THE ANGLICAN COMMUNION ON THE EVE OF LAMBETH

From

A Real Yet Imperfect Communion

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A theme such as the Anglican Communion in a series of lectures like these naturally raises interesting and important questions of history, distant and more recent, and of current issues in the life of the churches of the Anglican Communion. That history and those issues also invite consideration of some theological questions. Some of these theological questions are of common interest to Roman Catholics and Anglicans and some of them raise matters which are potentially contentious and highlight differences between our two communions. One of the striking changes in the last fifty years in the relationship between Roman Catholics and Anglicans has been the level of acceptance and fellowship between members of these two Communions which makes the raising of such contentious matters in this context not just possible but appropriate.

I propose to begin with a brief account of the spread of Anglicanism from the territory of England and then look at the present pattern of connections between the churches of the Anglican Communion.[1] That sketch provides the context for considering some of the current issues facing Anglicans and that in turn provides the opening for considering some theological matters.[2]

ORIGINS OF THE ANGLICAN COMMUNION

In 1784 the new bishop of Connecticut Samuel Seabury signed a *Concordate* with the three Scottish bishops who had ordained him bishop the previous day. This concordat established an Anglican Communion between Scotland and Connecticut, the first such international Anglican communion, which the Church of England would in a certain sense come to join.[3] However, this story of the origins of an

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[1] There have been a number of surveys of this history. Two standard accounts are , J Wand, The *Anglican Communion. A Survey*, London, 1948 and S Neill, *Anglicanism*, London, 1977. Two more recent accounts are W Sachs, *The Transformation of Anglicanism. From State Church to Global Communion*, Cambridge, 1993 and S Platten, *Augustine's Legacy. Authority and Leadership in the Anglican Communion*, London, 1997. Sachs is the most detailed and analytical, but very restricted in its view of the world wide reach of the communiion.

[2] There has been a increase in literature on Anglicanism in recent years. Two collections illustrate the trends, S Sykes and J Booty, *The Study of Anglicanism*, London,1988, and G Evans and R Wright, *The Anglican Tradition. A Handbook of Sources*, London, 1991.

[3] The document may be found in WS Perry, *Historical Notes and Documents*, 1874, pp238ff..

international communion of Anglicans goes back to the beginning of the seventeenth century.

On the 31st December, 1600, Queen Elizabeth granted a Charter to a company which came to be known as the East India Company. In 1614 the Company appointed five Chaplains to serve in the East Indies. "Thus began the Mission of the Church of England in India".[4] Some years earlier in 1585 English settlers established a colony at Roanoke Island. They named the colony Virginia after Elizabeth the Virgin Queen. In 1605 the same London company established a colony further north in Jamestown. The name of the Company was changed to the Virginia Company and in 1610 the Virginia martial law required colonists to gather together for Morning and Evening prayer, Sunday Worship and Sunday afternoon instruction in the Catechism. Clergy were to preside at the Services. The colonists saw their settlement in religious terms. John Rolf indicated that his marriage to the Indian, Pocahontas was "for the converting to the true knowledge of God and Jesus Christ an unbelieving creature".[5] Indeed the Virginia Legislature in 1619 declared that it was committed to the conversion of the savages. In the early days this missionary impulse had an eschatological intention. It was expressed in a sermon preached to the Company by John Donne based on Acts 1:8 in which the disciples were to preach to the ends of the earth. Donne urged on the members of the company that by preaching to the ends of the earth in their distant colonies they could add names to the Book of Life. The Managers of the Virginia Company appointed the Clergy who worked in their colonies for this end.

Because these various commercial enterprises had their headquarters in London, the Bishop of London took an interest in their activities. In 1689 the Bishop of London developed a system of Commissaries who would act as his representative in the various colonies for the supervision of the Clergy so distantly located from Episcopal oversight.[6] It was the initiative of one of those Commissaries, Thomas Bray in Maryland, that led to the establishment in 1701 of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel.

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[4] R Pritchard, *A History of the Episcopal Church*, Harrisburg, 1991, p.68
[5] Pritchard, p5
[6] The Preface of the 1662 Book of Common Prayer alludes to this situation in partial explanation for the inclusion of A Service for the Baptism of those of Riper Years, in that it "may be always useful for the baptizing of Natives on our Plantations, and others converted to the faith."

