

## **Farewell to Babel: Rowan Cantuar as servant of unity for the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Communion**

Michael Nai-Chiu Poon, Singapore

### **Canterbury's statement and its context**

Archbishop Rowan Williams' careful crafted statement *Church's Hope only in Christ* delivered in the Third South to South Encounter engaged the Communion on two fronts: leaders of churches outside of North America and Britain, and—completely unexpected and perhaps of more enduring importance—his colleagues in the west who are increasingly shaping the Communion along ideological lines. For strange reasons, Anglicans in the west have hitherto ignored his subtle statement in their discussions on the Communion. The purpose of this essay is to highlight the importance of Rowan Cantuar's remarkable statement for self-understanding the Communion and its mission.

Archbishop Williams penned these extraordinary words:

I mentioned in passing 'the instruments of Unity of the Anglican Communion'. I would be much happier, I have to say, if we spoke of the 'servants of Unity in the Anglican Communion', because whatever the instruments of unity are, I don't think that they are in any sense conditions to be met for Christian faithfulness. They are human institutions which seek to serve the unity of Christ's body and I would put all those instruments of unity, not least the Archbishop of Canterbury, under the rubric of St Paul's words in 2 Corinthians 3; 'it is not ourselves that we preach, but Jesus Christ as Lord and ourselves as your slaves for Jesus' sake'. Whether it is the Archbishop of Canterbury, the ACC, the Primates, or the Lambeth Conference, that must be what they hold in front of them. I think someone recently said that 'the path to heaven doesn't necessarily lie through Lambeth'. I agree entirely. The path to heaven lies solely through Jesus Christ our Saviour and the unity he gives, and the only use and integrity of the instruments of unity is when they serve that.

Canterbury here was not simply responding to the issue of Nigeria's constitutional revision. He did not oppose the changes at all. Rather he used this occasion to develop a fresh understanding of Canterbury's role in today's world.

Compare Canterbury's understanding of his office with the respective discussion on Canterbury's role in the Windsor Report, the Primates at Dromantine, and the Anglican Consultative Council in Nottingham.

(a) *Windsor Report*. Windsor Report conferred an enhanced role for Canterbury to solve the ills of the Communion. Let him be the 'central focus of both unity and mission within the Communion', rather than simply one of the instruments of unity. The Report explained:

The role of the Archbishop of Canterbury in relation to each of the other Instruments of Unity is pivotal. The Archbishop convenes both the Lambeth Conference and the Primates' Meeting, and is *ex officio* the President of the Anglican Consultative Council. This places the Archbishop *at the centre* [my emphasis] of each of the Instruments, and as the one factor common to all. If the Archbishop is to be enabled to play a critical role at the heart of the Communion, there are obvious implications for those who establish priorities in terms of the international ministry of the Archbishop of Canterbury. He must be free to exercise his role fully in each of the Instruments of Unity. The Commission believes therefore that the historic position of the Archbishopric of Canterbury

must not be regarded as a figurehead, but as *the central focus of both unity and mission within the Communion* [my emphasis]. This office has a very significant teaching role. As the significant *focus of unity, mission and teaching* [my emphasis], the Communion looks to the office of the Archbishop to articulate the mind of the Communion especially in areas of controversy. The Communion should be able to look to the holder of this office to speak directly to any provincial situation on behalf of the Communion where this is deemed advisable. Such action should not be viewed as outside interference in the exercise of autonomy by any province.<sup>1</sup>

(b) *Domantine Communiqué*. In February 2005, the Primates deliberated this proposal on Canterbury's role in Domantine. They eventually expressed their caution against this move:

We also have further questions concerning the development of the role of the Archbishop of Canterbury, and of a Council of Advice. While we welcome the ministry of the Archbishop of Canterbury as that of one who can speak to us as *primus inter pares* about the realities we face as a Communion, we are cautious of any development which would seem to imply the creation of an international jurisdiction which could override our proper provincial autonomy. We ask the Archbishop of Canterbury to explore ways of consulting further on these matters.<sup>2</sup>

(c) *Nottingham ACC-13*. The Anglican Consultative Council (ACC-13) that met shortly afterwards in Nottingham in June however endorsed Windsor Report's new understanding. They resolved:

The Anglican Consultative Council:

- a. notes with approval the suggestion of the Windsor Report that the Archbishop of Canterbury be regarded as the focus for unity and that the Primates' Meeting, the Lambeth Conference, the Anglican Consultative Council be regarded more appropriately as the "Instruments of Communion";
- b. resolves that henceforth it will use this terminology for those bodies currently known as "the Instruments of Unity".<sup>3</sup>

(d) *Anglican understanding in Lambeth 1948*. The changes from 'instrument' to 'focus', and 'unity' to 'Communion' represent a fundamental paradigmatic change in the self-understanding of the Communion over the sixty years. The Anglican Communion has indeed come-of-age as a denomination church! The understanding on authority that was proposed Lambeth 1948 seems no longer able to meet the present challenges. Windsor Report suggested:

It is because we have not always fully articulated how authority works within Anglicanism, and because recent decisions have not taken into account, and/or worked through and explained, such authority as we all in theory acknowledge, that we have reached the point where urgent fresh thought and action have become necessary.<sup>4</sup>

Lambeth 1948 had understood authority in the Communion in these terms:

The question is asked, "Is Anglicanism based on a sufficiently coherent form of authority to form the nucleus of a world-wide fellowship of Churches, or does its

---

<sup>1</sup> *Windsor Report*, 108-109.

<sup>2</sup> Primates' Meeting February 2005, *Communiqué*, 10.

<sup>3</sup> ACC-13, Resolution 2.

