

Appendix One : Reflections on the Instruments of Unity

The Anglican Consultative Council

- (1) Recent attempts to restructure the membership of the Anglican Consultative Council have foundered, partly on grounds of lack of finance, and partly because of a perceived imbalance between the orders of laity, clergy and bishops. This is particularly true of a suggestion that each province be represented on the Anglican Consultative Council by its primate. Some provinces in fact do this as a matter of policy, but ordinary membership of the Anglican Consultative Council is restricted to the duration of three ordinary meetings of the full Anglican Consultative Council, and then any primate so elected is forced to relinquish membership. The present membership of the Anglican Consultative Council could be made more effective, and more accountable, by being required to be drawn from those persons who have a voice within the highest executive body of each province. Members who ceased to hold such office while serving as members of the Anglican Consultative Council would be required to stand down and be replaced unless that member church made other arrangements. Such a requirement would allow for greatly improved mutual accountability and a sense of responsibility between the Anglican Consultative Council and each province. Should the Anglican Consultative Council move to assume a more synodical role, its authority would be strengthened if the episcopal house were to consist of the primates of the Communion.

- (2) The role and frequency of meetings of the Primates' Standing Committee and the Standing Committee of the Anglican Consultative Council need to be regularised. The members of the Anglican Consultative Council Standing Committee are currently the trustees of the funds of the Anglican Communion, with charitable status conferred under the laws of the United Kingdom. As such the Anglican Consultative Council Standing Committee has to make some decisions which carry financial implications quite independently of the Primates' Standing Committee, even though the two bodies generally meet as one 'Joint Standing Committee'. If the Primates' Meeting is to continue to meet on an annual basis, it would seem that the Joint Standing Committee of the primates and the Anglican Consultative Council should meet in close proximity, in order to allow for clear communication and understanding. If this is so, the Commission takes the view that the Constitution of the Anglican Consultative Council should be amended to ensure that members of the Standing Committee of the Primates' Meeting become members *ex officio* of the Anglican Consultative Council, and in turn become also members *ex officio* of its Standing Committee, and trustees of the Communion. This would give structural and constitutional reality to the present arrangements of meeting annually, but with unresolved questions of differing responsibilities.

The Lambeth Conference

- (3) It will help the life of the Anglican Communion if there is a clearer understanding of the ecclesiological foundations of our life as Anglicans and in particular of our theology of episcopacy and its relationship to both its local context and the wider

communion. The much-used phrase that we are “episcopally led but synodically governed” fails to explain adequately the relationship between the exercise of episcopacy and synodical government within and between provinces and begs the question as to what are the boundaries between leadership and governance. In clarifying this it might then be possible to reach agreement on the nature of ‘corporate episcopacy’ and the extent to which bishops meeting at Lambeth provide worldwide leadership, and on the nature of their authority over their own and other provinces of the Communion. While the decisions of Lambeth Conferences do not have canonical force, they do have moral authority across the Communion. Consequently, provinces of the Communion should not proceed with controversial developments in the face of teaching to the contrary from all the bishops gathered together in Lambeth Conferences. This might go to the heart of receiving what was said about synodality in *The Virginia Report*.¹⁰⁶ It is a fact that just as bishops of a particular province meet together from time to time to take counsel together as guardians both of the unity and teaching of the Church, so too bishops in the past have come together in council to give leadership to the Church on important issues. The Lambeth Conference follows this tradition.

- (4) Whilst this Commission does not wish to bring forward proposals to change the formal status of resolutions of the Lambeth Conference, we would like to suggest that there should be some level of distinction between different kinds of motion at the Conference. It might be helpful if there were a special category of Lambeth Resolutions which could be stated to “touch upon the definition of Anglicanism”, or upon “the authentic proclamation of the Gospel”; these motions could be subject to a distinctive procedure to demonstrate their differentiated status, and therefore for the special attention of the Communion. Clearly some process would need to be established whereby such issues could be identified. Such motions would also require a clear process by which they could be adopted - the extended consideration of the whole conference; to require an increased majority for passing or to trigger stated methods of reception, in order to be seen as the definitive teaching of the Anglican Communion.