The great revival under the impulse of Whitfield in middle of eighteenth century led to a scattering of the previously local concentrations of different brands of Christianity. This renewal and changing pattern prompted called for a local episcopate in North America. Conventions of Clergy began, first in Pennsylvania, Delaware, and New Jersey in 1760 and later in New York.

However, the great turning point came with the American War of Independence in 1776. This dramatically changed the situation of Anglicans in North America and accelerated the activity of forming and holding conventions. In 1784 Seabury was consecrated in Scotland as Bishop of Connecticut by three non-juror Scottish Bishops using the 1549 Ordination Service. It was in this context that the *Concordate* between Scotland and Connecticut was established. In 1786 the British Parliament allowed for the Consecration of three bishops for the American church which enabled bishops to be consecrated for Pennsylvania, New York and Nova Scotia in 1787, with Virginia (1790) and Quebec (1793) following soon afterwards. After these initial consecrations the church in the United States maintained its independence of the English Episcopate but this was not true of Canada.

With the beginning of the nineteenth century new horizons opened up. Anglican clergy were serving mainly as Chaplains in various parts of the commercial empire of Great Britain. In the period 1800 to 1840 only six new bishops were appointed, three in India, two in the West Indies and the Bishop of Australia. However, in the thirty years between 1840 and 1870 forty-one new bishops were appointed, eight in Canada, one in India, two in the West Indies, ten in Australia, eight in New Zealand and the Pacific and ten in Africa, as well as, one in Gibraltar for Europe and. of course, the contentious bishopric in Jerusalem. From 1870 until the end of the century thirty nine new bishops were appointed from England for service in the colonies, twelve in Canada, six in India and the East, four in the West Indies and South America, five in Australia and twelve in Africa and nearby islands.

While it became clear that it was increasingly difficult for the English church to appoint Bishops under their old system of Letters Patent by the turn of the 20th Century Anglican churches were developing in their own independent way around the globe. That process was not without its difficulties and as early as the middle of

the 19th Century problems were envisaged as to how these churches should properly establish themselves and how they should maintain some kind of fellowship amongst themselves and with the Church of England. This is the period of an emerging family of churches.

After the Second World War, particularly under the influence of Archbishop Geoffrey Fisher, this process towards independent churches with their own provinces was encouraged and accelerated. Fisher's push to decentralise corresponded with post-war de-colonisation. This was the period of the emergence of a Communion of independent churches and provinces. That is the situation at the end of the twentieth century even though the more activist role of Archbishop Robert Runcie in travelling around the Communion encouraged ideas of coherence and directed attention towards issues of commonality and unity amongst Anglican churches.

PRESENT PATTERNS OF CONNECTIONS:

There have been a number of ways in which connections have been maintained amongst the churches in this Anglican family. There were clearly connections established in the missionary phase by the powerful missionary societies principally the Church Missionary Society and the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. Society officials often enjoyed an ambiguous relationship with local bishops and often exercised more power and influence over the direction of colonial churches than did those bishops. However, the principal organisational means of connection have been a series of meetings of various kinds apart, of course, from the connecting role of the Archbishop of Canterbury.

a) Lambeth Conferences.

In the 1850's there had been a number of suggestions made for holding a conference. Colonial churches wanted to clarify their legal position. There were calls from the United States particularly in regard to doctrinal matters, and also from Canada and Australia in regard to matters of governance. The call to settle issues of governance eased during the 1860's when it became quite clear that Letters Patent no longer had

force for the purposes of appointing colonial bishops where there were local legislatures with any kind of independence. However, issues about orthodoxy and the suggestion that the Church of England was about to revise the Canons of 1604 prompted calls from Canada for some means to provide for communication for common action in a Communion of autonomous churches. In 1865 the Canadian Provincial Synod proposed a Pan-Anglican Conference. In 1867 a group of colonial church men in London asked Archbishop Longley to convene a conference of all churches holding full communion with the United Church of England and Ireland. Invitations were sent our to a meeting to be held from 24-27 September 1867. The meeting was to discuss inter-communion between Anglican churches, the colonial churches and co-operation for missionary action. A number of bishops in England boycotted the meeting but none the less in September 1867 the first Lambeth Conference was held.[7]

