpful for our own internal housekeeping as it is for conversations with ecumenical partners. There are dangers in over-emphasizing both autonomy and centralization. The health of the whole Church is dependent on a creative tension between the two, held together by love and trust. Wider cultural context is important here, and the complexity inherent in contemporary cultural analysis means that it is often challenging to develop convincing general strategies without attention to each particular.

In paragraph 48, the document mentions almost in passing the dangers of 'insufficient critical distance from the prevailing culture'. There may be all sorts of theological assumptions here about what we have learned to call 'the secular' which do not sit comfortably with parts of the Anglican

tradition which see wider culture as itself worthy of respectful discernment and analysis. How our two communions assess what is good, beautiful, and prophetic in wider culture will be a question for the next stage of the Commission's work.

The document's focus on how the local and trans-local are related to each other reveals delicate networks of relationship, where connections are well honed and balanced. To expand the biblical image of the Church as body of Christ, precisely because of the necessity of 'local adaptation' (§49) and cultural (as well as theological) diversity, the muscles and sinews which hold us together need to be able to stretch and to be flexible, formed by a hermeneutic of Christian trust. Those committed to mutuality and communion in the Anglican tradition need to curate structures which celebrate adiaphora while being committed to the life of the whole. The 2015 document of the Inter-Anglican Standing Committee on Unity, Faith and Order, *Towards a Symphony of Instruments*, begins to refocus our structures to 'intentionally and prophetically recall the Communion to its purpose in God's Kingdom'.<sup>24</sup> It is such structures which *WTW* now moves on to describe and interrogate.

### **Baptized into the communion of saints**

This subsection is a remarkable distillation of agreed teaching between our communions from previous rounds of ARCIC and other ecumenical dialogues. Christian existence, from the immersion of baptism onwards, is necessarily and simultaneously local and trans-local, participating in relational networks across time and space (§§51, 55). It is through baptism, where the believer is clothed with Christ, that each disciple shares in the ministry of Christ's *tria munera*—the triple office of Christ as prophet, priest, and king which St Eusebius of Caesarea articulated in the fourth century. Communion with and in Christ thus allows the whole Church to have confidence in her ultimate indefectibility on matters fundamental to the faith. This is allied to what the document calls an 'instinct for the faith' (§53), which Anglicans will recognize, for example, in the great poets as well as in formal doctrinal formularies. Fundamentally, this *sensus fidei fidelium* is not the sole preserve of formal instruments of communion, nor of great synodical gatherings: it is also a mystical reality, implanted within the human heart and nurtured by the Holy Spirit. It is testified to by the charismatic teacher, the contemplative, and even the Holy Fool. The faith is not a static set of precepts, but alive and active (Heb 4.12), proclaimed afresh in every generation through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Thus, discernment of the mind of Christ often takes time and must be rooted in prayerful reflection.

The universality, or catholicity, of the Church demands each Christian community's liberation from the idol of self-sufficiency. *WTW* warns of the dangers of local churches turning-in on themselves, recalling Martin Luther's masterful definition of sin as 'incurvatus in se est'.<sup>25</sup> By way of this analogy, we touch on the heart of the document's methodology: each church must reach 'beyond itself so that it may truly become a community in full communion with the other communities which form

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<sup>24</sup> Inter-Anglican Standing Commission on Unity, Faith and Order, *Towards a Symphony of Instruments: A Historical and Theological Consideration of the Instruments of Communion of the Anglican Communion* (London: Anglican Communion Office, 2015), 6.5.1.

<sup>25</sup> See Martin Luther, *Lectures on Romans*, ed. and trans. Wilhelm Pauck (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1961), drawing of course on Augustine.

the ecclesial body of Christ and serve the mission of God' (§56). In reaching beyond, each communion looks to the other expectantly for the gifts which will build up the Body of Christ.

So, within this context, instruments of communion must proceed with subtlety and care to ensure that they serve both unity *and* diversity. Paragraph 57 remarks that there will be occasions when interim decisions may be needed. For Anglicans, this will be so not least when new questions are arising or when cultural complexity and the emerging insights of other disciplines make definitive decisions extremely difficult. Given that the communion we are called to is fundamentally eschatological in nature (§46), the relationship between patient discernment, interim decisions, and more binding definitive conclusions demands closer and deeper investigation. The classical Anglican commitment to the role of reason, alongside that of Scripture and tradition, could be helpful here, and we look to the second phase of ARCIC III to ensure that the gift of reason is properly integrated in the process of moral discernment.

WTW's reflection on the eucharist is both theological and social. It is through the celebration of the eucharist that each church shares in the *koinonia* of the body and blood of Christ (§59), and thus participates in communion with the Lord and his wider ecclesial body. As the 'fullness of ecclesial reality' (§47) is actualized, especially in eucharistic communion with the bishop, the reconciling love of Christ which overflows in 'reconciliation, justice, and peace, and witness to the joy of the resurrection' (§58) should become characteristic of Christ's followers. This is the essential root of Christian ethical behaviour. Much of the language employed in these paragraphs is reminiscent of the theological tone of classical Anglican eucharistic theology evidenced in the Book of Common Prayer. For example, we receive Christ's body and blood 'that we may evermore dwell in him, and he in us'<sup>26</sup> and that we may 'continue in that holy fellowship, and do all such good works as thou hast prepared for us to walk in'.<sup>27</sup>

### **Ecclesial communion: local and trans-local**

Moving on from the shared ecclesiological outlines which have preceded it, this subsection provides a helpful precis of the differences between Anglicans and Roman Catholics both in emphasis and in theological understanding about the nature and structure of the Church. However, instead of seeking either to minimize or simply to note discrepancies, the document explicitly identifies these differences as areas where 'ecclesial repentance and receptive learning can take place' (§62). This is a crucial point; so often in the past, differing structures themselves have been perceived as a central part of the problem of disunity. Part of this document's genius is that what have often been considered boundary markers can instead be viewed as potential icons of mutual learning. This is a real development of trust in the Spirit of the one who has broken down the wall that separates Jews and Gentiles from each other 'in his flesh' (Eph 2.14). Here is a rich fruit of the theology of communion. If our fundamental identity is rooted in baptism, and developed in a shared theology of the Church, the basic operating system of our analysis of one another has to change as we look to one another expectant of the Holy Spirit.

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<sup>26</sup> The Prayer of Humble Access.

<sup>27</sup> Prayer after Communion.