The Primates’ Meeting

- (5) The Commission is convinced that the Primates’ Meeting should continue to provide an important element in the life of the Communion as the body which affirms the resolutions of the Lambeth Conference in the life of Anglicanism. In that respect, the Primates’ Meeting should serve formally as the Standing Committee of the Lambeth Conference and as such should monitor developments in furtherance of resolutions of the Lambeth Conference in addition to the process of reception. This will allow the Primates’ Meeting to begin the enhanced responsibility which successive Lambeth Conferences have recommended. It should be a primary forum for the strengthening of the mutual life of the provinces, and be respected by individual primates and the provinces they lead as an instrument through which new developments may be honestly addressed. In order to fulfil this role, it must be enabled to meet regularly. The Commission believes that greater attention should be paid to the organisation of the Primates’

¹⁰⁶ See *The Virginia Report*, ch.4.

Meeting to facilitate greater participation by the primates and to provide for more formal and businesslike sessions.

The Anglican Communion Office

- (6) The role and the particular responsibilities of the Secretary General of the Anglican Communion in relation to the Instruments of Unity and the office of the Archbishop of Canterbury need to be carefully evaluated and set out. In particular the relationship and the accountability between the holder of that office and the Archbishop of Canterbury as well as the Chair of the Anglican Consultative Council needs fundamental reappraisal. Some forms of regular meetings or the ability to communicate in person quickly and easily have to be established and maintained.
- (7) Any committee or body of trustees that is made up of persons located in a wide variety of countries spread around the Anglican Communion experiences peculiar difficulties in holding regular and effective meetings and in being able to communicate easily. This makes for particular difficulties in relating to the executive staff of the Anglican Communion Office in order to offer support, encouragement and advice, or suggest directions in which to move. Closer oversight and accountability is required in both directions. There should be regular reviews of staff performance and remuneration. The recent appointment of a new Secretary General also offers an opportunity for a reappraisal of staffing structures in both St Andrew's House for the Anglican Communion staff and at Lambeth Palace for those who assist the Archbishop of Canterbury in relation to Anglican Communion affairs. Duplication of roles is to be avoided wherever possible.
- (8) It is clear to the Commission that any effective attempt to enhance the synodality of the member churches of the Anglican Communion will require a vehicle whereby liaison and monitoring of the developments across the Communion can be afforded the importance they deserve. Apart from any Council of Advice which may be established, the Commission views as a matter of urgent priority a reassessment of the work of the Anglican Communion Office in London in this respect. This office functions as a secretariat for the entire Anglican Communion, including the three conciliar Instruments of Unity, even if it is technically only the secretariat of the Anglican Consultative Council. The demands on staff and time and the financial foundation of the Office at present are entirely unacceptable as a means of fulfilling these roles.
- (9) We recommend therefore a rethinking of the strategic role of the Anglican Communion Office. It should be understood to serve all Instruments of Unity, and have sufficient staffing and resourcing from across the Communion to be able to act in a neutral and un beholden way for the good of the whole Communion. In addition to all its current tasks, the office should be able to monitor the development in all the provinces, from information provided by the provinces designed to assist the Instruments of Unity to be aware of the development in the life of the Communion. This has financial implications which will need to be addressed by each member church of the Anglican Communion in reviewing and increasing their contributions to the inter-Anglican budget to enhance the effectiveness of the Instruments of Unity.

Appendix Two : Proposal for the Anglican Covenant

The Anglican Covenant

Preamble

We, the churches of the Anglican Communion, in order to foster greater unity and to consolidate our understandings of communion, solemnly establish this Covenant, entered on our behalf by designated signatories and to which we shall adhere as authorised by laws enacted by each of our churches for these purposes, so that our communion may be made more visible and committed, and agree as follows as to our:

- (1) Common identity;
- (2) Relationships of communion;
- (3) Commitments of communion;
- (4) Exercise of autonomy in communion;
- (5) Management of communion issues.

Part I: Common Identity

Article 1: Common Catholicity, Apostolicity and Confession of Faith

Each member church: (1) belongs to the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church of Jesus Christ; (2) participates in the apostolic mission of the whole people of God; (3) affirms Holy Scripture, as containing all things necessary for salvation and as being the rule and ultimate standard of faith, and holds the essentials of the apostolic faith, as summed up in the Creeds; and (4) seeks to preach God's Word authentically.