In broad terms these Conferences have been held every ten years since. In 1867 there were 76 bishops present. In 1998 about 800 will attend. The 1948 Lambeth Conference was particularly significant. It was held in the shadow of the conclusion of the Second World War and in the same year as the formation of the World Council of Churches. It was much more directed to social questions and laid down a report on authority in the Communion which has had a significant influence on subsequent thinking. Only since 1978 has the Conference been residential. In this post-war period the Lambeth Conferences grew in size but diminished in popularity around the Communion. Sales of the Reports and Papers from the Conferences have declined throughout this period even though the number of bishops attending increased. It should be emphasised that these conferences have been strictly consultative only, and that by deliberate decision of principle.[8]

b) Anglican Congresses:

Two distinctive events took place in 1954 at Minneapolis and in 1963 at Toronto. These were the Anglican Congresses which attracted large numbers of lay people as well as clergy. Great numbers of people came and the second Congress was much

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[7] The resolutions of the first twelve Lambeth Conferences have been conveniently drawn together in R Coleman, *Reolutions of the twelve Lambeth Conferences 1867-1988*, Toronto, 1991.

[8] The point was made at the first Lambeth Conference in 1867, was repeated in 1920 and on other occasions, and most recently in *The Virginia Report. The Report of the Inter-Anglican Theological Doctrinal Commission*, 1996, for the Anglican Consultative Council, London.

more obviously less a western affair than was that in 1954. Bishop Walter Gray characterised the Anglican Communion in his introduction to the 1954 Minneapolis Conference Report in these terms:

> Today this church is established on every continent and among people of every race. The pattern of expansion has been that the new sections of the church, once fully formed, have been national in their organisation and autonomous in their government. There is no joint central executive or legislative body in the Anglican Communion. No one Archbishop or Bishop is supreme, and no national church has authority or jurisdiction over any other. A special position of honour is accorded to the Archbishop of Canterbury as head of the Primatial See of the Mother Church of England, and the test of membership in the Anglican Communion has traditionally been whether a diocese is in communion with the See of Canterbury. [9]

The Toronto Congress agreed to a document entitled "Mutual Responsibility and Interdependence in the Body of Christ." It called for dramatic changes in the relationships between the member churches and a commitment to the recognition that each is dependent upon the other.

> In substance, what we are really asking is the rebirth of the Anglican Communion, which means the death of many old things but - infinitely more - the birth of entirely new relationships. We regard this as the essential task before the churches of the Anglican Communion now". [10]

These Congresses have not been repeated though there is a proposal that another be held in the year 2001, or perhaps 2004.

c) Anglican Consultative Council:

In 1968 the Lambeth Conference passed a resolution calling for the establishment of an Anglican Consultative Council. All churches responded to the proposal positively and the first meeting of the Council was held in 1971 in Limuru. This Council contains representatives from all Provinces. The larger Provinces send three representatives, smaller provinces only one representative. The larger Provinces must send a Bishop, Priest and a Lay person, other Provinces are encouraged to send lay people. The ACC is the only Anglican Communion body which has a Constitution. Its Constitution is essentially to share information and offer advice. It is fundamentally a consultative body. It has been widely regarded as being in some

[9] J Howe, *Anglicanism and the Universal Church*, Toronto, 1990, p.81.

sense too small and there are currently proposals that it might be enlarged. It has met on average every two to three years.

An Executive Officer for the Anglican Communion had been appointed in 1960 and in 1971 this position was discontinued and a Secretary General of the Anglican Consultative Council took his place. The Secretariat of the Communion is essentially the Secretariat of the Anglican Consultative Council.

d) Primate's Meeting:

As early as 1878 the Lambeth Conference passed a Resolution encouraging the establishment of a Lambeth Consultative Body to assist the Archbishop of Canterbury in planning the Lambeth Conference Agenda. It met only occasionally during the 20th Century and was dissolved in 1971 with the establishment of the Anglican Consultative Council. A Primates Committee was established to assist in the preparation of the 1978 Lambeth Conference. The 1978 Lambeth Conference recommended that this group, made up primarily of Primates, should continue to meet though its purpose was not specified. The first meeting of Primates as a whole took place in November 1979, though its purpose was still not entirely clear.

