

Prolegomena To An Anglican Discussion of Authority:

The Role of History on The Current Crisis

By

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Introduction

The Problem

Authority is problematic. It is problematic in theory, and it is problematic in practice. According to the Lutheran theologian Günther Gassmann, "The issue of authority has been a perennial problem in the framework of Christian thinking, Christian life, and the church."¹ This general problem of Christian authority has at the present moment taken on unique features within the Anglican Communion, where today it threatens it with schism. Through this thesis I will investigate the history of the Anglican church around the question of authority and how this has led the Communion to its current crisis on the subject. The overarching argument of this thesis will be two-fold. First, that Anglicanism has historically never had an uncontested practice, or doctrine, of authority up to the present day. Second, that, because of this, the history of Anglicanism needs to play a much larger role in the current discussions around the crisis of authority as there is much to learn from it. There is no simple solution to the challenges that face the Communion, and none is put forward here. What this thesis seeks to do is offer up a modest starting point from which further discussions on the concept and practice of authority within Anglicanism can move forward from.

This thesis does not seek to address all aspects of the current crisis of within Anglicanism. The focus of this thesis is authority, and viewed through the history of Anglicanism. The differing of opinion on the theological questions about the

¹ Günther Gassmann, "Ecumenical Dialogues and Authority," in *Authority in the Anglican Communion: Essays Presented to Bishop John Howe*, ed. by Stephen W. Sykes (Toronto: Anglican Book Centre, 1987), 223.

legitimacy of divorce, female priests, and same-sex relationships in the last several decades have triggered the current crisis, but it is argued here that the ground for it has been laid since the start of the church of England and became more fertile to a crisis as the Anglican Communion grew. Therefore, opinions and thoughts on these important, but volatile theological questions are not given here. The topics are addressed only in so far as they provide a window into how authority is being used, and abused, within the Anglican Communion today.

Methodology

This thesis will primarily be an historical investigation of authority within Anglicanism. To do this, an overview of Anglican history with a focus on how the current understanding and use of authority can to be will be undertaken. Once the history has been laid out, an analysis of how the results of those historical events are playing out in the Anglican church today on the issue of same-sex relationships will occur with an eye to possible ways forward. Research for this thesis will use numerous sources, all of them written. Scholarly articles, books, primary documents, and news articles will all be brought together to further the argument.

Examining institutional authority in the Anglican Communion presents several challenges. Three will present particular difficulty for this paper. Firstly, the relationship between the Anglican Communion and the individual churches that make up that communion is a complex arrangement with multiple understandings of it among various Anglican theologians. Secondly, there is a variety of opinion and experience related to concepts of authority within the churches that make up the Anglican Communion. Thirdly, the nature of the Communion within the Anglican

church has developed over time and has not remained the same. Though these challenges will create difficulties of focus for this thesis, by following the history of the development of authority these knots can be untangled to a large extent and a cohesive view put forward.

As the concept of unity examined here is one of institutional unity, so to will the question of authority be examined on a structured church basis. Although many forms of authority exist within the church, it will be on the authority that is invested in the leadership of the church, particularly bishops and the four instruments of unity of the Anglican Communion,² that the discussion will be focussed. These types of authority rely on a higher authority that gives the legitimating authority. In the Anglican church this higher authority is scripture and tradition, but specific comment on this relationship will be reserved until chapter four. For intuitional authority to be effective, the lay members must recognize, trust, and be prepared to follow the direction and dictates of those who wield it. If the lay members do not follow those in official authority, the office loses its ability to speak for those within their church. It will be argued in this thesis that that has for a large extent occurred within the Anglican Communion to create the current crisis.

Throughout this thesis I will be approaching the thesis question from my vantage point as a theologically traditional Anglican. This means that I am self-consciously aware that I am working within the stream of Anglican history. What has come before in that tradition is to be respected and granted a high amount of authority. So what constraints, if any, does the past put the approach of this thesis?

² The four instruments being: The Archbishop of Canterbury, the Lambeth Conference, the Anglican Consultative Council, and the Primates' Meeting.

The Anglican church is a church with a long history, and events within that history have led to where the church is now. What weight should be given in the current discussion to things that held authority for Anglicans in the past, beyond the general constraint of being the events that lead us to the place we are in?

This question is a difficult one because it brings up the issue of circular reasoning. This thesis is looking at the concept of authority within the Anglican church using the historical documents and writings that the church has produced, but to use those documents in any kind of authoritative manner suggests that a theory of authority has already been embraced. This is unavoidable. All arguments rest on some initial ground, a starting place that is not fully proven by the argument put forward, but is consistent with what is built on top of it. You cannot examine the question of authority without using authorities, be they scripture, tradition, or yourself, but you can give compelling reasons for why you have chosen your initial ground from the arguments you have built on top of it.