Article 2: Common Sacraments and Liturgical Tradition

Each member church: (1) holds and duly administers the sacraments of baptism and eucharist as instituted by Christ; and (2) practises the common patterns of Anglican liturgical and ritual tradition as adapted to the needs of each generation and the particular circumstances of each local ecclesial community.

Article 3: Common Ministry and Mission

In every member church: (1) the threefold ordained ministry of bishops, priests and deacons and the ministry of the laity are ministries given by God as instruments of his grace; and (2) we share a common life of service in the apostolic mission entrusted by Christ, serving in the world his purposes of mission, justice and peace.

Article 4: Common Understanding

(1) Each member church belongs to each other in mutual reciprocity and forbearance in the Body of Christ. (2) Communion does not require acceptance by every church of all theological opinion, sacramental devotion, or liturgical practice that is characteristic of the other. (3) Every member church has the intention to listen, speak, act and strive to obey the gospel. (4) Every church has the same concern for a conscientious interpretation of scripture in the light of tradition and reason, to be in dialogue with those who dissent from that interpretation, and to heal divisions.

Article 5: Common Autonomous Polity

(1) Each member church is autonomous, episcopally led and synodically governed. (2) Decisions in every church are to be presumed as duly authorised but such decisions do not bind outside that church. (3) Every church shares the same concern for good government for the fulfilment of its mission and for the common good of the Anglican Communion and the Church universal.

Part II: Relationships of Communion

Article 6: The Divine Foundation of Communion

(1) Communion is a gift of God, who is a communion of three persons, to all member churches of the Anglican Communion. (2) Our ecclesial communion is animated in the experience of God's work of redemption, and furthered or hampered by human action. (3) The divine call to communion is inviolable and no member church may declare unilaterally irreversible broken communion with any fellow church.

Article 7: Communion in Membership, Relation and Purpose

(1) The Anglican Communion is a community of interdependent churches and consists of relations between each church, the See of Canterbury, and the fellowship of member churches worldwide. (2) Each church acknowledges its Communion membership, and is constituted by, exists in and receives fullness of life in its relations to the other member churches. (3) Ordained and lay persons in each church are in personal communion with those of other member churches. (4) Each church shall serve the purposes of the Communion, which include: (a) proclaiming to the world in common witness the good news of the Kingdom of God; (b) fostering and protecting a common mind in essential matters; and (c) achieving greater unity.

Article 8: The Process and Substance of Communion

(1) Communion, never perfected until God's Kingdom is all in all, involves unity, equality of status, and a common pilgrimage towards truth, each church in partnership with its fellow churches learning what it means to become interdependent and thus more fully a communion. (2) Communion subsists in the mutual acknowledgement by churches of their common identity. (3) Communion involves responsibilities so that each church may be more fully completed in, through and by its relations with other member churches, having regard for their common good.

Part III: Commitments of Communion

Article 9: Catholicity and Common Good of the Anglican Communion

(1) Each church shall act in a manner compatible both with its belonging to the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, and with its membership of the Anglican Communion. (2) In all essential matters of common concern in the Anglican Communion, no member church shall act without consideration of the common good of the Communion and fundamental compliance with all of the Parts of this Covenant.

Article 10: Obligations of Confession of the Faith

Each church shall: (1) uphold and act compatibly with the catholic and apostolic faith, order and tradition, and moral values and vision of humanity received by and developed in the fellowship of member churches; and (2) primarily through its bishops, ensure that biblical texts are handled respectfully and coherently, building on our best traditions and scholarship believing that scriptural revelation must continue to illuminate, challenge and transform cultures, structures and ways of thinking.

Article 11: Sacramental Commitments

Each church shall: (1) maintain and administer the sacraments of baptism and eucharist; (2) welcome members of all other member churches to join in its own celebration of the sacraments; and (3) enjoin its members to eucharistic sharing in a fellow church in accordance with the canonical discipline of that host church.