It was to this group in 1986 that the presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church of the United States of America reported that he expected that his church might soon consecrate a woman to the Episcopate. The Primates' Meeting established a working party in order to assist discussion of this question at the 1988 Lambeth Conference. Clearly this issue was beginning to overlap with the proposal agreed to 1976 for the formation of an Inter-Anglican Commission to consider theological and doctrinal questions affecting the Communion. The Primates were beginning to stake a claim, indeed to take a lead in this area. Colin Craston reported in 1990 on this enhanced role for the Primate's Meeting.

> To their responsibility for guidance on doctrinal, moral and pastoral matters mentioned in the 1988 Lambeth Resolution 18 is added the apostolic role of leadership in the mission of the church, and their collegial oversight in the Communion is described as encouraging all that makes for unity and discouraging all that seriously undermines it.[11]

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[10] Howe, p.8.
[11] Howe, p235.

e) Archbishop of Canterbury:

The Archbishop of Canterbury has enjoyed a leading role in the Church of England particularly since Lanfranc deployed a range of political arguments and strategies to establish Canterbury's precedence over York. The Archbishop of Canterbury clearly has a dual role. He is the Primate of all England and he also has a recognised leadership role in the Anglican Communion. He is responsible for inviting bishops to the Lambeth Conference. It is essentially his Conference. He is also President of the Anglican Consultative Council and Chairs the Primates Meeting and he also presides at the Lambeth Conference. It is communion with the See of Canterbury that generally signifies membership of the Anglican Communion.

Leaving aside the occasional Anglican Congresses current discussion refers four organistational arrangements as instruments of unity. They are the office of the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Lambeth Conference, the Anglican Consultative Council and the Primates' Meeting. This latter Meeting has gained in significance and in the range of things it considers in the last fifteen years generally at the expense of the Anglican Consultative Council. These instrumentalities have recently been reviewed in an extensive report for the Anglican Consultative Council entitled "The Virginia Report". The Report has been commended for discussion in the Communion and no doubt will be considered in the next few years and at the Lambeth Conference in 1998.

CURRENT ISSUES

At the present time extensive preparations for the Lambeth Conference are in full-stream. It is clear that a number of issues are regarded as being important. The Conference itself will consider four themes; Called to Full Humanity, Called to live and Proclaim the Good News, Called to be a Faithful Church in a Plural World, and Called to be One.[12]

[12] A collection of essays on these themes has been published independently of the conference preparations, C Sugden and V Samuel, *Anglican Life and Witness. A Reader for the Lambeth Conference of Anglican Bishops 1998*, London,1997.

However, throughout these sections a number of themes emerge as of wide spread concern. How can a Communion of autonomous churches which seems to encourage diversity and pluralism continue to have a coherent sense of identity and some degree of unity. The pluralism and diversity issue of contemporary western culture appears in the life and discussion of the Anglican Communion. Allied to that question is the issue of authority. The 1948 Lambeth Report claimed authority was dispersed amongst the total membership of the church and was an authority not of coercion but of persuasion. That claim is widely accepted in Anglicanism. How it works in practice in a world-wide Communion of churches is an on-going question.

Liturgical changes in the last thirty years have also raised questions for many around the Communion. A view is emerging amongst Anglican liturgiologists that what is important is not so much a common identical liturgy, which no longer exists in Anglicanism, but a family resemblance between the eucharistic rites that are used in the Communion. That similarity probably does continue to exist though it would be difficult to be too certain what exactly was distinctive about this family pattern as compared with patterns in other churches.

How might the Bible properly be interpreted the modern world is an issue, especially in Latin America and Africa and also particularly in relation to sexual ethics. The relationship between Christian faith and Islam is felt particularly in Africa and may be illustrated by the changing position of Christianity and Islam in North African countries. For example in Nigeria the spread of the population between Islam Christianity and traditional religions has changed dramatically during the course of the twentieth Century in favour of Christianity. This change in the balance of the population in Nigeria between Christianity and Islam is also heightened by the changes within Islam since the early 1970's with the rise of a more militant forms of Islamic faith, and the availability of oil resources. It is, however, important to notice that there is no one pattern of relations between Anglican and Muslims. In the Middle East, for example, there is a significant degree of co-operation. It is also worth noting that there are more Anglicans in Nigeria than there are in either the United States or in England.

