



THE FAITH ONCE FOR ALL DELIVERED

An Australian Evangelical Response to
The Windsor Report

Edited by
Peter G. Bolt, Mark D. Thompson and Robert Tong

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The Australian Church Record

In conjunction with the Anglican Church League

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In the Place of a Preface

In the following pages you will find a sustained engagement with and critique of *The Windsor Report* from the perspective of classical evangelicalism. The report to which we here respond is the long-awaited official response of the Lambeth Commission to the consecration of a practicing homosexual as a bishop in the diocese of New Hampshire and a decision of the Diocese of New Westminster in Canada to authorize the blessing of same sex unions. These actions have been proclaimed as a new crisis in the Anglican Communion, as have the attempts to silence opposition to them. The breach of fellowship that has resulted is so serious as to warrant a description of these actions as schismatic.

Only the most churlish would suggest that there is nothing worthwhile in *The Windsor Report*. It is an honest attempt to grapple with the current problems facing the Anglican Communion. There is an attempt to give the teaching of Scripture a high profile. There is a recognition that the prime responsibility for the current crisis lies with the actions of ECUSA and the diocese of New Westminster. There are numerous helpful insights about the responsibilities entailed in fellowship and the way these operate within the overall context of faithfulness to the biblical gospel. This report deserves the careful attention of all who are concerned about the Anglican witness to Christ in the twenty-first century.

Nevertheless, it is the conviction of the authors of this response that the report is deeply flawed at numerous levels. It operates on the basis of certain questionable and unexamined presuppositions. Its theological foundations are not all that they seem with, for instance, appeal to some biblical texts which are tangential to the issues under review whilst much more pertinent texts are ignored. Its historical reflections are, at important points, both imprecise and misleading. Its analysis of the current situation in the Anglican Communion is also deeply problematic with a less than adequate treatment of the schismatic actions of certain American, Canadian (and indeed British) bishops and a failure to grasp the constitutional differences between the various provinces which renders the report's own proposal of an Anglican Covenant almost certainly unworkable. The complete lack of reference to the coercive behaviour of some bishops in America, Canada, the U.K. and elsewhere towards those who remain faithful to biblical teaching on human sexuality-behaviour which should be roundly condemned-is nothing less than scandalous. The attempt to include as part of the problem the pastoral response by Anglicans outside of each affected diocese is equally scandalous - if not more so.

In the light of these concerns a rigorous critique of *The Windsor Report* is an urgent need. As this document itself bears witness by its use of *The Virginia Report*, such reports quickly tend to assume a life of their own and are soon quoted as the settled position of the Anglican Communion even though there may have been no official endorsement and no constitutional adoption of their proposals. For this reason alone we can afford neither a superficial endorsement of the report and its recommendations nor a premature dismissal of them. Where biblical, theological, and historical claims are made they need to be tested

against the evidence. However, just as critically, we need to be made aware of the rhetorical devices employed in this report. Are we being pushed towards certain conclusions by the language of the report rather than the evidence to which it appeals?

We have put together a paragraph by paragraph commentary on the report together with a collection of very brief essays on important issues that arise as it is read. With the exception of the essays by Woodhouse, Knox and Jensen, all the others have been written in response to issues raised directly by the report. The Woodhouse and Knox essays were written for other purposes, but have been included as they discuss matters raised by the report. Archbishop Jensen wrote his essay before *The Windsor Report* was commissioned, as a response to the events that it would eventually address. It is hoped that both the commentary and the essays will provide those who are interested, and in particular the Primates of the Anglican Communion who will meet to consider *The Windsor Report* in February 2005, with a clear evangelical perspective on the report and its recommendations. As will become clear in the pages that follow, the issues that have arisen in the past few years are not really a 'new crisis' at all, but are symptomatic of trends that stretch back much further in our shared history. Furthermore, they are matters of serious concern to faithful Christian men and women all over the world - not merely to Anglicans. Most important of all, these are challenges which we face in the presence of the living God, the One to whom we must all give account. May God give us grace to renew our commitment to the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ and to repent of all words and behaviour that compromise its life-giving truth.

Peter Bolt

Mark Thompson

Robert Tong

Australia Day 2005

PART I

COMMENTARY

The Windsor Report: An Outline with Commentary

PETER BOLT, MARK THOMPSON, ROBERT TONG

In this commentary, we have not considered it necessary to repeat in detail the contents of each of the paragraphs of *The Windsor Report*, since *The Report* is readily available.¹ Instead, after a brief reference to the contents of the paragraph, we proceed to offer comment upon it.

We have designed this chapter as a reference guide to *The Report*. As such we expect readers will consult the comment on paragraphs which interest them rather than read the commentary from beginning to end. In order to make the individual comments intelligible and place them in a wide theological and historical framework, a degree of repetition is inevitable. Where relevant we have included a reference to one of the essays which follow in this volume, in which the reader will find further discussion and a fuller rationale for the comments made in this chapter.

Section A: The Purposes and Benefits of Communion

The Communion we have been given in Christ: Biblical Foundations (paragraphs 1–5)

Paragraph 1 opens *The Report* by noting that the context for God's people understanding their call and identity, and for the ordering of their life, is provided by God unveiling his plan in Jesus Christ. It is a plan for 'the rescue of the whole created order' and its 'initial achievement' in its unveiling in Jesus Christ.

A reference to God's work in Christ and the inauguration of the Kingdom of God is certainly a good place to begin. The future Kingdom of God – inaugurated and guaranteed by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead — provides the perspective against which all human beings ought to re-order their lives. With the coming of Jesus Christ, the time of reformation has begun (see Hebrews 9:10 and Titus 1:5) and this anticipates the renovation of all things at his return (Acts 3:21; Matt. 19:28). But we ought to note that the New Testament includes the warning that this coming Kingdom of God will also entail the judgement of those who are not 'in Christ'. The apostolic gospel, and the New Testament in its entirety, offers a very clear warning that, without repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus, certain practices — including homosexuality, the issue of concern that has given rise to *The Windsor Report* — will actually *exclude* people from the Kingdom (1 Cor. 6:9–10; cf. Gal. 5:21) and place them, instead, under the coming wrath of God (cf. Eph. 5:6 and Col. 3:6). In fact, it is *because* of such things that the wrath of God is coming upon the world (see also Romans 1:18ff.).

¹ It can be downloaded from www.anglicancommunion.org/windsor2004

The great joy that spills out of the New Testament is due to Jesus, through his death on the cross, being the one who brings rescue from the coming wrath (1 Thess. 1:10). But this is not automatic for all people. It is only those who are justified by faith in his blood that will be saved from the coming wrath (Rom. 5:1–11). At this point we should notice that the doctrine of ‘justification by faith’, which is so important to the New Testament, and absolutely foundational according to the services of the Book of Common Prayer and the Thirty Nine Articles (Article XI, XII, XIII), is invisible in *The Windsor Report*. This is no doubt due to the authors capitulating to a current trend in scholarship that seeks to unseat this doctrine from its proper place. Although this is not the place to argue the point, it must be noted that *The Windsor Report* seems to have dispensed with the doctrine that Anglicanism’s reformation heritage called ‘the well-spring of the church’. But surely this doctrine of justification is sorely needed in the current crisis, both to ensure that any discipline that is applied is a gospel discipline (rather than a legal one), and to bring the comfort of the gospel to those who are urged to repent. In fact, this central doctrine should have a myriad of applications to the current state of affairs within the Anglican Communion. It most certainly needs to be recovered and reinstated.

Jesus’ rescue is for those who put their faith in him and re-order their lives according to the direction given by his authorised apostles in the New Testament writings. The ‘rescue of the whole created order’ will see those without such repentance and faith not joining in the new creation, but rather suffering the wrath of God. This gives an added urgency to the task of gospel proclamation, so that all people everywhere might hear God’s command to repent (Acts 17:31), and receive the grace of God that is found only through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. With such good news of grace available, why would anyone cling to present sinful practices? The gospel of Christ calls them to leave this behind, in order to be saved from the wrath to come and enter into the coming new creation.

It is also worth noting in passing, that although God’s plan is most certainly revealed in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, we should not overlook the primary fact that it was *God Himself, in the person of the Son*, who was revealed to this sad and broken world. The gospel’s invitation to join the coming Kingdom of God is, in fact, God offering fellowship with Himself to humanity, so that we might call God our Father, and begin to take on the family likeness. The wonder of the gospel is that we sinful human beings can be called children of God. Being recipients of God’s mercy leads to profound changes in our lives. This is a real metamorphosis (cf. Rom. 12:1–2) orchestrated by the third person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit, in which life becomes focussed upon pleasing our heavenly Father. Once again, because sinfulness does not please Him, the apostolic deposit that comes to us in the New Testament urges people to rid their lives of these things.

Drawing upon Ephesians, **paragraph 2** tells us that God’s people are to be ‘an anticipatory sign’ of God’s glorious future. The ‘redeemed unity which is God’s will for the whole creation is to be lived out within the life of the church’. Holiness is important because the church ‘shares in God’s mission to the world through the fact of its corporate life’. **Paragraph 3** concludes that the unity, communion, and radical holiness ‘are rooted in the trinitarian life and purposes of the one God’, and they ‘serve and signify God’s mission to the world’. These three belong together and, as they are worked out in ‘severely practical contexts’, they indicate ‘a new way of being human’.

The basic mission of God is, of course, the Father sending the Son into our world to deal with our sin and its due penalty (see Rom. 8:3–4). The risen Son continues this mission through the preaching of the apostolic gospel, which now issues an invitation to both Jew and Gentile to receive the forgiveness of sins (Luke 24:45–48). By repentance and

faith, people from all nations can gain access to the benefits won by Christ on our behalf. Thus, believers are first and foremost *recipients* of God's mission. As individual believers continue to chatter the apostolic gospel to their friends and neighbours, Christ's mission continues through that powerful word (e.g. 1 Thess. 1:5–10; 2:13; 2 Thess. 3:1). As people who are recipients of God's mission and who are then caught up in it, it is incumbent upon Christian people to live lives that are worthy of the gospel we proclaim (e.g. Phil. 1:27; see also Eph. 4:1). Since the church is the local assembly of believers — 'a congregation of faithful men' (Article XIX) —, it does not have a mission as such, but the corporate life of the congregation serves the mission by strengthening believers for their work of mission in the world.

Given this important role—to pick up the language of *The Report*—it is crucial that the church is united in the fellowship of the gospel and that this fellowship is marked by holiness. But we should also note that this paragraph illustrates a mistake that is found constantly throughout *The Windsor Report*. The paragraph picks up language that the New Testament applies to *congregations* and simply applies it without qualification to the loose international entity known as the Anglican Communion. This slide should not pass by without comment, for it is a grave error and seriously misleading. The unity that Paul speaks of is worked out intra-congregationally, in the real stuff of human existence and relational life. The body of Christ envisaged in the New Testament is not a loose confederation, such as the Anglican Church of Australia, nor is it an even looser collection of confederations which are related historically, such as the Anglican Communion. Ephesians is speaking of the local church. As noted above, this is also reaffirmed by the 39 *Articles* (Article XIX). If there is a larger body, it is the heavenly church of which local churches are an expression. Unity, fellowship and holiness are to be worked out in local congregations, where real people are in proximity to other real people. The New Testament language addressed to congregations should not be applied to a confederation, or to an association of confederations, for this is not the arena in which the personal relationships of Christian men and women are lived out in everyday life. There may be some secondary, derivative application of this language and these concepts, but this should be carefully spelled out, beginning with the grass-roots, week by week gathering of believers in each locality around the globe.²

Paragraph 4 then turns to 1 Corinthians, which shows Paul reminding the people of God of their 'identity in Christ' and all the riches enjoyed in that position. The 'climax' of the letter is said to be the 'exposition of what it means to live as the Body of Christ, united in diversity', i.e. chapter 12, in which unity is 'characterised not by a mechanistic or formal structure but by that all-demanding and all-fulfilling virtue [...] love (chapter 13)'. Once again, this is properly language addressed to the local congregation. In the current climate, the notion of 'diversity' is often abstracted from its New Testament portraits and generalised beyond warrant. The diversity that is being illustrated in 1 Corinthians 12 is the diversity of gifts given by the Spirit. The application to, say, a diversity of belief systems, or of moral lifestyles or practices, is completely illegitimate. Rather than chapter 12 being the climax of the letter, this position properly belongs to chapter 15, where Paul provides the gospel that was preached and believed in Corinth. Here is the true source of unity.³ We should also note that the letter recognises an unhealthy 'diversity', in that the congregation has dissolved into factions around various leaders (see chapter 1). In this context, the aim of Paul's letter is to get the congregation to all 'speak the same' (1.10, literally). This is not a 'celebration of diversity' (*Windsor par. 3*), but of radical conformity. There is no doubt in the apostle's mind that this common faith will also produce a common morality (see, amongst

² The view of church in this paragraph is assumed by most of the essays in this volume. See especially the essays in the section 'The Church in clearer perspective'. ³ See the essays in the section 'Authority and the Apostolic Faith'.

others, chapters 5 and 6), for Christ transforms human beings away from the lifestyle of paganism into conformity with the standards of the living God. This common message, faith, and behaviour, is what enables all members of the body of Christ to find their proper place, united in and by Christ. Chapter 14 also seeks to bring a common 'order' to the Corinthian assembly, one that is maintained in other churches, and one that the apostle expects to be instituted on his authority (see 14:26-40).

Paragraph 5 continues the 'slippage' that has already been noted. Through the simple introduction of 'we Anglicans', with the Communion clearly in view, terms that the New Testament applies to local churches are swiftly brought to bear on the Anglican Communion. We are told here that 'we Anglicans' face challenges that have emerged from 'different interpretations of that holiness to which we are called, and different interpretations of the range of appropriate diversity within our union and communion'.

This is giving the ground away at the start. There is absolutely no way that the biblical material that deals with homosexuality could ever be construed to be a 'different interpretation' of holiness! This is a case of irenic language being used in such a way that gross distortion of the situation is slipped in almost unnoticed. From now on we are looking for the 'different interpretations of holiness', rather than looking for what is a clear departure from the standards of life ordained by God in the Apostolic Faith. It is therefore disingenuous to speak immediately of 'the unique source of that unity, our common identity in Christ, and its unique purpose, the furtherance of God's mission within the world'. The New Testament is quite clear: a person who practices homosexuality has no right to presume that they are 'in Christ' at all, nor that they are part of God's mission to the world. What is required is repentance from their sin, which also means the renunciation of that sin. 'Communion with God' can only be claimed by those who have received the forgiveness of sins that is found in Jesus, which is won by his death and resurrection and received through faith and repentance. Repentance means a 'radical holiness' which does *not* include homosexual practice. Thus, no 'unity and communion' can be assumed, for these gifts from God come only for those who are joined to Christ and then joined to each other in the local congregation. Such people are those who have repented of their sins and renounced the shameful ways of their past lives (see Rom. 6:21).

The practical consequences of a healthy communion (paragraphs 6–11)

The introductory **paragraph (6)** refers to Ephesians' model of the Body of Christ growing and building itself up in love as each member does its part (Eph. 4:15–16), and — continuing the same fallacy noted above — immediately refers to the Anglican Communion. The following paragraphs will provide 'reflections' on how the Ephesians model 'has been worked out within the Anglican Communion up to now'. The claim is then made (**par. 7**) that life in the Anglican Communion 'is indeed nourished by the presence and work of the Holy Spirit, building up the body in love'. Various activities of the Communion are then listed.

Once again this illustrates the 'slippage' that occurs as concepts that the New Testament applies to local congregations of believers are applied without argument to the Communion, as if this is an unproblematic transfer. It is, however, a misappropriation of NT teaching. Where do we get the idea that the Holy Spirit operates within a loose human association in such a way, or in the same way as he does in the local assembly? The Ephesians picture, like that of elsewhere in the New Testament, is that the Spirit dwells with Christ's people and binds them into his body, the Church. The 'church' in the New Testament refers to

either the heavenly assembly, gathered around Christ, or to the earthly manifestation of that heavenly assembly in the local congregation. The metaphor of the body of Christ refers to each local gathering of Christians, with names and faces, who share a common life in the reality and practicality of real human relationships, and not to an amorphous body of loose and occasional association, that cannot foster any real relating at the ‘grass-roots’ level of human life. *The Report* uses an abundance of personal and relational language (e.g. **par. 9**: ‘enhance the life’, ‘our unity and communion’, ‘mutual love and care’, ‘standing together’; **par. 10**: ‘organic reality that is life in communion’, ‘other parts of the body’; **par. 11**: ‘this organic body’, ‘a common mind’), but this only succeeds in furthering the illusion. Even the use of the inclusive plural ‘we’ serves the same end. Organizations — let alone, loose associations spread across the entire globe — may well be personified by their rhetoric, but this personification does not mean that they have become persons, nor that they are formed of personal relationships. Persons relate in real, proximate relations, in concrete life situations. It is local churches that foster common life and engage their members in mission. These churches are the groups who can rightly talk of themselves as ‘the body of Christ’. It introduces great dangers to use the language of the body of the Anglican Communion and to assume that passages such as 1 Cor 12 refer to it (e.g. **par. 10**).⁴

Paragraphs 7-11 present an altogether romantic picture of the Anglican Communion. The Anglican Communion is a recent phenomenon in denominational organisation. Its first conscious manifestation was the first Lambeth Conference of 1867. That in itself was controversial. The Archbishop of York and the bishops of his province did not attend, Westminster Abbey was denied to the Conference for services and Bishop Colenso cast his shadow over the whole Conference.⁵ What is this ‘organic reality’ (**par.10**) or ‘organic body’ (**par. 11**). Is this wishful thinking? The facts are altogether different. While each national church/province is a constitutional and legal organic reality, the Anglican Communion is a voluntary and informal fellowship of churches historically associated with the British Isles which have certain characteristics in common. There are longstanding sets of relationships nourished by the so called ‘instruments of unity’ but this does not amount to an organic reality. There is a passing, and perhaps token but nevertheless inadequate reference to the Holy Spirit (**par. 7**). Is the teaching of John 14: 15-21, about the need for keeping Jesus’ commandments, or John 16:5-11, about the Spirit’s role in conviction and judgement, entirely uncomfortable?

Recent mutual discernment within the Communion (paragraphs 12–21)

Paragraphs 12–21, seeks to draw some positive precedent out of the process which led to the adoption of the ordination of women to the priesthood and the episcopate in some parts of the Anglican Communion. The picture painted is one first of ‘debate and disagreement’ (**par. 13**) and then the Diocese of Hong Kong and Macao consulting with Lambeth Conference (**par. 13**) and the Anglican Consultative Council (**par. 14**). This is taken to indicate that ‘Hong Kong did not consider itself to be so autonomous that it might proceed [without such

⁴ For more on the New Testament’s view of ‘church’, see the essays by Knox and Bolt in this volume. ⁵ Colenso had been consecrated at Lambeth on 23 November 1853 for appointment as Bishop in Natal. Objection was taken to a commentary published by Colenso. Bishop Gray of Cape Town charged Colenso with heresy and had him tried and deposed. Colenso appealed to the Privy Council who held that Gray had no power to try Colenso because the Letters Patent from the Crown giving Gray rights to hold church trials had no validity in South Africa. A further Judgment confirmed Colenso’s rights to his see and stipend until his death in 1883. In the meantime, a new bishop, Macrorie, was consecrated by Gray to replace Colenso. For some 14 years there were two rival Bishops in Natal.

consultation]'. *The Report* presents this as an example of action taken with the co-operation of the Instruments of Unity (par. 15). Why then were the first women priests in the USA ordained by retired bishops? When several provinces had ordained women, Lambeth 1978 passed a resolution recognizing the autonomy of the provinces, as well as its commitment to 'the preservation of unity within and between all member Churches' (par. 16). When, in 1985, the General Convention of ECUSA moved towards the consecration of women to the episcopate, Canterbury and the Primates commissioned the preparation of what became the Grindrod Report (par. 17), which recommended (par. 18) either the counsel of restraint, or, should a province go ahead, offering this step 'for reception within the Anglican Communion'. Lambeth 1988 took the second option, calling for provinces to respect the decisions of other provinces in regard to women's ordination and consecration, and to maintain the 'highest possible degree of communion' with those who differ. A further request to the Archbishop of Canterbury led to the appointment of the Eames commission, set up 'to ensure the process of reception' (par. 19), which then began to work and reported to Lambeth 1998 (par. 20). This whole process is then said to demonstrate how 'decision-making in the Communion on serious and contentious issues has been, and can be, carried out without division, despite a measure of impairment' (par. 21). It is also noted that the 'instruments of unity' were all involved, and 'provincial autonomy was framed by Anglican interdependence'.

Leaving aside the accuracy or otherwise of this rather sanitized and revisionist historical précis, it is worth pointing out that these paragraphs rest on wrong assumptions. Despite the 'gloss' that has been put on this portrait, it remains a fact that, within the Anglican Communion, there is still a great deal of opposition, both to the ordination of women to the priesthood and to their consecration to the episcopate. This opposition is principled and mounted on biblical and theological grounds. The assumption that all questions, no matter how fundamental, can be dealt with simply by right process, seems to be rather naïve.

The Report refuses to acknowledge the deep divisions created by this issue — divisions which still continue. It also fails to acknowledge the heavy-handed tactics that have been used in various quarters in order to coerce agreement with the ordination of women. Conscience provisions (for those not in agreement) have been fought from the beginning on the grounds that they protect discrimination, and, if granted, have been quickly dispensed with in practice. The Christian press has reported a number of cases where diocese opposed to these moves have been told that the 'process of reception' is complete and they *must* now accept the practice (despite continuing conscientious objections).

These paragraphs introduce the notion of 'reception', which becomes a fundamental idea in *The Windsor Report* (see later, esp. pars. 68, 69).⁶ This idea, however, is fundamentally flawed in both assumption and procedure. It is basically part of the 'rhetoric of change' that privileges the revisionist agenda.⁷ In its worst form, it can be an example of 'institutional terrorism', in which an institution uses its committees and structures to attempt to manipulate (in the milder form) or coerce (in the stronger form) local churches to bend towards the will of the institution. Any change that is produced by such a process is 'top-down', rather than 'grass-roots up'. The process is justified in some circles – and hinted at also in this report – by reference to the Spirit of God working in the world and therefore offering guidance to those who are able to discern His action in the historical processes. This enables the Holy Spirit to 'move beyond' the New Testament teaching, which is relegated to being merely a first-century expression of Christianity, rather than the word of God through the apostles appointed by the risen Christ. This is a fundamentally liberal

⁶ See Jane Tooher's essay in this volume. ⁷ See Paul Barker's essay in this volume.

view of God's revelation, the Bible, and the way that guidance is obtained. Thus, from an evangelical point of view, the process of reception that is built on these faulty theological assumptions is also necessarily flawed.

The Report does recognize the possibility that a novelty might prove to be wrong. Although the implications of this possibility are not articulated, presumably this would mean that those introducing the novelty would have adopted, at best, an unwise, and, at worst, a sinful practice. The process of 'reception' is thus revealed as a misnomer, for in the case of an error, this process may actually result in the rejection of the novelty and the need for repentance by those who introduced it. This possibility, however, is effectively closed off from the beginning by the rhetoric of 'reception'.

What does it mean in **paragraph 21** "*that decision making in the communion on serious and contentious issues has been, and can be, carried out without division, despite a measure of impairment*"? It has always been the right of a bishop not to license. Before the ordination of women to the priesthood, questions about the validity of a person's orders were rarely raised. Mutual recognition of orders was the norm. That is not the case now with ordained women. In some dioceses there is no recognition of women in orders. The mutual recognition of orders is a foundational plank in the concept and practice of full communion between the various dioceses of the Anglican Communion. The impairment of this principle amounts to division in practice. It is dishonest to say otherwise. The impairment is compounded when the conscience clauses in the authorising legislation for women priests in both Canada and the USA are removed so that coercion is now the order of the day against those who remain opposed to the ordination of women.

Illness: The surface symptoms (paragraphs 22–30)

The opening **paragraph (22)** clearly shows that the procedure explained in **paragraphs 12–21** is regarded as a 'precedent that could have been set' (**par. 22**) for the current crisis over homosexuality. In a most revealing section, **paragraphs 22–30**, which seeks to 'summarise the presenting symptoms' (**par. 22**), *The Report* assumes that the current problems arise because due process was not followed. This is grossly offensive to those who are objecting that homosexual practice is actually contrary to Scripture and thus to the Apostolic Faith as it has been practiced over the past two thousand years. More importantly, such a preoccupation with institutional process has dangerous pastoral consequences. For, if the wrath of God is coming on this world because of such things, and if those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God, then the real problem is not due process. No due process of the Anglican Communion will ever turn an error into the truth. Even if an error is endorsed, this does not remove the fact that it is contrary to God's Word and it is, therefore, a schismatic act in breach of the Apostolic Faith.

Paragraph 23 itemizes the two questions facing the Communion: the blessing of 'committed, exclusive and faithful relationships of same sex couples', and the ordination or consecration of 'persons living in a sexual relationship with a partner of the same sex'. It also makes the outlandish assertion that these issues raise similar questions to the issues of polygamy, and the remarriage of divorced persons. No attempt to justify the supposed relationship between these issues is supplied.

The paragraph ends by citing a statement from ECUSA's House of Bishops 'offered for study and reflection' calling for members to be respectful of Diocesan interrelationships, since

‘ordination is for the whole Church’. The ‘strong reaction across the Communion’ to the decisions taken in New Hampshire and New Westminster ‘undercuts any argument that such decisions are purely local’ (par. 24). This is true, but of course, any ordination that assumes a departure from the Apostolic Faith is not a legitimate ordination and is, in fact, a schismatic ordination. Those churches still holding to the Apostolic Faith are not under any obligation to recognize it at all. For sure, this introduces another level of complexity into the supply of ministry, but we ought to acknowledge the right of local churches to determine matters to do with the recognition of ministry in their midst. If necessary, diocesan structures ought to be reformed in this direction.

Lambeth 1998 took the discussion further (par. 25), passing resolution 1.10. The wording of this paragraph casts not a little odium upon this resolution by immediately mentioning ‘some controversy about the way in which this resolution was arrived at and voted upon’. To undermine the resolution in such a way is both unwarranted and scandalous. Yet the fact of the matter is that the resolution was overwhelmingly supported at Lambeth (526 bishops voted in favour, 70 against and 45 abstained) and has been received with gratitude by the vast majority of Anglicans throughout the world as a reaffirmation of biblical teaching. It is only controversial in the minds of those who opposed it. Archbishop George Carey was conscious that his involvement in the debate could be misunderstood ‘I felt leadership had to be exercised’. He said, ‘Allow me to express my own view on this difficult matter and the motion before us. [...] I have long been persuaded that the entire Bible and Christian tradition gives us no permission to condone sexual practices of any sort outside the relationship of husband and wife in holy matrimony. Therefore, so far as I can see, physical homosexual acts fall within that restriction. With that in mind it is my hope that we shall affirm this motion gladly and expect the Provinces and dioceses of our Communion to heed our strong affirmation.’⁸

The additional unanimous support of the primates in their Report of 16/10/2003 may be taken to endorse Lambeth’s decision as *non-controversial*. However, *The Windsor Report’s* endorsement of the phrase ‘[the Communion’s] present position on these issues’, may operate as part of the ‘rhetoric of change’,⁹ implying that we will, eventually, move on from this temporary staging-post. This may also indicate that a principle such as (structural) ‘unity’ has, for some, over-ridden a commitment to ‘the faith once for all delivered to the saints’.¹⁰ If we are committed to being united in Christ and the Apostolic Faith, then there should be no possibility that this present position will ever be left behind by our churches, or by the Anglican Communion.

Paragraph 26 seeks to exonerate *The Windsor Report* for not making any comment on the issue of homosexuality. This is a fudge and all should recognize it to be so, and say so loudly. Why is it that the commission felt able to comment strongly on many other things — such as the pastoral intervention by the African bishops, for example (see also par. 107) — but not on the main issue that has given rise to the commission’s existence? This is a serious dereliction of duty by the drafters of *The Windsor Report*. It also seems to run counter to the recommendations of *The Report* itself. After all, *The Report* gives great prominence to ‘the Instruments of Unity’ and in fact seeks to give them even more prominence. Yet it will not stand with those Instruments on the issue of homosexual practice. The Archbishop of Canterbury, the Lambeth Conference and the Primates’ Meeting have all recognised that the official teaching of the Anglican Church is that homosexual practice is condemned by Scripture and is inconsistent with Christian faithfulness. Why is *The Report* so reluctant to add its own voice to this common message?

⁸ G. Carey, *Know The Truth*, p 328ff. ⁹ See essay by Barker, Chapter 6. ¹⁰ See John Woodhouse’s essay in this volume.

Paragraph 27 names New Hampshire and New Westminster as having acted contrary to the aforementioned resolutions of these three Instruments of Unity. What is not stated, however, is that it is clear that both places have indeed followed the procedures that have been itemised previously. If everything depends upon due process, then on what basis can other Anglicans object to an action taken in line with that process? After all, the process itself does not envisage universal agreement before any individual province or diocese takes action.

The only real basis of disagreement comes to the fore in **paragraph 28**. These actions are wrong, not because they breach some principle of (structural) unity, nor because due process was not followed, but because they are in breach of ‘genuine, apostolic Christian faith’¹¹ and, “contrary to biblical teaching” and as such unacceptable’. This has been the ‘overwhelming response from other Christians both inside and outside the Anglican family’. Even in reporting this ‘overwhelming response’, however, *The Windsor Report* does not refrain from adding a concessive clause, which is employed, it appears, simply to undermine those who stand on Apostolic Faith and biblical teaching. When this has been ‘the overwhelming response’ from far and wide, including the Roman Catholic and the Orthodox Churches, why do we need to hear of some who ‘have made provision, or are considering making such provision, for the ordination of persons in sexually active same-sex relationships, offering arguments based on modern scientific proposals about sexual attraction,¹² and corresponding, in their proposals, to changes and innovations in civil law’? Does this introduce the sub-text that this is the direction of the future?¹³ Besides raising all the questions about just how ‘scientific’ the supposed ‘science’ actually is, those who take their stand on biblical teaching must not be derailed. God’s Word is always relevant and will never be out of date. God knows how he made us and what is best for us all. As Lambeth 1998 resolution I.10 reiterated, God’s provision for human sexuality is the institution of marriage, which is a faithful, life-long sexual union between a man and a woman. It is not loving for anyone to suggest that any other pattern of sexual behaviour will be good for people in this world, or that this pattern will not be judged and found wanting when the Lord returns, bringing the glorious kingdom of God.

Reaction to these developments has also resulted in other actions, which are regarded by the Windsor commission as ‘part of the problem we face’ (**par. 29**). There have been declarations of impaired or broken communion directed towards the offending Dioceses from outside. Those who wish to maintain the Apostolic Faith within these Dioceses – negatively labelled by *Windsor’s* rhetoric as the ‘dissenting’ — have also sought to create distance from these decisions. Some of these latter protests have led to appeals to outside Bishops for help. A number have heard these appeals and acted on their behalf, even setting up alternative structures in the process.

However, even though *The Windsor Report* clearly sees these actions as ‘part of the problem’, such measures must be regarded, on the contrary, as part of the solution. When the real problem is the breach of apostolic unity, then those who continue to hold the Apostolic Faith have a responsibility to see it upheld in all places. If a Bishop has been derelict in his duty in this regard, then it is as if his See has become vacant. If the structures do not ensure his removal and replacement with a shepherd who will maintain the Apostolic Faith, then other shepherds who intervene should not be despised for taking

¹¹ Many of the essays in this volume beat this drum, given its foundational importance. See especially Adam, Woodhouse, Knox, Salier, Thompson, Bolt, Short. ¹² This could be called ‘the rhetoric of progress’, implying that our contemporary society knows so much more than the first century and so their ‘ignorance’ should give way to our ‘knowledge’. The unexamined assumption, of course, is that the biblical teaching is simply a reflection of ancient society, expressing its ignorance, rather than the revelation of the word of the Living God who knows what is best for human beings, ancient, modern and post-modern, since he is our creator. ¹³ See essay by Barker, Chapter 6.

action on behalf of Christ's sheep. The now famous remark by one Anglican bishop that 'when your neighbour's house is on fire you do not ask permission to rescue his children' captures the current crisis perfectly.

The Windsor Report claims that such action is in breach of 'the communion principle of interdependence' (par. 29(1)), and so of questionable 'ecclesiological legitimacy'. This is 'unilateralism'. However, as well as asking the drafters of *The Report* where this principle of 'interdependency' comes from and what is its status, we could also argue that such actions are not *against* this principle, but, in fact, they are *a clear expression of the principle working properly*. For a Bishop has sworn before God and His people to teach and so maintain the Apostolic Faith. When others in the Communion are derelict in this duty, the principle of interdependence demands that he steps in to care for those who still cling to 'biblical teaching'. Where these churches struggle under hostile Episcopal oversight, it is even more important for the orthodox to extend the 'bonds of affection' in their direction and supply whatever can be supplied to alleviate this desperate situation.¹⁴ There is no need to dissuade such actions by recourse to Nicene Canon 8,¹⁵ for the fathers were well aware that, even in the same city, there may well be churches who hold to the Catholic Faith, and those who do not (see, for example, Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechetical Lecture 18*).

The final **paragraph (30)** in this analysis of the 'symptoms' adopts a paternalistic tone that should win no friends at all. It suggests some kind of equal blame is attached both to those who endorse homosexuality and to those who intervene in another's diocese. To speak of 'a tit-for-tat stand-off', and to draw an analogy with political disasters in which 'each side now accuses the other of atrocities, and blames the other for the need to react further in turn' down-plays the serious issues at stake, and is *The Windsor Report* at its most unworthy. The dissemination of the Apostolic Faith is an incredibly serious business, and those who are attempting to take this stand against those who seek to cast the Church adrift from its apostolic moorings, should not be described with language suggesting that this is either child's-play, or some kind of ridiculous hillbilly feud! Nor should there be any suggestion that caring for faithful brothers and sisters is an atrocity!

Illness: The deeper symptoms (paragraphs 31–42)

This section deals with 'theological development' (pars. 32–33), ecclesiastical procedures (pars. 34–35), *adiaphora* (pars. 36–37), subsidiarity (pars. 38–39), trust (pars. 40–41), and authority (par. 42).

Paragraph 32 uses a very powerful piece of rhetoric when it claims, 'virtually all Christians agree on the necessity of theological development, including radical innovation, and on the fact that the Holy Spirit enables the church to undertake such development'. The fourth-century creeds are cited as examples of such 'theological development'. If 'virtually all Christians agree', and the great creeds of orthodoxy are examples, then this is a subtle way to silence anyone who does not agree with 'the necessity of theological development'. This rhetoric enables *The Report* to escape its responsibility to define just what is this 'theological development' with which we all apparently agree.

But the great creeds are not examples of 'theological development' at all.¹⁶ They certainly came about after a great deal of controversy and discussion. But this discussion was not a movement *away from* the teaching of the Scriptures; it was an attempt to *articulate* that

¹⁴ See Peter Bolt's essay in this volume. ¹⁵ See the essay by David Hohne in this volume. ¹⁶ See the essay by Doyle, Chapter 15.

biblical teaching. This is not theological *development*, but theological clarification. The task of the theologian is fresh reiteration of the apostolic gospel in a new context, never an entirely different proposal. In the Reformed tradition in which Anglicanism finds its roots, it was clearly recognised that councils cannot coin new doctrines (see Articles XX and XXI; Calvin, *Ins.* IV.viii.5). And as for the Holy Spirit enabling the church to undertake such development, this is by no means a reformed notion at all, nor is it true to the Anglican formularies. The Articles recognise that Church councils can err and that they have erred. Article XXI rightly says, ‘when they be gathered together, (forasmuch as they be an assembly of men, whereof all be not governed with the Spirit and Word of God,) they may err, and sometimes have erred, even in things pertaining unto God’.

It was not about church councils that Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit will ‘lead you into all truth’ — still less the cultural developments of human history. He promised that the *apostles* would be led into all truth (John 14:25–26 [compare 2:22 and 12:16]; 15:26–27; 16:12–15); his chosen and properly authorised eyewitnesses. This ensures that the apostolic teaching that is now enshrined in the New Testament is our standard for faith and life. To depart from the apostolic teaching is bad enough, but to attempt to justify this departure by appeal to the Holy Spirit who inspired the apostles is reprehensible.

The paragraph acknowledges that some ‘developments’ might be misguided. South African apartheid is cited as an example, which has the appearance of an unfortunate attempt to damn by association and to hint that the rejection of homosexuality is simply ignorant discrimination. *The Report* draws attention to the fine line between ‘faithful inculturation and false accommodation to the world’s ways of thinking’. However, the need for ‘inculturation’ is not a foregone conclusion, and the articulation of ‘the faith afresh in different cultures’ certainly does not change the faith that is being articulated. Christians have the responsibility to pass on the ‘faith delivered once for all to the saints’, the ‘deposit’, the ‘truth’, the ‘sound doctrine’, etc. The good news of what God has done in Jesus Christ, as articulated by the apostolic gospel, is always relevant, always fresh, and always available to any human being, no matter what their culture. The ever-present danger of thinking ‘like a human being, rather than like God’ (compare Mark 8:33, free rendering) puts us all at risk of ‘false accommodation to the world’s ways of thinking’. This paragraph notes Romans 12:1–2, but we should also remember that the same letter condemns homosexual practice as falling under the wrath of God (Romans 1:18–32). In Romans, homosexual practice is associated with a darkened mind (see Rom. 1:22, 25, 28), and is not part of the renewed mind promised by Rom. 12:1–2. What is needed in the current climate is not ‘theological development’, but a theological *warning* to a world gone sadly astray.

After utilising its slippery rhetoric to introduce a dubious guidance by the Holy Spirit, the paragraph ends by reference to the process of ‘reception’, claiming that the church ‘always needs procedures for discussing, sifting, evaluating and deciding upon proposed developments’. In this regard, the process of ‘reception’ (see below, Section B) is to be ‘honoured’. We have already commented on this notion that is so important to *The Report* (see above, under pars. 18–21).¹⁷

This discussion has been preliminary to the first of the ‘deeper symptoms’ of the current problem: New Westminster and ECUSA have not attempted to give ‘the significant development of theology which alone could justify the recent moves’ (par. 33). Since the commission was given the mandate to report on the legal and theological implications, why simply request theological justification from New Westminster and ECUSA? Why not state the biblical and

¹⁷ See also Jane Tooher’s essay in this volume.

theological reasons *against* their course of action that will need to be somehow explained away? The assumption seems to be made that it could be justified, but, since it involves a departure from the Apostolic Faith, no such reasons could ever be given. The Apostolic Faith, based as it is on the eyewitness testimony of Christ's commissioned apostles, is 'once for all delivered to the saints'. It does not change with time.

This is why the next two paragraphs (**pars. 34–35**) sound rather strange. Here ECUSA and New Westminster are chided for not following proper ecclesiastical procedure 'which might have made it possible for the church to hold together across differences of belief and practice' (**par. 35**). But since the breach is with Apostolic Faith, how would this be possible? A departure from the Apostolic Faith is automatically a schismatic move, for it is a departure from Christ, and so from his true church. If *The Windsor Report* can imagine a unity that spans 'differences of belief and practice', then this would be a unity based in something other than the truth of God's Word, so it would be building on a foundation other than that laid by Christ himself. This kind of unity is not the unity that the New Testament encourages and endorses.¹⁸ In fact, since departure from Apostolic Faith and practice is schismatic by definition, the lack of true fellowship can be reinforced by the removal of structural association as well. For sure, this removal of fellowship is based upon a desire to provoke repentance, but it is a proper course of action for such a serious problem. Wrong belief spreads like gangrene (2 Tim. 2:17) and only ruins the hearers (2 Tim. 2:14). The New Testament regularly counsels the churches of Christ to depart from false teaching and ungodly practice.

The third problem is identified as differences concerning '*adiaphora*' (**pars. 36–37**). This will be dealt with further down in *The Report* (**pars. 87–96**).¹⁹ This is related to the fourth problem, which relates to the notion of 'subsidiarity', that is, the more 'indifferent' an issue, the more it should be dealt with at the local level (**pars. 38–39**). The current situation has arisen from the assumption that issues of homosexuality could be decided locally, because these are issues in which legitimate difference could be tolerated. Later in this volume Mark Thompson and Robert Tong²⁰ will deal, respectively, with the notions of *adiaphora* and subsidiarity, but, in the meantime, we can simply ask the question, where in the NT are theology (ie belief) and sexual morality ever regarded as issues of indifference?