<sup>4</sup> *Windsor Report*, 42.

comprehensiveness conceal internal divisions which may cause its disruption?" Former Lambeth Conferences have wisely rejected proposals for a formal primacy of Canterbury, for an Appellate Tribunal, and for giving the Conference the status of a legislative synod. The Lambeth Conference remains advisory, and its continuation committee consultative. These decisions have led to a repudiation of centralized government, and a refusal of a legal basis of union. The positive nature of the authority which binds the Anglican Communion together is therefore seen to be moral and spiritual, resting on the truth of the Gospel, and on a charity which is patient and willing to defer to the common mind.<sup>5</sup>

Windsor Report and ACC-13 reversed this earlier understanding, and seeks to create new infrastructures (e.g. Council of Advice, Communion Law, Anglican Communion Liaison Officer) that order the Communion like a global confessional church. Hitherto, the lines of authority are for good reasons unclear; now Canterbury is thrust to become the focus of unity. The rationale of the continuing existence of the Communion was for the unity of the Christian churches. The instruments of unity were missional and ecumenical in their intent, to connect the Anglican missionary initiatives and churches in far-flung places with the emerging church unions, that Christian communities would be more able to confess Christ in their young nations. The instruments are now turned inward. They now serve the unity of the Communion instead of that of all Christians. This is indeed a far cry from what the Lambeth Fathers envisaged in their *Appeal to all Christian People* in 1920.<sup>6</sup> It is intriguing that the Anglican Communion website [www.anglicancommunion.org](http://www.anglicancommunion.org) hastily embraces this new understanding of ACC-13. Canterbury is now declared as the Focus of Unity. The other three—Lambeth Conference, Primates' Meeting, and the Anglican Consultative Council—are designated as Instruments of Communion.

I leave aside the intriguing question of who is now running the Communion. By what authority can the Anglican Communion Office make this fundamental change to the Communion self-understanding? Certainly their hands are not tied in virtual space! Can ACC, which just 'demoted' itself to be only one of the three remaining instruments, able to redefine the Communion, without endorsement from Canterbury, who is by its reckoning the focus of unity? I leave this for the Primates, Lambeth Conference, and the Provincial Synods to decide. Rowan Williams' stance on the matter however is clear.

It is inconceivable that Williams had not reflected on the deliberations on Canterbury's role in Dromantine and Nottingham that happened only a few months ago. However, the Archbishop continued to regard his office as one of the instruments of unity. More than this, he proposed a fresh understanding to Communion processes by abandoning the structural understanding of 'instruments', re-situate them in terms of service and thus restored a humbler role for Canterbury and the Communion as understood in 1948. Canterbury could not have forgotten what Nottingham just conferred upon him. However, he rejected this set of new clothes. His statement constituted a rebuke to the ideologues of the Communion in the strongest possible terms. Canterbury could have added: 'It shall not be so among you; but whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. For the Son of man also came not to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many (Mark 10:43-45)'.

### Canterbury pilgrim

---

<sup>5</sup> 'The Meaning and Unity of the Anglican Communion' in *Lambeth Conference 1948*, Part II: Report of Committees (London, SPCK, 1948), 84.

<sup>6</sup> Resolution 9. See Appendix I for the full text.

What does it mean for Canterbury to be a servant of unity in these ‘changing, unpredictable and bewildering’ times?<sup>7</sup> To understand the challenges facing Canterbury today and how Primates especially in the non-western world can cooperate with him, we need to retrace the developments in the Communion over the past sixty years. I have elsewhere sketched this development, with special reference to the ascendancy of Canterbury, in an earlier article.<sup>8</sup> I shall confine myself to elaborate this development in the context of two major undercurrents in our immediate past.

I refer first to the emergence of the confessional movement alongside the establishing of World Council of Churches in the post war period in late 1940s. Even up to the end of the World War II and the consequent political re-ordering of the world, the Lambeth Fathers insisted that the Communion ‘not the fellowship of independent Churches within a denomination, but of independent provinces within a Church’.<sup>9</sup> In other words, instead of organising itself along the lines of a confessional or denominational church, the Communion saw itself working towards a ‘larger episcopal unity’<sup>10</sup>. Hence, in the famous words of the Encyclical Letter of 1948, Anglican bishops were ready to accept the disappearance of their Communion for the sake of the emergence of ‘a much larger Communion of National or Regional Churches’. The continuing justification of the Communion’s existence was to translate this vision to reality:

As Anglicans we believe that God has entrusted to us in our Communion not only the Catholic faith, but a special service to render to the whole Church. Reunion of any part of our Communion with other denominations in its own area must make the resulting Church no longer simply Anglican, but something more comprehensive. There would be, in every country where there now exist the Anglican Church and others separated from it, a united Church, Catholic and Evangelical, but no longer in the limiting sense of the word Anglican. The Anglican Communion would be merged in a much larger Communion of National or Regional Churches, in full communion with one another, united in all the terms of what is known as the Lambeth Quadrilateral.

It is well to keep this vision before us; but we are still far from its attainment, and until this larger Communion begins to take firmer shape, it would be only a weakening of the present strength and service of the Anglican Communion if parts of it were severed from it prematurely. If we were slow to advance the larger cause, it would be a betrayal of what we believe to be our special calling. It

---

<sup>7</sup> This description and the heading of this section are from Michael Ramsey’s book *Canterbury Pilgrim*. Note Ramsey’s reflection on his ministry: ‘For while my office has been that of a teacher of the Christian faith I have found myself a learner amidst the changing and unpredictable scenes of the 1960s and after. . . . Through these bewildering years I have tried to learn, as only a learning Church can be a Church which guides.’ *Canterbury Pilgrim* (London: SPCK, 1974), ix.

<sup>8</sup> See my ‘Deliver us from “Corporate Perversion”: A Conversation with Ephraim Radner and Graham Kings on the State of our Communion’, *Global South Anglicans*.  
[http://www.globalsouthanglican.org/index.php/weblog/comments/state\\_of\\_our\\_communion/](http://www.globalsouthanglican.org/index.php/weblog/comments/state_of_our_communion/).

<sup>9</sup> Ruth Rouse and Stephen Charles Neill, eds. *A History of the Ecumenical Movement 1517-1948*. Second Edition (London: SPCK 1967), 617.

