



Archbishop Bernard Ntshoturi at Seoul Cathedral, during the Advent 2011 meeting of IASCUFO





**IASCUFO**

**INTER-ANGLICAN STANDING COMMISSION  
FOR UNITY, FAITH AND ORDER**

**Report to ACC-15**

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Dear Member of the Anglican Consultative Council,

The Inter-Anglican Standing Commission on Unity, Faith and Order (IASCUFO) was established by a resolution of ACC-14 and its members appointed by the Archbishop of Canterbury in consultation with the Secretary General of the ACO. IASCUFO has a large mandate, and so you are receiving a large report! In order to help you as you go through the material, we want to point out how it will be addressed at the ACC meeting.

IASCUFO has 8 sessions on the agenda. It hopes to use this time to inform ACC about its work, and to lift up the word 'consultative' in the ACC's name. IASCUFO hopes to use this time to be consultative about its work. Much of this is an interim report, and the Commission is seeking your comments about it, both at the ACC meeting itself and afterwards, if you would like to send any messages to the Commission about any of this material.

Session 1 will be a general introduction to the material, and to the section on Communion Life. You will be invited to discuss communion life and your part in it in your table groups.

Session 2 will give an overview of the Anglican Communion Covenant and the adoption process in the churches to date. You will be invited to discuss, in reflection groups, what we are learning through this study and decision-making process of the Covenant? This will include conversation about what has happened in individual provinces. Please note that as the Covenant is still in the process of reception, it is not anticipated that ACC-15 will consider resolutions about it at this meeting. (Section 11 A)

Session 3 will be an introduction to the Ecumenical work, drawing on the ecumenical participants at the meeting. (Section 12)

Session 4 will be an opportunity for you to choose particular ecumenical topics with which to engage, again featuring ecumenical participants and some members of ACC.

Sessions 5 and 6 will include an introduction to the work on the Instruments of Communion, and an invitation for you to address particular questions about these Instruments (Section 11B). This work also is at an interim stage and it is not anticipated that there will be resolutions about it at this meeting.

Session 7 will include debate on the resolutions which relate to the ecumenical work of the Communion (Section 14)

Session 8 will be a plenary opportunity to hear feedback from Reflection Groups from Sessions 2, 5 and 6.

There will be three members of the Commission present for parts of the ACC meeting so that you can engage with them: Bishop Stephen Pickard, the Vice-chair of the Commission, from Australia; Bishop Howard Gregory from Jamaica; and Bishop Victoria Matthews from New Zealand. The Director for Unity Faith and Order, Canon Alyson Barnett-Cowan, will be present

throughout, as will be Canon Joanna Udal, the Archbishop of Canterbury's representative to IASCUFO.

Our Anglican Communion is a communion of Churches, a communion of grace, that is, a community created and sustained by the sanctifying presence of the Triune God. This Communion that we experience through the Church, local as well as Universal, is not only with Christ and ultimately with the Triune God; but it is also a communion with one another in Christ, actualized by the power of the Holy Spirit- By reason of a shared faith, the members of the Communion become one family ,one body and one community of disciples.

Yours, Archbishop Bernard Ntahoturi, Chair

## **IASCUFO Report to ACC-15**

### **1. Mandate**

The Inter-Anglican Standing Commission for Unity Faith and Order was established by resolution of ACC-14 with the following mandate:

The Standing Commission shall have responsibility:

- To promote the deepening of Communion between the Churches of the Anglican Communion, and between those Churches and the other churches and traditions of the Christian *oikumene*
- To advise the Provinces and the Instruments of Communion on all questions of ecumenical engagement, proposals for national, regional or international ecumenical agreement or schemes of co-operation and unity, as well as on question touching Anglican Faith and Order
- To review developments in the areas of faith, order or unity in the Anglican Communion and among ecumenical partners, and to give advice to the Churches of the Anglican Communion or to the Instruments of Communion upon them, with the intention to promote common understanding, consistency, and convergence both in Anglican Communion affairs, and in ecumenical engagement
- To assist any Province with the assessment of new proposals in the areas of Unity, Faith and Order as requested.

It brought together work done previously by three different bodies: the Inter-Anglican Theological and Doctrinal Commission, the Inter-Anglican Standing Commission on Ecumenical Relations, and the Windsor Continuation Group.

### **2. Membership**

Nominations for membership on IASCUFO were sought from Primate of the churches of the Anglican Communion, grouped by regions. The Chair was appointed by the Archbishop of Canterbury in consultation with the Secretary General. The selection of members was made by the Secretary General in consultation with the Archbishop of Canterbury. All the members were present at the first meeting in Canterbury, December 2009, with the exception being that Canon Alyson Barnett-Cowan, originally a co-opted member, was now serving as staff to the Commission as Director for Unity Faith and Order at the Anglican Communion Office. For the 2010 meeting Bishop Baji was replaced by Bishop William Mchombo from the Province of Central Africa, and additional members were named from a region from which nominations had not previously been received: Revd Dr Sonal Christian from the Church of North India and Bishop Kumara Illangasinghe from the Church of Ceylon.

The Most Revd Bernard Ntahoturi, Primate of the Anglican Church of Burundi, and Chair of the Commission

The Rt Revd Dr Georges Titre Ande, Province de L'Eglise Anglicane Du Congo 2009, 2010, 2012

The Rt Revd Dr Dapo Asaju, The Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) 2009

The Revd Canon Professor Paul Avis, Church of England

The Rt Revd Philip Baji, Anglican Church of Tanzania 2009

The Revd Sonal Christian, Church of North India *from 2010*

The Revd Canon Dr John Gibaut, World Council of Churches

The Rt Revd Dr Howard Gregory, The Church in the Province of the West Indies

The Revd Dr Katherine Grieb, The Episcopal Church

The Rt Revd Kumara Illangasinghe, Church of Ceylon, Sri Lanka *from 2010*

The Revd Canon Clement Janda, The Episcopal Church of the Sudan 2009, 2010, 2011

The Revd Canon Dr Sarah Rowland Jones, Anglican Church of Southern Africa

The Revd Dr Edison Kalengyo, The Church of the Province of Uganda 2009

The Rt Revd Victoria Matthews, Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia

The Rt Revd William Mchombo, The Church of the Province of Central Africa 2010, 2011

The Revd Canon Dr Charlotte Methuen, Scottish Episcopal Church/Church of England

The Revd Canon Dr Simon Oliver, Church of England

The Rt Revd Dr Stephen Pickard, Anglican Church of Australia

Dr Andrew Pierce, Church of Ireland

The Revd Canon Dr Michael Nai Chiu Poon, Church of the Province of South East Asia 2009, 2010, 2012

The Revd Dr Jeremiah Guen Seok Yang, The Anglican Church of Korea

The Rt Revd Hector (Tito) Zavala, Iglesia Anglicana del Cono Sur de America 2009, 2010

The Revd Canon Joanna Udal, Archbishop of Canterbury's Secretary for Anglican Communion Affairs

The Revd Canon Dr Alyson Barnett-Cowan, Director for Unity, Faith and Order

Mr Neil Vigers, Anglican Communion Office

### **3. Issues given to IASCUFO by ACC-14 and Standing Committee**

ACC Resolution 14.01 (e) 'requests the Standing Committee to commission a review of the processes for the reception of ecumenical texts, as recommended in the Resolution 02.08 of IASCER.'

*An interim report on Reception is given in Section 10 of this report*

ACC Resolution 14.01 (i) 'noting the favourable response recorded in the Lambeth Indaba Reflections to the reports *The Church of the Triune God* of the International Commission for Anglican-Orthodox Theological Dialogue and *Growing Together in Unity and Mission* of the International Anglican-Roman Catholic Commission for Unity and Mission, commends them to the Provinces of the Communion for study and response as detailed in IASCER Resolutions 07.08 and 08.08, and requests that Provincial responses be submitted to the Anglican Communion Office by the end of June 2011 for consideration by the subsequent meeting of the Inter-Anglican Standing Commission for Unity, Faith and Order".

*These two texts were duly sent to the ecumenical officers of the churches of the Communion. The question of their reception is addressed briefly in Section 12 on Ecumenical work.*

ACC Resolution 14.08 (g) 'IASCUFO to undertake a study of the role and responsibilities in the Communion of the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Lambeth Conference, the Anglican Consultative Council and the Primates' Meeting; the ecclesiological rationale of each, and the relationships between them, in line with the Windsor Continuation Group Report, and to report back to ACC-15'.

*This task was undertaken by one of the working groups and a substantial interim report appears in Section 10 on Communion Life.*

ACC Resolution 14.10: IASCUFO Study

'The Anglican Consultative Council, in the light of the Resolution 14.09 of ACC-14 on the WCG Report, asks that the report of the study undertaken by IASCUFO includes a study of the existing papers developed within our Communion and of current best practices in governance for multi-layered complex organizations, and makes recommendations to ACC-15 on ways in which the effectiveness of the Instruments of Communion may be enhanced.'

*This task was partially addressed in the paper on the Instruments of Communion. Further work will be undertaken studying the ways in which other Christian World Communions live out their life in communion.*

The Standing Committee May 2009:

'That the Joint Standing Committee request the Secretary General to include the matter of definition and recognition of Anglican Churches in the agenda of IASCUFO meeting.'

*The precise question of the definition of churches arose in connection with the Anglican Communion Covenant and the Standing Committee chose to send the Covenant to the churches which are members of the Anglican Consultative Council. The broader question of the definition and recognition of Anglican Churches is being considered by the working group on Communion Life.*

#### **4. First Meeting of IASCUFO, Canterbury 2009**

With a mix of excitement and trepidation, the Commission met for the first time in Canterbury, lovingly welcomed by the Cathedral Dean and Chapter. The days were framed by sharing in the worship pattern of the Cathedral and by Bible study in small groups. The Secretary General set out the mandate, the Archbishop of Canterbury welcomed the Commission to Lambeth Palace and shared his hope for the Commission, and members of the previous bodies gave an overview of their work. Members shared with one another aspects of Anglican life in their own churches.

From the Communiqué issued at the end of the meeting:

‘The Commission devoted this first meeting to developing a vision that gives expression to its mandate. It sees its role as being a communicative and connection-making body which models and promotes communication and connection-making in the Anglican Communion, within a confident and vibrant expression of our shared faith and life, participating by God's grace in the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church of Jesus Christ.

‘In addition to outlining areas of longer-term work, the Commission committed itself to five immediate tasks:

1. to undertake a reflection on the Instruments of Communion and relationships among them;
2. to make a study of the definition and recognition of 'Anglican Churches' and develop guidelines for bishops in the Communion;
3. to provide supporting material to assist in promoting the Anglican Covenant;
4. to draft proposals for guided processes of 'reception' (how developments and agreements are evaluated, and how appropriate insights are brought into the life of the churches);
5. to consider the question of 'transitivity' (how ecumenical agreements in one region or Province may apply in others).

These tasks, which will be taken forward by working groups consulting electronically between meetings, aim to strengthen the unity, faith and order of the Communion.’

The announcement during the meeting of the election in the Diocese of Los Angeles had an effect on the new relationships being formed in Commission and after some discussion it stated its view that it hoped that ‘gracious restraint’ would be exercised by The Episcopal Church.

## **5. Cape Town Meeting 2010**

The second meeting of the Commission took place in Cape Town, South Africa in late November 2010. They were received by Archbishop Thabo Makgoba, visited Robben Island, and worshipped in Langa Township. The Commission continued its pattern of daily prayer and Bible study. Most of the meeting was spent in working groups, addressing the 5 tasks chosen in Canterbury.

The Covenant Working Group prepared a series of twelve questions and answers; and a study guide to the Covenant. These are available on the Anglican Communion website [www.anglicancommunion.org](http://www.anglicancommunion.org)

## **6. Seoul Meeting 2011**

The third meeting took place in late November in Seoul, South Korea. From the communiqué of that meeting:

‘During our visit, in particular through our introduction to the work of Towards Peace in Korea (TOPIK), we were made aware of the wide-ranging activities of the Korean churches in pursuit of social justice and reconciliation in the Korean peninsula, a concern that has been prominent at recent meetings of the ACC. Constructive conversations took place regarding the Anglican Church of Korea’s preparations to receive Anglican participants at the WCC Assembly in 2013.’

Work continued on the original topics but the Commission was reorganized into three working groups: Communion Life, Ecumenical, and a new group on Theological Anthropology. Their reports are in sections 9-12. Thanks to Dr Simon Oliver, and with the loan of equipment from the Anglican Church of Korea, several members were interviewed to produce videos on the Anglican Communion Covenant. Bishop Victoria Matthews and her staff in the Diocese of Christchurch, New Zealand did the final production and the videos are available at [www.anglicancommunion.org](http://www.anglicancommunion.org)

A draft of guidelines articulating expectations of Anglican participants in ecumenical dialogues was agreed for consideration by the Standing Committee, which adopted them in May 2012.

## **7. Dublin Meeting 2012**

The fourth meeting took place in Dublin, Ireland in September 2012, earlier in the year than usual so that work could be finalized for the ACC. Work concentrated on preparing all this material, but the Commission also participated in worship in Dublin’s two Cathedrals; spent an evening with the Archbishop of Dublin, the Most Revd Michael Jackson, in particular to hear about his work with NIFCON; and met with the Church of Ireland’s Council for Unity and Dialogue.

## **8. Archbishop of Canterbury's Pentecost Letter; Implications for the Commission**

In May, 2010, the Archbishop of Canterbury, in reaction to the episcopal consecration in the Diocese of Los Angeles, issued a letter to the Bishops, Clergy and Faithful of the Anglican Communion. He said in part:

'when a province through its formal decision-making bodies or its House of Bishops as a body declines to accept requests or advice from the consultative organs of the Communion, it is very hard (as noted in my letter to the Communion last year after the General Convention of TEC) to see how members of that province can be placed in positions where they are required to represent the Communion as a whole. This affects both our ecumenical dialogues, where our partners (as they often say to us) need to know who it is they are talking to, and our internal faith-and-order related groups.

'I am therefore proposing that, while these tensions remain unresolved, members of such provinces – provinces that have *formally*, through their Synod or House of Bishops, adopted policies that breach any of the moratoria requested by the Instruments of Communion and recently reaffirmed by the Standing Committee and the Inter-Anglican Standing Commission on Unity, Faith and Order (IASCUF0) – should not be participants in the ecumenical dialogues in which the Communion is formally engaged. I am further proposing that members of such provinces serving on IASCUF0 should for the time being have the status only of consultants rather than full members.'

The Secretary General then wrote to two members of IASCUF0 informing them that they were now to be considered as consultants: Dr Katherine Grieb from The Episcopal Church and the Most Revd Tito Zavala from the Anglican Church of the Southern Cone of America.

The membership of several participants in of the ecumenical dialogues, all of them from The Episcopal Church, was withdrawn.

Two members of the Commission have not attended IASCUF0 since the Canterbury meeting. Their reasons have never been given, although it is thought that the churches of Nigeria and Uganda do not support their participation.

Following discussion at the Seoul meeting, and at the request of the Chair, the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Secretary General accepted that the question of 'representation' did not apply to IASCUF0 as members do not represent their churches or speak for them. Dr Grieb and Archbishop Zavala were consequently restored as full members of the Commission.

There is no question that IASCUF0 has been severely weakened by the absence of some of its members. All members have been aware that, without full participation, it is not possible to consider and reflect a full range of views and perspectives. Nevertheless, the Commission has pressed on with its work, making all of its documents available to all the members throughout its meetings and between, so that there is the opportunity for electronic participation should members choose to contribute.

## **9. An Interim Report**

All of the work being reported to you is work in progress. After hearing the contributions from ACC members, the work on Reception and the Instruments will be refined and sent to the churches of the Communion for their input.

All churches of the Communion are encouraged to work with IASCUFO as they undertake these tasks, and to contribute from their own perspectives and rich diversity.

# Reception

## **10. Work done: Reception**

### **‘Receive one another as Christ has received you’: a working guide to reception for ACC-15**

#### **Introduction**

At its last meeting, the ACC, in Resolution 14.01 (e), requested the Standing Committee ‘to commission a review of the processes for the reception of ecumenical texts, as recommended in the Resolution 02.08 of IASCER.’ This task was referred by the Standing Committee to IASCUFO and specifically to the ecumenical working group.

IASCUFO soon realised that to address this question required a more comprehensive consideration of the processes and theology of reception, which extend far beyond both ecumenical relations, and the handling of texts. The word ‘Reception’ has a considerable breadth of meanings and usages, both in every-day English and within the specific context of Christian life. Within the Church, it has often been assumed to relate to ecumenical activity that results in the production of texts, and sometimes seems to presuppose that these will find acceptance. However, as we explore below, ‘Reception’ engages the life and mission of the Church far beyond the ecumenical arena; it encompasses far more than just written texts, including, for example, commitments to action. This process of discernment may lead to the conclusion that ‘no, thank you’, or ‘not yet’ rather than ‘yes’ is the most appropriate response.

Below we offer an initial overview of this broad subject. We see this as a first stage in ongoing work, which we anticipate will result in a deeper study of this issue, which is so central to the life and mission of churches, as individually and together we respond to God’s call upon our lives.

#### **Part 1: Reception in the life of the ACC**

The members of the ACC will be given many texts and documents, and asked to study them and make some decisions about them. Many may wonder what some of these have to do with the Gospel or being the Church. Actually, they have quite a lot to do with both. Just as parish statistics are fundamentally about people and mission, so the texts and reports presented to the ACC are equally about people, relationships between the churches and God’s mission in the world. They are the fruits of encounters, discussions and dialogues between Christians from around the world. And so dealing with these materials is important, and is part of the function of the ACC. The theological term for this process is *reception* which has deep roots in the Bible, and particularly the New Testament. A key text is from the letter to the Romans where Saint Paul says, ‘Receive one another’, or as the NRSV says, ‘Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God’ (Romans 15.7).

The operative Greek verb (*proslambanesthe*) in the New Testament can mean ‘to welcome’, ‘to accept’ or ‘to receive’ one another. For instance, the Anglican Communion Covenant has been in a process of ‘reception’ rather than simply one of ‘approval’ as a text that may enable the

churches of the Anglican Communion to receive one another more fully. The same is true of ecumenical texts, especially those coming from official dialogues of the Anglican Communion with its ecumenical partners, which are produced in order that we might receive one another as churches more fully, as Christ has received us. The ACC has a particular role in reception, a process which began long before a text appears before you, and continues as the texts are commended by the ACC to dioceses and parishes and received through being 'lived' in new or renewed relationships between the churches for the sake of their witness and mission in and for the world.

In this way reception is the task of the whole church. The church initiates the dialogues and encounters which give rise to texts, reports and draft agreements which are intended to enrich the life and mission of the whole church. There are different aspects to this process:

Reception is about relationships of mutual giving and receiving within and between churches, for the life of the world. In some places, ecumenical dialogues are encounters between churches who seek to heal their historical divisions to receive one another more fully. In other places, ecumenical dialogues often respond to current situations of urgency, for example, seeking the theological meaning of reconciliation and healing in the midst of conflict and violence.

There are many stages in reception. It begins with the mutual encounter by Christians who seek to heal or strengthen their relationships with one another. It continues through process of mutual giving and receiving in dialogue with one another; such a process may entail healing of estrangement, the recovering of common sacred ground in faith and mission, or concrete plans for making their unity visible. The report or agreed statement produced by a dialogue group is a record or echo of these conversations, which must then be received or owned by the churches themselves. To say 'no, thank you' or 'not yet' to the findings is as much an instance of reception as saying 'yes'. To say 'yes' to these findings is to commend them to the churches for study and implementation. To say 'yes' commits (or permits) a church to change. As such, reception is linked with renewal, as the church seeks to conform its unity and mission more closely to the will of Christ.

Reception is a deeply spiritual process of discernment. At every stage it takes place within the context of prayer, seeking the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The process of reception itself may be an experience of the transforming presence of the Spirit.

Reception is an organic process over and above formal processes around adoption or approval by bodies such as the ACC. It is a process which is fulfilled in local Christians' living into and living out a vision of what the Church could be.

## Part 2: Towards a Theology of Reception

The whole life of the Church is reception. As Saint Paul said to the Church in Corinth, 'What do you have that you did not receive?' (1 Cor 4.7). The receptive stance of the Church is particularly evident in Baptism (we receive Baptism: we do not baptise ourselves; we are brought to the font), in Eucharist (we receive the body and blood of Christ in the bread and wine), and in Holy Scripture (we receive the Word of God through the canonical books which we have received from the early Church). Generations of Christians have received Word and Sacraments in a rich variety of traditions. Church history can be described as the history of reception, as each generation builds upon the foundations of those before, who themselves have built on the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ being the cornerstone (1 Cor 3.5-11; Eph 2.19-20). Each generation receives from prior generations and builds further for the children yet unborn.

Reception is a matter of spiritual discernment. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, the Church listens for the Word of God, a Word which is living and active (Heb 4.12) and, like rain upon the earth, does not return to God empty, but makes the life of the Church fruitful and effective (Isa 55.8-11). Through the power of the Spirit, the Church listens for the voice of its Good Shepherd. The idea of the *sensus fidelium* (the mind of the faithful) assumes that sheep know the voice of their Shepherd (John 10.4). These processes of listening and knowing are themselves processes of reception. Reception takes time, since ideas develop slowly in the life of the Church, and patience is needed.

Within the context of ecumenical discussions, reception has been understood with the help of several metaphors. One important metaphor is that of giving and receiving gifts. First, reception is a response to God's indescribable gift of Jesus Christ (2 Cor 9.15). Second, in gratitude to God, churches and traditions exchange particular gifts received from earlier generations with churches and traditions that for one reason or another have not received them. An ecumenical gift (such as a liturgical practice) is offered, not imposed, and other churches and traditions which are differently ordered require time to discern whether they are able to accept it.

Another metaphor useful in ecumenical reception is the idea of welcoming one another, as God in Christ has welcomed every one of us and all others (Romans 14 and 15). The person who believes or worships differently than I do is also the brother or sister for whom Christ died. That person has infinite worth in the sight of God. Related to this idea is the metaphor of hospitality. First we are primarily recipients of God's hospitality and then, in God's name we offer hospitality to one another. Of particular importance, especially in ancient times, was the need to offer hospitality to the stranger. Israel was enjoined to remember that they were once strangers in Egypt, therefore they ought to remember the strangers in their midst. In Genesis 18, Abraham and Sarah offer hospitality to three strangers who are in some mysterious way also the presence of God. In Matthew 25, Jesus tells a parable with the warning that as we have treated the most vulnerable members of society, so we have treated him, even if we did not recognise him in the person who was hungry, thirsty, a stranger, naked, sick, or in prison. Recognising the stranger is also the theme in Luke 24.13-35, the story of the disciples on the road to Emmaus, where Jesus is the mysterious stranger who is both guest and host.

Welcoming one another, showing hospitality, and learning to recognise Christ in the stranger are all important to the idea of reception.

Reception also involves metaphors of invitation and acceptance. Reception is an invitation to encounter, to see one another in a fresh way. The open-ended quality of reception is life-giving and partakes in God's constantly surprising and interrupting grace. Genuine encounters with an unknown other involve both a willingness to be known (to disclose important parts of ourselves) and a willingness to know (to hear and understand, to listen with understanding). Reception in this sense involves learning to tell our stories to one another and learning to listen for God's active presence in the life of the other person. The Holy Spirit is key in this process, in the genuine encounter between Peter and Cornelius the Centurion (Acts 10–15) which resulted in the inclusion of the Gentiles in the early Christian Church.

Genuine mutuality is an important aspect of reception. Contextual theologians and missiologists teach us to take into account geopolitical and socio-economic realities and emerging movements of thought as we describe reception. It should never be assumed that reception is a one-way street, whether from newer churches to older churches, or from churches in the global North to those in the global South. All churches have much to receive from one another, since churches in different contexts are asking different questions and have often developed different theological methodologies and different approaches to theological reflection. All of us need to pay closer attention to the sacred and honoured traditions from peoples around the world, appreciating texts, art, artefacts, language, poetry, and songs from ancient civilisations. We also need to hear the suppressed memories and marginalised experiences of churches under persecution.

Moreover, there is a rich resource of unwritten theological wisdom and spirituality, for example from the South and from indigenous peoples globally, still to be retrieved and received by listening to oral traditions, especially stories and proverbs. These traditions can make us all better readers of the Bible, based as it is on the transmission of oral traditions. In addition, postcolonial criticism helps us to identify political dynamics that can work both to undermine and to restore trust in our reception of one another.

Reception is always contextual. This inevitably requires us to engage with non-doctrinal factors that shape religious and cultural identity. In Jesus Christ, God became incarnate to meet us in our human context (John 1.14). The Gospel message is similarly incarnated into local contexts and cultures. This inculturation and contextualisation can be a challenging process with ambiguous results. Positively, it is a process in which the Holy Spirit discloses to us new interpretations of the Gospel and their implications. At the same time, it is a risky, or even dangerous process in which the Gospel may become overly identified with certain expressions of culture. In some times and places it may be appropriate for churches to affirm cultural elements, while at other times and in other places churches mistakenly identify cultural elements with the Gospel. Since Christ's reconciling work must not be compromised in relation to any culture, the Church must always be on its guard. Careful discernment is consequently an important part of the theological task of reception.

### **Part 3: Processes of Ecumenical Reception**

Ecumenical reception is multilayered. The various stages of reception can be described as discovery, dialogue, and reflection on the insights of the dialogue, and discernment of the truth and wisdom of its conclusions and recommendations, then perhaps living into a new relationship with another church.

Ecumenical reception begins with the realisation that as churches we are diminished by our divisions, and with our yearning for healed relationships. It involves discovery of and encounter with those Christian communities with whom we are called into communion in Christ. The very action of discovery is an act of reception, as we learn to appreciate other churches and traditions, and begin to recognise that Christ is active and present in their life.

The establishment of dialogue is itself an act of reception, when we begin to engage with an ecumenical partner in a process of mutual giving and receiving. The ultimate goal of dialogue is our oneness for which Christ prays in John 17, and by stages to work towards visible unity in one faith and one Eucharistic fellowship. The outcome of dialogue may take several forms which deepen the shared life of the dialogue partners. Often it will yield a report, agreed statement or draft agreement, which will be offered for study by each of the dialogue partners.

Within the churches of the Anglican Communion, there is no common process for the reception of ecumenical texts. Nevertheless, it is possible to identify broadly similar patterns of reception operating across the Anglican Communion at a regional and global level. The form of such processes will reflect the resources and priorities of each church. Formal acts of mutual reception take place when both partners, after appropriate study, agree to commit themselves to the specific achievements of the dialogue and to on-going work. Acceptance of an ecumenical text is but a single moment within a much broader process of reception which begins long before that text or statement is formally received, and continues long afterwards.

In the process of reception of ecumenical texts, there is an important interplay between the local, regional and global levels of the Anglican Communion. Consultation across a body of autonomous churches is inevitably slow and the process can be confusing. Texts arising from dialogues are presented to the ACC, which is then asked to commend them to the churches of the Anglican Communion for study and response. Such texts will then be sent to each primate and ecumenical officer. They are sometimes accompanied by questions for theological reflection or requests for action. Churches of the Communion usually submit their responses to the Anglican Communion Office. Either the ACC or the Lambeth Conference will consider a resolution based on these responses. IASCUFO plays an important role in advisory and supportive role throughout this process.

There are challenges in this process of reception. In particular, the potential of ecumenical dialogues to enrich the mission and witness of the people of God is often not recognised. ACC members can make a significant difference by sharing the riches of our ecumenical dialogues within their own churches in appropriate ways when they return home.

**Some questions to keep in mind:**

1. What might you say here at ACC-15 about your own situation that other people in the Anglican Communion need to hear?
2. How might you take the documents you encounter here at the ACC and your insights about them back to your home church?
3. How might the responses and reactions of your own church be returned to the ACO?

# Communion Life

## **11. Work done: Communion Life**

### **A. The Anglican Communion Covenant**

The Anglican Communion Covenant, as amended by a working party of the Covenant Design Group after consultation with the churches, was approved for distribution by the Standing Committee in December 2009. The Secretary General, in his letter to the Primates which requested formal consideration for adoption by their churches through their appropriate processes, also noted that:

‘The Inter-Anglican Standing Commission on Unity, Faith and Order will be assisting the reception process for this Covenant by developing educational materials and arranging for the translation of the text into several languages. Background materials, including previous commentaries and Provincial responses, will be posted on the ACO website.’

Accordingly, IASCUFO developed a study guide to the Covenant, a series of questions and answers about it, and a video based on interviews with its members. These resources have all been made available at [http://www.aco.org/commission/covenant/study\\_materials/](http://www.aco.org/commission/covenant/study_materials/) and <http://www.aco.org/commission/covenant>. Translations are also available there in Spanish, Portuguese, French, Korean and Japanese.

IASCUFO has been tracking the official responses from the churches and an up to date collection will be distributed at the ACC meeting.

## **B. Instruments of Communion**

### **Background**

As part of its Mandate, IASCUFO was specifically requested by ACC-14 to undertake work on the Instruments of Communion.

In Resolution 14.08 (g), ACC resolved that IASCUFO should:

‘undertake a study of the role and responsibilities in the Communion of the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Lambeth Conference, the Anglican Consultative Council and the Primates’ Meeting; the ecclesiological rationale of each, and the relationships between them, in line with the Windsor Continuation Group Report.’

Additionally, in Resolution 14.10, ACC asked that:

‘the report of the study undertaken by IASCUFO includes a study of the existing papers developed within our Communion and of current best practices in governance for multi-layered complex organizations, and makes recommendations to ACC-15 on ways in which the effectiveness of the Instruments of Communion may be enhanced.’