For some Anglicans, the papal model of a universal teaching authority can seem quite attractive. For others, it risks annihilating diversity. However, the Archbishop of Canterbury's office (and the Anglican touchstone of communion with the See of Canterbury) is not a dissipated form of the Petrine office, as if it were possible to have a diluted form of the papacy, but rather an alternative model. It is rooted in the notion of bonds of affection which hold Anglicans together in communion, respecting the integrity and ecclesiality of each member church. As *WTW* highlights, some of the differences between Anglicans and Roman Catholics in practical expressions of decision-making and authority can be explained by reference to our separate histories (§66). It is also important to reflect on how different Anglican provinces have developed their own polities, adding further complexity to the task of discerning how the local relates to the trans-local. The heart of the question is surely 'what should be the appropriate balance between trans-local autonomy and mutual accountability' (§70), but this is greatly complicated by diverse cultural, juridical, and theological traditions within our own Communion. *WTW* reminds Anglicans that the diversity of expression within the Anglican family itself might be potential gift rather than threat, as we discern complexities which are linked to factors such as post-colonialism and modernity. In an interconnected, networked world, where social media increasingly beguile us into thinking that we know more about each other than we often do, what the document affirms as 'strong bonds of affection' and 'more robust forms of mutual accountability' (§71) are surely needed to develop a stronger theology of communion within our own tradition as well as in relation with others. Face-to-face encounters like those of the Anglican Consultative Council, the Primates' Meeting, and the Lambeth Conference remind us that these affectionate bonds are supposed to build us up in love (Col 3.14) rather than force us to submit. The simultaneously 'affective' and 'effective' characteristics of these instruments of communion are fundamentally expressions of the whole Church's pastoral office.

This section of *WTW* is a profoundly honest appraisal of current reality. Admitting that 'each tradition experiences its own particular tensions', in the sections which follow, there is no sense of the Church as a perfect society. After all, the Co-Chairs' Preface explicitly speaks of the Church as *ecclesia 'semper reformanda'*. The instruments which govern the Church are servants of her mission and unity, and therefore 'reformable in function' (§72) for both our traditions. The document notes that '*episcopate*, synodality, and primacy are enduring and necessary' (§72), but the form of these gifts can be renewed and reformed. Other instruments of communion must also be tested to ensure that they 'serve the current needs of mission and unity' (§75) which are the very centre of the Church's identity. For Anglicans, questions of how synodal structures and episcopal ministries are properly discerned, formed, and educated are urgent priorities in every context to ensure that the Gospel is proclaimed afresh in each generation. Particular care should be taken by trans-local structures in order to resist the temptation to homogenize the Church. As both our communions assess the adequacy of instruments of communion, it will be important to recognize and critique the sociological forces which encourage Christians to homogenize and flatten out distinctiveness, as well as the temptation to theologize homogeneity.

Anglicans and Roman Catholics affirm together that the episcopate is part of the *esse* of the Church. In human terms, the figure of the bishop is a relational symbol of Christ in the local church, and signifies the unity of the Church beyond the boundaries of the local and trans-local. The mutual dependence of presbyters and bishops is also a feature of much Anglican ecclesiology. Therefore, as we continue, we must be aware of the need for developing communion and coherence between instruments of communion in both our churches.

Further development of how non-Catholics might associate themselves with the ministry of the Bishop of Rome is not discussed in any detail; there is still much to harvest from *Ut Unum Sint*, *The Gift of Authority*, and *Evangelii Gaudium*. But Anglicans will be pleased to note the encouragement here to engage in intensified conversations on this issue (§76). This is surely not separate from the broader concern of how ‘to contain conflict so that it does not lead to further impairment of communion’ (§77). For the Petrine ministry to be a gift for Anglicans, it must protect the diversity of the Church as well as her unity. The negative reactions in some parts of the Anglican family to *The Gift of Authority* remind us of the need for further, careful work on this issue.

The end of this section reminds us that this is a document to celebrate. It does precisely what ARCIC’s critics have often challenged the Commission to do. It is the beginning of an answer to the question ‘So what?’ posed over many years. Precisely because of the high level of agreement between our two communions on the fundamentals of the faith reached over forty years, and our insistence on the deep baptismal *koinonia* that Anglicans and Roman Catholics already share, it is now possible to receive inspiration from the other’s structured lives precisely at the point where our own is weak, or ‘less developed’ (§79). This is *viaticum*—food and medicine for the ecclesial journey—which our pilgrim churches offer each other rather than jealously guard for themselves.



## IV. Instruments of Communion at the Local Levels of Anglican and Roman Catholic Life

Section IV is in three parts: first, analysing instruments of communion which operate at a local level in both our churches; second, identifying tensions and challenges for these instruments at a local level; and third, asking how each tradition might learn from the other in areas of ‘systemic stress’ (§80). The section bears a close reading in full in order to appreciate the many similarities between our churches, and the complexities at play in mutual ecclesial learning. Although, strictly speaking, both communions identify the local church with the diocese, *WTW*’s insistence that theological dialogue must take seriously the ‘lived reality of the structures that sustain the churches’ (§80) leads the analysis to include the parish level as well as the diocese.

### IV.A Instruments of communion at the local levels of Anglican and Roman Catholic life

Christian baptism makes each person a member both of the universal Church and a local church. For most people, this local church will be a parish, which is the ‘normal locus of Christian formation’ (§82). Through sharing in the ministry of Christ (again expressed in the threefold office of prophet, priest, and king), lay people have a responsibility with the presbyter, under the bishop, for the life of the parish. This notion of the priesthood of all believers (1 Pet 2.5–9) is expressed for Anglicans in baptism rites and ordinals, and is a fundamental ramification of both the baptismal and eucharistic ecclesiologies which have profoundly shaped contemporary Anglicanism. It was also affirmed bilaterally in the 1982 document *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* of the World Council of Churches, and in previous rounds of ARCIC.<sup>28</sup>

*WTW* affirms that since the Second Vatican Council, Anglicans and Roman Catholics share much in common in their theologies of the whole people of God. Lay theologians are celebrated in both communions. There are, however, differences in the practical outworking of this theology. For example, the structural involvement of lay people in authoritative roles is more a feature of the Anglican tradition, and is not merely of a consultative nature, although in many parts of the world this is also developing in the Roman Catholic Church. The process of parish appointments involves lay people more frequently in the Anglican Communion, alongside processes of advertisement and interview which would be unusual in the Roman Catholic world.