Article 12: Apostolic and Ministerial Commitments

Each church shall: (1) uphold the historic threefold ministry of bishops, priests and deacons; (2) recognise the canonical validity of orders duly conferred in every member church; (3) welcome persons episcopally ordained in any member church to minister in the host church subject to the necessary consents required by and in accordance with the law of that church; and (4) permit any person ordained in that church to seek ministry in any other member church subject to its law and discipline.

Article 13: Ministerial Obligations of Unity

(1) Each minister, especially a bishop, shall be a visible sign of unity and shall maintain communion within each church and between it, the See of Canterbury and all other Communion churches. (2) No minister, especially a bishop, shall: (a) act without due regard to or jeopardise the unity of the Communion; (b) neglect to co-operate with ministers, especially bishops, of member churches for the good of the Communion and Church universal; (c) unreasonably be the cause or focus of division and strife in their church or elsewhere in the Communion; (d) if in episcopal office, unreasonably refuse any invitation to attend meetings of the Instruments of Unity.

Article 14: Hospitality and Availability of Ministrations

Each church shall: (1) welcome members of every Communion church to share in the spiritual benefits, ministrations and worship available in that church in the manner prescribed by its law; (2) provide, as practicable, for the pastoral care and wellbeing of any member of a fellow church during a visit to that church; and (3) through the relevant authority, from time to time invite, as practicable, bishops of member churches to participate at ordinations administered in the host church as a sign of ecclesial unity and continuity.

Article 15: Commitments to Mission and Prayer

Each church shall: (1) share in the mission of the Anglican Communion entrusted by Christ to his church in a common life of service; (2) co-operate, so far as is practicable, with other member churches to develop a common understanding of mission and evangelism and to promote mission through practical schemes to serve the needs of the world; (3) pray for the needs of and with fellow member churches and their faithful; (4) offer its spiritual, intellectual, material and financial resources to assist with the needs of any other member church or of the Communion as a whole; and (5) promote in theological education, an understanding of the relationships of communion between the member churches.

Article 16: The Bonds of Mutual Loyalty

Each church shall: (1) in essential matters of common concern to the Communion place the interests and needs of the community of member churches before its own; (2) in such cases, make every effort to resolve disputes by reconciliation, mediation or other amicable and equitable means; (3) respect the counsels of the Archbishop of Canterbury, Primates' Meeting, Lambeth Conference, and Anglican [Communion] Council; and (4) respect the principles of canon law common to the churches of the Anglican Communion.

Article 17: Ecumenical Commitments

Each church recognises that: (1) if a member church enters a relation of communion with a non-member church, this effects a relationship between each member church and the non-member to the extent provided in our laws and the regulatory instruments of the ecumenical partner; and (2) before a member church enters any agreement with a non-member church, that church shall consult the appropriate Instrument of Unity.

Part IV: Exercise of Autonomy in Communion

Article 18: The Principle and Nature of Autonomy

(1) Autonomy is a fundamental principle of Anglicanism. (2) Autonomy is the right of a church to self-government. (3) An autonomous church has authority only to make decisions for itself in relation to its own affairs at its own level. (4) Autonomy expresses subsidiarity: decision-making at the appropriate level. (5) Autonomy is exercised by a church in the context of the wider community of which it forms part. (6) There are limits on the exercise of autonomy imposed by the relationships of

communion, the acknowledgement of common identity, the commitments of communion, and the principles applicable to the management of communion affairs.

Article 19: The Autonomy of Each Church

(1) Each autonomous church has the right to order and regulate its own affairs through its own system of government and law. (2) Each member church shall be free from control by any decision of any ecclesiastical body external to itself in relation to its exclusively internal affairs unless that decision is authorised under or incorporated in its own law. (3) The validity within each autonomous church of any ecclesiastical act relating to such internal affairs is governed by the law of that church.

Article 20: Autonomy and Communion Issues

(1) Some issues treated within each church may have a dual character and consist of mixed elements of internal (domestic) concern and of external (common) concern to the Anglican Communion. (2) Autonomy includes the right of a church to make decisions on issues in those of its affairs which may also touch the Anglican Communion of which it forms part, provided those decisions are compatible with the interests and standards of the wider Communion (as determined in accordance with Part V). (3) What touches all should be approved by all.