This study document is offered in partial response to those Resolutions. The second Resolution is larger in scope and IASCUFO believes that its approach would benefit from being expanded to include insights other than those from management theory. This coversheet includes a sketch of future work intended to clarify that task further and help the Churches of the Communion to discern how they affirm and express their unity and common life.

### **The Instruments of Communion**

The experience of being Anglican is complex. Most Anglican churches were established through mission initiatives. Although this was often in the context of colonial settlement, the consciously articulated intention in the late 19th century was that the local churches should develop appropriate local forms. Henry Venn, general secretary of the Church Missionary Society (1841-1873), emphasised that ‘Native Churches’ should pursue their own ecclesiastical polity, and Edward White Benson, Archbishop of Canterbury 1882-1896, wrote of the Church of England’s mission to Japan that ‘the great end of our planting a Church in Japan is that there may be a Japanese Church, not an English Church.’ This approach has meant that Anglicans have very different experiences of what it means to be Anglican: in their worship and their liturgy, but also in the ways that they participate in synodical and episcopal authority. The unity of the Anglican Communion is located in these particular experiences of continual interconnection between people, places and histories which embody the preaching of the gospel.

Similarly, each of the so-called *Instruments of Communion* emerged in a particular context. And so too did the language of Communion and the language of Instruments. That language of communion and of instruments of communion emerges from the context of the post-war ecumenical movement, the growth of structures of global communion and of questions about

the status of bodies such as the World Council of Churches. With the exception of the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Instruments evolved in the last one hundred and fifty years (Lambeth Conference 1867; ACC 1968; Primates' Meeting 1978) as means of deepening the shared life of the churches of the Anglican Communion but also of overseeing and facilitating the relationships between them. The Instruments of Communion are not an end in themselves; they are effective only in as far as they assist the witness and mission of the churches of the Anglican Communion in their particular context.

In the paper below, which is summarised in the shorter document *Instruments of Communion: Summary of Key Issues and Questions* which follows, an introductory section explores the *ecclesiology of the Anglican Communion*, exploring what meant by 'a communion of churches' and highlighting the importance of finding ways in which the whole body of the Church can come together, in a representative way, to take counsel for the well-being of the Church and the effectiveness of its mission.

Section 2 explores the origins, development and significance of the *Lambeth Conference*, suggesting that it has moral and pastoral authority by virtue of the office of those who constitute it – the bishops of the Anglican Communion – and highlighting its role in guiding the Communion in the face of internal and external challenges.

Section 3 outlines the history and significance of the ministry of the *Archbishop of Canterbury* for the character of the Anglican Communion, and concluding that this office commends itself to the Communion as a model of episcopal ministry that is primarily pastoral, one that guides, leads and challenges.

Section 4 considers the *Primates' Meeting* as an aspect of episcopal collegiality within the Communion, bringing out its fragility as representing differing priorities among the Primates and, therefore, the need for mutual commitment and loyalty among its members to make it effective in offering wise counsel to the Communion.

Section 5 considers the *Anglican Consultative Council*, the only instrument that includes lay and clerical participation. This leads to some discussion of the tension between self-governance and interdependence in the polity of the Communion as a whole.

Section 6 explores what is meant by *Instrument* in this discussion and offers some theological reflection on the term. In particular, the character of the Instruments is determined by the fact that they are made up of the human persons who serve them. They should therefore be envisioned in an essentially personal and organic way. The importance of effective connections between them is affirmed, in order to bring about 'a symphony of instruments'.

## **Instruments of Communion: Summary of Key Issues and Questions**

### **Introduction**

Members of ACC-15 have received among their IASCUFO material a lengthy paper on the Instruments of Communion. This paper is a draft working paper of the Commission and will continue to be developed and improved through feedback and ongoing work of the Commission. It is a careful and detailed paper on the Instruments in response to the Commission's mandate from ACC-14. The aim of the paper is to inform and educate as a first step in a larger project on the Instruments and what might be appropriate for the future churches of the Communion. This was felt necessary because the Instruments of Communion have been under strain and have increasingly been a focus for tension and conflict in the Anglican Communion. Yet it is surprising how few people have a good grasp of the origin, development and purpose of the Instruments. Accordingly the Commission offers its work so far as background reading in the ongoing discussions concerning the Instruments of Communion. Because it is quite lengthy the Commission considered that a shorter summary of the key issues and questions regarding the Instruments might be helpful for members of the ACC. This is the purpose of this brief paper. It is not a substitute for the longer paper but provides a simpler, summary overview of the main paper.

When we focus on the Instruments of Communion it is easy to forget that Anglican identity and mission is expressed in a rich variety of ways. There are more formal structures that are intended to serve the vision and purpose of Anglican life in the world. There are also more informal ways in which the provinces and national churches share in mission, care, education and worship. The whole of this being church is always greater than the sum of its parts. We belong to an amazing global family of churches following in the footsteps of Christ. What kind of Instruments of Communion are required to facilitate and enable this following of Christ is the larger question for the work of IASCUFO. The present working papers represent the first phase of this work.

**General Question: From your reading of the preparatory papers, what are the main questions that you would like to raise about the Instruments of Communion?**

## **A. Key issues with respect to the Anglican Communion**

**1. The Anglican Communion is made up of those churches that are in a particular relationship with each other.** In common speech we often refer to the global *Anglican Church* however strictly speaking it is the *Churches of the Anglican Communion* or *fellowship of Anglican Churches* rather than a single global Anglican Church.

**2. The Churches of the Anglican Communion (in over 160 countries and with over 80 million members) belong to the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church of Jesus Christ.** However the Anglican Communion is not formally constituted as a single Church. To be a duly constituted church requires not only many informal links and ligaments that bind it together as one community, but also more formal structures. In particular, a church needs a unified structure of oversight, embedded in a common discipline or law which is enforceable as a last resort. A church also requires a coherent overall policy with regard to its liturgy, its doctrinal and ethical teaching, and the question of who can be ordained. Although the Anglican Communion is sustained by several informal links and connections more formal, constitutional provisions, sufficient to sustain a single global church, do not exist in the Anglican Communion.

**3. The fellowship of Anglican Churches share an ecclesial or church-like character – some say family resemblance.** This ecclesial character is evident in the practices of the churches that make up the Anglican Communion such as proclaiming the gospel, teaching the faith, celebrating the sacraments, exercising pastoral care and oversight, engaging in conciliar consultation. The ecclesial character is evident in their common faith, grounded in Scripture, inscribed in the ecumenical creeds and supported by the historic formularies. It is evident in a common ordained ministry in the historic threefold order of bishops, priests and deacons. It is evident in the way it embraces the Five Marks of Mission.

**5. The Churches of the Anglican Communion share in the life of God and God's mission in the world.** This is the context for all our reflections on the nature of the Anglican Communion and its structure. Structure and order serve God's mission and that is why the Five Marks of Mission are the larger backdrop for our consideration of the four *Instruments of Communion*. The communion intended here does not stop with the ecclesiastical boundaries of the Anglican Communion, but reaches out to the world created and loved by God. This is the God who is drawing all things in heaven and earth towards deeper communion in the Holy Trinity.

**6. The Anglican Communion's experience of mutuality in the Spirit and in the means of grace is neither random nor arbitrary but ordered so that it can better fulfil its mission.** A relationship of communion requires a *polity* – that is to say a set of properly constituted structures or instruments to facilitate the common life that the Communion has freely agreed on. Such instruments enable the Communion to carry out its common tasks and mission. Anglican structures and instruments of communion have emerged in particular contexts and histories as Anglicanism has spread throughout the world. Moreover as circumstances change so structures undergo change – sometimes radical but more usually in an evolutionary way. The polity of the Anglican Communion is located to a large extent in its *Instruments of Communion*.

**Question: How helpful for Anglican identity is the distinction between the *Anglican Church* and the *Anglican Communion of Churches*?**

## **B. Key issues with respect to the Instruments of Communion**

**Introduction:** In the life of the Anglican Communion there four formal Instruments of Communion: a personal ministry of leadership is provided by the Archbishop of Canterbury; the collegiality of the bishops is expressed in the Lambeth Conference and the Primates' Meeting; and the communal dimension, where representation necessarily comes strongly into play, is provided by the Anglican Consultative Council. The various Instruments of Communion embody essential principles of ecclesiastical polity though of course from what has been said above it is clear that there is a whole range of other formal and informal ways through which Anglican polity and ordering expresses itself. The concept of Instruments of Unity had its origins in the ecumenical movement in the 1970s. The adoption by Anglicans of such language can be traced to the seventh meeting of the Anglican Consultative Council in 1987. Though as early as the 1968 Lambeth Conference, the Anglican Consultative Council (ACC) was referred to as *an instrument of common action*. The concept of *instrument* was invoked in the *Virginia Report* of 1997. Since the *Virginia Report* the language of instruments has become part of the stock-in-trade of international Anglican discourse.

### **The Lambeth Conference**

**1.The Lambeth Conference has been gathered by the Archbishop of Canterbury approximately every ten years since 1867.** The Lambeth Conference is an important expression of the collegiality of the episcopate which, in turn, forms a vital dimension of the conciliar character of the Church. It belongs to the ministry of bishops that collectively they should take care for the unity of the Church and that, as they come together, they should model that unity. The authority of the Lambeth Conference resides in the office and ministry of those who compose it – the bishops of the Anglican Communion.

**2.The Lambeth Conference has a unique role among the Instruments embodying the pastorate of the bishops.** As the corporate gathering of the most representative ministers of the Anglican Communion, it has considerable spiritual, moral and pastoral authority. It includes within itself the greater part of the other instruments of communion – there is some useful overlapping that points to the communion or harmony of instruments: the Archbishop of Canterbury belongs among his fellow bishops as first among equals, and the Primates take their place among the bishops too; the episcopal members of the Anglican Consultative Council are also members of the Lambeth Conference. The Anglican Communion will continue to need the considered guidance of its bishops acting collegially.

**3.The consultative character of the Lambeth Conference is expressed in various ways.** At the 2008 Lambeth Conference the emphasis was on *Indaba* whereby bishops met in groups each day in the morning for bible study and larger discussions and listening to each other. This was a significant departure from previous Lambeth Conferences which emphasised resolutions and decisions. Various suggestions have been made that are intended to make the Lambeth Conference more effective in the life of the Communion eg frequency of meetings; *indaba* and/or resolution focus; content of bishops' meetings (teaching, educative).

**Question: How does the Lambeth Conference serve the Anglican Communion? What are your hopes for the next Lambeth Conference?**

## **The Archbishop of Canterbury**

**1. The office of Archbishop of Canterbury goes back to the mission of Augustine** Augustine, a monk and abbot (not to be confused with the famous theologian and bishop of the 4th century, St Augustine of Hippo) was sent by Pope Gregory I ('The Great', Pope 590-604) in AD 596 to convert the Anglo-Saxons in England. Archbishops of Canterbury are primates of the first metropolitan see of the English Church (and thus of the Anglican Communion) to be founded after the mission of St Augustine – in other words, as part of the Western Church and under the Roman jurisdiction until the Reformation. To date there have been 104 Archbishops of Canterbury. Several Archbishops of Canterbury have undergone martyrdom.

**2. The basis of the Anglican Communion is personally grounded in the relationship of each of the Churches to the Archbishop of Canterbury who is freely recognised as the focus of unity.** The Archbishop is the *President* of the Lambeth Conference and of the Anglican Consultative Council and presides over the Primates' Meeting. The Archbishop calls a Lambeth Conference in consultation with other primates. The Primates' Meeting elects one of its number to be a voting member of the Crown Nominations Commission regarding the appointment of the Archbishop of Canterbury. The constitutional position is that the Archbishop of Canterbury visits member churches of the Communion at their invitation but does not have jurisdiction over such provinces.

**3. In the Anglican Communion the Archbishop of Canterbury has a unique role.**

Canterbury is historically the first metropolitan see (the seat of the archbishop who has primatial authority) of the Church of England and therefore of the Anglican Communion. It is significant that the Archbishop of Canterbury is also a diocesan bishop, the chief pastor of a local church. The Archbishop of Canterbury has had and continues to have a pivotal role with regard to the identity, unity and coherence of the Anglican Communion.

**4. There is a close connection between the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Lambeth Conference and membership of the Anglican Communion.**

It was the Archbishop of Canterbury who, in 1867, initiated the Lambeth Conference in the face of doubts and opposition, and it is the Archbishop of Canterbury who continues to invite the bishops of the Communion to attend. He presides over the Conference's proceedings and guides its deliberations. It is not possible for a Church to be a member of the Communion without being in communion with the Archbishop as bishop of the See of Canterbury.

**5. While it is the office of the Archbishop of Canterbury that matters more than any particular occupant of the office, nonetheless the ministry of the Archbishop of Canterbury depends very much on the character and qualities of the person who occupies the office.**

The office of Archbishop has been shaped by history, struggle and conflict. It has been moulded by the prayer and scholarship, leadership and witness, even to martyrdom in some cases, of previous incumbents. This ministry is both catholic and reformed, stretching back as it does beyond the Reformation to the mission of St Augustine of Canterbury in the early European Middle Ages, but reshaped at the time of the Reformation by the authority of the gospel and the Reformation imperatives of word, sacrament and pastoral care. It is a ministry that is not hierarchical and unaccountable, but constitutional and accessible and that knows its limits but also one that is aware of its potential for good in terms of the unity and mission of the Church.

**Question: What ministry do you imagine for the Archbishop of Canterbury in the Anglican Communion?**

## **The Primates' Meeting**

### **1. The Primates' Meeting makes an important contribution to the Anglican way of conversation and seeking wisdom.**

The first Primates' Meeting was in 1978 at the invitation of the Archbishop of Canterbury, who is regarded as the *primus-inter-pares* (first among equals) of the Primates. While the gathering has no legal jurisdiction, it acts as one of the Instruments of Communion among the autonomous Churches of the Communion. The role and idea of a Primate has changed over time and to this extent the office is a creature of different contexts and cultures. What a Primate is; how the office of Primate is regarded; how it functions and the authority associated with the office varies throughout the provinces. How these differing arrangements and understandings impact on the way the Primates act together is an important issue for the wider Communion.

### **2. The Primates meet for the purposes of consultation, collaboration and collegiality.**

The aim of the meeting is to enhance cohesion, understanding and collaboration in the family of Anglican Churches; and to facilitate communication and information sharing among the Churches of the Communion. The Windsor Working Group stated that, 'When they speak collectively, or in a united or unanimous manner, then their advice – while it is no more than advice – nevertheless needs to be received with a readiness to undertake reflection and accommodation'.

### **3. The conduct of the Primates is a micro example of what it means for Anglicans to live in a godly way in a world-wide fellowship of churches.**

The fractures and tensions of the wider Communion is often reflected among the Primates. This should not be surprising at a number of levels: personal dispositions can be a source of conflict; structural relationships by which the *bonds of affection* are expressed in the Communion give priority to conversation, persuasion, compromise and consensus; differing constitutional arrangements and expectations of Primates; variety of cultural contexts in which Holy Order, leadership, authority and power operates. For these reasons the Primates' Meeting often functions as a source of unity and tension. This means a priority is the building of trust and good relationships.

**Question: What contribution might the Primates' Meeting make to the well-being of the Anglican Communion?**

## **The Anglican Consultative Council**

**1. The Anglican Consultative Council, established by a resolution of the Lambeth Conference in 1968, draws its membership from the church at the most local level (eg parishes).** It is the only Instrument to include lay people, deacons and priests. It is also the only formal Instrument with a constitution to govern its functioning. Like the Lambeth Conference and the Primates' Meeting it has a consultative rather than a jurisdictional role.

**2. The ACC has a constitution to govern its functioning.**

The ACC is authorised by the Communion as a whole upon the agreement of two-thirds of the churches of the Communion. Like the Lambeth Conference and the Primates' Meeting it has a consultative rather than a jurisdictional role. The ACC symbolizes 'the communal dimension of the life of the Church. It is not understood as a synodical body, as its name indicates. It is consultative' (Windsor Continuation Group para. 71).

**3. The ACC is closely related to the Primates' Meeting.**

Both ACC and the Primates' Meeting have been closely bound up with each other over the last three decades. Neither the Primates' Meeting nor the ACC has legislative authority to determine matters of faith and doctrine for the whole Communion. No such body exists in a Communion of churches where the accent is upon local autonomy and interconnecting links through which a wider fellowship of churches is built. This is reflected in the brief for the Primates and the ACC to be bodies for consultation, listening, recommending, connecting, facilitating and communicating.

**Question: How might the ACC relate more closely to the other three Instruments of Communion?**

## **C. Key issues with respect to the nature of Instruments**

### **1. The appeal to Instruments of Unity had its origins in the ecumenical movement in the 1970s.**

It filtered into the consciousness of the Anglican Communion via the Lambeth Conference of 1968 (which described the ACC as *an instrument of common action*) and the ACC in 1968 which referred to the *Instruments of Communion*. The concept of *instrument* was invoked rather loosely in the *Virginia Report* of 1997. Certainly since the *Virginia Report* the language of instruments has become part of the stock-in-trade of international Anglican discourse. However there is little to suggest that the concept of 'instruments' has been subject to any critical assessment as to its appropriateness or what it might signify of an alternative language might be more appropriate.

### **2. The Instruments of Communion serve the *koinonia* of the Church.**

They do this by pointing the Churches of the Anglican Communion to the Lord of the Church and reminding the Church of its mission and calling to follow Christ in the world. Because the body of Christ is an unfinished reality and its pilgrimage is undertaken amidst the struggles of being human together the Instruments of Communion will be signs of the as yet unrealized communion that we hope and pray for. In this sense the Instruments are provisional signs of an incomplete communion with God and each other in the world.

### **3. The proper focus for the Instruments of Communion is communion with God and each other in the service of God's mission in the world.**

The Instruments of Communion are means through which the life of the church can be directed towards God. In this context the instruments have a subsidiary function, like John the Baptist, pointing to a greater reality and calling. This does not remove the important practical function of the Instruments of Communion. They remain highly pragmatic ways to enable complex communities of faith to realise their life and purpose in the world. However all this is merely enhanced and deepened as the Instruments are set within the horizon of God's mission in the world.

### **4. Recovering a *proper focus on purpose* and on the *personal dimension* of the Instruments of Communion is the prerequisite for their healthy operation.**

Two things are required: (a) the persistent focus on the purpose of the Instrument as a means through which God actively reconnects people with each other in Christ the Lord; and (b) human agents who steadfastly insist that the Instruments are not simply structural artefacts but are constituted by people in relation. In this way the Instruments can enhance our common life in the body of Christ. In times of crisis the Instruments can often become overburdened when more is asked of them than they are able to deliver.

### **5. The Instruments of Communion may be understood as gifts for Communion and gifts of Communion.**

However gifts have to be opened and unwrapped. In other words the Instruments are only as effective as those involved in their operation work together to enable them to be as effective as possible for the good of the Communion and its mission. However as Instruments they remain vulnerable to distortion and misuse. The gift-like character of the Instruments does not

negate the need for continual critique, strengthening and change. The Instruments are dynamic gifts that can and ought to evolve in response to new situations in order to enable Anglicans to be more faithful and effective disciples in the world.

**6. The Anglican Communion needs to recover a stronger relationship *between* the Instruments of Communion.**

There is a pressing need to recover a stronger relationship *between* the Instruments of Communion. We do not simply need a renewal of the working of the Instruments of Communion; we also need a deeper harmony between the Instruments of Communion. Indeed, these two approaches are complementary. Renewal of the Instruments requires a renewal of communion and communication between the Instruments. However this requires a new level of cooperation with each other and with the purposes of God. Through such a cooperative engagement with God and with each other the churches of the Communion will be enabled to move towards a greater symphony of the Instruments of Communion.

**Question: How might the Instruments help the Anglican Communion in your home church and context play a greater role in the mission of God?**



## ***Towards a Symphony of Instruments:***

### **An historical and theological consideration of the Instruments of Communion of the Anglican Communion**

#### **Introduction**

The purpose of this paper is to contribute to the unity and cohesion of the Anglican Communion by offering an exposition and reappraisal of the role of the four Instruments of Communion in the common life of the Communion. The Commission hopes that this short study will help Anglicans throughout the world to understand the Instruments better and then to go on to re-focus them in the service of our common life. Our hope is that a fuller appreciation of the nature and function of the Instruments will lead to a deepening of our communion with God the Holy Trinity in worship and with one another in fellowship and to renewed energy for mission and service in a world beloved of God.

In the task of mission and evangelisation Anglicans are guided by the widely accepted Five Marks of Mission. These are set out and expounded in the text of the Anglican Communion Covenant (section 2):

- 'to proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom of God' and to bring all to repentance and faith;
- 'to teach, baptize and nurture new believers', making disciples of all nations (Matthew 28.19) through the quickening power of the Holy Spirit and drawing them into the one Body of Christ whose faith, calling and hope are one in the Lord (Ephesians 4.4-6);
- 'to respond to human need by loving service', disclosing God's reign through humble ministry to those most needy (Mark 10.42-45; Matthew 18.4; 25.31-45);
- 'to seek to transform unjust structures of society' as the Church stands vigilantly with Christ proclaiming both judgment and salvation to the nations of the world, and manifesting through our actions on behalf of God's righteousness the Spirit's transfiguring power;
- 'to strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and to sustain and renew the life of the earth' as essential aspects of our mission in communion.

## 1 The Ecclesiology of the Anglican Communion

1.1 It might be helpful to start with a very basic question that is rarely asked when divisive issues within the Communion are being aired. The question is, 'What is the Anglican Communion?' What is it theologically speaking, or more specifically, ecclesologically speaking? Even official Anglican reports do not always address this rather obvious question.<sup>1</sup> The way that we think and talk about the Communion affects the way that we act with regard to the Communion. Uncertainty about what exactly the Communion is, or aspires to be is bound to affect our conversation within the Communion about matters of unity, authority, autonomy and mutual responsibility. It is also bound to have an impact on our ecumenical relations and dialogues. Before looking at the instruments of communion in themselves, we should ask, 'What is the nature of our communion as Anglicans?'; only then should we tackle the question, 'What instruments are appropriate to realize and sustain this communion?'<sup>2</sup>

1.2 So what sort of animal is the Anglican Communion? Is it, for the sake of argument, an international organisation, a kind of NGO, that tries to do useful work throughout the world and brings people together in a common cause, but whose *raison d'être* is essentially practical and pragmatic? Or is it more like a voluntary organisation or society that groups of people can opt into or out of as it suits them, depending on whether it can offer them something that appeals to their taste or preferences? Or is it in truth an expression of the Christian Church – the Church that is the visible manifestation of the mystical Body of Christ, into which we have been placed by the prevenient action of God the Holy Spirit through the power of word and sacrament and in which we are bound together in a unity that is God-given? The consistent and unwavering testimony of the historic Anglican formularies, the Lambeth Conference and individual Anglican theologians has been that the Churches of the Anglican Communion belong to the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church of Jesus Christ. It is against the background of that witness that we need to consider what the Anglican Communion is in reality.

1.3 The Anglican Communion is sometimes referred to as a *church* – hence the common expression *the Anglican Church*. Sometimes there is a journalistic ploy going on here: the British media in particular love to conflate the Church of England and the whole Communion and to play on the tensions and conflicts of both. The fact that the Archbishop of Canterbury is both Primate of All England and the President of certain of the Instruments of Communion lends itself to this kind of journalistic sleight of hand.

1.4 Sometimes those speaking for Anglicanism also refer to the Communion as a church, so endorsing the journalistic phrase *the Anglican Church*. The tendency to do this is understandable. When there is a strong sense of ecclesial density, as there is in the Lambeth

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<sup>1</sup> Bruce Kaye, *Conflict and the Practice of Christian Faith: The Anglican Experiment* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2009/Cambridge: Lutterworth Press, 2011), p. 122, points out that neither the Windsor Report nor the earlier Virginia Report dealt with this question.

<sup>2</sup> Cf Michael Poon, 'The Anglican Communion as Communion of Churches: on the historic significance of the Anglican Covenant' (2010), paper circulated to IASCUFO.

Conference, for example, it is easy to slip into the language of *church*. There is a powerful sense of *being the church* together and that is not an illusion because the Anglican Communion contains strong elements of ecclesiality, of a church-like character.

1.5 So is the Anglican Communion itself rightly described as a church? First, it is important to emphasise that the Anglican Communion has a strong ecclesial character. In the New Testament, the Church is described in several metaphors: the living body of Christ, the chosen people of God, the immaculate bride of Christ, a royal, prophetic priesthood and the temple of the Holy Spirit. The Communion surely partakes of the nature of the Church in this biblical sense.

1.6 Anglicans speak of the Church in four main ways: the universal Church (the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church); the diocese; the parish or congregation; and national or regional groupings of dioceses. In an episcopally-ordered polity, such as that of the Anglican Communion, the fundamental building block of the Church is the diocese considered as the portion of the people of God that is entrusted to the pastoral care of the bishop as its chief pastor, working collegially with the other pastors, the parish and cathedral clergy. The faithful are gathered by their bishop through the ministry of the word, the sacraments and pastoral care. Symbolically, if not always literally, they are gathered around the bishop. The diocese is the *locus* or place of the bishop's ministry and is sometimes referred to, ecclesiologically speaking, as *the local church*. Of course, a diocese is made up of those parishes or congregations that fall within its geographical bounds, but those parishes or congregations are not independent of the diocese in which they are placed, but depend for their vital ministry of word, sacrament and pastoral care on what the bishop provides or permits and are under the oversight and jurisdiction of the bishop. So, although for most Anglicans the parish is closer to home and more immediate in their experience than the diocese, looked at ecclesiologically the diocese is the fundamental unit of the Church.

1.7 In the sixteenth century the language of *particular churches* proved useful to distinguish the Reformation understanding of the integrity of national churches, particularly the Church of England, from the Roman Catholic understanding of one holy Roman Church which extended into various nations and was in principle (and is now in reality) universal. For the Reformers, the Church of Rome was one *particular church* among others.<sup>3</sup> The Lambeth Conference 1930 spoke of the Churches of the Communion as *particular or national churches* (Resolution 49).

1.8 When the Churches of the Anglican Communion come together to carry out their essential activities as churches – proclaiming the gospel, teaching the faith, celebrating the sacraments, exercising pastoral care and oversight, engaging in conciliar consultation – these activities impart an ecclesial character to their common life. The Anglican Communion has a common

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<sup>3</sup> Article 19 of the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion mentions the patriarchal churches of Jerusalem, Alexandria, Antioch and Rome. Article 34 refers to 'every particular or national church'.

faith, grounded in the Holy Scriptures, inscribed in the ecumenical creeds and supported by the historic formularies. It has a common ordained ministry in the historic threefold order of bishops, priests and deacons (albeit with some impairment with regard to interchangeability, because Anglican churches are not all in the same place at a given time with regard to the question of whether women should be ordained to the threefold ministry). It has a common sacramental life that involves mutual eucharistic hospitality and (subject to that degree of impairment that has already been mentioned) interchangeable eucharistic presidency. It has conciliar structures for consultation, discernment of God's will and decision-making about its common life. The ecclesial character of Anglicanism can be strongly affirmed; it helps to determine what the Anglican Communion is and should therefore shape its Instruments of Communion. But does that make the Anglican Communion a *church* as such?

1.9 In fact, the various elements that contribute to the ecclesial character of the Communion are not sufficient to make the Anglican Communion a single church. Strictly speaking the Anglican Communion is not a church. The term *the Anglican Church* is a misnomer. There is no such entity as *the Anglican Church*, unless that expression refers to an Anglican church in a particular country. The Anglican Communion is not formally constituted as a church. To be a duly constituted church requires not only many informal links and ligaments that bind it together as one community, but also more formal structures. In particular, a church needs a unified structure of oversight, embedded in a common discipline or law which is enforceable as a last resort. A church also requires a coherent overall policy with regard to its liturgy, its doctrinal and ethical teaching, and the question of who can be ordained. Although the Anglican Communion is sustained by several informal links and connections (the various Networks, diocesan companion links, the Anglican Alliance supporting shared relief and development work, theological education exchanges, NIFCON, the mission agencies and not least the Mothers Union), more formal, constitutional provisions, sufficient to sustain a church, do not exist in the Anglican Communion.

1.10 Each member church of the Anglican Communion has its own canons (though there is significant overlap between them),<sup>4</sup> its own liturgy (though with a common root and template in the Book of Common Prayer, and much family resemblance).<sup>5</sup> Moreover, each church takes responsibility for its doctrinal and ethical teaching (though there is a common focus in the Anglican and broader Christian tradition) and each church decides what categories of person it will ordain or not ordain. A church must maintain discipline on the basis of its canons, a discipline that is carried into effect through its structures of oversight. But the Anglican Communion does not have any way of ensuring that, for example, a recommendation agreed by the Lambeth Conference or the Primates' Meeting is implemented across the Communion.

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<sup>4</sup> See *The Principles of Canon Law Common to the Churches of the Anglican Communion* (London: Anglican Communion Office, 2008); Norman Doe, *Canon Law in the Anglican Communion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).

<sup>5</sup> Paul Avis, 'The Book of Common Prayer and Anglicanism: Worship and Belief', in Stephen Platten and Christopher Woods (eds), *Comfortable Words: Polity and Piety and the Book of Common Prayer* (London: Canterbury Press, 2011), pp. 133-151.

1.11 If the Anglican Communion clearly has a profoundly ecclesial character, yet is not formally constituted as a church, what does that make it? The answer is not far to seek. The Anglican Communion today is precisely what it has consistently defined itself to be, that is to say a communion or fellowship of churches. It is made up of churches that are in a particular relationship to each other, a relationship of ecclesial communion. What does this mean?