The fifth problem is highlighted as a failure of trust (**pars. 40–41**). Once again we have the presence of misleading language of personification. Here we are told 'the Communion puts its trust in each province [...]'. But what does this mean? How can such a loose association of churches that are related by virtue of history place trust in anyone else? These paragraphs make all kinds of sweeping generalisations and draw rather onerous analogies, not least about the language of the debate and actions issuing from it.

But what is not stated here is the fact that the most important arena for 'trust', or, to use the biblical word, 'faith', is, of course, trust in the living God. This requires trust in his Word as given through the apostles, and the reception of this Word as a gracious gift leading to life. The other aspect of 'trust' that is overlooked here is the fact that the Communion really owes a debt to our forebears, who passed on the Apostolic Faith so that we might believe. We hold their faith — and their property — in trust, so that we might, in turn, pass on the apostolic deposit to future generations. This is the trust between humans that must not be breached. Although *The Report's* call for more theological discussion is, of course, to be welcomed, theological discussion should always be 'faith seeking understanding'; that is, it

¹⁸ See John Woodhouse's essay in this volume, and all the essays under the section '*Windsor's* Fundamental Concern: Unity'. ¹⁹ See Mark Thompson's essay on *adiaphora* in this volume. ²⁰ See Robert Tong's essay on Subsidiarity in this volume.

should begin with the apostolic deposit and seek to understand it more carefully, so that the same faith might be delivered to the contemporary world.²¹ It is this deposit that has been ‘entrusted’ to the contemporary generation, for the sake of the future.

The final ‘problem’ apparently sums up the entire list: the concept of authority (**par. 42**). Here there is an acknowledgement that Scripture is the Anglican Communion’s ‘supreme authority’. But the ‘authority’ is both reinterpreted and then tied into structures that are involved with ‘decision-making’ within the Communion. This opens the door for the later assertion that these structures are how the Scriptures are interpreted.²² But isn’t this just a return to some kind of *magisterium*? Article XX puts the church under the word of God, not the other way around. We are in very serious danger indeed if the authority of the Scriptures is placed at the mercy of the processes and procedures of the Anglican Communion.

This paragraph also contains another example of the irenic rhetoric which assumes that people are together already. Apparently, when it comes to ‘how authority works within Anglicanism’, recent events show that ‘such authority as we all in theory acknowledge’ simply needs to receive fresh thought.²³ Another reading of the recent events might show that the framers of *The Report*, and those addressed by their mandate may, in fact, not agree at all – in practice or in theory! This rhetoric of the ‘charitable assumption’ does not help advance the discussion at all. What is needed is an honest assessment of the true status of the various bodies that occasionally meet within the Communion.²⁴ Why use the term ‘authority’ at all? If the Scriptures are our authority, then this cannot be divested onto any human body. The role of the bishop in an Episcopal structure is to preserve and to pass on intact the body of teaching that goes back to the apostles.²⁵ This is done at the local level and any international body has no ‘authority’ as such, but simply provides some bonds of fellowship (when things are working well and the Apostolic Faith is governing all), that may provide forums for discussion, advice and common action arising from common concerns set by our common faith. But this is not ‘authority’. The big question then becomes whether or not we all acknowledge in theory *and in practice* the teaching of the apostles in the New Testament, or whether some of us have long since left this behind.

Section B: Fundamental Principles

These paragraphs are supposed to explore the nature of the Communion, the bonds that hold it together, and the nature of the current threats and how they might be met. Through an exploration of these things, as well as through the observation of the tension and difficulty brought by ‘diversity’, this section promises ‘the [NB!] principles against which recent events and actions may be measured’ (**par. 44**). Given our previous discussion, we can ask the question, where in this section is there any acknowledgement that Scripture operates authoritatively to give principled direction to our behaviour?

The introductory paragraphs (**pars. 43–44**) repeat the point previously made (**par. 26**) that the commission was not set up to comment on the theological and ethical issues concerning homosexuality. Yet the commission’s mandate included (**par.1**) an examination of ‘the legal and theological implications flowing from the decisions’ of New Hampshire and New Westminster. How does that justify failing to comment on a breach of the Apostolic Faith? Surely one such ‘theological implication’ of what has happened is that repentance is

²¹ See the essay by Doyle, Chapter 15. ²² See Mark Thompson’s essay on Scripture in this volume. ²³ See also Tony Payne’s essay for an examination of the political usage of ambiguity, Chapter 13. ²⁴ See the essays that touch upon the various Instruments, by Jensen (Chapter 2), Cameron (Chapter 3), Tong (Chapter 4), Knox (Chapter 10). ²⁵ See the essay by Doyle, Chapter 15.

called for, in the light of the coming kingdom of God and the grace of God in the gospel. In the chairman's preface, Archbishop Eames sets the commission's task in the context of a search for the will of God. Can this be done without theological and ethical comment on the precipitating events?

The communion we share (45–51)

The next paragraphs (45–51) assume that those within the Anglican Communion share in 'double "bonds of affection"', that is, those that flow from being children of God in Christ, and those that flow from 'our shared and inherited identity'. Now, in regard to the latter, it is not in dispute that there is an external and structural association between Anglicans that we have inherited from the past. But, in regard to the former, there is another 'charitable assumption' being made, that all those within the Anglican Communion are children of God in Christ. If Article XXI recognises that not everyone in a general council has the Spirit of God, then surely this could also be true for denominational structures. If we take the New Testament seriously, we should also be aware that not everyone in the visible company of Christ's people is, in fact, one of his people.²⁶

As is the case whenever this 'charitable assumption' is made, it should not be assumed, and it is far from charitable. If we believe the NT, the future is fixed by God's promise to bring his kingdom. At his return, Christ will welcome those who are truly 'in Christ' into his coming kingdom with open arms. But to those who are not truly 'in Christ', he will say, 'I never knew you, depart from me' (Matt. 7.23). They may protest that they did miracles in his name, or prophesied in his name, or wore the episcopal purple in his name, or attended an Anglican church in his name, or whatever! But his reply remains, and it will be an eternal tragedy to hear it: 'I never knew you, depart from me'. It is not charitable, kind, or loving at all, to *assume* that people are truly 'in Christ', for their eternal state depends on getting this right.

When measured by the teaching of the NT and the Anglican formularies, it is also clearly wrong — and so unloving in the extreme — to say that our calling and setting apart comes through baptism (par. 45). Baptism is simply an external sign of an inward reality, and the sign only becomes effective when combined with faith. Baptism points to the true means of salvation, that is, the death of our Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus' death on the cross is the way of salvation — nothing more, nothing less. A child of God is someone who has been called by God, to put their faith in the crucified and risen Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord. Jesus' death brings our justification (sadly absent in *The Windsor Report*). His resurrection from the dead brings the guarantee of our own future resurrection and the means by which eternal life is given to us even now through the Spirit. This then revolutionises life, so that Christ's people renounce, with shame, the sin they were involved in previously, and begin to have their life shaped by God's Spirit in God-pleasing directions.

Paragraph 46 asserts that our communion is 'God's gift as well as God's command', in order to take forward God's mission and to express the 'catholic' nature of the Church. These are both questionable assertions to say the least. God's work of mission is enabled by the preaching of the word of the cross; the gospel of Jesus Christ, who died and rose again on our behalf. This is undertaken by Christian people, whether are at home or at work in the world. For sure, the structures of the Anglican Communion should not get in the way of this mission, and it would be nice if they actually supported this mission, but it is wrong-headed to assume

²⁶ See Bolt, Chapter 18, for a discussion of *koinonia* in the New Testament.

that these structures either ‘own’ God’s mission, or that they are the instruments through which it will be furthered. This is, once again, to assume responsibility for something that the New Testament grants to ordinary Christians at the grass-roots level, i.e. the level served by the local congregations. As for Catholicity, this ought to primarily concern the connection with the Apostolic Faith, that is, to truly be ‘Catholic’ is to believe the New Testament and take its apostolic teaching seriously.²⁷ Even though ‘Catholicity’ has nothing to do with being ‘world-wide’, — despite this being a regular misunderstanding (see **pars. 46, 47**)²⁸ if we grant this common misapprehension for the minute, it makes *Windsor Report* sound rather hypocritical: talk of a commitment to good relationships with the ‘world-wide’ Church sounds rather hollow where there is no apparent remorse over the fact that these have already been damaged by a number of recent actions and decision, including the ordination of women.²⁹

The notion of ‘mutual interdependence’ occurs again here, which is code for following the correct procedures as outlined by *The Report*. Comment has already been made above (see under **par. 26**), where we suggested an alternative use of this concept. Anchored in a strong view of the need to uphold the Apostolic Faith, this mutual interdependence operates under the canopy of a common faithfulness to God’s revelation of himself and his will. This will lead to a true fellowship between congregations and mutual help when it is required.³⁰

In **paragraph 47** *The Report* further explores the notion of catholicity with reference to ‘the universal Church’. It rightly recognises the intention of the English Reformers to affirm the common faith of Christians in the centuries before them and to deny the charge of doctrinal novelty or innovation. Yet there is again ecclesiological slippage here when the notion of a universal Church is introduced. This slippage is part of what we have noted earlier in connection with **paragraphs 6–11** of *The Report*.

Paragraph 49 argues that Communion is all about mutual relationships. When it lists how these are expressed, however, one wonders why we still persist in talking about the Anglican Communion. Surely we are long past the day when we can say that there is ‘visible unity, common confession of the Apostolic Faith, common belief in Scripture and the creeds, common baptism and shared eucharist, and a mutually recognised common ministry’, nor is there ‘a common liturgical tradition’. To argue that these things still exist, seems to be propagating a fantasy! Even as long ago as 1987, the ACC in Singapore when discussing the ‘Unity and Diversity within the Anglican Communion’ admitted that: ‘until recently Anglicans enjoyed a unified ministry, a common prayer book, a sacramental agreement and a common credal faith. Each of these factors is in turn being challenged or questioned by the ordination of women, the emergence of indigenous liturgies, new approaches to initiation and theological exploration. Renewal movements and different understandings of the mission of the Church are also challenging Anglican unity’.³¹

The inclusivist rhetoric is, once again, rampant in this paragraph. Surely the framers of *The Windsor Report* do not think that it will be an unproblematic assertion to say, ‘In communion, each church acknowledges and respects the interdependence and autonomy of the other, putting the needs of the global fellowship before its own’. Once again, New Testament language is hijacked from its proper realm of personal intra-congregational

²⁷ See the essay by Foord, Chapter 19. ²⁸ See the essay by Knox, Chapter 16. ²⁹ See the essay by Jane Tooher, Chapter 7. ³⁰ See the essays by Bolt (Chapter 18) and Short (Chapter 20). ³¹ In commenting on this discussion paper, Donald Robinson, then Archbishop of Sydney, went on to say that, ‘I believe the ordination of women as presbyters has not only brought about an inevitable lessening of communion between churches, since we are unable to accord recognition to all ministers in each other’s churches, but is at variance with the fundamental faith and order we derive from the apostolic church, on which we rest our claim to apostolicity and to fidelity to scripture.’ Presidential Address to 1986 Sydney Synod, in 1987 Year Book of the Diocese of Sydney (Sydney: AIO, 1987), 244.

relations (cf. Phil. 2:3–4), to do service for the loose and impersonal structure known as the Anglican Communion. In particular, the word ‘completeness’ is used, not with reference to being found ‘in Christ’ but with reference to taking our place in the Anglican Communion. What is more, is it seriously envisaged that the decision of a particular church to, say, jettison biblical teaching ought to be respected by others in the Communion?³²

In **Paragraph 50** there is a discussion of communion which is now ‘less full than it was’. The simple constitutional position in Australia is that Section 6 of the Constitution of the Anglican Church of Australia states ‘This Church will remain and be in communion with the Church of England in England and with churches in communion therewith so long as communion is consistent with the Fundamental Declarations contained in this Constitution.’ No change can be made to this clause unless at General Synod a majority of the members of each House of Bishops, Clergy and Laity, pass a canon making the alteration. However, the alteration does not take effect until three quarters of the Diocesan Synods including all the metropolitan Sees have assented to the change by ordinance. Not an easy or quick process. This begs the question of what happens if the Church of England or a ‘church in communion therewith’ ceases to conform to the Fundamental Declarations of the constitution.³³ Does section 6 prevent an Australian diocese declaring itself ‘out of communion’ with another diocese whether in or out of Australia? Whatever the meaning of section 6, diocesan bishops will continue to recognise or not recognise the validity of a persons’ ordination and to licence at their sole discretion. Impaired communion strikes at the mutual recognition of ordination which was the norm before women’s ordination became the vogue.

Paragraph 51 refers to ‘The Lambeth Quadrilateral’. Originally, this was a statement on how Anglicans were to relate to other churches, not as stated here, something that actually evokes ‘commitments’.³⁴ It does not really ‘commit Anglicans’ to anything, as the essay by Broughton Knox in this volume shows. In the first instance, it is an ecumenical device — and a flawed one at that —, not a formulary that binds us.

The bonds of communion (52–70)

Paragraph 52 introduces a reflection upon ‘the specific bonds which hold the Anglican Communion together’. Here the authority of Scripture, the episcopate and the process of discernment and reception are put together as aspects of our common life that draw us together and hold us in fellowship.

Perhaps we might have expected something about a common gospel call to repentance and faith in Christ Jesus as a framework for considering those things which hold us together. Despite this disappointment, however, it is a good thing that the authority of Scripture is mentioned first in this section. Though the way this authority is explained raises very serious questions, this is something we should applaud. Far too many ecclesiastical documents omit all mention of Scripture and its authority. Nevertheless, putting Scripture alongside

³² See the essay by Short, Chapter 20. ³³ The Fundamental Declarations are: ‘The Anglican Church of Australia being a part of the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church of Christ, holds the Christian Faith as professed by the Church of Christ from primitive times and in particular as set forth in the creeds known as the Nicene Creed and the Apostles Creed. This Church receives all the canonical scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as being the ultimate rule and standard of faith given by inspiration of God and containing all things necessary for salvation. This Church will ever obey the commands of Christ, teach His doctrine, administer His sacraments of Holy Baptism and Holy Communion, follow and uphold His discipline and preserve the three orders of bishops, priests and deacons in the sacred ministry.’ General Synod cannot alter these provisions. ³⁴ See the essay by Knox, Chapter 10.

the episcopate and a human mechanism for institutional endorsement of change is problematic. We are bound to oppose bishops should they err, and to resist change when it involves a departure from Apostolic Faith, but we are called to submit our minds and wills to the word of God.

This section then proceeds to discuss the authority of Scripture (**pars. 53–56**), Scripture and Interpretation (**pars. 57–62**), the episcopate (**pars. 63–66**), and discernment in communion and reception (**pars. 67–70**).

(i) The authority of Scripture (53–56)³⁵

Paragraph 53 speaks of Scripture as ‘the Church’s supreme authority’. It then draws attention to the way the Anglican Reformers used ‘the Bible and the Fathers’ to both oppose illegitimate developments and appeal to ‘ancient undivided Christian faith and life’. The centrality of Scripture is affirmed but it is also understood to operate in relationship with tradition and reason on the one hand (the seventeenth century notion of the three-legged stool) and with the creeds, the sacraments and the historic episcopate on the other (the Lambeth Quadrilateral of 1886/1888).

The triad of Scripture-tradition-reason does appear in the writing of Hooker and in seventeenth century Anglican theology. However, there remains a clear sense that tradition might be proven to be wrong and reason might fail us but Scripture always stands apart from these as an unchallengeable authority. Where Anglicanism has adopted the formula without understanding this basic fact about the relationship of these three phenomena the authority of Scripture is almost inevitably undermined.

The Lambeth Quadrilateral does give Scripture the first place but it also elevates the sacraments and the episcopate in an unacceptable way. Furthermore, there remains the question of the status of that formula. It was adopted by the Lambeth Conference in 1888 as a foundation for ecumenical engagement. Has it been given a legal status anywhere in the Anglican Communion?

Paragraph 54 begins to qualify the expression ‘the authority of Scripture’ by reference to the authority of the triune God, *exercised through* Scripture’. Appeal is made to the ‘Great Commission’ where Jesus speaks of all authority being given to him rather than to the writings of his followers. It is suggested that the phrase ‘the authority of Scripture’ characteristically emerged ‘in contexts of protest’ and needs to be thought through more fully.

This explanation appears thoroughly disingenuous. Jesus’ own appeal to an authoritative Scripture throughout his ministry is ignored, as is the rest of the New Testament’s teaching about the Old Testament and the apostolic writings. It is remarkable that a section purporting to be dealing with the authority of Scripture should ignore Matthew 4:1–11; John 10:31–39, 1 Thessalonians 2:13–16; 2 Timothy 3:14–17, Hebrews 1:1–2:4; 2 Peter 1:20–21; 2 Peter 3:14–18 and many other texts which bare on this issue directly and instead appeal to a text which ostensibly has little to do with the status of any of the biblical material. In addition, the phrase ‘it may be’ is used to cast doubt upon, not only the expression ‘the authority of Scripture’ but also the concept it represents as this has been understood for two thousand years — and not only in polemical contexts. This is how you can include the expression ‘the authority of Scripture’ and yet ignore the reality in the same report.

Paragraph 55 seeks to give a different view of the authority of Scripture, one which concentrates on the narrative of God’s mission and the place of Scripture as part of ‘the dynamic life of the Spirit’.

³⁵ See the essay by Thompson, Chapter 12.

This paragraph uses terms like ‘static’ in opposition to ‘dynamic’ to prejudice the reader against the notion of biblical authority as it has been universally understood over the last two thousand years. It also creates a false dichotomy between ‘information’, ‘instruction’, ‘prescription’ and ‘a court of appeal’ on the one hand and ‘the dynamic in-breaking of God’s kingdom’, ‘the dynamic life of the Spirit’ and ‘the saving rule of God’ on the other. Yet God rules his people dynamically and effectively — in accordance with his creational purposes and for our good — by his word, which expresses his mind and calls on us to repent and align ourselves with those purposes. It is a caricature to suggest that this knowledge of God, his character, his will, and his call upon us is static. The truth is that in Scripture itself and in the history of the Christian churches, Scripture has always operated as *both* a source of information (the truth about God and his purposes) *and* a means of the dynamic in-breaking of God’s kingdom in the life of individuals and communities. It has *both* prescribed matters of faith and conduct *and* been the means by which the Spirit nurtures the life of faith. It has been *both* ‘a court of appeal’ *and* ‘the means by which God directs the Church in its mission’. To suggest we have to choose between these functions of Scripture, or that one is not intimately connected to the other, is to mislead all who read this report.³⁶

Paragraph 56 continues this redefinition of biblical authority in functional terms, starting with a very brief comment on the authority of the apostles with an emphasis on the telling of the Jesus story and its role in the worship and edification of the churches.

This redefinition of the authority of Scripture is problematic at a number of levels. Most important of all is the way it so heavily reductionistic. It subsumes the various types of Scripture under the heading of narrative and leaves little place for the direct address of God by means of his own word which calls upon his people everywhere and in all ages to repent and believe. This collection of texts does not only give us the background against which we are to understand our Christian existence (though it clearly does give us that) but also the word of God addressed to us. Again *The report* presents us with a false dichotomy (under the mask of seeking the ‘deepest meaning’ of this expression), this time between ‘a quasi-legal process of “appeal”’ and the source of encouragement and praise. Even within the pages of the New Testament, let alone in the ensuing two millennia, Scripture has functioned in both senses. Given the drift of *The Windsor Report*, it is quite breath-taking that it seeks to liberate Anglicans from Scripture as a ‘quasi-legal’ entity and deliver us over to human ‘quasi-legal’ structures such as a strengthened ‘Instruments of Unity’ and the newly proposed ‘Anglican Covenant’. Surely Christians have been correct throughout our history to seek to live under God’s word, rather than that of human beings. In addition, the word of God, centering as it does on justification by faith alone, is a word of grace, and this grace transforms people from within. To speak of the appeal to the Scriptures as a ‘quasi-legal’ process, is to seriously misunderstand this appeal.

(ii) Scripture and interpretation (57–62)

Paragraph 57 speaks of the Christian assembly and Christian worship as the appropriate contexts for reading and reflecting upon Scripture. There is much that is good in this paragraph though at points it is so vague as to be unhelpful. For example, what does it mean to say that ‘the message of Scripture, as a whole and in its several parts, must be preached and taught in all possible and appropriate ways’? At one level this is a motherhood statement. At another, without a definition of ‘possible’ and ‘appropriate’, the door would seem open to widely divergent and even contradictory interpretations. Yet the 39 *Articles* insist that no one part of

³⁶ For more on the rhetoric of this section in *The Windsor Report*, see the essay by Payne, Chapter 13.

Scripture is to be interpreted in such a way as ‘that it be repugnant to another’ (Art. XX).

Paragraph 58 seeks to identify bishops as ‘teachers of Scripture’.³⁷ It is gratifying that *The report* recognises that the authority of bishops should not reside solely or primarily in legal structures. Bishops need to be teachers. It is also gratifying that recognition is given to the fact that academic researchers do not have an exclusive right to Scripture either. However, what is missing from this passage is an acknowledgement that bishops are themselves bound by the teaching of Scripture. They are students of Scripture before they are teachers of it. Bishops may be called to repentance by God in Scripture as much as any other believer.

Paragraph 59 rightly highlights the importance of interpretive questions in order to avoid simply echoing our own preferences as Scripture is read or taught. These are not in themselves ways of evading Scripture; much depends on where we get the answers. What is lacking here, though, is a note of caution, particularly at the level of ‘large-scale historical reconstruction’. In some contemporary instances imagination has played a larger role than a commitment to attend to the evidence.

Paragraph 60 also rightly questions our own contemporary philosophical and cultural context. It calls for critical interaction with new proposals for understanding texts. These are important comments. However, the process of interpretation is constrained by more than merely ‘loyalty to the community of the Church across time and space’. Here some acknowledgement of the principle of comparing Scripture with Scripture (in line with Article XX) and attention to the larger context of biblical theology would have strengthened the point being made. Some criteria for assessing different proposed meanings could have been suggested. There is a vagueness and open-endedness to the argument here that is not helpful.

Paragraph 61 seeks to relate this discussion to the current crisis in the Anglican Communion. However, it is at this point that caricature and mischievous implication rise to the surface. When *The report* suggests we need ‘mature study’ and ‘wise and prayerful discussion’ rather than remaining content ‘to drop random texts into arguments imagining that the point is thereby proved’ who is it who is doing the latter? Could not the authors of this report themselves be accused of ‘dropping random texts into arguments’ back in **paragraph 54** by their appeal to Matthew 28 and avoidance of texts which directly address the nature and function of Scripture?

The suggestion that this present crisis is a call ‘to re-evaluate the ways in which we have read, heard, studied and digested Scripture’ is a strange way of describing the situation. We have had, over the last thirty years or so, a succession of actions within the Anglican Communion which have repudiated the teaching of Scripture as it has been understood by the vast majority of mainstream Christianity across the traditions since the time of the New Testament. Of course new things are not always wrong things. Nevertheless, it is the novelty which needs evaluation first and foremost. There is a real danger that we have already irresponsibly adjusted our method of reading Scripture in order to accommodate the mood of the times and the moral judgements of a secular world.

Paragraph 62 bridges this section with the next, suggesting that too often appeals to Scripture have been divisive and that a more positive way forward occurs within the context of the various ministries of the Church, not least ‘the bonds of unity’ (i.e. in the section which follows, the episcopate). However, once again there is a literary sleight of hand. The suggestion of ‘the bewildering range of available interpretative strategies and results’, which appears to inspire division rather than unity, fails to recognise that not all strategies and hence their results are exercises in Christian faithfulness. The kind of hermeneutical

³⁷ See the essay by Doyle, Chapter 15.

bungy-jumping which transforms a prohibition into permission (e.g. the way some have handled Romans 1:18–31) ought to be unmasked as unbelief rather than included as one ‘available’ interpretative strategy.

What is missing in this entire section is any concept of the clarity of Scripture as understood by the Anglican Reformers. Tyndale, Cranmer and others wanted the Scriptures to be placed in the hands of the plough-boy because they were convinced that he could understand accurately (if not exhaustively) just what it is God has to say to his people in these words. The First Book of Homilies, for instance, presents a much more positive view of the Christian’s engagement with Scripture than does this report. As was said in paragraph 59, questions of interpretation are not necessarily attempts to avoid or relativise Scripture and its authority; but they may be.

(iii) The episcopate (63–66)³⁸

In this subsection we are told that that ‘the unity of the Communion is both expressed and put into effect amongst other things’ through the episcopate. The Virginia Report is also cited, to the effect that in the Reformation ‘there was no attempt to minimise the role of bishops as ministers of the word and sacrament or to stop a collegial relation between bishops and presbyters in the diocese or bishops together at the level of the Province.’ Next we are told that this amounts to ‘the retention of episcopacy as the foundational form of government within the Anglican churches’, ‘the distinctive mark of its claim to be both Catholic and Protestant’, ‘reflecting the practice of the very early Church’, and, citing the Lambeth Quadrilateral, ‘at once local and universal’ and ‘therefore an essential element of the life of the Anglican Communion’ (par. 63).

Once again, this is a sanitised portrait from one particular perspective. Each of these statements can be questioned. To begin at the end, despite the Lambeth Quadrilateral (and comment has already been made as to its status), the Anglican formularies do not consider the episcopate to be ‘an *essential* element’ of the church, but simply a practice which has prevailed since earliest times (Article XIX, and the preface to the ordinal of 1552 [and 1662]).

The quotation repeats one of Virginia’s pieces of slippery rhetoric— the fact that the collegiality of bishops was not ‘stopped’ by the Reformation, does not mean that it was endorsed, and, in fact, it does not mean it was even in existence at the time! Certainly the bishops have had a common responsibility to pass on the Apostolic Faith, but the notion of ‘collegiality’ amongst bishops is a recent innovation. The earliest notion of bishop, of course, was that they were the chief pastor of a local congregation. It might be nice for a group of bishops to get together occasionally for a cup of tea and chat; it is even better that they gather for Christian fellowship and mutual encouragement, but their gatherings ought not to take on the role of some kind of power block, and certainly within Anglicanism it should never become a new *magisterium*. The history of the Lambeth Conference illustrates a worrying slide in this direction and it is surely time to reverse it. The Lambeth Conference was not originally intended as a legislative body and even now it does not have that status.³⁹ Gathering together as fellow Christians ought to be to strengthen their commitment to the Apostolic Faith, which they are charged with teaching, and to the congregations in their care, which they are charged with encouraging in Christ by their teaching and example. It is perfectly appropriate for gathered bishops to express their mind on issues, but, once again, their resolutions must be weighed in the light of Scripture. When they affirm

³⁸ See Robert Doyle’s essay in this volume. ³⁹ See the essays by Cameron (Chapter 3) and Knox (Chapter 10).

scriptural truth, such as in Lambeth 1998 resolution 1.10, then this ought to be applauded and affirmed, for it represents the bishops doing exactly what they ought to do. Yet this does not mean that a resolution of Lambeth, simply by virtue of being a resolution of Lambeth, should be applauded or adopted.

And again, where does the notion of the Bishop expressing the unity of *the Communion* come from? The connection with the ‘very early Church’ may intend to take us back to Ignatius, whose view of the unity of the Bishop, it must be remembered, is the unity of the *local church*, not an amorphous international association. The notion of catholicity, although persistently misunderstood by so many (as in *par. 64* here), in the ‘very early Church’ actually spoke, not of ‘universal’ – if this is meant to imply a geographical ‘world-wide’ notion — but of the connection of a particular local church or bishop with the Apostolic Faith (see Cyril of Jerusalem’s instructions to his flock to choose the Catholic church from amongst all others in a town, *Cat. Lect.*18). This connection with the Apostolic Faith meant that here is found true believers, who are members of the true church, namely, ‘the assembly of the firstborn enrolled in heaven’ (Heb. 12:23). This heavenly assembly is the one true church, and it is expressed in the local ‘congregation of faithful men, in which the pure Word of God is preached, and the Sacraments be duly ministered [...]’ (Art. XIX).⁴⁰

And, finally, this brings us to the strong point of paragraph 63, which must not be overlooked in the midst of all the other things. The paragraph ends by endorsing the fact that ‘the bishop’s role as teacher of Scripture that is meant, above all, to be not merely a symbolic but a very practical means of giving the Church the energy and direction it needs for its mission and therefore the motivation and the groundwork for its unity’. If we remember that ‘the visible Church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men’ (Article XIX), i.e. a local assembly of believers, expressing that heavenly assembly around Christ, then this is an excellent statement indeed. The 39 *Articles* remind us of the danger that ‘in the visible church the evil be ever mingled with the good, and sometimes the evil have chief authority in the Ministration of the Word and Sacraments’ (Article XXVI). Those who hold the office of bishop should therefore be on their guard, to ensure that they are one of the ‘good’, rather than one of the ‘evil’. The bishop’s role as a teacher of Scripture needs constant reiteration and endorsement. And, we should add, this does not give licence for the bishop to be an innovator, providing novel interpretations of Scripture, or to ‘so expound one place of Scripture, that it be repugnant to another’ (Article XX). They are, in the words of the ordinal, to ‘study the Scriptures and pray for a true understanding of them so that you may be able to teach and exhort with sound doctrine, and be able to withstand and convince those who speak against them’; and to be ‘ready to drive away all false and strange doctrine which is contrary to God’s word; and privately and publicly to call upon and encourage others to do likewise’. The bishop’s role is to teach Scripture, so that he continues to pass on the good deposit, the faith once for all delivered to the saints. This is the way to promote true unity in the congregations: unity in the Apostolic Faith, and so unity *in Christ*.

Paragraph 65 makes a number of assertions about the Instruments of Unity, in an attempt to link these with whatever status the local episcopate has been given by the preceding paragraphs, and, by the happy conjunction of terms, even with the apostles and the New Testament. This is at best completely unhelpful and, at worst, deeply manipulative. The four things grouped together under the title ‘Instruments of Unity’ may perform useful functions, and, if so, they are to be welcomed for that usefulness. However, it must always be recognized that these Instruments are a recent development of history, and they are not

⁴⁰ See further on this view of church, the essay by Knox, Chapter 16.

without their problems. For example, the ACC is the only body which has lay membership, as of right (and even here they are grossly under-represented and under-empowered), and yet *theologically* the church is ‘a congregation of faithful men’, and so Christianity as a grass-roots movement is certainly not represented by these Instruments.

Paragraph 66 speaks of ‘unity-in-diversity’ and the need for interdependence and *synodality*. In the current climate, ‘diversity’ is something of a ‘buzz word’ which seems to catch up any and every difference among human beings. However, as discussed already above (see under par. 4), if the New Testament speaks of ‘diversity’ it is of a very limited kind. For sure, Christ brings people of different backgrounds, races and tribes, genders, and social classes together, so that we ‘are all one in Christ Jesus’ (Gal. 3:28). But this unity arises from being united together in a common faith, and being united together in striving for a common morality. Diversity of belief or morality is not promoted by the New Testament at all, and neither is it promoted by our Anglican formularies.

This paragraph states that the existence of the Instruments of Unity points to the desire ‘to work together, with bishops, clergy and laity all involved as fully as possible’. Leaving aside the glossing over of the obvious imbalance in respect to the lay involvement in these Instruments, this desire to work together is, of course, to be applauded. But, of course, the area of ‘work’ that these Instruments ought to take on for themselves needs careful definition. The recognition of the importance of ‘synods, at all levels of the Church’ in this paragraph also stands out like a sore thumb in *The Windsor Report*. What is also needed is a statement of the relative merit of the various ‘levels’ of synods. Theologically, since in the New Testament the heavenly church is expressed in the local church (‘in Corinth’, ‘in Ephesus’, ‘in Rome’, etc), and the visible church is ‘a congregation of faithful men’ (Article XIX), and Christianity is a grass-roots movement transforming the world ‘from below’ rather than ‘from above’, then it is the local synods who ought to feel most the responsibility for maintaining and promoting the Apostolic Faith.⁴¹ We recognize, of course, that local synods (as synods, or human beings, at any level) can — when measured against the norm of Scripture — get it wrong (Article XXI). At this point the ministers, and perhaps especially the bishop, ought to feel the weight of their responsibility to admonish and to encourage the people to greater commitment to the apostolic deposit. On the other hand, we recognize just as clearly, that those entrusted with the ministry of the word can also — when measured against the norm of Scripture — get it wrong (Article XXVI). When this occurs the godly laity needs to feel the weight of their responsibility to admonish and to encourage the clergy to greater commitment to the apostolic deposit. If the structures of the Anglican Communion are to have any assistance, they ought to exercise the role of an endorser of scriptural truth and practice, and their advice, admonishment, and action ought to be consistent with the faith once for all delivered to the saints.

(iv) Discernment in communion and reception (67–70)

Paragraph 67 makes a welcome plea for all in the Communion to read the Scriptures and apply them in their own setting. The danger in this paragraph, however, for those with ears to hear, is the implicit suggestion that one ‘reading’ is as legitimate as another. This is certainly a prevalent view in our post-modern world. But God’s voice should not be muffled by post-modern dogma about texts being capable of multiple meanings. Yes, interpretation of the Scriptures has always and should always be done in a context of dialogue and discussion. But if it is possible for the Scriptures to be distorted (see 2 Peter 3:14–18 and

⁴¹ How different is this idea from the notion of ‘Subsidiarity’ propagated by *The Windsor Report*. See Tong, Chapter 17.

Article XX, compare XXI and XXVI), then they must have a meaning that is clearly able to be discerned. Where have we left Tyndale's plough-boy, if we insist there are multiple meanings that continue to retreat further and further from his grasp? There may be multiple readings, but the task of 'discernment' is to discern which are the good ones, and the responsibility of Christian people is then to reject the evil and hold fast to the good (see 1 Thess. 5:21–22).

Paragraph 68 speaks, once again, of the notion of 'reception', which has already received comment above (see under pars. 12–21, 32–33). If this is the way the process works, then, in the current climate, the faithful have rejected the new teaching. But it is not a rejection simply because the novelty goes against 'the current teaching of the Anglican Communion' as **Paragraph 68** implies, but, far more importantly, because it goes against the mind of God as revealed in the Scriptures. There are aspects of 'the current teaching of the Anglican Communion' that should also be rejected on the same criteria. **Paragraph 69** rightly attempts to create some distance between the Anglican structures and those of the Roman Catholic Church, once again pointing to the supremacy of the Scriptures as our authority. This statement ought to be used to offer critique of some of the other suggestions in *The Report*. It can be argued that the current crisis in the Anglican Communion — as well as any other faults — is symptomatic of a failure of our congregations to take the Scriptures seriously enough. The process of reception apparently arises from those struggling under the misapprehension that the Scriptures are not clear, and so the 'Church has not so far made up its mind'. But this is a problem created by the sceptical scholarship of recent days. After hundreds of years of critical assault on the Scriptures from liberal scholarship, it is time for Anglicans all over the world to say 'enough!', and get back to preaching 'the pure word of God', and believing the same.

Diversity within community (71–96)

This section deals with Autonomy (pars. 72–86), and things known as *Adiaphora* (pars. 87–96).

The discussion of *autonomy* in **paragraphs 72–86** is another example of wishful thinking. **Paragraph 74** is a self-serving interpretation of history. Christianity in its Anglican expression found its way to many parts of the globe through English expansion, both military and mercantile. In Australia, the first Anglican clergy were chaplains, part of the military establishment and paid by the Crown. Eventually, bishops were appointed by Letters Patent to various colonies of the British Empire but these instruments were held to be ineffective as a basis for disciplining clergy.⁴² The United Kingdom parliament felt itself no longer responsible for colonial Anglicans once a colony was granted self government and the local Anglican Christians constituted themselves locally, sometimes with the aid of the colonial legislature and sometimes by agreement among themselves.⁴³ Once colonial Anglicans constituted themselves locally and took authority for discipline, faith and order they became independent of the Church of England and legally autonomous. The churches are then voluntary bodies organised on a consensual basis.

⁴² See *Long v Bishop of Cape Town* 1 Moo PCNS 411, where the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council held that the letters patent appointing Gray, bishop of Cape Town, gave him no coercive jurisdiction to compel Long, the incumbent of a parish, to attend synod. Once representative government had been granted to the colony the letters patent were ineffectual to create any jurisdiction in the colony. If any doubts remained after this 1863 decision they were decisively blown away 22 months later when the Privy council held that Gray had no coercive power to depose Colenso as bishop of Natal for heresy. *Re Lord Bishop of Natal* 3 Moo PCNS 115. ⁴³ See G.W.O. Addleshaw, 'The Law and Constitution of the Church'.

Each separate Anglican province has, within the limits of its own self determined constitution, power to be as diverse as it chooses. The extent of diversity from an 'Anglican norm' is a matter within the legal competence of the province. Beyond the province, diversity must be evaluated within the context of fellowship, relationships and persuasion, not jurisdiction, as there is none. Footnote 43 is misleading, *The Virginia Report* paragraphs referred to, provide no examples.

Paragraphs 75-77 are gobbledegook. To argue that provinces are autonomous and then say they are not sovereign or independent (**par. 75**) is just playing with words. The attempt to draw a parallel between the law making power of a province and a body in the secular world '*on which has been conferred subordinate and restricted legislative power*' fails. First, no superior external Anglican body has conferred power on national provincial synods. It is not like the parliament of the United Kingdom passing an imperial act granting independence to a former colony and granting law making powers to that new country. It is more akin to the people of the Thirteen Colonies putting together their own constitution for the United States of America. Secondly, to whom or what is the autonomous, independent and sovereign national province subordinate to? It makes no legal sense. Any restriction on the autonomy, independence or sovereignty of a national provincial synod arises out of historic relationships of fellowship; not a constitutional connection of jurisdiction, law and coercion.

While the legal realities are recognised in **par.78 & 79**, the concept of autonomy is required to bear the responsibility for the wellbeing of the Anglican Communion (**par. 80 & 82**). Fidelity to the faith once for all delivered should be a primary duty of provincial synods. If this coincides with the health of the Anglican Communion well and good. The puerile illustration in **par. 85** detracts from the seriousness of *The Report*. There is no scriptural warrant for crossing oneself, let alone a right way or a wrong way. If anything is *adiaphora*, this is it! **Paragraph 38** has an illustration in the same vein. Subsidiarity **par. 83** is examined in a separate essay.⁴⁴

Paragraphs 87-96 make use of the concept of *adiaphora* ('things indifferent' or 'things neither commanded nor forbidden'). A fuller consideration of the concept and its background is provided elsewhere.⁴⁵ As a whole this section appears to be suggesting that the concept of *adiaphora*, within certain limits, could provide a way forward in the current crisis. We need to learn what things are 'non-essential issues about which one can disagree without dividing the Church' (**par. 87**). Yet *The Report* is far from sanguine about the prospect of success in such a venture. There is a helpful recognition of the complexity of establishing criteria for determining what is *adiaphora* and what is not as well as an acknowledgement that 'not all "differences" can be tolerated' (**par. 89**).

There are some elements of this discussion that are less than adequate. There is no acknowledgement that in the New Testament the concept of 'matters of indifference' is never used in connection with sexual morality or doctrinal truth. The classic cases in the New Testament are eating food offered to idols and circumcision and in both of these there are conditions which would render each practice a matter of importance rather than one of indifference. Furthermore, when *The Report* appeals to the early English reformation, the patently absurd claim is made that matters of eucharistic theology fit within this category. But can this claim withstand the evidence that the real presence and transubstantiation were critical in the trials of John Lambert and Thomas Cranmer (both of whom were martyred)? In later sixteenth century England the idea of *adiaphora* was indeed employed

⁴⁴ See Tong, Chapter 17. ⁴⁵ See Mark Thompson's essay on *adiaphora* in this volume, Chapter 14.

by some in connection with the wearing of the surplice and the making of the sign of the cross in baptism. However, there is little or no evidence it was used to justify doctrinal deviation and it was certainly never countenanced as a way of excusing the overturning of explicit biblical teaching on human sexuality.

A curious feature of this section is the way it avoids the issue of homosexuality even when the biblical passages under consideration mention it explicitly. So 1 Corinthians 5 and 6 are mentioned as listing things that cannot fall into the category of *adiaphora*, indeed 1 Cor. 6:10 is paraphrased as ‘some types of behaviour are incompatible with inheriting God’s kingdom’, and yet there is a deafening silence on the presence of homosexual practice in the list in 1 Cor. 6:9 (par. 89). We are told Paul ruled out ‘anger and violence on the one hand and sexual profligacy on the other’ for those in Christ, yet again the issue of the moment is ignored (par. 91).