Deacons and presbyters are set apart by ordination as co-workers with the bishop, and Agreed Statements on such ministries were significant achievements of ARCIC I and II. They need not be rehearsed here. In both communions, each presbyter derives their licence from the bishop, and cannot operate without one. The bishop is the principal minister of Word and sacrament in each diocese, and acts ‘in service of the *koinonia* of the Church’.<sup>29</sup> To a very large extent, Anglicans and Roman Catholics share a theology of the episcopate. Differences in emphasis and practice emerge

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<sup>28</sup> For example in *The Doctrine of the Ministry* of ARCIC I (1973), where ‘the priesthood of all the faithful’ (7) and ‘the common Christian priesthood’ (13) are referred to. See [www.anglicancommunion.org/media/105233/ARCIC\\_I\\_The\\_Doctrine\\_of\\_the\\_Ministry.pdf](http://www.anglicancommunion.org/media/105233/ARCIC_I_The_Doctrine_of_the_Ministry.pdf).

<sup>29</sup> Church of England, *Bishops in Communion: Collegiality in Service of the Koinonia of the Church* (London: Church House Publishing, 2000).

when *WTW* analyses how the bishop's authority operates. The Anglican relationship of 'bishop-in-synod' (§90) is not mirrored in the Roman Catholic Church, although the bishop has the discretion to summon a synod or a pastoral council. The principle of the bishop as 'sole legislator' in the Roman Catholic Church is only really paralleled in the Anglican tradition by the need for the consent of the bishop for motions of synod to be enacted.<sup>30</sup> One of the few moments in *WTW* where difference is perhaps understated is in the selection and appointment of bishops. While the aim of both processes is doubtless that of preserving 'the Church in a unity of faith, sacramental practice, and mission to others' (§91), there is no Anglican parallel for a universal structure of episcopal appointment as seen in the Latin rite of the Roman Catholic Church.

The integrity of each local church is a theological matter. Therefore it is only with real care and in exceptional circumstances that one see—even Canterbury—might interfere with or comment on the election of a bishop in another member church, as long as that bishop is recognizable as a bishop in each place.

#### **IV.B Tensions and difficulties in the practice of communion at the local levels of Anglican and Roman Catholic life**

This subsection moves on to highlight some of the challenges which mitigate against a theology of communion and its instruments. Parochialism is the first danger to emerge. Anyone who has ever worked in parish ministry will recognize how swiftly this can arise in a variety of forms, and how difficult it is to monitor. Diversity of liturgical practice is easier to monitor but just as hard to address. In the Church of England, the Fresh Expressions movement, changes within and around the parish system, and the number of churches which depart not only from the authorized rites but also from lectionaries have greatly complicated the picture. The presence of non-parochial expressions of the Church—and their growth in some dioceses in the Communion—also pose a challenge to our theology of the local parish unit. Furthermore, our liturgy images our faith. Anglicans need to ensure that liturgical renewal is pursued with great care. What we do and say in church really does matter, and is rarely neutral in whether it builds up the body of Christ. Liturgical coherence is at least as important as structural coherence, and a crisis in the one often indicates a crisis in the other.

For Anglicans the 'legislative focus' and parliamentary style of our synodical bodies can pose very serious problems, even eclipsing 'the need for catechesis and renewal' (§94). The presence of quasi-official interest groups, voting en bloc and strategically, can be especially corrosive of communion and the bonds of trust. This is a particular problem for Anglican bodies. As paragraph 94 makes clear, in the Roman Catholic Church lay participation in instruments of governance (where it occurs) is usually just consultative. It is easy for Anglicans to adopt a rather superior attitude in these circumstances. However, Anglicans might also reflect on the role that charism should play in ecclesial governance and discernment, and engage in critical reflection on what has sometimes been a rather unthinking reification of secular models.

Paragraph 95 addresses the highly complex area of alternative and parallel jurisdictions. One of the knottiest features of this question, not explicitly discussed in *WTW*, is the nature of the link between

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<sup>30</sup> e.g. in the Church of England General Synod, consensus is needed in the House of Bishops before any change to matters touching on faith and order can be approved.

geography and episcopal leadership. What this paragraph calls ‘trans-jurisdictional accountability’ has sometimes been described as a consumerist approach to authority: choosing a bishop (or a community) whose views on one or other matter are acceptable to a parish or group, and thus mitigating against the catholicity of the whole. This statement is not intended to minimize either the theological problems which, in the Anglican world, have given rise to these situations or the sincerity of those taking advantage of authorized structures. It is simply to raise the question of how such jurisdictions might contribute more fully to the strengthening of the *koinonia* of the whole. As *WTW* shows, this matters to our ecumenical partners, as well as within our own provinces and the whole Anglican Communion.

The final paragraph of this subsection raises questions which emerge from changing demographics in church life. There are broad similarities here: both our communions are currently experiencing overall numerical growth, and there is some similarity in geographical patterns. However, the decision-making surrounding ecumenical ‘shared ministries’ in the Anglican Communion at a provincial level does open questions about how such localized decisions relate to the universal Communion, and to other bilateral ecumenical commitments made at a Communion-wide level. This is a feature of Anglican provincial autonomy which may benefit from receptive learning and further reflection.

#### **IV.C Potential receptive ecclesial learning at the local levels of Anglican and Roman Catholic life**

This next subsection moves on to discuss specific examples where there is potential for receptive ecclesial learning in the local context. The first is in the area of parallel jurisdictions. In some parts of the world, the oft-quoted Patristic principle of ‘one bishop, one city’<sup>31</sup> has not been upheld for quite a long time. In fact, multiple jurisdictions are of course a feature of the ecumenical landscape. However, it is also the case within churches. This is perhaps most famously so in the Orthodox world: although ancient canons place orthodox ‘living in non-orthodox lands’ under the care of the Patriarch of Constantinople, in reality there are myriad overlapping orthodox ecclesial jurisdictions between churches in full communion. The Western pattern is less prolific: as *WTW* highlights, the presence of Eastern Catholic jurisdictions within and alongside other structures is the main example. However, in the Anglican world, the presence of the Convocation of Episcopal Churches in Europe, alongside the Church of England Diocese in Europe, is a significant unresolved ecclesiological anomaly. Ongoing discernment is also needed in northern Europe and Scandinavia, where churches of the Porvoo Communion—with which the Anglican Communion is in a relationship of full communion—are the local church, and where there are still Anglican parishes and chaplaincies. There is also the different but related question of non-geographical jurisdiction: in the Roman Catholic Church this can be considered through the presence of ordinariate communities, and in the Church of England there are provincial episcopal visitors who care for parishes currently unable to receive the episcopal and presbyteral ministry of women.