Besides these more general issues in Anglicanism there is clearly concern around the Communion about the developing pattern of the instruments within the Communion. The growth and the role of the Primates' Meeting attracts attention, but more particularly does the declining influence and significance of the Anglican Consultative Council. There is a critical issue at stake here . What is the Anglican Communion? Is it a church and ought it therefore to reflect in its organisational arrangements in an ecclesial polity which can be seen as identifiably Anglican. Historically that would be conciliar in character and, probably in the modern form, synodical, that is to say, a synod of bishops, clergy and laity. If however it is not conceived of as a church in that way then it does not necessarily follow that the instruments for connecting the independent autonomous churches in the Communion should reflect that Anglican polity. None the less, while it may not necessarily reflect such a polity at the global level, it remains the case that if this is a Communion of autonomous churches whose polity is of a certain kind. It would perhaps, therefore, be surprising if something like that polity or something akin to that polity were not visible in the instruments that hold together the international Communion.

My predecessor in office was widely experienced in these matters, chaired the Anglican Consultative Council and was involved in events surrounding the 1978 Lambeth Conference. In a speech given in Sydney in 1989 he reviewed these developments in the world wide communion and drew attention to the overshadowing of the ACC by the rising role of the Primates' Meeting and the Archbishop of Canterbury and the balance of time and resources away from the ACC to the Lambeth Conference and the bishops, tendencies he characterised as the 'vaticanisation' of the Communion. It is a sharp comment.

My point here is not to evaluate these recent institutional tendencies in the Anglican Communion but to draw attention to the need for a critical appraisal of them in the light of the long historical tradition of Anglican thought and practice.

Before leaving this topic I might draw attention to a line of argument which has recently been developing in some quarters in Anglicanism on this point. It comes to expression in the recent *Virginia Report*. The argument is set in the context of the growth of the Communion, and the increasing diversity of practice found within the

Communion. In favour of legitimating the more recent organisational arrangements in the communion, they are designated "instruments of unity". It is then argued that the principle that the "highest degree of the unity possible" should be applied. The effect of the argument is to enhance these communion wide organisational arrangements.

The whole report proceeds as if there are no other connections between Anglicans around the world which foster unity and communiion. In fact there is a myriad of informal and personal connections, networks, and diocesan partnerships which contribute enormously the the unity of Anglicans around the world. The report has a clerical and organisational focus which diminishes its value as a serious attempt to grapple with the nature of the Anglican Communion. The inadequate scope of the report and the application of the argument identified above makes for a potentially very misleading contribution.

There is a similar argument going on amongst Roman Catholics in relation to the application of the principle of subsidiarity to recent centralising tendencies in the church. The arguments are about similar things, but they approach the question from the opposite direction. The point of approach in each case reflects the fact that the institutional presumptions in these two traditions move in different directions.

Another theme which emerges as an issue around the Communion in the run-up to the 1998 Lambeth Conference is the nature and practice of episcopacy in the Church. There are different forms and different particular characteristics to the exercise of episcopacy in different churches around the Communion. Because Anglicanism has a bias towards indigenisation, at least theoretically, then it is entirely proper that episcopacy in the Church should in some sense be influenced by and relate to the cultural character of the society in which that episcopacy is being exercised. One might imagine therefore that a bishop in a particular cultural and social structure in Africa or Asia might be different from what exists in the Episcopal Church of the United States, or the Church of England.

In 1988 the Lambeth Conference addressed this question but the concern has not diminished. In western countries such as Australia it becomes a significant question where churches face huge cultural pressure to shape themselves in the image of

business corporations and thus bishops in the image of Chief Executive Officers. There are many in Anglicism who worry that this form of indigenisation simply erodes the nature of episcope not only for bishops but that it also deprives the church of that episcope or over-sight which, at least at the theological level, is regarded as of such great significance for the life and mission of the church.