Paragraphs 94–95 introduce the notion of subsidiarity.⁴⁶ Here the suggestion is made that the more important an issue is perceived to be the higher the level of decision that is necessary. Local congregations may decide matters of indifference but the Anglican Communion must be consulted on central issues of importance. We have discussed elsewhere the way this inverts the biblical emphasis on relationship and responsibility and the way it invests an international network with a dignity the New Testament reserves for local church (above on pars. 36–42). However, the basic flaw at this point is the difficulty of determining just what is a matter of indifference and what is not. Practice and theory, or issues of behaviour and matters of belief are not easily disentangled from one another. Furthermore, what is to be done when one part of the Communion considers the issue a matter of indifference and others do not? Much more serious thought — and theological reflection upon the teaching of Scripture — was needed at this point.

Section C: Our Future Life Together

The Instruments of Unity (97–104)

This section deals with the Archbishop of Canterbury (par. 99), the Lambeth Conference (par.100–102), The Anglican Consultative Council (par. 103), and the Primates’ meeting (par.104).

Paragraph 97 expresses surprise that the views of the Instruments of Unity have been ignored. Nobody should have been surprised. Historically the so called Instruments of Unity have never been used in the manner envisaged by the *Virginia Report*. Timing is one problem. Lambeth meets ten yearly, ACC every three years and until recently the Primates every second year. Paragraph 98 implies that the Instruments have been available for *common council* from the beginning. Subsequent paragraphs (103–104) indicate that the ACC (1968) and the Primates Meeting (1978) are of recent origin. Thus for one hundred years the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Lambeth Conference, every ten years, were the instruments for *common council*.

While a critical analysis of the role of the Instruments of Unity is for another time, a few observations can be made.⁴⁷ The Archbishop of Canterbury was not the focus of colonial churchmen from the beginning. During the time of Charles II (150 years before the American Revolution), the Bishop of London came to exercise jurisdiction over the church in the American colonies and later churches in Europe. Footnote 57 does acknowledge this. The volume of correspondence of successive Archbishops gathered in the Lambeth Palace Library attest to his role and office.

⁴⁶ See Tong, Chapter 17. ⁴⁷ However, the Instruments of Unity are touched on in various places in this volume: Jensen, Chapter 2 (Archbishop of Canterbury); Cameron and Tong, Chapters 3 & 4 (various), Knox, Chapter 10 (Lambeth).

The key comment on the Lambeth Conference is in **par.102**, the Conference has no legislative powers but is an advisory body. Resolutions of Lambeth are uneven and many attract little attention. Others like Resolution 1.10 of Lambeth 1998 are turning points in the life of the Communion.

Laity, as of right are members of the Anglican Consultative Council. However, clergy and bishops make up two thirds of the membership. When the bishops from the Primates' Standing Committee are added, the laity can be swamped. Members of the ACC participated fully at Lambeth 1998 except the clergy and laity could not speak or vote at the plenary sessions when conference resolutions were considered.

Recommendations on the Instruments of Unity (par. 104-112)

This section deals with the Archbishop of Canterbury (**pars. 108–110**), and the proposed Council of Advice (**pars. 111–112**). The questions posed by this section and **Appendix One** require time for mature reflection. There is a cry for Anglican coherence but the answer we suggest is faithfulness to Apostolic teaching not structures.

Canon Law and Covenant (pars.113-120)

For comment on this section, see the essays by Robert Tong and Neil Cameron.

Section D: The Maintenance of Communion

General Findings (pars. 121–123)

The principle of interdependence is declared to be important (**par. 121**). Those in New Hampshire and New Westminster offended this principle by failing to 'attach sufficient importance to the impact of their decisions on other parts of the Communion'. As one of the most offensive sections of *The Report*, these paragraphs (**pars. 121–123**) then (without naming names) turn to those who have responded to the resulting situation by providing pastoral care in dioceses other than their own, in order to declare that their actions 'offend our understanding of communion in significant ways'. On the contrary, when a bishop departs from the Apostolic Faith, his See ought to be declared vacant, and the principle of interdependence ought to impel those who remain true to the Apostolic Faith to stretch out the right hand of fellowship to the churches who are thereby like sheep without an episcopal shepherd. The African bishops who sought to take responsible action in the wake of the schismatic actions of others, have been rightly offended by *The Windsor Report* at this point. In addition, despite the Windsor commission taking offence at the fact that these bishops acted hastily by not acceding to the Archbishop of Canterbury's request for a period of calm to allow them to complete their findings (**par. 122**), their action of reaching out to those whose bishops are derelict in their duty, is actually a true act of Christian fellowship arising from a common unity in the Apostolic Faith. The Archbishop of Canterbury can certainly offer his opinion and advice on such things, but he, too, is just a man, and his advice is of no stronger weight than any other persons, and in fact it may have been, as in this case, not the best way forward at all.⁴⁸

⁴⁸ For an evaluation of the possible courses of action available to him, see Peter Jensen's essay in this volume.

On elections to the episcopate (124–135)

The assumption is that a Bishop is consecrated into ‘the worldwide Church of God’ (par. 124) and ought to be acceptable to the wider Church. In some areas, such as divorce and remarriage, the issue of acceptability is unclear (par. 125). But there are other matters ‘over which the Communion has expressed its mind’ (par. 126). In another of *The Report’s* most surprising statements, it is claimed that ‘a common mind’ has been reached in regard to the ordination of women as bishops. The final sentence shows that this ‘common mind’ devolves onto the opinion of the Instruments of Unity that ‘although the ministry of a woman as bishop might not be accepted in some provinces, that represented a degree of impairment which the Communion could bear’. But what are the criteria that enable this conclusion to be reached? If the episcopacy is *essential* (as par. 63 told us — but this has been questioned above), then how can an impairment at the essence be tolerable? Furthermore, if the bishop’s role is primarily to teach the Scriptures, and those Scriptures prohibit a woman from teaching a man (1 Tim. 2:11–12), then how can this situation be tolerable? In other words, despite the glossy picture, there are still serious issues in regard to the ordination and the consecration of women, from which different conclusions can be drawn to those apparently drawn by the Instruments of Unity.⁴⁹

The ‘Instruments of Unity’ and the vast majority of Anglicans world-wide have expressed their mind on the ordination or consecration of people involved sexually with another person of the same gender (euphemistically described as ‘same gender unions’ (par. 127). Since it involves the endorsement of an activity which God explicitly condemns in Scripture, such an ordination is a breach of Apostolic Faith and order. Expressions of this common mind have, of course, been treated with contempt by those involved in the consecration of a practicing homosexual for New Hampshire.

Not everyone who was involved in the processes, of course, would have known of the opinions of the Instruments of Unity. This shows the need for greater awareness of these opinions (par. 128). Nevertheless, the Bishops of ECUSA certainly knew of these opinions, and acted in defiance of them (par. 129). This raises questions about these bishops’ commitment to ECUSA’s ‘interdependence as a member of the Anglican Communion’. Due concern for ‘wider relationships with a number of key ecumenical partners’ was also lacking (par. 130).

The Report suggests that in the future all those involved in consecration of bishops should ask the question about the candidate’s wider acceptability (par. 131). This goes wider than the issue of homosexuality, arguing that those involved in episcopal consecrations should take account ‘our bonds of affection’ and ‘interdependence’ (par. 132). The commission endorses Canterbury’s opinion that Gene Robinson would not be received as a bishop in England (par. 133), and urges caution in issuing him with invitations to ‘the councils of the Communion’. To bring all sides together, *The Report* (par.134): invites ECUSA to express regret; urges those who consecrated Gene Robinson to consider withdrawing themselves from representative functions within the Communion; invites ECUSA to effect a moratorium on similar consecrations ‘until some new consensus in the Anglican Communion emerges’.⁵⁰ This is all fair enough, even if not strong enough (why ‘regret’ instead of ‘repentance’?), but it is worrying that the rest of the Communion are asked to accept their decision, either way (par. 134)! How can this be possible, if we are committed to true unity, namely, unity in the Apostolic Faith?

⁴⁹ See the essay by Jane Tooher, Chapter 7. ⁵⁰ Note the rhetoric of change, assuming that this consensus will emerge, thereby assuming the present position is faulty. See further, Barker, Chapter 6.

The final recommendation in this section (**par. 135**) is that the Instruments of Unity give attention to the ‘Listening’ process, ‘so that greater common understanding might be obtained on the underlying issue of same gender relationships’. In particular, ECUSA is invited to show ‘from within the sources of authority that we Anglicans have received in Scripture, the apostolic tradition and reasoned reflection, how a person living in a same gender union may be considered eligible to lead the flock of Christ’. This ‘reasoned response [...] will have an important contribution to make to the ongoing discussion’. But, of course, given the clarity of God’s word on these issues, is there really any way that this will ever happen? What is needed is for all sides to listen carefully to God’s word, especially since Western culture has moved so far away from it on these issues.

On public Rites of Blessing of same sex unions (136–146)

Authorisation of the blessing of same sex unions was part of what led to the ‘current tensions’, and so is part of the mandate of the Windsor commission (**par. 136**). The diocese of New Westminster regarded this as ‘not a matter of theology but of pastoral care’ and so decidable at the diocesan level. With no formal consultation with the wider province or Communion, such rites were eventually agreed to, and administered (**par. 137**). Normally a bishop does not have the freedom to authorise a liturgical text which is inconsistent with the province’s Book of Common Prayer (**par. 138**). The Canadian church is engaged in ‘a process of discernment’ to decide whether this is a doctrinal matter, or not (**par. 139**).

As did ECUSA, this Canadian diocese acknowledged there was no consensus over the blessing of homosexual relationships (**par. 140**), but commended the development of such rites in any case and without consultation in the Communion. The Instruments of Unity had clearly advised against the development of such rites (**par. 141**) and to act in defiance of this clearly ‘constitutes a denial of the bonds of Communion’. These bonds would be properly acknowledged by the churches proposing such action being able ‘to demonstrate to the rest of the Communion why their proposal meets the criteria of Scripture, tradition and reason. In order to be received as a legitimate development of the tradition, it must be possible to demonstrate how public Rites of Blessing for same sex unions would constitute growth in harmony with the apostolic tradition as it has been received’. At the moment, many do not see this is so (**par. 142**). To act unilaterally goes against the opinions of the Instruments of Unity, and therefore in breach of ‘the legitimate application of the Christian faith as the churches of the Anglican Communion have received it’ and of the bonds of affection, and especially the principle of interdependence.

The Report calls for a moratorium on all such rites (**par. 144**), and invites bishops who have authorised such rites to express regret and to consider whether they should withdraw from representative functions. Once more the language is unnecessarily muted (and offensively so when the same expression is used of the faithful bishops who have acted to care for those injured by this action). Why weren’t those involved called upon to repent and reverse their decision? Why is there any doubt that this matter involves doctrine and not simply ceremonial. The calling down of God’s blessing on an activity which God explicitly — and repeatedly — condemns in Scripture raises huge theological questions.

Paragraph 145 then urges all provinces to engage in biblical study in regard to same sex unions, especially bearing in mind the distinction, if any, between same sex unions and same sex marriage. We are told this call does not imply approval.

Paragraph 146 calls for continued consideration of the issue, and for a reassessment of

our care of persons of homosexual orientation. We could ask why is there an uncritical adoption of the language of ‘homosexual orientation’? Why is there no call for care of those who seek to uphold the Apostolic Faith, or those ‘struggling’ to be godly in marriage, or celibate in singleness? Why such a bias towards one party over another? Why is there no acknowledgement that God’s good plan for human beings does not include either homosexual orientation or practice? Why is there no clear statement that homosexual activity is actually a sin that without repentance will remove a person from the future kingdom of God? Surely it is equally a pastoral duty to remind people of the coming kingdom of God, in both its aspects of coming judgement, and coming salvation and renovation.

On care of dissenting groups (147–155)

Paragraph 147 muddies the waters by guessing at the motivations of those who react against the revisionist actions. Why must there be a psychologising of motivation (‘hurt and alienation’, ‘suspicion and division’). The stated motivation ‘to be faithful to Christian truth and values as they have understood them’ needs no extra psychological overlay and ought to be respected. This is every Christian’s duty and it is sufficiently motivated by the love of Christ and his call to be faithful to him. Whether hurt or not, this motivation ought to be owned by all of God’s children.

The commission wishes to uphold the Bishop’s ‘historically sanctioned role’ as a ‘core principle of Anglican ecclesiology’, and to acknowledge the tension arising from the situation when spiritual leadership (presumably that of the Bishop) is felt to be compromised (**par. 148**). *The Report* also recognizes that it has been such ‘principled concerns’ (**par. 149**) that have led to invitations for external bishops to step into the breach, and to bishops accepting such invitations. The authors of *The Report* are also clear in their disapproval of these actions. Nevertheless, surely if a bishop fails in his ‘historically sanctioned role’ of upholding and maintaining and promoting the Apostolic Faith, then he is derelict in his duty to God and God’s people. In this case, although perhaps still maintaining tenure in the external structures of his diocese, he cannot really be considered to be one of ‘the proper authorities of the dioceses concerned’, and neither can any body within that diocese that has followed him in his departure. As mentioned above, it could be argued that the principle of interdependence, of such concern to the authors of *The Windsor Report*, itself mandates the action of those outside these dioceses who continue to uphold the Apostolic Faith to provide whatever care is within their power to the abandoned congregations, or dioceses.

It really seems to be bad manners, to say the least, when **paragraph 150** (and **151**) labels those congregations seeking to uphold biblical Christianity, ‘dissenting groups’. This privileges the innovation, which – at best — has yet to prove its consistency with scriptural teaching (see **pars. 32–33**), and – at worst — is actually contrary to that teaching. The rhetoric of *The Report* seems to begin on the wrong side of the equation.

The Report (**par. 151**) does, however, allow for a ‘conditional and temporary provision of delegated pastoral oversight’ as a last resort, and this only within ‘a mutually agreed commitment to effecting reconciliation’. But who says when the last resort has been reached? Surely this is the responsibility of the local congregation, for it is at this level that the pastoral care has broken down. And what is the realistic possibility of ‘reconciliation’. If it is a case of breach of the Apostolic Faith, then there can be no reconciliation without repentance, and it is probably highly unlikely that this will come about, short of a miracle of God. True Christian fellowship has been lost already, and all that is left is structural association, which,

in the end, is of limited value to the local churches. Instead of spending energy rebuking those who have cared for congregations in this dreadful situation, the Anglican ‘Instruments of Unity’ should perhaps spend time on how local churches can be protected against runaway bishops and other wayward structural processes.

Further, what is the likelihood of the (structurally) ‘incumbent bishop’ delegating some of their powers to the incoming bishop, as **paragraph 152** suggests. The experience of ‘flying bishops’ in the United Kingdom suggests that, despite a synodical agreement to allow the practice, actual requests for such a ministry meet strong resistance and even hostility. Yet even if this were not the case, why should the diocesan bishop have the say over who might be invited in to exercise this ministry or have the power to veto it? Shouldn’t this be the choice of the congregation itself? If the Anglican Communion believes that ordination/consecration is for the whole church (**par. 23**), then the incumbent bishop ought to find any canonically fit bishop chosen by the congregation suitable. If he does not find their choice suitable, then isn’t this simply transferring the hostility down to another level?

After calling on the Canadian Anglican Church to bear with *The Report’s* principles (**par. 153**), and after disagreeing with the establishment of parallel jurisdictions (**par. 154**), the final word of *The Report* before the conclusion is given over to calling on the bishops who have intervened in other dioceses to express regret, to affirm their desire to stay in the Communion, and to effect a moratorium on any further interventions (**par. 155**). But how can this call be heeded and the bishops remain true to their acknowledged ‘principled concerns’ (**par. 149**)? This amounts to *The Report* calling on the Bishops to renounce their principles. Since these principles were to care for those in need of pastoral care, in an endeavour to fulfil the episcopal duty of maintaining the Apostolic Faith, then the bishops should roundly condemn *The Windsor Report* for even considering this a right course of action.

Conclusion: (pars. 156–157)

The final paragraphs of *The Report* call for reconciliation and for healing of divisions, which will – in the opinion of *The Report* – be achieved by heeding the recommendations contained therein. The real danger of choosing ‘not to walk together’ (**par. 157**) opens up before us. Various avenues are open should the recommendations go unheeded, but those drafting *The Report* are looking not for further division, but for healing. The question that really needs to be resolved is whether there is a fundamental divide in terms of the stance towards the Scriptures. Without this being healed, then there is no point tinkering at the structural end of the equation. The future of the Anglican Communion really swings upon its membership’s attitude towards the faith once for all delivered to the saints.

*Appendix One: Reflections on the Instruments of Unity*⁵¹**The Anglican Consultative Council [(1)–(2)]****The Lambeth Conference [(3)–(4)]****The Primates' Meeting [(5)]****The Anglican Communion Office [(6)–(9)]***Appendix Two: Proposal for the Anglican Covenant*

Rather than discussing the detail of this draft, the more important issue is whether such a covenant is desirable or workable in practice. The answer to both those questions is 'no', as the essays by Neil Cameron and Robert Tong seek to demonstrate. The loose structures of the Anglican Communion should remain loose, and a quasi-legal response to current concerns should be resisted at all costs. The New Testament notion of fellowship in a common gospel provides the model for a way forward. Fellowship is breached with a departure from the Apostolic Faith. Those who continue in the Apostolic Faith continue in fellowship. Where there are structural problems caused by departures from the Apostolic Faith, new alignments ought to be created between congregations who continue to share fellowship in the apostolic gospel. The structures of the Anglican Communion should facilitate such re-alignments by means of their provision of fora for discussion, counsels of advice, and other non-legal, persuasive mechanisms. In the case of a breach of Apostolic Faith, the structures that are already in place are sufficient to allow for the withdrawal of fellowship, through, for example, the non-issue of the invitation to attend various meetings, through words of admonition from one Bishop to another, through words of pastoral encouragement to congregations holding the Apostolic Faith, and through working to ensure that Anglican congregations throughout the world are supported and strengthened in holding firmly to the apostolic word.

⁵¹ For comment on these sections see Neil Cameron's essay in this volume.

PART II

CONVERSATION

The Archbishop of Canterbury: Accountability and Unity

PETER F. JENSEN

The Current Appeal to Canterbury for Help

Everyone who knows the Archbishop of Canterbury personally testifies to his deep commitment to the unity of the Anglican Communion. It is also recognised that he is going to need all that commitment and his theological skills to hinder it from self-destructing in what he himself acknowledges to be a time of crisis.¹

He writes in *New Directions*, 'I suspect that those who speak of new alignments and new patterns, of the weakening of territorial jurisdiction and the like, are seeing the situation pretty accurately.'² In itself this sentence was not central to his argument, but it helped 'earth' his discussion and invites us to test what he is saying against the situation we now find ourselves in.

Developments in the Diocese of New Westminster, provide a useful template for the future of the Communion and the role of the Archbishop of Canterbury. If we can see the significance of events in this Diocese, and work out what needs to happen there, it will help us develop an approach when the crisis spreads, as it has done in ECUSA and as it almost did in Oxford.³

The situation in New Westminster as I understand it is that, following a vote in favour of the blessing of same sex-unions by a considerable number in the Synod, Bishop Ingham agreed to make provision for such services. As soon as the vote was taken, representatives of about nine parishes withdrew from the Synod. These parishes have since that time refused to support the Diocese financially, and have in essence attempted to withdraw from the jurisdiction of the Bishop. Appealing to the rest of the Anglican Communion for support, they have named themselves 'The Anglican Communion in New Westminster.'

Why have they taken such a drastic step? To be in structural communion with other Christians is usually a great blessing and a testimony to the world of the mutual regard which we have in Christ. It is not to be abandoned lightly. For most of us, most of the time, we are content to have the positive benefits, despite the inconveniences or even the downright disagreements we have about the faith. Most of these can be tolerated or even enjoyed.

¹ This article has previously been published in *New Directions* (October 2003) and appears here with permission. Some minor changes have been made, including the insertion of headings and explanatory footnotes. ² *New Directions* (September 2003). ³ [Editors' note: Since then, Jeffrey John has been installed as Dean of St Albans, not without the vocal opposition of biblically minded Anglicans in that diocese.]

But the blessings of such communion also create the conditions for grave difficulty. Where those with whom I am known to be in association choose a course of action which at a fundamental level denies what I stand for, the continued association is put at risk. Our very communion gives the other parties a share in the credit which accrues to our joint name, access to our people and standing in the community. It is legitimately believed that if we continue to be united we must endorse their activities. The blessing of same-sex unions, involved the nine parishes, by association, in an immoral activity which, in their view, is specifically forbidden by the Bible. They had no choice but to withdraw.

In the following months, the parishes have secured the oversight of the Bishop of the Yukon and the recognition of some other Canadian and international bishops. Such developments have, of course, been contested by Bishop Ingham. For their part, they have appealed to the Archbishop of Canterbury for his recognition that they are authentically Anglican, and continue to be part of the Anglican Communion. Can they be part of the Communion if they have broken with their own (territorial) Bishop?

The role of the Archbishop in answering this question is crucial though not utterly decisive. Clearly, his word matters a great deal to all involved and all will be urging him to support them. At stake are such issues as property and the succession of ministry. He is faced with extremely painful choices. They amount, I think, to three options.

Three Options for Canterbury

Do Nothing

First, he could do nothing. He would not recognise the dissenters as other than a break-away group who should revert to the Diocese and simply continue to recognise the Diocese of New Westminster as the only authentic Anglicans. The dissenters would be treated as akin to the many splinter groups who have broken from ECUSA over the years. This would be tantamount to saying that as far as disciplinary matters are concerned, it is entirely a matter for the Canadian Church and the Diocese to work out. As long as the legalities are in order the Diocese is authentic – the passage to the next Lambeth conference (thought of by many as a test of membership in the Communion) is secure.

Recognise Both

Secondly, he could recognise both the dissenters, (especially since they have received the protection of the Bishop of the Yukon and various international Bishops), and the Diocese of New Westminster. The fact that the two groups are structurally out of communion with each other for the time being is not something which should trouble the Archbishop. His role is to take the long view and hold them together. This would amount to a recognition that the Anglican Communion is a confederation or network of local churches (Dioceses), in varying relation to one another, but held together by history and respect for Canterbury.

Withdraw Recognition from the Bishop

Thirdly, he could take the view that Bishop Ingham has in fact broken unity by his action and that it is an action so much at odds with the mind of the Communion and the teaching of Scripture, that he can no longer have whatever benefits are conferred by the recognition of the See of Canterbury. There are, of course, various ways in which that withdrawal of recognition may be worked out, some more drastic than others.

Assessing the Options: How can we assess the different options?

Not to Act?

There is something to be said for first approach, of doing nothing. It recognises that the Communion is a loose one, based more on history and structure than we had realised. It does not exaggerate the role of the Archbishop. It allows local people to deal with local problems, as have occurred and will continue to occur all over the world.

However, the problem for the Archbishop is that so many people in the Communion see the particular issue of homosexuality as having high moral and spiritual importance, and requiring a firm and clear decision by him. In his article, he raises the question of whether we are in fact dealing with a matter of such significance. He suggests that we ought to see ourselves as uniting on a fundamental theological consensus – endorsing a Primates' *communiqué* which, in Dr William's words, said that 'breaking communion should be restricted to cases where the basic "grammar" of the faith and practice had been altered and (which) proposed the Lambeth Quadrilateral as a rule of thumb for identifying that grammar'.⁴

At one level, we ought to be grateful for a mood of peaceableness which accompanies this suggestion. The Archbishop does not want us to dramatise our situation, but to think carefully about what really matters and why. He points out that some people have seen the ordination of women as a communion-breaking issue,⁵ while others who object to same-sex unions accept the ordination of women.

In my judgment, however, he has misjudged the present situation and his peaceable approach has run out of time. There are several reasons for this. First, although we may want to regard issues of human sexuality as of the second order, they are in fact so prominent in the Bible and the moral tradition is so clear that the 'time for listening' beloved of liberal thinkers is not available.

Second, many people regard the matter of homosexuality as the last point of a drift which has been occurring for several decades. It is the final moment for the Communion. Interestingly, those who have accepted the ordination of women are now being told by both sides of the debate that their hermeneutical method has led inexorably to this moment. It does not necessarily make them happy to accept it. In fact it is interesting to see how strongly negative many such Christians are to the practice of homosexuality. May it be that they will now reconsider their earlier commitment?

Third, the offence caused to churches in the global south by the maverick western decision-making which has badly affected them, has been seriously underestimated. There is deep hurt, and the Communion has been destabilised. The way in which the first blessing of same-sex unions occurred so soon after the last Primates meeting, when it was thought that assurances had been made, has caused added offence. It should be noted here that there is a moral strength in the position of the so-called traditionalists. It is the innovators who are the threat to disunity, not those who have remained exactly as they are, and who hold the views of the vast majority of Christians throughout the world.

Fourth, the Archbishop's own writings on human sexuality have made the situation more awkward.⁶ It is true that he has made clear his intention of working within the mind of the church on this matter. But what if the next Lambeth, or the one after that should vote

⁴ On the place of the Lambeth Quadrilateral, see the essay by D.B. Knox in this volume. ⁵ For this view, see further the essay by Jane Tooher in this volume. ⁶ See R. Williams, 'Making Moral Decisions'.

in a different way? As well, the Reading imbroglio has shaken some of the hopes that people had in the possibilities for this walking along the fence.⁷

In short, it is going to be difficult for the Archbishop not to act. His moral authority is on the line. Even if he cannot accept that the blessing of same-sex unions and the endorsement of a gay Bishop are wrong in themselves, it will be expected that he can see that faithful Anglicans have been disenfranchised for no other sin than holding on the majority traditional view. Not to act will invite others to act in support of the traditionalists.

Recognize Both?

What of the second option, the way of recognising both parties? Such a route would not please many people, but it may actually create time for the Communion to settle. It is also less draconian than the expulsions and suspensions being spoken of under the third option. On the other hand, it is a frank recognition, perhaps foreshadowed by the Archbishop already, that we are going to see ‘new alignments and new patterns’.

Indeed, this route raises important theological questions about what makes a church a church.⁸ The Communion would begin to look more like a network of interconnecting churches, some of whom would be out of fellowship with the others. It is by no means certain that Canterbury would remain in any sense the focus for all this, especially as there would be those who would take the view that this represents a compromise where no compromise is possible.

Discipline?

Lastly, the third option requires disciplining the erring churches in the only realistic way possible, namely withdrawing recognition. This, of course, is the way of greatest risk and requires the greatest courage. It would mean a belated recognition of the distance we have already come along a liberal path, and the need for decisive action. It would send a powerful moral and spiritual message to the churches of the west, that our flirtation with secularism has gone too far and we are in real danger of losing the moral and spiritual imperatives of the gospel. Of course, it would lead to the alienation of many and the withdrawal from the Communion of a significant number of players.

Issues of Accountability

... and Scripture

‘Accountability’ is a key word in the Archbishop’s article. He has in mind both accountability to one another and accountability to the past. Given his doctrine of the Church, that it finds its source in the act of God in calling forth a people, I missed a clearer statement of our accountability to God as he has spoken in Scripture. I wonder whether there is a hidden hermeneutical problem at this point, involving the move from Scripture to understanding the will of God. At stake, in my view, is the doctrine of the clarity of Scripture.

It is true that the Archbishop counts the use of Scripture along with the creeds and the sacraments more or less as the boundary markers of the church. The difficulty is that the

⁷ [Editors’ note: In 2003, the Bishop of Oxford announced the appointment of Rev. Jeffrey John, an open but currently celibate homosexual, as Bishop of Reading. The ensuing furore resulted in an extended meeting with the Archbishop of Canterbury at the conclusion of which it was announced that the appointment would not proceed. Subsequently, the same man has now been appointed Dean of St Albans and the diocesan authorities have acted strongly against all who have objected.] ⁸ See further, the essays by Knox and Bolt in this volume.

authority of Scripture needs to be asserted and defended precisely where the argument is occurring – in today's world, over homosexuality. Dr Williams wonders whether this will turn out to be a marginal issue: I believe it is the latest version of a conflict over major issues which the Communion cannot and must not evade. Beneath the presenting problem of homosexuality there are bound to be issues of Christology and the nature of God.

... and 'Church' and 'Communion'

One more thing. The Archbishop raises the danger that the new alignment may lead to the entire end of a communion of churches in favour of 'non-communicating and competing entities', a situation which he describes as 'untheological pluralism'. This would indeed be grievous. It may be helpful, however, for us all to be more precise about what we mean by church and what we mean by communion.

The Church of Jesus Christ is one. All Christians are in communion with it and with each other. The churches of Jesus Christ struggle to make that unity visible both within their lives and between themselves. The churches come in all shapes and sizes – we should value and strengthen our communion with as many as we can. Structural communion, such as we have enjoyed for so long in the Anglican Communion is reflection of that gift.

But the blessing of structural communion becomes a curse when it involves us in partnering those who endorse major doctrinal or moral deviance from the scriptural norms. As the parishes in New Westminster testify, there is a limit to communion. It comes where souls are put at risk by sustained institutional disobedience to the word of God in scripture. For myself, I believe that they were right to say that in the blessing of same-sex unions (and the endorsement of a gay Bishop) the limit has been reached.

The Windsor Report 2004

—Legal implications

NEIL CAMERON

Introduction

In October 2003, the Archbishop of Canterbury established the Lambeth Commission on Communion (the 'Commission'). He subsequently requested the Commission (amongst other things):¹

'[...] To examine and report to him by 30th September 2004, in preparation for the ensuing meetings of the Primates and the Anglican Consultative Council, on the legal and theological implications flowing from the decisions of the Episcopal Church (USA) to appoint a priest in a committed same sex relationship as one of its bishops, and of the Diocese of New Westminster to authorise services for use in connection with same sex unions [...].'

The Anglican Communion

The Archbishop's mandate refers to the 'Anglican Communion' as if this description is the name of a single entity. It is not. In 1930, the Lambeth Conference resolved² that the Anglican Communion was:

'[...] a fellowship within the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church, of those duly constituted dioceses, provinces or regional Churches in communion with the See of Canterbury [...].'

Changes have occurred since 1930 and, whilst in one sense, this description remains the same, it is technically more accurate to describe the Anglican Communion as a fellowship which manifests itself in four instruments – the Lambeth Conference, the Anglican Consultative Council (the 'ACC'), the Primates' Meeting and the Archbishop of Canterbury.

The office of the Archbishop of Canterbury is the only element that has been in existence for more than 150 years. The Archbishop has primacy in England and, by acceptance, primacy throughout the Anglican Communion although, in many parts, the office has no legal standing.

¹ The complete mandate is reproduced in *The Windsor Report*, 8. ² LC1930 Res 49.

The Lambeth Conference established³ the Anglican Consultative Council (the ‘ACC’) as a body of bishops, clergy and lay persons representing the provinces of the Anglican Communion to share information, advise on inter-Anglican relations, agree on policies for world mission, relations with other Christian Churches and inter-Anglican communication. Dioceses that are not part of a province have no representation.

The Primates of the churches that make up the communion first met in 1979. Initially they met every two years. Recently they have been meeting annually. Meetings are intended to be for ‘mutual counsel and pastoral care’.⁴

Of the four elements, the Lambeth Conference remains the most important element. The first Lambeth Conference was held in 1867. A conference has been held mostly once each decade since that year. The Lambeth conference of 1988 was described in 1989⁵ as follows:

‘[I speak ...] about the legal implications of a body which has no standing in canon, ecclesiastical, civil or common law. The Lambeth Conference was a gathering of persons individually invited by the Archbishop of Canterbury to meet with him for three weeks in the University of Kent at Canterbury. Finance for the meeting came from a number of corporate bodies but none of them had any control over what happened. The Archbishop had asked a number of persons to assist him in the organisation of the meeting but the ultimate control of it was in his hands, subject to the willingness of those who were there to fall in with what was proposed. During the last week of the meeting some seventy resolutions were passed, but none of them, with one possible exception, has any legal effect of any kind.’

Doe notes that two very different views exist as to the nature of the resolutions of the Lambeth Conferences.⁶ One view (which I will refer to as the ‘Realists’ View’) is that just stated. The other view (which I will refer to as the ‘Idealists’ View’) treats the resolutions as a form of ‘legislation’. On the basis of this view:⁷

‘Whilst it is accepted that the (Lambeth) Conference is convened “not to make law but to take resolutions which should be a guide to the various [...] Churches in their making of law” resolutions are of such weight that they (are) more than “not binding”: it is in this way the Lambeth Conference(s) started to make a new body of legislation [...].’

Doe propounds a similar view.⁸

The recent decision of the 74th General Convention of the Episcopal Church (USA) (‘ECUSA’) to appoint a priest in a committed same sex relationship as one of its bishops (‘the ECUSA decision’) and the endorsement of a public Rite of Blessing for same sex unions by the Diocese of New Westminster (the ‘New Westminster endorsement’) indicate clearly that, where there is determination, the Realists’ View applies and little or no regard will be paid to the Idealists’ View.

The position of the other three instruments of the Anglican Communion is no different.

³ The formal constitution of the ACC was approved by the Lambeth Conference in 1968. What legal standing this gives the ACC is unclear. ⁴ D. Hamid, ‘Church, Communion’, 363. ⁵ E. Kemp, ‘Legal Implications of Lambeth’, 15. ⁶ N. Doe, *Canon Law and the Anglican Communion*, 346. ⁷ O. Chadwick, ‘Introduction’, to *Resolutions of the twelve Lambeth Conferences 1867-1988*, xv-xviii. ⁸ N. Doe, *Canon Law and the Anglican Communion*, 339ff.

Remedies

The Anglican Communion and its instruments suffer the same disabilities as those of most voluntary associations when a member acts contrary to the constitution or policies of the association. The sanctions available to a secular authority are generally not available. Recourse to secular authorities may be pointless and, in any event, distasteful. A member may be reprimanded in public or in private but that may not concern the member if the member does not accept the relevant provision of the constitution or the policy. A member may be threatened with expulsion or be expelled. However, the threat or expulsion may not concern the member and there may be continuing members who are reluctant, for various reasons, to support such an action.

The consequences of membership of the Anglican Communion have been variously expressed. At the first meeting of the ACC, the following resolution was passed:⁹

'Anglican Churches and Provinces are in full communion with one another. This means that there is a mutual recognition of members and ministers, so that the clergy of one Church can act in and for another Church and the bishops of one Church can take part in the consecration of bishops of another.'

At its second meeting, the ACC noted¹⁰:

'Events since 1971[...] have however supported the suggestion made at Limuru that the term "full communion" requires much more flexible application than has hitherto been the case. In the past it has been used with precise reference to interchangeability of ministries and communicants [...] to be in communion with another church should involve much more spiritual sharing than that and also that Churches can have a very real and also sacramental fellowship, while at the same time accepting certain limitations required by their own discipline [...].'

By 1984, the ACC had come to recognise that 'full communion' had ceased to exist throughout the Anglican Communion.¹¹ The ordination of women to the priesthood issue resulted in some clergy and bishops of the Anglican Communion refusing to recognise the orders of female persons ordained as priests in other parts of the Anglican Communion.

Nevertheless, the denial or the threat of a denial of the recognition of the orders of priests and bishops of a former member of the Anglican Communion may have some force as may the denial of recognition of the baptism and confirmation of members of a former member – although it must be recognised that the latter can give rise to major problems.

Limits on Autonomy

There is no suggestion in *The Windsor Report 2004* that the ECUSA decision or the Westminster endorsement are illegal under the constitutions of the respective church bodies which made them. In consequence the Commission needed to address the issue as to whether there is or ought to be limits on the exercise of local autonomy. The Commission appears to have adopted theories advanced by Norman Doe.¹² Several tests were suggested (see pars. 79, 80 and 82), all similar, one being that autonomy must be limited that the decisions must be 'fully compatible with the interests, standards, unity and

⁹ Anglican Consultative Council, *The Time is Now*, 1. ¹⁰ Anglican Consultative Council, *Partners in Mission*, 6.

¹¹ Anglican Consultative Council, *Bonds in Affection*, 1984, 1. ¹² Compare, for example, the assertions (for which there is little or no foundation) suggested in Doe, *Canon Law and the Anglican Communion*, 341 ff.

good order of the wider community' (par. 79). What is surprising is that the Commission advanced no doctrinal basis (such as Scripture or the Thirty nine Articles) as justification for the test.

The solution proposed by the Commission is a series of covenants. A possible draft is attached to *The Report* as Appendix two. The draft is a 'preliminary draft and discussion document' only. The final form of the covenant is to be signed by the primates. A programme leading to adoption is suggested.

Looking at the proposal from an Australian perspective, the Commission's proposal seems impractical:

- The Australian Primate has no authority to execute such a covenant.
- Such a covenant will not bind any diocese of the Anglican Church of Australia unless either the Constitution of The Anglican Church of Australia is amended or the synod of a diocese chooses to adopt the covenant. In the latter event, the synod, having adopted the covenant could later repudiate it.¹³
- An amendment to the Constitution will not be easy to achieve.
- Whilst one accepts that the covenant is merely a draft and a detailed review of the draft is inappropriate at this stage, one can observe that the draft has clearly been drafted by someone of the Anglo-Catholic persuasion who has no understanding of or sympathy for the position of the evangelical wing of the Anglican Communion. Quite apart from inappropriate language (such as the term 'eucharist') and the failure to refer The Book of Common Prayer and to the Thirty Nine Articles, the provisions of each of Articles 2 to 24 raise contentious doctrinal issues.
- A separate and contentious issue is the role of The Archbishop of Canterbury. Should the Archbishop be given the powers contemplated by the draft? If the Archbishop's powers relating to the Anglican Communion are to be increased, should not the Anglican Communion determine who is to be appointed to the office?

Nothing is said in *The Report* as to what happens if a particular church does not sign the covenant. Nothing is said in *The Report* as to what happens if a particular church acts contrary to the covenant.

The ECUSA decision and the New Westminster endorsement

By resolution 1.10,¹⁴ the 1998 Lambeth Conference rejected homosexual activity as 'incompatible with Scripture'¹⁵ and said¹⁶ that it:

'[...] cannot advise the legitimising or blessing of same sex unions nor ordaining those involved in same gender unions'.

The Commission took the ECUSA decision and the Westminster endorsement to be contrary to the terms of resolution 1.10.

The Commission's mandate required it to consider the legal implications of the ECUSA decision and the New Westminster endorsement, both of which the Commission accepted were contrary to the terms of resolution 1.10. An appropriate response should have been

¹³ In relation to this and the following paragraph the reader is referred to the following essay by Mr Robert Tong.

¹⁴ The terms of the resolution are reproduced in *The Windsor Report*, Appendix 3, part 6. ¹⁵ Paragraph 4 of resolution 1.10. ¹⁶ Paragraph 5 of resolution 1.10.

based on the seriousness of the breach of Scripture recognised by resolution 1.10. That required an analysis of the ECUSA decision and the Westminster endorsement against the Scripture relied on by resolution 1.10. Were the breaches significant when compared with Scripture thereby calling for a significant response or were they a minor or technical breach which might require a lesser or no response? The Commission failed to address the issue. Instead, it said (par. 43; in italics):

'We repeat that we have not been invited, and are not intending, to comment or make recommendations on the theological and ethical matters concerning the practice of same sex relations and the blessings and ethical matters concerning the practice of same sex relations and the blessing or ordination or consecration of those who engage in them.'

The Commission identified other actions that it considered inappropriate. Briefly:

- Those involved in the ECUSA consecration 'did not pay due regard, in the way they might and, in our view, should have done, to the wider implications of the decisions they were making and the actions they were taking' (par. 130).
- Likewise, the diocese of New Westminster made no formal attempt to consult the wider province or the Anglican Communion on the theological issues or to delay processes to allow such a consultation to take place (par. 137).
- The action of the diocese of New Westminster was against 'the formally expressed opinions in the Instruments of Unity' (par. 143).

The Commission's Recommendations

The recommendations of the Commission are:

- That ECUSA be invited to express its regret, that those bishops of ECUSA who took part in the consecration of the relevant bishop consider withdrawing from representative functions in the Anglican Communion and that no election of any candidate to the episcopate living in a same gender union be effected (par. 135).
- That there be a moratorium on all rites of blessing of same sex unions, that the bishops who authorised such rites be invited to express regret, that pending such expression of regret such bishops be invited to consider in all conscience whether they should withdraw themselves from their representative functions in the Anglican Communion (par. 141).

In relation to these recommendations:

- Inherent in the Commission's recommendations is the retention of the status quo. In view of the terms of resolution 1.10, this seems extraordinary.
- One might have thought that ECUSA could and, indeed, should have been called upon to remove the offending Bishop from office and that membership of the Anglican Communion of ECUSA be suspended pending completion of that action.
- One might also have thought that the synod of the diocese of New Westminster could and, indeed should have been called upon to disallow the rite and that membership of the Anglican Communion of the Diocese of New Westminster be suspended pending that action.