1.12 The relationship of communion between certain churches is to be understood as a particular expression of the *koinonia*, the sharing, the having-in-common and mutual participation about which much is said in the New Testament.<sup>6</sup> In English-language Bibles *koinonia* is translated as fellowship, communion, participation or sharing. After the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, the new converts 'continued in the apostles' teaching and *koinonia*' (Acts 2.42). St Paul draws out the mystery of the Lord's Supper when he states that the cup of blessing is a *koinonia* in the blood of Christ and the bread that is broken is a *koinonia* in the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 10.16). Paul concludes his second letter to the Corinthians with an early trinitarian blessing that includes the words 'the *koinonia* of the Holy Spirit' (2 Corinthians 13.13). Paul thanks God for the Philippian Christians' very practical *koinonia* in supporting his ministry of the gospel (Philippians 1.5). The author of the First Epistle of John writes to the recipients of his letter 'that you may have *koinonia* with us and ... with the Father and the Son' (1 John 1.3). In the Farewell Discourses of St John's Gospel, the image of the vine and the language of the mutual indwelling of the Father and the Son and of the disciples in both, as they abide in his love and his truth, are speaking the language of *koinonia* (John 14-17). The communion or fellowship that Christians enjoy with God and with one another in the Body of Christ is the gift of God and the fruit of Christ's saving work. The WCC Faith and Order document *The Nature and Mission of the Church* puts that point like this:

31. It is only by virtue of God's gift of grace through Jesus Christ that deep, lasting communion is made possible; by faith and baptism, persons participate in the mystery of Christ's death, burial and resurrection (cf. Phil. 3.10-11). United to Christ, through the Holy Spirit, they are thus joined to all who are 'in Christ': they belong to the communion - the new community of the risen Lord. Because *koinonia* is a participation in Christ crucified and risen, it is also part of the mission of the Church to share in the sufferings and hopes of humankind.

The report goes on to describe the manifold expressions of communion in the life of the Church:

32. Visible and tangible signs of the new life of communion are expressed in receiving and sharing the faith of the apostles; breaking and sharing the Eucharistic bread; praying with and for one another and for the needs of the world; serving one another in love; participating in each other's joys and sorrows; giving material aid; proclaiming and witnessing to the good news in mission and working together for justice and peace. The communion of the Church consists not of independent individuals but of persons in community, all of whom contribute to its flourishing.

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<sup>6</sup> See Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC), *Church as Communion* (London: SPCK/CTS, 1990).

*The Nature and Mission of the Church* also brings out the wider, cosmic scope of the communion that is the gift of God through Jesus Christ:

33. The Church exists for the glory and praise of God, to serve the reconciliation of humankind, in obedience to the command of Christ. It is the will of God that the communion in Christ, which is realised in the Church, should embrace the whole creation (cf. Eph 1.10).

When we map this fundamental reality of communion (*koinonia*) on to the relationship between churches, we see that communion involves the three dimensions of recognition, commitment and participation. First, recognition of one another, on the basis of apostolic faith and order, as sister churches belonging to the one holy catholic and apostolic Church; secondly, mutual commitment to live and act together in fellowship and to do this through appropriate conciliar channels; and, thirdly, unrestricted mutual participation in the sacramental life of the Church, that is to say, a common baptism and a shared Eucharist celebrated by a common ordained ministry. These three dimensions of mutual recognition as churches, mutual commitment and mutual sacramental participation are the key components of ecclesial communion.

1.13 So we may say that the Anglican Communion is a particular expression – moulded by history, geography, culture and politics, as well as by doctrine, prayer and worship – of communion. It participates in the communion that is the deepest reality of the triune God and of God's relationship with humankind and of the relationship of humans with one another in God. Because it is constituted as a communion of churches, the Anglican Communion models in a specific way the unity or communion of the one Church of Jesus Christ. It reaches out towards the ultimate eschatological unity of the Church in the purposes of God. And it makes a significant contribution to the quest for church unity in fulfilment of Christ's high-priestly prayer and the apostles' frequent exhortations to the New Testament communities that they should live in harmony and unity with one another. Although the Communion is not constituted as a single church, it has an ecclesial character. All that we do in our Communion life is done, so to speak, on behalf of the Church of Christ. As a Communion we believe that the Communion should seek to behave more like a church. It should want to be more church-like. It should be moving in a churchward direction. While the autonomy of the Churches of the Communion must be upheld, their interdependence calls them to act together as one in the fellowship of Christ's Church.

1.14 However, the experience of mutuality in the Spirit and in the means of grace that the Anglican Communion has stood for historically and still aspires to realise cannot be sustained without a structure. A relationship of communion requires a *polity* – that is to say a set of properly constituted structures or instruments to facilitate the common life that the Communion has freely agreed on, instruments that will enable the Communion to carry out its common tasks. We might say that polity is the concrete application of ecclesiology to the organisation of the Church; or, looking at it another way, that ecclesiology is theological reflection on the whole life of the churches, including their polity. Polity is a proper concern of

the Church, deserving of its best study and reflection.<sup>7</sup> Theological reflection on polity calls for the a high level of spiritual gifts and skills. Richard Hooker's *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* in the late sixteenth century models this high calling. But what sort of polity is appropriate to Anglicanism today? The polity of the Anglican Communion as such is located to a large extent in its *Instruments of Communion*, as the *Windsor Report* and the Anglican Covenant describe them. So what sort of *Instruments of Communion*, do we need? Can we suggest some criteria?

1.15 First and foremost, the instruments that structure Anglican polity should be ecclesologically and missiologically appropriate and effective. That is to say, the instruments need to be suited to *the nature and mission of the Christian Church*, to its divine commission and ordering and to its place in the mission of God. The polity of any church or family of churches should be consonant with fundamental ecclesiology and missiology. The way that the churches structure themselves and their common life cannot be divorced from their mission. As Dan Hardy puts it, 'Anglican polity is based on a humble confidence in Anglican Christianity as a mediation of the engagement of the triune God with the world.'<sup>8</sup> Anglican polity should be capable of effectively serving God's ways with the world.

1.16 Secondly, Anglican polity should honour the God-given constitution of the Church of Christ by giving a central place to *word and sacrament*. The Christian Church is created and sustained by the power of word and sacrament working together and by the ministry that serves them. The ministry of the word consists of the interpretation, exposition and application of Scripture in the light of the resources that the Christian tradition can bring to bear and in dialogue with contemporary culture and with other relevant disciplines. Theological reflection, grounded in the Scriptures, should be central to our common life as Anglicans. Our first priority should be to submit ourselves corporately to formation by the word of God over time.<sup>9</sup> Even though we cannot agree on everything, we should continue to gather around the open page of Scripture in the expectation that God has more light and truth yet to break forth from his holy word. But the sacramental character of Anglican common life is also vital. Our communion is essentially eucharistic. The conciliar life of the Christian Church is premised on eucharistic communion. The councils of the Church, at every level, are eucharistic events and the Anglican Communion is a eucharistic community.<sup>10</sup>

1.17 Thirdly, the instruments of communion should be adapted to the nature of the Anglican Communion as a specific *historically contingent* expression of the Church. They should take seriously the concrete, diverse reality of the Communion as it has emerged in history across

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<sup>7</sup> As Philip Turner has underlined: 'Communion, Order and Dissent': [www.anglicancommunioninstitute.com/2010/02/communion-order-and-dissent](http://www.anglicancommunioninstitute.com/2010/02/communion-order-and-dissent).

<sup>8</sup> Daniel W. Hardy, *Finding the Church* (London: SCM Press, 2001), pp. 158f.

<sup>9</sup> Ephraim Radner and Philip Turner, *The Fate of Communion: The Agony of Anglicanism and the Future of a Global Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2006).

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Hardy, p. 156.

the world. There is a particular experience or range of experiences of what it is to be Anglican. Anglicans believe that, notwithstanding all their mistakes and failings, the Communion has been led and guided by the Holy Spirit to bear witness to Christian truth in word and deed and in the way that it has expressed communion between Christians and churches. The instruments should be realistic and workable, grounded in Anglican experience, and not just a beautiful dream. But they should not be absolutised: Anglican conciliar structures came into being at a certain point to meet the needs of that time. They have evolved since then and should continue to develop to meet fresh challenges.

1.18 Fourthly, the instruments should be designed to *serve churches*. As they do their work, they need to recognise that the Anglican Communion, though not a formally a church itself, is made up of churches. What is important about the Anglican Communion is that it is composed of churches-in-communion. A church is not necessarily the same as a province. The term *province* is sometimes convenient, but it can become misleading if it is over-used. Unlike the word *church*, *province* is not a biblical or theological term, but is borrowed from the administrative division of the Roman Empire. There is nothing wrong with that as such and because *province* suggests a geographically discrete part of a larger whole it resonates to some extent with the reality of Anglicanism. But it also plays into the damaging misconception that the Anglican Communion is constituted as a global church with various local branches that report to head office, so to speak. The term *province*, in any context, has connotations of relation to the centre; the province is not the centre, but is peripheral. The use of the term *province* for the member bodies of the Communion seems to have crept into Anglican discourse partly by accident.<sup>11</sup> In Anglican ecclesiology the so-called *provinces* are more properly understood as churches. There are exceptions and anomalies: there are provinces that are made up of more than one particular or national church; some churches consist of more than one province; and some member churches of the Communion are legally styled *the Province*, etc. Nevertheless, the important point is that they are *churches*, with all the privileges and responsibilities of churches.

1.19 Now *churches* have responsibilities both to their own mission context and to the whole Church, the Church Catholic. Their responsibility to their mission context points to the truth in the *autonomy* of the member churches of the Communion that is often appealed to; the member churches of the Communion are, without question, self-governing churches. Their responsibility to the wider Church points to the truth in the *interdependence* of the member churches that is sometimes invoked; though self-governing, they are neither self-sufficient nor solitary. From time to time these two spheres of responsibility, the local and the universal, come into conflict. When churches are in communion, with the mutual commitment that that

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<sup>11</sup> See Colin J. Podmore, *Aspects of Anglican Identity* (London: Church House Publishing, 2005), pp. 69-70: 'Resolution 52 of the 1930 [Lambeth] conference had been clear about the distinction between a province and a church, approving "the association of Dioceses or Provinces in the larger unity of a 'national Church.'" In fact, however, all of the autonomous Anglican churches formed after 1930 consisted of single provinces, and as their number grew, so did the solecism of referring to each member church of the Anglican Communion as "a province", however many provinces it actually comprised.'

entails to maintain the common sacramental and conciliar life, their responsibility to govern themselves can pull in one direction and their responsibility to consider the common good of the wider fellowship can pull in another direction. That tension is something that needs to be worked out by member churches in dialogue with the wider fellowship. But in this situation member churches must always act as *churches*, embodiments of the Body of Christ, and that means remembering at all times that they are placed by God in a relationship of communion with other churches within the universal Church. To adapt the seventeenth-century poet and Dean of St Paul's Cathedral, John Donne, no *church* is 'an island, entire of itself'.

1.20 Fifth, churches are bound together by certain *bonds of communion*. Today we are understandably suspicious of the image of bonds. Just a few years ago some of us celebrated the bicentenary of the abolition of the slave trade in certain parts of the world. As churches we affirm the equal worth, ability and dignity of all people. We rightly emphasise that the gospel brings liberation and that Christ sets us free. Yes, free from oppression, free from sin, free from self-obsession, but not free from mutual care! St Paul called himself the slave of Christ. Martin Luther wrote in his treatise of 1520 *On the Freedom of a Christian*: 'A Christian is a perfectly free lord, subject to none. A Christian is a perfectly dutiful servant, subject to all.'<sup>12</sup> We are bound together in mutual care in the service of Christ. Anglicans have sometimes spoken of *the bonds of affection* and when there is genuine affection between Anglicans (of which there is a great deal) that is a cause for rejoicing. But in times of tension affection is a rather weak and all too human thing on which to base what holds us together as Anglicans. The fundamental ties are *bonds of communion*, and the instruments of communion are intended to make these effective and fruitful.

1.21 Sixth, Anglican polity and its structures, the bonds of communion, should express and embody *the conciliar nature of the Christian Church*. Conciliarity stands for all the ways in which the Church consults within itself about its life and mission by gathering together in representative ways to wait upon God in prayer, especially with regard to divisive issues. Since the Church is bound to do this continually, conciliarity is an essential dimension of the Church's being and an expression of its communion. The WCC Canberra Assembly of 1991, building particularly on the 1975 Nairobi Assembly's concept of *conciliar fellowship*, underlined the conciliar dimension of the Church's communion:

The goal of the search for full communion is realized when all the churches are able to recognize in one another the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church in its fullness. This full communion will be expressed on the local and the universal levels through conciliar forms of life and action. In such communion churches are bound in all aspects of their life together at all levels in confessing the one faith and engaging in worship and witness, deliberation and action. ('The Unity of the Church as Koinonia: Gift and Calling', 2.1)

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<sup>12</sup> Martin Luther's *Basic Theological Writings*, ed. Timothy Lull (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989), p. 596.

Conciliarity stands for the whole Church sharing responsibility for its well-being and is an ongoing activity of the Church. It requires patient study and dialogue, gifts of empathy, a sense of perspective, and plenty of time. Radner and Turner have aptly described conciliarity as a process of submitting ourselves to the whole body over time.<sup>13</sup>

1.22 The Council of Jerusalem of Acts 15 is often seen as the first Church council. The councils of the early Church gave us the ecumenical creeds. After the formal breach between East and West in 1054, western councils ceased to be representative of the whole Church. In the late middle ages theological reflection on the conciliar character of the Church received a major impetus in reaction to an unprecedented trauma, the Great Schism of the West. The Schism was caused by the split in the papacy that began in 1378, where there were first two, then three, claimants to the papal throne, and continued until 1417 when the Council of Constance re-unified the papacy. When the sixteenth-century Reformers appealed to, and prepared for, a General Council, they were continuing the conciliar tradition of the Western Church. The Reformers wanted a free and representative council to reform abuses in the Church and to tackle the divisions of their time. Anglicans acknowledge that general councils, though not infallible, have very considerable authority. The mainstream churches today express the essentially conciliar nature of the Church in ways that, in varying degrees, are representative, constitutional and require consent, according to their polity. When Christians come together in council or synod they should have a sense that they have been convened by the Holy Spirit and therefore prayerfully seek the will of God for God's Church.<sup>14</sup>

1.23 Finally, in this 'conciliar economy'<sup>15</sup> *all Christians play their part according to their calling, whether lay or ordained*, whether bishop, priest or deacon. As Dan Hardy says, polity should 'incorporate all the people of God in their different callings and situations in the mission of the Church.'<sup>16</sup> The whole body shares responsibility but comes together in a representative way to take counsel. Within the body there are particular ministries. The apostolic ministry is set within an apostolic community.<sup>17</sup> By virtue of their calling and ordination bishops have a special but not exclusive responsibility for faith and order, doctrine and worship. But bishops are bound to consult the faithful and to seek both their wisdom and their consent (*consensus fidelium*). The unity of bishops and people enables conciliarity to be exercised in personal,

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<sup>13</sup> Radner and Turner, p. 12.

<sup>14</sup> See further on conciliarity Paul Avis, *Beyond the Reformation? Authority, Primacy and Unity in the Conciliar Tradition* (London and New York: T&T Clark, 2006); Francis Oakley, *The Conciliarist Tradition: Constitutionalism in the Catholic Church, 1300-1870* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003); Paul Valliere, *Conciliarism: A History of Decision-Making in the Church* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012); Norman Tanner, *The Church in Council: Conciliar Movements, Religious Practice and the Papacy from Nicaea to Vatican II* (London: I.B. Taurus, 2011).

<sup>15</sup> Cf. Radner and Turner, p. 122.

<sup>16</sup> Hardy, p. 262.

<sup>17</sup> See Paul Avis, *A Ministry Shaped by Mission* (London and New York: T&T Clark, 2005).

collegial and communal ways.<sup>18</sup> The personal element provides leadership; the collegial element shares responsibility and decision-making; the communal dimension facilitates consultation and allows consent to be given or withheld.

1.24 In the life of the Anglican Communion as a whole a *personal* ministry of leadership is provided by the Archbishop of Canterbury; the *collegiality* of the bishops is expressed in the Lambeth Conference and the Primates' Meeting; and the *communal* dimension, where representation necessarily comes strongly into play, is provided by the Anglican Consultative Council. Although the roles of the various Instruments of Communion have evolved in response to historical developments, they do embody essential principles of ecclesiastical polity. However, that does not of course mean that they always work as effectively as they might or that they do not need to be renewed. In the discussion that follows we explore the origins, development and current form of the instruments, beginning with the Lambeth Conference and then looking at the ministry of the Archbishop of Canterbury, and asking how their roles might become more effective and fruitful.

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<sup>18</sup> Cf. *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1982), M26.

## 2 THE LAMBETH CONFERENCE

### 2.1 The origins of the Lambeth Conference

2.1.1 The first Lambeth Conference, in 1867, came about mainly in response to pastoral issues within the Anglican Communion – a term that was already current at that time – and in response to a request from bishops in Canada.<sup>19</sup> Around the middle of the nineteenth century there was a broad movement, particularly in England, the United States of America and Canada, in support of the Church gathering in council. Diocesan and national synods had been springing up across the Communion. The Convocation of the Clergy of Canterbury had been revived in 1853 and the Convocation of York in 1861 (under Archbishop of York Charles Thomas Longley, who, as Archbishop of Canterbury, would convene the first Lambeth Conference six years later). The publication of the radical theology symposium *Essays and Reviews* in 1860 had created a demand for a national council of bishops to respond to what was seen at the time as a dire threat.

2.1.2 Bishops from overseas had previously attended the great celebration of the third Jubilee of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in London in 1852. But there were unresolved issues concerning the relation of the churches of the British Empire and Dominions to the British state: to what extent did the structures of the established Church of England apply in self-governing territories? The theology and practice of Bishop Colenso of Natal and the resulting schism from his metropolitan, Archbishop Gray of Cape Town, precipitated a major theological and constitutional crisis. The controversy focused on two areas that are a cause of tension within the Communion today: the interpretation of Scripture (in Colenso's case, the Pentateuch) and human sexuality and marriage practices (at that time, polygamy).

2.1.3 Ecumenical – if that is the right word for those days – challenges had also helped to concentrate the mind of Anglicans. The Roman Catholic hierarchy, complete with territorial dioceses and cathedrals, had been restored in England and Wales in 1850 (the so-called *Papal Aggression*; the pope referred to the Church of England as *the Anglican schism*); and in 1854 Pope Pius IX had promulgated the Dogma of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary.<sup>20</sup>

2.1.4 So for a number of reasons many bishops in various parts of the Anglican Communion felt the need to confer together in order to guide the Communion through turbulent times, but it

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<sup>19</sup> It seems that the term *Anglican Communion* was first used in 1847: C. J. Podmore, *Aspects of Anglican Identity* (London: Church House Publishing, 2005), chapter 3: 'The Anglican Communion: Idea, name and identity'; Paul Avis, *The Identity of Anglicanism: Essentials of Anglican Ecclesiology* (London and New York: T&T Clark, 2008), pp. 19-21.

<sup>20</sup> A. M. G. Stephenson, *The First Lambeth Conference* (London: SPCK, 1967). More concisely in *ibid.*, *Anglicanism and the Lambeth Conferences* (London: SPCK, 1978). Documentation in R. T. Davidson, *Origin and History of the Lambeth Conferences of 1867 and 1878* (London: SPCK, 1888).

should be noted that, even in those days, not all those who were invited chose to accept the invitation for various reasons.

## 2.2 Conciliarity and collegiality

2.2.1 In the mid-nineteenth century the challenges of the times generated a rediscovery, among some Anglicans, of the conciliar nature of the Christian Church. As we have already noted, the heart of the conciliar tradition is that the whole body of the Church should take responsibility for the Church's life and mission. Moreover, according to the conciliar tradition, it should do so in a way that is (a) representative (through appropriate instruments of representation); (b) constitutional (the distribution, scope and limits of authority are laid down); and (c) has the consent of the faithful (decisions are offered for consent through appropriate representative channels, so that all Christians can be said to participate, at least to that extent, in what is decided). The most notable expressions of conciliarity have been the General or Ecumenical Councils of the Church (there have also been many regional or national councils), where the bishops gather to attempt to address doctrinal and pastoral issues, and the Church's synods, where the bishops meet with other representatives of the people. But the conciliar life of the Church should not be limited to formal councils and synods. The Lambeth Conference can be seen as a conciliar event in a non-judicial mode. Here the bishops come precisely to *confer* and not to take decisions that are binding on the member churches.

2.2.2 The Lambeth Conference is a significant expression of the collegiality of the episcopate which, in turn, forms a vital dimension of the conciliar character of the Church. It belongs to the ministry of bishops that collectively they should take care for the unity of the Church and that, as they come together, they should model that unity.<sup>21</sup> The 1978 Lambeth Conference spoke of 'the guardianship of the faith' as 'a collegial responsibility of the whole episcopate' (Resolution 13).<sup>22</sup> The Anglican Covenant text states that the Lambeth Conference 'expresses episcopal collegiality worldwide, and brings together the bishops for common worship, counsel, consultation and encouragement in their ministry of guarding the faith and unity of the Communion and equipping the saints for the work of ministry (Eph. 4.12) and mission' (3.1.4, II).

2.2.3 Episcopal collegiality is intimately related to the communion of the Church: collegiality is not only a salient expression of *visible communion* (Archbishop Longley's phrase: see below), it is also one of the key constituents of visible communion. In other words, the manifest collegiality of the bishops is not merely ornamental or functional: it is constitutive of the visible fabric of the Church. Collegiality manifests itself in several ways, but underlying them all is the

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<sup>21</sup> Cf. *Bishops in Communion*, A Teaching Document of the House of Bishops of the Church of England (London: Church House Publishing, 2000).

<sup>22</sup> Roger Coleman (ed.), *Resolutions of the Twelve Lambeth Conferences 1867-1988* (Toronto: Anglican Book Centre, 1992), p. 183.

acceptance of a shared responsibility for the welfare of the Church, for maintaining its unity and leading its mission. The bishops are not detached from the portion of the people of God entrusted to their care, but bring to the Conference the needs and concerns of the faithful. They remain *bishops in synod* and it is helpful if they can consult their people before they set off. The collegiality of bishops is grounded in the sacraments, underpinned by the bishops' unity in baptism and the Eucharist. Collegiality is eucharistic at its heart.

## 2.3 The authority of the Lambeth Conference

2.3.1 The first formal gathering of Anglican bishops was designated a *conference* by the Archbishop of Canterbury, Charles Longley, who called it. He was insistent that the meeting would not be a synod or council of the Church. In his opening address he said: 'It has never been contemplated that we should assume the functions of a general synod of all the churches in full communion with the Church of England, and take upon ourselves to enact canons that should be binding ...'. Similarly, in connection with the 1878 Conference, Archbishop Tait ruled out any attempt to define doctrine: 'there is no intention whatever,' he said, 'at any such gathering that questions of doctrine should be submitted for interpretation'.<sup>23</sup> Of course, that did not mean that the bishops would not engage in theologically-informed reflection or that their advice would be detached from doctrinal considerations. What Longley and Tait were seeking to guard against was any suggestion that the Conference might assume the role of a *magisterium* that would issue decrees of a doctrinal nature, which Anglicans throughout the world would be required to accept. Articulating doctrine that is already accepted and defining doctrine in a fresh way are not the same thing.

2.3.2 In his letter of invitation to the first Conference Archbishop Longley invited those bishops who were 'in visible communion with the United Church of England and Ireland' (as it was until 1870, when the Church of Ireland was separated from the Church of England and disestablished by Act of Parliament) to come together 'for brotherly communion and conference', for 'brotherly consultation', in the context of celebrating the Holy Communion together. Longley invited them to gather 'under my Presidency'. While Longley explained that 'Such a meeting would not be competent to make decisions, or lay down definitions on points of doctrine,' he went on to say that 'united worship and common counsels would greatly tend to maintain practically the Unity of the Faith, while they would bind us in straighter [= straiter] bonds of peace and brotherly charity.'<sup>24</sup>

2.3.3 At various times of stress within the Communion the suggestion has been made that the Lambeth Conference should be awarded – or award itself – higher powers, that it should be upgraded from a conference to say a synod or a council. Then, it is suggested, the Conference

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<sup>23</sup> R. T. Davidson, *Origin and History of the Lambeth Conferences of 1867 and 1878*, p. 18.

<sup>24</sup> Stephenson, *The First Lambeth Conference 1867*, pp. 187-8.

would be able to take decisive action in directing the affairs of the Communion, perhaps to give rulings on doctrine that would be binding, perhaps to intervene in the internal affairs of member churches that were in difficulties. What the Canadian 'provincial synod' asked for in 1865 was not in fact a conference, but a 'General Council' of the Anglican Communion, and this formula has been put forward on subsequent occasions.<sup>25</sup>

2.3.4 However, the essential character of the Lambeth Conference has not changed since 1867. It remains a gathering of the bishops of the Anglican Communion (now including the United Churches of South Asia with their various traditions), who come together at the invitation of the Archbishop of Canterbury and under the presidency of the Archbishop, precisely to *confer* – to pray, to worship, to engage in Bible study, to share experiences and concerns and to seek a common mind. But that does not make the Conference a mere talking shop. As the Anglican ordination services show, it is inherent in the office of a bishop to guide and lead the flock of Christ and to teach and guard the faith. The bishops could, if they wished, remain mute as far as the outside world is concerned, talking only among themselves. But this would be a missed opportunity, if not a dereliction of duty. So if the bishops at Lambeth are to speak to the Church and the world, it will be in fulfilment of their specific episcopal responsibilities: they will speak words of Christian teaching, guidance or warning and give encouragement to the faithful to persevere in the way of Christ amid all the challenges of the modern world. In this way the resolutions and perhaps, even more, the section or committee reports help to build theological capacity for the Communion. Although the Lambeth Conference of 2008 was found to be deeply fruitful by the participants, it was in a sense the exception that proves the rule in that it did not overtly address the Church and the world. Lambeth Conferences have a teaching or guiding responsibility. Future Conferences will need to resume this role and the Anglican faithful look to the bishops for this.

2.3.5 But what do we mean when we say that the bishops together have a responsibility to teach the faith and to guide the Communion? It is not simply a matter of passing resolutions, especially if political pressures somewhat stifle the process of waiting on God. Processing resolutions may not be the most helpful way in which bishops can fulfil their role at the Lambeth Conference. The teaching office is a delicate, dynamic ecology of listening, mutual learning and mutual admonition, stating a considered view and allowing it to be heard and evaluated by the faithful, and then considering again. This is how the cycle of wisdom works. So when the bishops gather in Conference, the first mode of teaching is actually to listen, to take counsel together, to engage in self-criticism before God and to submit themselves to a process of discernment of the truth through prayer and study of the Scriptures. Where a common mind is not attainable, the bishops should exercise restraint and keep a wise silence. The teaching office involves a hermeneutical exercise, homing in on the truth of a situation by patient, interpersonal interpretation and receptivity and then stating it in a way that can be discerningly received by the faithful and to which they can make their own responses in due

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<sup>25</sup> Davidson, *Origin and History of the Lambeth Conferences of 1867 and 1878*, p. 33; Stephenson, *Anglicanism and the Lambeth Conferences*, pp. 113-4

course. The lead that bishops seek to give to the Church takes its place in an ongoing process of reception. In such a profoundly interactive way the bishops guide the Church and help to hold in faithfulness to the apostolic faith.

2.3.6 So what authority do the pronouncements of the Lambeth Conferences have? How should they be regarded by Anglicans and Anglican Churches throughout the world? Sometimes it is said that the Lambeth Conference has 'no authority'. This is only true if what is meant is purely authority that is legally binding. But juridical authority is not the only form of authority. There are several other authentic forms and modes of authority.<sup>26</sup> It is true that the Lambeth Conference has no juridical authority, in the sense that it cannot enforce its mind on the member churches of the Anglican Communion, which remain self-governing or autonomous. The resolutions of the Conferences need to be received, adopted by the national or general synods of the churches of the Communion and incorporated into their own church law before they can become binding for those churches. But that is not the end of the story and the fact that 'provincial autonomy' imposes a limit on the scope of Lambeth Conference resolutions is certainly not the most important thing or even the first thing that needs to be said about the authority of the Conference.<sup>27</sup>

2.3.7 The authority of the Lambeth Conference resides in the office and ministry of those who compose it – the bishops of the Anglican Communion. Its authority is not something extrinsic that some external body imparts to the Conference. The office of bishop is the most representative ministry in the Christian Church. Bishops gather up in themselves what it means to be a baptised disciple, a deacon and a priest. Bishops gather and guide their people through their ministry of word, sacrament and pastoral care. Bishops preside in the ministry of the word, the sacraments and oversight throughout the diocese, the portion of the people of God entrusted to their charge by the Church. They do this in collegiality with presbyters and in consultation with the lay faithful. As chief pastors, bishops represent their dioceses: they represent the 'local' church to other 'local' churches, both when they take part in the consecration of new bishops and when they express the conciliarity of the Church in conference, synod or council. As the *Virginia Report* puts it, the bishop 'represents the part to the whole and the whole to the part, the particularity of each diocese to the whole Communion and the Communion to each diocese.'<sup>28</sup> Their office also reflects something of the four credal marks of the Church – unity, holiness, apostolicity and catholicity – since bishops have a special, though not exclusive, responsibility for the welfare and well being of the Church, in terms of its unity, holiness, catholicity and apostolicity, helping the Church to be the Church,

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<sup>26</sup> Paul Avis, *Authority, Leadership and Conflict in the Church* (London: Mowbray, 1992), chapter 2; S. W. Sykes, *Power and Christian Theology* (London and New York: Continuum, 2006); J. P. Mackey, *Power and Christian Ethics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

<sup>27</sup> See the discussion in Norman Doe, *Canon Law in the Anglican Communion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 346-8.