*WTW* poses the question of how far parallel and overlapping jurisdictions might offer a useful model where there are culturally distinct ecclesial realities alongside one another in a relationship of full

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<sup>31</sup> See the Apostolic tradition of Hippolytus, Cyprian, and other sources from the Patristic era. St Ignatius’ Epistle to the Smyrnaeans (chapter 8) assumes and defends the monoepiscopal model: ‘Wherever the bishop shall appear, there let the multitude also be; even as, wherever Jesus Christ is, there is the Catholic Church.’

communion. Given the pace of change in contemporary culture, and the many layers of meaning freighted to conceptions of culture, it might be helpful for the Commission to consider just how far 'culture' can be pressed. How do concepts of culture contribute to our consideration of ecclesial diversity? Might a deeper sense of, and theology of, culture contribute towards our discernment of what are and what are not adiaphora? Equally importantly, the 'catholic' nature of the whole Church, and of each local expression of the Church, is guaranteed by legitimate diversity. One challenge is how to work through this exceptionally detailed material while insisting that parallel jurisdictions must always build up the unity, holiness, catholicity, and apostolicity of the local and the trans-local. *WTW's* insistence on the premise of full communion as essential for healthy parallel jurisdictions is a helpful reminder of how destructive cross-border interventions and illegal or irregular consecrations are to the health and catholicity of the Church.

There are further lessons here for both communions, in particular in how the voices of whole parishes and communities are heard in wider discernment, and in learning from one another's structures of discernment. In situations of tension, *WTW* asks whether Anglicans would also benefit from a greater sense of a universal Anglican identity. In the reception of this document, Anglican bodies might consider how this might be achieved. As has already been highlighted, at least one communion-wide eucharistic prayer would be a rich symbol of such identity, alongside encouraging regional Anglican synods, and work on an agreed basic programme and texts for those training for ordination. Much of this can be learned by receptive reflection on Catholic practice.

This section closes with a strong recommendation of a greater sharing in practical *koinonia* at episcopal and parochial levels. The commissioning of the IARCCUM bishops provides a model for Anglican–Catholic episcopal shared ministry for bishops throughout our communions. The practical reception of this document will depend in part on how this shared ministry is encouraged. The upcoming Lambeth Conference in 2020 is both a great opportunity to learn from IARCCUM bishops already engaged in such work and a potential moment for the Archbishop of Canterbury to encourage such partnership as a norm throughout the Communion. However, here we must sound a small note of caution: precisely because all the baptized share in the *tria munera Christi*, this work of building communion cannot be left to the bishops alone. For our churches to genuinely walk together, it is essential that local and parish groups learn how to live the experience of real, imperfect, but deepening communion together. Whether ecclesiologies are 'bottom-up' or 'top-down', this pilgrim ethic is essential for the reception of what the Spirit appears to be saying to our churches.

## **V. Instruments of Communion at the Regional Levels of Anglican and Roman Catholic Life**

This section follows the same pattern as the previous one. First, the document describes how instruments of communion work at a regional level in both communions. Second, it identifies areas where there is tension or stress in relation to these instruments. Finally, it asks where mutual receptive learning might take place.

The need for structures which nurture and guard the communion of the Church is rooted in and testified to in Scripture. The local synods which were features of the life of the early Church (and continued to operate regularly for many centuries in the Christian East) reveal a concern for how local churches relate to one another. Instruments of communion are supposed to allow for—and protect—subsidiarity, that principle which determines that decisions should be made at the lowest appropriate level. By inference, there will always be some decisions which relate to issues touching on the wider Church, which need to be tested by reference to wider Christian discernment. Anglicans will be familiar with the principle of subsidiarity through the *Virginia Report* and *Windsor Report* and the Covenant process. It is intended to protect the theological and cultural integrity of the local, while prompting a simultaneous exercise of wisdom which builds up the whole.

### **V.A The nature and instruments of communion at the regional levels of Anglican and Roman Catholic life**

Despite the many differences between Anglicans and Roman Catholics in the nature and exercise of instruments of communion at this level, *WTW* speaks of a ‘familial resemblance’ (§109) which stems from a common heritage in the early and medieval Church. This is appropriate language for those who speak of one another in fraternal terms, and helpfully roots our two communions in shared territory.

At this stage it is essential to highlight that many of the differences in structure and pattern do not always stem from theological conviction. The patterns of empire and missionary expansion, and their bequeathed models, are as much cultural phenomena as anything else. While Anglicans now largely think of ‘national’ churches, the document explains how Roman Catholics have largely been cautious in promoting this language. The history of much of the Anglican Communion is greatly influenced by the history of colonialism and independence, although there are churches such as the Scottish Episcopal Church which are not shaped by this inheritance in such a direct way. The document mentions the first Lambeth Conference in 1868, convened to address ‘questions of mission, unity, faith, and order arising within and among the regional churches’ (§110). The third Lambeth Conference of 1888 then adopted what we now know as the Lambeth Quadrilateral—a version of a proposal first shaped by the Episcopal priest and ecumenical pioneer William Reed Huntington, who hoped that Anglicanism could become the basis of ‘a church of the reconciliation’<sup>32</sup>—which commits the Communion to four points: first, that the Holy Scriptures are the ultimate rule of faith; second, the sufficiency of the Apostles’ and Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creeds; third, the dominical sacraments of baptism and eucharist, and fourth, the historic

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<sup>32</sup> See Paul Avis, *Anglicanism and the Christian Church* (London and New York: T & T Clark, 2002), p. 350.

episcopate, 'locally adapted in the methods of its administration to the varying needs of the nations and people called of God into the Unity of His Church'.<sup>33</sup> These principles have underpinned Anglican identity and the maintenance of communion between the regional churches ever since.