- The Commission is silent as to what, if anything, will happen if the relevant parties ‘consider’ withdrawing and then announce that they will not.
- The Commission is silent as to what, if anything will happen if the recommendations are not adopted.

While one accepts that the alternatives open to the instruments of the Anglican Communion are limited, the conclusions of the Commission imply that its members do not take the resolutions of the Lambeth Conference or, in any event, resolution 1.10 too seriously.

How Would the Anglican Church of Australia Commit Itself to an Anglican Covenant?

ROBERT TONG

Windsor: paragraph 118.

This Commission recommends, therefore, and urges the primates to consider, the adoption by the churches of the Communion of a common Anglican Covenant¹ which would make explicit and forceful the loyalty and bonds of affection which governs the relationships between the churches of the Communion [...] The Covenant could be signed by the primates.

Introduction

A previous Australian primate said,

William Temple whose fame is in all the Churches is credited with having said: "When people say that the Church should do something, they usually mean that the Bishops should say something". The trouble is that the Bishops seldom agree among themselves, and in any case the Bishops are not the Church. The Church is made up of people: it is governed by an elected General Synod; when the Synod is not in session, its Standing Committee acts on its behalf. That is, as democratic a system of church government as can easily be devised, but it makes it impossible for the Church to speak with a single authoritative voice. Therefore what the Primate should choose to say, or what the Bishops decide to say may be no more than a personal utterance and may command no more support than those whose views it happens to reflect.²

Constitutionally, Australia is a federation of States³ and several Commonwealth Territories. In Australia, the Anglican Church is a voluntary association organised on a consensual basis. The law concerning voluntary associations is a matter for State and Territory parliaments. Thus, the Constitution⁴ of the Anglican Church of Australia ('ACA') can be found as a schedule to a similar but not identical act of each State and Territory

¹ Draft text of *The Anglican Covenant* is set out as Appendix Two of *The Windsor Report*. ² Presidential Address to the Sixth Australian General Synod 24th August 1981 by The Most Rev Sir Marcus Loane KBE, MA, DD Archbishop of Sydney and Primate. *Proceedings Sixth General Synod Anglican Church of Australia* 1981. ³ The Australian States (New South Wales 1788, Tasmania 1825, Western Australia 1829, South Australia 1836, Victoria 1851, and Queensland 1859) existed as separate colonies of the United Kingdom before Federation in 1900. Law making power is shared between the Commonwealth and State and Territory Parliaments depending on the subject matter.

parliament.⁵ The effect of the ‘covering acts’ is to make dealings in property binding on bishops, clergy and laity; facilitate the conduct of tribunals and allow the administration of oaths.

Section 10 of the Constitution provides,

‘There shall be a Primate of this Church who shall be elected and hold office as may be prescribed by canon of the General Synod.’

The Primate of the ACA must be a diocesan bishop.⁶ Various functions are given by the Constitution to the Primate, for example, the Primate is a member of the House of Bishops (s 16); presides at General Synod (s 20); convenes General Synod (s 23); and acts on the recommendation of tribunals as to sentence. A canon may give a specific task to the Primate.⁷

The problem

Windsor 117 urges that a brief law be enacted in each province to enable a commitment to the covenant. An example is given: *‘The Governing Body of the Church in Wales authorises the Archbishop of Wales to enter on behalf of this church the Anglican Covenant and commits the Church in Wales to comply and act in a manner compatible with the Covenant so entered.’*⁸

At present there is no existing provision in the Constitution or in any canon of the General Synod authorising the Primate to represent the ACA ‘at large’ or specifically to sign a document such as the Anglican Covenant as proposed by paragraph 118.

Authorising the Australian primate

This lack of legal foundation could be remedied by amending the Constitution or by passing a General Synod canon or by a diocese by ordinance authorising the Primate to sign on behalf of that diocese. Each has problems.

First, amending the Constitution is neither quick nor easy. Generally, changes to core provisions of the Constitution require majorities in each of the Houses of Bishops, Clergy and Laity and subsequently, the assent of three quarters of the diocesan synods including all the metropolitan sees.⁹ While diocesan synods meet annually, General Synod meets every three years, the next being 2007.

Secondly, if a canon was promoted to authorise the Primate to sign the covenant then as the subject matter of the covenant *‘concerns the ritual ceremonial or discipline of this Church’* (s 28), a special majority is required of two thirds of the members of each house to pass the canon. Even then, the canon does not become effective until *every* diocesan synod assents to it.

⁴ The text of the Constitution can be found on the General Synod website www.anglican.org.au ⁵ Anglican Church of Australia Act 1980 (ACT); Anglican Church of Australia Act 1976 (NT); Anglican Church of Australia Constitution Act 1961 (NSW); Anglican Church of Australia Constitution Act 1961 (Qld); Anglican Church of Australia Constitution Act 1961 (SA); Anglican Church of Australia Constitution Act 1977 (Tas); Anglican Church of Australia Constitution Act 1985 (Vic); Anglican Church of Australia Constitution Act 1960 (WA). ⁶ Primate Canon 1985-2004. Unlike Canada or the United States of America the Australian primate is not fulltime. So far only bishops of metropolitan sees have been elected: Gough (Sydney), Woods (Melbourne), Loane (Sydney), Grindrod (Brisbane), Rayner (Melbourne), and Carnley (Perth). Before the 1961 constitutional arrangements, WG Broughton (1836-1853) was styled Bishop of Australia and from 1847 Bishop of Sydney and Metropolitan of Australasia. His successor, F Barker (1854-1882) was styled Metropolitan of Australia and from 1872, Primate. Thereafter, the Bishop of Sydney, (styled Archbishop from 1897), Barry, Saumarez-Smith, Wright, Mowll and Gough with one exception, was primate. That exception was Le Fanu of Perth, primate 1935-1947. ⁷ For example: the Defence Force Ministry Canon 1985-2001 where the Primate can issue a Licence for a Defence Force chaplain or appoint, with the approval of a majority of the Metropolitans, a bishop to the Defence Force. Not all dioceses have adopted the canon. In those dioceses the chaplain must have the licence of the diocesan to function. Even where the canon has been adopted, some diocesans endorse the primate’s licence or issue a parallel licence. ⁸ *The Windsor Report*, footnote 79. ⁹ S 67 sets out how the Constitution can be changed. There are 23 dioceses in Australia. Metropolitan sees are Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide and Perth.

Thirdly, a diocesan synod could by ordinance cede to the Primate power to enter into the covenant on its behalf. In Australia, an ordinance of a diocesan synod is not made until the diocesan bishop assents to it.¹⁰ As a matter of political reality why would a diocesan synod or its bishop cede power to the Primate in this case? Surely the diocesan would want to sign the covenant himself.

Other possibilities

Putting to one side the question of authorising the primate, the Constitution could be amended to add new sections to Chapter II, *Ruling Principles*, thus the terms of the covenant are incorporated into the constitution and become a constitutional imperative. The complex requirements for constitutional alteration have been indicated above.

General Synod could by canon adopt the covenant but because the subject matter relates to 'ritual, ceremonial or discipline' (s 28), special majorities are required. If passed by General Synod the *provisional* canon must then be assented to by all diocesan synods by ordinance. Once made, the canon does not take effect in a diocese until adopted by ordinance of the diocese because it affects the 'order and good government of the Church within a diocese' (s 30).

If adopted, how binding would the covenant be?

Assume the primate is authorised to sign the covenant or the Constitution is amended, or General Synod passes a canon to adopt the covenant. How would the terms of a covenant bind the ACA, the individual dioceses, diocesan bishops or the clergy?

If the Australian primate is authorised to sign the covenant in the terms suggested, the commitment to comply is not part of the law of the diocese until adopted by ordinance of the synod of that diocese.

If the General Synod passed a canon contrary to the terms of the covenant the ultimate sanction would be *withdrawal from membership* (par. 157) of the Anglican Communion. There would be no invitation to Lambeth, ACC or Primates Meetings.

At the diocesan level the Offences Canon 1962-1998 could be used to charge clergy and bishops¹¹ but only in those dioceses where the synod has adopted the covenant. For example, in the internal province of New South Wales, some dioceses would adopt the covenant and others would not. Further, for the seven dioceses¹² in the State of New South Wales church tribunal rulings on charges against clergy may have no ultimate legal effect unless church trust property is involved.¹³ Surely an absurd situation!

10 Contrast this with General Synod where a canon is passed by the votes of members. The Primate has no assent to give or withhold. **11** Clause 1 of the canon sets out various offences including: Conduct, whenever occurring, (a) which would be disgraceful if committed by a member of the clergy, and (b) which at the time the charge is preferred is productive, or if known publicly would be productive, of scandal or evil report. In addition, bishops may be charged with violation of the Constitution, (clause 2). **12** Armidale, Bathurst, Canberra/Goulburn, Grafton, Newcastle, Riverina and the Metropolitan See, Sydney. **13** In *Scandrett v Dowling* 27 NSWLR 483 the New South Wales Court of Appeal refused to grant an injunction to restrain the Bishop of Canberra/Goulburn from ordaining women as priests without an authorising canon from General Synod. The court held that the Constitution of the ACA in force in the State of New South Wales was binding in conscience only and not justiciable in a civil court unless a matter concerned church property. The leading High Court of Australia case of *Cameron v Hogan* 51 CLR 358 was applied. In that case the Premier of Victoria (Hogan) had been expelled from the state branch of the Australian Labor Party. As Hogan had no proprietary interest in the property of the association the High Court held that he had no entitlement to a declaration or injunction in respect to his expulsion. Further the rules of the association did not act as an enforceable contract between members. See also *Wylde v Attorney-General (NSW)* 78 CLR 224.

Some Political Realities

Any proposal to enlarge the powers of the primate or General Synod will be strongly resisted by significant parts of the ACA.

First, the history of the making of the Constitution of the ACA¹⁴ revealed diocesan, churchmanship and theological fault lines across the foundations of Australian Anglicanism. Those fault lines remain, and are exasperated by census figures over the last decade¹⁵ which indicate evangelical growth, liberal stagnation and Anglo-Catholic invisibility. The covenant process enlarges the function of the primate and at least on paper, tightens constitutional bonds. The call is for the opposite.¹⁶

Secondly, as indicated above, changes to core provisions of the Constitution require all metropolitan sees to assent by ordinance to the change. Given past history, the synod of the diocese of Sydney is most unlikely to pass any ordinance to enlarge the powers of the primate or to amend the Constitution to include the terms of the proposed covenant.

Thirdly, allegations about the theological orthodoxy of the Sydney synod and the theological leadership of the diocese by the present primate are strong arguments against enhancing the office of primate.¹⁷

Fourthly, even if it was possible to make the covenant part of the General Synod legislative framework, without agreement from Sydney, the covenant would have no effect on a bishop of a diocese or in a diocese *unless and until* that diocese, by ordinance of its own synod, adopted the covenant. This would mean that the covenant would apply in some dioceses and not in others. For those who argue that unity is paramount this result is nonsense. But for those who give priority to apostolic teaching over organisational unity, an uneven response may be an appropriate and proper loosening of the constitutional straight jacket.

Fifthly, before the ordination of women, bishops generally accepted the validity of an ordination by another bishop. It was entirely a matter for the bishop's discretion whether the ordained person was licensed to function in the diocese. No bishop could be compelled to recognise an ordination by another bishop or compelled to licence a minister ordained elsewhere. The covenant does not change this.

Sixthly, a diocese may by ordinance repeal an earlier ordinance adopting a General Synod canon and so the covenant would no longer be part of the law of the diocese.

Seventhly, it is unlikely that the reformed, evangelical, protestant and biblically literate laity found in several Australian dioceses will cede to Canterbury what is in the end coercive power.

Conclusion

To the extent that this [the draft Covenant] is largely descriptive of existing principles, it is hoped that its adoption might be regarded as relatively uncontroversial (The Windsor Report, par. 118).

As drafted the covenant is objectionable to evangelicals. Its language and thought forms are Catholic; many of its assertions cannot be properly grounded in Scripture; laity (who

¹⁴ See J. Davis, *Anglicans and Australian their Constitution*; B.N. Kaye, *Anglicanism in Australia*. ¹⁵ General Synod website search 'church attendance' or www.anglican.org.au/docs/GS%20Attendance%20%20%20Missions5.pdf ¹⁶ See for example, David Chislett, 'Letter from Australia', *New Directions* (December 2004). ¹⁷ See Peter F. Carnley, *Reflections in Glass and Colloquium on Subordinationism and the Doctrine of the Trinity*, 20 August 2004, Trinity College, Melbourne; www.trinity.unimelb.edu.au, especially essay by the Rev Dr Peter Adam.

mostly pay the bills) continue to be excluded from decision making; loyalty is to structures and organisational unity rather than to the apostolic faith and worst of all; Canterbury becomes papal.¹⁸

Given the synodical arrangements in Australia, generations may pass before a covenant text is approved.

If committing the ACA to the covenant is nigh impossible, or, if there is a commitment, it is uneven, what of the other 30 odd provinces of the Anglican Communion?

Exclusion from fellowship is the biblical response to those who depart from the apostolic faith. Some have taken that step (see pars. 28–30). Unfortunately *The Windsor Report* belittles those who have acted in defence of apostolic teaching.

If only Canterbury would act. He could declare now, that Gene Robinson and his consecrators will not be invited to Lambeth. The bishop of New Westminster could be told likewise. Invitations to Lambeth are solely in the discretion of Canterbury.¹⁹ There is a precedent for exclusion. Fisher, in an unprincipled decision refused to invite Morris to Lambeth 1958.²⁰ Archbishop Williams can rely on New Testament principles and practices. Biblical leadership of this character would immediately lift the morale of the Anglican Communion in its most populous provinces. It would be akin to George Carey's leadership at Lambeth 1998 when he joined the debate and made a major speech, from the floor, in favour of Lambeth resolution I.10.²¹

The covenant is a *cul de sac*.

¹⁸ See the proposed *Anglican Covenant*, Article 27: Interpretation and Periodic Review. 'The Archbishop of Canterbury shall decide all questions of interpretation of this Covenant [...] the decision of the Archbishop shall be regarded as authoritative in the Communion [...]'. ¹⁹ In 1958 only diocesan bishops were invited; in 1968 diocesan and non-diocesan were invited; in 1978 the ACC Standing Committee were included; in 1988 and 1998 the whole ACC and all active bishops were invited. ²⁰ Fisher, Archbishop of Canterbury 1945-1961. Fred Morris had been consecrated in 1943 as Bishop of North Africa in St Paul's Cathedral London by Temple, Archbishop of Canterbury. When Morris retired in 1955 he was elected bishop of the Church of England in South Africa. ²¹ See G. Carey, *Know the Truth*, 328.

A Layman's View of The Windsor Report

BARRY NEWMAN

The Report as I Read it

According to *The Windsor Report*, many things are to blame for the present crisis. The structures at the top could have worked better, the Episcopal Church (USA) (ECUSA), the Canadian Diocese of New Westminster (New Westminster) and the Anglican Church of Canada could have been given a better understanding of how they should have proceeded. They were certainly in the wrong — that is, in proceeding in the way and when they did. Of course, not everyone is being blamed in the naming these entities — it was, for example, the Synods or the bishops. But also blameworthy were those primates or bishops who intervened in other dioceses or provinces without sanction. Others added to the various improprieties by speaking up in an inflammatory manner.

Calm, adopting the appropriate procedures, having more discussion and debate, waiting for a more definitive view from the four instruments of unity — the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Lambeth Conference, the Anglican Consultative Council and the Primates' Meeting, should have been the case. Above all, everyone directly involved should have given greater consideration to the overwhelming importance of the existence, maintenance and nurture of the Anglican Communion. Of course, Scripture and truth matter. But in the end the focus must be on what Scripture and the Spirit point us to — unity. The report, as it clearly states, does not discuss the pros and cons of same sex relations.

Several solutions to the current crisis are proposed. Give an even greater role to the Archbishop of Canterbury, particularly in his being seen as the ultimate human focus for Anglican unity, but also in his feeling quite free to be selective on whom he calls to the Lambeth Conference and the Primates' Meeting. Rearrange the four instruments of unity so that together they make more sense to each other and to those whom they seek to help. Create a Council of Advice for the Archbishop of Canterbury so that he can act more wisely. Pleas are made for expressions of regret to be issued and for moratoriums to be declared by those two groups of people mainly to blame — ECUSA, New Westminster and the Anglican Church of Canada on the one hand, and those who intervened, on the other. Invite ECUSA and the Anglican Church of Canada to provide to the proper authorities well-reasoned accounts of why they believe as they do. An official approval in the end might be forthcoming.

Most importantly, let the Anglican Communion consider a covenant which in its final development phase would be binding on all who signed, with obvious penalties for those who would break the law. Walking along different paths is to be avoided at almost all costs.

The Report as I See It

The document has a certain nobility to it, but a nobility that doesn't take reality into account. Rather than confronting things as they really are, the report reads like a stage performance of a sad fairy tale, with genuine attempts being made to avoid a final tragedy.

Anglicanism is a type of secular organisation that, at the highest level, has a board of four *ex officio* directors. The company is in a shambles. Its cohesive character is largely a myth. Even if the present crisis is resolved, will the Anglican Communion then be, at best, like a broken chair but now mended with legs and pieces of seat, broken sections of the back and arm rests joined in some fashion but pointing every which way, no longer recognisable or usable as a chair? Giving more power to one of the directors, introducing a fifth and shuffling the relationships between them will be an experience felt more by them than the majority of the shareholders. Many of the shareholders never turn up to meetings and either don't care or blindly follow someone to whom they have given their proxy. Other shareholders who do express their opinions have quite different ideas on what products the company is selling, how they should be marketed and who are the prospective buyers. Some have little confidence in the four directors while not feeling free to suggest votes of no confidence. Many of those who have invested their time and energy in the workings of the company use the same words but not the same language. Confidence levels among various groups of shareholders are often quite minimal.

Solution: introduce a binding law. Does it have any hope of succeeding? If however, this attempt gets to any significant stage in its proposed development, it could be the greatest instrument for fracturing the communion we have seen so far. It won't even have the appearance of a patchwork quilt where some pieces do not adhere to others and with no overall designer at the helm (the present position). There will be a ripping of the quilt and probably severe condemnation made of those who are alleged to have made the first tear with ostracisation as a real consequence. However, the terrible danger would be, if, within certain provinces, dioceses and —with a ripple-down-the-line effect — even parishes, were forced to acquire such a legal bond or depart from the company with perhaps dire financial and other consequences to follow.

The real situation existing within Anglicanism today is like that of a very nasty marriage with intolerable behaviour having to be endured. Such marriages, if they are not totally physically and mentally destructive, generally end up in divorce. Surface-level amicable relations are only restored, if ever, when the parties are so far removed from one another's lives that significant mutual harm is unlikely to occur. One may hope for a measure of reconciliation after arbitration before divorce, but the statistics for success are not high. One of the saving graces of Anglicanism is that not too many of the multitudes that inhabit our earth know too much about it or care about it. The real game of Christendom is played at a much more personal level and as such, in a much more effective way than this report envisages.

Of course there is a crisis. Given the nature of the company and its shareholders it was a crisis that had to happen.

My conclusion is that the report is largely delusional.

The Rhetoric of Change

PAUL BARKER

Rhetoric is the art of persuasion. Speakers and writers seeking to bring about change, as well as those who seek to uphold the status quo, will use rhetoric to persuade people to their view. There is nothing wrong, *per se*, in the use of rhetoric. There are all sorts of standard rhetorical devices and techniques commonly employed and this brief article will look at *The Windsor Report* to highlight some used here and in the current debate about homosexuality in the Anglican Communion.

One of the arguments often used for the acceptance of homosexual practice is the so-called developments in modern science. *The Windsor Report* falls into this rhetoric when it says that some churches are ordaining practising homosexuals 'offering arguments based on modern scientific proposals'. The rhetorical implication is that those that refuse to ordain practising homosexuals are ignoring or ignorant of modern science. The fallacy is that modern science does not determine Christian morality.

In the current debate, though not a significant feature of *The Windsor Report* that I detected, is the rhetorical device of labeling people holding various views. For example, those advocating an acceptance of homosexual practice, ordination and same-sex blessing will frequently call those who support their views such things as progressive, contemporary, informed, up-to-date and widely read. Those opposing them will be called such things as fundamentalist, traditional, ill-informed, homophobic, rigid. This is an obvious rhetoric, seeking to instill in the audience or reader an emotion against the opposing view and in favour of the change. Notice that in such rhetoric, the emotion derives from the selective use of labels and not from the argument itself.

Having said this, in the concluding paragraphs of *The Windsor Report*, we read that 'many people within the Communion fail to see how the authorization of (a rite of blessing same-sex relationships) is compatible with the teaching of Scripture' (par. 142). While that is true, the language used is deceptive. It seems to imply, perhaps subtly, that the crisis we face over blessing same-sex unions is because of the failure of many to see how it is compatible with Scripture. Is it not more accurate that it is incompatible and that the failure belongs to those who cannot produce conclusive evidence for its compatibility? In effect, the language 'labels' those who do not agree with blessing same-sex unions as having failed.

More subtly, when the change being sought is significant, then various rhetorical techniques are employed to diminish the perception of the significance of the change. For example, evidence may be given of other churches or denominations that have adopted the change with the implied conclusion that such a change is not so significant after all. In such arguments, the evidence can easily be overstated.

A second rhetorical device to understate the seriousness of the issue is to focus on those who hold views intensely. Such dismissive language diverts the reader or listener away from the issue itself to the intensity of holding a view. For example, in the foreword to *The Windsor Report*, Archbishop Eames notes that ‘a large constituency of faithful members [...] are bemused and bewildered by the intensity of the opposing views’. The implication is that holding a view intensely is bad. The rhetoric could well seek to imply that the issue is not as serious as some think.

We also see this in *The Windsor Report* when it urges the church to move ‘forward from entrenched positions into fresh appreciation of the riches of the gospel’ (par. 62). This comes in a section which underplays the authority of Scripture (par. 55 ‘scripture is *part* of the means by which God directs the church[...]’), advocates a re-evaluation of the way in which scripture is read (par. 61) and urges the church to be ‘open to the fresh wind of the Spirit’. This concludes with the appeal that the Bible ought to be ‘a means of unity, not division’ (par. 62) and that it is by reading the Bible too little, not too much, that we have allowed ourselves to drift apart (par. 67). All of this sounds appealing and attractive. But it is flawed, in that God’s word divides people between those who accept it and those who reject it. Where division occurs, as in this debate, it may not be because of ‘entrenched positions’ and a lack of being ‘open to the fresh wind of the Spirit’, though that is a real possibility. It may simply be because of a rejection of God’s moral standards. People love darkness more than light.

A third rhetorical way in which the significance of the change is understated is by using an analogy. *The Windsor Report* seeks to parallel the issue of the ordination of women with that of homosexual practice (see pars. 12–21). By making the two analogous, the rhetoric implies that the two concerns are of the same order. They are not. Though there is some discussion on matters of indifference in *The Windsor Report*, the rhetorical impact is to keep suggesting that the two matters are of the same order and that just as the communion changed its view on ordination of women, so too can it on the issue of homosexual practice. The implication is that the reader or listener will consider that since one change has happened in the Anglican Communion, one which they may even agree with, this other proposed change is not so monumental after all.

A fourth way in which the significance of the change is diminished in the readers’ or listeners’ perceptions is to imply, if not state, that the current status quo is not in fact a firmly agreed position. One might hear, for example, the language that we are in a position of listening in order to determine our position as a church (pars. 41, 60, 66). Or we might read that the church is not of a mind on this matter and has no position. Indeed one of the key recommendations of *The Windsor Report* is that the Anglican Communion spends more time listening (par. 135). The truth is that the church has a position, firmly held for a long time, and reaffirmed at the most recent Lambeth conference.

While the dominant rhetoric in synodical debates I have experienced is that the church is undecided and has no view, in *The Windsor Report* this rhetoric rears its head in a devious way. In this instance, the rhetoric is associated with misquotation, a common failing in those advocating change. Distortions of truth, and not stating the full truth, are also rhetorical devices used in to mislead, confuse or persuade to a different point of view. The most sinister of these was the serpent’s misquoting of God in Eden. Here, in *The Windsor Report*, the misquoting of Lambeth I.10 is of concern. For example, Lambeth is quoted as calling for an ‘ongoing process of listening and discernment’ (par. 146). Lambeth did not mention discernment. The effect of its inclusion here is to sow seeds of doubt in those

convinced of the traditional view. It implies, falsely, that there exists no reliable discernment of the truth of these matters.

A further way in which the significance of the change is understated or avoided is by playing a different card as the trump card. In *The Windsor Report*, the crucial issue is the unity of the Anglican Communion. One could sense that unity at almost any cost is the aim of the report. For example, 'Communion is, in fact, the fundamental limit to autonomy' (par. 82). This emphasis runs through the whole report, admittedly because that was part of its brief from the Archbishop of Canterbury. So unity becomes the dominant issue and therefore the issue of homosexual practice and ordination takes a back seat. It is trumped by the unity card and thus its importance is diminished. Where *The Windsor Report* is weakest is in its lack of theological discussion about the bounds of Christian unity.¹ Institutional unity is its concern, as evidenced by its 'instruments of unity' (see pars. 21, 98). Where is the Bible's authority in this? Instead, the key authority ends up being that of 'reception' (pars. 68–69).²

Though not in *The Windsor Report*, but frequent in the same debate elsewhere, the 'love' card is frequently played as trump. Homosexual practice, it is argued is an expression of love. Love is supreme (what Christian could deny that, is the implication) so therefore homosexual practice can be accepted.

The unity and love cards, though sounding biblical and highly attractive, are not in fact trumps. Biblical unity is never at the expense of biblical truth. Indeed, unity is within biblical truth (Ephesians 4:13–16). The rhetoric of unity at all costs is misleading. *The Windsor Report* founders in this respect with its emphasis on 'communion', not a biblically dominant motif — at least, not in the sense it is used here.³ Even though *The Windsor Report* can be applauded for its missiological concern in seeking a unified communion, it is theologically deficient in thinking that any unity, especially a unity at the expense of truth, will promote gospel mission.

A glaring omission in *The Windsor Report* is the lack of a clear affirmation of traditional sexual ethics. Nowhere is there an endorsement of Lambeth I.10. Nowhere is there an unequivocal upholding of traditional biblical views on homosexuality. This is all part of the rhetoric, seeking to convey the impression that there is no norm on which the church stands.

This rhetoric of unity leads *The Windsor Report* into a predominant critique of process. The chastisement to ECUSA and New Westminster is therefore predominantly on the issue of failing to submit to due process, rather than on the ethics of the issue itself. This approach softens the issue and directs the readers' attention away from the real issue, the biblical view of homosexual practice. Further, because *The Windsor Report* is playing the unity card as trumps, it chastises some Primates and others for intervening in other dioceses in order to care for those upholding the traditional view on homosexuality under threat from revisionist (rhetorical term!) bishops.

Though overall *The Windsor Report* seeks to be fair and balanced, its rhetoric contributes to some of its weaknesses and failures. The purpose of this paper is to make us more alert to the use of language which can deceive, divert or understate the issues.

¹ The essays in this volume in the section 'Windsor's Fundamental Concern: Unity' seek to provide such a discussion. ² See the following essay by Jane Tooher. ³ See Bolt's essay, Chapter 18 of this volume.

The Rhetoric of Reception: Lessons from the Ordination of Women Priests

JANE TOOHER

The Windsor Report regards the ordination of women as a settled feature of life in the Anglican Communion, one which provides a precedent for the process of change that ought to have been followed in the recent controversies caused by the actions in New Hampshire and New Westminster (par. 12). Though ordaining women to the presbyterate was controversial at first, we are told that an extended period of consultation and 'reception' has resulted in a change of mind and a transformation of practice that is now generally accepted. Yet the report ignores the fact that there remains significant and widespread opposition to this development inside and outside the Communion. In the face of ridicule and even attempts at coercion there remain pockets of the Anglican Communion which have not endorsed the ordination of women. Those of us who are convinced that this development was in fact a breach of biblical faithfulness would argue that the only precedent that should be followed from the earlier controversy is that of protest and resistance to the revisionist agenda. Put another way, the precedent to be followed is a determination to listen to the Scriptures and to conform our lives and ministry practices to its teaching. In both these controversial cases (the ordination of women and the endorsement of homosexual practice) the long history of the church testifies to the clear and unambiguous teaching of Scripture on the issue in dispute.

According to *The Windsor Report*, the idea of 'reception' has been used by church councils to test how the faithful 'received' changes which those councils have proposed, while the *consensus fidelium* provided the ultimate check that any new declaration was in harmony with the faith as it had been received (par. 68). The report then goes on to note that more recently a process of 'reception' has been used to test whether a controversial development that has arisen within one province of the Communion (e.g. the ordination of women to the presbyterate) might over time come to be seen by other provinces as an authentic development of the faith (par. 68).

The report does recognise that a suggested change might, in fact, be illegitimate because it is not consistent with clear biblical teaching and hence with the Apostolic Faith. Presumably in such cases a 'process of reception' is a misnomer, for the suggested changes could also be rejected and repentance called for. Indeed, persistence with the language of 'reception' in *The Windsor Report* and elsewhere suggests that change is inevitably in the

direction of the revisionist agenda. But what if that agenda is wrongheaded and faithless? The report makes much of the importance of listening (e.g. par. 41) but the urgent and unacknowledged question remains, who is to listen to whom? The assumption appears to be that the 'old' need to listen to the 'new' and that, as this listening takes place, the new will gradually be accommodated and the 'reception' process will be complete. But there are other voices to be heard and heeded in these debates.

The first of these (first in every way) is the voice of God in the Scriptures. A conviction that in the Old and New Testaments we have the good word of a benevolent and loving God should lead us to approach the Scriptures with confidence and a determination to let its teaching shape our thinking and practice. Instead of evading the teaching of Scripture because of an *a priori* conviction that we know better what is for our welfare, we recognise that this teaching opens up to us the best and most beneficial way of living in relationship with God and with each other.

In second place, we are bound to listen to the Apostolic Faith as received by Christians down through the centuries. As those committed to maintain and pass on the deposit of faith, our fundamental stance is to look backwards to ensure that what we are maintaining and passing on is indeed the apostolic deposit. When an innovation takes us away from this deposit, then it ought to be rejected. If the situation arises that some in our denominational grouping embrace such an innovation, the faithful should continue to hold firm and, where possible, seek to persuade the innovators to repent and 'turn back the clock'. It may indeed come to mean that the Apostolic Faith is maintained only by a minority within the Anglican Communion, but truth is not determined by the numbers. If only a minority remains faithful to biblical truth then we can take courage from the example of Athanasius who held out against 'the world' in the days of the Arian controversy. A majority should always be wary of assuming the truth of their position and should instead remember that the possibility always exists that the majority have gone astray. The process of 'reception' should, therefore, always include a very careful listening to a minority who might well be found to be holding fast to an unpopular yet genuine nourishing biblical truth. The voice of the minority should never be marginalised, silenced, ignored, or mocked. There may yet be a day when a majority in the Anglican Communion might need to repent and come back home.

The Windsor Report lays down some steps that ought to have been taken by New Hampshire and New Westminster in regard to their innovation, namely the endorsement of homosexual practice. We may well ask whether the same requirements were placed before those who ordained women in the face of widespread protest. It seems almost irrefutable now that a pattern of dismissing the teaching of Scripture and those who seek to honour it was in place at least as early as this prior debate. After all, the apostolic deposit of the Scriptures includes explicit instructions about church life and the exercise of Christian ministry. The instructions of the apostle Paul were 'for all the churches' and in his letters he addresses directly the roles of men and women in the churches. What he says in those texts is not difficult even though for some it has proven unpalatable. The teaching of Scripture is clear, despite the most valiant attempts to undermine it and muddy the waters. This is why those who continue to resist the innovation of the ordination of women to the teaching office in the churches argue it was a departure from the Apostolic Faith which calls for repentance. In the face of this, to suggest that there is no theological objection to the ordination of women is to gloss over a very serious debate and continuing disagreement. It reflects the political interests of one group rather than the truth of the matter.

What is more, the kind of statement found throughout this section of *The Windsor Report* also makes clear to the many within the Anglican Communion who do not agree with female ordination to the presbyterate that we have not been listened to, despite the insistence within the report that listening is the key (e.g. pars. 41, 66). Our voices have been forgotten and a revision of history has been attempted which declares that the issue was 'carried out without division, despite a measure of impairment' (par. 21). This is a grave insult to many within the Anglican Communion. It relies upon a watered-down, almost bureaucratic redefinition of unity and raises amongst other questions, 'What does "listening" actually mean in Anglican dialogue?'

The process by which some came to embrace the ordination of women cannot operate as a precedent for the issues surrounding homosexuality or indeed any other issue. There are a number of local diocesan synods who have not accepted the ordination of women (despite unrelenting pressure to do so) and they ought to be seen as upholding the Apostolic Faith. It is the conviction of this paper that to follow the process by which that practice was accepted by some in the Anglican Communion would be to fall into substantial error. Both the process and the result has split the Communion in ways many still refuse to recognise. At the tip of the iceberg there is the simple fact that there is no longer a universal mutual recognition of orders across diocesan boundaries. Then, as now, a failure to stand true to the teaching of Scripture could rightly be described as schismatic behaviour with the most serious repercussions. 'Reception' in such a case would be a sin.

Communion: Virtue or Vice?

PETER ADAM

I am grateful for this opportunity to contribute to the ongoing search for a way forward that will honour God and serve Christ's will for the church. I enjoyed reading *The Windsor Report 2004*,¹ and I hope that my reflections on it will aid further reflection from others.

Communion, the greatest virtue?

I suppose that the reason why *The Report* takes 'Communion' as its main theme is because of the common expression 'The Anglican Communion'. However the danger of this approach is that it leads to an inevitable focus on relationships between the various national churches within the Anglican association, and so to a radical reduction in the notion of 'communion'. For despite the excellent Biblical foundations in paragraphs 1–5, the notion of communion is soon reduced to meaning little more than due process, conformity to everything being done decently and in order within the instruments of unity within the Communion. This demeans the value of 'communion', exaggerates the value of due process, and blinds us to the deeper significance of the problems that gave rise to the writing of *The Report*. Due process of consultation within the Anglican Communion is of great value, but is not the only value which we are called to espouse. And, as we shall see, if conformity to the due process is viewed as the greatest virtue, then nonconformity is viewed as the greatest vice.

The Report has in mind two groups who have produced the problems, namely the Diocese of New Westminster and ECUSA on the one hand, and those archbishops and parishes breaking geographical boundaries on the other hand. However, as we shall see, both kinds of actions are viewed merely from the perspective of whether or not they have taken place within due process. This is a very limited perspective, and betrays a mindset that is focused on administrative and organizational issues, and so ignores other assessments of human actions.

The focus on due process is an application of the great Anglican virtue of everything being done 'decently and in order'. However this virtue by itself is insufficient. Conformity to due process of consultation could merely lead us together on the primrose path to hell. The whole Communion could err, even with appropriate consultation. Of course true consultation would be one way of helping to avoid this unfortunate outcome, but by itself it

¹ I understand the reason for use of the word 'Windsor' in the naming of the report, but it may have unfortunate resonances for some. Its most obvious association would be with the royal house of Windsor, and so indicate an established and privileged church. Would it not have been better named The Slough Report?

is insufficient. The weakness of *The Report* is that it reduces communion to due process, and so fails to discover the deeper issues about the problems it tackles.²

Even though communion is an important theme in the Scriptures, the Biblical material from 1 Corinthians and Ephesians used in *The Report* is of limited value, as it actually addresses the kind of communion found within local churches, and not the kind of communion that should be found within an international association of churches.³

Of course we are right to claim that the Anglican Communion is part of the universal people of God. But is ‘communion’ the best term to use about the universal people of God, or about a subset of that people of God? If we described ourselves as ‘The Anglican Mission’, then we might worry less about our mutual relations, and more about serving God in the world. ‘Communion’ as a self-description seems to promote unhelpful introspection. We do also tackle our ecumenical relationships, but even this focus does not get us to think about how God is calling us to service in the world beyond Christendom.

We may claim that doing things ‘decently and in order’ is an Anglican strength; but every strength can also be a weakness. It may lead us to think of Anglicanism as an ideal predictable and Newtonian universe, in which circling churches sing on their ordered way under the direction of an eternal ruler. We may also value this virtue in our liturgy, in which all is ordered, controlled, and predictable. But God is not only the eternal ruler of the ceaseless round, he is also the God of surprises, and especially of surprises that reflect his grace, his judgment, and his refining of his people. Would we have persisted in supporting the weak high priest Eli and his corrupt sons, or have recognized God’s judgment of Eli and his call of Samuel? Would we have recognized that Jesus of Nazareth had greater authority than the chief priest of his day? From one perspective, it would be difficult to say that the life and ministry of Jesus of Nazareth could be characterized as ‘decently and in order’! Good order is a good servant, but a bad master. It may only reflect lack of vision, and desire for control. It is a remarkable feature of our church that most movements of reform and renewal have begun from below, and met persecution and insult, because they have been like new wine in old wineskins. Have not some of our greatest Anglican leaders been nonconformists?

In summary, communion or fellowship is a great gift of God through the gospel, but it is *not itself* the gospel. It suffers if it is reduced to organizational conformity and the following of due process. Then it may easily become a conformity that is restrictive and negative in its effects. Administrative conformity may be a useful servant, but it may easily be a tyrannical and intolerable master.

Breaking communion, the greatest vice?

The consequence of the puffing up of organizational conformity is that within this theological framework the greatest vice or sin must be that of organizational nonconformity. This is exactly what *The Report* identifies as the problem, namely the actions of New Westminster and ECUSA on the one side [pars. 22-28], and the actions of parishes and archbishops breaking geographical boundaries on the other side [par. 29]. However, even though failure to follow due process may be an issue of some importance, it is not the most important issue. The focus on the issue of organizational order only identifies the formal

² Is it because the issue of the theological significance of homosexual practice is considered to be too difficult to resolve that this Report focuses on the more manageable — if less significant — issues of process? ³ See the essay by D.B. Knox, ‘The Church and the Denominations’ in this volume.

shape of the problem, not its material content. This results in *The Report* failing to identify the real problem.

This focus on the formal shape of the problem rather than its material content also fails to evaluate the gravity of the issues.⁴ For which is more serious, the blessing of homosexual practice among lay people and clergy, or the breaking down of recognized geographical boundaries? If the former is a sin, then it is a sin against what Scripture teaches: if the latter is a sin, then it is a sin against church order. Of course there will be debate about the teaching of Scripture and its application to today. But my point is that if homosexual practice is a sin, then it is a serious sin because of the teaching of Scripture. There is no teaching of Scripture on the model of organization for a worldwide association of churches. It would take a very creative mind to find from Scripture any direct teaching on how a worldwide association of churches should arrange their connections. While *The Report* supports the geographical arrangements of dioceses and bishops, that is not an essential component of church order. It was unknown in the Celtic Church of England, and was introduced by the Roman Mission. Though it has been in place since, in practice it has been severely modified and compromised. The geographical arrangement of the church is derived from the administrative arrangements of the Roman Empire.⁵ However, many vital ministries of the church have sat loose to diocesan boundaries, including monasteries and convents; Preaching and Ministry Orders such as the Benedictines, Franciscans and Dominicans; University and Hospital Chapels, Proprietary Chapels; and many Voluntary Societies. So geographical boundaries cannot be a matter of theological principle. The historic episcopate does not depend on the existence of geographical dioceses, as the Celtic church had episcopate without dioceses. If homosexual practice is a sin, then it is a serious matter, because it is the subject of Scriptural teaching. If breaking diocesan boundaries is a sin, then it is a lesser sin, because it is not the subject of Scriptural teaching, and, as I have shown, it is not a matter of theological principle.⁶ The logic of the limited worldview of *The Report* is that these sins appear to have equal seriousness, because they are both merely sins against due process: so it fails to recognize the seriousness of the issues under discussion. In fact, from a merely administrative viewpoint, the actions of ECUSA and New Westminster are less trouble than those of archbishops breaking diocesan boundaries, because they are only a problem if someone regards them as a problem, whereas administrative confusion is easier to identify and provides more practical problems. But a merely administrative perspective is insufficient: efficiency is not enough.