<sup>10</sup> Thus in Lambeth Conference 1948, Resolution 74 on ‘A Larger Episcopal Unity’: ‘The Conference, welcoming the fact that some of the Churches of the Anglican Communion are already in intercommunion with the Old Catholic Churches, looking forward to the time when they will enter into communion with other parts of the Catholic Church *not definable as Anglican* [my emphasis], and desiring that Churches thus linked together should express *their common relationship in common counsel and mutual aid* [my emphasis], recommends that bishops of the Anglican Communion and bishops of other Churches which are, or may be, in communion with them should meet together from time to time as an episcopal conference, advisory in character, for brotherly counsel and encouragement.’

would be equally a betrayal of our trust before God if the Anglican Communion were to allow itself to be dispersed before its particular work was done.<sup>11</sup>

The establishing of World Council of Churches in 1948 however was instrumental in shaping the Communion along confessional lines. As W A Visser 'T Hooft observed, the ecumenical movement brought about development in confessional consciousness:

The new unprecedented ecumenical situation obliged each confession to consider naturally to a new reflection on the significance of the common confessional heritage. All has to ask: What can our confessional family contribute to the wider ecumenical family? What is the basic truth for which it must stand at all cost?<sup>12</sup>

When the World Council of Churches first convened in Amsterdam in 1948, its membership consisted of geographical and national groups as well as confessional bodies.<sup>13</sup> Opinion may differ on whether the rise of world-wide confessional bodies was in fact a ploy devised by 'parent' churches and missionary agencies in the west to assert their continuing influence in their former mission fields, and to gain credence in the ecumenical movement. After all, confessional groups could provide the desperately needed material and personnel resources for the survival of young churches. It is worth noting that the Anglicans did not develop—in Harold Fey's words—a 'continuing organization' until after 1958. All along it refused to regard itself as a confessional church.<sup>14</sup> Indeed, it was in Lambeth 1958 when Canterbury was first asked by the bishops of the Communion to convey a Lambeth resolution on their behalf to the World Council of Churches.<sup>15</sup> The rest of the story was aptly summarised in Owen Chadwick's account of the ascendancy of Canterbury.<sup>16</sup>

Young churches in East and South Asia were among the most vocal critics of the confessional movements. The East Asian Christian Conference (EACC) questioned whether the rising strength of confessional bodies would violate the integrity of the younger churches and their quest for 'unity in truth'. Harold Fey gave this account of deliberations in the EACC Conference in Bangkok 1964:

Affirming their belief that "the Church is One Body, the Body of Christ", the Asian Churches pointed out that they are moving toward autonomy, not merely to achieve organizational independence, but also so that each Church will "find its own selfhood, being able under God to make its own response to its Lord in the specific situation it has been called to mission". . . . The East Asia churchmen asked confessional organizations to work within the ecumenical movement to help people within their respective families to understand how the Asian Churches see and are trying to interpret the Christian faith. An informational role which each confessional body should undertake ought also to be carried out

---

<sup>11</sup> See *Lambeth Conference 1948*, Part I (London, SPCK, 1948), 22. See Appendix II for the full text of the section 'God in his Church' in the Encyclical Letter.

<sup>12</sup> 'The General Ecumenical Development since 1948' in *The Ecumenical Advance. A History of the Ecumenical Movement*, Volume Two: 1948-1968, edited by Harold E Fey (London: SPCK, 1970), 17.

<sup>13</sup> See Harold Fey's fascinating account of the emergence of confessional movement after the Second World War: 'Confessional families and the Ecumenical Movement', in *The Ecumenical Advance*, 117-142.

<sup>14</sup> *The Ecumenical Advance*, 117.

<sup>15</sup> See Resolution 15. Referring to Resolution 14 on the definition of the terms 'full communion' and 'intercommunion', Lambeth resolved: 'The Conference therefore requests the Archbishop of Canterbury to communicate this Resolution to the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches for its information.'

<sup>16</sup> See his 'Introduction' in *Resolutions of the Twelve Lambeth Conferences 1867-1988*, edited by Roger Coleman (Toronto: Anglican Book Centre, 1992), xiii-xv. See also my 'Delivery from "Corporate Perversion".'

concerning the experiences of Christians in other confessional families "so that they can take courage and pray intelligently for each other". Before these organizations carry out these essentially theological functions, their Asian colleagues asked them to face three hard questions: 1. Do the world confessional organizations rest on a theological principle or do they simply gather together Churches because of a common history and tradition? 2. Even where world confessional organizations are seeking to preserve for the universal Church some fundamental insight into an aspect of Christian truth, is this best done by an organization built around that truth? 3. Are the confessions and doctrines which are the historical basis of these world confessional organizations living realities among the people in these confessional families?<sup>17</sup>

C H Hwang noted in his paper in a 'Confessing the Faith in Asia Today' Conference in 1966:

The sad thing is that, before becoming first a confessing Church in the missionary situation, the younger churches were prematurely projected into a "confessional" situation which was not their own, that is, before they knew and became a Community of Christ they were told to become a Presbyterian, Lutheran, Methodist or Anglican Church. They were divided without even being able to know why. I believe that the way to recover the unity of the Church on the road is to return to the confessing church first, and only secondly to become a confessional church, and hold steadfastly the second within the context of the first. Finally, I believe that God has once again put not only the younger churches but also the older churches and the ancient churches in a new missionary situation—not only in Asia today but also in the world today—so that we may learn our way back to the unity of the *confessio viatorum*.<sup>18</sup>

This set of concerns tabled in the early years in the founding of World Council of Churches assumes a fresh relevance today. Why is the Anglican Communion in such deep crisis today? Windsor Report reasoned that the Communion has not 'fully articulated how authority works within Anglicanism'.<sup>19</sup> Is it something that is regrettable, as if it was an oversight of former Anglican leaders? Windsor Report then sought to remedy the situation by first, overlaying the Communion with more superstructures and thus bringing the development of the Communion along confessional lines to its logical conclusion, and secondly—to which I shall return presently—fabricating an ideological history for the Communion. However, the Report did not ask the more fundamental question on whether the Communion was meant to last through the lifetime of those who congregated in Lambeth 1948 in the first place? Indeed, if the Communion is indeed a confessional church (e.g. like the Presbyterians and Methodists), the office of Canterbury should indeed be de-established and be open to election within the whole Communion (as is the case for other confessional churches).<sup>20</sup>

The three hard questions that EACC raised in the sixties become especially relevant for Anglicans today. Should Anglican churches (in truth, the Holy Catholic churches [Sheng Kung Hui] churches) continue to expend their energy in propping up a Communion that has abandoned its original vision? Are the newly devised Communion mechanisms isolating the Anglican churches around the world from other churches and prevent them from growing together with churches of each local area, as EACC explicitly asked the Anglican Communion

---

<sup>17</sup> *The Ecumenical Advance*, 125.