<sup>28</sup> *Virginia Report*, 6.10, .

and all this is reflected in their ordination.<sup>29</sup> As the Windsor Continuation Group points out, the fact that the Lambeth 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>30</sup>

2.3.8 Since the 1998 Lambeth Conference, the Communion has witnessed the unprecedented situation of some bishops publicly repudiating, by their words and their actions, particular resolutions of the Lambeth Conference – notably those concerned with human sexuality or the integrity of provincial boundaries. In response to those who have repudiated certain resolutions of the Lambeth Conference out of hand, it is important to re-affirm that the moral and pastoral authority of the Anglican episcopate should be quite sufficient for any faithful Anglican and for any provincial synod of the Communion to accept. 'The resolutions may not always be perfectly expressed, they may not get the balance of various elements quite right and they may need to be revisited at a later date, but they should never be dismissed out of hand.'<sup>31</sup>

## 2.4 The future shape of the Lambeth Conference

2.4.1 Most Lambeth Conferences have seen it as their business to pass numerous resolutions, but it has to be said that these have varied considerably in their importance. It is probable that the law of diminishing returns applies to Conference resolutions. The Conference might be well advised to exercise restraint – a self-denying ordinance – in generating resolutions, so that when it has something rather major to say, the message comes across loud and clear, and is not drowned in a sea of words. At the least, the resolutions could be layered in importance, as the *Windsor Report* suggested, so that the crucial ones stand out.<sup>32</sup> Even better, the Conference might decide that resolutions were not the most appropriate vehicle for what they wanted to say and that 'affirmations' or a pastoral letter (Lambeth 1988 attempted this) might be more helpful.

2.4.2 We might imagine that, at times when tensions were running high in the Communion, it would not be possible for the Lambeth Conference to make any public statement at all. That does not mean that it should not meet. The Lambeth Conference held in 2008 was designed to

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<sup>29</sup> Cf. *Episcopal Ministry: The Report of the Archbishops' Group on the Episcopate 1990* (London: Church House Publishing, 1990; GS 944); *Women Bishops in the Church of England? A Report of the House of Bishops' Working Party on Women in the Episcopate* (London: Church House Publishing, 2004); Paul Avis, *Reshaping Ecumenical Theology: The Church Made Whole?* (London and New York: T&T Clark, 2010), chapter 7: 'Episcopacy: Focus of Unity or Cause of Division?'

<sup>30</sup> The Windsor Continuation Group, 'Report to the Archbishop of Canterbury', 2009, para. 66.

<sup>31</sup> Paul Avis, *The Identity of Anglicanism* (London and New York: T&T Clark, 2008), p. 61. Cf. Owen Chadwick, 'Introduction' to R. Coleman (ed.), *Resolutions of the Twelve Lambeth Conferences, 1867-1988*.

<sup>32</sup> *Windsor Report*, p. 78.

be without resolutions: it needed to fulfil a different function on that occasion. It is likely that strong tensions will persist in the Communion and in the episcopate for the foreseeable future, but that need not mean that meetings of the Lambeth Conference to come can have nothing to say. It should be possible for them to identify areas on which they can agree and thus to make certain affirmations to the Church and the world on those topics, bracketing out areas of violent disagreement and so avoiding an unseemly and destructive split.

2.4.3 However, for that to be possible, the Conference needs to be expertly planned and skilfully facilitated, making a space for diverse voices to be heard, but avoiding polarisation and gathering consensus. The bishops themselves need to accept a degree of mutual accountability. As the *Virginia Report* points out, 'Bishops are responsible for their words and actions at Lambeth, before God and the whole Church'.<sup>33</sup> The 'loyalty to the fellowship', of which Lambeth Conference resolutions themselves have often spoken, must remain the key – and one is not free to ignore the fellowship.<sup>34</sup>

2.4.4 Various suggestions have been made that are intended to make the Lambeth Conference more effective in the life of the Communion. Some of these proposals founder on the question of money – a commodity that is not going to be more plentiful in the foreseeable future. For example, the suggestion that a Conference, of similar size to those that have been held in recent decades, should meet more frequently than every ten years, while perhaps desirable in theory, is not financially viable. In fact, meeting every ten years is probably about right in terms of the huge planning, administrative and logistical operation that is involved in setting up a meeting of the Lambeth Conference. After all, the other instruments of communion continue to function during the intervening years. If financial pressures were particularly tight, the alternative to no Conference at all might be one or more of the following: a Conference that was (a) shorter, and/or (b) did not include spouses, and/or (c) was confined to diocesan bishops, as the Conferences were before 1998, but to restrict the membership in that way would be to exclude those who, by virtue of their ordination, fully share in episcopal responsibility for matters of faith and order.

2.4.5 For reasons that we set out in the section on the ministry of the Archbishop of Canterbury as an instrument of communion, we believe that the Lambeth Conference should continue to meet from time to time, that it should do so at the invitation of the Archbishop of Canterbury and that it should be convened at the historic seat of the Archbishop, that is to say within the Archbishop's diocese and at his cathedral.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> *Virginia Report*, 6.20.

<sup>34</sup> Lambeth Conference 1920, p. 14: 'The Lambeth Conference does not claim to exercise any powers of control. It stands for the far more spiritual and more Christian principle of loyalty to the fellowship. The churches represented in it are indeed independent, but independent with the Christian freedom which recognises the restraint of truth and love. They are not free to ignore the fellowship ... The Conference is a fellowship in the Spirit.'

<sup>35</sup> The 1978 Lambeth Conference (Resolution 13) suggested that a Lambeth Conference 'could

## 2.5 Conclusion to reflections on the Lambeth Conference as an Instrument of Communion

2.5.1 We have considered briefly the origin, purpose and shape of the Lambeth Conference, which has been gathered by the Archbishop of Canterbury approximately every ten years since 1867. There is no substitute for the Lambeth Conference. It has a unique role among the Anglican Instruments of Communion. It embodies the collective pastorate of the bishops. As the corporate gathering of the most representative ministers of the Anglican Communion, it has considerable spiritual, moral and pastoral authority. It includes within itself the greater part of the other instruments of communion – there is some useful overlapping that points to the communion or harmony of instruments: the Archbishop of Canterbury belongs among his fellow bishops as first among equals, and the Primates take their place among the bishops too; the episcopal members of the Anglican Consultative Council are also members of the Lambeth Conference. Its public statements should be made more sparingly in future, but they carry weight and should be accorded full respect by all Anglicans and reflected on carefully and prayerfully. The Anglican Communion will continue to need the considered guidance of its bishops acting collegially: the Lambeth Conference has proved its worth over a century and a half as an effective instrument for this purpose.

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well be held in some other province' (Coleman (ed.), *Resolutions of the Twelve Lambeth Conferences, 1867-1988*, p. 183.

## 3 THE MINISTRY OF THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY

### 3.1 The early history of the See of Canterbury

3.1.1 The office of Archbishop of Canterbury goes back to the mission of Augustine, who was sent by Pope Gregory I ('The Great', Pope 590-604) in AD 596 to convert the Anglo-Saxons in England. Augustine, named after an even more famous bishop, St Augustine of Hippo, was a monk and an abbot, but not yet a bishop. Most of what we know about Augustine's mission comes from *The Ecclesiastical History of the English Nation* by the Venerable Bede, which was completed by Bede in the monastery of Jarrow in the North-East of England in 731.<sup>36</sup> To compile his work Bede had access to documents that had been preserved at Canterbury since the days of Augustine. Bede describes the origin of Augustine's mission like this: 'Moved by divine inspiration ... [Gregory] sent the servant of God, Augustine, and with him several other monks, who feared the Lord, to preach the word of God to the English nation.'<sup>37</sup> The monks sensed that they were venturing into the unknown, to a land of pagan darkness and violence: they did not expect to return home. On their way to England they lost their nerve and Augustine's commission needed to be reinforced by Gregory with words of authority and encouragement.

3.1.2 Augustine was not coming to a country that had not known Christianity, though Gregory probably thought that he was ending him to a non-Christian England.<sup>38</sup> The Christian faith had arrived with the Roman armies and their followers centuries before. The Celtic expression of Christianity continued to flourish in western Britain. Patrick evangelised Ireland in the second half of the fifth century and, according to tradition, founded the see of Armagh. David, who died around 601, consolidated Christianity in Wales. Columba set sail across the Irish Sea in 563 and landed on Iona where he founded the first of his many monasteries. Columba died in the year that Augustine reached England, 597. In England itself the Anglo-Saxon invasions had driven Celtic Christianity back to the margins and replaced it with pagan rites.<sup>39</sup>

3.1.3 Augustine and his band approached the town of Durovernum Cantiacorum (the modern Canterbury), holding up a silver cross and a painting of Christ crucified. They requested a meeting with Ethelberht, the *over-king* among the Saxon kingdoms. Ethelbert had a Christian

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<sup>36</sup> J. Robert Wright, *A Companion to Bede: A Reader's Commentary on The Ecclesiastical History of the English People* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008).

<sup>37</sup> Bede, *The Ecclesiastical History of the English Nation and the Lives of St Cuthbert and the Abbots* (London: Dent [Everyman Library], 1910), p. 33 (chapter xxiii). For Gregory see R. A. Markus, *Gregory the Great and his World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

<sup>38</sup> Robin Fleming, *Britain After Rome* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 2011), p. 131.

<sup>39</sup> See H. Meyr-Harting, *The Coming of Christianity to Anglo-Saxon England* (Batsford/Book Club Associates, 1977); Barbara Yorke, *The Conversion of Britain 600-800* (Harlow: Pearson, 2006); Malcolm Lambert, *Christians and Pagans: The Conversion of Britain from Alban to Bede* (New Haven: Yale, 2010).

wife Bertha (who had come from Paris in 560), and was not himself antagonistic to Christianity, but it was several years before he was converted and underwent baptism, probably in the spring of 601. Meanwhile, Augustine had been invested with additional authority by his consecration to the episcopate, probably at Arles in 597-8.<sup>40</sup> In 601 Augustine also received reinforcements from Rome and a mandate from Gregory to consecrate some of the recent arrivals as bishops. The party included Mellitus, who became Bishop of London and Paulinus who evangelised the North of England, becoming Bishop of York in 625 (the bishop of that see being first mentioned as early as 314) and baptising King Edwin, king of Northumbria, two years later. (In 735 the then Bishop of York, Egbert, was elevated to Archbishop.) Augustine did not carry out Pope Gregory's instructions to make Londinium (London) his seat.

3.1.4 Shortly after his arrival, Augustine consecrated an existing Roman church in Canterbury as his Cathedral Church of Christ. This first cathedral was destroyed by fire in 1067, the year after the Norman Conquest. The cathedral was rebuilt by Archbishop Lanfranc, extended by Archbishop Anselm and consecrated in 1130. The crypt contains Roman and Saxon fragments, though it is mainly Norman. In the second half of the fourteenth century Archbishop Sudbury remodelled the choir and nave. St Augustine's Chair, made of Purbeck marble, probably dates from the thirteenth century. Canterbury Cathedral is still, of course, the *seat* of the Archbishop and for that reason it has a special significance for Anglicans throughout the world.

3.1.5 Every new Archbishop of Canterbury swears, on a Book of the Gospels that is believed to have been brought over from Rome in 601, to preserve the rights of 'this Cathedral and Metropolitan Church of Christ'.

3.1.6 Archbishops of Canterbury are Primates of the first metropolitan see of the English Church (and thus of the Anglican Communion) to be founded after the mission of St Augustine – in other words, as part of the Western Church and under the Roman jurisdiction until the Reformation. To date there have been 104 Archbishops of Canterbury.<sup>41</sup>

3.1.7 In the medieval period a succession of popes re-affirmed the primacy of the See of Canterbury.<sup>42</sup> In the mid-fourteenth century the pope settled the competing claims of the Archbishops of Canterbury and York with the wisdom of Solomon by decreeing that the former was Primate of All England, while the latter was Primate of England.

3.1.8 Several Archbishops of Canterbury have undergone martyrdom, beginning with Alphege

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<sup>40</sup> Margaret Deanesly, *Augustine of Canterbury* (London: Nelson, 1964), pp. 39-40.

<sup>41</sup> See further Edward Carpenter, *Cantuar: The Archbishops in Their Office* (London: Cassell, 1971).

<sup>42</sup> This is documented in [Lambert Beauduin], 'The Church of England United not Absorbed', a paper contributed to the Malines Conversations in 1925: A. Denaux and J. Dick (eds), *From Malines to ARCIC: The Malines Conversations Commemorated* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1997), pp. 35-46.

in 1012, who was hacked to death in Danish captivity because he refused to be ransomed. Thomas Becket was killed in his cathedral in 1170 by knights who believed that they were carrying out the wishes of King Henry II. Archbishop Sudbury was killed in the Peasants' Revolt in 1381 (more a political victim than a martyr). Thomas Cranmer was burned at the stake under the Roman Catholic Queen Mary in 1556. In 1645 William Laud was sent to the executioner's block by Parliament; his King, Charles I, followed in 1649.

## **3.2 What has the Lambeth Conference said about the office of Archbishop of Canterbury?**

3.2.1 Since Archbishop Longley called the first Lambeth Conference in 1867, various Lambeth Conferences, particularly the more recent ones, have made formal statements about the office of Archbishop of Canterbury and we take the most significant of these in review now.

3.2.2 The Lambeth Conference of 1897, in requesting that there should be further Conferences in the future, every ten years, acknowledged that it would be for the Archbishop to gather such Conferences.<sup>43</sup>

3.2.3 The 1930 Conference underlined the constitutive role of the Archbishop of Canterbury when it defined the Anglican Communion as 'a fellowship, within the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church', of dioceses, provinces and regional churches that are 'in communion with the see of Canterbury'.<sup>44</sup>

3.2.4 Interestingly, in the proceedings of the 1948 Conference, which is notable for its elaborate statement about authority, the office of Archbishop of Canterbury is virtually invisible.<sup>45</sup>

3.2.5 The 1958 Lambeth Conference recommended that a 'Consultative Body' be established 'to assist the Archbishop of Canterbury in the preparation of the business of the ensuing Conference' and 'to consider matters referred to the Archbishop of Canterbury on which he requests its aid and to advise him' and, furthermore, 'to deal with matters referred to it by the Archbishop of Canterbury or by any bishop or group of bishops'. The resolution recognised that the Archbishop would be 'ex officio Chairman' of this Consultative Body and would 'summon' its members to meet.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> LC 1897, Resolution 2: Coleman, p. 16.

<sup>44</sup> LC 1930, Resolutions 48 and 49: Coleman pp. 83-84.

<sup>45</sup> *The Lambeth Conference 1948: The Encyclical Letter from the Bishops; together with Resolutions and Reports* (London: SPCK, 1948). The classic statement on authority is in section report IV, III (pp. 84-86).

<sup>46</sup> LC 1958, Resolution 61, (a) and (b): Coleman, p. 134.

3.2.6 The 1968 Conference's section report on unity made a quite low-key statement about the place of the Archbishop of Canterbury within the Communion. While emphasising the collegiality of the episcopate, the report recognised that within the college of bishops there must be a president. It observed that 'this position is at present held by the occupant of the historic See of Canterbury, who enjoys a primacy of honour, not of jurisdiction.' It added that this primacy involves 'in a particular way, that care of all the churches which is shared by all the bishops'.<sup>47</sup>

3.2.7 The 1978 Lambeth Conference section report dealing with the Anglican Communion within the universal Church affirmed (though the text is not a model of clarity) that the basis of the Communion 'is personally grounded in the loyal relationship of each of the Churches to the Archbishop of Canterbury who is freely recognised as the focus of unity'.<sup>48</sup> The 1978 resolutions described the Archbishop as the 'President' of the Lambeth Conference and of the Anglican Consultative Council and affirmed that it remained the prerogative of the Archbishop to call a Lambeth Conference, but recommended that he should make his decision in consultation with other primates.<sup>49</sup>

3.2.8 The Conference of 1988, in urging that the Primates should have a strengthened *collegial role*, also recognised that the meetings of the Primates were presided over by the Archbishop of Canterbury. This Conference also recommended that, in the appointment of any future Archbishop of Canterbury, the Crown Appointments Commission (now the Crown Nominations Commission) should 'be asked to bring the primates of the Communion into the process of consultation'.<sup>50</sup> Subsequent practice has reflected this concern by providing for the Primates' Meeting to elect one of its number to be a voting member of the Crown Nominations Commission, while the Secretary General of the Anglican Consultative Council has a non-voting seat.<sup>51</sup>

3.2.9 In the light of the appalling failure of ecclesial structures in the Rwanda genocide, the Lambeth Conference of 1998 raised the question of in what circumstances the Archbishop of Canterbury should have 'an extra-ordinary [sic] ministry of episcopé (pastoral oversight), support and reconciliation with regard to the internal affairs of a Province other than his own for the sake of maintaining communion within the said Province and between the said

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<sup>47</sup> *The Lambeth Conference 1968* (London: SPCK; New York: Seabury Press, 1968), p. 137.

<sup>48</sup> *The Report of the Lambeth Conference 1978* (London: CIO, 1978), p. 98.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, Resolutions 12 and 13 (p. 42).

<sup>50</sup> LC 1988, Resolution 18.2 (a) and (b): *The Truth Shall Make You Free*, p. 216; Coleman, p. 207.

<sup>51</sup> See further *Working with the Spirit: A review of the Crown Appointments Commission and related matters* (London: Church House Publishing, 2001), p. 57 (para. 3.82). *To Lead and to Serve: The Report of the Review of the See of Canterbury* ['the Hurd Report'] (London: Church House Publishing, 2001), p. 48. These reports suggested that the Chair of the ACC should be a voting member of the Crown Nominations Commission (formerly the Crown Appointments Commission) and that the Secretary General of the ACC should in future have a vote.

Province and the rest of the Anglican Communion'.<sup>52</sup> The Lambeth Commission that produced the *Windsor Report* had this question as part of its mandate, but did not directly address it. The constitutional position is that the Archbishop of Canterbury visits member churches of the Communion at their invitation.

### 3.3 How have other reports of the Communion described the role of the Archbishop of Canterbury?

3.3.1 The *Virginia Report* (1997) described the Archbishop of Canterbury's ministry in the Communion as that of 'a pastor in the service of unity', offering care and support to the Churches of the Communion by invitation of the member Churches. It went on to say that 'the interdependence of the Anglican Communion becomes most clearly visible when the Archbishop of Canterbury exercises his primatial office as an enabler of mission, pastoral care and healing in those situations of need to which he is called'.<sup>53</sup>

3.3.2 Interestingly, the *Virginia Report* describes the Archbishop of Canterbury as 'Primate of the Anglican Communion'.<sup>54</sup> This title has not been picked up since the *Virginia Report* and it is not difficult to see why. Although the Archbishop does have a degree of primacy – *primus inter pares*, first among equals – among Anglican bishops by virtue of his presidency of the Lambeth Conference, the Primates' Meeting and the Anglican Consultative Council, it is strange to describe him as *Primate* of the Communion, as though his metropolitanical jurisdiction extended throughout the Communion, as a sort of universal archbishop. The Archbishop does not have any primatial jurisdiction outside the Church of England.<sup>55</sup>

3.3.3 *The Windsor Report* (2004) describes the Archbishop of Canterbury, 'both in his person and his office', as 'the pivotal instrument and focus of unity', observing that 'relationship to him became a touchstone of what it was to be Anglican'.<sup>56</sup> It therefore seems rather inconsistent when, a few pages later, the report suggests that the Archbishop of Canterbury should not be counted among the Instruments of Unity, but should be seen as *the focus of unity* – but then on the same page again places the Archbishop among the *Instruments of Unity*.<sup>57</sup>

3.3.4 *The Windsor Report* seeks to strengthen the role of the Archbishop. He should not be regarded as a mere *figurehead*, but as 'the central focus of both unity and mission within the

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<sup>52</sup> LC 1998, IV, 13: <http://www.lambethconference.org/resolutions/1998/1998-4-13.cfm>

<sup>53</sup> *Virginia Report*, 6.2.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.6.

<sup>55</sup> On the Archbishop of Canterbury's primatial authority and related questions see Podmore, *Aspects of Anglican Identity*, chapter 5.

<sup>56</sup> *The Windsor Report* (London: Anglican Communion Office, 2004), para. 99 (p. 55).

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, paras 105, 108 (p. 58). It is not entirely clear what is implied when, in Appendix 1 (pp. 79-80) the Anglican Communion Office is discussed in the context of the Instruments of Communion.

Communion'. He has 'a very significant teaching role' and Anglicans should be able to look to him 'to articulate the mind of the Communion especially in areas of controversy'. He should be able 'to speak directly to any provincial situation on behalf of the Communion when this is deemed advisable'. He should have complete discretion about when to call the Lambeth Conference or the Primates' Meeting together and sole discretion about whom to invite and on what terms. However, the report goes on to guard against any suggestion that it is giving the Archbishop some kind of arbitrary power by recommending that he should have the benefit of a Council of Advice in exercising this discretion.<sup>58</sup>

3.3.5 The report of the Windsor Continuation Group (2009) puts the Archbishop firmly back among the Instruments of Communion. It points out that the pivotal presidential role exercised by the Archbishop at the 2008 Lambeth Conference, evidenced by his three presidential addresses, has 'highlighted the extent to which there is scope for the ministry of a personal primacy at the level of the worldwide Communion'. The report urges, however, that this ministry should be exercised in personal, collegial and communal ways, as the World Council of Churches' Faith and Order report *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* (1982) had proposed for all ordained ministry.<sup>59</sup> The collegial mode of the Archbishop's ministry is found in conjunction with the bishops through the Lambeth Conference and the Primates' Meeting; the communal context is provided at the global level by the Anglican Consultative Council. The report of the Windsor Continuation Group makes a couple of tentative suggestions about how the Archbishop might be assisted in carrying out his role.<sup>60</sup>

3.3.6 The text of the proposed Anglican Covenant contains a descriptive statement about the role accorded to the Archbishop within the Communion:

We accord the Archbishop of Canterbury, as the Bishop of the See of Canterbury with which Anglicans have historically been in communion, a primacy of honour and respect among the college of bishops in the Anglican Communion as first among equals (*primus inter pares*). As a focus and means of unity, the Archbishop gathers and works with the Lambeth Conference and Primates' Meeting, and presides in the Anglican Consultative Council. (3.1.4: I)

3.3.7 It is worth noting that (1) neither this statement nor the proposed arrangements for the outworking of Covenant commitments entails any executive role for the Archbishop of Canterbury; but equally (2) the Covenant does not envisage a purely symbolic role for the Archbishop; the Archbishop is not only a 'focus' but also a 'means' of unity: this is to echo the language of 'instrument'.

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid., paras 109-112 (pp. 59-60).

<sup>59</sup> *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*, M26.

<sup>60</sup> The Windsor Continuation Group, 'Report to the Archbishop of Canterbury' (2009), paras 62-64 (p. 13).

### **3.4 Conclusion to reflections on the ministry of the Archbishop of Canterbury as an Instrument of Communion**

3.4.1 In order to understand Anglicanism, we must grasp the unique role of the Archbishop of Canterbury. Canterbury itself is important because it is historically the first metropolitan see (the seat of the archbishop who has primatial authority) of the Church of England and therefore – for originally historical reasons, but Anglicans take history seriously – of the Anglican Communion.<sup>61</sup> It is significant that the Archbishop of Canterbury is also a diocesan bishop, the chief pastor of a *local church*. It is clear from the history of the century and a half that has passed since the first Lambeth Conference, and from the formal statements that the Anglican Communion has produced since then, that the Archbishop of Canterbury has had and continues to have a pivotal role with regard to the identity, unity and coherence of the Anglican Communion – all matters that are currently of great importance and urgency for Anglicans. It puts the Archbishop's Communion role in perspective when we call to mind that the Archbishop is prayed for in Anglican celebrations of the liturgy around the world.

3.4.2 It was the Archbishop of Canterbury who, in 1867, initiated the Lambeth Conference in the face of doubts and opposition, and it is the Archbishop of Canterbury who continues to invite the bishops of the Communion to attend it. From time to time the Archbishop may exercise some discretion, in the interests of Anglican unity, harmony and coherence, over whom he invites and whom he chooses not to invite. He presides over the Conference's proceedings and guides its deliberations. That is to say that the Archbishop is the convener, host and president of the Lambeth Conference, which many would consider the most significant of the Instruments of Communion. There is thus an intimate connection between the ministry of the Archbishop and the Lambeth Conference of all the bishops. The Archbishop also convenes the Primates Meeting and presides over its business. Constitutionally, the Archbishop is President of the Anglican Consultative Council.

3.4.3 The office of the Archbishop of Canterbury is not only integral to the way that the Anglican Communion is made up, as a worldwide fellowship of self-governing but interdependent Churches, but is also a criterion of membership of the Communion, for it is not possible for a Church to be a member of the Communion without being in communion with the Archbishop as bishop of the See of Canterbury. Through communion with the Archbishop of Canterbury, Anglican Churches are held in communion with the Church of England and with each other, while those Churches that are in communion with the Anglican Communion are also in communion with the See of Canterbury. 'The litmus-test of membership of the Anglican Communion is to be in communion with the See of Canterbury. Of course, this cannot be the only condition for membership of the Communion. A common faith and order; a shared tradition of liturgy, theology and spirituality; and participation in the [other] instruments of the Communion are also involved. But it is the ultimate criterion.'<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Avis, *The Identity of Anglicanism*, pp. 61-62.

<sup>62</sup> Avis, *The Identity of Anglicanism*, p. 62.

3.4.4 The communion that Anglicans receive thankfully from God is both conciliar and sacramental in nature: indeed the two aspects are bound together in Anglican (and any other traditionally catholic) ecclesiology. It is as a eucharistic body that the Anglican bishops come together in the Lambeth Conference to take counsel one with another as they gather around the open page of Scripture. The intimate connection between the conciliar and the sacramental dimensions of communion are particularly clearly manifested when the Archbishop presides and often preaches at the opening Eucharist of the Lambeth Conference in Canterbury Cathedral, the bishops being, as it were, gathered around the throne of St Augustine. But that opening celebration of the Eucharist also makes it clear that the Archbishop is set in the midst of the college of Anglican bishops and intends to exercise his unique responsibilities in consultation and collaboration with his fellow bishops. Except at meetings of the ACC, the Archbishop relates to the Anglican clergy and lay faithful around the world through their bishops, not directly. But at the ACC the communal nature of the Archbishop's ministry becomes apparent: it is exercised in consultation and collaboration with the bishops, other clergy and lay people of the Communion who are present representatively and symbolically in the ACC.

3.4.5 In this section we have used the male pronoun for the Archbishop of Canterbury. That is currently applicable and so it would seem a little artificial to say he/she every time; but it may not be, and probably will not always be the case that the Archbishop is male.

3.4.6 The ministry of the Archbishop of Canterbury depends hugely on the personal spiritual, moral and theological qualities of the person who exercises it – that is undeniable. But essentially it is the office that matters and the office is greater than any one occupant of it. The office of Archbishop has been shaped by history, struggle and conflict. It has been moulded by the prayer and the scholarship, the leadership and the witness, even to martyrdom in some cases, of previous incumbents.

3.4.7 Whoever may be the occupant of the office at the time, the ministry of the Archbishop of Canterbury commends itself to the Anglican Communion and to the universal Church as a paradigm of episcopal oversight that is personal and pastoral and that guides, leads and challenges. This ministry is one that is manifestly both catholic and reformed, stretching back as it does beyond the Reformation to the mission of St Augustine of Canterbury in the early European Middle Ages, but reshaped at the time of the Reformation by the authority of the gospel and the Reformation imperatives of word, sacrament and pastoral care. It is a ministry that is not hierarchical and unaccountable, but constitutional and accessible and that knows its limits but also one that is aware of its potential for good in terms of the unity and mission of the Church of Jesus Christ.

## 4 THE PRIMATES' MEETING<sup>63</sup>

### 4.1 The idea of primacy in the Anglican Communion

4.1.1 An Anglican primate is the chief bishop or archbishop of one of the provinces of the Anglican Communion.<sup>64</sup> Some of these provinces are stand-alone ecclesiastical provinces (such as the Church of the Province of West Africa), while others are national churches comprising more than one ecclesiastical province (such as the Church of England). Since 1978, the primates have met regularly at the invitation of the Archbishop of Canterbury, who is regarded as the *primus-inter-pares* of the primates. While the gathering has no legal jurisdiction, it acts as one of the Instruments of Communion among the autonomous provinces of the Communion.

4.1.2 In stand-alone ecclesiastical provinces, the Primate is the metropolitan archbishop of the province. In national churches composed of several ecclesiastical provinces, the Primate will be senior to the metropolitan archbishops of the various provinces, and may also be a metropolitan archbishop (e.g. The Primate of the Anglican Church of Australia). In those churches that do not have a tradition of archiepiscopacy, the Primate is a bishop styled *Primus* (in the case of the Scottish Episcopal Church), *Presiding Bishop*, *President-Bishop*, *Prime Bishop* or simply *Primate*. In the case of the Episcopal Church in the United States, which is composed of several ecclesiastical provinces, there is a Presiding Bishop who is its Primate; but the individual provinces are not led by metropolitans.

4.1.3. The Moderators of the United Churches of North and South India, which are united with other originally non-Anglican churches, and which are part of the Anglican Communion, while not primates, participate in the Primates' Meetings.