How extraordinary to read that '[t]he depth of conviction [...] has introduced a degree of harshness and a lack of charity which is new to Anglicanism' (See the Forward, p.5). I think that the already existing Celtic Church leaders and members who were forced to accept the customs of the new missionaries from Rome would have found those words hard to believe, as would have the Lollards, Cranmer, Ridley and Latimer on their fires, the other martyrs of the Reformation Era, the victims of Archbishop Laud, the 1000 clergy who refused to assent to a Book of Common Prayer they had not seen in 1662, nonconformists

⁴ So, for example, disturbing my neighbour by making too much noise and murdering him have the same formal shape; they both express a lack of love for my neighbour. But they differ in material content, and one is more serious than the other. ⁵ As the Roman Catholic church may be seen as the after-glow of the Roman Empire, so that Anglican Communion may be seen as the after-glow of the British Empire. Is the desire to keep administrative and conformity across the Anglican Communion a relic of Empire? ⁶ It may seem odd that the point of tension between more liberal and more conservative churches is the secondary matter of morality. Matters such as the incarnation, atonement and resurrection of Christ are more central to Christian faith. However it is often the case that an issue of practice becomes the public issue which gains symbolic significance, as in the tonsure debate between the English Celtic church and the Roman Mission.

persecuted under the Clarendon Code, Roman Catholics and other nonconformists deprived of University education, the seven students expelled from Oxford University for 'methodism', F. D. Maurice sacked for inadequate views on hell, or Bishop King of Lincoln in prison for illegal liturgical practice. Those who claim the natural tolerance of Anglicanism do not know their history.

However the making of this claim has a much more serious aspect: it marginalizes those who are now 'making trouble' by refusing to conform. The claim is a power play, and has the political value of condemning current dissent. The claim for Anglican tolerance is historically unsupported, and politically motivated. It claims the moral high ground in order to marginalize 'nonconformists' of whatever persuasion. It serves to support the unstated claim that those currently in power have the right to establish the boundaries of Anglicanism, and that those who object are not 'real' Anglicans. Furthermore, we can now see that Anglican conformity has its destructive aspect, in attempting to rid the church of anything that has not followed due process.

The Report further obscures the problems it is trying to identify by the unhelpful use of the rather odd metaphor of 'Illness' (pars. 22–42). Illness is an odd metaphor because it does not easily associate with the notion of blame. It assumes systemic problems, and does not help us to name human causes. We may have systemic problems, and it is worth addressing these issues, but we also need to identify human causes. Does *The Report* use this metaphor because it has decided to focus on structural issues? Illness is used oddly because it looks at first sight as if Theological Development, Ecclesiastical Procedures, Adiaphora, Subsidiarity, Trust and Authority are the 'deeper symptoms' of that Illness (pars. 31–42). Of course they are not, they are only useful categories in which to perceive the problems. *The Report* is confusing the structural features of the Anglican Communion which have been either the context in which the problems have arisen, or which have contributed to the problems. Again, the statement of the problem is solely in terms of failure of due process, as described in paragraphs 33, 35, 37. As I have shown, this focuses on the formal shape of the problems, but does not identify their material content.

Furthermore, because of its narrow view of the problems as those of failure of internal due process, *The Report* fails to name sin against God, which must be the subject of repentance. As we have seen, *The Report* takes material from 1 Corinthians which originally pertains to the internal life of a local church, and then applies it to the international relationships of an association of churches. If *The Report* is to be consistent, it ought also to apply Paul's instructions in 1 Corinthians about the excommunication of the man engaging in sexual relationships with his father's wife: 'you are to deliver this man to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord' (1 Cor. 5:5).

In paragraph 134, *The Report* recommends that 'the Episcopal Church [USA] to invited to express its regret [...] The notion of 'regret' fails to address the seriousness of the problems. As Paul explains in 2 Corinthians 7, remorse or worldly grief produces death, while godly grief with true repentance leads to salvation (2 Cor. 7:10). If it is the case that ECUSA has sinned not only against the due processes of the church but also against the teaching of God in Scripture, then it must repent.⁷ It is facile to apply some aspects of Corinthians and Ephesians to the life of the Communion, and to avoid other less palatable aspects.

⁷ Is the focus on conformity to due process the result of a reluctance to answer the question whether or not ECUSA and New Westminster have sinned against God?

Instruments of unity?

The fact that it has now become common to speak of four 'Instruments of Unity' (pars. 97–112) is itself a sign that 'Communion' itself has been diminished to mean procedural correctness. For the true 'Instruments of Unity' are the works and gifts of God: original creation of humanity as 'one blood', the one incarnation of the Son of God, the work of atonement on the cross, the formative resurrection of Christ, the gift of the Holy Spirit, the one Gospel, the one faith 'once for all delivered to the saints' (Jude 3). The Archbishop of Canterbury, the Lambeth Conference, The Anglican Consultative Council and the Primates Meeting pale into relative insignificance! They may be useful for administrative convenience and symbolic significance, but it is pretentious to describe them as 'instruments of communion'. To do so indicates what a weak notion of Communion underlies *The Report*.

As *The Report* uses 1 Corinthians and Ephesians in paragraphs 1–5 on the Biblical foundations of the communion we have in Christ, it ought to have been consistent in featuring the instruments of communion found in those letters, including from 1 Corinthians the message of Christ crucified [ch. 1], the authority of the apostle Paul [chs. 1–14], and the Gospel received by Paul and handed on to the Corinthians, namely 'Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures [...]' (1 Cor. 15:3–5). The instruments of communion in Ephesians are clearly listed, 'one body [...] one Spirit [...] one hope [...] one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all [...]' (Eph. 4:4–6).

We need to clarify what aspect of unity we are concerned to preserve and express. Are our Anglican 'Instruments of Unity' merely concerned to preserve a unity of association, and to achieve it by helping us all follow due processes? As happiness is most often found by those who do not search for it, so too unity may be a byproduct of other aims. Unity might best result from holiness, or obedience, or doing God's mission in the world. Introspective unity may deaden us, not enliven us. Unity which is merely administrative conformity is a petty aim, not a glorious goal. It may be a useful means, but it is not a great end or purpose. If it stands alone, it does not provide an adequate perspective on the welfare of the people of God.

The Report does not claim to make a final statement, but to contribute to an ongoing analysis of the problems we face. It is a privilege to contribute to that analysis. In summary, though there is much useful material in *The Report*, its weakness lies in its theological worldview, in which the notion of Communion is puffed up so that it fills the horizon, but is at the same time reduced in its effectiveness by being diminished to little more than organizational conformity.

Due process is a useful servant, but a bad master. Conformity may be a virtue, but may also be a particularly Anglican vice.

The Babylonian Unity of the Church¹

JOHN W. WOODHOUSE

A quick survey of headlines reporting the current crisis in the Anglican Communion reveals one word that appears over and over again:

'Anglican unity at threat around the world'
(an editorial in *The Australian*)

'Homosexual debate threatens episcopal unity'
(*Washington Times*, 29th July, 2003)

'Church unity is at risk'
(*Washington Post*, 30th July, 2003)

These references are, of course, to a controversy that has come to the surface this year (2003) in the proposed, but abandoned, consecration of an openly homosexual man as Bishop of Reading in the Diocese of Oxford, and the consecration — not abandoned — of a practising homosexual man as Bishop of New Hampshire in the United States, as well as the approval of same sex unions in the Diocese of New Westminster, Canada.

There is a recognition, it seems, inside and outside the institutional church, of the value of 'unity' and the scandal of 'disunity' or division. There is just enough *truth* in this recognition to make it persuasive, and enough *error* to make it dangerous. Certainly there is enough *confusion* to justify some careful thought and reflection.

Unity: a moral category?

In the current controversy *unity* has become a concept against which actions and proposals are measured. It has become, in effect, a moral category.

Let me illustrate with the course of events in the UK version of the controversy. On what moral principle do you think the decision *not to proceed* with the proposed consecration is justified by those who believed it should have happened? Was it that they were persuaded that the action contemplated was itself wrong? Has there been a change of mind on the question itself? I have heard no report that suggests such a thing. Every report — and of course we must recognise the unreliability of reports — but with that caveat, the evidence I have seen indicates that the decision not to proceed (at this time) was motivated by the commitment of certain leading persons to the *unity* of the Church of England, and of the Anglican Communion. The threat of serious division was just too real in this case, so that

¹ This was originally delivered as an address at the annual Synod dinner for the Anglican Church League on 13th October 2003. It is reproduced here by permission.

an action — still not considered wrong in itself by those who showed restraint — was not taken. It seems clear to me that the restraint was motivated by a higher value: *unity*. But I want to suggest that is a very serious state of affairs.

Put yourself, for a moment, in the thinking of those in the hierarchy of the Church of England who wanted to see the ordination of an openly homosexual bishop. They believed — and believe, as far as I can gather from published comments — that this ordination was morally acceptable and that those who opposed it were morally wrong — at best ignorant or mistaken, but often reprehensible. Much of the opposition came from bigotry, unenlightened consciences, prejudice. It was morally akin to racism. However, what they appear to have learned was that this prejudice was more deeply felt and more widely held than they had thought. They realised that to go ahead with the planned action at this time would threaten *unity*. And so the action was not taken. Do you see what a high order moral principle *unity* must be? Can you imagine a situation in which blatant racism was permitted to win the day, and action taken, or not taken, in response to racist pressure was justified by appealing to *unity*? What kind of unity would that be?

I want to suggest that this situation is very serious indeed. Leaders in the Anglican Communion are doing what they believe to be wrong — or at least refraining from doing what they believe to be right — for the sake of *unity*. No. It is not just a matter of curbing your freedom for the sake of the weaker brother. That analogy will not work here. The closer analogy — as best I can see — to the conduct of those who showed restraint in the Church of England would be to exclude a Gentile because he was a Gentile, or a slave because he was a slave. And to justify your action by some concept of *unity*.

This gives us a new way of categorising actions and policies: those that threaten unity and those that don't. There was once a risk that the ordination of women might have been in the first category — but it turned out to be not quite divisive enough. It now belongs to the second category. For the moment, the two big issues in the first category — for many Anglicans (at least outside North America) — are the approval in one way or another of homosexual practice and of lay administration of the Lord's Supper. The argument being advanced is that whether or not these things should be permitted in this denomination must be decided on whether they will cause an unacceptable degree of division.

Do not misunderstand me. I am *glad* that the proposed action in the Diocese of Oxford was stopped. But not because of unity. I am deeply persuaded that what was proposed was *morally wrong*. But what has happened is not right either. The man who declined appointment as a bishop continues as a recognised Anglican minister.² Since that is less disruptive of *unity* it is acceptable. *Unity* has become the controlling moral category.

If this situation is allowed to prevail, there is no doubt in my mind that we will all be called on to play the game by the same rules. Indeed the call is in the air — loud and clear. For the sake of *unity* you must do or not do this or that. The clearest example at the moment is lay administration. Sometimes the call is presented with an insistence that this is not a matter of right and wrong. ('Personally I have no problems with it!') But then the call is presented with a passion and such an appeal to the conscience that belies the insistence. Don't do it until it will not disrupt our *unity*. It follows — as night follows day — that if a *right* action must not be done for the sake of unity, a *wrong* action will soon be contemplated if it will maintain the unity.

This is a very confusing situation to be in. It calls for a careful re-examination of the concept of unity. I want to suggest four propositions that I put before you for consideration — recognising the need for much more to be said.

² [Editors' note: For details, see note 7, Chapter 2].

(1) The Bible values unity

It is even possible that, like so many aspects of our culture, the sense of the goodness of unity may in fact come from the historical influence of the Bible. Certainly the Bible gives powerful support for the concept of unity in its revelation of the fact that there is one — and only one — God. There is a unity to *all things*, because all things are creatures of the one God. More significantly there is a unity to *humanity*, because ‘in the image of God he created him, male and female he created them’ (Gen. 1:27). Unity between men and women, and between all humans is clearly the good will of the Creator. But this human unity under God was devastated by the Fall.

However God’s work of redemption, climaxing in the death of Jesus Christ on the cross, has broken down all the dividing walls of hostility introduced because of sin (Eph. 2:13–16). In Christ Jesus there is no longer male and female, Jew and Gentile, slave and free, for we are all *one* in Christ Jesus (Gal. 3:28). We all have access to the Father by the one Spirit (Eph. 2:18), on exactly the same basis of the atoning death of Christ, by the one faith in the one Lord (cf. Eph. 4:4–5). This unity is the brilliant gift of God, and we are to live out our lives with one another in the light of its reality. This is our unity in Christ, the unity of the Spirit.

(2) Humans seeks false forms of unity

Unity in Christ is not the only kind of unity to be found among human beings. Indeed since the Fall, the Bible shows us the human race seeking false forms of unity that are in fact an expression of our rebellion against God. The city of Babel, or Babylon, is the epitome of this pursuit. The builders sought to make a name for themselves, to make themselves secure, and to make their mark, by a man-made unity, a unity not under God, but in defiance of him. The story in Genesis 11 tells us that God would not allow such a unity to succeed. Attempts to establish such a unity have been made in every generation and every society since. And all have failed.

(3) There are two kinds of unity.

The unity that matters is the unity of the new humanity God has created by the death of his Son, and that he is bringing into being by the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. This unity is unity *in* the gospel, unity in the Christ of the gospel. This unity is, by the grace of God, a spiritual reality. ‘You *are* all one in Christ Jesus’ (Gal. 3:28). And it is lived out by patience, kindness, love and acceptance of one another in glad submission to our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. The other unity is what humans in their pride and arrogance create. It is the unity of man-made institutions and structures. In itself it is worse than worthless. It is Babylonian unity, and will fall under God’s judgment.

We must be *for* the first kind of unity, but profoundly critical of the second. My simple question is, which kind of unity do you think the unity in the newspaper headlines has been?

(4) There are two kinds of division

This follows from the two kinds of unity. The unity God is creating through the power of the Spirit and the proclamation of Christ, itself creates a division. It is the division between those to whom the word of the cross is foolishness and those to whom it is the power of God (1 Cor. 1:18). That is one kind of division. It is the kind which Paul told the Corinthians was *necessary* (1 Cor. 11:19). Not pleasant. Not desirable. But necessary wherever Christ is proclaimed.

But there is also division caused by human sin, human 'boasting'. This is the kind of division caused by personalities, by personal preferences, by human pride. This kind of division is a denial of Christ. 'Is Christ divided?' (1 Cor. 1:13). Paul pointedly asked the same Corinthian Christians. Faithfulness to Christ must be willing to accept and even cause the first kind of division. But we must oppose and — where appropriate — repent for the second kind of division.

Do we find ourselves in a time when the *Babylonian* unity of the church is cherished and guarded, and the *necessary* divisions are condemned? May the Lord give us wisdom to discern the differences.

Lambeth and Reunion¹

D. BROUGHTON KNOX

The third Lambeth Conference met in 1888. One of its topics was Home Reunion, that is, the reunion of the Christian denominations of the English speaking world. It put out four points on which it believed such reunion could take place. These became known as the Lambeth Quadrilateral. Resolution 11 reads: 'The following articles supply a basis on which an approach may be made by God's blessing towards Home Reunion.

The Holy Scriptures [...]

The Apostles Creed [...] and the Nicene Creed [...]

The two sacraments [...]

The Historic Episcopate, locally adapted in the methods of its administration. [...]'

These four points were copied from the report of the House of Bishops of the Protestant Episcopal Church of America 1886 (hence this is sometimes known as the Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral).

It was not the first time that Lambeth had discussed the subject. At the first Lambeth Conference of 1867 Reunion was on the agenda when it assembled. But it is interesting to note that the bishops changed the subject on the agenda from Reunion to Christian Unity, that is, to fellowship between Christians, as the real subject that should be considered. In moving his amendment Dr. C.R. Sumner, Bishop of Winchester, said 'The clause has no reference to Reunion: I am not speaking of any Christian body, but of individuals'.²

This first Lambeth Conference put out its own four points by which it said 'unity will be most effectively promoted'. They were:

by maintaining the faith in its purity and integrity as taught in the Holy Scriptures,

by drawing each of us closer to our common Lord,

by giving ourselves to much prayer and intercession,

by the cultivation of a spirit of charity and a love of our Lord's appearing.

These four points are thoroughly scriptural, spiritual and heavenly-minded. Notice the last phrase 'by the cultivation of a spirit of [...] love of our Lord's appearing'. Such a spirit provides proper priorities for ecclesiastical endeavours. It is heavenly minded and not this-world-centred.

¹ This is an edited extract of an article which first appeared in *Churchman* 102/4 (1988), 344-354. It is used here with permission. ² *The Manchester Guardian* 19 June 1878.

At this first conference Christian unity is seen to be the result of the spiritual life of individual Christians.

This is the true way forward. It was for this spiritual unity that Jesus prayed in the Upper Room on the eve of his crucifixion, ‘that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us’ (John 17:21).³ This is plainly a union through the Spirit with God and with one another. This prayer was fulfilled at Pentecost and the unity that the Spirit’s presence in each brings about is to be preserved by Christlike behaviour towards one another and the removal of man-made barriers which keep us separate. This prayer of our Lord Jesus for unity of Christians with one another and with the Godhead has nothing to do with denominational amalgamation, as it is so constantly misapplied these days. The first Lambeth Conference correctly applied this verse to the Christian unity between individuals for the promotion of which they enumerated their four points.

However, the first Lambeth conference’s stress on the importance of promoting Christian fellowship in spiritual unity was not followed up. In 1888, at the third conference, the subject was the reunion (that is to say the amalgamation) of the English speaking denominations as the way to achieve Christian unity. It, too, enumerated four points on which such unity might be based, namely Holy Scripture, the creeds, the two sacraments and the historic episcopate. These four points became known as the Lambeth Quadrilateral.

The first three—the Scriptures, the creeds, the two sacraments—really amount to one. For the creeds are expressions of Scripture, which have commended themselves over the centuries as true expressions of Scripture, and the two sacraments are sacraments of the gospel, that is, they exhibit and hold out the scriptural gospel for the believer to embrace. They are visible words of Scripture. So the first three points of the Lambeth conference are, in essence, one: Holy Scripture. But the fourth point, the historic episcopate, is not to be found in Scripture. To require it as a necessity to fulfill God’s command to be in fellowship with each other, is to contravene Article 6 of the 39 Articles. Nor must we ever forget that though bishops are mentioned in the New Testament and continued on in the early church, they then fulfilled quite different functions to those known as bishops in mediaeval and modern times. This latter office is not known in the New Testament or the primitive church. The name is the same but the office is different. Moreover, though ministry is essential in the congregation, and the Lord will ensure that it is present in every spiritual congregation, Scripture does not enjoin any particular sort except that it is to be a teaching ministry, teaching from generation to generation the apostolic tradition of the gospel (2 Tim. 2:2). To endeavour to maintain the unity of the spirit is an essential Christian duty, but the Scripture never hints that the maintenance of a certain type of ministry is necessary to fulfill this duty. For example, in Ephesians 4:2, Paul notes seven bases of unity of the church. The Christian ministry was not one of these seven.

The first grave error of Lambeth 1888 was to introduce a nonscriptural requirement for Christian fellowship — as though the Scriptures were insufficient for the complete equipping of the Christian for every good work (2 Tim 3:16). The Lambeth Quadrilateral was the result of Anglo-Catholic theology. The American bishops, whose quadrilateral Lambeth took over, had made it clear that they regarded episcopacy as having the authority of our Lord and the apostles. They had said that they were prepared to make concessions for reunion on ‘all things of human ordering or of human choice’. For them episcopacy was of divine, not of human, authority. It was one of the ‘inherent parts of the sacred deposit of Christian faith and order committed by Christ and his apostles to the church and as

³ Editors’ note: For further discussion, see the essay by Bill Salier in this volume.

therefore essential to the restoration of unity' (quoted in Report of Lambeth 1888). This was simply echoing John Henry Newman's theology in Tract 1 of the *Tracts for the Times*, or as Darwell Stone, Warden of Pusey House, Oxford put it later that 'without a bishop there can be no priest and without a priest there can be no eucharist'.⁴ The Lambeth Quadrilateral reflected the same theology. In their encyclical letter the bishops of Lambeth 1888 said: 'We cannot desert our position as to faith or discipline'.

After the First World War, at the sixth Lambeth conference in 1920, reunion was again a prominent topic. What was now envisaged was not merely home reunion but the reunion of all the denominations of every language and nation throughout the world. But the bishops had not changed their theology, though on the surface it seemed that they had. In their report they repeated, somewhat simplified, the first three points of the Lambeth Quadrilateral, namely, Scripture, the creeds and the two sacraments, but they expressed the fourth point as 'a ministry acknowledged by every part of the church as possessing not only the inward call of the Spirit but also the commission of Christ and the authority of the whole body'. Episcopacy was not expressly mentioned. Since 1888 it had come to be recognised that the Tractarian identification of episcopacy with apostolic authorisation could not be sustained. For example, a month before Lambeth 1920 Dr. A.C. Headlam (of Sanday and Headlam fame, and soon to become bishop of Gloucester) had published his Bampton lectures *The Doctrine of the Church and Christian Reunion*. In this publication he said:

Episcopacy [...] was the creation of the church [...]. It represents a continuous development from Apostolic times; but we cannot claim that it has apostolic authority behind it [...] we cannot claim such authority for any Christian institution or teaching unless there is the clear and certain evidence of documents coming from the time of the apostles, and we cannot believe that our Lord could have intended that any institution should be looked upon as essential to the existence of the church without giving explicit and certain directions [...]. He did not directly institute or command episcopacy. We cannot claim that it is essential to the church. Equally it is clear that there is no apostolic ordinance to be quoted in its support. There is no adequate or sufficient evidence that it was instituted by apostles (pp.105–6).

However Lambeth 1920's modification of the 1888 Quadrilateral did not in practice amount to any real change. For in their next paragraph the bishops said:

May we not reasonably claim that the episcopate is the one means of providing such a ministry. It is not that we call in question for the moment the spiritual reality of the ministries of those communions which do not possess the episcopate. On the contrary we thankfully acknowledge that these ministries have been manifestly blessed and owned by the Holy Spirit as effective means of grace. But we submit that considerations alike of history and present experience justify the claim that we make on behalf of the episcopate. Moreover, we would urge that it is now and will prove to be in the future the best instrument for maintaining the unity and the continuity of the church [...]

The bishops omitted the adjective 'historic' as a description of the episcopate they were advocating, so in theory it was open to re-definition, but in practice it has always been assumed to be the episcopate as held in the Church of England. However, the bishops had put themselves in an untenable position. They had abandoned the exclusive claim for episcopacy based on

⁴ We have been unable to locate the source of this quotation – Eds.

its divine authorisation and had fully acknowledged that the Holy Spirit (whose views alone should be taken into account) had blessed and owned non-episcopal ministries; but they had not budged from requiring episcopacy in any union the Church of England entered. But they based it now on pragmatism, as being the only likely ministry to be accepted by all. But the Spirit of God is not a spirit of pragmatism but the Spirit of Truth.

Nevertheless, in actual fact the bishops and the Church of England as a whole had not changed. Theoretically the bishops held that episcopacy was *de humano*, in practice they were acting as though the *de divino* of episcopacy was unassailable. For if episcopacy was of human origin, albeit arising under providential guidance, the question as to whether it should be changed for another form of ministry in order to further the divine will for unity at least ought to have been considered. But this concept has never been on the agenda in any discussion for reunion in which the Anglican church has taken part. Evangelicals are as guilty in this matter as anyone else. Anglo-Catholics used to maintain that episcopacy was of the *esse* of the church, and though perhaps they now do not do so in theory with so certain a voice, they still do so in practice. Evangelical Anglicans like to think that episcopacy is of the *bene esse* of the church. But the fact is it is neither of the *esse* or the *bene esse*, but is a matter of indifference, for all things necessary for our spiritual *well* being have been given to us in Scripture.

Anglican Evangelicals should insist that, in all ecumenical discussions for the amalgamation of denominations, the form of the ministry should be a subject of discussion. In 1920 the bishops took up an entirely pragmatic position in advocating episcopacy in reunion negotiations. An *a priori* intransigence in insisting on episcopacy in any reunion scheme is a contradiction of this stance, yet in practice this is what has always prevailed. Evangelicals should constantly emphasize that episcopacy as the only form of ministry cannot be established from Scripture and that therefore its continuance must be subject to discussion and evaluation. What may be pragmatically useful at one time in the church's history may not be so at another. The Church of England does not say in any of its formulae that episcopacy is a good thing; merely that it has received it from ancient times and is continuing it, and that this action is not contrary to Scripture.

I need not enumerate here the strengths of the episcopal structure as we know it. Its great defect as it has developed since Constantine's time is that it usurps the jurisdiction which God has entrusted to others for the well being of his church. The full development of this usurped jurisdiction is seen in the papacy. Papal infallibility is the most notorious claim of the papacy, but it is not the most serious. Papal infallibility became *de fide* for Roman Catholics only in 1870, but papal jurisdiction over the consciences of the faithful is a much more serious and much more ancient error. It was expressed forcibly by Pope Boniface VIII in the Bull *Unam Sanctam* issued in 1302. In it the pope said that it is necessary for salvation to believe that every human being is subject to the Roman Pope in every sphere, political as well as religious.

The church of Rome has never modified this claim. It is one of the reasons why the sovereign should never be a Roman Catholic, for that denomination binds all its members in conscience to be obedient to the pope, that is, were our sovereign to be a Roman Catholic he would acknowledge that the pope was sovereign over him in his political as well as his religious activities. This would be intolerable in itself and is contrary to Article 37 of the Thirty Nine Articles. The claim is not moribund. The church of Rome still asserts this claim. Only recently the pope beatified persons whom the government of Elizabeth I had executed as traitors — as undoubtedly they were, because they were obeying the papal bull to plot and overthrow the Queen whom the pope had deposed. This recent beatification of

those who obeyed the pope in plotting against the government of their country shows that the papacy has not retracted an inch from the claims of *Unam Sanctam* and the bull of 1570 deposing Elizabeth I.

Usurped jurisdiction over the consciences of others is not made right by being shared with a college of bishops or even by it being exercised by a constitutional bishop. Episcopal jurisdiction over the conscience has been a constant cause of disunity amongst Christ's people. This is exemplified pre-eminently in the papacy. The great schism of 1054, the division of the west at the time of the Reformation, the Uniate churches in the east today, all resulted from papal claims to jurisdiction. The papacy is not a unifying principle. Rather, it undermines unity among Christians. The same is true of episcopacy though, of course, to a lesser extent. Lambeth was mistaken in thinking that the Episcopate would further unity among Christian people. History shows that it has never done so; Scripture shows that the unity amongst Christians is preserved by quite different means.

The modern bishop, in contrast to the bishops of the New Testament or the early church, in practice exercises his ministry from outside the congregation. Consequently, his ministry should be limited to that which all Christians share one to another; of teaching, encouraging, exhorting one another. The same is true of any other individual or group outside the congregation, whether superintendent, presbytery, moderator or conference. For it is to ministers *within* the congregation that the word of God grants jurisdiction over the consciences of members of the congregation. They are in constant human and spiritual fellowship with the congregation, of which they themselves are members, and are themselves the recipients of the exhortation, encouragement and personal instruction of their fellow members. It is because of their God-given ministry of the word of God to the congregation that these leaders have the responsibility of watching in behalf of the souls of the congregation and of admonishing them. It is because they minister God's word that they have jurisdiction and are to be submitted to by the members of the congregation.

Their rule is not that of lording it over the flock, for even an apostle does not have the right to lord it over the faith of a fellow Christian, even the faith of the congregation he founded by his preaching of the gospel (2 Cor. 1:24), but he does have the right when present (as has every other Christian who is present too) of sitting with the congregation to consider how jurisdiction should be exercised when sin surfaces in the life of the congregation (1 Cor. 5:3-5).

Another grave error, both of Lambeth 1888 and 1920, and of the ongoing ecumenical movements, concerns the nature of the visible church. It is an error which nowadays many Evangelical Anglicans have also adopted. A direct consequence of this error is that two further errors follow, namely the nature of the visible unity of the church and the method by which this unity may be secured. Reflect on the situation of the Christian church in the second century. The Mediterranean world was studded with Christian congregations. Each congregation had deacons and elders, one of whom was probably known as the bishop. Each of these churches or congregations was independent of all other congregations — though independent is not the right word, for being independent of one another is an attitude alien to Christianity, as it is alien to the nature of the Trinity.

The situation was a continuance of that reflected in the New Testament, for example, in the Epistle to the Hebrews chapter 13, where the ministers who had founded the church had died, but other ministers called 'leaders' were in charge of the congregation with the responsibility as God's ministers of watching over the souls of the congregation. This situation was envisaged by Paul at the end of his life when he enjoins Timothy: What you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust to faithful men who shall be able to

teach others also' (2 Tim. 2:2). Note the four generations of teachers of the apostolic tradition of scriptural revelation mentioned in this verse. This is the only apostolic succession known to Scripture, namely succession in teaching the word of God.

The congregations of the second century were in full fellowship with each other, expressed as circumstances permitted, but none had jurisdiction over another — nor did any church officer or organization outside the congregation have any jurisdiction within the congregation. Christ's church was visible in the visibility of the churches, and in the visibility of the Christian character of the members. 'See how these Christians love one another' (Tertullian, *Apology*). The situation of the Christian communities in the early centuries is reflected, for example, in the Epistles of Clement, Polycarp and Ignatius. There were many churches, all in fellowship with each other, but there is no visible structure linking them. Roman Catholicism, ecumenicism, Anglo-Catholicism and many Evangelicals make the mistake of identifying the denominational structure which has arisen since primitive times as the visible church. For non Roman Catholics this visible church is fractured into several parts and the aim of the ecumenical movement is to reunite the parts. Traditional Protestantism has seen the visible church as all Christians scattered over the face of the earth. However, Article 19 states the matter correctly — each congregation is *the* visible church.

The visible church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men in which the pure word of God is preached and the sacraments duly ministered [...]

'The visible church is a congregation'. Article 19 defines the visible church as the local church, for it is only in a local church that God's word is preached and the sacraments are administered. Lambeth 1920, however, defined visible unity as 'an outward, visible and united society, holding one faith, having its own recognized officers [...]', in fact, an organizational unity. This definition would not have applied to the church of the second century where there were no bishops outside their own congregation, no archbishops, no uniformity of ministry and no visible structure linking congregation with congregation. Yet was not the church visible then and was it not one?

A visible organization as Lambeth and the ecumenical movement envisaged can never be the visible church for it can never gather, that is, never become a church, nor can the word of God be preached within it, though, of course, it can and should be preached within the churches linked with it. The denominational organization exists for the purpose of helping congregations. It is a parachurch organization, no more a church than the church building is a church, though both are called 'church'. Both are designed to help the church fulfill its function of being the church, that is, of expressing fellowship in Christ. But in history such organizations have come to usurp jurisdiction over congregations, and in doing so, to weaken the word and the Spirit within the congregation. Jurisdiction is ministered within the visible church by the word of God, ministered to the consciences of the congregation by the Spirit of God through the leaders and the whole congregation teaching and applying the word of God one to another. So we have three errors which underlie the Lambeth contribution to the ecumenical movement.

A mistake about the nature of the visibility of the church.

A mistake about the nature of the unity of the church and in what it consists.

A mistake in thinking episcopacy is the unifying principle of the church.⁵

⁵ [Editors' note: The original article concluded with a lengthy discussion of the nature of the church. For this discussion, the reader is referred to Knox's second article in this volume, i.e. Chapter 16.]

John 17:21-23 and Christian Unity

BILL SALIER

Whenever there is talk of Christian unity in any form, John 17:21-23 is a favourite proof-text. Here we have a request, to the Father from the Son, for oneness amongst his followers. This expression of the Lord's desire is a natural rallying point for talk of Church unity and ecumenical thinking. Unfortunately, it is often badly misunderstood and misapplied. Therefore, it behoves us to look closely at this passage and see, as far as we are able, precisely what Jesus might have meant by this prayer request and what the unity he is praying for might entail. Too often talk of Christian unity is conducted with scant regard of the context and meaning of these key verses.¹

1. *The Context.*

Our paragraph (John 17:21-23) is traditionally considered to be the beginning of the third, and final, section of Jesus' prayer. Jesus firstly prays for himself that he might glorified (17:1-5); then he turns to pray for his immediate band of disciples (17:6-19) that they may be guarded, unified and sanctified; and then, finally, Jesus turns to pray for those who will believe in him through the word of the disciples (17:20-26).

There is little doubt that *unity* is a key theme of this part of the prayer. The threefold repetition of the petition that the disciples may be 'one' (21, 22, 23) attests to this. This request echoes the prior request that Jesus makes concerning the unity of the disciples themselves (17:11). Broadly speaking the theme of unity, as expressed in John 17, picks up on a theme established briefly in the main body of the Gospel at John 10:16 where Jesus looks forward to a time when his sheep will be one flock under one shepherd; Jn 10:30 (cf. 10:38) when he speaks of the oneness of the Father and himself (cf 17:21-22); and 11:52 where the prophecy of Caiaphas is interpreted as suggesting that Jesus' death would gather the scattered children of God into 'one'.

These earlier verses contribute a theological context for the request in John 17 as well as a narrative and salvation-historical context. The unity between Father and Son provides the theological context. The context of the wider narrative shows an interest in Jesus' mission to gather and 'make one' the scattered sheep/children of God. And, because John's narrative tells the events of salvation-history, we know that unity is also grounded in this plan of God to unite his children into one flock. At the very least this is most likely an allusion to the fact that Jews and Greeks will together form the children of God, a new family marked out

¹ The following discussion is limited to an examination of the verses in John 17 but we need to mention that similar points may well be established from an examination of the other key passages cited in discussions of Christian unity: Ephesians 2-4.

by belief in the Son (cf. 1:13). According to Caiaphas' inadvertent prophecy this will be achieved via the death of Jesus (John 11:51–2). This line of thought is confirmed by the fact that it is the request of the Greeks to see Jesus that precipitates Jesus' recognition of the fateful 'hour' that has been anticipated throughout the Gospel narrative (12:20–26).

2. *The Text: John 17:21–23*

A number of points may be observed from the passage itself.

Jesus requests oneness

The first thing to note is that Jesus *prays* for unity as he requests that *those who believe* the disciples' message, together with *the disciples themselves* might be one. The oneness of Jesus' followers, in the sense requested, is not a natural development, but it is a gift from the Father and, as such, needs to be requested from him. To perhaps overstate, a oneness or unity is not a 'man-made' accomplishment but rather a God-given quality. The children of God will remain in debt to the gracious gift of the Father for their sense of 'oneness' and will doubtless join in the Son's petition to the Father for the continued maintenance of the sense of unity they possess.

Unity and the Word of the Disciples

In verse 20 Jesus distinguishes between 'these' — that is, the disciples given to him from out of the world who have been the focus of the prayer from verses 6–19 — and 'those' — the people who will come to believe through the word of this earlier group. Jesus has already prayed for unity for the disciples the Father has already given him (17:11). Now he prays for the unity of those who would believe through the disciples' word. Unity is a key request for 'all' of Jesus' followers.

For the original group of disciples, unity is predicated on them being kept in the name of the Father (17:11). This group has been sanctified in the truth, which is further defined as the word of the Father (17:17). They must be loyal to the revelation given them. This taps into a very important theme of the farewell discourse of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel. This farewell discourse is a lengthy conversation that Jesus has with his disciples on the last night he shares with them. Following his washing of the disciples' feet and Judas' leaving of the party, Jesus goes into a lengthy explanation of why his imminent departure is to their advantage and what they are to do in the light of this departure (and his eventual return). One of the disciples' chief responsibilities is to testify to Jesus. They are to do this in the face of hostility from the world. The fruit of their testimony will be that there will be many who believe in the word in subsequent generations. In one very real sense the Fourth Gospel itself is the fruit of this discussion and command, as it presents its own testimony to Jesus.

Notice that the apostolic testimony is foundational for the faith of those who will believe, and this is a continuous reality as long as men and women wish to come to the Lord Jesus. The church's faith does not change but remains recognisably the same in this loyalty to the disciples' teaching. This teaching remains the basis for Christian fellowship and therefore the basis of Christian unity. This is reinforced in the first letter of John when he writes 'that which we (the disciples) have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you may have fellowship with us; and our fellowship is with the Father and his son Jesus Christ (1 John 1:3).

At the very beginning of this prayer Jesus has defined eternal life as knowing the only true God and Jesus Christ whom that God sent (John 17:3). This knowledge comes via the

disciples' testimony and it is this testimony that remains the only reliable basis for knowing God and his will. This testimony is, of course, only effective in the power of the Spirit (15:26; 16:8–11). The tight connection between the operation of the Spirit and the testimony of the disciples (cf 14:26; 15:26–7; 16:13–15).

The oneness of those who will believe is founded on the true word of revelation communicated to them through the writings of those originally given by the Father to testify to the Son.

Unity and the Relationship of Father and Son

Jesus also draws a line between the oneness that he requests for his future disciples and the oneness that he experiences with the Father (17:21–2). This takes us right to the edge of the profound mystery of the unity of the Father and the Son, expressed by the language of mutual indwelling — the Father is in the Son, and the Son is in the Father. This language speaks of the closest possible connection between Father and Son. This is the language of intimacy of relationship and gains concrete expression in the fabric of the Gospel narrative when Jesus says that he only speaks what he hears the Father speak and does what he sees the Father do (5:19–20); that he is the one who is in the bosom of the Father and therefore can reveal him perfectly (1:18). Because of this perfect unity of mind, purpose and action the Son can perfectly reveal the Father. This, in turn, leads to a redrawing of the 'map of God' in trinitarian terms.

This prayer of Jesus is that those who believe in the word of his disciples might also share in that relationship and be drawn somehow into the life of the Trinitarian God. This will mean participation in the revealed mission of the Son in the manner that he has revealed it to be accomplished: testimony to the truth of God and suffering and dying.

The unity requested here is therefore a unity with the Father and Son, based on the knowledge of the Father and Son testified to by the original disciples. In Stott's pithy expression, what is on view here is a common truth and a common life. Christian 'oneness' is based on a common allegiance to apostolic truth and a shared experience of divine grace that leads to the experience of life with the Father and Son.

Such realities perhaps ought to find their expression in various forms of institutional unity, but these forms of unity must have their basis in the foundational realities of apostolic truth and divine life if they are to be an answer to the petition of Jesus.

Unity and Glory

The resources for unity amongst Christ's followers are then hinted at in verse 22. Jesus says that he has given to his followers the glory that the Father has given to him. The concept of glory in the Fourth Gospel is a complex one. It certainly encompasses the idea of the revelation of the Father by the Son. The identity of the Father is expressed in the Son such that the original eyewitnesses can say that they beheld the glory of the Father in the Son (1:14). This at least means the fullness of his identity and person as revealed in the words and deeds of the Son. This glory ultimately is connected with the death and resurrection of the Son and, for John, is supremely expressed in the lifting up of Jesus (12:20–33). So it contains within its compass the notions of suffering for the sake of others as revealing the character of the Father.

The fullness of the expression might be beyond our grasp but the point is clear. The prayer for unity is through the name in verse 11; through the word in verse 20 and through the glory in verse 22. All three expressions have reference to the revelation of the Father through the Son. The oneness desired and prayed for by Jesus is requested on the basis of

loyalty to the divine name, on the basis of the word and glory. The unity of the church suggested here is based on the revelation of the Father by the Son; the revelation of truth (cf. John 17:17–19) as ultimately recorded in the testimony of the disciples.

Unity and the World

Finally in this small section we see that the oneness of Jesus' disciples has a broader focus as well. It is a oneness expressed before a watching (and hostile) world (verses 21, 23; cf. 15:18). The unity of the believers will be a testimony to the watching world of the mission of the Son and the love of the Father. There is an evangelistic edge to the unity prayed for here. This makes it even more important for the disciples of Christ who have the testimony of the disciples to express this unity.

The passage appears to envisage a Christian community where this unity might be expressed in relationships marked by mutual love and service (cf. 13:15, 34–5). Broader 'church' groupings and organization might be implied, but this will be by extension from this basic congregational setting.

3. Summary and Discussion

In this seminal passage Jesus requests that his followers be one. The oneness they are to express is based on the truth of the revelation they have received concerning the Father and Son, through the testimony of the original disciples, whom the Father gave to the Son. The glory of the revelation of the Father in the Son, given to the original disciples is, in turn, given through the testimony of the disciples to those who believe in their word and therefore believe in the name of Jesus. As children of God, therefore, they are caught up into the life of the Father and Son. The gracious gift of oneness implied here is to be expressed in their common life.

What has all this to do with modern discussions of unity? First, we must remember that 'the union of Christendom does not lie through committee-rooms, though there is a task of formulation to be done there'.² Unity is first of all the gift of the Father, arising from his revelation in the Son. This is communicated through the writings of the appointed disciples. The 'church' (a term that also needs careful definition) may be responsible to *maintain* the unity that is hers by grace, but it is always hers by grace.