<sup>18</sup> *The South East Asia Journal of Theology*, 8.1-2 (1967): 77f. Quoted in Hans Ruedi Weber, 'Out of all Continents and Nations' in *The Ecumenical Advance*, 72-73.

<sup>19</sup> *Windsor Report*, 42.

<sup>20</sup> Stephen Noll, 'The Global Anglican Communion: A Blueprint', Global South Anglicans. [http://www.globalsouthanglican.org/index.php/comments/the\\_anglican\\_communion\\_in\\_crisis/](http://www.globalsouthanglican.org/index.php/comments/the_anglican_communion_in_crisis/).

fifty years ago in Bangkok 1964?<sup>21</sup> Could the limited resources be better devoted in times like these to the building up mature confessing churches in our own nations and geographical regions, and to creating new networks with all who confess Christ? In Barrett's analysis, world Christianity is fast becoming increasingly less defined along denominational lines.<sup>22</sup> The irony is that fast-growing independent Christians have the better prospects of being the 'one, holy, catholic, and apostolic' society of Jesus Christ in the lands they reside, because they no longer define themselves along denominational lines. Churches in Asia, Africa, and Latin America would do well to engage these Christians and work with them to build up mature confessing churches world-wide. Indeed, Owen Chadwick's analysis on the ascendancy of Canterbury because of his patriarchal role vis-à-vis the younger churches can be extended to ECUSA. While Canterbury provided the historical link, ECUSA supplied the financial resources! Yet both depend on churches in Asia, Africa, and Latin America for their continuing international stature as global leaders of a 70-million world-wide Communion.

Alongside the confessional movement we also discern ideological movements at work in building new empires and creating new social identities, whether in the name of nation-building, globalisation or otherwise.<sup>23</sup> Our communion is also in danger of conforming itself to such movements. The instruments of unity of the Communion are increasingly dependent on information technology and air travel. Elsewhere I have pointed out how the Windsor Report offered a historically untrue account on decision-making processes in the Communion.<sup>24</sup> The emergence of the Anglican churches in Asia, Latin America, and Africa were not understood in their particular missionary, geographical, cultural and political contexts.<sup>25</sup> They still remain as ideological projections in the mind of the west.<sup>26</sup> Indeed, it was a former Canterbury in the eighteenth century who naively believed the story of George Psalmanazar, an imposter who enchanted Church of England clergy with his fabricated story and invented language of the distant land of Formosa in the Far East.<sup>27</sup> Anglican theologians in the West who purportedly

<sup>21</sup> See *The Ecumenical Advance*, 124.

<sup>22</sup> See my discussion in 'Deliver us from "Corporate Perversion"'.

<sup>23</sup> Oliver O'Donovan's critique of late liberalism and ideological shaping in the contemporary world deserves wider readership among Christians in the non-western world. See for our present purposes especially 'A Multitude of Rational Beings United' in *Common Objects of Love. Moral Reflection and the Shaping of Community* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 45-72; 'Freedom and its Loss' in *The Ways of Judgment* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 67-83. See also E J Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth and Reality*. Second Edition (Cambridge: UP, 1992), 141-143, 163-192; Ina Merdjanova, 'In Search of Identity: Nationalism and Religion in Eastern Europe', *Religion, State and Society* 28 (2000): 233-262; D Densil Morgan, 'Christianity and National Identity in Twentieth Century Wales', *Religion, State and Society* 27 (1999): 327-342.

<sup>24</sup> 'Maintaining the Bonds of Affection and Discovering Common Objects of Love: An East Asian Response to the Windsor Report 2004', Fulcrum, <http://www.fulcrum-anglican.org.uk/docs/2004/12/20041206michaelpoon.pdf>.

<sup>25</sup> East Asian churches are only beginning to reflect on their own histories. For example, see the Documentation of Christianity in Asia Programme <http://www.ttc.edu.sg/csca/arch-pres/dia2005.pdf>. See also Oliver O'Donovan's remark: 'Communications are sustained by tradition and tradition is a continuity of practices learned, repeated, and developed. . . . But what kind of practice forms the tradition of a whole society . . . . Supremely, the practice of recounting. History sustains the identity of societies, not only the history of the distant past, but that of the immediate past, too. . . . The subject of histories are places. But because places are materially different from one another, so are their histories. . . . Societies cannot be free if they cannot sustain their historical identities. . . . That a society is free is not merely a matter of its being situated in its place, but of having a tradition of communications shaped by the place, handed on from generation to generation.' (*The Ways of Judgment*, 69-70.)

<sup>26</sup> See my article 'Reflections on the Identity of the Church in Asia: An Ecumenical Conversation', *Trinity Theological Journal*, 13 (2005): 1-26.

<sup>27</sup> See Lambeth Palace Papers, Cod. Miscell. MS 954.25-27. See also *A Catalogue of the Archbishop's Manuscripts in the Library of Lambeth Palace*, compiled by Henry J Todd (London: Law and Gilbert, 1812), 241; Frederic J Forley, *The Great Formosan Imposter* (Saint Louis: Jesuit Historical Institute, 1968).

write and make proposals for the Communion are perhaps no better. Hardly would any historical sources and theological contributions in Asia, Latin America and Africa appear in their writings. Thus it is intriguing that in the recent uproar over the Nigerian revision, no one questioned whether the constitutions of the Church in Wales, Church of Ireland, Scottish Episcopal Church, *and* indeed that of the Church of England should be brought in line with the requirements of the newly redefined globalised Communion. No one in the west questioned why the Anglican Communion Office can declare Canterbury to be the focus of unity without undergoing due process.