The question of historical authorities within Anglicanism has often centered around the Thirty-Nine Articles, so we will use their example here. How much authority do these documents hold for the church today? In practice, it is clear that the authority of the Articles has been lessening. Laity were never required to subscribe to the Articles. English clergy are required to declare their assent to them, but what exactly that means has changed over time, with the assent becoming more ambiguous each time a new declaration is authorized for use. Many non-English churches within Anglicanism also consider the Thirty-Nine Articles to have some level of doctrinal

authority, but other churches do not make official mention of the Articles at all.³ The general position of most Anglicans can be summed up by former Archbishop Michael Ramsey when he said, "...It will be more than ever clear that the clergy accept the Thirty-Nine Articles as a statement of the church's historical position and not as a doctrinal definition for literal subscription."⁴ This is not, however, a universally accepted Anglican understanding of the Articles. Some, such as English Bishop Stephen Sykes, have argued that the Anglican church is a confessional church, and that the authority of the Thirty-Nine Articles must be maintained.⁵

Within this thesis the historical positions of the Anglican church, found in both official documents such as the Thirty-Nine Articles, the 1662 Prayer Book, and in the writings of its theologians, will be taken as normative. Two qualifications must immediately be made. First, many of the questions dealt with within the Anglican tradition were historically situated questions that do not have direct application for us today. For example, the Canadian Anglican church is not an established church; the many volumes written regarding questions of relationship between church and state within Anglican England are not directly applicable to our situation and are, therefore, not normative. However, they still have value and insights on the question of church-state relationship in general, just not specifics. Second, because of the nature of the Anglican tradition allows multiple understandings to exist within it, there will be times where differing views on topics both have equal claim to be historically

³ Peter Toon, "The Articles and Homilies," in *The Study of Anglicanism*, ed. Stephen Sykes, John Booty, and Jonathan Knight (Minnesota: Fortress Press, 2004), 151.

⁴Michael Ramsey, *Canterbury Pilgrim* (London: SPCK, 1974), 179.

⁵ Sykes, Stephen W., *The Integrity of Anglicanism* (Mowbrays: London, 1978), 42.

Anglican. In these situations, it is the breadth of views presented within the tradition that have claim to be normative. There may be no "Anglican position" on such questions, only a range of valid "Anglican positions." In these cases all acceptable Anglican positions must be considered when formulating which authority will be followed.

However, this position does allow boundaries to be setup for discussion on what authority means within the Anglican church. Boundaries are important to give form to discussion. If one is going to speak of authority within Anglicanism, one must first establish what is meant by Anglicanism, and that is what reference to its history has allowed us to do.

Review of Literature

Within the field of Anglican theology, on the question of authority, there are a few important modern writers that must be engaged. The first of these is Stephen Sykes whose book *The Integrity of Anglicanism* is a classic in this area. Sykes argues for an authority that is rooted in the history and tradition of the Anglican church: something that is distinctly Anglican. The ARCIC discussion allowed Sykes to illustrate what he believed would be the implications of Anglicans moving away from their tradition and embracing elements of Roman Catholicism in his article, "ARCIC and The Papacy: An Examination of The Documents On Authority." My own thinking on this topic has been heavily influenced by Sykes, and I hope to have brought his concern over a disappearing tradition to bare on the issues related to authority that have arisen within Anglicanism since he wrote in the late seventies and eighties.

Paul Avis is a currently active Anglican theologian whose work on a variety of

subjects – Ecumenicalism, polity, and ecclesiology – all touch on the matter of authority within the church. His work, *The Identity of Anglicanism: Essentials of Anglican Ecclesiology*, lays out his understanding of what makes the Anglicanism unique. Although he writes from a Church of England perspective, because of his involvement in the ecumenical movement he is able to highlight what sets Anglicanism in general apart from other denominations. Avis very much continues in the trajectory of Sykes in this work, but softens him somewhat to make room for Anglican theologians who want to view Anglicanism less as something distinct but more as the essentials of catholic Christianity.⁶ I believe that Avis was correct to do this. There is a rift between Sykes, who saw Anglicanism as unique, and Michael Ramsey, who saw it as the best of the great Christian tradition, that needs to be brought together to have a full picture of Anglicanism. Avis starts to try to find the middle way between them. A second book of his that figured heavily into this thesis is *Becoming a Bishop: A Theological Handbook of Episcopal Ministry*. This work has important discussions around the authority and role of the bishop in the Anglican church. Released in 2015, the information in this work takes into account how bishops are currently seen in the Anglican church. Lastly, Avis' book *Reshaping Ecumenical Theology: The Church Made Whole?* is not directly referenced in this thesis, however it was the starting point for my thinking on how the decisions the Anglican Communion makes effects, and is affected by, its ecumenical partners.