Second, the unity involved arises from a common truth about the Father and Son, imparted by divine revelation through the testimony of the appointed disciples. While Christian unity will undoubtedly have a public and possibly institutional expression, at base is its foundation in the revelation of God. Unity for its own sake is no answer to the Lord Jesus' request. It is unity in his revealed truth that he desires.

Third, unity is therefore, in a double sense, apostolic. It is to be based on the word of the apostle, and it *forms part of the apostolic call* to be sent by Jesus. Unity, based in the truth of the revelation of the Son by the Father, expressing the mutuality of life shared with the Father and the Son is presented before the world as a testimony to the mission of the Son and the love of the Father.

The request is serious and the stakes are high. All the more reason to pursue unity amongst Christian people and groups, but a unity predicated on the biblical teaching that properly grounds such endeavours.

² W. Temple, *Readings in St John's Gospel* (London, Macmillan, 1943), 327.

Scripture in The Windsor Report

MARK D. THOMPSON

Many have welcomed the way *The Windsor Report* not only begins with a reflection upon the biblical foundations of communion but also includes an entire section which deals with the authority of Scripture. There would seem to be an implicit and indeed explicit recognition that the current crisis cannot be dealt with apart from a serious engagement with the teaching of Scripture and a fresh willingness to allow Scripture to function for the churches as God himself intended. This would be very good news indeed, however, evangelicals have serious cause for concern in the way these things are explained within the report itself. An analysis of the most relevant sections of the report (pars. 1–5 and 52–62) is part of chapter 1 of the present work. In what follows I propose to examine the way Scripture is used in the report, the notion of biblical authority that is endorsed by it, and its presentation of the interpretative task.

1. *The Use of Scripture in the Windsor Report*

While a report of this kind cannot help but be selective in its use of Scripture, *The Windsor Report* is oddly so. The texts which are chosen at various points are curious and other texts which both obviously and powerfully address the issues are ignored. Two examples will suffice. In the opening section on unity and communion some use is made of Paul's letters to the Ephesians and Corinthians (pars. 1–5). Leaving aside the very significant fact that Ephesians 5:3–14 — with its condemnation of sexual immorality and its call not to associate with those who practice it — is effectively ignored in paragraph 2, the use made of 1 Corinthians is also somewhat odd. Is chapter twelve really the climax of the letter? Is Paul's call for unity completely unqualified? Is it really sufficient, particularly in the context in which this report is written, to acknowledge in passing Paul's willingness to administer severe discipline in the case of scandalous behaviour and to move on quickly to emphasise the importance of unity in diversity?

A study of 1 Corinthians reveals that the diversity Paul has in mind in chapters 1–2 and 12–14 is not doctrinal diversity (see 1 Corinthians 2). It most certainly is not moral diversity either (compare 1 Corinthians 5–6). It is rather a diversity of background, culture, experience, social location and giftedness. After all, Paul expects a common mind on the centrality of Christ crucified (1 Cor. 2:2) and the historical reality of the resurrection (1 Corinthians 15). Divisions will be overcome, he says right at the beginning of his letter, by being 'united in the same mind and same judgment' (1 Cor. 1:10). Furthermore, Paul expects a common approach to immorality. Sexual immorality is indeed explicitly highlighted by Paul as warranting a breach of unity (1 Cor 5:1–2; 6:9–11). Strange then that in paragraph 5 of *The*

Windsor Report we are told that the challenges to our unity arise from ‘different interpretations of that holiness to which we are called’. Has 1 Corinthians 6:18 been taken seriously enough — ‘Flee from sexual immorality’? A failure to identify the kind of diversity Paul refuses to condone in this letter actually leads to a blurring of the categories. This is all the more suspect when the institutional endorsement of a form of sexual immorality by the dioceses of New Hampshire and New Westminster is a presenting cause of the current crisis.

The second most obvious example is found in the section on the authority of Scripture (pars. 52–62). Instead of an examination of Jesus’ use of the Old Testament (e.g. Matt. 4:1–11; John 10:31–39) or the apostolic comments about Scripture or their own writing (2 Tim. 3:14–17; Heb. 1:1–2:4; 2 Pet. 1:20–21; 3:14–18), the only text that features prominently is the Great Claim and Commission of Matthew 28. This is all the more remarkable because that text does not deal explicitly with the nature and function of Scripture (either the existent Old Testament or the prospective New Testament). It is difficult not to conclude that alongside the laudable goal of generating a Christological focus, concentration on this text enables the authors of *The Windsor Report* to emphasise the authority which belongs to Jesus in a way which calls into question the function of Scripture as a court of appeal or as something which supplies true information or prescribes matters of belief and conduct. Yet vast tracts of the New Testament (not to mention the Old Testament), which speak of Scripture as truth and summon men and women to faith and obedience, are ignored.¹

A superficial glance at the Table of Contents or the sectional headings might give the impression that this report intends to take the authority of Scripture seriously. Yet one of the best tests of an author’s perspective on biblical authority is the way that author him/herself actually uses Scripture. By such a test we cannot but conclude that *The Windsor Report* has a problematic view on this important matter. Yet the report itself provides us with even more evidence on this question.

2. *The Authority of Scripture according to The Windsor Report*

Paragraphs 53–56 fall under the heading ‘The authority of scripture’. Scripture is recognised as the central aspect of our common life which enables mission and both ‘draws us together’ and ‘holds us in fellowship’. However four features of this section of the report serve to undermine biblical authority.

i) Scripture is placed alongside other authorities and the nature of the relationship between them is not made clear. The triad of ‘Scripture, tradition and reason’, which can be found both in Hooker and the seventeenth century Anglican divines, is called into service at this point. Yet Hooker, in common with his contemporaries, recognised that church councils ‘forasmuch as they be an assembly of men, whereof all be not governed with the Spirit and Word of God, may err, and sometimes have erred, even in things pertaining unto God’ (Article XXI —presumably this applies all the more to individual theologians). He also held that human reason, while not rendered totally useless by the Fall, nevertheless labours under the impact of sin.² Use can and should be made of the Fathers who sought faithfully to expound the teaching of Scripture. Human reason is indeed an indispensable aid as we seek to read and understand the Scriptures and weigh the contribution of the Fathers. Yet Scripture stands alone as the final authority. It stands in a different category altogether to

¹ For the rhetoric of this paragraph in *The Windsor Report*, see the next essay, by Tony Payne. ² Richard Hooker, *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* II–III.

that of the other two: it is the word of God written. The Fathers and human reason can be challenged. Scripture alone is the unchallengeable authority. By failing to make clear this distinction between Scripture and the other two ‘authorities’ that form part of the famous ‘three-legged stool’, *The Windsor Report* leaves us with a view of biblical authority that is less than that of classical Anglicanism. The problem is repeated and compounded by mention of the Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral of 1886/1888.³

ii) *The expression ‘the authority of Scripture’ is itself called into question as a potentially misleading shorthand for ‘the authority of the triune God, exercised through Scripture’.* This is the point at which the report cites Matthew 28. Texts which actually speak about the origin, authority and function of the Scriptures (including the apostolic writings) are ignored. Furthermore, the use of the word ‘misleading’ and the suggestion of that ‘the authority of the triune God, exercised through Scripture’ is a ‘more complex notion’ function to heighten our suspicions that a simple appeal to the teaching of Scripture is not appropriate. This is taken further when the report suggests that the actual phrase ‘the authority of Scripture’ may have emerged in contexts of protest. In other words, this is a polemical doctrine, one that serves the interests of one side or other in a debate or controversy, rather than a settled and central feature of Christian theology. Yet the idea of Scripture as an authority to which we can and should appeal occurs long before the regular use of this expression. Jesus certainly appealed to [our Old Testament] Scripture against the temptations of the Satan and in discussion with the religious leaders of Israel. The apostles did the same thing, as evidenced by the record of their early preaching in the book of Acts as well as in their own writings in the pages of the New Testament. There is confusion in the report at this point between the origin of the terminology and that of the concept.

iii) *False dichotomies are created between various functions of Scripture in the lives of Christians and the corporate life of the Christian churches.* Various devices are used throughout this section to cast doubt on the practice of Christians over two millennia of appealing to Scripture as normative for belief and conduct. One of these is to make use of adjectives such as ‘static’ to refer to classical approaches and ‘dynamic’ to refer to its own proposal. Yet as viewed by the New Testament, the truth about God and his instruction of his people is a dynamic reality. ‘The word of God’, Hebrews reminds us, ‘is living and active’ and the context of that statement is a citation of Psalm 95 and, more specifically, the command to pay attention to what we have heard (Heb. 4:1–13). God rules his people dynamically and effectively by his word.

This same strategy appears to underlie the series of dichotomies in paragraphs 55 and 56. In each case, one element is actually affirmed by the report:

Not ‘a static source of information or the giving of orders’ ...
 ... but the dynamic inbreaking of God’s kingdom
 Not simply ‘to supply true information,
 nor just to prescribe in matters of belief and conduct,

³ See Broughton Knox’s essay on Lambeth, Chapter 10.

nor merely *to act as a court of appeal ...*
 ... but *to be part of the dynamic life of the Spirit*
part of the means by which God directs the Church in its mission
The Church's praise to God and drawing fresh strength from God ...
 ... *rather than a quasi-legal process of "appeal"*

The effect of this combination of pejorative adjectives and the creation of false antitheses is to caricature the position of those who believe that Scripture is the powerful and authoritative word of the living God which speaks directly to the contemporary Christian. The simple truth attested to by the New Testament and two thousand years of church history is that Scripture functions in a variety of ways without any one of them vitiating the others. It is both our source of the knowledge of God and the way God nurtures individual and corporate faith. It is both the ultimate court of appeal in matters of faith and conduct and the means by which God directs the Church in its mission.

iv) The authority of Scripture is redefined in terms of Christian identity and liturgical function. The primary and dynamic context within which 'the authority of Scripture' should be understood is, the report suggests, the worship of the churches. In particular, emphasis is placed on the way the reading of Scripture in that context elicits praise and provides encouragement for mission and holiness. As mentioned above this is put in strong contrast with 'a quasi-legal process of "appeal"'. However, what is not developed is precisely how Scripture provides the foundations for praise and encouragement. Perhaps the suggestion that the Gospel writers tell 'the story of Jesus in such a way as to demonstrate its fulfilment of the story of Israel and its foundational character for the mission and life of the Church' is to be taken as the primary clue.

The Scriptures locate contemporary believers in the ongoing story of God's purposes focussed on Christ. Undoubtedly this is true. However, all of Scripture cannot simply be explained in terms of this 'metanarrative'. There are various types of literature in the Scriptures. In particular, this apparently reductionistic approach leaves little room for an understanding of Scripture as the word of God which addresses his people in all ages calling on them to repent and live lives worthy of the gospel of Christ. The Scriptures do not simply provide a backdrop to life now which gives me an identity and a ground for praise and encouragement. Here is the word of God addressed to the human heart. Here is all that is necessary for 'teaching, reproof, correction and training in righteousness' (2 Tim. 3:16).

3. The Interpretation of Scripture as envisaged by the Windsor Report

The report rightly identifies the importance of responsible interpretative practice. It is certainly true that questions of interpretation need not always be seen as attempts to avoid or relativise Scripture and its authority (par. 59). Yet vagueness at the level of criteria for deciding what is appropriate and inappropriate interpretation, together with the caricature of those with whom the report apparently disagrees, cause the section on Scripture and interpretation (pars. 57–62) to be deeply unsatisfactory. It is one thing to acknowledge interpretative differences on the crucial issues at the present time. It is quite another to

avoid the question of how interpretations should be evaluated. Indeed, it would appear from what is said that the authors of the report have a highly problematic view of interpretative principle and practice.

In stark contrast to this section of *The Windsor Report*, the earliest Anglican Reformers, schooled though they were in the interpretative niceties of medieval scholasticism and renaissance humanism, considered the meaning of Scripture to be accessible to the common man and woman. Tyndale's comment about putting the Scriptures into the hands of the ploughboy is the most obvious case in point. But the commitment of Cranmer to the production and placement of vernacular Bibles and to a lectionary which exposed all who came into the churches to the uncommented upon reading of great swathes of Scripture makes little sense unless he too believed in the accessibility and intelligibility of the biblical text. The notion of the clarity of Scripture, worked out on the Continent by Luther and then Zwingli finds an echo in the formularies of the Church of England. It also finds its echo in the very first of the Anglican homilies: 'A Fruitful Exhortation to the Reading and Knowledge of Holy Scripture'.

What is lacking in this section is any consideration of what are the proper constraints for biblical interpretation. The closest it comes is the insistence that biblical scholarship should be 'constrained by loyalty to the community of the Church across time and space' (par. 60) — a form of words which is next to meaningless. In contrast we find no such reluctance to identify principles of appropriate interpretation in the foundational documents of the denomination. Article XX makes clear that 'it is not lawful for the Church to ordain anything contrary to God's word written, neither may it so expound one place of Scripture, that it be repugnant to another'. The homily mentioned adds that what is required is a prayerful and humble attitude before the word of God which issues into repentance where the Scriptures expose our sinful thinking or behaviour.

In sum, *The Windsor Report* is seriously flawed in each of these three areas: the way the report itself uses Scripture, the way it explains the authority of Scripture, and its understanding of the interpretative task. It is abundantly clear that a genuine commitment to abide by the God-given authority of Scripture would have led the authors of the report to address the monumental breach of faith and order by the dioceses of New Hampshire and New Westminster (and others who have endorsed or attempted similar moves) precisely because such a breach is directly addressed at numerous points within the pages of the Bible. To remain silent when the word of God is so trenchant and unambiguous in its rejection of homosexual behaviour as sinful and perverse is itself a remarkable loss of nerve which calls into question any claim to take the teaching of Scripture seriously.

Church Politics and the English Language

TONY PAYNE

George Orwell, like Martin Luther, is one of those astonishingly prolific and quotable authors whom nearly everyone, it seems, claims for their own. In Orwell's case, the Left love him for his socialism and the Right for his unremitting anti-communism.

I confess to being an Orwell fan myself, not so much because of his politics but because of his writing, and his writing about writing. Orwell was not only a brilliant writer himself, especially in his clarity and precision, but he very clearly perceived the importance of language, and how language works politically. In his famous essay, *Politics and the English Language*, he points out that language and thought are inextricably linked, and that language often functions as a replacement for thought:

[...] modern writing at its worst does not consist in picking out words for the sake of their meaning and inventing images in order to make the meaning clearer. It consists in gumming together long strips of words which have already been set in order by someone else, and making the results presentable by sheer humbug [...] It is easier — even quicker, once you are in the habit — to say In my opinion it is a not unjustifiable assumption that than to say I think.

Perhaps more importantly, Orwell goes on to argue that the poor state of English writing—especially political writing—in his own time was not just a matter of intellectual laziness and the victory of the cliché, but the routine defense of the indefensible. 'Political language', he says, 'is designed to make lies sound truthful and murder respectable, and to give an appearance of solidity to pure wind'.

Consider some comfortable English professor defending Russian totalitarianism [Orwell was writing in 1946]. He cannot say outright, 'I believe in killing off your opponents when you can get results by doing so'. Probably, therefore, he will say something like this:

'While freely conceding that the Soviet regime exhibits certain features which the humanitarian may be inclined to deplore, we must, I think, agree that a certain curtailment of the right to political opposition is an unavoidable concomitant of transitional periods, and that the rigours which the Russian people have been called upon to undergo have been amply justified in the sphere of concrete achievement.'

The inflated style is itself a kind of euphemism. A mass of Latin words falls upon the facts like soft snow, blurring the outlines and covering up all the details. The great enemy of clear language is insincerity. When there is a gap between one's real and one's declared aims, one turns as it were instinctively to long words and exhausted idioms, like a cuttlefish squirting out ink.

Anyone who has ever read communiqués or statements put out by Anglican church leaders will recognize immediately what Orwell is talking about—the flowery rhetoric, the ornate sentence structure, the vocabulary of bland politically correct spirituality, and the endless equivocations, qualifications, exceptions and ambiguities. In the case of ecclesiastical politics, the reason for this sort of language is obvious and known to all: to speak clearly about the matters involved would expose rather too brutally the fundamental disagreements that exist among Anglican leaders. It would shout from the belltower what everyone knows is really happening in the church; namely, that large numbers of Anglican priests and bishops no longer believe in such basic Christian tenets as the authority of the Bible or the resurrection of Jesus.

The Windsor Report supplies us with as many examples of this kind of writing as we might expect from such a lengthy document written mainly by Anglican bishops. To see how it works, and to blow from our minds some of the fog that such language introduces, let us focus on just a few examples from sections 53-55 (about the authority of Scripture).

The dilemma faced by the authors of *The Report* at this point is simple. Within Anglicanism there are two diametrically opposed views of Scripture that J. I. Packer has called the 'objectivist' and 'subjectivist' positions. The objectivist view is that the Bible is the actual and pure word of God, the supreme authority in all matters of faith and life, and that accordingly 'it is not lawful for the church to ordain any thing that is contrary to God's Word written, neither may it so expound one place of Scripture that it be repugnant to another' (as Article XX puts it). The subjectivist view is that the Bible is a 'witness' to the true word of God, and should inform our understanding of what God wants us to do, but is not finally 'authoritative' in an external or timeless sense; that is, the Church in its subjective understanding may decide that God is leading her beyond or even against what the Bible says, and thus may ordain something which is contrary to God's word written, if circumstances so dictate.

The dilemma for *The Report* is how to say something about this important subject without appearing to come down on one side or the other of this deep divide, and thus achieve the political goal of *The Report*—which is to hold the Anglican communion together organizationally despite mutually exclusive theological views.

Their rhetorical strategy in sections 52-56 is not difficult to follow: start with a strong statement in section 53 that appears to satisfy the objectivist side, but then gradually qualify and redefine it so that by section 56 the subjectivist side can feel not only that they have been accommodated but that *The Report's* sympathies may even lie in their direction.

What *The Report* needs at this point is what Theodore Roosevelt called 'weasel words'. 'You can have universal training or you can have voluntary training,' said Roosevelt, 'but when you use the word "voluntary" to qualify the word "universal",¹ you are using a weasel word: it has sucked all the meaning out of "universal"'. This is what *The Report* proceeds to do with the word 'authority'. In English, the word 'authority', when used in a phrase like 'the *authority* of Scripture', means the 'power or right to enforce obedience; moral or legal

¹ [Editors' note: That is, as in 'voluntary universal training'.]

supremacy; the right to command, or give an ultimate decision' (OED). When we say the 'authority of the law' or the 'authority of President Bush' or 'Fred is in a position of authority', this is what we mean in English.

This is unfortunate for the authors of *The Report* because it sounds far too objectivist. If Scripture is allowed *this* sort of authority, then it is granted the 'moral and legal supremacy' to direct our action, even if we disagree with it, which is hardly something the subjectivist wants to hear.

Let's look at how *The Report* tries to neutralize politically this quite fundamental element of the word 'authority' through a range of linguistic devices.

1. Increase ambiguity by adding more words

The opening sentence of paragraph 54 suggests that the 'common phrase "authority of Scripture" can be misleading', which of course is a truism, since all phrases *can* be misleading in certain circumstances. It turns out that the nature of this dangerous potential misunderstanding is that the phrase 'authority of Scripture' may lead us to forget that the real authority is the triune God who stands behind Scripture. The phrase authority of Scripture really is shorthand, *The Report* suggests, for 'the authority of the triune God, exercised through Scripture' (their emphasis). In one sense, this sounds like a small and inconsequential clarification: who wouldn't agree that Scripture's power or right to enforce obedience (i.e. its authority) derives from the fact that it is God's own Word, and comes with all his divine authority?

Clarification is not the aim, however. Quite the opposite. The aim is ambiguity and conceptual change by driving a wedge between God's authority and Scripture's authority. In other words, even though God's authority is exercised through Scripture, it may not be the only or final place it is 'exercised through', and the way it is '*exercised through*' is a thorny problem that we all need to think a lot more about. The seemingly simple and clear concept of the 'authority of Scripture' has already begun to grow fuzzy around the edges.

Note how the longer phrase—'the authority of the triune God, exercised through Scripture'—with its passive voice and vague verb 'exercised', allows *The Report* to appear to say one thing, while opening the door for something quite different. If a more straightforward verb was used, and in the active voice, the phrase might be something like 'the authority of God speaking through Scripture'; or 'God authoritatively directs our beliefs and actions by speaking to us in Scripture'; or even 'Scripture has authority because it is breathed out by God'. But each of these phrases would close the door to subjectivism, not open it, as *The Report* plainly wishes to do.

2. Brazen re-definition

Even more meaning is evacuated from the word 'authority' in the extraordinary sentence at the beginning of paragraph 55: 'For Jesus and the early Christians, "authority" was not conceived as a static source of information or the giving of orders (as the word 'authority' sometimes implied), but in terms of the dynamic inbreaking of God's kingdom, that is, God's sovereign, saving, redeeming and reconciling rule over all creation'.

Whether or not this is what Jesus and the early Christians actually thought, if their concept of 'authority' didn't include the 'giving of orders' or the supplying of 'information',

then the English word ‘authority’ is the wrong one to use. Note how *The Report* suggests that the word ‘authority’ has ‘sometimes implied’ these notions, as if it were a peripheral and now archaic usage. A moment’s thought exposes the absurdity of this. The English word ‘authority’ nearly always, both now and in the past, implies the supplying of instructions and commands (‘information’ and ‘orders’) from the person in authority to the one obeying that authority, to direct their action. To suggest that Jesus and the early Christians didn’t think that ‘authority’ meant ‘someone being able to tell someone else what to do’ is itself a very bold (and one must say baseless) claim. But to say that the word ‘authority’ doesn’t really mean that is linguistic nonsense.

Note also that *The Report*’s alternative definition is not really a definition at all, but a vague string of positive words connected to ‘authority’ by that most useful of weasel phrases ‘in terms of’.

3. *Guilt by linguistic association*

The sentence that opens paragraph 55 also features another linguistic trick designed to break down the meaning of ‘authority’. *The Report* wants to say that ‘authority’ doesn’t really mean ‘the power to command someone’s obedience’, but it can’t come out and simply say that because it would sound rather ridiculous (because it is). Instead, *The Report* tries to blacken this idea by bad linguistic association. Notice the bad words that Jesus’ concept of authority is supposedly *not* about: a *static source of information* (evoking dead, motionless, academia) and *the giving of orders* (evoking a policeman or petty tyrant). Then see all the wonderful words that his idea of authority really was ‘in terms of’: dynamic, inbreaking, God, kingdom, sovereign, saving, redeeming, reconciling, all creation.

We have only to switch things around to see how language at this point is taking the place of argument. Imagine *The Report* had put it like this: ‘For Jesus and the early Christians, “authority” was not conceived of as a dynamic inbreaking message from the sovereign, saving, reconciling God, a divine command to be joyfully obeyed with trembling, but in terms of God’s kingdom becoming a reality.’

As Orwell would say, ‘the appearance of solidity to pure wind’.

4. *The ‘not simply’ slide*

The Report wants to move away from the idea that Scripture ‘tells us what to do and we should obey it’, and in paragraph 55 it uses another classic linguistic feint—the increasingly common ‘not simply slide’—to achieve this. The ‘not simply slide’ works like this. Say you want to argue that soccer games should be decided not by scoring goals but through a judging system, such as for gymnastics, with the winning team being the one that scores highest for technical skill, fair play and artistry. And say, further, that you wish to bring the traditionalist soccer fans with you by arguing that your innovation is true to what soccer has always been about. Then you would begin your argument like this:

Anyone who loves soccer will recognize that the game is not simply about a piece of leather coming to rest against some netting, nor just a matter of static electronic numbers appearing on a scoreboard, nor merely a simplistic I-win-you-lose grab for ‘victor’ status, but a swirling dynamic slice of human life, a test of artistry, skill, and

sporting beauty that should be celebrated as part of the rich tapestry of human cultural achievement.

The ‘not simply slide’ works by taking something that is central (in this case, scoring more goals than the opposition), moving it towards the edges by phrasing it in a simplistic and negative way, and by pointing out the truism that it is not the *only* thing that makes up the activity, and then quickly moving something else to the centre in its place. The author then proceeds with the rest of his argument as if the new thing is self-evidently central, and hopes that the reader hasn’t noticed the sleight-of-hand.

As a linguistic device, it relies on the reader not taking the time to pause and think: ‘Well, yes, I suppose soccer is about more than just scoring goals, but you could never *remove* scoring goals from the absolute centre of the game without destroying it. Soccer may be about *more* than scoring goals, but it could never be about *not* scoring goals’.

Many readers, of course, don’t take the time to stop and think. The authors of *The Windsor Report* no doubt pinned their hopes on this when they penned this sentence in paragraph 55:

If the notion of scriptural authority is itself to be rooted in Scripture, and to be consonant with the central truths confessed by Christians from the earliest days, it must be seen that the purpose of Scripture is not simply to supply true information, nor just to prescribe in matters of belief and conduct, nor merely to act as a court of appeal, but to be part of the dynamic life of the Spirit through which God the Father is making the victory which was won by Jesus’ death and resurrection operative within the world in and through human beings.

Notice how the sentence takes three aspects that are quite properly central to any coherent view of the authority of Scripture (that its content is true, that it commands obedience, and that it should be the rule and standard for faith and life), and sidelines them through a textbook ‘not simply slide’. They are described using cold, negative words (‘supplying information’, ‘prescribing’, ‘court of appeal’), and the deftly moved to the margins with ‘not simply’, ‘nor just’ and ‘not merely’. The punch line comes in the final long clause (again full of warm, positive words) where the fullest and true expression of the purpose of Scripture is described: it’s to be *part* of how God is spreading his victory in the world in *and through human beings*. This is music to the subjectivist’s ears: Scripture has a part to play, but it’s a dynamic process of the Spirit and who knows whether the Spirit might lead us (dynamically or otherwise) in a new direction.²

Conclusion

The Windsor Report, like most exercises in politics, uses a special kind of language to achieve its purposes. It is not the language of clarity, simplicity and candour, but the opposite—a rhetoric of ambiguity, complexity, vagueness and equivocation, a language

² Incidentally, while not being a betting man, I would be willing to lay odds that Bishop N. T. Wright had a great deal to do with the sentence quoted above—not only because of the prominence of the theme of God’s victory, but in the use of the ‘not simply slide’. It is a regular feature of his writing, as in this sentence from *Jesus and the Victory of God*: “This ‘repentance’ is not, then, simply the individual moral turning from private sin. It is the sort of repentance which Josephus urged upon his fanatical and violent contemporaries”—after which he goes on to redefine ‘repentance’ as being mainly about political turning from violent nationalism.

calculated to allow contradictory understandings to sit happily together within the one paragraph, and to forestall indefinitely any moral conclusion.

Is homosexual sex sinful?

The Windsor Report might well reply, along with Bill Clinton: 'It depends on what the meaning of "is" is'.

The Concept of ‘Adiaphora’ and The Windsor Report

MARK D. THOMPSON

In paragraphs 36 and 87–96 of *The Windsor Report* consideration is given to the concept of *adiaphora* (‘things indifferent’ or ‘things neither commanded nor forbidden’) and its usefulness in enabling the various churches of the Anglican Communion to live together in the face of diversity. This is unsurprising given the increasing interest in this concept as a way of reducing the heat of a variety of modern controversies. Writers across the theological spectrum have encouraged reflection on this concept, including such evangelical luminaries as John R. W. Stott.¹ In what follows I intend to examine the idea in its historical and theological context and then provide an evaluation of how it is used by the authors of *The Windsor Report*.

1. *The foundations of the concept of ‘adiaphora’*

The idea that some things are matters of indifference while others are matters of importance is not a uniquely Christian concept. It certainly seems to have been a feature of the Stoic approach to life. The idea, and indeed the term, can be found in the writings of Marcus Aurelius and Diogenes Laertius.² For the Stoics, recognising which things are *adiaphora* and which are not enables a person to avoid distorted values. This was itself a critical part of living a life of virtue.

While the Greek word *adiaphora* does not appear in the New Testament, the idea that some things are matters of indifference and hence matters of Christian freedom is present in a number of places. These reveal a very different context from that of Stoicism. While the Stoics considered that a recognition of certain things, actions, or circumstances as *adiaphora* enabled a person to remain undisturbed by them and thus be able to live the virtuous life, *adiaphora* in the New Testament arise from an understanding of the work of Christ. There is now a new perspective on circumstances, human activity, and religious experiences that renders certain practices and situations matters of indifference.

The most obvious example in the New Testament is the practice of circumcision. The apostle Paul insists that, in the light of salvation by grace through faith in Christ, ‘neither circumcision counts for anything nor uncircumcision’ (1 Cor. 7:19; Gal. 5:6; 6:5). It cannot secure salvation because that is anchored in Christ and his cross. It is not the identifying

¹ Stott, *Evangelical Truth*, 141–144. ² Marcus Aurelius, *Meditationes*, 11.16; Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of the Philosophers*, 7.105–106.

mark of the Christian; that mark is one's faith. As a result, the Gentile convert is free to be circumcised and free to remain uncircumcised. Indeed, the apostle Paul could choose to circumcise Timothy because of its strategic value for ministry at Lystra and Iconium (Acts 16:3) and yet choose not to circumcise Titus when he visited Jerusalem (Gal. 2:3). Circumcision or uncircumcision makes no difference to one who is saved completely on the basis of Christ's saving work and so it is a matter of freedom. However, the moment others insist upon it, circumcision stops being a matter of indifference and instead becomes a threat to faith (Gal. 5:2). Those who insist upon it or make it a condition of fellowship must be opposed in the fiercest terms (Gal. 1:6-10; 2:11-16; 3:1-6; 5:7-12).

Circumcision is not the only matter which in and of itself is *adiaphora*. The other notorious example is the practice of eating food which had previously been offered to idols (1 Cor. 8; Rom. 14). Such a practice is harmless in itself and becomes a matter of freedom but a matter of significance once it is clear that your brother is troubled by the practice. The gospel makes clear that the idolatry of the nations is a deception (1 Cor. 8:4-6). Nothing has happened to the meat which has been offered to this product of the human imagination and so it is perfectly serviceable as part of the Christian diet. It is a matter of indifference whether you eat it or not. Therefore, this too is a matter of freedom. And yet there are circumstances where love will constrain the exercise of Christian freedom.³

What is of particular importance is that the New Testament nowhere speaks of sexual immorality in such terms. In close proximity to Paul's discussions of circumcision and food offered to idols are some of the most scathing denunciations of immorality in all its forms and sexual immorality is conspicuously prominent: 'Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God' (1 Cor. 6:18); 'Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God' (Gal. 5:19-21). In the current crisis pressure may be applied to consider one's stance on homosexual activity as a matter of Christian freedom, an issue over which we ought not to divide. Faithfulness to the word of God cannot countenance this evasion for a moment.

Similarly, it is noteworthy that there is no case in the New Testament where doctrine is a matter of indifference. The very phenomenon of Paul's letters is itself a testimony to how seriously he took doctrinal deviation. What he actually writes in those letters confirms this. It matters that, in line with his eternal character, the Son humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death (Phil. 2:5-10). It matters that Christ rose bodily from the grave (1 Corinthians 15). It matters that justification is not by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ (Gal. 2:15-21). It matters that our salvation is anchored in God's eternal choice of us in Christ (Eph. 1:3-14). Furthermore, this conviction that gospel truth matters is not simply a peculiarity of Paul. In the midst of an epistle which highlights the importance of loving one another as we have been loved by God, John speaks of any denial of the reality of the incarnation as 'the spirit of the antichrist' and 'the spirit of error' (1 John 4:1-6).

It would be nothing short of ridiculous to deny that considerable diversity has in fact arisen since the New Testament on issues the Bible says little or nothing about and that much of this appears to be of a very different order to the kinds of things we have identified

³ There may also be other circumstances in which a high-handed attitude towards the eating of meat offered to idols takes it outside of the sphere of *adiaphora*. See Revelation 2:14, 20.

above. There are, no doubt, some areas where there is legitimate room for disagreement without disenfranchising our Christian brothers or sisters who think differently. The most obvious example is the timing of baptism, but there are others. However, the point being made here is simply that, notwithstanding the best efforts of those critical scholars who seek to establish various competing and even contradictory theologies within the New Testament, there is no secure evidence of doctrinal diversity within its pages and certainly there is no evidence at all of a doctrinal matter being considered *adiaphora*. Nor is there any biblical evidence at all for considering issues of sexual morality to be *adiaphora*. Perhaps we ought to be more cautious before we employ the category in these areas. How we then handle our differences is another matter.

2. *Later development and employment of the concept of 'adiaphora'*

In the centuries immediately following the completion of the New Testament, it would appear that the concept of *adiaphora* did not develop into a prominent feature of Christian discourse. It did indeed surface at points but little seems to have been added beyond the lines of argument discerned above. In the medieval period some use was made of it with reference to works of supererogation (e.g. Thomas Aquinas).⁴ However, the concept became much more important at the time of the Reformation.

In the early years of the Lutheran Reformation there was some debate about the extent of the transformation of church ceremony, ritual and government, which the gospel required. Could the episcopate be retained within a Protestant framework? Could the practice of confirmation continue even if it was no longer considered a sacrament? Should all traces of Roman liturgical practice be removed from the evangelical churches? Luther's *Invocavit* sermons (1522) and the first edition of Melancthon's *Loci Communes* (1521) called for calm and patience in such matters.⁵ It is interesting that the 1534 edition of Melancthon's Colossians commentary included the complaint that some used the term *adiaphora* to excuse their own licentiousness.⁶

In the wake of the defeat of the Schmalkald League in 1547 and the attempt by Charles V to impose the Augsburg Interim, the issue of *adiaphora* became highly controversial. A rift developed within the Lutheran churches, Melancthon leading a group willing to compromise on certain ceremonies and labelling them *adiaphora* while stricter Lutherans led by Matthias Flacius Illyricus and Nikolaus von Amsdorf famously insisted that 'nothing is *adiaphora* in the case of confession and scandal', i.e. in a time of persecution steadfast confession was required, not compromise. The debate continued until the Treaty of Passau (1552) and the Peace of Augsburg (1555) dramatically transformed the situation. Article 10 of the Formula of Concord (1580) settled a definition of *adiaphora* and its use:

X. Of Church Rites which are [commonly] called Adiaphora or Matters of Indifference.

(3) For settling also this controversy we unanimously believe, teach and confess that the ceremonies or church rites which are neither commanded nor forbidden in God's Word, but have been instituted alone for the sake of propriety and good order, are in and of themselves no divine worship, nor even a part of it [...]

(6) We believe, teach and confess that in time of persecution, when a plain confession is required of us, we should not yield to the enemies in regard to such adiaphora [...]

⁴ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, I-II, q. 18, art. 8 & 9 (=pages 668–669 in the Benziger Brothers edition).

⁵ WA 10–3, 1–64 = LW 51, 70–100. ⁶ Wengert, 'Adiaphora', I, 4.

(7) *We believe, teach and confess also that no Church should condemn another because one has less or more external ceremonies not commanded by God than the other, if otherwise there is agreement among them in doctrine and all its articles [...]*

What is important to remember is that at neither the earlier or later periods of this intra-Lutheran controversy were tenets of doctrine or sexual morality included in the category of *adiaphora*.

The concept of *adiaphora* was similarly prominent in the later years of the English Reformation. Once again it was ecclesiastical ceremony, and in particular the extent to which certain practices of the pre-reformed English church could be retained in the Elizabethan Protestant church, which was the focus of the debate. The Vestarian Controversy of 1565 (over the use of the surplice and relation of church and civil authority) and the Admonition Controversy of 1572 (largely over forms of church government) both included appeals to the concept. Of course there was ample recognition—on both sides—that practice is a reflection of theology and so the category of ‘external ceremonies’ could not be quarantined as easily as some may have wished. Nevertheless, classically the practices labelled *adiaphora* by some (e.g. the wearing of the surplice, the sign of the cross, etc.) were individual actions which had been in use for centuries in the Roman churches and which for some implied a certain understanding of priesthood. When the issue was one of church government, appeal was made on both sides to patterns discernible in various centres of the Roman Empire in the first century. In neither case did the practice or pattern involve endorsing something explicitly condemned in Scripture.

What we have provided in this section is simply an overview of the use of the term ‘*adiaphora*’ in the period when it was most prominent in theological discussion. The idea that a prudent division between matters of indifference and matters of importance is critical for the exercise of genuinely Christian faith and ministry has resurfaced from time to time in most mainline Protestant traditions over the past 450 years. A review of this continuing debate reveals that criteria for the inclusion of particular ceremonies and practices in one category or the other have remained illusive and controversial. Nevertheless, there is a pattern in the use of this concept which remains constant from the time of the New Testament until long after the time of the Reformation. In that long period the concept was not enlarged to include articles of Christian doctrine or matters of sexual morality. These were very definitely things which mattered and about which God had spoken in the Scriptures.

What remains for us to do in this essay is to ask whether *The Windsor Report* uses the term *adiaphora* in a way that is commensurate with what we have seen from Scripture and history.

3. *The use of the concept of ‘adiaphora’ in The Windsor Report*

The first mention of *adiaphora* in *The Windsor Report* occurs in paragraphs 36–37 which are part of a larger description and analysis of the current situation. The suggestion is made that ‘many within the Episcopal Church (USA) and the Diocese of New Westminster hold to the opinion, at least by implication, that the questions they were deciding were things upon which Christians might have legitimate difference’ (para. 37). How the decision to consecrate a practicing homosexual or to endorse a form of blessing for same sex unions would fit within the historic limitations of the concept of *adiaphora* is not made clear. Is such an overturning of the explicit teaching of Scripture on the nature and consequences of same-sex

sexual behaviour really a matter of indifference? Would Paul have recognised it as such? Would the English Reformers have recognised it as such? However, at this point the report is merely suggesting part of the rationale for the actions of ECUSA and New Westminster rather than evaluating that rationale. The problem is not so much with *The Windsor Report* as with those who may have thought sexual morality could be included in the category of *adiaphora*.

However, there is one serious weakness associated with this first appearance of the concept of *adiaphora* in *The Windsor Report*. Given what we have outlined above, it is surely imprecise at best to suggest that ‘Anglicans have always recognised a key distinction between core doctrines of the church (remembering that ethics, liturgy and pastoral practice, if authentically Christian, are all rooted in theology and doctrine) and those upon which disagreement can be tolerated without endangering unity’ (par. 36). In this form, the report seems to be suggesting that the distinction is between core doctrines and other doctrines that are matters of indifference. Yet matters of doctrine were not considered matters of indifference at the time of the English Reformation: *adiaphora* as understood by the Reformers concerned matters of outward ceremony and ecclesiastical organisation.

The same misunderstanding finds its way into the more extensive treatment of the concept in paragraphs 87–96. Did men like Lambert, Bilney, Barnes, Tyndale, Cranmer, Latimer & Ridley (‘the early English Reformers’ par. 88) consider *adiaphora* to include matters of belief? Was it merely the insistence upon transubstantiation as the only explanation of what happens during the prayer of consecration that troubled them? Were they merely calling for freedom to adopt alternative explanations? Or did they find that explanation itself to be, not so much a matter of indifference, as something which called into question explicit biblical teaching about the finality of Christ’s sacrifice and reality of the bodily ascension? *The Windsor Report* needs to pay more attention to the precise way in which the concept was brought into service in the English religious debates of 1530–90 and in particular to the way in which leaders on both sides avoided placing matters of doctrine or sexual morality into this category.

Nevertheless, there is much that is good and helpful in this section. It identifies some of the persistent difficulties surrounding the concept of *adiaphora* such as the question of criteria for determining precisely what qualifies and what does not. It asks good questions and even hints that *adiaphora* in and of itself is an inadequate solution to the problems we presently face. It recognises that ‘some types of behaviour are incompatible with inheriting God’s kingdom’ (para. 89), even if it is reluctant to name homosexual practice as one of these (a strange reluctance given that the precise biblical passage under consideration in that paragraph explicitly includes it). Alongside these, however, is the introduction of the language of culture and ‘inculturation’ in paragraph 91. This does little more than throw dust in the air since so much is left unexplained. Much more clarity is needed at this point.

4. *Adiaphora and the current Anglican crisis*

The current crisis in Anglicanism cannot be solved completely or even in part by recourse to the concept of *adiaphora*. As a matter of fact, neither side in the debate could accept such a move. It is particularly telling that the innovations in America, Canada, the U.K. and other places were never justified by an appeal to *adiaphora*. Those behind them do not think that these issues are matters of indifference. They have acted conscientiously and in line with their own view of the essence of the gospel as a message of inclusion. The very

fact that they have acted in full knowledge of the opposition that was voiced prior to the fact by many throughout the world (including the vast majority of Anglicans) makes clear that they consider the matter to be much more significant than that. They will not back down because their revision of the gospel message is at stake.