The reference to the Communion Office leads to a major concern on Communion processes. 'Global South' Primates have voiced their alarm over this in January 2005.<sup>28</sup> Canterbury, Lambeth Conference, Primates' Meeting and ACC are the formal instruments of unity. There are however more powerful instruments at work that just 'come out' of the fire of globalisation as impatient leaders crave for something to unite and lead the organisation forward (Exodus 32:24). Over the past decade, the *Anglican World Magazine*, the Anglican Communion website, and the Anglican Communion News Service become powerful instruments that are shaping public opinion. They too can succumb to the dangers of globalisation and make the Communion 'globalised' rather than 'catholic', thus undermining reception processes in the Communion. Canterbury himself pointed out:

A catholic church is not a church that seeks a uniform global culture. The unity of the church is not cultural; it is in Christ - one Lord, one faith, one baptism - and any number of languages and costumes. It's been said recently by one theologian that the catholicity of the church is really a kind of great protest against globalisation; the really catholic is the opposite of the globalised, because the catholic is about wholeness, about the wholeness of the person, the wholeness of local culture and language, therefore it's not simply opening the same fast-food shop in every village on the globe, and it's not like the global economy, in which people are drawn into somebody's story and somebody's interests which in fact makes others poor and excluded. The catholic is the opposite of the globalised because the catholic is about everyone's welfare, everyone's growth and justice.<sup>29</sup>

I suggest that editorial policies of the media deployed by the Communion Office can be more transparent. For example, I find it puzzling why a fund raising agency that is not officially part of the Communion can be featured prominently on the Home Page of the Anglican Communion website, appearing alongside the Anglican Centre in Rome as the only two institutions listed as 'Related Organisation' of the Communion? Are there not many other 'related organisations'? Why are the hundreds of Mission Organisations identified in the 76-page *Directory of Mission Organisations: Mission, Development and Funding* (2003) published by the Communion Office not also given such prominence? Why this special treatment for a voluntary fund-raising agency that is not accountable to any Provincial Synod or to the formal Instruments of Unity, whose membership primarily come only from USA and (recently with flurry of new membership) from Hong Kong? Would not 'everyone's welfare, everyone's growth and justice' undermined by those who happen to possess the IT expertise and financial clout?

---

<sup>28</sup> Note in this connection the Statement from Global South Primates meeting in Nairobi (January 27<sup>th</sup>/28<sup>th</sup>, 2005): 'We are encouraged by the suggestions offered for restructuring the various instruments of unity to strengthen our common life in Christ. We are, however, aggrieved and disappointed that the contributions and resources of the majority of the Anglican Communion are not adequately recognized and represented in these instruments. We are convinced that there must be a more regionally and provincially representative procedure in appointments to commissions and task forces established to serve the whole Communion. (Section 11)'

<sup>29</sup> *Church's Hope only in Christ.*

### Canterbury's progress

The challenges outlined above are related to those from the late liberal society and the political realignment in today's world. I recognise Rowan Cantuar as one of the most sensitive theologians that God has gifted us for this hour is more able to articulate the issues himself. He deserves the full cooperation and support from the world-wide Communion to tackle these fundamental issues in Lambeth 2008. One agenda is paramount to Lambeth 2008: the recovery of its original vision in the service for mission.

In this connection we can evaluate IASCOME's recent proposal of a *Covenant for Communion in Mission* in a better light. It began with a late liberal and individualistic definition of covenant:

Covenants are fundamentally about relationships to which one gives oneself voluntarily, while contracts can be seen as a legally binding document under a body of governing principles. Covenants are free-will voluntary offerings from one to another while contracts are binding entities whose locus of authority is externally to oneself.

Then it proceeded to offer a nine-point Covenant that seeks to unite the Communion in mission and steer it away from institutional considerations. The nine points are:

(1) Recognising Jesus in each other contexts and lives; (2) Support one another in our participation in God's mission; (3) Encourage expressions of our new life in Christ; (4) Meet to share common purpose and explore differences and disagreements; (5) Be willing to change in response to critique and challenge from others; (6) Celebrate our strengths and mourn our faiths; (7) Share equitably our God-given resources; (8) Work together for the sustainability of God's creation; (9) Live in the promise of God's reconciliation for ourselves and for the world.

IASCOME's solution is attractive on the surface. 'Forget the quarrel and get busy!', so it pleads. It however succumbed to the same problem as the Windsor Report. Cardinal Walter Kasper's response to Windsor Report is relevant:

The first point concerns the text's ecclesiological approach itself. While the Report stresses that Anglican provinces have a responsibility towards each other and towards the maintenance of communion, a communion rooted in the Scriptures, considerably little attention is given to the importance of being in communion with the faith of the Church through the ages. In addressing the exercise of authority in the Church, "The Gift of Authority" speaks not only of the necessity of a synchronic communion of churches but also of a *diachronic consensus*; in fundamental matters of faith and discipline, the decisions of a local or regional church must not only foster communion in the present context, but must also be in agreement with the Church of the past, and in a particular way, with the apostolic Church as witnessed in the Scriptures, the early councils and the patristic tradition. While the *Windsor Report* stresses the catholicity of the Church, we believe that in the discussion that will follow, it might be helpful for the Anglican Communion to place more stress on the Church's apostolicity. This aspect also has important ecumenical ramifications, since we share a common tradition of one and a half millennia. This common patrimony - what Pope Paul VI and Archbishop Michael Ramsey called our 'ancient common traditions' - is worth being appealed to and preserved.

The second area we would hope to see more directly addressed in discussions of the Report and its implementation concern the moral questions at the heart of the

current controversy. The Report stresses that it was not its mandate to deal with disputed questions concerning homosexuality. We have noted that the problematic character of decisions taken in the Episcopal Church of the United States and the Anglican Church of Canada is addressed from an ecclesiological perspective but not a moral one. While the *Windsor Report* calls for a moratorium on same-sex blessings and episcopal appointments of those in same-sex relationships, this in itself is open to different interpretations. We would ask whether the traditional Christian understanding of marriage and human sexuality doesn't need to be reasserted more clearly. As you know, the position of the Catholic Church in this matter, as expressed in the Catechism of the Catholic Church (nn. 2357-59), is clear, and for us, remains binding. We believe that on these matters, we appeal to a shared apostolic patrimony which includes the Scriptures, but also includes a common tradition - grounded in a common interpretation of the Bible - of over 1900 years.<sup>30</sup>