Basic Anglican polity allows for greater diversity and depth of decision-making within the province than is currently the case in the Roman Catholic Church. Each Anglican province has its own legal constitution and synodical structures which include clergy and laity. Even the precise nature of synodal or conventional presidency varies.<sup>34</sup> There is less diversity in the Latin Catholic rite, although the document helpfully points out that two recent documents of Pope Francis have attempted to strengthen the trans-local or regional level of ecclesial decision-making (§110). This section contains useful points of clarification for both Anglicans and Roman Catholics about their own and one another's local structures. These are detailed in paragraphs 111–14. It also helps us avoid caricature: for example, Pope Francis's *de facto* recognition of the intrinsic authority of teaching documents from particular episcopal conferences by referring to them in his encyclicals shows a dynamic relationship between the local church and the universal Church which is often missed.

Two features stand out which, in the broad context of the document, are perhaps worthy of individual comment from an Anglican perspective. The Roman Catholic practice of regional episcopal synods, attended also by representatives of the competent Vatican department, is one which could greatly strengthen the Anglican world. Something similar happens with the Council of Anglican Provinces of Africa (CAPA), but this pattern could be explored much more widely. Secondly, it is important to note that local primacy of a senior bishop is a feature of both of our communions. Although this is lived out in slightly diverse ways in international Anglicanism, it is of profound importance for the prayerful maintenance of communion and the public face of the Church.

### **V.B Tensions and difficulties in the practice of communion at the regional levels of Anglican and Roman Catholic life**

The stresses and difficulties in building communion at a regional level are very different for Anglicans and Roman Catholics. Anglicans are often excessively bound by what might be seen as mimicking a parliamentary or democratic model, whereas Roman Catholics are defined by a system where authority is strongly centralized. In the Anglican world, often our synodical structures can ensure a fairly monochrome membership. The social background and age of those elected to representative bodies are examples of topics which may need to be addressed in parts of the Anglican world. When cultural and political contexts outweigh broader theological discernment within a provincial body, these must be tested in the wider church. The role of the episcopate as the ministry specifically charged with teaching the faith and guarding this treasure can sometimes be obscured through quasi-parliamentary procedure (§116). Better theologies of charism and cultures could be of great service to both our communions, and may even assist in discerning future patterns of non-adversarial practice in ecclesial decision-making.

### **V.C Potential receptive ecclesial learning at the regional levels of Anglican and Roman Catholic life**

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<sup>33</sup> See Randall Davidson (ed.), *The Five Lambeth Conferences* (London: SPCK, 1920), pp. 122–3.

<sup>34</sup> See §111.

The final paragraphs of this section make some practical suggestions as to how each communion might learn from the life of the other. Once again, *WTW* affirms that despite ‘noticeable asymmetry’ (§119) between our structures, these differences are part of the context in which we together learn the life of communion. In other words, our structural differences can be considered laboratories of the Spirit as we grow in unity. We must not underestimate what a profound theological development this is, rooted in ARCIC’s heritage of reflection on the Gospels and ancient common traditions, and enabled by the substantial but imperfect communion that our churches already share in the life of faith.

Anglicans are challenged to learn from the self-conscious universality of the Roman Catholic Church. The process surrounding the proposed Anglican Communion Covenant has revealed a significant degree of resistance to anything which might question provincial autonomy. But here, the suggestions are not principally juridical, but couched in the language of representation and mutual accountability and responsibility. The possibility of ‘mutual visitation’ between dioceses/provinces offers a helpful model which, through its face-to-face nature, might help reduce unhelpful caricature or generalization.

The document also suggests that Anglicans might receive some help in strengthening our sense of corporate episcopal authority. The oft-repeated totem that Anglicanism is ‘episcopally governed and synodically led’ is rarely unpacked. The question of what kind of theological density belongs to a college of bishops in a province or an episcopal conference is one for both communions. The opportunity for Anglican colleges of bishops to teach with a united voice in their own contexts is one which would further strengthen communion with other provinces. The unified voice of an episcopate also has a missionary dimension, through which episcopal teaching has more weight in its wider national and international surroundings. Finally, in the many and diverse complex situations currently facing the Anglican Communion, the encouragement to include consultant experts in discernment and study is a much-needed one. For example, debates surrounding the human person should be carefully informed by up-to-date expertise in science and social science.

There are challenges, too, for Roman Catholics which an Anglican commentary should mention very briefly. The document encourages Roman Catholics to learn from the ‘characteristic theology and associated principles of the provincial church’ and to develop a ‘pastoral magisterium’ which takes local context and need very seriously (§120). Pope Francis’s document *Amoris Laetitia* is quoted several times, revealing what a rich source it is for ecclesiology as well as for ethics. Much of *WTW* is about the dynamics of relationship between and within the churches. It is an encouragement for Anglicans to read how Roman Catholics might learn from the Anglican provincial model about how bishops’ conferences might appropriately question ‘initiatives and directives emanating from Rome’ (§121).

It is an immense challenge for both our churches to outline a theologically mature, affective, and effective relationship between the local, trans-local, and universal which is able to take diverse culture seriously. Together, we are part of a living tradition which has itself evolved, changed, and developed over many centuries. For Anglicans, the further development of deliberative and reflective structures which are authoritative without always needing to be decisive is a particular challenge. Learning carefully from other traditions in which we know the Holy Spirit is operative is a fundamental part of that journey. At a provincial level, especially where bodies are more or less coterminous, a commitment to such mutual learning could be evidenced by a commitment to

regular joint statements by episcopal conferences and houses of bishops on national or regional matters. In strengthening the communion of the regional, we strengthen the communion of the whole Church, and it is to the universal level that we must now turn.

## **VI. Instruments of Communion at the Worldwide/Universal Level of Anglican and Roman Catholic Life**

This section follows the same trifold pattern as Sections IV and V. As well as offering an analysis of structures with the intention of mutual learning, this material is a helpful precis for Anglicans wanting to learn more about their own tradition. Both Roman Catholic and Anglican patterns of oversight are discussed with clarity and focus.

The conciliar document *Unitatis Redintegratio* celebrates the common heritage preserved in Anglican institutions<sup>35</sup> as well as in the content of the faith itself. The ‘service rendered by instruments of communion’ towards the maintenance of faith and communion can be considered among such institutions (§123). While structures of oversight have developed over time, the Anglican experience has been to emphasize provincial autonomy, while creating dynamic structures of accountability which ensure doctrinal cohesion across the Communion. The Roman Catholic experience has been far more attuned to normative universal governance.