Those who remain faithful to the teaching of Scripture also object to the intrusion of the concept of *adiaphora* at this point. To attempt to place homosexual practice or even the endorsement of homosexual practice in this category is to do violence to its meaning and history. Nor can it be considered a matter of indifference when Christian men and women who seek to remain faithful to the Scriptures are harassed by those who have been charged with their care. These are not merely matters of outward ceremonial or things about which the Scriptures remain silent. The activity of those in ECUSA, New Westminster, and several dioceses within the Church of England involves the repudiation of vast tracts of biblical teaching. It cannot be sanitised or domesticated. Such behaviour remains an affront to all who truly belong to the Lord Jesus precisely because Scripture makes clear it is an affront to the Lord Jesus himself.

The Episcopacy

ROBERT DOYLE

The sections of the Report (pars. 63–66) which are concerned with the nature of episcopacy are in part heartening, but overall continue to embrace lines of thinking which have been distinctive of Anglo-Catholicism since the early 19th century and are now almost universal within the Anglican denomination.

The strong emphasis that bishops should teach, and teach Scripture at that, is refreshing and welcome. However it suffers from being placed in two wrong frameworks.

First, it stands within a sad failure to understand the nature of theological reflection and the need to state it clearly. Theological language is *not* the development of concepts extra and new to the New Testament, but simply a recognition of concepts already found in the New Testament. This theological task of recognition includes taking concepts from ordinary, human religious experience and life generally, and re-shaping them in the service of biblical truth. A very good example of that is the ecumenical Creed of Nicaea/Constantinople. This description of the task of theology means that when bishops teach, they ought be committed to taking the teachings of the Church, in this case of the Church of England as recognised in its creeds and evangelical articles, and explaining them against the norm given us by Holy Scripture itself, which is Christ clothed with the Apostolic Gospel, the New Testament.

The Windsor Report, through its use of ambiguity and misstatement, shows that it operates with a different view of the nature of the theological enterprise. Within this alternative, the teaching role of bishops is compromised at its foundations. In its nuanced way, *The Report* makes bishops creators and developers of theological truth on the grounds, not only of the contents of the Bible, *but also of human experience in history*. What ‘Christ clothed with his promises’ requires, is recognition of what the Bible teaches, on its own terms, and faithfully proclaiming this discovery. The creeds and articles have placed some very serious pegs in the ground. To wander outside them, as too many do, is to invent a new religion, which is fundamentally other than that of the Christian Church.

Secondly, as with earlier reports by the Eames Commission, and much that has preceded it over the last century, *The Report’s* emphasis on the bishop as teacher is placed within a false understanding of how God works in the world.

At the time of the Reformation there were two opposite and rival views of spiritual reality. The first, and still dominant, was that we live in a relentlessly sacramental universe and that God works indirectly in the world through a chain of sacraments taken from ordinary and spiritual experience. So, in this view, which had its first clearest expression with Ignatius and has since undergone considered development in the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox traditions, God works indirectly and impersonally down an unbreakable hierarchy

of bishops, priests and deacons, to the people. Responding to this sacramental grace, we offer our prayers and sacramental activities back towards God through the same hierarchical order. On these assumptions, certain claims in recent times by a majority report of our Australian bishops are unsurprising: no bishop, no proper Holy Communion; no bishop, no proper church or church activity.

The other view was that of the Reformers, notably Martin Luther, John Calvin, and Archbishop Thomas Cranmer. These men grasped the New Testament teaching that God does not primarily work in the work impersonally and indirectly through a chain of sacramental activities and persons, but of first importance, he works in the world *directly* and *personally*, by Word and Spirit. The New Testament certainly shows that order in ministry is necessary, but this order is simply the temporary scaffolding God puts in place and uses in his direct work of building his church.

In the wider context of contemporary Anglicanism, and as much of the contents of the document itself shows, *The Windsor Report* places its call for bishops to teach within the sacramental understanding of spiritual reality, which, when weighed against the New Testament, is incorrect. For example, refer to *The Report's* notions:

- of the bishop being ‘the chief pastor’ (par. 64), to use the old term, ‘pastor of the pastors’ — a Roman Catholic phrase;
- of the ‘representative’ ministry of the bishop, in which he represents the local church to the wider, the wider church to the local; Christ to the people, the people to God; and God and the Church to the world (par. 64, footnote 38).¹¹ [*Editors’ note: In passing, we note that the final representation does not have a reciprocate. Given the present ‘crisis’, perhaps it should be added as the only true statement of this entire list: for here we have the bishop representing the world to the Church!*]
- the way it regards the Archbishop of Canterbury as the head or chief bishop over the other bishops and members of the Anglican denomination (par. 65);
- and the necessity of bishops as the ‘the source of ministry’, that is, ordination (par. 63).

Not so Cranmer, who famously stated that even a laymen, a king, could ordain a bishop, so long as he did it with prayer and the laying on of hands!

Within the framework of spiritual reality given by the New Testament, what is an adequate theological conception of a bishop and his work?

The bishop ought be an ‘apostolic visitor’, who through his teaching and private conversations asks the question: ‘How goes it with the apostolic gospel here?’ In this, he reminds the minister and the congregation that they are not alone, but are part of the body of Christ, under the direct and personal authority of Christ, clothed with his gospel. The churches of the Reformation recognised from the New Testament that this work of ‘apostolic visitation’ needs to be done, but how it is done is a matter of what works best under local circumstances. It can be done —and, at least in the Diocese of Sydney, actually is done — informally by senior lay people, as well as more formally by our bishops. For that we thank God. *The Windsor Report* undermines the nature and faithful discharge of New Testament ‘episcopacy’ through its ambiguity and, at times, its denial of the foundations episcopacy ought to rest upon. As ‘apostolic visitor’ the bishop should teach only what is recognized from the Scriptures, and this teaching should be done in the awareness that God does not work sacramentally, but he works in his world directly, through the conjunction of his Word and his Spirit.

The Church and Denominations¹

D. BROUGHTON KNOX

1. What is 'Church'?

The important word 'church' is used in current language with at least six different meanings. For example, it is used for a building, a denomination, or a profession. But interestingly enough it is seldom used in its basic New Testament meaning.

We need not quarrel with the semasiologist about this variety of use, but we should be on our guard lest what is true of the word in one of its meanings is transferred to its use in another meaning, and in particular we need to be on guard lest the aura of glory which surrounds its New Testament meaning is used to heighten loyalty to institutions other than the New Testament church. It is from lack of reflection at this point that much of the modern confusion in the doctrine of the church arises.

In the New Testament the word 'church' always means 'a gathering' or 'an assembly'. Acts 19 shows it was not a technical ecclesiastical word, for in verse 32, St Luke used it of the gathering of the mob in the amphitheatre in Ephesus, and in verse 39 of the regular political assembly of the citizens.² In the Old Testament the two Hebrew equivalents of the Greek *ekklesia* are applied to the Old Testament people of God, especially when that people is conceived of as assembling or gathering; for example, when gathered around Mount Sinai for the giving of the law, or later on Mount Zion where all Israel were required to assemble three times a year. The usual English equivalents of the Hebrew are 'congregation' and 'assembly', but Stephen in Acts 7 used the word 'church' (i.e. *ekklesia*) of this Old Testament congregation of God. In the New Testament the Christian church is the fulfilment of the Old Testament assembly. Jesus Christ is its constituent. Just as in Exodus 19:4-5, God is said to have gathered his people around himself at Mount Sinai, and as later they regularly gathered at his command around his dwelling place on Mount Zion, so Christ gathers his people around himself as their shepherd. He gathers them through the preaching of the gospel: 'The Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved' (Acts 2:47). It is Christ who builds his church (Matt. 16:18). He calls into one flock around him his sheep, whether near or far off (Jn. 10:16; Acts 2:39).

The Epistle to the Hebrews makes clear that the assembly, or church, which Christ is building now is primarily a supernal heavenly assembly. In Hebrews 12:18-24, the writer contrasts the assembly of which his readers are members with the Old Testament assembly

¹ Reprinted, with permission, from *Reformed Theological Review* 23.2 (1964), 44-53. Headings have been added. For a later discussion of the same topic, see Knox, 'The Church, the Churches, and the Denominations of the Churches'. ² It was still being used of a secular assembly by Justin Martyr (*Trypho* 42). The word only occurs six times in the Apologists.

of the people of God. That earlier assembly was gathered round God on Mount Sinai, but the present assembly into which Christian believers have been gathered is around the heavenly Zion, the City of the Living God. This assembly is ascribed as 'the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven'. This is the essential Christian church and it is gathered round Christ where he now is. Our membership of this assembly or church is not some future hope but is a present reality. We have already come to the heavenly Zion and already are members of this 'assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven'. We are already 'seated with Christ in the heavenly' (cf. Eph. 2:6). The Book of the Revelation gives us several glimpses of this heavenly assembly around Christ, e.g. 'a great multitude [...] standing before the throne and before the Lamb' (Rev. 7:9), and 'on Mount Zion stood the Lamb, and with him one hundred and forty four thousand who had his name and his Father's name written on their foreheads' (Rev. 14:1). The Scriptures make clear that Christ is now primarily to be thought of as in Heaven. There are many passages to this effect, such as 'seek the things that are above, where Christ is' (Col. 3:1); 'Jesus Christ who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God,' (1 Peter 3:22); 'Jesus whom heaven must receive until the time for restoring all things' (Acts 3:21, modifying ESV); 'I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God' (Acts 7:56); 'Away from the body and at home with the Lord' (2 Cor. 5:8. cf. Acts 1:11; 2:33; 9:6; 26:15-19; Philippians 3:20; 1 Thessalonians 1:7, 10; 4:16; Hebrews 9:24-28).

Since Christ is now in heaven, it is there that the New Testament thinks of him as building his church, because the Church of Christ is the assembly which he calls into being around himself. This supernal church or assembly round Christ is a present, not merely a future reality, and we are to think of ourselves as already members of it, assembled with him in heaven. This is the primary reference of the word 'church' in the New Testament. It is this church to which Jesus referred in Matthew 16:18 and which he is now building; it is this church or assembly which he loved and gave himself up for (Eph. 5:25). This is the church which Paul persecuted by 'breathing threats and murder' against its members 'the disciples of the Lord' (Acts 9:1). This is the church in which God has appointed apostles, prophets, teachers and the rest. This is the church affirmed in the Nicene Creed, 'I believe in one Holy Catholic Apostolic church'. Its principle of unity is, of course, the fact that Christ has assembled it round himself. It is logically impossible for him to assemble two churches; for Christ is to be thought of as in one place only, that is, in Heaven, if we are to use biblical imagery which is the only imagery available. This gathering or church is holy, because it is God's; it has been called out by God for himself. It may also be called holy because its members are holy, not only in status but also in character, for being assembled into the presence of Christ they see him, and as they see him they become like him, being made holy as he is holy (1 John 3:2). It is catholic because the gospel is no longer confined to the literal seed of Abraham, but rather Christ is gathering into his church 'from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages' (Rev. 7:9). It is apostolic because it is founded on the Apostles, that is to say, Christ's commissioned missionaries who founded the church by the preaching of the gospel of Christ. It is worth noting that in Revelation it is the heavenly church which is described as apostolic, for it is the heavenly church which is described as a city the foundations of which are inscribed with the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb (Rev. 21:14). St Paul tells the Ephesian Christians that they are citizens of this heavenly city along with the rest of God's children. He also described them as members of God's household, which is essentially a heavenly establishment. And as such, he described them as built on the foundation of the Apostles. Thus it is the supernal church which is apostolic, as well as catholic, holy and indivisibly one.

We are called into membership of this one church of Christ by the preaching of the gospel. As a consequence of membership of Christ's church there is a duty on Christians to assemble in local gatherings. Interestingly enough, the duty was not so obvious to the early Christians that they did not need to be exhorted not to forsake the assembling of themselves together (Heb. 10:25). And the letters of Ignatius of Antioch are notorious for their constant iteration of the duty of Christians to assemble together rather than each to worship God on his own. These exhortations confirm that in its primary meaning in the New Testament, the word 'church' refers to that heavenly assembly which Christ is gathering. To this assembly every New Testament Christian was vividly conscious of belonging, as he awaited his Lord from Heaven. The fact that these early Christians nevertheless required exhortation to assemble together, shows that their concept for the church of Christ, of which they all knew themselves to be members, was in essence other than the local group.

Though a derived and not a primary use, nevertheless the most frequent use of the word in the New Testament is of the local gathering of Christians. These local gatherings, whether at Corinth or in the cities of Galatia, or in Jerusalem, were manifestations of the one church of Christ. Christ had gathered them, and he himself was present according to his promise where two or three were met together in his name. Thus they were gathered round Christ through his Spirit, and consequently nothing was lacking for a complete church of Christ. They were never spoken of as *part of* Christ's church because they *were* Christ's church, gathered by him round himself at a certain time in a certain place.³ They were manifestations of the supernal church of which every member of the local church was at that very time a member. It is a grave mistake, common in current theology, to reverse the order and to think of Christ's universal church as made up by adding together the total membership of the local churches whether backwards through time or extensively over the earth's surface.

It is worth noting that Ignatius who was the first to use the term 'the Catholic Church' applied it to the gathering of Christians around Jesus. 'Where Jesus is, there is the Catholic Church' (*ad Smyrn.* 8). It is the heavenly assembly ('where Jesus is') which Ignatius here designates as Catholic or universal, and he contrasts it with its counterpart, namely its local manifestation in the assembly of Christians round their minister. It is not a spiritualised presence of Jesus to which Ignatius is referring as this would defeat his argument, which is, that just as the Catholic Church is gathered round Jesus in Heaven, so Christians should gather round their minister in their own locality. This interpretation of Ignatius' phrase, sufficiently clear from the context itself, is confirmed by the gloss placed on it by the interpolator in the longer recension of Ignatius' letters. The interpolator reproduced the section almost verbatim, but for the clause, 'where Jesus Christ is, there is the Catholic Church', he has 'where Jesus Christ is, there the whole heavenly army is present . . .' so making clear that it is the heavenly assembly which Ignatius had in mind by the term 'the Catholic Church'.⁴

The local churches come into being as their members are joined to Christ. These local churches will never be visibly one assembly until the Second Coming. Then, when Christ

³ The activities ascribed to a local church by the New Testament do not go beyond fellowship, including prayer together and mutual edification. It is a mistake to ascribe to the church functions committed in Scripture to its members. An example of this mistake may be taken from Joint Commission on Union, *The Church — Its Nature, Function and Ordering*, 20, 'To the church is committed the task of proclaiming Christ by word and deed'. This statement would conform more closely to Scripture if it read 'To Christians is committed [...]'. Of course, we must have fellowship one with another in the exercise of the various ministries church members receive, just as the Church at Antioch and later the Philippians had fellowship with St. Paul in his ministry which he had received from Christ. But this ministry was not committed to the church, but to the apostle (Acts 22:21). The only corporate activity towards outsiders ascribed to the church in the New Testament is a heavenly activity (Eph. 3:10). ⁴ See following page

will be manifested, the church will be seen to be united around him; and St Paul in 1 Thessalonians 4:17 speaks of this quite correctly as our 'gathering together' around him in the air. But just as at the present time Christ's Lordship is not yet manifest as it will be, but remains an object of faith, so his gathering or church is not yet manifest but remains an object of faith, not only in its characteristic of unity, but in all its characteristics as his church, so that quite properly the Creed affirms 'I believe in one [...] church'.

2. *Inter-relationships Between Churches*

A question remains to be considered, namely, what is the relationship between the local manifestations of Christ's church, one or more of which all of us are members? The basic and only essential bond between these local churches is the mutual love, interest and prayer that members of one assembly have for members of the others. They receive members of other assemblies as fellow Christians, when they are assured of the individual faith of those members. They are interested in the Christian progress of one another, not only of those within their own assembly, but of those in other assemblies. It is impossible to discover in the New Testament any other link or relationship of the local churches one with the other than this invisible bond of mutual love for the members one for the other. The same is true for the first centuries of the church's history. For example, in the time of Cyprian each Christian assembly, though bound in love one to the other, is completely independent of any other assembly. Things are very different today. The various local assemblies of Christians are grouped in patterns of fellowship, called denominations. These groupings or denominations arose in history for various reasons but what delineates a denomination at the present time and its principle of continuity is the restriction of fellowship by Christians within the denomination with Christians outside the denomination. A denomination need not consist of more than one congregation, but if this congregation restricts its fellowship in one way or another with regard to members of other congregations, it is rightly called a denomination. In fact it would be difficult to find a Christian assembly today which, though not linked in any way with other assemblies, nevertheless recognises other assemblies as on all points equally Christian as itself. Such an attitude of full acceptance of other congregations is now limited to those within the same denomination. Denominationalism is not solely a modern phenomenon. The ancient church had its pattern of restricted fellowship both at a local as well as on a world-wide level. The Melitian schism is an example of the former, the Novatian and Donatist and Catholic groupings are examples of world-wide denominational patterns of fellowship. Thus Cyril of Jerusalem (AD 350) took it for granted that in any city which his catechumens might visit, there would be several churches of different denominations, all calling themselves Christian churches (*Cat. Lectures* 18:26).

4 Lightfoot in his commentary on the passage missed the significance of this. He mistook Ignatius' phrase to mean 'the worldwide church'. [Editors' note: The fact that this misunderstanding of Ignatius has been the norm has also meant that a similar reference in Cyril of Jerusalem (*Lecture* 18) has also been overlooked, since the misunderstanding of Ignatius makes Cyril's reference incomprehensible. Moroziuk, 'Some Thoughts', 170, notes that 'in the context of Ignatius' ecclesiology the term *katholike* would appear to imply entirety, completeness, ecclesial wholeness'. He notes that this contrasts with modern notions of 'universal church'. Knox's notion of the church agrees that the local church is the whole church, but goes further than Moroziuk to explain this by reference to the heavenly assembly gathered around Jesus, of which the local church is a manifestation. Moroziuk shows that Cyril of Jerusalem, while incorporating 'most of the shades of meaning of the term *katholike* that evolved in the preceding Christian tradition' was also keen to demonstrate 'the ontological catholicity of the Church. [...] Cyril seems to project a strong sense of wholeness, particularly ontological wholeness that emanates from the Christian Assembly [...]'. Knox helpfully grounds this 'ontological wholeness' in the heavenly assembly spoken of in Hebrews 12 and depicted in Revelation 4, 5, 7.]

Nowadays denominationalism is greatly strengthened by the centralised service structure which has been built up to serve denominationally linked churches. This service structure very frequently has a control of the denominational property and so is able to apply effective sanctions over the local congregation and its ministers. In fact denominationalism depends very largely for its continued existence nowadays on property ownership. If property were not owned on trust for the use of the denominational 'church', denominational edges would soon be blurred, for it is the continuance of this church trust property which perpetuates the separate denominations when the original *raison d'être* for their separate existence has ceased. It is not for nothing that Christ warned his disciples against the danger of owning property. Perhaps the most serious danger, which the denominational groupings of Christian congregations presents, is that such groupings provide a focal point for loyalty. For many members, especially for the more carnal members, the denomination replaces the true centre of loyalty which a Christian assembly should have, namely, Christ who gathers his assembly together. Thus, nowadays we witness Christians assembling, both locally and on a world-wide scale, on the ground of their denominational allegiance, and the issue is confused by the fact that invariably the denomination is called 'the church', as though Christ who assembles his church were also the one who is assembling the denominational gathering.

A denomination is seen in its best light when viewed from the service which it provides for the local Christian assemblies. Thus it normally provides expert advice and mediation in many areas; it provides training colleges for the ministers; it provides financial facilities for the purchase of congregational amenities, such as a church building to assemble in, a residence for the minister and suchlike. It also provides a channel for supporting missionaries in their ministry overseas, and in this respect it has a New Testament prototype in the aid the Philippians provided Paul for the full time exercise of his ministry.⁵ When viewed as a service organisation, the union of denominations is beneficial as leading to greater efficiency, so long as this efficiency is not purchased at the cost of truth or liberty. Thus the union of denominations is normally an object to be encouraged, though it is unwarranted to think that such union in itself is a spiritual objective which Christians are under obligation to strive for.

Denominational organisation increases the influence of the denomination in the community. We have an interesting example of this in the formation of the Baptist Union as reported in the article 'Baptists' in the *New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopaedia of Religious Knowledge*, volume 1, page 466a: 'About 1812 a conviction was expressed by a writer in the Baptist magazine that while numerically strong the Baptists of England and Wales exerted little influence because of their lack of union. "Union of the most extensive, firm and durable nature" was earnestly advocated by him. A number of brethren met in London the same year to plan for a Union.' Some denominations, specially those who give high sounding titles to their office-bearers, are more effective than others in securing this influence in the community. But it remains true that influence secured by denominational organisation is worldly influence rather than the influence which arises from the power of the gospel, and so it may fail to advance God's glory. It falls under the ban 'it shall not be so among you'. God's purposes are not advanced by pressure groups, but by prayer, preaching and Christian living and suffering. A strong denominational structure enables a 'denominational witness' to be maintained in areas where otherwise the congregation would die out. Thus when there is a prolonged failure to preach the gospel with the consequential absence

⁵ Missionary societies which operate within a denomination but are not coterminous with it furnish the interesting phenomenon — wrongly regarded by some people as anomalous — of a denomination within a denomination.

of the Spirit of God at work, it is only the existence of a church building, parochial structure, parsonage, and stipend which keeps a congregation in existence.⁶ It is normally assumed that such continuity of the 'church's' witness, even though more or less a dead witness, is a good thing, and to God's glory. But the assumption is highly questionable.

'Parallel denominationalism' may be defined as more than one denomination having churches in the same locality. The parallel denominationalism of the early church was terminated by the persecution carried on by Constantine and his successors against all Christians who were not Catholic. Hatch in his *Organization of the Early Christian Churches*, gives a long list of these oppressive measures.⁷ In Britain and its one-time colonies, parallel denominationalism has arisen again consequent on the relaxation of persecution following the failure of the Clarendon Code and the repeal of the disabilities imposed on Roman Catholics. The blessing that parallel denominationalism brings with it is liberty of conscience. A single denomination has always been a persecuting denomination and has maintained its monopoly only by persecution. It is well to remember this as we witness the present efforts under the umbrella of the Ecumenical Movement to bring about an amalgamation of denominational structures. Amalgamation through negotiation will never completely succeed nor be permanently monolithic without the aid of persecution. The old fashioned method of burning at the stake is, for the time being at least, out of favour, but there are other forms of persecution to suppress liberty of conscience.⁸ Moreover, the efforts of the Ecumenical Movement in aiming at the unification of denominational structures are directed towards achieving an irrelevancy, and if successful will accentuate the temptations of denominationalism in proportion to the success in creating a big denomination. The real way forward is a return to the ancient pattern of mutual acceptance of one another without negotiating a 'union scheme' of the denominations of which the local churches happen to belong. The restrictive character of the denominational link-up should be weakened by allowing with good will, and indeed encouraging, congregations and individual Christians to be in fellowship with each other across the denominational barriers. Enlarging the line-up by denominational amalgamation or 'church union' will only strengthen its exclusiveness.

It will be of great assistance to the clarity of theological thinking if the word 'church' were restricted in its use once more to the church which Christ assembles round himself in Heaven and to the local manifestation in time and place of this one church of Christ. These local manifestations are as numerous as there are assemblies of Christians meeting together in Christ's name with his promised presence in the midst [i.e. by his Spirit — Eds.]. Thus there may be a church in Corinth and again a church within that church, meeting in a house in Corinth. Each such assembly, meeting in Christ's name, is complete, for Christ's presence makes it a complete church or gathering of Christ. It is not as though the larger were made up by adding together the smaller. But in addition to these two New Testament usages we have in modern language other uses of the word. The distinctive characteristic of these modern extensions is that the word is applied (in contrast to the New Testament) to entities never thought of as assembling, nor which could, in fact, assemble. We freely recognise that when we speak of the church as a building or a profession we are not using it in a New Testament sense. But it is not always so clearly recognised that when we use it as a shorthand term to describe all our Christian brethren at present living in the world (as in the phrase, 'the church militant here in earth'), or when we use it for a denomination (as

⁶ Amongst migrant groups it is often merely a common nationality which ensures the continuity of the congregation.

⁷ Hatch, *Organization of the Early Christian Churches*, 181. ⁸ [Editors' note: The crisis which lies behind *The Windsor Report* has seen numerous examples of coercive behaviour by some denominational officials, who wish to silence those who disagree.]

'the Church of England', or 'the Presbyterian Church'), these are also non-biblical senses. It is here that the confusion arises, because we bring over into these modern non-biblical uses the theology of glory which applies to the New Testament church. Yet as the late Dr. Gabriel Hebert, well known to Australians as a leading High Churchman, says in his book, *Apostle and Bishop*, p. 148: 'It is of course an improper use of words to call denominations churches; for in the New Testament the word *ekklesia* means "the Church of God", and "a church", such as that of Ephesus, is a local unit of the Church'.

It would help clarity of thought if wherever the word denomination can be used without altering the meaning of the sentence we used it instead of the word church. Thus we should speak of 'heads of denominations', rather than use the horrible new-fangled phrase 'heads of churches'; and we should also speak of 'Council of denominations' rather than 'Council of churches', and 'the amalgamation of denominations' rather than 'church union'. Such usage would enable us to see these things more clearly in their true proportions. A distinction in nomenclature between church and denomination would immediately make clear the fallacy of the statement in the proposed basis of union for the Congregational, Methodist and Presbyterian Churches in Australia:⁹ 'The Uniting Church acknowledges with joy that she belongs to the one holy Catholic and Apostolic Church.' The sentence should read 'The Uniting Denomination acknowledges with joy that she belongs to the only holy Catholic Church', which lacks intelligibility, as Christ does not gather denominational organisations, but persons, to himself. Nor can denominational officers testify on behalf of their organisation that 'she' is a member of Christ. Such witness can only be given by individuals about their own status, as they are conscious of the Spirit's witness with their spirit that they are children of God. We may affirm that in our judgement the structure and doctrinal basis of association of the denomination to which we belong does not contravene the word of God, but to assert that our denomination, *per se*, as distinct from the regenerate Christians associated with it, is part of Christ's church is to attempt to combine concepts utterly disparate. Christ's church is certainly visible on earth (for invisible gatherings on earth is a contradiction) but it is not to be identified with the confederations called denominations.

⁹ See *The Church: Its Nature, Function and Ordering*, 77. This union, proposed at the time of Knox's article, was enacted on 22nd June 1977 resulting in the Uniting Church of Australia.

Subsidiarity.

A Principle in Search of an Application

ROBERT TONG

In *Windsor 38* subsidiarity is noted as a *key strand of our common life*, it is the *principle that matters should be decided as close to the local level as possible*.

This accords with the *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED) definition: *The principle is, that a central authority should have a subsidiary function, performing only those tasks which cannot be performed effectively at a more immediate or local level.*¹ As the OED indicates, the notion is (Roman) Catholic in origin and application.² It is part of Catholic social theory. OED records *according to the doctrine of subsidiarity, as developed in various papal encyclicals, social problems should be dealt with at the most immediate (or local) level consistent with their solution*.

The devastating European wars of the 20th century has given rise to the European Union and the concept of *subsidiarity* has been pressed into service to assist sovereign nation-states come to terms with the federal idea of a united Europe.ⁱⁱⁱ Limitations were placed on national sovereignty, beginning with the European Coal and Steel Community.⁴ The principle of *subsidiarity* is a central plank in the proposed European Constitution. While lawyers and public servants from the civil law tradition or Catholic Europe are comfortable with the concept, those with a common law background find it imprecise.⁵

A British discussion paper gives the contemporary flavour:

'The current British political debate links the principle of subsidiarity exclusively to the debate about the European Community. Policy makers and academics are attempting to develop new definitions of the concept, recognising that Roman Catholic sources have supplied the basic foundations. It is not surprising, given that British experience is

¹ *Oxford English Dictionary* Oxford, Clarendon Press 1989. ² The term was first used and explicitly defined by Pius XI. *New Catholic Encyclopedia* (New York McGraw-Hill 1967) Vol XIII p762. ³ See for example J. Pinder, 'European Community: The Building of a Union 1991', in S. Weatherill, *Cases and Materials on EEC Law*, 3, or D. Wyatt & A. Dashwood, *European Community Law*. ⁴ With the revival of the German steel industry in the 1950's came the desire for a common structure to govern coal and steel in Germany, France and other European countries. The structure has a life independent of existing governments. ⁵ 'The "principle of subsidiarity"- a meaningless or even misleading phrase in English- is being discussed in the European Parliament in connection with eventual revision of the Treaty of Rome. It is defined to mean that the European Community's activities should be limited to those which are better performed in common than by member states individually.' *Times* 18 Sept 1982 quoted in OED definition of subsidiarity. Apart from books on the EEC or EU, the concept is absent from common law constitutional law texts.

different from Dutch or German, that a considerable confusion persists when it comes to “pinning down” the principle of subsidiarity.’

The paper goes on

‘...in the absence of a “precise identity” it is time to start with a clean sheet of paper as the concept of subsidiarity is assigned a major constitutional role. This last assumption necessitates a clarification of the subsidiarity concept, which is clearly established as a manufactured term; and accordingly there is ample scope for argument about the meaning to be ascribed to it today.’⁶

The Virginia Report⁷ devotes a whole chapter to subsidiarity. In the 27 paragraphs of chapter 4 no scriptural warrant is given for the principle. Catholic theology undergirds Virginia and chapter 4 reflects this.⁸ Not surprisingly, metaphors applicable to the congregation are inappropriately used for the Anglican denomination. More serious is the slipshod use of scripture.⁹

The Legal Advisors Network¹⁰ identified the concept as a *principle of canon law common to the churches of the Anglican Communion* (Principle 10), but again there is no scriptural foundations are identified or any real example given to illustrate the principle in action.

Given this background, how can *The Windsor Report* 38, assert that ‘subsidiarity and *adiaphora* belong together: the more something is regarded as ‘indifferent’, the more locally the decision can be made. It does not take an Ecumenical Council to decide what colour flowers might be displayed in church; nor does a local congregation presume to add or subtract clauses from the Nicene Creed’.

If, as *The Windsor Report* asserts, the character of local decisions are *adiaphora*, that is ‘things that do not make a difference’ then local level decision making bodies are belittled and insulted. The political and legal realities are altogether different. Could the subsidiarity/*adiaphora* linked analysis be applied to the decisions of the nation-states vis-à-vis the European Union. Not at all. Then, why apply the same analysis to the independent national churches which voluntarily make up the Anglican Communion? How can the actions of the Episcopal Church of the United States and the Diocese of New Westminster be characterised as *adiaphora* as defined by *Windsor*. They have acted in a way repugnant to scripture. Surely that offers a better paradigm for analysis.

The Australian General Synod has no direct legislative power over a diocese. Unless and until a diocese, by ordinance of its synod, adopts a General Synod measure, then that measure is not part of the law of the diocese. So much for subsidiarity!

⁶ M.Wilke and H. Wallace, ‘Subsidiarity: Approaches to Power-Sharing in the European Community’, in S. Weatherill *Cases and Materials on EEC Law*, 449 ⁷ Anglican Consultative Council 1997. ⁸ See para 4.24 and the way ‘universal church’ is interchangeable with ‘Anglican Communion’ ⁹ In para 4.1 the disciples, not the ‘Church’ is commanded to go into all the world. Mt.28:19ff; in 2Cor:5:18 it is all Christians not the ‘Church’s ministers’ who are ambassadors for Christ; in para 4.2 Eph.4:11-16 is cited as authority for “Christians are...to be nourished by teaching and the sacraments...” but there is no mention of sacraments. Perhaps *Virginia* knew something Paul did not! ¹⁰ *The Windsor Report*, 114 and footnote 77.

Communion As Fellowship. The Role of Fellowship Between Churches with a Common Faith

PETER G. BOLT

The Anglican Communion is a loose network of Dioceses and their Churches which share some common historical links and contemporary associations. Thus, the relationship between Churches of the Anglican Communion is certainly a *structural* one. The much-discussed ‘unity’ of the Anglican Communion is often only at the level of these loose linkages and often proves to be a chimera as soon as it is closely examined.

Sometimes the New Testament word *koinonia* has been enlisted to describe the relationship between churches (or Dioceses, or Provinces) within the Anglican Communion. This should not be done too quickly, as it is a word applied by the New Testament to local churches – not Dioceses or Provinces or International confederations. Nevertheless, after bearing this proviso in mind, the New Testament concept of *fellowship* does hold some important lessons for the current controversies, as well as something of a model for how we who operate within the Anglican Communion may do so in a more helpful manner.

New Testament Fellowship

If we simply deal with the noun itself, the word *koinonia* occurs nineteen times in the New Testament.

1.1 Fellowship in Christ

When individuals put their faith in Jesus Christ, they are ‘called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord’ (1 Cor. 1:9). The Christian meal, by the eating of which believers ‘proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes’ (1 Cor. 11:26), is a ‘*participation* in the blood of Christ’ and a ‘*participation* in the body of Christ’ (1 Cor. 10:16) – both times: *koinonia*. Paul is drawing upon the well-known practice of the Old Testament period, in which those who sacrificed then ate the meat of the sacrifice and so expressed the fact that they had participated in the sacrificial means of dealing with their sins (cf. 1 Cor. 10:18). So, too, the Christian meal — although never a sacrifice itself — is an expression of the believers’ fellowship with Christ and especially with the death he died on their behalf to bring about the forgiveness of sins. Fellowship with Christ also entails *fellowship* in his sufferings (Phil. 3:10). This participation in Christ is, of course, only possible because of the ministry of God’s Holy

Spirit. This is summed up in Paul's now-famous doxology: 'The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the *fellowship* of the Holy Spirit be with you all' (2 Cor. 13:13).

Fellowship with the Christ who died and rose again on our behalf is basic. It comes about by belief in the apostolic word.¹ By this means we become one (i.e. share) with the Father through the Son by means of the Spirit. By this means we also become one with others who are united to the Father through the Son by means of the Spirit. According to 1 John, the apostles' role as eyewitnesses ('which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands [...]; we have seen it, and testify to it and proclaim to you [...]; that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you [...]', 1 John 1:1–3) is crucial for their hearers. The apostles proclaim the life that was made manifest to them (i.e. Christ) with a distinct purpose: 'so that you too may have *fellowship* with us' (i.e. the apostles), 'and indeed our *fellowship* is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ' (1 John 1:3). This is the way to fullness of joy (1 John 1:4).

The opposite is also true. When the Corinthians are tempted to leave their own apostle for the 'super-apostles', Paul rebukes them, asking 'Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what *partnership* (*metoche*) has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship (*koinonia*) has light with darkness?' (2 Cor. 6:14). His authority as the apostle to the Gentiles was so great that when Paul appealed to the Corinthians to be reconciled with himself, it was an appeal to be reconciled to God (2 Cor. 5:16–6:13). John makes the same point: 'God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say we have *fellowship* with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But, if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have *fellowship* with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin' (1 John 1:5–7).

1.2 Fellowship between individuals within a group of local believers

The three thousand-odd believers on the day of Pentecost 'devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and *fellowship*, to the breaking of bread and the prayers' (Acts 2:42). Here the *fellowship* is a sharing in meals, prayers, and even extended to the sharing of property (v.44–45; cf. 4:32–5:11).² The writer to the Hebrews also encourages his audience not to neglect doing good and *fellowship* (Heb. 13:16). This may be 'sharing what you have' (ESV), or it may be simply the practice of assembling together with all the benefits accruing to that activity (see Heb. 10:24–25). The Spirit of God is also behind this kind of fellowship (Phil. 2:1), which is enjoyed by local churches, that is, at the congregational level. To belong to a local church and experience its fellowship is truly to become a partaker in the things of the Spirit (compare Heb. 6:4, *metochous*).

Because fellowship is such a blessing, the exclusion from or removal of fellowship is actually the means of discipline. Although Christ's mission means that his people continue to associate with the people of the world, there are occasions when those *within* the congregation are to be disciplined by this means (1 Cor. 5:9–13). Those who do not share the same fellowship with Christ, by not believing the apostolic word, or not shaping their life by that word, or by ignoring the apostolic instructions about appropriate order in the congregation (1 Cor. 14:37–38), are not to experience the joy of Christian fellowship. This has a protective function for the church itself, but when the removal of fellowship is felt to be necessary, it ought to be done for the sake of the person so disciplined. Given the terrible prospect of the coming judgment of God, it is preferable that this congregational 'judgement', although painful, might produce repentance in the person so they can return to the fold (see 1 Cor. 5: 2 Cor. 7).

¹ See further, the essay by Bill Salier, Chapter 12. ² Acts 2:44 and 4:32 use a cognate to *koinonia*, 'they had everything in common (*koina*)'.

When Paul writes to the Philippians he speaks of their ‘partnership (*koinonia*) in the gospel from the first day until now’ (Phil. 1:9). The Philippian church had been involved in the apostles’ ministry of preaching the gospel to the nations. Their involvement included preaching the gospel themselves (1:12–18), supporting the apostle financially (4:10–19; using the verbal form, *koinoneo* [4:15]), and releasing some of their own members to work alongside Paul in the gospel work (2:25–29).

Thus, congregational fellowship then spills over to fellowship between churches.

1.3 Fellowship between churches

The impression gained from the New Testament, is that the earliest churches were very aware of the links between them. At the most basic level, they were bound together by Christ, whom they had received when they believed the gospel that they also held in common. The apostles had delivered their eyewitness testimony to Jesus, and as the Spirit worked his work of power through the apostolic word (see 1 Thessalonians 1:5; 2:13), this gospel message now shaped the lives of the churches. Each of the churches now had the central features of life in common: ‘one body and one Spirit [...] one hope [...] one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all’ (Eph. 4:4–6). Because this commonality was a feature of each congregation, the congregations located in the various cities and towns and regions of the first century also shared these things in common. So Paul can speak of the ‘*fellowship* of (the) faith’ that binds Philemon to other believers (Phm. 1:9, my own translation).

This common faith, in which each congregation found its unity (as a fact of life, to be maintained [Eph. 4:3], rather than striven after), was then expressed towards those who also shared it, in very practical ways. The various prayers of the New Testament are evidence of a rich life of prayer on behalf of fellow Christians at a distance. The letters also reveal that congregations showed a vital interest in the work of the gospel in other regions, through other congregations. Sometimes, as with the church at Philippi, this interest was expressed through the provision of gospel workers to assist in Christ’s mission in their area.

Sometimes this is specifically the sharing of money. So, when Paul tells the Romans that ‘Macedonia and Achaia have been pleased to make some *contribution* for the poor among the saints at Jerusalem’ (Rom. 15:26, ESV), he uses the word *koinonia* (compare Phil. 4:15, see above). Here he is referring, of course, to the collection from the Gentile churches for the needs of the saints, that is, the Jewish believers in Jerusalem. When Paul and Barnabas were given ‘the right hand of fellowship’ by the apostles to the Jews (Gal. 2:9), ‘in order that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised’, they were also asked to remember the poor (2:10), that is, the poor amongst the Jerusalem church. Paul himself was eager to do something for ‘the saints’, and set about to organise the famous collection. This collection occupied the apostle’s attention more than once in his letters. It was not simply some kind of redistribution of wealth, but, in Paul’s mind, it represented a material expression of thanksgiving from the Gentiles for the spiritual blessing they had received from Christ by way of the Jewish Christians. Jesus was the Jewish Messiah, and the twelve apostles (plus Paul) were the ‘new Israel’ who brought the gospel of forgiveness to the nations. Once converted to Christ, the Gentiles then expressed their fellowship with Christ, and with each other in Christ, by giving their concrete *fellowship* to the Jewish Christians. In fact, the Macedonians begged ‘for the favour of taking part in the relief of the saints’ (2 Cor. 8:4 ESV – literally: in the favour and fellowship of the ministry towards the saints), that is, of giving their money to their Jewish brethren. As Paul seeks the same kind of generosity from the Corinthians, he promises them that this will be an experience of God’s grace for them as

others are led to praise God for their *contribution* (2 Cor. 9:13).

Although it may not be exactly analogous to the 'discipline' that is administered within a congregation, it is logical and natural to see that this kind of extra-congregational fellowship will not be extended to congregations or movements that are not like-minded. The congregation at Ephesus, for example, did not take an interest in, pray for the work of, provide workers for, or pay for, the ancient magical practices and guilds of the city, if the story of Acts 19 is anything to go by. Congregations will express their good will and all it entails, towards those who are 'on the same page' as themselves, and not towards those who are not.