I cite this statement in some length because we have not engaged the importance of this Roman Catholic response at the Communion level. The Roman Catholics reminded Canterbury of the common understanding in ARCIC processes and then pointed out two troubling developments in the Anglican church: the emphasis of synchronic communion of churches over *diachronic consensus*, and deviation from the common tradition on interpretation of the Bible over moral issues. Here, Rome concurs with the 'Global South' Primates. IASCOME and ECUSA have brushed aside the common tradition that provides the conceptual framework in all discerning processes. It is thus very puzzling how IASCOME can suggest the Communion to 'recognise', 'share', and 'work together' without first articulating the basis of authority in the Communion and mission. Orthodox belief vanishes into thin air. This makes nonsense of Saint John's insistences in 1 John on orthodox belief as foundational to communion. The Lambeth Fathers in 1948 were wiser in their Encyclical Letter to discuss marriage discipline under the section 'God in his Church':

The Church can only fulfil its mission to mankind if every member of it is a faithful, disciplined, and instructed servant of Christ. Again and again, in our Resolutions and Reports, we recall our people to the obligations to which they are committed by their faith.<sup>31</sup>

Canterbury's role is indeed pivotal to the Communion. As servant for unity, he has the grave responsibility to lead all under-shepherds of the Communion to discuss these matters in the coming months of preparation leading to Lambeth 2008. May Canterbury's pilgrimage lead the Communion to be re-connected with the ancient common traditions for the sake of the Kingdom, that 'with a hope against hope, that all of us, we once were so united, and so happy in our union, may even be brought at length, by the Power of the Divine Will, into One Fold and under One Shepherd'.<sup>32</sup>

*Candlemas 2006, Singapore*

*Tenth Anniversary of the Inauguration of the Province of the Anglican Church in South East Asia*

---

<sup>30</sup> Letter of his Eminence Cardinal Walter Kasper to his Grace Dr Rowan Williams Archbishop of Canterbury (17 December 2004). The Holy See. [http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/pontifical\\_councils/chrstuni/card-kasper-docs/rc\\_pc\\_chrstuni\\_doc\\_20041217\\_kasper-arch-canterbury\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/chrstuni/card-kasper-docs/rc_pc_chrstuni_doc_20041217_kasper-arch-canterbury_en.html).

<sup>31</sup> See Appendix II.

<sup>32</sup> The ending prayer of John Henry Newman, *Apologia pro vita sua*, as he bid his sad farewell to the Church of England and submitted himself to the ancient common traditions of the apostolic church.

## **Appendix I. Lambeth 1920 Appeal to all Christian People (Resolution 9)**

### **Reunion of Christendom**

The Conference adopts and sends forth the following Appeal to all Christian people:

An Appeal To All Christian People from the Bishops Assembled in the Lambeth Conference of 1920 We, Archbishops, Bishops Metropolitan, and other Bishops of the Holy Catholic Church in full communion with the Church of England, in Conference assembled, realising the responsibility which rests upon us at this time, and sensible of the sympathy and the prayers of many, both within and without our own Communion, make this appeal to all Christian people.

We acknowledge all those who believe in our Lord Jesus Christ, and have been baptized into the name of the Holy Trinity, as sharing with us membership in the universal Church of Christ which is his Body. We believe that the Holy Spirit has called us in a very solemn and special manner to associate ourselves in penitence and prayer with all those who deplore the divisions of Christian people, and are inspired by the vision and hope of a visible unity of the whole Church.

I. We believe that God wills fellowship. By God's own act this fellowship was made in and through Jesus Christ, and its life is in his Spirit. We believe that it is God's purpose to manifest this fellowship, so far as this world is concerned, in an outward, visible, and united society, holding one faith, having its own recognized officers, using God-given means of grace, and inspiring all its members to the world-wide service of the Kingdom of God. This is what we mean by the Catholic Church.

II. This united fellowship is not visible in the world today. On the one hand there are other ancient episcopal Communion in East and West, to whom ours is bound by many ties of common faith and tradition. On the other hand there are the great non-episcopal Communion, standing for rich elements of truth, liberty and life which might otherwise have been obscured or neglected. With them we are closely linked by many affinities, racial, historical and spiritual. We cherish the earnest hope that all these Communion, and our own, may be led by the Spirit into the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God. But in fact we are all organized in different groups, each one keeping to itself gifts that rightly belong to the whole fellowship, and tending to live its own life apart from the rest.

III. The causes of division lie deep in the past, and are by no means simple or wholly blameworthy. Yet none can doubt that self-will, ambition, and lack of charity among Christians have been principal factors in the mingled process, and that these, together with blindness to the sin of disunion, are still mainly responsible for the breaches of Christendom. We acknowledge this condition of broken fellowship to be contrary to God's will, and we desire frankly to confess our share in the guilt of thus crippling the Body of Christ and hindering the activity of his Spirit.

IV. The times call us to new outlook and new measures. The faith cannot be adequately apprehended and the battle of the Kingdom cannot be worthily fought while the body is divided, and is thus unable to grow up into the fullness of the life of Christ. The time has come, we believe, for all the separated groups of Christians to agree in forgetting the things which are behind and reaching out towards the goal of a reunited Catholic Church. The removal of the barriers which have arisen between them will only be brought about by a new comradeship of those whose faces are definitely set this way.

The vision which rises before us is that of a Church, genuinely Catholic, loyal to all truth, and gathering into its fellowship all "who profess and call themselves Christians," within whose visible unity all the treasures of faith and order, bequeathed as a heritage by the past to the

present, shall be possessed in common, and made serviceable to the whole Body of Christ. Within this unity Christian Communion now separated from one another would retain much that has long been distinctive in their methods of worship and service. It is through a rich diversity of life and devotion that the unity of the whole fellowship will be fulfilled.

V. This means an adventure of goodwill and still more of faith, for nothing less is required than a new discovery of the creative resources of God. To this adventure we are convinced that God is now calling all the members of his Church.

VI. We believe that the visible unity of the Church will be found to involve the wholehearted acceptance of:

The Holy Scriptures, as the record of God's revelation of himself to man, and as being the rule and ultimate standard of faith; and the Creed commonly called Nicene, as the sufficient statement of the Christian faith, and either it or the Apostles' Creed as the baptismal confession of belief; the divinely instituted sacraments of Baptism and the Holy Communion, as expressing for all the corporate life of the whole fellowship in and with Christ; 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.