Neither of these experiences is perhaps fully balanced, and both therefore have something of what we might call an ecclesial deficit.<sup>36</sup> Paragraph 124 outlines differences in Anglican and Roman Catholic self-understanding of how each Church relates to the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church of Christ. The Anglican pattern of what has been called a ‘modesty’ in our ecclesiology<sup>37</sup> shines through here. Anglicans do not make exclusive ecclesiological claims. The lines of demarcation indicated by the Lambeth Quadrilateral allow space for the development of an indigenous, provincial Catholicism, where there is a communion of churches guaranteed by ‘mutual loyalty sustained through the common counsel of the bishops in conference’.<sup>38</sup>

### **VI.A The nature and instruments of communion at the worldwide levels of Anglican and Roman Catholic life**

This subsection articulates very clearly the differences in our ecclesiological praxis. Although since the *Virginia Report* and *Windsor Report*, and the beginning of the Covenant process, there has been much more consideration of how ‘centralized’ instruments of communion might operate, the default operational mode of Anglicanism remains provincial. Equally, it might be said that although since the Second Vatican Council there has been much more emphasis on conciliarity and synodality, the

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<sup>35</sup> Decree on Ecumenism *Unitatis Redintegratio* §13, in Vatican Council II, ed. Flannery, p. 513.

<sup>36</sup> This notion has been discussed in the Anglican context by the Windsor Continuation Group.

<sup>37</sup> Modesty as a characteristic in Anglican theology and ecclesiology has been elaborated on in contemporary writing about the Church; see Paul Avis, *The Identity of Anglicanism: Essentials of Anglican Ecclesiology* (London: Continuum, 2007) for a good recent example.

<sup>38</sup> The report of the 1930 Lambeth Conference, quoted in *WTW* §130.



default mode of Roman Catholicism remains a centralized authority. Both habits are placed under analysis and scrutiny in *WTW*.

It emerges that the ‘character of decisions’ at a universal level varies markedly. No centralized Anglican decision (whether a Lambeth Conference resolution, a document of the Primates’ Meeting, or a resolution by the Anglican Consultative Council) can be considered binding on the provinces. Bonds which are principally affectionate cannot be juridical in quite that way, even if they do have a moral force. While most magisterial teaching ‘at the universal level is not definitive’ (§126) for Roman Catholics, there is a stronger sense of a centralized power in Rome which is perhaps rooted both in the ancient power of the Roman See as a seat of final appeal and in the nature of the Latin legal tradition.

However, both our traditions teach that conciliarity and primacy belong together, and that a delicate, dynamic balance (see §127) is needed between the two for the Church to be healthy. Each province experiences this reality in some form, and it is perhaps at these two poles of conciliarity and primacy where mutual, receptive learning can most fruitfully occur.

Participation in a General Council has not been possible for Anglicans since the Reformation. Elsewhere, questions have been raised by both Anglicans and Roman Catholics on just how much could be required of Anglicans in a future united Christendom, particularly with regard to topics that were defined in an earlier situation of ecclesial division. Many Anglicans celebrate the documents of the Second Vatican Council precisely because it was a pastoral council without anathemas. Even without councils, both communions affirm that guarding the deposit of faith and expressing the *sensus fidelium* are the principal responsibility of bishops. The Synod of Bishops, the Lambeth Conference, and the Primates’ Meeting all testify to this in slightly different ways. However, both communions would also now affirm that conciliarity is not just the responsibility of the episcopate. The 2006 Agreed Statement between Orthodox and Anglicans, *The Church of the Triune God*, expressed the clear ecclesiological importance of this realization: ‘... we must approach the concept of the college of bishops with great care: it must not be allowed to undermine the basic principles of synodality by detaching the bishops from their church communities, and setting the college of bishops over against the Church as a whole.’<sup>39</sup> There are implications here for both Anglicans and Roman Catholics in considering how the diverse and symphonic voice of the whole Church—including lay people, theologians, and those whose voices are easily and unintentionally marginalized—is discerned and articulated. The Anglican Consultative Council is the only Anglican instrument of communion where there is guaranteed lay representation. This guards against any temptation to see role of the laity as simply those who utter an ‘Amen’ to episcopal discernment, but a theology of the Council (particularly as related to the Primates’ Meeting and Lambeth Conference) is underdeveloped. Work on this area could potentially be helpful for both Anglicans and Roman Catholics as we consider together structures of authority and *koinonia*.

There are very marked differences in how our two communions practise primacy. At first glance, paragraph 133 may appear rather too short to introduce a topic of this magnitude. However, *WTW* enters this conversation informed by the mature and serious work of two previous commissions: the

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<sup>39</sup> International Commission for Anglican–Orthodox Theological Dialogue, *The Church of the Triune God*, The Cyprus Statement (London: The Anglican Communion Office, 2006), V: 25.

thorough bibliography points the reader towards much of this material. One charism which is perhaps shared by both the Pope and the Archbishop of Canterbury is that of convening other instruments of communion. Both are personal, visible ministries and are related to *sees* which have particular historic resonance. One is juridically guaranteed, whereas the other has the informal moral authority of one who is *primus inter pares*. However, it is clear that forms of primacy are essential to guarantee diversity and to draw plurality into communion.

## **VI.B Tensions and difficulties in the practice of communion at the worldwide/universal levels of Anglican and Roman Catholic life**

Both our communions are currently finding that structures which are supposed to serve the unity of a diverse—and continually diversifying—ecclesial body are under significant stress. What some sociologists have referred to as ‘a crisis of institutions’ is also by no means simply the preserve of the churches. However, there are particular tensions for Anglicans which can appear insoluble. Broadly speaking, autonomous provinces which claim interdependence are experiencing ‘strain on the bonds of affection and the capacity of the instruments of communion to respond’ (§137). Paragraph 137 of the document helpfully reminds the reader that many provincial changes in ethical teaching are made in response to what the local church believes to be the demands of mission. While not removing the difficulties associated with such changes, this does remind us that others do not seek to tear the fabric of communion, but rather to act with integrity in their own context. The various listening exercises currently taking place within Anglican provinces, particularly on the topic of human sexuality, are seeking to understand this more deeply. However, ultimate questions remain as to how matters are discerned to be Church-dividing, and what ‘universal’ responses are appropriate in such cases.