Fellowship Between Churches with a Common Faith

This gospel-shaped fellowship ought to be the pattern in today's world too. The basic *koinonia* from which all else springs arises from the apostolic faith by which we are joined to Christ. Congregational life arises from this spiritual connection to Christ and to each other. Relations between Churches with a common faith are built by a common love of Christ and his people, and a desire to see his gospel proclaimed far and wide. Practical expressions of our common faith would be genuine interest in the progress of the gospel, prayer support, money, provision of gospel workers/ ministers.

Associations of congregations (i.e. denominations) may formalise these relations to some extent, but denominations should work hard to continue to strengthen and maintain the power of the local congregations, for this is where true fellowship is found. The 'centre' is always the local congregation, not the denomination. The 'top' is always the local church, not the denominational officials. It is difficult for denominations not to take on a life of their own, but every effort should be made to do so.

There are different patterns and practices around the globe, but, given the true centre (theologically speaking) ought to be the congregation, then the best-case scenario is when the local congregation controls its own property, selects and pays for its own ministry, and the associations of congregations (i.e. the synods) protect the rights and responsibilities of the parishes, and ensures the congregations will continue to thrive (through the provision of ministers trained in the apostolic faith, for example, and structures that will ensure that the teaching of the apostolic word will continue for perpetuity). It seems to be an appalling situation, for example, where a congregation can be locked out of its own buildings, because it continues to believe the faith of the forebears who bequeathed this property so that future generations might propagate the same faith as them. Surely the best Christian lawyers in every land ought to be doing their homework so that the way might be found for the law to be used to protect real people against amorphous institutions.

Once a denomination has formed, time may see congregations within it, or structures set up by it, moving away from the apostolic faith. When this happens, the membership operates on two levels: that of the structures, and that of true Christian fellowship. Since it is a common apostolic faith that enables true fellowship, then this can be enjoyed with other congregations who share that faith, but who are not part of the same denomination. On the other hand, those within the same denomination may not actually share true fellowship, due a departure from apostolic faith, morality, or order.

At base, the Anglican Communion, in its basic formularies, is committed to a unity in the apostolic faith. This is certainly the case in Australia, as the Fundamental Declarations and Ruling Principles clearly show. When these are breached, then communion is automatically

breached. It may take a while for the formal association between congregations to 'catch up' with this breach, but the true fellowship between churches has been broken at the point of departure from the apostolic faith.

As the denominational structures 'catch up' with the breach that has already occurred, associations between churches who share the apostolic faith will continue. Within the Anglican Communion, this may mean the crossing of previous boundaries based simply on geography. True Christian fellowship does not follow geographical contours, but it follows the contours of a common faith in Christ, and a faith, morality, and order defined by the apostolic teaching.

Fellowship with the Father, through the Son; issues in fellowship within the congregation by the Spirit; and this issues in fellowship between congregations in a common faith.

Ignoring the Real Problem

MARTIN FOORD

Introduction: A Tale of Two Teams

Imagine a soccer team and basketball team run out into an arena to play against each other. *The Windsor Report* is like giving advice about ‘fair play’, while ignoring the real problem: *the two teams are playing different games*.

The Anglican Communion is experiencing a clash between incompatible religions that exist within it. The visible issue over which these mismatched teams are divided is homosexuality. But homosexuality is only a manifestation of the deeper fundamental differences. One team believes that it is not only important but also *necessary* to bring practising homosexuals into the episcopate. It is so necessary they are willing to press ahead without proper consultation. The other team believes that Christianity itself will be destroyed if homosexual practise is affirmed, not simply for clergy, but at all. The differences between the two teams are immense.

Many tell us that our differences are Anglicanism’s glory. But legitimate differences cannot exist where there are no universal rules by which to play. Differences are only seen when legitimate boundaries provide the markers of judgement. A tennis player’s unique style is seen when he or she plays within an agreed set of rules. The Anglican Communion is struggling to find an agreed set of rules by which to function and until they do, squabbling will continue. This paper examines not so much the advice *The Windsor Report* gives, but the method it uses to get there—the rules of play.

1. *The Bondage of Ambiguous Language*

The Windsor Report will satisfy neither team because of its ambiguous language. Much of the problem stems from the tradition begun by Friedrich Schleiermacher who sought to *redefine* traditional theological terminology. For example, although according to historical definition Schleiermacher was an Ebionite, he *redefined* the term ‘Ebionite’ and declared himself not to be one. Schleiermacher dislodged the term from its historical moorings and invested it with new meaning.¹ Moreover, Schleiermacher redefined Christian doctrine itself. It was no longer a set of truths about God but about religious experience. This way of redefining both theological terminology and doctrine itself has enabled Christians to produce written statements that cover up irreconcilable belief systems.

An example of this phenomenon is the Primates’ statement of 16 October 2003. All signed it, but Archbishop Griswold pressed ahead with the consecration of Gene Robinson, much

¹ Schleiermacher, *Christian Faith*, 99. A similar move can be seen in John Henry Newman’s famous Tract 90 (1841).

to the bewilderment of other Primates. How could the Primates sign an agreed statement and then proceed to act in opposition to each other? What makes this possible is the ambiguous redefinition of words.

The Windsor Report smooths over the real problem using vague terminology. It contains many theological statements, but nowhere are we told whether the doctrines stated are statements about an objective God or subjective religious experience (or anything else). This then renders all theological discourse in the report ambiguous. For example, when it comes to the authority of Scripture we read statements like:

Within Anglicanism, scripture has always been recognised as the Church's supreme authority, and as such ought to be seen as a focus and means of unity. (par. 53)

Scripture itself, after all, regularly speaks of God as the supreme authority. When Jesus speaks of "all authority in heaven and earth" (Matthew 28:18), he declares that this authority is given, not to the books that his followers will write, but to himself. Jesus, the living Word, is the one to whom the written Word bears witness as God's ultimate and personal self-expression. (par. 54)

But the two incompatible teams could both say a hearty 'Amen' to such statements when read through their own belief systems. Ultimately the redefinition, and ambiguous use of theological terminology fosters an illegitimate and illusory unity. Words themselves are only symbols that point to a specified meaning. It is not unity to agree on the symbols but not the meaning to which they refer.²

2. Agreeing on Common Rules

If the Anglican Communion is to properly address the current crisis, then there must be clear rules of play. *The Windsor Report* tells us that there are two elements that make up the Anglican Communion: Catholicism, or the historic core of common Christian belief and practise; and Anglicanism, the unique tradition the Communion possesses. Hence any ground rules from which to proceed must derive from these two elements. Unfortunately *The Windsor Report* is unclear concerning both.

3.1 Catholicism

We read that Anglicans recognise the existence of 'core doctrines' (as opposed to *adiaphora*) and 'central truths' which have been 'confessed by Christians from the earliest days' (pars. 36 and 55). But what does this mean? In reality can the leaders of the Anglican Communion truly affirm a 'core' or 'central set of beliefs'? This is the issue of *Catholicism*. What are the beliefs that make the Anglican Communion truly Catholic, that is, historically Christian?

One answer might be the affirmation of the Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral that the ancient Nicene Creed is the 'sufficient statement of the Christian Faith'. In other words the Nicene Creed contains core Catholic belief. But, again, can the leaders of the Anglican Communion affirm the truths therein? Of course, many will be able to agree with the Creed by redefining its statements to fit their theological agenda. But to change the meaning of the words is to

² What is interesting is that amidst its ambiguous language *The Windsor Report* charges those who spoke of 'impaired', 'fractured', or 'restricted' communion, and 'degrees' of communion (par. 50) with using 'imprecise' language!

change beliefs. In doing this, the real issue of core *beliefs* is by-passed.

If the Nicene Creed is to have any use its meaning must be derived from its historical context. But how many Anglican leaders could affirm the historical meaning of the Nicene Creed? A recent survey of Church of England clergy shows the problem with using the Nicene teaching as a common creed. Here are the percentages of those who could affirm certain truths in the Apostles and Nicene Creed:³

Statement	Male Clergy %	Female Clergy %
<i>I believe in God the Father who created the world</i>	83	74
<i>I believe that Jesus Christ was born of a virgin</i>	58	33
<i>I believe that Jesus Christ physically rose from the dead</i>	68	53

What then is the common creed Anglicans confess? What are the ‘core doctrines’ to which *The Windsor Report* refers? What then makes the Anglican Communion truly Catholic? How then can we affirm the Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral, if in fact we don’t all believe it?

If our leaders can’t all affirm the historic teaching of the Nicene Creed, how possibly can *The Windsor Report* then conclude that certain Archbishops, who offered Episcopal oversight to parishes in ECUSA, contravened:

some of the longest-standing regulations of the early undivided church (Canon 8 of Nicaea). (par. 29.iii)

Why hold Archbishops accountable to the Nicene canons⁴ but not the Nicene Creed? This is methodologically incoherent.

Until the Anglican Communion can ascertain what their common beliefs are, their Catholicism, it is doubtful that the immense theological tension over homosexuality will be resolved. Without an agreed set of core beliefs the communion cannot together ascertain what is important or *adiaphora*. Hence when it comes to the Anglican Communion as being Catholic, *The Windsor Report* does not address the real issue: incompatible religions in one communion as manifest in the disagreement about homosexuality.

3.2 Anglicanism

When we turn to the issue of ‘Anglicanism’ *The Windsor Report* also falters. We read that the Anglican Communion draws on a tradition that:

encompasses the ancient Celtic and Saxon churches of the British Isles, and which was given fresh theological expression during the period of the Reformation in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. (par. 47)

And then we read statements about Anglicanism like this:

It has always been maintained within Anglicanism that a bishop is more than simply the local chief pastor. (par. 64)

³ The figures are in Low and Gardom, *Believe It or Not!*, cited in Atherstone, ‘Incoherence’, 240. ⁴ The report’s understanding of Canon 8 is questionable. On this Canon, see further the essay by David Höhne in this volume.

This may be true but how has this conclusion been determined? Within the Anglican tradition there is a wide spectrum of belief about Episcopal government. How do we determine what to include and what to reject?

Many studies on 'Anglicanism' pick and choose quite arbitrarily from our common past.⁵ *The Windsor Report* appears to do the same. For example, the reformers appealed to the ancient English Church to show that the Pope had not always ruled English Christianity. But the reformers also appealed to many other parts of the Catholic Christian tradition to prove this and other points. So why does *The Windsor Report* assert that the 'ancient Celtic and Saxon churches' have a special place in the Anglican tradition? Much of the problem lies in anachronistic understandings of Anglicanism in history. In the 16th and early 17th century one cannot speak of a 'clear-cut entity identifiable as "Anglicanism"'.⁶ Moreover, concepts like the Anglican *via media* simply cannot be read into the 16th and 17th century history of the Church of England.⁷

If the Anglican Communion is to address the deep problem in its midst then it needs to be clear about what the rules of Anglicanism actually are. *The Windsor Report*, unfortunately, fails to help us here.

4. Conclusion

Homosexuality is not the real issue, it is the manifestation of a deeper problem: the collision of irreconcilable belief systems within the one institution. Until this is frankly faced and dealt with major squabbles will continue. Unfortunately, *The Windsor Report* through ambiguous language, and ill-defined notions of Catholicism and Anglicanism, fails to address the real problem at hand.

⁵ A good example is More and Cross, *Anglicanism*, where one set of 17th century theologians are examined to the curious neglect of others. ⁶ Wallace, *Puritans*, 71. Even Hooker's important *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* failed to resolve the issue. His prominence as a spokesman for 'authentic Anglicanism' is a product of nineteenth century revisionism. ⁷ See Tyacke, *Aspects*, 164–170, 180–89.

Towards a Realigned Anglicanism¹

DAVID SHORT

In recent Anglican reports, what is feared above all else is a declaration by some Anglicans that they are ‘out of communion’ with others.² This appears to ignore a major aspect of the New Testament view of *koinonia*. Alongside fellowship with God and fellowship with other believers, in the work of God, there is also the notion of the *avoidance of fellowship* with the works of darkness. The NT does not speak of levels of communion but simply of having, or not having, communion.

Anglican polity by design and inclination traditionally gives wide room for disagreement. When it comes to non-essentials this ‘comprehensiveness’ allows for a right humility and charity. However, when an official body, such as a diocese, intentionally *constitutionalizes* what Scripture describes as sin, it creates a fork in the road. It is no longer possible for biblically orthodox Anglicans, lay, ordained or consecrated, to have communion with that body, since the platform for belonging and associating has changed from the historic revealed faith, to something which officially approves, recognizes and promotes sin. Any body that promotes or legitimizes same sex unions has effectively removed itself from the fellowship of the gospel, and from the catholic and apostolic faith.

This explains why, in response to the recent actions in the USA and Canada, African and Asian primates have declared communion ‘severed’. The realignment they are calling for will have profound implications for global Anglicanism.

a. Structures

Koinonia is largely responsible for generating denominations. Local congregations are the primary vehicle for expressing true *koinonia*, yet denominations (i.e. associations between churches) also arise as Christian people express their fellowship in the Spirit beyond their own congregation. The benefits of such associations are obvious; establishing a platform for mutual recognition and ministry, combining resources to train gospel ministers, deploying and resourcing mission enterprises, administering nurture, accountability and support. Sadly, denominational structures that may originally have been created to protect and promote gospel ministry and *koinonia* gradually become mistaken for *koinonia* itself. But, when operating best, structures support local congregations by promoting gospel initiative and facilitating *koinonia*.

¹ This is an edited extract from a paper written in May, 2004, ‘A Crisis in *Koinonia*: Biblical Perspectives for Anglicans’. ² See both the Eames report and the Virginia report. [Editors’ note: This is also apparent in *The Windsor Report*.]

However, we must ask what happens when structures are being used to support what they were created to oppose, and to oppose what they were created to support? What if, instead of expressing and facilitating *koinonia*, they become instruments to coerce compliance in the works of darkness? What do biblically orthodox Anglicans do when their diocese and bishop promote, vote and proceed with something contrary to the revealed will of God? The apostle Paul tells us: he calls for disassociation (see 1 Cor. 5:9–11).

Clearly, if revisionist bishops and dioceses continue calling themselves ‘Anglican’ it is a delusion to describe the global Anglican body a ‘communion.’ It will be something else. Without a structural realignment Anglicanism will become a confederation of irreconcilable congregations, or two or more competing communions. This will require overlapping or parallel jurisdiction by bishops, with neither jurisdiction fully able to recognize the legitimacy or integrity of the other. This is not ‘schism’, if we recall that: ‘The schismatic is the one who causes the separation, not the one who separates’.³

For realignment to proceed there needs to be some willingness on both sides. It is vital for biblically orthodox Anglicans to receive international recognition and for congregations to retain the right to decide which communion they affiliate with and to own and dispose of the properties they have paid for and now steward. Biblically orthodox Anglicans need to seek to build a generous, diverse platform that will serve the gospel by serving congregations and preserving NT *koinonia*. This entails contending for the faith once for all delivered to the saints, with a generosity of spirit and the hospitality, grace and kindness of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Some have used the language of a marital separation leading to divorce, with the consequent division of assets. This will be viciously opposed by those who have elevated structures to the place of the gospel. Regrettably, the same biblically revisionist bishops and bodies of authority in the USA and Canada who have demonstrated a zeal for altering fundamental doctrines, have also demonstrated an irresistible intransigence to any form of structural change. Litigation, the assertion of diocesan property rights, threats to clergy licenses by liberal bishops are thinly veiled exercises of coercive power, censorship and control. A realigned Anglicanism must reverse this centralization of control by empowering congregations to decide ministry succession, how and where ministers are trained, and for there to be an amicable property settlement. Certainly congregations cannot accept the spiritual oversight of a bishop who is out of communion with the catholic and apostolic faith.

b. Money

One of the most prominent expressions of *koinonia* in the NT is the willingness to share financial resources. Whether this is within the local congregation (Acts 2:44, 4:32), or beyond (2 Cor 9:13; Rom. 15:26, 27), giving money is more than a calculated act of charity, it is a demonstration of spiritual partnership, of *koinonia*.

This connection between money and fellowship implies that biblically orthodox Anglicans cannot contribute financially to bodies that approve the blessing of same sex unions. If same sex behavior is contrary to God’s will, and if we are warned not to have *koinonia* with the unfruitful works of darkness, and if contributing finances is a key expression of *koinonia*, it is impossible to see how funds given by orthodox congregations can be paid to revisionist bodies for revisionist projects. A second implication is more

³ Ryle, *Charges and Addresses*, 69, quoted in Packer, *Faithfulness and Holiness*, 50.

difficult. The Anglican leaders who have been clearest and most outspoken for biblical orthodoxy are almost all from the global south. The differences in wealth and possessions between congregations in North America and those in Africa and Asia are staggering. Yet at great personal cost, in the face of tremendous opposition and suffering, bishops and primates from the global south have given extraordinary time and energy to love, care for, visit, defend, protect and inspire biblically orthodox Anglicans in North America. In return they have been vilified, dismissed and accused of being ignorant. They have demonstrated themselves cheerful victims of astonishing prejudice, discrimination and intolerance by biblically revisionist leaders in the USA and Canada. Their care is a demonstration of true *koinonia*. A realignment of Anglicanism will require biblically orthodox Anglicans in North America to submit to the wisdom of global south leaders and to give generous, sacrificial financial support.

c. Mission

The NT reveals that there is a living and indispensable link between *koinonia* and mission. The events of the last few years have exposed two different missions, two different *koinonias* under the umbrella of Anglicanism. The issue of the blessing of same sex unions is symptomatic of the two missions. Liberals believe it is a gospel issue for them to affirm, approve and consecrate same-sex behavior as part of their mission: evangelicals believe it is a gospel issue for them to proclaim forgiveness and freedom in Christ from all sin, including homosexual conduct.

There are now two competing unities in Anglicanism: one regards Scripture as God's sovereign word written, the other as merely the repository of the symbols of our faith; one names Christ as the unique and only saviour of the world—meaning there is salvation in no-one else —, the other sees Christ as the unique saviour for them only. One sees mission primarily in terms of the proclamation of the gospel, of conversion to Christ from sin through repentance and faith, of lifelong growing discipleship, of presenting people mature in Christ for the last judgment. The other sees mission in terms of extending the church (meaning 'denomination'), of making the world a better place, of providing religious services, of helping people connect with their inherent spirituality, of affirming people in their lifestyle preferences, of boldly reflecting the cultural *Zeitgeist* of tolerance, pluralism and inclusivity.

The two missions are irreconcilable. There is no basis for true *koinonia* between them. You cannot throw a blanket of structural communion over two different gospels. For the sake of the true gospel, for the sake of true *koinonia*, it is time for Anglicans to realign. Jesus is still building his church.

Ancient Words on Embracing the Excluded

DAVID HÖHNE

In the foreword to *The Windsor Report*, the chairman of the Commission, Archbishop Robin Eames opens with the question, ‘What do we believe is the will of God for the Anglican Communion?’. The Commission was asked to consider

‘...ways in which communion and understanding could be enhanced where serious differences threatened the life of a diverse worldwide Church.’

This report aims to define the nature of communion for all Anglicans during the current crisis that has arisen in the Worldwide Communion due mostly to the actions of ECUSA and the Diocese of New Westminster. These actions are the consecration as Bishop of the openly homosexual Gene Robinson and the formalising of rites for the marriage of homosexual couples.

However, according to the report, these actions are not the only ones to bring disharmony to the worldwide communion. In the section headed, ‘Illness: The Surface symptoms’ (par. 29), the report refers to certain Anglican Archbishops entering parts of the Episcopal Church (USA) and the Anglican Church of Canada and ‘exercising Episcopal functions without the consent of the relevant diocesan bishop’. According to the report, such action ‘goes not only against traditional and often-repeated Anglican practice [...] but also against some of the longest-standing regulations of the early undivided church (Canon 8 of Nicaea)’. Reference to this ancient and mysterious law, it would seem, is meant to infer that breaches of denominational law are to be viewed with equal seriousness as the ordination of practising homosexuals and the promotion of such a lifestyle. This essay will briefly examine Canon 8 of Nicaea to consider, ‘ways in which communion and understanding could be enhanced where serious differences threatened the life of a diverse worldwide Church’.

The Council of Nicaea (AD 325) was the first great ecumenical gathering of the bishops called by emperor Constantine to deal with the Arian schism that all but engulfed the church of the Roman Empire. In addition to taking steps to solve the immediate crisis — the most notable being a first draft of what later came to be known as the Nicene Creed — the synod also set down a number of canons to deal with the life of both the church and individuals, addressing both order and morality.¹ Canon 8 of Nicaea reads:

Concerning those who used to call themselves pure (katharous), but are now coming to the Catholic and Apostolic church, it seems to the holy and great council that, since they

have been ordained (cheirothetoumenous), they ought to remain in the clergy. Yet first, they must confess in writing that they will agree to and follow the decrees of the Catholic and Apostolic church; that is, to be in communion with those who have remarried (digamois), and with those who fell away in the persecution, upon whom a time has been set, and a season determined for them to obey, in all things, the ordinances of the Catholic church. Therefore in villages or cities where they alone are found to have been ordained they shall remain in the clergy as either the bishop of the Catholic Church or presbyter associated with it. However, if there is already a Catholic bishop, clearly he is the one worthy of honour of bishop. The one called bishop, by those calling themselves pure, shall have the honour of presbyter, unless the Catholic bishop allows him to share the honour of the name. If this is not pleasing to the Catholic bishop, he should invent a place, either rural dean (chorepiskopou) or presbyter, for the other so that he is genuinely part of the clergy, in order that there are not two bishops in one city.²

Clearly it is the last sentence of this regulation that *The Windsor Report* is referring to, 'in order that there are not two bishops in one city'. Taken out of context, this canon could act as precedent for preventing two Bishops exercising jurisdiction in the same place. However, a little more attention to the details shows that this was, in fact, possible, since the Catholic Bishop may actually 'allow him to share the honour of the name'.³

Even more importantly, this Canon gave guidance for how to deal with schismatics who had decided 'to come in from the cold'.⁴ The 'pure' or 'katharoi' referred to the remnants of the Novatian schism that began in 251. Novatian was a Roman presbyter, who, after being passed over in the election of the Roman See, had himself consecrated as head of a rival church with its own bishops and presbyters, especially in the regions of the Eastern empire.⁵ The most notable characteristic of the Novatian sect was a strict refusal to accept those who had fallen away during the persecutions by Emperor Decian. The saying went, 'God might forgive, but his ministers might not absolve them'.⁶ In addition the Novatianists also forbade second marriages. They saw themselves as taking the hard line on matters and hence the name 'pure.' The purpose of Canon 8 then, was to lay down appropriate guidelines for how the separatists could be assimilated back into the Church. The latecomers had to promise in writing to uphold the ordinances of the Church and renounce their peculiar claims. In return they would be graciously readmitted to fellowship within the true Church. As a further sign of grace, those who had already been ordained would be allowed to retain their position amongst the community except at points where

¹ Luibheid, *Council of Nicaea*, 82, points out that Nicaea was not the first time such steps were taken. There is evidence of similar canons being established at pre-Nicene gatherings of bishops, 'By the time the council of Nicaea had come together there was therefore a well-established tendency for bishops to meet with the objective, among other things, of defining the norms which must guide the lives of individual Christians' (p.100). ² *Nicaea Canon 8*, Bright, *Canons of the First Four General Councils*, xi-xii. Unless otherwise stated all translations are my own. ³ The possibility of two bishops in the one place shows a certain level of flexibility in the thinking of the Nicene Fathers regarding order. L'Hullier notes that historically the West has tended to over-evaluate the significance of the Nicene canons due to the general acceptance of the creed. '[...]we must keep in mind also that conciliar canons were regarded more as guidelines than as strictly compulsory decrees,' L'Hullier, 'Ecclesiology', 119-120. Those canons that do refer to church order tend to focus on the recognition of the rights of pre-eminent Sees. Thus Canon 6 at Nicaea seeks to maintain the authority of Alexandria alongside Rome and Antioch; see Bright, *Canons of the First Four General Councils*; Chadwick, 'Faith and Order', 171-195; Luibheid, *Council of Nicaea*. ⁴ Basil of Caesarea makes a distinction between heretics and schismatics, namely that schismatics still belong to the church but have been involved in unlawful meetings. *Ep.188.1*. ⁵ Bright, *Canons of the First Four General Councils*, 30. See also Luibheid, *Council of Nicaea*, 106f. Luibheid is in basic agreement with Bright but is more circumspect in regards to the origins of the Novatian schism, 'For reasons no longer evident, this leading presbyter found himself at odds with the new pontiff, and went on to provoke a schism'. ⁶ Bright, *Canons of the First Four General Councils*, 30.

this might cause confusion – namely, if there were two bishops in the one place. The Council offers suggestions as to how any confusion could be dealt with, all the while seeking to maintain the dignity of those being assimilated.

It is here that the writers of *The Windsor Report* are to be commended for looking to the wisdom of the Church Fathers in times of trouble. It is most fortuitous that the wisdom of the ancients be included at this point in the life of the Anglican denomination with its stated reverence for tradition. For Canon 8 of Nicaea has much to contribute to the enhancement of communion. However, far from being a reprimand, it is an encouragement for separatists to show humility and the orthodox to show grace. For Canon 8 of Nicaea brings some tried and tested wisdom from across the centuries on how to deal with maverick members of the extended Christian community who, through matters of conscience, end up separating themselves from the greater fellowship. Both the Diocese of New Westminster and ECUSA are good examples of modern, in fact modernist, schismatics. For reasons of conscience (like the Novatianists) they have separated themselves from the rest of the worldwide communion. They have sought to be ‘pure’ to their modernist convictions, consecrating their own bishops and ordaining their own presbyters. They have adopted a ‘necessary’ stance in terms of their understanding of community life, especially in relation to the secular world. The result is that they stand in a ‘purer’ state as modern believers. The only difference between them and the Novatianists is that the latter chose to distance themselves from both church and society where the former have chosen as a matter of conscience to identify with society and consequently alienated themselves from the church.⁷

So then, the guidance of the Nicene divines may provide a way forward for the worldwide Anglican Communion. The schismatics — here read ECUSA and New Westminster — ‘must confess in writing that they will agree to and follow the decrees of the Catholic and Apostolic church’. Just as the Novatianists had to reverse their decisions regarding the *lapsi*⁸ and the second married, so too must the modern separatists reverse their decision regarding homosexual clergy and the blessing of same sex unions. In turn, the orthodox clergy should make room for them within their ranks, even to the point of sharing honours.

It is by no means a new thing for a Diocese to separate itself from the rest of the Church. The great Cappadocian Father, Basil of Caesarea, had to write several letters to bishops of other dioceses encouraging them not to withdraw from fellowship. Basil took the position that ‘no single community of people can survive without cooperation from others’.⁹

Truly, from our bodily constitution the Lord has taught us the necessity of fellowship (koinonia). When I look to these my limbs and see that no one of them is self-sufficient (autarches), how can I reckon myself competent to discharge the duties of life? One foot

⁷ Such a comparison may in the eyes of some to be untenable. Some might rightly argue that it is not possible to compare a split based on a ‘refining’ of Christian discipline, in the case of the Novatianists (*ibid.*), with a progressive stance on morality such as claimed by those who defend the actions of ECUSA. Some have sought to draw sharp distinction between the issues involved in current debates over human sexuality and the attitudes to morality represented by the writings of the Fathers; see Brooten, ‘Patristic Interpretations’; Petersen, ‘On the Study of “Homosexuality”’. Such efforts to legitimise the acceptability of homosexuality in modern life serve only to highlight the role of decisions of conscience in the present circumstance and therefore make the comparison with past schismatics all the easier. For a good case affirming the negative stance of the church Fathers towards homosexuality and the consequent applicability of the Fathers writings in such contexts, see D.F. Wright, ‘Early Christian Attitudes’. ⁸ The *lapsi* was the common term for those who had recanted their faith during persecution. ⁹ Fedwick, *The Church*, 114.

*could not walk securely without the support of the other; the grasp is made firmer by the fellowship of the fingers. In a word, of all that is done by nature and by the will, I see nothing done without the concern (sumpnoia) of fellow forces. Even prayer, when it is not united, loses its natural strength.*¹⁰

Christians have always faced challenges to their faith and practice. Churches have always struggled to find contextually appropriate ways of facing these challenges. In these post-modern times we do well to listen to the wisdom of those from previous times, whose perseverance in the grace of God largely accounts for the existence of churches today. If the writers of *The Windsor Report* want to maintain communion, then Canon 8 of Nicaea needs to be applied in terms of reintegrating schismatics into the Apostolic Faith, rather than reprimanding bishops for duplicating Episcopal oversight.

A Way Forward

PETER BOLT, MARK THOMPSON, ROBERT TONG

Without summarizing the previous contributions, this final chapter draws out some implications in order to point to a general way forward in the present situation.

Given the actions of ECUSA and the Diocese of Westminster, the rest of the Communion need to bear the following points in mind.

1. *The Windsor Report* has many problems, including legal, rhetorical, theological, and practical. In particular, it fails to fulfil two very important components of its mandate.
 - a. Despite being asked to report on ‘the legal and theological implications’¹ flowing out of the ECUSA and New Westminster situation, *The Report* does not deliver on this requirement. The essays of this volume hope to step into this breach, to provide some legal and theological input for further discussion. Despite having the character of ‘occasional pieces’, and despite the fact that the issues certainly deserve greater attention than was possible in the brief space of time given to the authors (given the constraints imposed by the pending February 2005 Primates’ meeting), the essays provide helpful insights that together mount a good case for a principled way forward that differs from that put forward in *The Windsor Report*.
 - b. *The Report* also fails to adequately recommend ‘as to the exceptional circumstances and conditions under which, and the means by which, it would be appropriate for the Archbishop of Canterbury to exercise an extraordinary ministry of episcopate (pastoral oversight), support and reconciliation with regard to the internal affairs of a province other than his own [...]’.² *The Report* did propose the provision of a Council of Advice to assist the Archbishop, and the Anglican Covenant is also designed to strengthen his hand, but still more could have been said. The fact of the matter is that the Archbishop of Canterbury already has all the power needed to respond to this situation, and there is much that he should have already done.
2. In regard to a view of the Anglican Communion, the ‘Realist’ position needs to be adopted, namely, that the Anglican Structures are not legal, and should not become so — even if this were possible. In this regard, the proposed Anglican Covenant is bound to fail.
 - a. Our ecclesiology is crucial in shaping an appropriate response. According to the New Testament, which ought to be our authority in these matters, the ‘church’ is the congregation of Christ’s people who gather on earth as an expression of the heavenly church gathered around the exalted Jesus.

¹ *The Windsor Report*, 8, item 1. ² *The Windsor Report*, 8, item 3.

- b. The Anglican Communion is an historical, voluntary association of Provinces, made up of Dioceses, which are, in turn, collections of congregations located in particular settings. These local churches are gatherings of individuals who have been drawn by the Father to the Son, through the preaching of the apostolic word, heard in the conviction of the Spirit. In terms of 'where the spiritual action is', it is not at the level of the structures of the Anglican Communion, it is at the level of the gatherings of faithful people around the pure word of God preached.
 - c. Although there is a certain sense in which it is perfectly correct to speak of the 'unity' of the Anglican Communion, it is incorrect to apply the biblical language about congregations to this amorphous association as if there is a direct transference. This 'over-theologizes' the Communion, and runs the danger of manipulating God's people, as well as creating expectations for a structure that are, in the end, almost certainly unattainable. The *koinonia* that is most basic is *fellowship* with Christ, and this only comes through the apostolic word. Thus, true Christian unity will only come about by being true to that apostolic word in both faith and practice (whether questions of morality or of order). The Anglican formularies (BCP, 39 Articles) recognize the priority of purity in doctrine and in life.
3. The so-called 'Instruments of Unity' have no legal authority and neither should they be pressed in this direction. They provide opportunities for mutual discussion, counsel, advice, and the like.
 - a. The gospel is not coercive, but it is persuasive, and our 'structures' should bear this in mind. If there is a continuing role for these Instruments, then it should be coloured by an absolute commitment to eschew coercion, in favour of persuasion. This commitment to persuasion assumes that it is belief that is to be central in this task, and that action will arise from belief.
 - b. The Instruments have all the power they need already to exercise this persuasive role. In fact, they may already have too much: witness, for example, the succession of reports that have been issued up to Windsor, which are treated by some as if they have some kind of legislative force; witness the increase in the number of meetings; witness the call (in some quarters, such as the Australian General Synod, 2004) for previously part-time Primates to become full-time, given the increased role of the Primates on the International scene (or so the argument ran).
 - c. The Archbishop of Canterbury already has the power to speak his mind, and he already has certain prerogatives that he could exercise, such as the right of invitation to attend meetings he convenes.
 4. *The Report* is wrong in suggesting a tightening up of the Anglican Communion and an increase in the powers of its various 'Instruments'. On the contrary, it is important that freer structural relations are promoted within the Communion. Any discipline that is necessary should be along New Testament lines, ie. the withdrawal of fellowship.
 - a. We do not want to encourage, or promote, any further body that thinks it has the right to speak on behalf of Anglicanism, passes resolutions or pronounces edicts, and who then seeks to enforce them. If anything, we need to reverse the creeping trend towards the kind of centralised structural thinking that has already arisen.

- b. The New Testament shows us that discipline is by means of the withdrawal of fellowship, and that this ought to be aiming at the repentance of the person or persons concerned. Thus, it is an act of grace — not of judgmentalism, or bigotry, or the like.
 - c. All levels of the Communion can exercise this withdrawal already – including the Archbishop of Canterbury and those bodies dependent upon his invitation.
 - d. If there is genuine repentance, then those who have withdrawn their fellowship should then be ready to receive the estranged back into their ranks.
5. Since the Apostolic Faith is the key item in the Christian agenda, there should be absolute clarity about whether a person stands for that Faith (delivered once for all time to the saints), or whether they do not. The desire for structural unity has made pretence of the real state of affairs. Deliberately misleading rhetoric, and the ambiguous language that occurs in Church politics, should be jettisoned once and for all. If Anglicans are so proud of their ‘diversity’, then it is time to be truly honest about it. Those who do not hold to the Apostolic Faith and who are prepared to say so, are being honest. At least then it becomes clear who is aligned with whom, and congregations can be clear about the true situation to which they must respond. Pretending to be united is of no help to anyone. If we are committed to the authority of the Scriptures, then, just as the Bible itself is clear and direct, we too need to be clear about what we believe.
6. Fellowship occurs between Christian individuals, and within congregations. A new ‘Anglican Covenant’ is not needed and would almost certainly fail anyway. What is needed is a renewed commitment to the Apostolic Faith in congregations all over the world. Liberalism has had a huge influence but it is on the way out. Our denomination is left the worse for its influence. But, if Australia is any indication, voices are proclaiming the complete disappearance of liberalism in the next twenty years.³ Congregations need to hear God’s word, believe it, and live it out in practice. Faith, morality, and order need attention. This attention to the Apostolic Faith ought to be supported and encouraged by the ‘instruments of unity’ in whatever way possible, and especially by local diocesan structures. Our bishops should see themselves as teachers, champions of the Faith delivered once for all to the saints, and express a new resolve to teach it, and to inquire after it in their Episcopal visitation. The real arena of action is the local congregation, as it provides a gathering to hear God’s word and to pray, so that Christian people all over the world might be instruments of God’s mission.
7. Congregations who hold to the Apostolic Faith in common will also express their fellowship between congregations in various ways. When one congregation perceives that another has departed from the Apostolic Faith, then there is no real fellowship with that congregation. Departure from the Apostolic Faith is a schismatic action and communion is broken once that action is taken.
- a. In the current crisis, many feel that this time has come. In one sense, there is nothing new in this crisis. It has commonly been recognised that communion has already been impaired, or even broken, by the ordination and consecration of women as priests and bishops, since this meant that there was no longer a common ministry.

³ Chislett, ‘Letter from Australia’.

- b. Those who have ‘offended’ by ordaining Gene Robinson or permitting the blessing of same-sex unions, have actually acted in accord with their own constitutional arrangements. The talk about their ‘breach of unity’, when this is understood as the breach of some *international structural* unity, is not the real cause of their offence. The real problem is the breach of *apostolic tradition*, i.e. the breach of what the Scriptures teach. True unity is a unity in the Apostolic Faith (as revealed in the Scriptures). When this is breached, this is schism. For *this* reason, they should be called upon to repent, to change their mind, and to re-embrace the apostolic faith and order.
 - c. This can be formalised within the Communion along the NT lines of the withdrawal of fellowship.
 - d. At the level of the congregations and dioceses, realignments are already taking place. Rather than such moves being condemned (as is clearly the case in *The Windsor Report*), they should be encouraged. In a situation where there is a departure by a Bishop (or a Synod) from the Apostolic Faith, his See is actually ‘vacant’, even if he still occupies the position structurally. Those churches who used to be under his care, and who continue to hold to the Apostolic Faith, cannot look to the schismatic Bishop for oversight. It is incumbent on churches still holding to the Apostolic Faith to establish links of fellowship, which may include the provision of ministry (perhaps including Episcopal oversight) and money, and encouragement in the work of the gospel. For the work of Christ’s mission must continue through the people who gather in local congregations, despite the failure at the episcopal or synodical level.
8. When elements of the Anglican Communion have broken with the Apostolic Faith, then the structures no longer correspond to true relationships of Christian fellowship. Those in the Anglican Communion may then have to operate on two levels. The structures of the Anglican Communion may continue to operate as forums for mutual discussion and reflection, but they should never pronounce in a final and binding way on issues of faith and conduct.
9. As to the details of the current ‘crisis’, the status quo should not be tolerated (as *The Windsor Report* suggests). That is, there needs to be a call for repentance, not just regret.
- a. The various instruments of the Anglican Communion should each call upon ECUSA and New Westminster to reverse the decisions made. The Archbishop of Canterbury and the Primates could speak out almost immediately, and, although inevitably later, the Anglican Consultative Council and the Lambeth Conference in due course. The offending parties should not be invited to the various meetings until the requested repentance and reversal is forthcoming.
 - b. Anglican congregations within the Communion should align themselves with like-minded congregations. This re-alignment will be along the lines of faith and order, not simply of geography or history. The various instruments of the Anglican Communion should seek to persuade Provinces and Dioceses to continue to act in a way that enhances the fellowship of the local congregation.
 - c. Whatever power the Instruments may properly yield, they ought to be used to protect congregations in peril because of their biblical stand. The instruments should also acknowledge and endorse those congregations who have taken their

stand in the Apostolic Faith against a hostile bishop, synod, or provincial administration. Likewise, those bishops who have already offered their services in response to requests from congregations in this situation, ought to be applauded by all four Instruments of Unity.

- d. In particular, the Archbishop of Canterbury must play a most important role in this whole process. Forthwith, he ought to acknowledge those congregations who stand for the Apostolic Faith as the ones who are in communion with his office. He needs no extra powers in order to do this now. If he stands with them, and makes this publicly known, this will enhance their public prestige and will further strengthen their position in regard to such matters as legal disputes over their property. This public acknowledgement by Canterbury has been too long delayed already and it ought to be done immediately.
10. The present 'crisis' in the Anglican Communion raises a most important question for all concerned. As we contend over what are deemed 'contentious issues', do we follow the world's agenda, or do we seek to change the world by proclaiming God's agenda? God has acted in his grace by sending his Son Jesus Christ to die and rise again on our behalf. This message is 'good news', and it is good news that powerfully transforms sinners into the image of the God's Son. As we contend, may we all contend for the faith delivered once for all to the saints.

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The Archbishop of Canterbury's commission has delivered *The Windsor Report*.



As one way out of the current 'crisis' within the Anglican Communion *The Windsor Report* seeks to strengthen the structures of the Communion in such a way as to give them almost quasi-legal force.

The Faith Once for All Delivered assembles a number of responses to Windsor and argues that Windsor's strategy has little chance of succeeding.

It is the responsibility of all Christian people to cling to the apostolic word, 'once for all delivered to the saints' (Jude 3). The apostolic word is the word of God. To depart from this word is to depart from God's form of faith and God's way of life. Jesus himself commissioned the apostles to tell the world about him. These men, whose word is now embedded in the New Testament, have all the authority of Jesus Christ and so of the Father who sent him. This is the word that we must cling to, lest we drift away (Heb. 2:4).

Our elders, ministers, and bishops have a responsibility to 'hold firm to the trustworthy word' (Titus 1:9). In their consecration, Anglican Bishops have taken responsibility to pass on faithfully the deposit of apostolic teaching, and to admonish and exhort others to do the same. To depart from biblical teaching is a severe dereliction of duty which has disastrous spiritual consequences for the people under their pastoral care. This is the serious nature of the contemporary 'crisis'.

This collection of essays responds to *The Windsor Report* from several directions: legal, rhetorical, and theological. They are written by Australian evangelicals, who share a common belief that the future of Anglicanism ought to be shaped more and more by 'the faith once for all delivered to the saints'.

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