VII. 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 a moment the spiritual reality of the ministries of those Communion 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 of present experience justify the claim which 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 continuity of the Church. But we greatly desire that the office of a bishop should be everywhere exercised in a representative and constitutional manner, and more truly express all that ought to be involved for the life of the Christian family in the title of Father-in-God. Nay more, we eagerly look forward to the day when through its acceptance in a united Church we may all share in that grace which is pledged to the members of the whole body in the apostolic rite of the laying-on of hands, and in the joy and fellowship of a eucharist in which as one family we may together, without any doubtfulness of mind, offer to the one Lord our worship and service.

VIII. We believe that for all, the truly equitable approach to union is by way of mutual deference to one another's consciences. To this end, we who send forth this appeal would say that if the authorities of other Communion should so desire, we are persuaded that, terms of union having been otherwise satisfactorily adjusted, bishops and clergy of our Communion would willingly accept from these authorities a form of commission or recognition which would commend our ministry to their congregations, as having its place in the one family life. It is not in our power to know how far this suggestion may be acceptable to those to whom we offer it. We can only say that we offer it in all sincerity as a token of our longing that all ministries of grace, theirs and ours, shall be available for the service of our Lord in a united church.

It is our hope that the same motive would lead ministers who have not received it to accept a commission through episcopal ordination, as obtaining for them a ministry throughout the whole fellowship.

In so acting no one of us could possibly be taken to repudiate his past ministry. God forbid that any man should repudiate a past experience rich in spiritual blessings for himself and others. Nor would any of us be dishonouring the Holy Spirit of God, whose call led us all to our several ministries, and whose power enabled us to perform them. We shall be publicly and

formally seeking additional recognition of a new call to wider service in a reunited Church, and imploring for ourselves God's grace and strength to fulfil the same.

IX. The spiritual leadership of the Catholic Church in days to come, for which the world is manifestly waiting, depends upon the readiness with which each group is prepared to make sacrifices for the sake of a common fellowship, a common ministry, and a common service to the world.

We place this ideal first and foremost before ourselves and our own people. We call upon them to make the effort to meet the demands of a new age with a new outlook. To all other Christian people whom our words may reach we make the same appeal. We do not ask that any one Communion should consent to be absorbed into another. We do ask that all should unite in a new and great endeavour to recover and to manifest to the world the unity of the Body of Christ for which he prayed.

[Source: Roger Coleman, ed. *Resolutions of the Twelve Lambeth Conferences 1867-1988* (Toronto: Anglican Book Centre, 1992), 45-38.]

**Appendix II: Excerpt from the Encyclical Letter  
from Geoffrey Cantuar to the Faithful in Jesus Christ, Lambeth 1948**

GOD IN HIS CHURCH

The Anglican Communion, as part of the Holy Catholic Church, exists to proclaim, the everlasting Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ to all the world and to be an instrument in the hand of God for the fulfilment of His purpose. Deep divisions have long existed within the Church itself, based in the main on divergent interpretations of its faith and order; but, in spite of our divisions, we still know that it is the will of Christ that we should seek to overcome our separations and find again our true unity in Him.

At every Lambeth Conference this question of unity comes before us; and, at our gathering this year, a great part of our time and thought has been devoted to this subject. We have been made conscious yet again of the hindrance to Christ's cause which springs from the fact that it is a divided Church which ministers to a divided world. We have heard with great thankfulness that in many parts of the world separated Churches are making new ventures towards unity.

Our chief concern has been with the Church of South India, in which, for the first time since the great division of Christendom at the Reformation, an act of union has taken place in which episcopal and non-episcopal traditions have been united. By that act four dioceses of the Church of India, Burma, and Ceylon, speeded by the consent and prayers of that Church, and encouraged by the advice of the last Lambeth Conference, have joined with former Methodists, Presbyterians, and Congregationalists in a more comprehensive expression of the Universal Church. The Conference gives thanks to God for the measure of unity thus locally achieved. At the same time it records that some features of the Constitution of the Church of South India give rise to uncertainty or grave misgivings in the minds of many, and hopes that such action may be taken as to and intercommunion may become full communion between the Church of South India and the Churches of the Anglican Communion. We have pledged ourselves to do all in our power, by consultation, work, and prayer to bring about that end.

On one particular question, the status of bishops and clergy, consecrated and ordained at or since the inauguration of the union, in the Church of South India, there is a divergence of opinion. A majority recognizes their status fully. A substantial minority feels bound to suspend judgement. No one of us desires to condemn outright or to declare invalid their ministry. No one of us wishes to limit the freedom of either the majority or the minority to act according to its own judgement. It has been a test of sincerity and charity to reach our conclusions. But it is only by costly effort that the unity of the Body of Christ can be restored.

There are movements towards union in other parts of the mission field, affecting the younger Churches. But the movement is no less strong in the English-speaking countries themselves. We feel more and more keenly the rift between the different parts of the Anglican Communion and the Protestant Churches; and we have a great desire to find a way forward to closer unity with them. In the United States, in Canada, in Australia, in the British Isles, there are projects and schemes of various kinds, some for organic union, some for a mutually recognized ministry. In our Report we mention certain guiding principles which should be borne in mind in all approaches to Reunion. We bid Godspeed to all those who are doing their utmost in different ways to set forward this work.

We also keep in mind our strong desire for a closer fellowship of Episcopal Churches. With some we are already in partial communion. Full intercommunion has been achieved with the Old Catholics since the last Conference, upon terms which should provide a model for such agreements. Each Communion recognizes the catholicity and independence of the other and

maintains its own, and while each believes the other to hold all the essentials of the Christian Faith, neither requires from the other the acceptance of all doctrinal opinion, or liturgical practice, characteristic of it.

Here we desire to set before our people a view of what, if it be the will of God, may come to pass. As Anglicans we believe that God has entrusted to us in our Communion not only the Catholic faith, but a special service to render to the whole Church. Reunion of any part of our Communion with other denominations in its own area must make the resulting Church no longer simply Anglican, but something more comprehensive. There would be, in every country where there now exist the Anglican Church and others separated from it, a united Church, Catholic and Evangelical, but no longer in the limiting sense of the word Anglican. The Anglican Communion would be merged in a much larger Communion of National or Regional Churches, in full communion with one another, united in all the terms of what is known as the Lambeth Quadrilateral.