4.1.4 Anglican primates may be attached to a fixed see (eg, the Archbishop of Canterbury is the Primate of All England). He or she may be chosen from among sitting metropolitans or diocesan bishops and retain their see (as with, for example, the Primate of the Anglican Church of Australia), or he or she may have no see (as in the Anglican Church of Canada). Primates are generally chosen by election (either by a Synod consisting of laity, clergy and bishops, or by a House of Bishops). In some instances, the primacy is awarded on the basis of seniority among the episcopal college. In the Church of England, the Primate, like all bishops, is nominated for election by the College of Canons of the cathedral by the British Sovereign, in his or her capacity as Supreme Governor of the established church, on the advice of the Crown

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<sup>63</sup> The discussion that follows on the Primates' Meeting and the ACC in sections 4 and 5 of this paper has drawn from a number of sources including an important paper, *The Anglican Communion Instruments of Unity*, Australian General Synod Office, research paper, 2000.

<sup>64</sup> The concept of a primate is usefully and accurately outlined in [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Primate\\_\(bishop\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Primate_(bishop)).

Nominations Commission.

4.1.5 In the Church of England and in the Church of Ireland, the metropolitan of the second province has since medieval times also been accorded the title of Primate. In England, the Archbishop of Canterbury is the Primate of All England while the Archbishop of York is Primate of England. In Ireland both the Anglican and Roman Catholic Archbishops of Armagh are titled Primate of All Ireland; while both the Anglican and Roman Catholic Archbishops of Dublin are titled Primate of Ireland. As both of these positions pre-date the 1921 partition of Ireland into two jurisdictions, they relate to the whole island of Ireland. The junior primates of these churches do not normally participate in the Primates' Meeting.

4.1.6 The role and idea of a Primate has changed over time and to this extent the office is a creature of different contexts and cultures. What a Primate is; how the office of Primate is regarded; how it functions and the authority associated with the office varies throughout the Anglican Communion. Primates are primarily focused on Provincial matters and they act in a representative manner on behalf of their Province in the wider Communion. To this extent Primates are a sign of communion shared across provincial boundaries and as such they mediate between more local and wider expressions of Anglican faith and life. Not surprisingly, precisely because Primates function in this way the office of the Primate will also become from time to time a sign of tensions within the Communion. This points to the inevitably provisional nature of the office of Primate as a sign of ecclesial communion.

## **4.2 The Primates' Meeting: Origin and Focus**

4.2.1 The Primates' Meetings were established in response to the 1978 Lambeth Conference Resolution 12: 'Anglican conferences, councils, and meetings':

The Conference asks the Archbishop of Canterbury, as President of the Lambeth Conference and President of the Anglican Consultative Council, with all the primates of the Anglican Communion, within one year to initiate consideration of the way to relate together the international conferences, councils, and meetings within the Anglican Communion so that the Anglican Communion may best serve God within the context of the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church.

4.2.2 There had previously been meetings of the Primates. The Lambeth Consultative Body existed from the beginning of the century through to 1968 when it was replaced by the Anglican Consultative Council. A Lambeth resolution in 1958 revised its constitution. This affected the membership which became the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, the Primates of the national or provincial churches, and other members appointed by the Archbishop of Canterbury to represent other dioceses under his jurisdiction. This body was not limited to the Primates but was in a sense a forerunner of the Primates' Meeting.

4.2.3 The Primates' Meeting started in 1979. Like the Lambeth Conference, it has a consultative rather than an authoritative role. It has never had an official constitution, although a memorandum drawn up by Bishop John Howe for the Archbishop of Canterbury, formed the basis for its functions:

The Purpose of the Primates' Meetings might then be:

- i. To confer on matters on which the Archbishop of Canterbury might wish to consult the Primates, including matters concerning the Lambeth Conference,
- ii. Bearing in mind the terms of reference of the Anglican Consultative Council:  
to refer suitable matters to the Anglican Consultative Council;  
to confer on the implementation of policy and proposals from the Anglican Consultative Council;
- iii. To share information and experience.

4.2.4 The purpose of the Primates' Meeting is twofold: to enhance cohesion, understanding and collaboration in the family; and to share information among the Churches - not least about the implementation of ACC recommendations made by the ACC under its terms of reference in its constitution. The meeting can also consider procedures which the Anglican Communion might wish to follow.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> John Howe, *Highways and Hedges: a Study of Developments in the Anglican Communion 1958-1982* (London: ACC, 1985), pp. 83, 84.

## 4.3 Changing Roles

4.3.1 The role of the Primates' Meetings has evolved over the years. The 1988 Lambeth Conference resolved that it

Urges that encouragement be given to a developing collegial role for the Primates Meeting under the presidency of the Archbishop of Canterbury, so that the Primates Meeting is able to exercise an enhanced responsibility in offering guidance on doctrinal, moral and pastoral matters.<sup>66</sup>

4.3.2 The Working Papers for the 1988 Lambeth Conference said:

The calling of regular Primates' Meetings was endorsed by Lambeth 1978. This reflected the need for a more effective means of exercising episcopal collegiality through the consultation of the Primates. Those meetings, at regular intervals, are a 'meeting of minds' through which individual provincial and international concerns can be tested by collective discussions between acknowledged leaders who will attempt to reach a common mind.<sup>67</sup>

4.3.3 There has been a move over more recent years for the Primates' Meetings to develop a more *collegial* role than was originally envisaged. At the 1997 Primates' Meeting in Jerusalem it was said:

The Meeting had evolved since the Lambeth Conference 1978 and the meetings had taken different forms. Archbishop Eames pointed out that the *Virginia Report* regarded the Primates' Meeting as being in the first place, collegial. This was echoed by the other Primates.<sup>68</sup>

4.3.4 The collegial focus was re-affirmed at the 1998 Lambeth Conference in Resolution III.6. This resolution also included the recommendation that the Primates' Meeting occur more regularly than the ACC. The Primates' Meetings have followed a pattern of meeting usually every 2 years (although there are some 3 year gaps). The ACC tends to meet every 3 years (although early on there were some 2 year gaps). The intention has been for the Primates' to meet every two years. The growing significance of the Primates was seen when they gathered quickly following the consecration of Gene Robinson in 2003, offered some clear directives and commissioned the work that resulted in the *Windsor Report*.

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<sup>66</sup> Lambeth Conference 1988, Resolution 18.

<sup>67</sup> Working Papers for the Lambeth Conference 1988, p. 34.

<sup>68</sup> Meeting of the Primates of the Anglican Communion and the Moderators of the United Churches, St Georges College, Jerusalem 10-17 March 1997, p. 9.

4.3.5 The Dar es Salaam meeting of 2007 worked hard to develop a pastoral response (rather than discipline as such) to the situation in the Episcopal Church and associated cross-border interventions. In the end the proposals offered were not taken up. From this perspective the 2007 Primate's Meeting might be understood less as an example of inappropriate interference in the internal polity of a member church and more a demonstration of the way in which provincial autonomy actually works in the Anglican Communion.<sup>69</sup>

4.3.6 Lessons learned from Dar es Salaam in 2007 were reflected to some extent in the outcome of the 2009 meeting of Primates in Alexandria. The Primates recognized that 'the role of the Primates' Meeting has occasioned some debate.' They stated that 'when the Archbishop of Canterbury calls us together "for leisurely thought, prayer and deep consultation", it is intended that we act as "the channels through which the voice of the member churches [are] heard, and real interchange of heart [can] take place".<sup>70</sup> The consultative and collegial dimension to the Primates' Meetings was emphasized: 'We have the responsibility each to speak to the other primates on behalf of the views and understandings held in our own Provinces. We are called to mutual accountability and to bear faithful witness to what is held dear in the life of our Provinces and to the inheritance of faith as our Church has received it. Together we share responsibility with the other Instruments of Communion for discerning what is best for the well-being of our Communion. We are conscious that the attitudes and deliberations of the primates have sometimes inadvertently given rise to disappointment and even disillusion. We acknowledge that we still struggle to get the balance right in our deliberations and ask for the prayers of our people in seeking the assistance of the Holy Spirit to support and direct us in discharging our responsibilities before God.' The Alexandria Primates' Meeting pointed to the importance of the Primates' Meeting of mutual sharing, listening and bearing one another's burdens for the sake of churches.

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<sup>69</sup> A lesson from Dar es Salaam might be that proposals in the form of documents are most persuasive when accompanied by people to engage with others over the relevant matters. Such face to face engagements are the best way to enhance communication and engender trust.

<sup>70</sup> Cf. The Address of Archbishop Donald Coggan to the Lambeth Conference, 1978.

## **4.4 Dublin 2011: Consultation, Collaboration and Collegiality**

4.4.1 The gains from 2009 were also evident at the Dublin meeting of February 2011 which focused on common counsel and collaboration. The spirit of this meeting was experienced as extremely positive by those who attended. The fact that not all Primates attended highlighted ongoing tensions in the Communion which invariably became focused in the Primates. Notwithstanding this fact, the Dublin meeting articulated in a clear and concise way an understanding of the purpose and intent of the Primates' Meeting.<sup>71</sup>

4.4.2 The Primates stated that their meetings: 'bring the realities, expectations and hopes of the context from which they come, thus representing the local to the global, learn the realities, expectations and hopes of other contexts, and carry home and interpret the global to the local'.

4.4.3 The Primates together: give leadership and support as the Communion lives out the Marks of Mission; seek continuity and coherence in faith, order, and ethics; provide a focal point of unity; address pressing issues affecting the life of the Communion; provide guidance for the Communion; address pressing issues of global concern; are advocates for social justice in these situations.

4.4.4 The Primates sought to accomplish their work through:

- prayer, fellowship, study and reflection;
- caring for one another as Primates and offering mutual support;
- taking counsel with one another and with the Archbishop of Canterbury; relationship building at regular meetings;
- being spiritually aware;
- being collegial;
- being consultative;
- acknowledging diversity and giving space for difference ; being open to the prophetic Spirit; exercising authority in a way that emerges from consensus building and mutual discernment;
- leading to persuasive wisdom;
- the work of the Primates' Standing Committee.

4.4.5 The Primates affirmed their commitment thus:

'In our common life in Christ we are passionately committed to journeying together in honest conversation. In faith, hope and love we seek to build our Communion and further the reign of God'.

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<sup>71</sup> 'Towards an Understanding of the Purpose and Scope of the Primates' Meeting: A Working Document, Approved by the Primates Meeting January 29, 2011.'

## 4.5 The Primates and the Windsor Process

4.5.1 The *Windsor Report* expressed the hope that the Primates' Meeting 'should be a primary forum for the strengthening of the mutual life of the provinces, and be respected by individual primates and the provinces they lead as an instrument through which new developments may be honestly addressed' (*The Windsor Report*, Appendix One, paragraph 5).

4.5.2 Recommendations in the December 2008 report of the Windsor Continuation Group (WCG) gave major significance to the collegial dimension of Primates with the Archbishop of Canterbury to 'offer support and advice to one another and in the life of the Communion' (para. 69).<sup>72</sup> The report also sounded a cautionary note that 'more than one model of primacy exists in the Anglican Communion and the diverse expressions of primatial authority can lead some to have concerns about the primates' meeting'. However the report suggested that 'Because of this intrinsic relation with their episcopates and the faithful of their provinces, the Primates' Meeting may be thought to have a "weight" - not from the individual primates but from their representative role' (para 69).

4.5.3 The WCG recognized the delicate nature of the exercise of Primatial authority - 'the primates collectively should not exercise more authority than properly belongs to them in their own Provinces' - but also noted that 'the primates also have a high degree of responsibility as the chief pastors of their respective Provinces to articulate the concerns of that Church in the counsels of the Communion. When they speak collectively, or in a united or unanimous manner, then their advice - while it is no more than advice - nevertheless needs to be received with a readiness to undertake reflection and accommodation.'

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<sup>72</sup> See the December 2008 report to the Archbishop of Canterbury at [www.aco.org/commission/windsor\\_continuation/WCG\\_Report.cfm](http://www.aco.org/commission/windsor_continuation/WCG_Report.cfm)

## **4.6 Conclusion of reflections on the Primates' Meeting as an Instrument of Communion**

4.6.1 The regular gathering of Primates of the Anglican Communion makes an important contribution to the Anglican way of conversation and seeking wisdom. The need for mutual sharing, listening, bearing one another's burdens and offering of guidance all arise out of deep commitment to a consultative and collegial way of being the Church.

4.6.2 What also emerges from the foregoing is a clear sense that the Primates' Meetings are woven into the fabric of an Anglican vision for being the Church which values both autonomy and freedom for a high degree of self-regulation as well as an outward orientation and sense of interdependence and accountability to the wider body. In other words the Primates' Meetings, in order to operate as a part of the body of Christ, have to function in relation to the body and encourage a natural reciprocity between their own deliberations and the wisdom of the wider body. In this sense how the Primates conduct their life together becomes a micro example of what it means for Anglicans to live in a godly way in a world wide fellowship of churches.

4.6.3 The foregoing conclusions also mean that the fractures and tensions of the wider body will also emerge from time to time among the Primates.<sup>73</sup> Indeed this should not be surprising at a number of levels: personal dispositions can be a source of conflict; structural relationships by which the 'bonds of affection' are expressed in the Communion give priority to conversation, persuasion, compromise and consensus (a messy process at the best of times!); differing constitutional arrangements and expectations of Primates; variety of cultural contexts in which Holy Order, leadership, authority and power operates. For these reasons the Primates' Meeting will function as both a source of unity and a site of tension and fracture in the Anglican Communion. It is thus a fragile Instrument of Communion and relies upon mutual commitment to build relationships and to bear one another's burdens and in this way fulfil the law of Christ.

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<sup>73</sup> It is such internal conflict that explains in part Ephraim Radner's statement that 'no one looks to it [the Primates Meeting] for leadership at present'. See his paper 'Can the Instruments of Unity be Repaired?': [www.anglicancommunioninstitute.com](http://www.anglicancommunioninstitute.com), October 5, 2010, p. 2.

## 5 THE ANGLICAN CONSULTATIVE COUNCIL

5.1.1 The ACC was established by a resolution of the Lambeth Conference in 1968 (subject to approval by a two-thirds majority of member churches).<sup>74</sup> The ACC is unique among the Instruments of Communion in a few ways. First, it is the only one of the Instruments to include lay people, deacons and priests. With respect to lay people while the ACC may not have originally intended lay representation, nonetheless from earliest days of its formation lay representation was integral to its function.<sup>75</sup> However, lay people are still a minority on the ACC. A second feature of the ACC is related to its constituents. Lay people, deacons and priests come from the most local of settings for the church, i.e. parishes, chaplaincies and other highly localised ministries. This gives to the ACC a decidedly 'ground-up' voice in the wider counsels of the church.

5.1.2 Thirdly, the ACC has a constitution to govern its functioning. Its creation required the agreement of two-thirds of the churches in the Anglican Communion. Neither the Lambeth Conference nor the Primates' Meeting required any approval from member churches. The ACC is authorised by the Communion as a whole. It is also the only inter-Anglican body with a secretariat continuously in existence and supported by the Communion. Like the Lambeth Conference and the Primates' Meeting it has a consultative rather than a jurisdictional role. This was echoed in the report of the Windsor Continuation Group which also drew attention to the function of the ACC in symbolizing 'the communal dimension of the life of the Church. It is not understood as a synodical body, as its name indicates. It is consultative' (WCG para. 71). The report also noted that

The ACC tends to be accorded particular significance by those provinces whose liturgies emphasize the baptismal covenant and who therefore desire to find the contribution of the whole people of God in the life, mission and also governance of the Church at every level of the Church's life expressed in a conciliar gathering at the world level. (WCG para. 71)<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Lambeth Conference 1968, Resolution 69.

<sup>75</sup> Michael Poon notes this in relation to Lambeth 1968, resolution 69, concerning the establishment of the ACC. It is also clear from this resolution that lay people were not excluded so it is not surprising that they soon became part of the membership. See Poon, 'The Anglican Communion as Communion of Churches: on the historic significance of the Anglican Covenant', paper prepared for the South-South Encounter, para. 26.

<sup>76</sup> The matter is more complex than this. For example, the Anglican Church of Australia has not emphasised the baptismal covenant of the Episcopal Church prayer book, yet it is committed to synodical structures and conciliar models of church governance. It is not alone in this. The TEC baptismal covenant has a lot to do with US styles of individual rights. See Bruce Kaye, *An Introduction to World Anglicanism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), pp. 223-227.

5.1.3 The problem of infrequency of meetings and changing membership of the ACC was recognized and the report wondered whether 'there may be other ways in which the involvement of the laity should be made effective in the discernment and guidance of the Communion and not only at the world level' (WCG para 71).

5.1.4 It was in the context of the need for more effective communication and consultation across the Communion that the WCG report discussed the role of the Joint Standing Committee of the Primates and the ACC. The report noted that the JSC is 'not a separate Instrument of Communion, but it does contain representatives of all four Instruments' (WCG para 72).

The crux is how the committee works and the various parts dovetail. In many senses, it is still in an early stage of development. As it develops, it will be important to stress the links to all four instruments so that it is not just seen as a branch of the ACC. It will also be important to ensure that the membership reflects the breadth of opinion in the Communion. If the membership becomes polarized, it will lose its ability to act effectively on behalf of the whole Communion. It would be strengthened by the Archbishop of Canterbury being present throughout the meeting. (WCG para 72)

5.1.5 In the proposed Covenant the previously established JSC appears as 'the Standing Committee of the Anglican Communion', responsible to the Primates and the ACC. Essentially the change of name, which was agreed by due process, represents a formalizing process in that the primate members have been made actual members in the ACC constitution, rather than the informal arrangement that pertained before 2009. The Covenant proposal invests this body with a co-ordinating role with responsibility for monitoring the functioning of the Covenant and for referring matters for advice to the Primates and ACC and where appropriate recommending to any Instrument or to the member churches various actions regarding member churches deemed non-compliant with the Covenant.

## 5.2 The Primates and the ACC: inter-related Instruments

5.2.1 The fact that the Primates' Meeting and the ACC are inter-related ought not be a surprise for Anglicans. It is consonant with the Anglican idea of the church as episcopally ordered and synodically governed.<sup>77</sup> From a practical point of view the fact that the two bodies are inter-related makes sense precisely because the fortunes of both have been closely bound up with each other over the last three decades. The interconnectedness of the two bodies is readily apparent from statements emanating from the Instruments of Communion calling for close cooperation between the two bodies. There was from the outset recognition that both bodies needed a close working arrangement if both were to serve the interests of the Communion. One Anglican ecclesiological, Bruce Kaye has argued that the ACC has been marginalized in recent years during a period in which the Primates began to exercise what has been called an 'enhanced authority', a development observed to some extent in a shift in focus from a conciliar/consultative to a collegial focus.<sup>78</sup> Others will disagree with this assessment. Different views on this matter highlight the sensitive nature of the relationship between these two Instruments (the Primates' Meeting and the ACC).

5.2.2 However, the strength of either body can vary and is subject to various contingencies, e.g. the latest disturbance in the Communion and/or changing membership. Furthermore both bodies are vulnerable to political pressure and manipulation. Neither body can be expected to deliver on things for which it was not established. In times of great stress it is inevitable that structures designed for certain purposes are asked to deliver in areas beyond their brief. What can then occur is a progressive inflation of the rationale and brief of a particular body. This may or may not be a good thing, but it does increase the possibility of disappointment and controversy and expose ecclesial bodies to criticism and claims of ineffectiveness.

5.2.3 The ACC may have struggled to find a voice in recent years in relation to an ascendant Primates' role in the Communion. It may also have been subject to political manipulation by sectional interests. For both reasons some may consider that it has failed to deliver what they wish to effect in the Communion. However, the claim that the ACC is, as a consequence 'defunct' is premature and needs to be treated with caution.<sup>79</sup> Such a claim belongs to a wider critique of the present Anglican Communion. In this respect it ought to be noted that the call

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<sup>77</sup> The phrase 'episcopally ordered' is more accurate from an Anglican ecclesiological point of view than the more familiar phrase 'episcopally led'. This latter phrase imports unwarranted judgements regarding the nature of leadership of clergy and laity in the Anglican idea of the Church.

<sup>78</sup> 'The Sidelining of the Anglican Consultative Council in a Time of Turmoil', in J. Fairbrother (ed.), *To the Church to the World. Essays in Honour of the Right Reverend John C. Paterson* (Auckland: Vaughan Park Anglican Retreat Centre, 2010), pp. 67-74. Kaye's view finds support in the research paper from the Australian General Synod Office, 'The Anglican Communion Instruments of Unity'. This paper notes the move 'from seeing a "council" of bishops to a "college" of bishops' along the lines of Roman Catholic usage. The communal and consultative roles have been more muted.

<sup>79</sup> See Radner, *Can the Instruments of Unity Be Repaired?*.

by some for the abandonment/dissolution of the ACC (in, for example, a new covenanted membership of the Anglican Communion) paves the way for a new type ACC formed from those churches that have signed up to the Covenant. In other words even advocates of a kind of 'purified' Anglicanism cannot dispense with a body like the ACC, nor with its Primates and their meetings. In Anglican ecclesiology both bodies evidently have a part to play.

5.2.4 It may be that in the future an even greater integration between the Primates and the ACC can be achieved. This may be associated with a more positive mandate for the ACC in relation to strategic priorities. This enhanced function would involve listening to stories of being church from around the global Communion. In the light of this the ACC would be in a unique position (drawing as it does from local expressions of the church and from across all orders and the laity) to highlight, for example to the Primates, priorities and issues worthy of attention. On this basis the ACC may have a stronger commissioning type role within the life of the Communion. Such a positive and even celebratory note for the work of the ACC would give to its deliberations a natural missional focus.

### **5.3 The Primates' Meeting and the ACC: Authority, Power and Persuasion**

5.3.1 Neither the Primates' Meeting nor the ACC has legislative authority to determine matters of faith and doctrine for the whole Communion. No such body exists in a Communion of churches where the accent is upon local autonomy and interconnecting links through which a wider fellowship of churches is built.<sup>80</sup> This is reflected in the brief for the Primates and the ACC to be bodies for consultation, listening, recommending, connecting, facilitating and communicating. This is not to suggest that Anglicans throughout the world are rudderless with regard to belief and worship. Even a cursory examination of the provincial constitutions and/or organizational arrangements of the Communion and of course the existence of the Lambeth Quadrilateral highlight commitments – in diverse ways – to the ancient apostolic faith enshrined in Scriptures, Creeds, Prayer Book heritage, liturgies and canons of the church. The question is not about the existence or otherwise of apostolic faith and order, but rather about the location for determining faith and discipline in the churches of the Communion. It may be helpful to see authority to determine such matters as operating in a series of concentric circles from the parish/diocese nexus and extending to national/provincial levels. Authority beyond these domains is of the persuasive and moral kind – i.e. advice, recommendation. This can be observed in the way the Primates' Meeting and ACC have actually worked or failed to work over time.

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<sup>80</sup> The phrase 'provincial ecclesiology' may have some currency here. For example, the phrase is used in The Third Inter-Anglican Theological and Doctrinal Commission final report, 'Communion, Conflict and Hope: the Kuala Lumpur Report' (London: Anglican Communion Office, 2008), para. 49. Although the word 'provincial' can have a number of different meanings and caution is required in its use in relation to the idea of a church (see 1.18 above) the phrase 'provincial ecclesiology' does have the advantage of highlighting the importance of local autonomy in relation to a defined place.

5.3.2 From 1979 the Primates' Meeting functioned to 'enhance cohesion, understanding and collaboration in the family and to share information among the Churches'. It did this by conferring with the Archbishop of Canterbury, referring matters to the ACC and conferring with regard to the implementation of recommendations from the ACC. In 1988 the brief had sharpened such that the Primates' Meeting was asked 'to exercise an enhanced responsibility in offering guidance on doctrinal, moral and pastoral matters'. In 1998 Archbishop Eames pointed out that the *Virginia Report* regarded the Primates' Meeting as being in the first place, collegial. Mutual accountability within the Primates' Meeting was recognised in 2009 at the Alexandria meeting. Within this unfolding and expanding brief for the Primates' Meetings (and more regular gatherings) the essential authority remained of a moral/persuasive, rather than juridical kind. Indeed the latter is not possible within an Anglican 'polity of persuasion'.<sup>81</sup> The fact that there are some who might wish it were otherwise and the fact that there are others who rejoice because the present situation suits their purposes is both inevitable in the Anglican idea of the Church and a cause of significant conflict from time to time.

5.3.3 The ACC is, as its name implies, a consultative body for the Communion. Its authority comes by virtue of the agreement of the provinces that such a body could attend to matters relevant to the life of the member churches of the Communion. But it is an authority to consult and to make recommendations. It has no power of enforcement as such. Again its work is premised on good will, moral suasion and the *bonds of affection*.

5.3.4 Recent controversies in the Communion have led many to call for sanctions, for authority with bite and the capability to enforce decisions. Not surprisingly, such bodies as exist cannot deliver such things. The matter was discussed extensively in the *Windsor Report* and followed up in the Windsor Continuation Group whose own report stated that 'The principle of autonomy-in-communion described in the *Windsor Report* makes clear that the principle of subsidiarity has always to be borne in mind. If the concern is with communion in a diocese, only diocesan authority is involved; if communion at a provincial level then only provincial decision. But if the matter concerns recognising one another as sharing one communion of faith and life, then some joint organs of discernment and decision, which are recognised by all, are required' (para 55). This led the WCG to articulate the move to 'communion with autonomy and accountability' as being a better articulation of the ecclesiology which is necessary to sustain Communion. However how such an accountability would work is itself controversial. For example, only a structure that was deliberately framed to allow direction from the top down would fully meet the aspirations of those who demand more effective global discipline. The correlate of a stronger top down discipline is reduced provincial autonomy. This would raise other problems for the churches of the Anglican Communion. There remains disagreement in the Communion about the extent to which, if at all, the proposed Covenant would lead to a more centralised top-down approach to decision making. This is reflected in more recent debate throughout the Communion about the Covenant at Synodical and Provincial

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<sup>81</sup> The phrase was coined by Archbishop Jeffrey Driver in his unpublished PhD thesis, 'Beyond Windsor: Anglicanism, Communion and Episcopacy', Charles Sturt University, Australia, 2008.

gatherings. One of the issues in such debates concerns the unintended consequences of the Covenant. The conversation on such matters continues.

5.3.5 The above reflections point to the fact that in Anglicanism discipline of a juridical/canonical kind operates up to the provincial/national level. There is at present no international canon law that might enable decisions to carry force at law and any suggestion that the Communion should move to a common canon law would be controversial and unlikely to succeed. It could be argued that, in the nature of the case, the present position ought to remain, in keeping with the Anglican idea of the Church. A change in this regard would require the consent of the provinces. One suggestion that might be acceptable is that the member churches should incorporate some common Communion-related enactments into their canons. The recent Covenant proposals speak of 'enhanced mutual discernment and accountability'. Some are relaxed about this. Others believe this implies too strong a move in the direction of greater disciplinary capability at the international level. Others regard such proposals as not delivering sufficient discipline. Certainly the current Instruments of Communion cannot administer discipline that is legally binding, but can only exercise the force of moral suasion. Perhaps this is what discipline has to look like within a provincial type ecclesiology i.e. non juridical, non coercive; in short a discipline of persuasion and mutual accountability. Some will say 'that's not much' and will want something far stronger, but that will require a different kind of Anglican Communion.

## 5.4 The Primates' Meetings, the ACC and Anglican Unity

5.4.1 There are various voices and groups in the Anglican Church at this time who argue that these two Instruments have failed to assist the unity of the church. Indeed some say that these two Instruments have served to exacerbate the problems of being together and to some extent concentrated the conflict. As a result, the Instruments are, as noted above, pronounced *defunct* or *paralysed*. This arises in part because the instruments are being asked to do work that they are not equipped to perform; to deliver in areas in which they lack authority. They are consultative bodies and the authority they exercise is consonant with this; it is an authority of moral suasion. Such bodies do not have juridical authority. The idea that such bodies can be invested with new powers and authority raises questions about the character of Anglican polity. The Instruments are Instruments of a particular ecclesial body i.e. Anglican. Focusing on the Instruments *per se* while ignoring the character of the body in whose hands such Instruments are held creates confusion and raises expectations that may not be realizable.

5.4.2 The Instruments are organically related to the body of the church and specific to that body.<sup>82</sup> Altering the Instruments may involve change to the ecclesial body. For example, in Anglicanism strengthening the Instruments of Communion to include greater powers of sanction and discipline will involve readjusting the balance between provincial autonomy and mutual accountability. In a polity of persuasion where the accent is on hospitality, invitation, conversation, mutual discernment, admonition, recognition and respect, the injection of powers to discipline and perhaps exclude would require the consent of the whole. Furthermore, within a polity of persuasion the sharpest and most important ways of exercising discipline and mutual admonition will be precisely through those forms of life that mark Anglicanism out. This includes persistence in difficult conversations, not inviting to the conference table according to conscience, and freedom for the voice(s) of protest. Such things are some of the ways in which Anglicans can respond to conflict and profound – and perhaps irreconcilable – differences. This is a particular kind of discipline that requires the practice of considerable inner discipline. The significance of this is easily missed. The kind of inner discipline referred to here involves humility, patience and love and nurtures a resilient wisdom and sympathetic heart that sustains a people in Christ even through sharp and painful difference over lengthy periods of time.

5.4.3 The Primates' Meeting and the ACC operate within such a polity and their effectiveness has to be judged in relation to this ecclesial ethos and not some imagined church in which sanctions and discipline operate in a more overt and definitive manner. If the Primates' Meetings struggle to fulfil their mandate and the ACC is divided by sectional interests, this is a sign of the deeper divisions and conflicts that beset the wider church. In this sense the Primates' Meeting and the ACC hold a mirror to the rest of the church of our shared and

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<sup>82</sup> See the paper prepared by Stephen Pickard for IASCUFO November 2010, 'From Instruments to Gifts: Recovering the Anglican Idea of the Church'.

imperfect life. To this extent (a) the struggles of the Primates to collaborate in the ministry of the gospel and (b) the efforts of the ACC to encourage the churches of the Communion to engage in practices that honour the incarnate Lord, both bear witness to a *koinonia* in the gospel refracted through flawed and fragile human lives and societies.<sup>83</sup> In this sense the Primates' Meeting and the ACC are a sign and instance of our wounded unity and a litmus test of how the Communion handles and/or harnesses the conflicts that beset it.