The question of the basis upon which a church order of ministry operates arises in various parts of the Communion. For example the issue of lay presidency at the Eucharist has arisen in the horn of South America, England, Kenya, Australia and in Singapore. It arises in some places for practical reasons and in other places as part of a particular theological push. Both the practical and the theological challenges raise important issues about the nature of Anglican ecclesiology.

ANGLICANISM AND ROMAN CATHOLICISM WITHIN CHRISTIANITY:

One of the striking activities of Anglicans in the last 20 years has been the series of discussions and documents produced under the auspices of the Anglican Roman Catholic International Commission.[13] These have raised important questions and the Reports of ARCIC have not always won support from their respective church constituencies. The suggestion by ARCIC that the notion of a universal Primacy might be acceptable to Anglicanism did not win universal support amongst Anglicans, indeed it did not win very much support at all. On the other hand Cardinal Ratzinger indicated that infallibility and the Roman Primacy were, for the Roman Catholic Congregation of the Faith, part of the Gospel. Yet ARCIC envisages a coming together on this fundamental question.

However, one cannot but contrast the dramatic change in Anglican Roman Catholic relations. In 1849 the Bishop of Sydney in St James Church said the following:

> The existing circumstances of the British Empire now render it no less manifest, than it is set up to be a bulwark of that reformed and recovered Christianity which exhibits the genuine lineaments of heavenly truth; as it stood revealed before the corrupting taint of human invention and been mingled with the pure water of life; and aired the aspiring thought had been admitted of erecting a worldly dominion, under the guise of executing a

[13] The relevant documents are contained in C Hill and E Yarnold SJ, *Anglicans and Roman Catholics: The Search for Unity*, London, 1994.

> commission entirely of an unworldly character ... it's protest for ever recorded against the forced grounds of righteousness and hope for sinners which the system of the Roman Church seeks to substitute - and succeeds too well, it must be said, in substituting - for the genuine tenet of the Doctrine of Christ, Our Lord and Saviour, - that we are accounted righteous before God only for His merits, by faith; and not for our own works or deservings... The hope of the world I repeat is still bound up with the cause of the Reformation as it was undertaken and carried on within the Church of England.[14]

There are some Anglicans at the present time who share the convictions of Bishop Broughton and within the Communion of Anglican Christianity their voice cannot be ignored.

Yet, having said that, it remains the case that the dynamics of the international character of Anglicanism in the late twentieth Century do seem to have led in the direction of an enhancement of the role of a universal Primate in Anglicanism. One need only compare the attitudes of Fisher and Runcie to see the point. However it is one thing for the English Church Commissioners to pay for the Archbishop of Canterbury to travel around the world. It is quite another thing for such a trans - provincial notion of primacy to gain acceptance in Anglicanism. It has been part of my argument that such a notion is foregin to the tradition of Anglicanism.

An interesting aspect of this question is that a similar discussion is taking place amongst Roman Catholics. Current literature speaks of Papal power on the one hand, and Collegial primacy on the other. Precise circumspection of the formulation of infallibility is appealed to by Collegialists who stand somewhat in the spirit of Vatican II, while others draw attention to a tradition of juridical supremacy in the life of the Church for the Bishop of Rome.

What appears to me to be different is that the institutional presumption in the Roman Catholic Church tends in the direction of a centralised authority, whereas in the Anglican Communion the institutional presupposition tends in the direction of local autonomy. Furthermore in Anglicanism there is a more profound commitment to a conciliar conception of the Church, a conception which includes necessarily a significant role for the laity in church governance.

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[14] The English Reformation and the Empire of England, in WG Broughton, *Sermons on the Church of*

One of the striking features of the modern age is the degree to which diversity is seen to be encouraged yet at the same time authoritative even authoritarian power centres seem to emerge. Such a tendency ought not to surprise us since a radicalisation of pluralisms will inevitably lead to a different kind of community within which that pluralism exists. Furthermore, if that pluralism is more individualistic then in due course it will tend towards some form of centralisation of authority, some form of Leviathan. Both Roman Catholicism and Anglicanism have an interest in defending the human condition from such tendencies.