It is well to keep this vision before us; but we are still far from its attainment, and until this larger Communion begins to take firmer shape, it would be only a weakening of the present strength and service of the Anglican Communion if parts of it were severed from it prematurely. If we were slow to advance the larger cause, it would be a betrayal of what we believe to be our special calling. It would be equally a betrayal of our trust before God if the Anglican Communion were to allow itself to be dispersed before its particular work was done.

In our Resolutions, we recommend that, in further schemes for reunion, care should be taken to see that they do not, unless for a brief time, put any member of our family of Churches out of communion with it and that they are not put into force unless after consultation with the rest of our family. That is a right and wise precaution. Yet we look to, and work for, the larger family, and we are thankful that in so many parts of the world other Churches are joined with us in working for it.

The Oecumenical Movement is one of the principal facts in the Christian life of our times. We cordially welcome the formation of the World Council of Churches as marking a notable stage in that movement, and we bid our people to pray that in and after its first Assembly, which follows quickly after our Conference, God will guide and direct all its operations.

Meanwhile it is our duty to make the life and witness of our own Communion strong and effective for its own work. To that end we are bound to preserve our unity in the tradition which we have received. Owing to the number and variety of the national Churches, provinces, and missionary dioceses within our fellowship, and the great distances which separate them from one another, problems arise which call for the application of a wise and sympathetic strategy. Our organized life will rightly be influenced by local colour and national culture, and will, in consequence, develop varied characteristics. But within this diversity it is essential to maintain such a unity of faith and order as will preserve its unity of purpose and spirit. We find the authoritative expression of that faith and order in the Book of Common Prayer, together with the Ordinal. This book is the heritage of the whole Communion, and, while revisions of it are made to suit the needs of different Churches, it provides our accepted pattern of liturgical order, worship, and doctrine which is to be everywhere maintained. We hope that, throughout the Anglican Communion, suitable steps will be taken in 1949 to celebrate the growth of the English Book of Common Prayer which had its beginning in the first English Prayer Book of 1549. Such celebrations will help to call to mind, and emphasize, the important position within the fellowship which the Book of Common Prayer has always held and the formative and unifying influence which it has exercised.

Among other proposals for increasing means of common consultation and action between the various parts of our Communion, two deserve special mention. The Conference desires the establishment, at St. Augustine's College, Canterbury, of a Central College, under a Council

representative of the whole Anglican Communion, to which priests and others from every part of our fellowship may come to study together and to learn from one another in an atmosphere of scholarship and common life.

Another proposal which has been approved is that of a Congress, to be held between Lambeth Conferences, elsewhere than in the British Isles, and to be attended by representative leaders, clerical and lay, from all parts of the Anglican Communion. The Church discharges its mission to the world through the devotion and work of its members. Its greatest need is for an increase in the number of men and women who will devote their lives to its service. We believe that Christ is calling many who are not aware of His call. From many lands the appeal is made for teachers in schools and colleges, for scholars to help in the training of clergy and catechists, for doctors and nurses. Nor does this exhaust the list. There is need for experts in agriculture, crafts, and domestic science, and in many of the welfare services. It is a call to young men and women who desire to do constructive work for Christ and for his people, and are ready for His sake to face difficulties and make sacrifices. Especially is there need for a great increase in the ordained ministry of the Church, to make good deficiencies which have accumulated before and during the war and to equip the Church to go forward. From every part of the Church comes the conviction that great opportunities can be taken, if the Church's ministry is strengthened by the coming into the ranks of the clergy of an increasing number of young men who hear the call of Christ, and are willing to give all to obey it.

But the Church can only fulfil its mission to mankind if every member of it is a faithful, disciplined, and instructed servant of Christ. Again and again, in our Resolutions and Reports, we recall our people to the obligations to which they are committed by their faith. Christ needs their service and witness in their everyday lives, in their homes, in work and industry, in all the activities of the community. One whole Report is devoted to Christian teaching about marriage and to the witness which Christian people must give to it. While we should not forget that faithful and happy marriages still far outnumber those that fail, yet the prevalence of divorce and the easy acceptance of it gravely threaten the stability of individual, home, and family life and cause great suffering to innocent children thus deprived of the security of home. We believe that there is, especially among younger people, the beginning of a revolt against the degrading of marriage and a desire for homes made stable by the vows of obligation and the bond of children. The Church owes it to those engaged to be married to help them to prepare for it. When there has been divorce and re-marriage, the Church must keep those concerned within its pastoral care and love, recognizing with sympathy and understanding the suffering and distress which have been inflicted upon many of them and desiring for the sinful penitence. The Church will not marry anyone who has been previously married save where no marriage bond as recognized by the Church still exists. It bids its members to uphold faithfully the life-long obligation of the marriage vow and to give no occasion for sin. But it cannot exclude from the love of Christ, nor does it exclude from its own fellowship, those who have come through bitter experience and look for help. About this matter there is a special urgency. But in every sphere of human life there is an insistent call to every Christian at this time to bear clear witness to the character of Christ and the principles of conduct which He enjoins.

For this witness there is needed the grace of Christ, which He promises to those who are of the household of faith. One Report emphasizes the importance of the careful administration of Baptism and Confirmation, whereby God gives entrance to that household. Another dwells on the essential place of private prayer and public worship. Another suggests a rule of life which every faithful Christian should observe. Through all these means, God in His love reaches us in the fellowship of His Church, to maintain in us the new life which is from above. He meets each in his or her own field of opportunity, service, and need: He unites us in the common bond of one faith, one worship, one Lord.

Finally, we would say a special word of recognition and encouragement to our clergy. In all parts of the world you have shepherded your flocks, strengthened their courage, and consoled

them in their sorrows, through some of the hardest trials mankind has ever known. On you, and on your people, we bid God's blessing.

Let the Church and all its members take fresh heart and hope. "In all things we are more than conquerors."

[Source: *Lambeth Conference 1948*, Part I (London, SPCK, 1948), 21-25.]