5.4.4 The foregoing comments are not a recipe for inaction, but they do beg the question of what kind of action/change is called for and is possible. In the present circumstances a question is how the Primates' Meeting and the ACC might assist in the repair of Communion. As indicated above, this is difficult given that these particular Instruments are in fact part of the problem – but only part and symptomatic of a wider failure. Perhaps, as outlined above (5.2.4), a closer working collaborative relationship between the Primates and the ACC might be a helpful development. An important step in this direction has already begun through the role of the Standing Committee. However as identified earlier (5.2.4) there are opportunities in the ACC for some quite positive developments in terms of strategic goal setting. This could be a collaborative exercise with the Primates. Such a move might go hand in hand with a deeper engagement and participation of the laity in global Anglicanism. The ACC is the place to address the clerical weight of the Instruments and give more opportunity for the gift of the voice of the laity at an international level. This matter is deserving of greater attention.

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<sup>83</sup> It might be more accurate to speak of a low-grade *koinonia* with respect to such matters. This is precisely how the Anglican Church of Australia has functioned throughout its history and there are numerous examples of how resilient ecclesial communities (e.g. many dioceses of the Communion!) function in similar ways.

## 5.5 Provisional Instruments for an incomplete Communion

5.5.1 The Primates' Meeting and the ACC serve the *koinonia* of the Church as they point the fellowship of churches of the Anglican Communion to the incarnate Lord who galvanizes their trusts and guides their mutual consents. Because the body of Christ is an unfinished reality and its pilgrimage is undertaken amidst the struggles of being human together - with all its conflicts, friction, fractures and regrets - the Instruments of Communion will be signs of the as yet unrealized communion that we hope and pray for. In this sense the Instruments are provisional signs of an incomplete communion with God and each other in the world. It is deeply attractive to attempt to resolve conflicts and divisions either too quickly or via solutions that are essentially political and/or ecclesiastical but lack a critical theological element. Often unintended consequences of such actions only deepen fractures and divide people for longer periods of time and make the task of mediation even more difficult and cumbersome.

5.5.2 Yet our impaired communion is not bereft of life for it also lives out of a wholly undeserved gift of an indestructible bond in Christ. This primary bond in the Spirit sustains the people of God and propels them forward towards a new day when God will be *all in all*. This relativises all talk of irreparable brokenness and directs us to even deeper realities of the one-in-Christ bond. This may sound too good to be true when all we can see and experience is fracture and disturbance. From whence arises hope for a new future in such a context? The good news is that our life together is inwardly fortified by the intensity of God's nearness even in the darkness. To deny this is to deny our fundamental situation and capitulate to the powers and relinquish hope in God.

5.5.3 An Anglican theology of communion has to be developed from within the fractures, imperfections and wounds of the life of the body of Christ. Such an approach might move the Communion towards a deeper unity. What might this look like for the Primates' Meetings and the ACC? Can such bodies enable the Communion to find a deeper unity in God? The call in this regard was succinctly stated in the 2007 *Kuala Lumpur Report* of the third Inter-Anglican Theological and Doctrinal Commission (IATDC):

Sometimes we hear of Communion being broken, and often this language is used in rhetorical exchanges about particular issues in dispute. The greater reality however, is the brokenness of the church within which communion can and does flourish. Communion flourishes when we accept that discipleship in the church is a call to the way of the cross in the brokenness of the church to which we all contribute.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> The Third Inter-Anglican Theological and Doctrinal Commission final report 'Communion, Conflict and Hope: the Kuala Lumpur Report', para. 50.

5.5.4 The IATDC 2007 report was mindful of the well-known words of Michael Ramsey who, in speaking of the catholicity of Anglicanism referred to its incompleteness and untidiness: 'For while the Anglican church is vindicated by its place in history, with a strikingly balanced witness to gospel and church and sound learning, its greater vindication lies in its pointing through its own history to something of which it is a fragment. Its credentials are its incompleteness, with the tension and the travail in its soul. It is clumsy and untidy, it baffles neatness and logic. For it is sent not to commend itself as "the best type of Christianity", but by its very brokenness to point to the universal Church wherein all have died'.<sup>85</sup> In a very specific sense these words offer a powerful comment on the Instruments of Communion and highlight the importance of nurturing a strong relationship between these Instruments. What this might involve is briefly developed below.

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<sup>85</sup> A. M. Ramsey, *The Gospel and the Catholic Church* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co, 1936), p. 220.

## 6 TOWARDS A SYMPHONY OF THE INSTRUMENTS OF COMMUNION

6.1.1 The first section of this paper set out some principles of the ecclesiology of the Anglican Communion as the framework for considering the Instruments of Communion. Sections 2-5 provided a more detailed examination of the four Instruments: the Lambeth Conference, the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Primates' Meeting and the Anglican Consultative Council. In section 5 some issues were identified in relation to the development and recent function of the Primates' Meeting and the ACC. This final section highlights some underlying issues that have emerged in the earlier sections and makes some tentative proposals for the future understanding and functioning of the Instruments.

### 6.2 The Concept of an Instrument

6.2.1 The concept of Instruments of Unity had its origins in the ecumenical movement in the 1970s.<sup>86</sup> The adoption by Anglicans of such language can be traced to the seventh meeting of the Anglican Consultative Council in 1987.<sup>87</sup> Though as early as the 1968 Lambeth Conference the Anglican Consultative Council was referred to as *an instrument of common action*.<sup>88</sup>

6.2.2 The concept of *instrument* was invoked in the *Virginia Report* of 1997. However it is attached in a rather loose manner to a range of phrases eg *Instruments of Communion*; 'instruments of Anglican belonging at the world level' (5.28); 'international Anglican instruments of unity' (6.23); 'worldwide instruments of communion' and 'instruments of interdependence' (6.34); 'instruments of the Anglican Communion' (6.32). Furthermore the

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<sup>86</sup> Poon, op. cit., para. 37: 'The term "instrument of unity" was used in discussions on the ecclesiological significance of the varieties of "Christian councils" that have emerged in the post-War years. Lukas Vischer insisted that Christian Councils should be "instruments of unity". By this he meant the ecclesial reality should not be sought in Christian Councils but in the communion among the Churches. "As structures, Christian Councils have only *an instrumental ecclesiological significance* in the promotion of this communion." This instrumental and provisional role was underscored in the 1982 "Consultation on the Significance and Contribution of Councils of Churches in the Ecumenical Movement" in Venice and the 1986 Second Consultation on Councils of Churches as "Instruments of Unity within the One Ecumenical Movement" in Geneva.' For Vischer see Lukas Vischer, 'Christian councils: instruments of ecclesial communion', *Ecumenical Review* 24, no. 1 (1972), pp. 72-87; this reference pp. 77, 80. See also Hervé Legrand, 'Councils of Churches as Instruments of Unity within the one Ecumenical Movement', in *Instruments of unity: national councils of churches within the one ecumenical movement*, ed., Thomas F. Best (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1988), pp. 55-71; more generally see Konrad Raiser, *Ecumenism in Transition* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1991).

<sup>87</sup> Poon, para. 38: 'The "instruments of unity" concept appeared in the Seventh Meeting of ACC in 1987. It was used in the Report "Unity and Diversity within the Anglican Communion: A way forward" as a collective name for the Archbishop of Canterbury, Lambeth Conference, Anglican Consultative Council, and the Primates' Meeting. Before this, Lambeth 1978 used the term "structures in the Anglican Communion"; in 1984 the Secretary General used the term "inter-Anglican organization" in his ACC-6 Opening Speech.'

<sup>88</sup> See 1968 Lambeth Conference resolution 69.

report states that the episcopate is 'the primary instrument of Anglican unity' (3.51) and it recognises the need in the Anglican Communion for 'appropriate instruments' (5.20). The Anglican Consultative Council is identified as 'unique among the international Anglican instruments of unity' (6.23). Three things are to be noted from the *Virginia Report*. First, an uncritical acceptance of the language of 'instrument'; second, a loose association of 'instrument' with a range of phrases relating to matters of ecclesial structure; and third, 'Instruments of Communion' was evidently the preferred general identifier regarding 'instruments'.

6.2.3 Certainly since the *Virginia Report* the language of instruments has become part of the stock-in-trade of international Anglican discourse. In Michael Poon's view the 'uncritical use of concepts from the ecumenical movement' such as the concept of 'instruments of unity' aggravates what has been termed as an 'ecclesial deficit' in Anglicanism.<sup>89</sup> He states: 'The last decade saw the creation of concepts and structures to uphold the Communion at international level, without thinking through their ecclesial implications and their connection to the ecclesial realities of the particular Churches. So the Communion structures unwittingly set Anglican Churches worldwide on a collision course with one another. These terminologies came from specific Protestant denominational settings; but there was little discussion and explanation of what they mean in Anglican terms ecclesologically.'<sup>90</sup>

6.2.4 There is little to suggest that the concept of *instruments* has been subject to any critical assessment as to its appropriateness or what it might signify. Instruments are things that you use to achieve certain ends. A hammer is an instrument for striking a nail in order to build or repair some structure; a dentist's drill is an instrument. This tool-like quality is reflected in the etymology of *instrument* meaning a tool or apparatus. It is originally connected with a musical instrument. Interestingly it also includes the sense of *arrange and furnish*. The adjective *instrumental* points to something that is *serviceable* or *useful*.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> Poon, para. 37. The idea of an 'ecclesial deficit' was discussed in the *Windsor Continuation Group Report to the Archbishop of Canterbury* in December 2008. In section D of that report, paragraph 51, it was noted that 'a central deficit in the life of the Communion is its inability to uphold structures which can make decisions which carry force in the life of the Churches of the Communion, or even give any definitive guidance to them'. The report then noted that 'Other commentators will argue that such mechanisms are entirely unnecessary, but this touches upon the heart of what it is to live as a Communion of Churches'. The ecclesial deficit concerns both the determination of the limits of diversity in the fellowship of Anglican churches and capacity to exercise authority to discipline churches that disregard such limits. What this means is that the notion of an 'ecclesial deficit' is an essentially contested ecclesiological concept.

<sup>90</sup> Poon, para. 38.

<sup>91</sup> In the late 13<sup>th</sup> century the usage is in relation to a 'musical instrument', from the Latin, *instrumentem* meaning 'a tool, apparatus, furniture, dress, document'; from *instruere* meaning to 'arrange, furnish' (see instruct). The broader sense of instrument as 'that which is used as an agent in a performance' is from the mid 14<sup>th</sup> century. Instrumental as 'musical composition for instruments without vocals' appears from 1940. Instrumental (adj.) is from the late 14<sup>th</sup> century; 'of the nature of an instrument', from instrument + al. The meaning as 'serviceable, useful' is from 1600. Musical composition for 'instruments only' is attested by 1940. See *Shorter Oxford Dictionary*.

6.2.5 The musical background to *instrument* offers a wider framework in which to consider the concept. For example, in music instruments belong to a rich environment that includes harmonic, orchestral and symphonic dimensions. In this context instruments play a part in an organic offering directed to successful performance. In this sense the instrument only comes to life as it is integrated into the musician's own existence. Referring to the way in which an external object (in this case a musical instrument) becomes an extension of the user, Michael Polanyi states: 'We pour ourselves into them and assimilate them as part of our own existence. We accept them existentially by dwelling in them'.<sup>92</sup> This requires a 'purposive effort', 'commitment' and 'a manner of disposing ourselves'.<sup>93</sup> The external object becomes an instrument or tool when it is assimilated into the operation of the user. A merger takes place and the instrument becomes an extension of the body.

6.2.6 However, this assimilation is neither automatic nor simple and can disintegrate. For example when attention is directly focussed on the instrument/tool rather than on the purpose for which it is being used the capacity of the user to achieve the intended goal is seriously diminished.<sup>94</sup> Thus if a pianist switches attention from the performance to the particulars – the act of striking the keys – the performance will suffer. An actor who becomes fixated on the next word and gesture can be paralysed with stage fright. In both cases fluency is restored only as the pianist or actor casts their mind forward beyond the particulars to the purpose of the act. The fundamental problem arises when the *focal awareness* shifts from the purposive intent of the activity to something that ordinarily lies in the *subsidiary awareness*.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> Michael Polanyi, *Personal Knowledge: Towards a post-Critical Philosophy* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1958), p. 59.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 60-61.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 56.

<sup>95</sup> Cf. the insightful work of Michael Polanyi on focal and subsidiary awareness: Polanyi, *op. cit.* Polanyi refers to 'The kind of clumsiness which is due to the fact that focal attention is directed to the subsidiary elements of an action is commonly known as self-consciousness' (p. 56). In this context Polanyi states that 'a serious and sometimes incurable form of it is "stage fright" where the actor becomes fixated on 'the next word, note or gesture and thereby loses the sense of flow and context sweep of the performance'.

6.2.7 This brief discussion indicates that the concept of an instrument is complex. An instrument is originally an external object differentiated from the user. The transposition of an external object into an instrument, as noted above, requires skill whereby the object external to the user becomes part of his/her own existence. The move from object to instrument involves the overcoming of a natural distance between person and object. Overcoming this distance belongs to the skill of knowing and doing. The skill and intuitive connection between user and instrument through intelligent effort and imaginative endeavour (which cannot be explained simply as the effect of repetition of a task) is the basis for successful achievement of the purpose. The wisdom built up in such processes transcends the mechanical and technical and enters the domain of personal knowledge.

6.2.8 The philosopher of science Michael Polanyi likens the process by which we move from technical and mechanical action to personal knowledge, to a person being blindfolded and having to use a stick (with a probe at the end of it) to explore a particular space.<sup>96</sup> The stick and probe at the end eventually become an extension of the hand. At first the sensory data flowing upwards from the probe at the tip of the stick to the palm are difficult to discriminate. Slowly the blindfolded person learns to discriminate more finely between different surfaces, densities etc. A mental picture is built up in the mind. This occurs through a growing organic connection between the probe and the person; the natural discontinuity of the probe from the user's hand is slowly overcome; an organic reintegration is achieved.

6.2.9 This illustration reminds us that an instrument can function as an important heuristic or finding mechanism. But the quality of this is entirely dependent on the degree to which the user achieves a high level of organic connection between himself/herself and the instrument. In this process the nature of the entity changes from external object to instrument as extension of the self. The foregoing discussion points to two key issues for instruments i.e. human agency and purpose.

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<sup>96</sup> Ibid., p. 61. Polanyi observes that if we are blindfolded we 'cannot find our way about with a stick as skilfully as a blind man does who has practised it a long time. We can feel that the stick hits something from time to time but cannot correlate these events. We can learn to do this only by an intelligent effort at constructing a coherent perception of the things hit by the stick. We then gradually cease to feel a series of jerks in our fingers as such – as we still do in our first clumsy trials – but experience them as the presence of obstacles of certain hardness and shape, placed at a certain distance, at the point of our stick ... When the new interpretation of the shocks in our fingers is achieved in terms of the objects touched by the stick, we may be said to carry out unconsciously the process of interpreting the shocks ... we become unconscious of the actions by which we achieve this result.'

## 6.3 Instruments, Human Agency and Purpose

6.3.1 Instruments have an inescapable *personal dimension*. When there are complaints about instruments and mechanical type behaviour of structures, often the real issue concerns the depersonalising of the instruments in question. The problem is masked in Anglicanism when the Instruments of Communion are identified merely as parts of the *structure of polity*.<sup>97</sup> This is only partly true. The fuller picture is that the instruments are gatherings of *human agents in particular sets of relationships*. The loss of the sense of human agency and participation in the use of the Instruments is of course a feature of contemporary life and it is usually associated with questions of power and bureaucratic technique that is depersonalising.

6.3.2 A second and related issue for instruments concerns the purpose of instruments; or more particularly what happens when there is a *loss of focus* on the purpose for which an instrument is intended. When 'the eye is taken off the ball' and becomes fixed on the instrument as such, then the focal awareness shifts to a secondary element. This can arise from anxiety and lack of confidence or lack of well-formed habits of use. When this occurs it means that the end or purpose becomes of secondary importance; it moves into a subsidiary awareness. The result is poor performance because the focus is no longer on the purpose for which the instrument is being deployed, but rather the focus has shifted to the instrument. The horizon of the deeper purpose has receded from view and the instrument becomes the focus.

6.3.3 The proper focus for the Instruments of Communion is communion with God and each other in the service of God's mission in the world. Communion is strengthened as more and more parts of our lives and church are directed to God's purposes. The Instruments of Communion are means through which the life of the church can be directed towards God. In this context the instruments have a subsidiary function, John the Baptist like, pointing to a greater reality and calling. This does not remove the important practical function of the Instruments of Communion. They remain highly pragmatic ways to enable complex communities of faith to realise their life and purpose in the world. However all this is merely enhanced and deepened as the Instruments are set within their true horizon of the purposes of God. As such they are invested with their true significance, i.e. to enable the people of the Church to follow Christ in the world. In recent years Anglicans have interpreted this movement outwards in terms of the Five Mark's of Mission. The Instruments of Communion are intended to serve these marks. The marks of mission are the proper horizon towards which the Instruments are directed.

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<sup>97</sup> This problem emerges in the IADTC 1997 *Virginia Report*. In this report the language of instrument is linked to the need for 'enabling structures' to maintain communication and coherence across the Communion. Personal and relational life was stated to be prior to such structure, the latter being necessary in order to enable the former to be maintained (5.4). This may sound benign language but it betrays an implicit dislocation of personal agency from structure. The form of the relationship between the two depersonalises structure and makes it secondary to relational life.

6.3.4 In times of crisis the Instruments become easily overburdened. What this means is that they become the main focus and cease to point to God in the Church. People become preoccupied with the operation of the instruments in a highly structuralist and mechanical manner. They not only lose focus but become depersonalised. Under these conditions, not surprisingly the Instruments are often pronounced meaningless and inadequate for the purpose to which they were created. Often this is simply a sign that we don't know how to use the instrument any longer or don't believe it can do what it is supposed to do. Then it ceases to be a living instrument and appears as a peculiar artefact, irrelevant and meaningless. The issue can be stated succinctly: 'If we discredit the usefulness of a tool, its meaning as a tool is gone'.<sup>98</sup> In an ecclesial context this not only spells the end of the instrument; more importantly it is a sign of a dismembered body. This reveals the deeper wound of the body and the pain caused through a disordered ecclesial spirit (Galatians 5:13-21).

6.3.5 Recovering a *proper focus on purpose* and on the *personal dimension* of the Instruments of Communion is the prerequisite for their healthy operation. When the Instruments remain locked in the language of *structure* they remain disconnected from the life of the church 'like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind' (James 1:6b). Two things are required: (a) the persistent focus on the purpose of the Instrument as a means through which God actively reconnects people with each other in Christ the Lord; and (b) human agents who steadfastly insist that the Instruments are not simply structural artefacts but are constituted by people in relation. In this way we will find that the Instruments of Communion are active and vital constituents of our common life in the body of Christ, rather than simply elements of our common law.

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<sup>98</sup> Ibid, p. 57.

## 6.4 Instruments as Gifts of the Spirit

6.4.1 One of the great insights of the Anglican Communion may be the way that it values – within an episcopal ordering of the church – the symphony of bishops, clergy and laity working together in communion. This is a significant challenge for Anglicans in the world today and this challenge is especially – but not solely – focused on the Instruments of Communion. What is required is a clearer understanding of the role and function of each Instrument of Communion. This should take into account the specific gifts and responsibilities for governance as well as the representative functions entrusted to bishops and the how these might best work together with the whole body of the faithful.

6.4.2 The Instruments of Communion are not just quirks of Anglican governance, but particular ways of facilitating practices that attend to the incarnate Lord and enhance the life of the body of Christ. It is more accurate from a theological point of view to understand the Instruments of Communion as intensifications or concentrations of ecclesial communion. As such the Instruments are particular focal points of what binds us together in Christ. When the people who constitute the various Instruments of Communion seek wisdom together they embody and re-present what the whole church is called to do and be. As they concentrate God's gift of oneness (in all its diversity and tensions) they simultaneously enhance the Communion of whole body of Christ.<sup>99</sup>

6.4.3 The work of the Instruments is one of facilitating the overflow of Christ's bond with the world through the Spirit. In this way ecclesial structures of governance serve the strengthening of our oneness with God in the world. This points to a truly missional focus and a trinitarian dynamic as foundational for Instruments of Communion. It means that the instruments have a gift-like character. From what has been said above this gift-like character is deeply personal and reminds us of the 'indescribable gift' of Jesus Christ. God in Christ is the up close and personal gift of God for the life of the world. The life of Jesus shows us that God's gift is fragile, suffers and sacrifices even as the joy of God is present and provides the wider horizon. It is for good reason that the gift of Jesus is marked at key points with the symbols of cradle, table, towel, bread and wine, cross and grave and empty tomb. The gift-like character of the second person of the Trinity reminds us of the greatness and the contingent nature of such a gift. If we now speak of Instruments of Communion as gifts they have to be understood against the gift of Jesus. This means that the Instruments are intended to reflect personal and costly engagements between people and ought be set against the horizon of God's work in the world and hence be outward looking. Such a rich backdrop for Instruments as gifts has not been a strong feature in the development of the understanding of the Instruments. While the gift-like character of the Instruments was flagged in the *Virginia Report* of 1997 this depiction

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<sup>99</sup> It is an ecclesial version of the concept of 'the butterfly effect'. Theologically this is grounded in the deep interconnectedness of the whole of creation.

remained undeveloped in that report.<sup>100</sup>

6.4.4 The fact that the Instruments have emerged in history – often in times of conflict and uncertainty in the Church (eg the first Lambeth Conference) – points to the fact that the Instruments are contingent and therefore provisional and unfinished. The Instruments will probably undergo change and modification as the contexts and circumstances of being the Church also change and evolve. The contingent nature of the Instruments goes hand in hand with their gift-like character. Indeed a gift is only a gift as it is opened, unwrapped and used. That is what we do with gifts. The Instruments are gifts of the Spirit that have emerged through a process and within specific historical contexts. This means that the Instruments represent both gift and task for the Church. Their operation and ongoing value for Communion requires active human participation and an imaginative effort to follow what the Spirit is saying to the Church as the future unfolds. This also means that there will be an inevitable messiness about the way the Instruments function as gifts *from* and *of* God. All this points to Instruments not as signs of a steady-state Church but as signs of work to be done and an expectation that new things will emerge as people engage faithfully and joyfully seeking wisdom and bearing witness to Christ in the world.

6.4.5 A current danger for Anglicans in relation to the Instruments of Communion is that we may jettison or spurn the gifts given for our common life now and a hoped for future life together in the Kingdom of God. This can happen when the Instruments are reduced to a merely human achievement and when those who inhabit the Instruments fail to recognise the Spirit at work willing the good through such Instruments.<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> See *Virginia Report 1997* 1.14, 'The instruments of communion which are a gift of God to the Church help to hold us in the life of the triune God'. Unfortunately this statement remains quite disconnected to the lengthy sections of the report on Communion and the Trinity which is argued as the basis for the life of the Church.

<sup>101</sup> The late Daniel Hardy said that 'greatest threat to Anglicanism today is that ... the personal will (what each person wants), and the will of sectional interests in the Church are displacing love for the truth ... What is needed is to move radically in the opposite direction: attentiveness to the truth, to the infinite identity of God in acting (in Christ through the Holy Spirit) in the world to bring it to its final end: attentiveness to God for God-self. All will depend on *whether we can 'place' everything in relation to the truth of God's own life*, as that is found through the right kind of attentiveness to the richness of God's presence and blessing as they are found in worship and corporate life when they respond to God's purposes for the world' (Daniel Hardy, unpublished paper at the American Academy of Religion, 2004, 'Anglicanism in the Twenty-First Century: Scriptural, Local and Global'. Such a placing of everything in relation to the truth of God's life involves what has been identified above as a purposive effort, commitment and a manner of disposing ourselves that befits the fruit of the Spirit.

6.4.6 A important task in respect to the Instruments of Communion is to recover a gift-centred approach to such locations for common counsel in international Anglicanism. As Instruments they (Archbishop of Canterbury, Lambeth Conference, Primates' Meeting, ACC) remain vulnerable to distortion and misuse. For example, when the Instruments are abstracted from their human agency and are treated as things and/or objects apart from the body they become disembodied tools. As such they are more easily subject to political misuse and manipulation by sectional interests of all persuasions. These differing groups have their own ideas concerning the nature of communion and how it needs to be repaired, and this is easier to prosecute when the Instruments are objectified. One effect of reducing Instruments to such artefacts of human manipulation is that it generates false expectations concerning what is possible and at the same time takes away their gift-like character.

6.4.7 A gift-centred approach to the structures of our polity is resistant to unreal expectations about their ability to provide quick solutions. A gift-centred approach belongs to an environment that fosters purposive effort, commitment and collaboration informed and energised by God. In this sense it is a reminder of the moral weight and vision of a godly *ecclesia* to which we are called together and not apart. This points to the fact that a gift-centred approach belongs to the language of conversion. The church is being called back to the ultimate goal to display imperfectly but truly God's Christ-like communion with the world. From this perspective the Instruments of Communion might be recognised as having a sacramental or quasi-sacramental character as signs and mediations of the presence and work of God in the church for the sake of the world. Furthermore this approach necessarily points the Instruments of Communion beyond their immediate focus on the internal life of the church towards the world where God is at work to bring all things to his holy ways. The unfinished nature of this work of God is the deeper missiological horizon for the role and significance of the Instruments of Communion.

6.4.8 The approach suggested here implies something very different from a 'puncture repair kit' approach to the problems and challenges of Anglicanism. The wound needing healing can't be fixed with a patch. Healing and repair can only come through deep listening and forbearance. The Instruments are in fact persons in relation seeking divine wisdom through common counsel. The danger is that the search for wisdom can be displaced by a desire to state opinions without adequate listening and attending to each other. When this happens the Instruments are depersonalised and they fail to achieve their true purpose. In these circumstances they become rather blunt Instruments at best and we are not surprised by calls for different instruments that will fix the problem; revamping or removing some Instruments; and/or enhancing the authority of one Instrument and diminishing another. Such proposals might well be needed in order to improve communication and facilitate a deeper engagement between people. This may well belong to the evolution of the Instruments as identified above. But there are no quick-fix solutions to the need for careful and respectful listening. This requires a disposition and intent that goes beyond mere statement of opinion.

6.4.9 This paper has intentionally deployed the phrase Instruments of Communion rather than Instruments of Unity. It has done so in the belief that the gift-like character of the Instruments is enhanced by the language of *communion* rather than the language of *unity*. Interestingly, *communion* was the original term in relation to Instruments and was only later replaced by the term *unity*. In our present context 'Communion' is a broader and richer term theologically than unity. Unity has unfortunately been too easily associated with structural and legal elements in the *ecclesia* of God. The institutional dimension of communion is important, but it is not the only or the most significant aspect of union with God and each other. *Instruments of Communion* opens up possibilities whereas *unity* language, at least in our present ecclesial context, tends to close down the perceived range of possibilities. Furthermore, the language of communion strengthens the relational dimension of the language of instruments. The recovery of communion terminology is of a piece with the recovery of the role of human agency and theological focus on God that underlies the purpose of the Instruments of Communion. Language may not solve the problems but it has a part to play in changing expectations and attitudes.

6.4.10 It is legitimate to ask whether the language of *instruments* might be replaced. The matter was extensively canvassed in an earlier paper prepared for IASCUFO. As noted earlier in this paper, the appeal to Instruments of Communion is relatively recent and was clearly part of the discourse of the *Virginia Report* of 1997. There does not appear to have been any conscious process of reception of the language of *instruments* in the *Virginia Report* and subsequently. Moreover, as discussed in this section of the paper, there remain significant problems associated with the language of 'instruments' that seriously distort the nature, perceptions and functioning of the familiar Anglican Instruments of Communion.

6.4.11 Finding a more acceptable language than *instruments* is challenging. Nothing as yet commends itself, especially given the way in which the language of 'instrument' has become set in the general discourse and mind of the church. This paper has adopted a different approach. First, the paper has argued for the recovery of a more nuanced and richer appreciation of what an instrument is and how it functions in relation to human agency and purpose. Second, the paper has developed the gift-like character of the Instruments of Communion and set this within a distinctly theological framework. Third, the paper has suggested a consistent use of Instruments of Communion rather than Instruments of Unity in order to emphasise a stronger relational dimension.

## **6.5 Towards a deeper harmony of Instruments**

6.5.1 The reflections above bring to the fore the importance of the recovery of a proper and richer relationship *between* the Instruments of Communion. We do not simply need a renewal of the working of the Instruments of Communion; we also need a deeper harmony between the Instruments of Communion. Indeed, these two approaches are complementary. Renewal of the Instruments requires a renewal of communion and communication between the Instruments. The two are co-related. This fact emerges when the history and changing fortunes of the four Instruments of Communion are examined. What can be observed at times is a competitive spirit and tensions that often end up in open conflict. Such things may be symptomatic of deeper issues; however, this simply confirms the view that the Instruments of Communion are a litmus test of what is happening in the Anglican Communion. It also means that the Instruments are uniquely placed to intentionally and prophetically recall the Communion to its true purpose in God's kingdom. In this sense the Instruments are less reactive and more proactive in their work, not simply responding but also anticipating. However this requires a new level of cooperation with each other and with the purposes of God. Through such a cooperative engagement with God and with each other the church will be enabled to move towards a greater symphony of the Instruments of Communion.