None the less it does seem to me that a comparison of Roman Catholicism and Anglicanism on this point highlights an issue for both Churches in relation to Christianity as a whole and our understanding of Christianity as a whole. It seems to me that Christianity has diversity and difference built into its very nature. From the very earliest days of the Church there has been difference, indeed conflict. It is, I believe, not possible to capture in one institutional tradition all of the diversity and richness of Christianity. Our own two institutional traditions capture to a greater or lesser extent different aspects of this multifaceted dynamic Christianity. The notion therefore of some ultimate organisational amalgamation seems to me not only to be doomed never to succeed but also to be inimical to the dynamism of Christian faith which comes from its richness and diversity.

Having said that, it seems to me equally to be the case that that diversity must in some sense be connected. There needs to be some sense of koinonia between these different institutional traditions. If this connection, or communion, is not vital then those institutional traditions are likely to corrode and fossilise. I believe we need each other but we need each other distinctly. It becomes therefore an important issue as to what kind of inter-communion is possible, or most helpful, between different institutional traditions within Christianity.

An inspection of the emergence of the Anglican Communion in the modern world simply draws attention to a modern example of what Peter Brown has called in relation to late antiquity " mini Christendoms".[15] The disinclination in western christianity to embrace the diversity implicit in the protestations of the Council of

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England: Its Constitution, Mission, and Trials, London, 1857, pp.57f.

[15] P Brown, *The Rise of Western Christendom. Triumph and Diversity AD 200-1000*, Oxford, 1996.

Constance provided the grounds for the organisational separations of the Reformation. Of course, there were many other reasons for the way in which that religious impulse combined with political circumstances to create a more fundamentally and obviously divided Western Christendom. Yet it remains the case that the reformatiion divisions are evidence for the the way in which the unity of Western Christianity was changing in a centralising and authoritarian direction.[16]

Despite these quite significant differences between our two traditions I want to suggest that they are not issues which create fundamental divisions. I also want to suggest that these differences can and should be used to advantage in the more vital and important imperative to which both our churches must respond, namely, the effective representation of the Gospel in the world in which God has placed us and in which he is effectively and providentially present. The order of the Church stands secondary to the mission of the Church and in that context the greater priority is to engage our society and our culture with the gospel. We will do that more effectively by a unity which is expressed in terms of complementarity than by one which demands organisational amalgamation. Such an approach will also be more faithful to our own traditions and to the Gospel. In such a context I believe that it is time for us to re-visit the rules which currently exist for inter-communion between our two churches. I believe that we ought now to be moving to a situation where not only do we recognise each other's stewardship of the gospel, but we ought to be recognising that the ministries and sacraments of our churches should be accessible to each other, that we ought to be able to visit each other and participate fully as guests.

Whether my judgement on that matter is correct or not is a matter for discussion or debate. What I feel is beyond debate in our present circumstances is that our obligations as Christian people in our modern plural society, fraught with so many challenges to genuine human existence, is to demonstrate by the character and quality of our Christian communities what a genuinely human existence might look like.

[16] See for example J Figgis, *Studies of Political Thought from Gerson to Grotiius, 1414-1625*, Cambridge, 1907,

CONCLUSION:

I have sought to outline something of the growth and spread of Anglicanism beyond the territory of England and the development of the character of the Anglican Communion at the end of the second millennium. I have argued that this process began back in the sixteenth century and I contend that it represents a form of Christianity which reaches back well beyond the sixteenth century. Furthermore, in the context of a series of lectures sponsored by Roman Catholic and Anglican bishops, I have argued that those two traditions each capture something significant in Christian faith which is important, indeed I would say vital, within the whole spectrum of Christianity. That difference can be a potent force in the mission of God and is not necessarily an inevitable hindrance to the Gospel. It depends on a complementary unity in the faith for it to help rather than to hinder. One part of that complementarity will be some form of inter-communion.

However, the point towards which this all moves is not just good relations between two ecclesiastical clubs. The point to which it moves is the degree to which a complementary unity between these two different traditions of Christianity serves a renewal of faith in our society, serves to affirm the social vocation of all the baptised in an increasingly hostile environment, serves the creation of Christian communities which demonstrate to our fellow citizens what a genuinely human experience is like, serves to make manifest in the midst of our neighbours the presence of the risen Christ.