Universal gatherings of the episcopate are fraught for various and diverse reasons. The numerical growth in the episcopate of the Roman Catholic Church makes it hard to imagine a General Council. The Synod of Bishops in the Roman Catholic Church is under ongoing development as a theological body, but its methodology is contested, and its authority is unclear. The Lambeth Conference is still able to operate as a universal gathering of Anglican bishops, but has no formal teaching authority, and its ability to exercise discernment and promote communion is damaged when provinces refuse to attend. However, it is important to affirm the intrinsic authority of such a gathering. That the Conference is ‘a body composed of those who by their ordination to the episcopate have been given apostolic responsibility to govern means that the resolutions of a Lambeth Conference may be considered to have an intrinsic authority which is inherent in their members gathered together’.<sup>40</sup> The Primates’ Meeting has perhaps the greatest potential for acting as a body in which primacy-in-communion can be exercised, but in both cases that which is inherent and implicit needs further investigation and articulation.

There is little theological parity between the primacy of the Bishop of Rome, with powers of immediate and ordinary jurisdiction, and the informal, moral convening powers of the Archbishop of Canterbury. However, unity in both our communions is guaranteed by a relationship of communion

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<sup>40</sup> Windsor Continuation Group Report, in *One Love: The Official Report of ACC-14* (London: Anglican Consultative Council, 2010), §66.

with each of these primatial figures and their sees. Alongside mutual learning on conciliarity, this pole of primacy is perhaps a helpful place for further reflection to begin on mutual learning. As *WTW* attests, Pope Francis has encouraged local bishops and episcopal conferences to be much more conscious of their own implicit theological authority, without frequently deferring to Rome.

While very few in the Anglican Communion would advocate moving beyond a primacy of honour for the Archbishop of Canterbury, how archbishops of Canterbury exercise a servant ministry which builds up love and nourishes the bonds of affection for the sake of communion needs further consideration with or without a formal Covenant to establish it.

### **VI.C Potential receptive ecclesial learning at the worldwide levels of Anglican and Roman Catholic life**

*WTW* affirms that both communions have much to learn from each other. The close relationship of communion which we already celebrate is one that should liberate us from insecurity and nervousness in mutual learning. From an Anglican perspective, the Roman Catholic Church has been operating at an international level for much longer than the Anglican Communion, and there are surely gifts to be received without ecclesiological mimicry. This subsection of *WTW* deserves close scrutiny. More than this, it is urgent that its many points of practical suggestion are examined and received by the relevant authorities in both our churches. This commentary will focus on points of potential Anglican learning.

The Covenant process has revealed the extent to which a majority of Anglicans appear to be allergic to greater centralized control. However, the communion theology which underpins both substantial ecumenical progress and the life of our own denomination itself has great implications for how we order our common life. There is a clarity which emerges from *koinonia* in a form of responsibility for one another in the household of faith.

Some of *WTW's* recommendations are rooted in remembrance. How do we remain conscious of one another especially at moments of great celebration or tension? The liturgy is fundamental to this process. Thus a common eucharistic prayer (§145), commended to be used in every province perhaps at major occasions, preferably with the name of the local bishop and possibly the name of the Archbishop of Canterbury commemorated within the anaphora, would be both a means and an expression of our universal communion. We could also remember one another in common calendars and catechisms. None of this work should be understood as threatening to the ecclesiological autonomy of each province, and it needs to be pursued intentionally at a Communion-wide level. The formal reception of the 2008 document *The Principles of Canon Law Common to the Churches of the Anglican Communion* is also recommended by the Commission.

The emphasis on service in the ministry of Pope Francis, his consistent references to the principle of subsidiarity, and his reluctance to close down debate might help Anglicans reconsider how a Communion-wide ministry of oversight from the Archbishop of Canterbury might be received. Again, it is worth stressing again for both our communions that conciliarity and primacy must always be held together, and while it would be ludicrous for the role of the Archbishop of Canterbury to develop on quasi-papal lines in terms of jurisdiction, patriarchal language has been used of the office

of Archbishop in previous ecumenical conversations,<sup>41</sup> and a personal ministry which serves the unity of a relatively new ecclesial communion is a gift which could be further explored and carefully tested in the light of this receptive methodology. This dynamic between the poles of conciliarity and primacy creates a certain amount of space where issues can be discerned over time, impacts of change assessed, and warnings given. In such a context, the ministry of the Archbishop could further develop without a self-conscious disciplinary charism into 'a paradigm of episcopal oversight that is personal and pastoral and that guides, leads and challenges'.<sup>42</sup>

The See of Canterbury and its cathedral, intrinsically linked to the ministry of the Archbishop of Canterbury as an instrument of communion, also have a role in supporting the development and maintenance of communion. Even in an age where technology offers so many possibilities, the realities of face-to-face encounter cannot be underestimated, especially when affection itself needs to be strengthened. Could there be several specific Sundays during the year where different Anglican primates, or new bishops, are invited to preside at the main eucharist in Canterbury Cathedral? Could funding be found for every new bishop in the Communion to visit Canterbury at least once in their first three years of office? Regional or topic-based synods as recommended in paragraph 145 could also strengthen a sense of collegiality among the bishops and fellowship among other participants within the Anglican Communion. Full and regular participation in such a synodal process by Roman Catholic bishops would also aid the development of *koinonia* between our communions. It is not principally for an Anglican commentator to suggest how the Roman Catholic Church might respond to this, but a new category of ecumenical cardinals would be an extraordinary sign of universal commitment to the goal of full, visible unity. Anglican participation in *ad limina* visits really ought to become a normal feature of such occasions (see §147), properly coordinated between the relevant authorities.

Towards the end of this final section, there is an extremely important short paragraph on the principle of re-reception (§149). Especially when communions have developed apart from one other, attention to the dynamic of re-reception is fundamental. *The Gift of Authority*, published in 1999, states, 'The churches suffer when some element of ecclesial communion has been forgotten, neglected or abused ... Thus, there may be a rediscovery of elements that were neglected and a fresh remembrance of the promises of God, leading to a renewal of the Church's "Amen".'<sup>43</sup> A

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<sup>41</sup> Cardinal Mercier of Mechlen-Bruxelles made this suggestion when considering how the Church of England could be 'united but not absorbed' with the Catholic Church through the Malines Conversations of the early twentieth century. The 'uniate' nature of such a suggestion would now be considered eccentric and implausible by many theologians. However, fresh insight could be gained into the Archbishop of Canterbury's role in the wider Anglican Communion through conscious and careful consideration of how a patriarchal model, informed by other such offices in both East and West, might be a legitimate development in Anglican polity for the sake of the whole.