# Ecumenical Matters

## **12. Work done: Ecumenical**

### **IASCUFO Report to ACC-15 on Ecumenical Matters**

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## 1. The Anglican Communion and the ecumenical task

*There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all. (Eph 4.4-6)*

For many Christians, the vision of unity found in the New Testament – here in Ephesians and also in Christ’s prayer to the Father in the Gospel of John ‘that they may be one, as we are one’ (John 17.11, 22) – is at the same time both a lived reality and an unreachable goal. In their daily lives, Christians may have deep experiences of unity with other Christians (often in the context of the considerable diversity that is also a mark of God’s people), whilst having at the same time a strong sense that Christians are divided over particular issues. And yet the call to pray and work for the unity given by God to God’s Church remains an imperative to all Christians. In response to that call, Christians work together to proclaim Christ’s gospel in their words and in their deeds, and they consult together to try better to understand and to overcome the divisions between them.

The ecumenical movement was born out of mission. Missionaries increasingly found themselves frustrated by their awareness that they were perpetuating European confessional divisions rather than proclaiming the gospel together. The 1910 World Missionary Conference noted that ‘the divisions within the Christian church weaken its testimony and confuse the total impression made by Christianity on the minds of the non-Christian peoples.’ Those divisions seemed even more pressing in the aftermath of the First World War. In 1920, the Anglican Bishops gathered at Lambeth issued an *Appeal to All Christian People*, affirming that they were ‘inspired by the vision and hope of a visible unity of the whole Church’. The *Life and Work* movement, which sought church unity through practical engagement with the pressing social questions of the time, held its first *World Conference* in 1925. The *World Conference on Faith and Order*, which approached questions of unity from a more theological perspective, first met in 1927. In 1948, after the Second World War, the two movements were brought together in the World Council of Churches.

Dialogues – generally between *historic* churches (those founded in the eighteenth century or before) – have also been taking place since the early twentieth century. These led to the founding of United Churches such as the Churches of North and South India. Unity has also been imposed on Christian churches, as by political authorities in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in China. In recent years, finding ways to dialogue with Pentecostal and

*IASCUF0 members’ thoughts  
on ecumenism*

For me, ecumenism is a way of life: I am an Anglican priest and a theologian; I regularly lead worship in an Episcopal parish in Scotland and an Old Catholic parish in Germany; I teach Reformed candidates for the ministry in Scotland and Lutheran, Reformed and United candidates in Germany; I have been closely involved in dialogue with Lutherans; and I am married to a Roman Catholic.

All that means a continual reflection on what we as Christians and as churches can and should do together and what keeps us apart.

In Glasgow, lived ecumenism offers the hope of overcoming sectarian violence.

*Charlotte Methuen, University of  
Glasgow*

Evangelical churches has become increasingly important. Anglicans—both as churches and as individuals – have been deeply involved in all these ecumenical initiatives and endeavours. From the earliest years of the twentieth century, Anglicans have engaged both in multi-lateral ecumenical movements and gatherings, and in bi-lateral relations with churches of other denominations including Baptist, Lutheran, Methodist, Eastern and Oriental Orthodox, Old Catholic, Reformed and Roman Catholic.

In Southern Africa, churches and Christian bodies will stand together, almost automatically and generally with inter-faith partners, whenever there is some common public issue, from responding to tragedy through to taking a shared stance against corruption.

*Sarah Rowland Jones,  
Cape Town, South Africa*

## 2. IASCUFO's mandate and its ecumenical work

The Inter-Anglican Standing Commission on Unity, Faith and Order (IASCUFO) was constituted to continue the work of both the Inter-Anglican Theological and Doctrinal Commission (IATDC) and the Inter-Anglican Standing Commission on Ecumenical Relations (IASCER). A significant aspect of IASCUFO's mandate consequently includes giving attentive consideration to the ecumenical relationships in which the Churches of the Anglican Communion are engaged, and offering support and advice related to that work.

The IASCUFO mandate makes this clear (passages in the mandate explicitly relating to ecumenical relations are emphasised):

The Standing Commission shall have responsibility:

- **to promote the deepening of Communion** between the Churches of the Anglican Communion, and **between those Churches and the other churches and traditions of the Christian *oikumene***
- **to advise the Provinces and the Instruments of Communion on all questions of ecumenical engagement, proposals for national, regional or international ecumenical agreement or schemes of co-operation and unity**, as well as on questions touching Anglican Faith and Order
- **to review developments in the areas of faith, order or unity in the Anglican Communion and among ecumenical partners, and to give advice to the Churches of the Anglican Communion or to the Instruments of Communion upon them, with the intention to promote common understanding, consistency, and convergence both in Anglican Communion affairs, and in ecumenical engagement**
- **to assist any Province with the assessment of new proposals in the areas of Unity, Faith and Order** as requested.

IASCUFO is therefore charged with wide-ranging responsibilities in the area of ecumenical relations. Ecumenical awareness should also permeate all aspects of its work.

This work is also part of the task of ACC itself. According to its Constitution, the object of the ACC is 'to advance the Christian religion' in areas including ecumenism. ACC is:

- f. to encourage and guide Anglican participation in the ecumenical movement and the ecumenical organisations, to co-operate with the World Council of Churches and the world confessional bodies on behalf of the Anglican Communion, and to make arrangements for the conduct of pan-Anglican conversations with the Roman Catholic Church, the Orthodox churches, and other churches

My ecumenical family, studies and teaching background have shaped me to be an 'ecumenical' man in a country where the word 'ecumenical' itself is often seen as 'diabolic'.

Fortunately, the uniting efforts to address the harsh socio-political and economic conditions are shaping the Congolese churches to become more 'ecumenical'.

*Georges Titre Ande,  
Diocese of Aru,  
Democratic Republic of the Congo*

g. to advise on matters arising out of national or regional church union negotiations or conversations and on subsequent relations with united churches.

h. to advise on problems of inter-Anglican communication and to help in the dissemination of Anglican and ecumenical information.

In accordance with these responsibilities, ACC-14 agreed an extensive resolution (14:01 – see Appendix 1) on Ecumenical Affairs, much of which supported on-going work. In particular, ACC-14 endorsed the Four *Principles of Anglican Engagement in Ecumenism* set out in IASCIER's report *The Vision Before Us*:

1. The Goal: the full organic unity of the Church
2. The Task: recognising and receiving the Church in one another
3. The Process: unity by stages
4. The Content: common faith, sacraments and ministry

ACC-14 also called for further work on the processes of **reception of ecumenical texts**, a task which has been taken up by IASCUFO. In approaching this task, IASCUFO has recognised that it needs to be placed in the wider context of considering the reception of documents and decisions across the Communion. ACC-14 also recommended the study of ecumenical texts, in particular *The Church of the Triune God*, the report of the International Commission for Anglican-Orthodox Theological Dialogue, and *Growing Together in Unity and Mission*, the report of the International Anglican-Roman Catholic Commission for Unity and Mission (IARCCUM). Provincial responses to those reports, requested by June 2011, have largely not been forthcoming, further illustrating the problems of this form of reception. However, it is noticeable that the insights of both these documents are increasingly being brought into the life of the Churches of the Anglican Communion, illustrating another aspect of reception.

Another theme emerging from IASCIER's work, and in particular from the Anglican-Lutheran dialogue, was that which has been called *transitivity*, the way in which different local or regional bilateral agreements affect each other and the implications that the relationships they create have for other Churches of the Anglican Communion and ecumenical partners. Transitivity is discussed in section 4 and appendix 2 of this report.

The IASCUFO mandate also commits it to work on the understanding of Communion, and on the definition of Church, both of which have implications for ecumenical relationships. These are also discussed in section 4.

IASCUFO approached its task at its first meeting in Canterbury in late 2009, by assigning the primary themes to working groups which focussed on reception, transitivity, the church, the Instruments of Communion and the Anglican Communion Covenant. All of these – and particularly the first three – have ecumenical aspects, which members of IASCUFO felt would be fruitful to draw out further. Moreover, it also became clear that these groups could not review and assess the on-going work of dialogues. At the IASCUFO meeting in Cape Town in late 2010, it was consequently agreed that the task of monitoring ecumenical dialogues should be assigned to a specific group which could continue that work between the meetings of the Commission, in consultation with Alyson Barnett-Cowan. Accordingly, an Ecumenical Reference Group met at Lambeth Palace in mid-2011. The results of that meeting were presented to IASCUFO in Seoul in late 2011, and it was decided to form an Ecumenical

Working Group to continue the theological work on reception and transitivity, to follow the work of dialogues, to respond to requests for advice from particular dialogues, and to give attention to ecumenical dimensions of IASCUFO's other work.

### **3. Report of developments in Communion-level dialogues and multilateral forums**

Members of IASCUFO are very aware of the extent of fundamental ecumenical work of shared mission between Anglicans and other partners taking place at local, diocesan and provincial level. This common mission shapes and feeds the encounters on global level which take place in bilateral dialogues. Increasingly on local level, relationships are with independent Evangelical and Pentecostal churches as well as with historical denominations. However, since it is not possible in this report to offer an overview of the wide range of local work in which our ecumenical relationships are founded, this report summarises developments in the global bilateral dialogues (all with the historic churches) and in multilateral encounters in the World Council of Churches and the Global Christian Forum. Communication between the different global bilateral dialogues is facilitated through the Anglican Communion Office's Director for Unity, Faith and Order, who serves as co-secretary for all of these dialogues.

#### **a) *Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission***

The first meeting of the third Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC III) took place at the Monastery of Bose in northern Italy, 17-27 May 2011, and the second in Hong Kong, 3-11 May 2012. Its mandate asks ARCIC III to consider 'the Church as Communion, local and universal, and how in communion the local and universal Church come to discern right ethical teaching'. In both areas, the Commission is asked to build on what is already in the agreed statements of the first two phases of dialogue. The Commission spent much of the first meeting discussing the history and processes of ARCIC II. It explored the mandate in both its ecclesiological and ethical dimensions and developed a plan for its work.

Anglican members are:

The Most Revd David Moxon (co-Chair), Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia

Canon Dr Paula Gooder, England

The Rt Revd Christopher Hill, England

The Revd Dr Mark McIntosh, England

The Rt Revd Nkosinathi Ndwandwe, Southern Africa

The Rt Revd Linda Nicholls, Canada

The Revd Dr Michael Poon, South-East Asia

The Revd Canon Dr Nicholas Sagovsky, England

The Revd Dr Peter Sedgwick, Wales

The Revd Dr Charles Sherlock, consultant, Australia

The Revd Canon Jonathan Goodall, Archbishop of Canterbury's Representative

Reception of the work of ARCIC is overseen by the International Anglican-Roman Catholic Commission on Unity and Mission. Bishop David Hamid (suffragan bishop in the Diocese in Europe of the Church of England) is the Anglican co-chair, and Bishop Don Bolen (Bishop of Saskatoon) the Roman Catholic co-chair. They are beginning to draw up plans to reactivate this

work and to liaise with local and regional ARCs (Anglican-Roman Catholic Committees), where they exist.

**b) *International Commission for Anglican-Orthodox Theological Dialogue (ICAOTD)***

This dialogue has held four meetings in its current phase, which is considering theological anthropology. Papers have addressed:

1. What is a human being?
2. The freedom and growth of the human being with particular reference to the understanding of image and likeness, and
3. Human responsibility for creation; a critical overview of recent statements by our churches

At the meeting in Albania in September 2011, members drew up a schema for their first report. A drafting meeting took place in June 2012 at the Phanar, Istanbul, and a full meeting was held in Chester, England in September 2012. The Chester meeting considered a draft statement which will be reworked in light of the discussions and brought back to the next meeting, to be held in Novi Sad, Serbia in September 2013.

Anglican members are:

Archbishop Roger Herft (co-Chair), Perth, Australia

The Revd Marc Billimoria, Sri Lanka

The Revd Dr Timothy Bradshaw, England

The Rt Revd Richard Clarke, Ireland

The Revd Deacon Dr Christine Hall, England

The Revd Canon Philip Hobson, Canada

Ms Natasha Klukach, WCC, Geneva

Bishop Michael Lewis, Cyprus & the Gulf, Jerusalem & the Middle East

The Revd Dr Gloria Mapangdol, Philippines

The Revd Dr Duncan Reid, Australia

The Revd Canon Professor John Riches, Scotland

Bishop John Stroyan, Warwick, England

The Revd Joseph Wandera, Southern Africa

The Revd Canon Jonathan Goodall, Archbishop of Canterbury's Representative

**c) *Anglican-Oriental Orthodox International Commission (AOOIC)***

The Archbishop of Canterbury wrote to the Heads of the Oriental Orthodox Churches in December 2010 outlining developments since the suspension of the dialogue in 2003 and asking them to consider starting the dialogue anew. A positive response was received from the *Catholicos* of the Armenian Church (Cilicia). Staff are exploring ways to be in friendship with these churches, many of which are in lands experiencing great turmoil.

The Anglican Co-Chair, Bishop Geoffrey Rowell (bishop of the Diocese in Europe of the Church of England), attended the funeral of His Holiness Pope Shenouda III, as the representative of the Archbishop of Canterbury.

At the time of its suspension, the dialogue had addressed the Christological questions which led to the separation of the Oriental Churches from the rest of the Christian churches, and had

produced an agreed statement. This was circulated to the Provinces for approval (although few responses have been received), but no further action has been taken because of the suspension. The dialogue was next to address doctrinal questions related to the Holy Spirit (pneumatology).

**d) Anglican-Lutheran International Commission (ALIC)**

ALIC has completed its present round of dialogue, which focused on the theme of *diakonia*. *Koinonia* is often the topic of ecumenical dialogues, but ALIC argues that *diakonia* is an essential expression of *koinonia*. ALIC'S Jerusalem report, *To Love and Serve the Lord: Diakonia in the Life of the Church*, will be published in late 2012. It explores the way in which the *diakonia Dei* – the *diakonia* of God – shapes the *missio Dei* – the mission of God. The report recommends the setting up of an International Coordinating Committee to continue its work.

Anglican members of this dialogue were:

The Most Revd Fred Hiltz (Co-Chair), Canada

The Revd Canon Alyson Barnett-Cowan, Canada (until appointment to the ACO in 2009)

The Revd Dr Charlotte Methuen, England (now Scotland)

The Rt Revd Musonda (Trevor) Mwamba, Central Africa

The Revd Renta Nishihara, Japan

The Revd William Petersen, USA (initially member; subsequently Consultant)

The Revd Dr Cathy Thompson, Australia

ACC-15 is asked to welcome the ALIC report, *To Love and Serve the Lord*, and its recommendations, to commend the report to the Churches of the Anglican Communion for study, and to affirm the establishment of an Anglican-Lutheran International Coordinating Committee to take this work forward.

**e) Anglican-Methodist International Commission on Unity in Mission (AMICUM)**

The fourth meeting of AMICUM took place in Baltimore in February 2012, hosted by the Methodists. There was opportunity to meet with representatives of the American dialogue, through which The Episcopal Church and the United Methodist Church are moving towards a relationship of full communion. As with ALIC, it surveys and analyses regional agreements, and is conducting a survey of relationships between the churches of the two communions. A drafting meeting took place in Melbourne, Australia in August 2012 to prepare a report which will be finalized in Jamaica in February 2013. The report will survey and analyse regional agreements, provide a theological framework for Anglican-Methodist relationships, address outstanding questions such as the historical episcopate and mutual recognition of ministry, and develop guidelines to assist local and regional dialogues.

Anglican members of this dialogue are:

The Rt Revd Harold Miller (Co-Chair), Ireland

The Revd Canon Dr Paul Avis, England

The Ven Flavio Irala, Brazil

The Revd Dr Garth Minott, West Indies

The Revd Canon Lulama Ntshingwa, Southern Africa

The Rt Revd Surya Prakash, South India

**f) Anglican-Old Catholic International Co-ordinating Council (AOCICC)**

Strictly speaking, AOCICC is not an ecumenical dialogue, since the Churches of the Anglican Communion have been in communion with the Old Catholics of the Utrecht Union since 1931. Rather, AOCICC oversees the common mission of Anglicans and Old Catholics, which is concentrated in continental Europe. Relations are therefore strongest with the Church of England's Diocese in Europe and TEC's Convocation of Churches in Europe. AOCICC met most recently in November 2011. It has produced an important paper on ecclesiology and mission which calls for shared prayer and worship, common witness to the Gospel and joint service to the world, and asks the Old Catholic and Anglican bishops 'to commit themselves to find a visible form for the communion which our churches already share.'

Anglican members were:

The Rt Revd Jonathan Gledhill (Co-chair), England

The Rt Revd David Hamid, England (Europe)

Mrs Maryon Jägers, England (Europe)

The Revd Dr Jeremy Morris, England

The Revd Carola von Wrangel, USA (Convocation)

ACC-15 is asked to commend the work of AOCICC and to recommend that a new Coordinating Council be established to continue this work.

**g) Anglican-Reformed Dialogue**

In June 2011, exploratory talks were held between the Anglican Communion and the World Communion of Reformed Churches, with a view to re-establishing a dialogue between them. There has not been a formal dialogue since the publication in 1984 of *God's Reign and our Unity*, a report which has been influential, despite never having been received officially. These talks were very positive and a proposed Schema has been approved by IASCUFO.

The Schema proposes that the following topics be addressed:

- 1) The nature of communion;
- 2) The history between us;
- 3) Mapping of existing relationships;
- 4) Identifying ultimate and proximate goals;
- 5) The range of missiological challenges facing the two Communion;
- 6) Patterns of worship which shape the Communion;
- 7) Sources of authority and how to discern the work of the Spirit over the ages and in the present time;
- 8) How the traditions build bridges in terms of continuity and discontinuity, embody *episcopate* and transmit ministerial authority and oversight;
- 9) Mutual recognition of churches and reconciliation of ordained ministries;
- 10) Promoting reception of the fruits of this dialogue broadly in the Communion.

A mandate for establishing the talks is being sought from ACC-15 now and will also be sought from the Executive Committee of the WCRC. Due to the reorganisation of the Reformed Communion this work is likely not to begin immediately, but it is hoped that it will start before ACC-16.

**h) World Council of Churches**

(i) The 10th Assembly of the World Council of Churches will take place in Busan, South Korea, 30 October – 8 November 2013, on the theme ‘God of life, lead us to justice and peace,’ inspired by the diversity of Asian contexts and by a growing sense of urgency to care for life and seek justice, and profiting from the unique ecumenical witness of the Korean churches. The Assembly is the most representative body of the WCC; it meets every seven years, bringing together thousands of delegates and visitors. Assemblies are times of celebration and sharing as well as business. An assembly’s central element is its worship life, which draws on the diverse spiritual experience of churches around the world. Most of the Churches of the Anglican Communion are members of the WCC, and the Anglican Communion Office will hold two meetings of Anglican participants during the Assembly.

(ii) Thirty years after the publication of *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* (BEM) in 1982, the WCC’s Commission on Faith and Order has produced a second convergence text, *The Church: Towards a Common Vision*, which explores what *Church* means in the context of its unity and mission in and for the world. Faith and Order is sending this text to all its member churches, councils of churches, and Christian World Communions with a series of questions for formal response; these may also help reflection within the churches themselves. Ecumenical agreement on ecclesiology is a significant stage on the journey towards the unity of the Church for which Christ prayed. The ACC will be invited to commend the text to the Churches of the Anglican Communion for study, and for response to the WCC by those who are members.

(iii) The proliferation of bilateral dialogues since the 1960s led to the creation of the Forum on Bilateral Dialogues. This met in Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania, in March 2012, and focused on the reception of the achievements of the bilateral dialogues in the Global South. The Forum urged the international theological dialogues to be more intentional about questions of membership and methodology, and to attend to the theological questions relating to Christian unity that emerge from the variety of contexts in the South.

Ecumenism means for me the continual discovery of the wonder and variety of the body of Christ.

I am an Australian bishop and theologian. My pastoral ministry has been influenced by a Roman Catholic CPE supervisor. Our daughter’s godmother is a Lutheran pastor; my first teaching appointment was in the Uniting Church in Australia, and for many years I was a member of an Anglican/Uniting national dialogue.

As a theological educator I have had the privilege of teaching and learning from students from across the religious spectrum.

*Stephen Pickard, Australia*

**g) Global Christian Forum**

Anglicans around the world participate at many levels in ecumenical engagement that takes as its starting point sharing experiences of faith, seeing reflections on a lived relationship with Jesus Christ as the foundation for building and deepening conversation and dialogue among partners. Chief among these initiatives is the Global Christian Forum, which has particularly encouraged encounters between Pentecostal and Evangelical Christians and other churches with which links have been weak or absent in other ecumenical contexts. A number of Anglicans attended the Forum's second *Global Event* in Manado, in October 2011.

The Revd Canon Dr Sarah Rowland Jones (Southern Africa) has been the Anglican Communion's representative on the Global Christian Forum Committee since 2003, and currently serves on the Committee's facilitation team that steers the Forum's ongoing work between meetings.

Our understanding of ecumenism is very much formed by the situation of division between the North and the South Korea.

In Christians' efforts for the reconciliation and peace of our nation, Korean Christians discover the real meaning and goal of ecumenism.

One very important thing in the ecumenical efforts is the deep and critical reflection on the past history in which Christians have contributed to antagonism rather than to reconciliation in the area.

This self-reflection by Christians in the situation of division is the starting point of ecumenical effort in Korea.

*Jeremiah Guen Seok Yang  
Sungkonghoe (Anglican)  
University, Seoul, South Korea*

#### 4. Ecumenical aspects of IASCUFO's work

IASCUFO is charged with monitoring ecumenical dialogue around the Anglican Communion, but other aspects of the Commission's work also relate to – or arise from – Anglican ecumenical relationships. These are reviewed in this section.

a) Questions of the deeper understanding of the identity and nature of the Anglican Communion are bound up with a discussion of the **Instruments of Communion**, an important theme of IASCUFO's work. Although not relating explicitly to ecumenical dialogue, this task is relevant to our ecumenical work in a number of ways. Partner churches may ask: 'Who speaks for the Anglican Communion and for whom does the Anglican Communion speak?' Clarification of structures can assist in answering that question.

Moreover, when considering our own structures, we may be able to learn from how our ecumenical partners structure their life at the international, regional and local levels. Through our ecumenical relationships – which encourage us to fuller expression of our own self-understanding, and also hold up a mirror in which we can see ourselves – the Churches of the Anglican Communion gain in understanding of what it is to be Anglican, whilst deepening our appreciation of how the gifts of God's unity transcend boundaries. At the same time, our ecumenical relationships, especially those of (full) communion, offer a reminder that communion is not located in or dependent upon the specific forms and structures which have developed within the Anglican Communion.

b) As the process of receiving the **Anglican Communion Covenant** continues, it will be necessary to assess its implications for ecumenical relations, and to consider the consequences, if any, of some churches having adopted it and others not having done so.

c) Consideration of **the definition and 'recognition' of churches** begins at home. For example, it was important when considering which bodies would be invited to adopt the Anglican Communion Covenant.

Currently, one of the fundamental questions within Anglicanism is the extent to which the Churches of the Anglican Communion can or should be considered together to constitute an Anglican Church. Much recent theological work within the Anglican Communion has focussed

Ecumenism has been an expression of my faith as part of the body of Christ, imperfect, and broken as it may be.

My ecumenical experience began in the different denominational high schools which I attended. This continued in my studies in an ecumenical seminary which I later served for 22 years as lecturer and in last 12 years as President. I was simultaneously President of the ecumenical seminary and President of the Jamaica Council of Churches.

While pursuing doctoral and clinical studies I was registered in a Presbyterian School, pursuing most of my courses at Emory University, a Methodist school, while also doing clinical training for three years in a Southern Baptist Hospital.

I continue to be sought by the ecumenical community in Jamaica, and on the Sunday prior to coming to Dublin I preached in a leading Baptist Church in the city of Kingston.

*Howard Gregory  
Diocese of Jamaica and the  
Cayman Islands*

on the importance of taking seriously what it means to be in communion, both with each other, and with other churches – for the understanding of communion is fundamental not only to the Anglican Communion but to ecumenical relationships. There is, however, a growing view that this approach has been too narrowly focused, and so failed to take adequate account of other ways in which Anglicans experience a sense of mutual belonging (including, for example, feeling at home when worshipping in Anglican churches around the world).

Ecumenical dialogues have produced much material of significance in this area, which can help resource further reflection. AOCICC's recent paper includes useful insights into the practical implications of ecclesiology and the theology of communion. The ALIC report, *To Love and Serve the Lord*, highlights the relationship between ecclesiology and mission, pointing to the way in which shared action can lead to, as well as resulting from, relationships of deeper unity. The work of ARCIC and the earlier Anglican-Reformed Dialogue includes significant insights on the nature of the Church, as have the three agreements Anglican-Lutheran agreements of (full) communion, *Porvoo* (Europe), *Waterloo* (Canada) and *Called to Common Mission* (US), and the nature of communion will also be high on the agenda for future Anglican-Reformed talks. The WCC has done very important work in ecclesiology, adopting *Called to be the One Church* (The Porto Alegre Ecclesiology Text) in 2006; and the convergence text *The Church: Towards a Common Vision* will be presented at the Busan Assembly in 2013. Questions of ecclesiology and the definition of communion arise from the Leuenberg Agreement which constitutes the Community of Protestant Churches in Europe (CPCE), and the CPCE will be undertaking further work in this area. On-going work on Continuing Anglican Churches and their relationship to the Churches of the Anglican Communion may also yield useful insights in this area. IASCUFO will draw on all these resources as it continues its ecclesiological work.

d) **Theological anthropology** has become an increasingly important theme in ecumenical discussions, in some instances prompted by concerns to provide a carefully considered context for addressing aspects of debate around human sexuality and culture. It is currently a focus of the work of both ICAOTD and ARCIC; it is an important theme in Reformed-Roman Catholic discussions, and the World Council of Churches has also considered it. IASCUFO has embarked on work in this area, in which several of the Commission's members have theological expertise. It is hoped that IASCUFO's work will offer a resource to both the Communion and to Ecumenical Dialogues, and help to ensure consistency and coherence in Anglican approaches.

As a New Testament professor in an Anglican seminary, I am continually reminded that every Christian group reads Scripture through the lenses of its own tradition.

Often we do this without knowing it – it's like the air we breathe – until, in conversation with someone from another tradition, we are helped to understand our unexamined assumptions about God, Christ, the Spirit, the Church, the end times, and so many other aspects of our faith.

Kathy Grieb  
Virginia Theological Seminary,  
USA

e) IASCUFO is very aware that almost all ecumenical encounter now takes place in an **interreligious context**. For example, Christians of different traditions may be prompted to stand together because of challenges from some other, perhaps majority, faith tradition. Or Christians may cooperate closely with others from across the faith spectrum in the face of secularising pressures. Further work needs to be done on the implications of these contexts for ecumenical work, drawing on existing Anglican and other resources that explore the theology and best practice of interreligious dialogue.

f) Guidelines outlining the **expectations of Anglican participants in ecumenical dialogues** and in the work of Inter-Anglican commissions have been drawn up by IASCUFO and endorsed by the Standing Committee. IASCUFO also notes the recommendations on the representative range of participation in dialogues and commissions, with the intention of ensuring 'due attention to the breadth of contexts,' proposed in the Statement of the 10th Forum on Bilateral dialogues. Whilst recognising that this is often difficult to achieve, IASCUFO hopes that this principle will be taken seriously in appointments to dialogues, networks, Inter-Anglican commissions and other similar bodies. Recognising that processes of theological reflection vary in different contexts, IASCUFO also encourages consideration of different possibilities for the methodologies of ecumenical dialogues.

g) Particularly, but not only, in the context of Anglican-Lutheran relations, where several regional or local agreements of (full) communion have now been signed, the question arises of how such relationships affect other ecclesial relationships, especially with other members of the two global Communion concerned: so called **transitivity**. For instance: the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America has a relationship of full communion with The Episcopal Church. The question then arises of whether this agreement has any implications for the relationship of an ELCA presbyter who is working in an ecumenical seminary in Jamaica to the Anglican Diocese of Jamaica and the Cayman Islands. Both ALIC and

In Sri Lanka and in the wider Asian context, Ecumenism is understood by taking into consideration the multi-religious pluralistic context and other socio, political and economic factors.

We are conscious of how we become partners of a movement which has a relationship to the Church but is not confined or controlled by the leaders and the elite of the Church.

Our priorities for Ecumenism emerge from the desire to create a movement identified with the suffering and struggling masses in Asia, and is committed to draw from the liberative spiritual wells of Asian religions. We create a movement which will be in partnership with the most vulnerable people, who are also the sinned against in the world.

We understand true Ecumenism as God working in and through the *Oikumene*, by participating and not controlling. However we have institutionalised Ecumenism. Our engagement now has to recognise that this has stifled the Spirit of Ecumenism and established institutions, destroying the movement led by the Spirit of God. In our ecumenical endeavours we need to urge the churches and those beyond church structures to partner with God in the transformation of the broken creation.

*Kumara Illangasinghe,  
Sri Lanka*

IASCUF0 have done work on this, summarised in the Report in Appendix 2.

IASCUF0 recommends that the contextual nature of regional agreements be respected, so that such relationships do not automatically extend to other partner churches. However, IASCUF0 endorses the recommendation by ALIC that agreements of full communion should be deemed to *touch* each other, enabling clergy to transfer between such agreements (so, for example, a priest of the Episcopal Church who moved to Sweden would then come under the Porvoo agreement).

The question of transitivity highlights the need for the Churches of the Anglican Communion to keep the ACO (and thus IASCUF0) informed about regional dialogues. This helps to ensure consistency between dialogues, and also makes it possible for materials produced in the course of regional dialogues and resulting agreements to be shared with, and used by, other Communion partners.