Article 21: Autonomy in Communion

(1) Each church has a fiduciary duty to honour and not to breach the trust put in it by the Communion to exercise its autonomy in communion. (2) In essential matters of common concern, each church shall in the exercise of its autonomy have regard to the common good of the Anglican Communion. (3) In such matters, each church shall exercise its autonomy in communion, prior to any implementation, through explanation, dialogue, consultation, discernment and agreement with the appropriate Instruments of Unity.

Article 22: Autonomy, Diversity and Mutual Respect

(1) Diversity is a desirable dimension of the catholicity of the church, a feature of the historic development of Anglicanism, and inherent to the particularity of each member church. (2) Each autonomous church has the greatest possible liberty to order its life and affairs, appropriate to its Christian people in their geographical, cultural and historical context, compatible with the unity and good order of the Communion. (3) Each church shall respect and maintain the autonomy of all churches in the Anglican Communion and shall not permit any authority or person within it to intervene in the internal affairs of another member church without its consent.

Part V: Management of Communion Issues

Article 23: Communion Issues of Common Concern

(1) Communion issues are those essential matters of common concern to the member churches of the Communion, and include the affairs, actual and prospective decisions, of a member church which touch fundamentally the fellowship and mission of the Anglican Communion, the relations of its churches, and the compatibility of such decisions with this Covenant and the unity and good order of the Communion. (2) The Instruments of Unity shall set out formally their composition, functions, relations one with another, and procedures for matters arising under this Part. (3) A matter is a communion issue if so designated by the Instruments of Unity, where appropriate in dialogue with any member church involved in the matter, subject to the right of the Archbishop of Canterbury under Article 27.

Article 24: The Instruments of Unity

(1) The Instruments of Unity serve in communion to discern our common mind in communion issues, and foster our interdependence and mutual accountability, but exercise no jurisdiction over autonomous member churches save to the limited extent provided in this Covenant and the laws of member churches. (2) The Archbishop of Canterbury enjoys a primacy of honour and is a personal sign of our unity and communion, and shall be assisted by a Council of Advice. (3) The Lambeth Conference, under the presidency of the Archbishop of Canterbury, expressing episcopal collegiality worldwide, gathers for common counsel, consultation and encouragement and to provide direction to the whole Communion. (4) The Anglican Consultative Council has such membership and functions as are prescribed by its constitution. (5) The Primates' Meeting, presided over by the Archbishop of Canterbury, assembles for mutual support and counsel, monitors global developments and exercises collegial responsibility in doctrinal, moral and pastoral matters.

Article 25: The Anglican Communion Officer in Each Church

Each church shall (1) designate a person to act as its own Anglican Communion Liaison Officer, appointed to defend the bonds of communion expressed in this Covenant, and accountable to its central assembly; and (2) have a system to identify and process within that church contentious communion issues for submission to that Officer.

Article 26: Process in Contentious Communion Issues

(1) On discernment by the Officer of any contentious communion issue, the Anglican Communion Liaison Officer shall liaise with the Primate and the Secretary General of the Anglican Communion. (2) Following such liaison, the Officer or Secretary General may submit the matter to the Archbishop of Canterbury. (3) The Archbishop may issue such guidance as he deems fit or, as appropriate, refer the matter to the Council of Advice for guidance and, if necessary, the Primates' Meeting, the Anglican Consultative Council, or the Lambeth Conference to resolve the issue having regard to the common good of the Communion and compatibility with this covenant.

Article 27: Interpretation and Periodic Review

(1) The Archbishop of Canterbury shall decide all questions of interpretation of this Covenant, consulting the Council of Advice, and seeking the advice of any other body as he deems appropriate. (2) If approved by the Joint Standing Committee of the Primates' Meeting and Anglican Consultative Council, the decision of the Archbishop shall be regarded as authoritative in the Communion until altered in like manner. (3) The Council of Advice shall carry out periodic reviews of the administration of this Covenant for submission to the Archbishop of Canterbury, who shall act upon such reviews as he deems appropriate, so that our churches may more completely embrace the life in communion to which all are called by the Lord Jesus Christ.