<sup>42</sup> Inter-Anglican Standing Commission on Unity, Faith and Order, *Towards a Symphony of Instruments*, 3.4.7, quoted in *WTW* §135.

<sup>43</sup> ARCIC II, *The Gift of Authority (Authority in the Church III)* (London: CTS; Toronto: Anglican Book Centre; and New York: Church Publishing Incorporated, 1999), §25, available at: [www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/pontifical\\_councils/chrstuni/documents/rc\\_pc\\_chrstuni\\_doc\\_12051999\\_gift-of-authority\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/chrstuni/documents/rc_pc_chrstuni_doc_12051999_gift-of-authority_en.html).

recognition that the Holy Spirit has not abandoned Christian communities without the inspiration of divine grace, even when they have been separated from one another for so long, reveals a rich series of ecclesiological ramifications. This is a question not only of learning from past experience or even current reality, but also about how each church might be receiving particular eschatological insight which can be discerned and shared with the other. Such gifts, and the structures they shape, are gifts of communion for the whole Church from the *eschaton*, revealing something of God's ultimate intention for creation and for the diverse body which participates in Christ's mission. There is a huge amount in this section to inspire internal housekeeping *within* both our churches. But the establishment of a small mandated body—perhaps a subsection of IARCCUM—to monitor and encourage the process of re-reception in the cause of intensifying communion *between* our churches would be of significant benefit as our journey together continues to deepen.

## Conclusion

*WTW* opens up a whole new vista in Anglican–Roman Catholic relations. In its recommendations on mutual learning from one another’s structures, there is an implicit recognition of ecclesiality and partnership in the Gospel. This is a dynamic relationship in which neither partner remains unchanged, because there can be no reverse gear in the process of walking together towards the goal of full, visible, eucharistic unity. The vision of conciliarity and primacy held together, and the many levels of agreement recorded in this Joint Statement, deserve to be received urgently by both our communions. For Anglicans, the Lambeth Conference of 2020 provides an obvious and timely moment to formally receive this work and to discern how our own structures might put this mutual receptive learning into practice.

There is also further theological spade-work to be done. The document recognizes that because our traditions broke apart only in the sixteenth century, in many ways ‘structures and procedures’ remain similar (§152). While in many ways this is of course true, it is also risky to assume that there was monochrome, uncontested structural uniformity throughout the Catholic West in the centuries prior to the Reformation. Further work and reflection on pre-Reformation diversity of structures and practice could be illuminating for contemporary ecclesiology. Equally, there is further work to be done on the charisms of discernment, and in particular on how lay people participate in that beyond simply uttering a doxological ‘Amen!’ to episcopal judgement.<sup>44</sup> The question of universal primacy continues to concern many Anglicans, and further work is needed here alongside better reception of ARCIC’s previous work in this area. In particular, urgent consideration should be given to how theological colleges, seminaries, and university faculties work with this material.

This document repeatedly makes it clear that the Church’s structures exist to enable her mission. In other words, they should reveal, enable, and guard the Church’s inner dynamic reality in its engagement with a rapidly changing world. Such structures are therefore in need of constant renewal and refreshment to ensure that they are fit to serve the Church’s communion and to engage fully with the context of contemporary culture. They are, to quote the document, essential but ‘also open to reform’ (§152). There are serious implications for how and when authoritative statements are made by each communion. If ‘Catholics and Anglicans must give attention to what the Spirit may be saying in the other tradition before arriving at a definitive conclusion for their own particular tradition’ (§153), we must hold one another to account, in love, when it appears that legitimate discussion on contested issues is being foreshortened or closed down. A passage from an Anglican consecration sermon from an earlier period of conflict in the Church of England offers a beautiful and poetic image from the prophet Ezekiel as to how a bishop might discern the complexity surrounding his church. Like the Living Creatures of Ezekiel, the bishop must have eyes all round him, ‘in every member of his body ... in his head to understand his place and function ... eyes in his feet, to have a care in his goings ... eyes all round him [that] he may wink at some things out of human frailty, and possibly connive at others out of just necessity, yet will he still have one eye open to have a care upon the main.’<sup>45</sup> Complex situations often need discernment over time, and our instruments

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<sup>44</sup> See the end of both §§156 and 157.

<sup>45</sup> Peter Heylyn, *Sermon on Acts 20:30–31* (London, 1659). This was preached at the consecration of Bishop John Towers in March 1639.

of communion should also liberate us from the urge to foreshorten debate for the sake of temporary clarity.

If ecclesial *structures* exist to exhibit something of ecclesial *life*, the broader *life* of the other church is surely also something from which we each need to prayerfully receive. Furthermore, if church structures reveal something of the inner reality of each church's life, Anglicans might legitimately suggest that questions about ecclesiality need to be posed afresh. To what extent can it be said that the one Church of Christ 'subsists in' the Anglican Communion? What really is the difference between a church and an 'ecclesial community'? Have we reached a point when our reflection on one another's structures has opened new insights into this matter?

One of the ongoing challenges to this work for both our communions is to engage openly and hopefully with some of the fresh questions being posed by science, social science, and cultural theory. *WTW* shows the Commission's consciousness of the need to seek out ways in which new questions can patiently be handled, without always rushing to final conclusions. A permanent Anglican–Roman Catholic group of theologians could potentially be mandated to deal with such questions. From an Anglican perspective, if we believe that the world is the locus of God's redeeming action in Christ, it is essential to discern voices of passion, expertise, and insight beyond the Church's structures as well as within them. This document offers wonderful reflections on mutual learnings from one another's structures; it is to be hoped that such an open disposition might enable joint, careful, even receptive listening together to wider culture in the next phase of the Commission's work.

This is a wonderfully strong document, affirming that our structures need reform as well as refreshment. As we walk together along the way, growing in unity, faith, and love, can the Anglican Communion now humbly and seriously engage in the theological questions raised by this methodology? In international terms, we are a young communion of churches, with the opportunity to learn from our older sisters and brothers in careful and prayerful discernment as we proceed along the road of 'penitence and renewal towards full communion' (§161). Increasingly, if we walk together, we will need to eat together. It remains for the process of ongoing reception, mutual accountability, and dialogue to not flee from the difficult question of whether we should therefore allow one another's eucharists to be viaticum for this journey. In St John's Gospel, Jesus says, 'Whoever eats me will live because of me' (Jn 6.57). Only thus will we ultimately grow together into the fullness of Christ.

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