The ACC is asked to endorse the recommendations in IASCUF0's Report on Transitivity.

h) A further major concern, arising from the mandate given to IASCUF0 by ACC-14, is that of **reception**. IASCUF0 was specifically charged with considering the reception of ecumenical documents, but it soon became clear that this question is related to broader issues of how we do (or do not) 'receive one another' at every level and in all areas of our common lives. Reception is about how we learn to see each other in new ways, and it is this process that should be supported through the fruits of ecumenical dialogues and other theological work. The lack of engagement in formal processes of receiving ecumenical and other documents often indicates problems of capacity, but can also suggest that such documents are not easily related to the daily lives of local churches. Those involved in dialogues are increasingly attentive to this problem, considering the kinds of texts being produced, the language in which they are written, their audience and context, constrained resources, and other factors that may impede reception. IASCUF0 also encourages members of ACC to participate actively in reception processes. All this has been set out in further detail in IASCUF0's interim paper on Reception offered to ACC-15.

i) Related to processes of reception is the challenge of **communication**. Ecumenical relationships happen on many different levels and with many different participants. All of these encounters are in some way *incarnational*, manifesting a *charism of encounter*. How this multiplicity of levels and contexts of engagement can be informed by – and themselves inform – each other is an important question. Communication and processes of reception need to flow in all directions. Reflecting on methods of communication, including not simply the imparting

Sometimes ecumenism is treated as though it were concerned solely with inter-church crisis management and/or interreligious diplomacy.

While it is good to seek healing for damaged relationships between churches and religions, and to challenge mutual misunderstandings and disregard, ecumenism is much more than problem-solving or problem-preventing.

Ecumenism offers us challenging and creative theological partners in those from whom we differ in the ways in which we believe and belong, and thus makes possible genuinely new theological insights and developments.

Andrew Pierce,  
*Irish School of Ecumenics*

of information but the designing of events and encounters is increasingly becoming an important part of deepening relationships and engaging in reception. Methods of conscientisation and of liberation pedagogy, classically expressed, for example, by Paolo Freire, could offer useful insights for the development of such processes of encounter. Communication is an issue to which IASCUFO is also giving wider consideration, beyond purely ecumenical concerns.

## 5. Conclusions and future work

IASCUFO's mandate to address ecumenical issues is very broad in its scope. It is clear that much continuing work is to be done, both in relation to bilateral and multilateral dialogues, and in integrating ecumenical perspectives with other areas of activity. The question of Reception, which has implications far beyond the ecumenical arena, is another area of on-going reflection.

In looking ahead, as we have done at our Dublin meeting in September 2012, we also identify particular areas where new, or more intentional, work is required. These include the need to:

- reflect more comprehensively on ecumenical theology;
- strengthen links to networks and other pan-Communion structures and activities, in order to be better informed about their ecumenical dimensions, and so to be able to resource and encourage these out of IASCUFO's work and expertise;
- improve communication around local and regional ecumenical initiatives, to be better able to respond with advice, resourcing, and encouragement as appropriate;
- consider appropriate responses to upcoming major anniversaries, particularly those relating to the Reformation.

I work in a union theological college in Singapore with students coming from more than 15 nations and speaking over 10 languages.

For them, ecumenism is a continuing journey in expanding their cultural world, engaging new patterns of discipleship, and building fresh networks in order to confess Christ together in the contrasting socio-political situations in Asia.

*Michael Nai Chiu Poon,  
Trinity Theological College,  
Singapore*

The earthquakes of the last two years have led the churches of Christchurch and Canterbury NZ to ask how we can share the church buildings that are still safe and secure.

Both the crisis earthquake response and the longer term recovery work also involved high levels of co-operation and shared strategy. However the real challenge will be how we build for the future. Do we have the courage to build intentionally for a shared future?

*Victoria Matthews  
Christchurch, New Zealand*

## Appendix 1: ACC-14 – Resolution 1: Ecumenical Affairs

The Anglican Consultative Council:

- a. thanks the members and staff of the Inter-Anglican Standing Commission for Ecumenical Affairs (IASCER) for their fruitful labours over the last ten years, and commend the Report “The Vision Before Us”, compiled on behalf of the Commission by the Revd Sarah Rowland Jones, for study as a benchmark ecumenical volume in the Provinces of the Anglican Communion;
- b. endorses the “Four Principles of Anglican Engagement in Ecumenism” set out in that Report as a key description of the Anglican approach towards ecumenical activity and goals, adopts the following shorthand to describe them, and commends them to the Churches of the Communion;
  5. The Goal: the full organic unity of the Church
  6. The Task: recognising and receiving the Church in one another
  7. The Process: unity by stages
  8. The Content: common faith, sacraments and ministry
- c. welcomes the Resolutions of IASCER set out in the Report, and endorses those relating to the administration of the “the two sacraments ordained by Christ himself – Baptism and the Supper of the Lord”(Lambeth Quadrilateral) and urges their adoption throughout the Anglican Communion in the light of the importance of convergence on the administration of these sacraments in ecumenical relations;
- d. reaffirms the “Guidelines on Ecumenical Participation in Ordinations” set out in the report of IASCER as describing the best practice for Anglicans in this area;
- e. requests the Standing Committee to commission a review of the processes for the reception of ecumenical texts, as recommended in the Resolution 02.08 of IASCER;
- f. welcomes the continuing work of the various dialogue commissions of the Anglican Communion at present operating, namely the Anglican Old Catholic International Co-ordinating Council, the Anglican Lutheran International Commission and the Anglican Methodist International Commission for Unity in Mission;
- g. looks forward to the Report of the ARCIC Preparatory Commission, and the commissioning of a third phase of the Anglican Roman Catholic International Commission, and the resumption of the work of the International Anglican Roman Catholic Commission for Unity and Mission and the International Commission for Anglican Orthodox Theological Dialogue;
- h. urges the resumption of the work of the Anglican Oriental Orthodox International Commission along the lines set in IASCER Resolution 04.04 point 4
- i. noting the favourable response recorded in the Lambeth Indaba Reflections to the reports “The Church of the Triune God” of the International Commission for Anglican - Orthodox Theological Dialogue and “Growing Together in Unity and Mission” of the International Anglican Roman Catholic Commission for Unity and Mission, commends them to the Provinces of the Communion for study and response as detailed in IASCER Resolutions 07.08 and 08.08, and requests that Provincial responses be submitted to the Anglican Communion Office by the end of June 2011 for consideration by the subsequent meeting of the Inter-Anglican Standing Commission for Unity, Faith and Order;

- j. welcomes the IAS CER Report with respect to the World Council of Churches and urges the Churches of the Anglican Consultative Council to continue their support of, and their participation in, the life of the WCC;
- k. urges Anglican Christians around the world to gather informally with other Christians around God's Word, in prayer and in service.

## Appendix 2: Transitivity

The term *transitivity* was first applied to ecumenical relations in the report of the Anglican-Lutheran International Working Party (ALIWG), *Growth in Communion* (2002). Drawn from mathematics, the term refers to the ways in which particular relationships relate to one another.<sup>102</sup> In an ecumenical context, the term is used to consider whether a particular ecumenical relationship extends to other contexts and partners or not. The question is: how do regional ecumenical agreements between churches which are members of different global communions in one location affect or extend to other parts of the Communion in which one or both partner churches exists?

As *Growth in Communion* report puts it: 'My brother's brother must also be my brother, but my friend's friend is not necessarily my friend' [158]. The question in *Growth in Communion* was set specifically in the context of discussions about relations of (full) communion: if church A is in (full) communion with church B, and church A is also in (full) communion with church C, what are the implications of these relationships for the relations between B and C?

This term has been redrawn and extended in the Kyoto Report of the Inter-Anglican Standing Commission on Ecumenical Relations (IASCER), *The Vision Before Us* (compiled and edited by Sarah Rowland Jones), which offers a summary of and commentary on the current range of agreements into which the Anglican Communion has entered. *The Vision Before Us* uses the concept of *transitivity* to ask 'the question of whether a relationship of communion of one Province ha[s] implications for other Provinces' [19]. IASCER extended the definition of the term *transitivity* from its original use by ALIWG in *Growth in Communion* to ask questions about the implications of a relationships other than those of (full) communion.

The term *transitivity* is not unproblematic when discussing how ecumenical agreements extend to other communion partners, not least because it appears to assume that agreements *should* be extended to others. Whatever we think of the term, however, the underlying questions are important and that they highlight some of the deepest practical and pastoral consequences of local or regional ecumenical agreements between churches which are members of different global communions.

### **Transitivity in ecumenical relationships**

Our search for unity is an imperative which is grounded in our understanding of missiology and ecclesiology as expressed in our Christ's High Priestly Prayer that 'they all may be one' (John 17.22). The ultimate aim of unity is not a matter for the Church alone, but concerns the well-being of all the members of the community of faith and is a witness to all humanity. Efforts to establish regional ecumenical relationships recognise and respond to the fact that one expression of the fractured nature of the church is its manifold manifestation in denominational structures. Ecumenical dialogues arise from the imperative to overcome these fractured structures; they are the process by which denominations seek to work towards

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<sup>102</sup> Mathematically, = is an example of a transitive relationship: if  $a = x$  and  $b = x$  then necessarily  $a = b$ .

In contrast, > is an example of an intransitive relationship: if  $a > x$  and  $b > x$  then this says nothing about whether  $a$  is larger than (>) or smaller than (<)  $b$ .

various levels of unity in the hope that this will lead eventually to the organic unity of the church.

One challenge which arises along the road to dialogue and eventual expressions of communion and unity is that of how the ecumenical efforts which have been advanced by particular member churches within the Anglican Communion in a particular national or regional context can be acknowledged and related to by their sister churches in the Communion.

While ecumenical agreements involving local and regional churches within the Anglican Communion have not been limited to Lutherans, the question arises particularly in the context of Anglican-Lutheran relations, since Agreements of (full) communion have now been agreed between Anglicans and Lutherans in three areas of the world.

In Europe, the British and Irish Anglican Churches are in communion with the Lutheran Churches of Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Lithuania, Norway, Sweden, and from 2010 Denmark (excluding Latvia) are in communion (*Porvoo Declaration 1992*).

In the USA, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America is in communion with the Episcopal Church (*Called to Common Mission 1999/2000*).

In Canada, the Anglican Church of Canada is in communion with the Lutheran Church of Canada (*Called to Full Communion: The Waterloo Declaration 2000*).

Given the global nature of much of modern life, inevitably there is some movement of lay people and clergy between places where there are agreements of communion to other places where there is no such agreement, or a different agreement. Additionally, in some cases congregations belonging to a church which has an agreement can exist in another region which does not, or which has another agreement. Thus the question has arisen as to how Lutheran churches from one region of the world might recognize Anglican churches from another region, and *vice versa*.

*Growth in Communion* noted that it is often not satisfactory to ask churches from one region simply to sign onto the agreement of churches from another region. This recognizes the fact that such agreements are contextual. The specific ways in which Lutheran and Anglican churches in one area are reconciled relate to the history and the characteristics of the churches in the region. Moreover, the commitments associated with each agreement include undertaking to engage in common life and mission, something which is not possible outside of the context shared between the partners to the agreement.

The Anglican Churches involved in these agreements are all in communion with one another through the Anglican Communion; the Lutheran Churches are in communion through the Lutheran World Federation. However, the Lutheran churches involved in these agreements are not part of the Anglican Communion, although representative bishops may be (and usually are) invited to the Lambeth Conference. The question of the *transitivity* of these relationships concerns the impact on the rest of the Communion when one Province within the Anglican Communion enters into communion with another denomination: what consequences does this

relationship have for the churches or provinces which have not been party to such dialogue or agreement?

Similar questions also arise in relation to the Churches of North and South India, which are United Churches which relate to several global communions. Questions also arise about the implications of new relations of (full) communion entered into by Anglicans for existing relations, for instance with the Old Catholic Churches of the Union of Utrecht, with which the whole Anglican Communion has been in communion since 1931. As Anglican relationships with Methodist churches deepen in some areas of the world, similar questions will also emerge.

That this is not just a theoretical issue can be seen from the particular challenges arising from such relationships, which in turn give rise to a range of practical and pastoral questions relating to communion.

For instance:

What is the relationship between the Episcopal parish in Frankfurt-am-Main (falls under *Called to Common Mission*) and the Swedish Church in Frankfurt (falls under *Porvoo*)? Can they celebrate a shared Eucharist or not? Is the situation different if the service also involves the American Lutheran Pastor in Frankfurt who is a member of the ELCA, which is in communion with both?

A Lutheran presbyter from the Church of Sweden may be licensed to the Church of England's Diocese of Gibraltar in Europe, but can that person's ministry be accepted by the Convocation of American Churches in Europe? Similarly, although the Convocation would accept the ministry of a presbyter from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) could that person minister in the Diocese in Europe?

What is the relationship of an ELCA presbyter who is working in an ecumenical seminary in Jamaica to the Anglican Diocese of Jamaica and the Cayman Islands?

## **Theological issues relating to the extension of agreements of (full) communion**

*Growth in Communion* noted that there are good theological reasons why these relationships of communion should be transitive – 'ie that if two churches are in communion, they ought in principle to both be in communion with all churches with which either is in communion' [§159]. Moreover, Anglicans and Lutherans in some parts of the world have also expressed frustration that they cannot directly benefit from agreements reached elsewhere by better resourced Provinces, but are expected to pursue their own local dialogues.

However there are also structural and theological reasons why it is not possible simply to extend relationships from one part of the world to another. Several of these are highlighted in *Growth in Communion*:

1. The structures of decision-making in the Anglican Communion are such that local or regional decisions by individual churches are not binding on the whole communion.
2. Local and regional ecumenical agreements are contextual in nature, reflecting the specific realities of the churches involved and their histories together.
3. Agreements may commit particular churches to taking actions (for instance, the affirmation of the episcopate or agreeing that only ordained ministers will preside at the Eucharist) which other churches in that communion would not wish to take. This can be the case, for instance within the Lutheran World Federation and for Methodist and Reformed churches, particularly on questions of the episcopate.

To these can be added a range of issues which highlight the difficulty of simply extending agreements made in particular contexts to other contexts:

1. *Transitivity* speaks first to a relationship between an Anglican church or churches and a church or churches of another denomination. The question of how other Anglican churches may be related to the non-Anglican party to the relationship is generally a secondary consideration. In the case of Anglican communities within the Global South, the path towards accepting such agreements may be impeded by relics and prejudices of the past, left behind by the churches of the North which brought Christianity to these regions. Any move towards the geographical extension of such agreements should involve rapprochement with both the communion partner and the non-Anglican partner in both regions. This can be a particular problem in the face of the fact that denominational divisions were brought into and imposed upon the churches of the South by missionaries from Europe and North America. In particular, there may be suspicion that ecumenical initiatives are guided by prevailing paradigms of the global marketplace which sees mergers as the way to grow and to gain strength, or by the experiences of decline of the churches in the North.
2. Local ecumenical agreements must be the outcome of a dialogical/relational process which cannot be circumvented by receiving bodies. It is therefore not appropriate simply to transpose one agreement from one part of the Communion to another.
3. Regional agreements of (full) communion or of mutual eucharistic and pulpit hospitality generally grow out of an experience of cordial relationships and of shared mission.

However, the experience in other regional settings may be different and require a more prolonged and conciliatory approach.

4. Canon law differs in churches across the Anglican Communion. Therefore it is possible that agreements which involve mutual recognition and interchangeability of ministries in one church of the Anglican Communion may be incompatible with the canon law of another church of the Communion.
5. Agreements made in one region may not address particular concerns which would have been raised by churches in another region. For example, partner churches in some regions may have particular concerns relating to the definition of the boundaries and limits of Anglican diversity in the area of authority and/or ecclesiology.
6. In some regions, local churches may have close relationships to a particular mission agency which may affect that church's ability to enter into relationships with other denominations or to undertake joint efforts in mission.

The question of whether and how agreements of (full) communion can and should extend to other areas must be attentive to these issues. Decisions will need to be sensitive to the situation of the partners in the particular context. There is not going to be a *one size fits all* answer.

Consequently, communion cannot simply be imposed on churches. The example of the Congo is instructive here. From the 1970s, over a period of around five years, sixty-four different Protestant denominations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo had a relationship of communion imposed on them, forming them into the L'Eglise du Christ au Congo (ECC). Some of the churches involved had been very hostile to the Anglican Church, and although the imposed communion did bring about some new relationships and some exploration of possible practical consequences – for instance the exchange of preachers, and some joint mission projects – many of the old hostilities have remained. It is precisely these kinds of issues that can and must be addressed through more gradual, and comprehensive, progress in relationships.

For all these reasons, those who live in areas where agreements of (full) communion exist may not simply assume that arrangements made under such an agreement can simply be transferred to another place. This may require education about the particular nature of some relationships and the awareness that restraint may sometimes need to be exercised.

On the other hand, the resources of regional dialogues in one area of the world may prove useful to churches elsewhere. For instance, on 3 April 2009, the Episcopal Church of Ecuador and the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ecuador signed a locally adapted version of the text which underlies the *Meissen Agreement* between the Church of England and the Protestant Church in Germany, and entered into a relationship allowing mutual eucharistic and pulpit hospitality without full interchangeability of ministries. This is a very fruitful example of the use of ecumenical work in one region to resource a relationship in another.

## Laying foundations for transitive relationships

To help to make ecumenical discussion more easily extensible to other contexts, we suggest that the following should be borne in mind:

1. Local and regional conversations should be treated as Communion concerns and not just as local matters.
2. Proposed local and regional agreements toward (full) communion should be shared with the rest of the Communion, especially those geographically close or likely to be affected, before being adopted by national or regional churches.
3. Such agreements should include clear strategies for encouraging and equipping churches to live out the enhanced relationship at the local level.
4. Official dialogues and conversations on all levels should reflect and be continually attentive to relationships in parishes and local churches.
5. Agreements in a regional context should explicitly be understood by the parties involved to have no automatic consequences for their members who may be dispersed in other geographical locations.

Additionally:

6. The Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral must be viewed as fundamental to any such conversation.<sup>103</sup>
7. The use of the terms *communion* and *full communion* in regional agreements should be restricted to those in which full interchangeability of ministries is agreed.
8. The language of (full) communion should be slow in adoption, and it must be taken seriously that this must be more than a formal statement.

At the same time, member churches should be encouraged to recognize that other parts of a partner church with which they are in negotiations may have overseas connections to other geographical locations where the Anglican Communion exists, and that agreements may exist in other places which may offer useful resources. The materials and process of dialogue with such Communion partners should be made available via the Anglican Communion Office, so that each area of the Communion does not have to re-invent the wheel.

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<sup>103</sup> The Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral, adopted by the 1888 Lambeth Conference, affirms: 'That, in the opinion of this Conference, the following articles supply a basis on which approach may be by God's blessing made towards home reunion:

- a. The Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, as "containing all things necessary to salvation," and as being the rule and ultimate standard of faith.
- b. The Apostles' Creed, as the baptismal symbol; and the Nicene Creed, as the sufficient statement of the Christian faith.
- c. The two sacraments ordained by Christ himself - Baptism and the Supper of the Lord - ministered with unailing use of Christ's words of institution, and of the elements ordained by him.
- d. The historic episcopate, locally adapted in the methods of its administration to the varying needs of the nations and peoples called of God into the unity of his Church.'

## Transitivity in the Anglican-Lutheran context – a specific proposal

As noted above, Anglicans and Lutherans have entered into agreements of (full) communion in several geographical areas:

In Europe, the British and Irish Anglican Churches are in communion with the Lutheran Churches of Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Lithuania, Norway, Sweden, and from 2010 Denmark (excluding Latvia) are in communion (*Porvoo Declaration 1992*).

In the USA, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America is in communion with the Episcopal Church (*Called to Common Mission 1999/2000*).

In Canada, the Anglican Church of Canada is in communion with the Lutheran Church of Canada (*Called to Full Communion: The Waterloo Declaration 2000*).

These agreements are specific to those places. Further agreements involving limited interchangeability of ministry (pulpit fellowship and mutual Eucharistic hospitality) also exist in a number of areas. Again, these are specific to those areas.

However, given the fact that people move around the globe, appropriate ways, sensitive to the local situation, need to be found to receive Lutherans or Anglicans who have experienced living in particular relationships with each other when they move to another region. In such situations it is important to operate on principles of trust and hospitality.

The Anglican-Lutheran International Commission (in its Jerusalem Report, *To Love and Serve the Lord: Diakonia in the Life of the Church*, 2012) has suggested that across the three areas where (full) communion has been established should be regarded as effectively transitive, or as *touching* each other. In particular:

- ❑ *Lay People:* While more work needs to be done on the status of confirmation in both our Communions, it is recommended that lay people from anywhere within the other Communion be received with the same status they have in their own Communion. Unless they are seeking ordination in the other Communion, those confirmed in one Communion in areas where there are (full) communion agreements should not normally be confirmed in the other Communion.
- ❑ *Diaconal ministers and deacons:* While more work needs to be done on the equivalency of diaconal ministers and deacons, in principle Anglican and Lutheran churches in areas where there are (full) communion agreements should be able to permit diaconal ministers and deacons from other churches in (full) communion agreements to perform any diaconal liturgical role that they would normally perform in their own church.
- ❑ *Presbyters:* Ordained Lutheran pastors from churches with which Anglican churches have (full) communion agreements should be recognized in other Anglican churches in areas where there are full communion agreements in the same way as priests from other Anglican Provinces. Similarly Anglican priests from churches with which Lutheran churches have (full) communion agreements should be recognized by other Lutheran churches in areas where there are full communion agreements in the same way as ordained pastors from other Lutheran churches. They should be invited to

participate in the laying on of hands at ordinations of pastors and priests as appropriate in local custom. Subject to their qualifications for a particular appointment, they should be eligible for positions in ministry.

- *Bishops:* Bishops from churches in (full) communion agreements may as appropriate be invited to participate in the laying on of hands at the ordination of bishops in any other diocese of the other Communion which falls under a full communion agreement. Such bishops may also be invited to perform other episcopal duties in such dioceses, subject always to the approval of both local bishops and under the jurisdiction of the bishop of the church in which they are asked to serve.

If these recommendations are well received, it is hoped that the next stage of the Anglican-Lutheran work will be able to find ways of implementing them through discussions with the commission which supervise the implementation of these regional (full) communion relationships.

### **13. Work done: Theological Anthropology**

At its meeting in Seoul, IASCUFO observed that several of the ecumenical dialogues are considering theological questions related to the nature of the human person. The International Commission for Anglican-Orthodox Theological Dialogue (ICAOTD) is discussing the implications of what it means for human beings to be made in the image and likeness of God. The Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC) has ethics on its agenda, and ethical questions are closely linked to theological anthropology. The topic has also been proposed for the conversations with the World Communion of Reformed Churches.

IASCUFO therefore mandated a working group from among its members to survey Anglican work in this field, and to coordinate with Anglicans in the ecumenical dialogues to ensure consistency. As the work really got underway only at the Dublin meeting, it is too early to report any findings for ACC-15

# Resolutions

## **14. Resolutions for ACC-15**

The following resolutions have been sent by IASCUFO to the Resolutions Committee, which may edit them.

### **A. Anglican-Reformed**

That the ACC-15 mandate the establishment of a dialogue with the World Communion of Reformed Churches, according to the Schema prepared at the exploratory talks.

#### **Explanatory note/ Background information**

In June 2011, exploratory talks were held between the Anglican Communion and the World Communion of Reformed Churches, with a view to re-establishing a dialogue between them. There has not been a formal dialogue since the publication in 1984 of *God's Reign and our Unity*, a report which has been influential, despite never having been received officially. These talks were very positive and a proposed Schema has been approved by IASCUFO.

The Schema proposes that the following topics be addressed:

- 11) The Nature of Communion
- 12) The History between us
- 13) Mapping of existing relationships
- 14) Identifying ultimate and proximate goals
- 15) The range of missiological challenges facing the two Communion
- 16) Patterns of worship which shape the Communion
- 17) Sources of authority and how to discern the work of the Spirit over the ages and in the present time
- 18) How the traditions build bridges in terms of continuity and discontinuity, embody *episcopate* and transmit ministerial authority and oversight
- 19) Mutual recognition of churches and reconciliation of ordained ministries
- 20) Promoting reception of the fruits of this dialogue broadly in the Communion

A mandate for establishing the talks is being sought from ACC-15 now and will also be sought from the Executive Committee of the WCRC. Due to the reorganisation of the Reformed Communion this work is likely not to begin immediately, but is hoped that it will start before ACC-16.

## **B. Faith and Order Commission of the WCC: *The Church: Towards a Common Vision***

Be it resolved that this Anglican Consultative Council:

welcomes the publication of *The Church: Towards a Common Vision*, the convergence text of the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches, commends it to the Churches of the Anglican Communion for study, and requests those which are members of the World Council of Churches to submit their responses to the Faith and Order Commission and to copy their responses to the Anglican Communion Office.

### **Explanatory note/ Background information**

Thirty years after the publication of *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* (BEM) in 1982, the WCC's Commission on Faith and Order has produced a second convergence text, *The Church: Towards a Common Vision* which explores what 'Church' means in the context of its unity and mission in and for the world. Faith and Order is sending *The Church* to churches, councils of churches, and Christian World Communions with a series of questions for formal response which may also help reflection within the churches themselves. Ecumenical agreement on ecclesiology is a significant stage on the journey towards the unity of the Church for which Christ prayed.

## **C. Anglican-Lutheran International Commission (ALIC)**

Be it resolved that this Anglican Consultative Council:

welcomes the *Jerusalem Report* of the Anglican-Lutheran International Commission ('To Love and Serve the Lord', LWF 2012), commends the report to the churches of the Anglican Communion for study and action, endorses its recommendations, and in particular affirms the establishment of a Coordinating Committee to take this work forward.

### **Explanatory note/ Background information**

The *Jerusalem Report* asks both Communions:

1. a. To encourage our churches to pursue common development of a wide range of ministries and for the building up of Lutheran and Anglican relationships on all levels of ecclesial life and mission;
- b. To challenge member churches to find ways in which they may do more together on all levels for disaster relief and to advocate on issues relating to climate change, illegitimate debt, HIV and AIDS, and other pressing social concerns of peace, justice, and the integrity of creation;

- c. To encourage churches not in a relation of communion with each other to begin conversations around the invitations to shared *diakonia*, especially as it is developed in this report, and simultaneously to consider cooperation in diaconal projects;
  - d. In particular, to encourage the All Africa Anglican–Lutheran Commission to move to the formal signing of those agreements on full communion which have been agreed in various consultations since 1992 but not yet endorsed;
  - e. To encourage ways to be with one another in decision making (following the model of the 2013 joint meeting in Canada of the Evangelical Lutheran Church’s National Convention and the Anglican Church’s General Synod);
  - f. To encourage churches to revisit and continue to consider the recommendations from *Growth in Communion*, especially Recommendation 6, Paragraph 214 concerning ‘mutual visits and common action by church leaders’
  - g. To commend to the churches the appendix on Transitivity.
2. To continue regular Joint Staff Meetings, and to include a focus on possibilities for shared *diakonia*;
  3. To seek opportunities to participate reciprocally in each other’s networks and programmes
  4. To establish a Coordinating Committee to aid in taking the next steps

The proposed mandate for the Coordinating Committee is on page 44 of The Jerusalem Report.

#### **D. Anglican-Old Catholic International Coordinating Council (AOCICC)**

Be it resolved that this Anglican Consultative Council:

1. commends the paper *Belonging together in Europe: A joint statement on aspects of ecclesiology and mission* to ACC-15 as a sufficient basis on which to proceed to further concrete proposals for common mission between the Anglican Communion and the Old Catholic Churches of the Union of Utrecht on the European continent.
2. renews the mandate for the Anglican-Old Catholic International Coordinating Council, asking it:
  - a. To continue to explore the nature and meaning of our communion
  - b. To promote knowledge of our churches and their relationship
  - c. To assist the annual meeting of Old Catholic and Anglican Bishops in Europe to develop a common definition and understanding of shared mission and coordinated oversight for their work

- d. To explore the possibility of establishing a representative body to oversee relationships in Europe
- e. To advise on the establishment of appropriate instruments and concrete proposals for joint initiatives in mission work in continental Europe
- f. To review the consistency of ecumenical agreements and dialogues of the churches of the Anglican Communion and the Union of Utrecht

3. thanks the Anglican members of the Coordinating Council and request that new members be appointed in the usual manner (*the Archbishop of Canterbury to name the Anglican co-chair in consultation with the Secretary General, and the Secretary General to name the Anglican members in consultation with the Archbishop of Canterbury*).

### **Explanatory note/ Background information**

The churches of the Anglican Communion and the Old Catholic Union of Utrecht have been in communion with each other since the signing of the *Bonn Agreement* of 1931. The Anglican-Old Catholic International Coordinating Council was asked to undertake a theological study of the basis for their relationship, as it has evolved since 1931, as a foundation for common mission in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The Old Catholic churches are all located on the continent of Europe, which is why the paper looks only at mission in that context.

### **E. Transitivity**

Be it resolved that this Anglican Consultative Council:

affirms the report on Transitivity and commends it to the churches of the Communion, inviting them where appropriate to implement its recommendations on “Laying foundations for transitive relationships”.

### **Explanatory note/ Background information**

Transitivity is a term that is used in the ecumenical context. It is the question of the relationship of different ecumenical agreements to one another. The report on transitivity arose in the context of the Anglican Lutheran international conversations. It is found at in the IASCUFO Report, Ecumenical Section, Appendix 2.

#### **Documents:**

*The Church: Towards a Common Vision* (WCC) – some copies will be available at ACC

*The Jerusalem Report* ALIC Report

*Belonging together in Europe* Anglican-Old Catholic ecclesiological paper