A theologian who is more critical of Sykes is Mark Chapman, whose book *Anglican Theology* provides a dissenting opinion to Sykes. Chapman sees

⁶ Paul Avis, *The Identity of Anglicanism: Essentials Of Anglican Ecclesiology* (London: Continuum, 2007), 40.

Anglicanism as having far less of a consistent tradition of its own, and instead is "both complex and contested and it is nowhere near as simple as some might claim."⁷ He makes this case by pointing to specific events within Anglican history and showing the contested theology in them and how those arguments are still ongoing in the church today. Although my sympathy is to a more consistent theological tradition within Anglicanism than Chapman would want, his method of looking at the historical precedents to current issues was followed in this thesis. There is no doubt much confusion within Anglican history on the question of authority, but until recently there was enough of an agreement thanks to the Elizabethan Settlement, The Thirty-Nine Articles, The Prayer Book, and the political power of the English Church, that the Communion could hold together. Within the first three of these things I would follow Sykes over Chapman in seeing an Anglican theological distinctiveness.

Another important Anglican theological voice is Philip Turner. Turner is an Episcopalian who is critical of the recent direction of his church. In an essay entitled "Episcopal Authority Within a Communion of Churches," he addresses how the role of bishop has changed from the person who would maintain peace in the church to being a prophetic witness.⁸ This is due to a societal shift in how authority itself is understood, and makes it unclear of the role of the bishop within the church today. The canons and history of Anglicanism want them to exercise authority in one way, while their congregations expect something different. Turner sees this as almost a Catch-22 for bishops, as any solution out of this would require a level of authority

⁷ Mark Chapman, *Anglican Theology* (London: Bloomsbury, 2012), 210.

⁸ Philip Turner, "Episcopal Authority Within a Communion of Churches" in *The Fate of Communion: The Agony of Anglicanism and the Future of a Global Church*, ed. by Ephraim Radner and Philip Turner (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 141.

they can no longer exercise. He therefore looks to bishops to go on doing their regular work as bishops, living exemplarily lives and striving for unity, but recognizing the crisis of authority is something on which the whole church must find a solution. I am in agreement with Turner that the solution cannot come just from bishops. We have seen that tried multiple times within the current crisis and each time it fails. Yet, I believe that bishops need to do more than he suggests. The church needs its own robust theology of authority, not one copied from the world around it. The bishops should have a major role to play in helping to shape this theology. Theologians can suggest ways of approaching the question, as I have in the final chapter, but it is the bishops who need to do the work of bringing the theology of authority to the church.

There are two Australian Anglicans who have recently made important contributions to the topic of authority. Jeffery W. Driver's book, *A Polity of Persuasion: Gift and Grief of Anglicanism*, argues that there has been a recent trend among the committees of the Anglican Communion to try to centralize authority that goes against the historical practice of authority in Anglicanism. What Driver wants to see instead is a polity that emphasizes persuasion more: "The emphasis on the minimizing of conflict through processes involving centralist and somewhat 'top-down' instruments, evident within Anglicanism in recent times, needs a balancing emphasis on the enabling of dialogue within diversity, disagreement in relationship and conflict within communion."⁹ Driver is correct that for most of Anglican history there was a very dispersed authority, but at the moment of the Elizabethan Settlement there was a queen enforcing her vision onto the church. It was only by the act of the

⁹ Jeffrey W. Driver, *A Polity of Persuasion: Gift and Grief of Anglicanism* (Eugene Oregon: Cascade Books, 2014), 89.

centralized monarch that Anglicanism was able to then move to a dispensed authority. Are the times calling again for a centralized authority? It does not seem that this question has received enough thought within the current discussion so during my own discussion of ARCIC I attempt to add to it.

The other Australian who has written on the topic recently is Bruce N. Kaye. In his book, *Conflict and the Practice of Christian Faith: The Anglican Experiment*, he argues for the legitimacy of diversity within a tradition. Local differences occur due to local situations and they should be embraced. This begs the question of what is an allowable local difference. No serious Anglican theologian is arguing for complete uniformity on all issues within Anglicanism, so the question is really around what doctrine and morals the whole communion should be held to. It is where that line is drawn in areas of sexuality that produces the divergence within Anglicanism we see today. Kaye's point is an important one. The Elizabethan Settlement was a search for a way to set up a wide boundary around the church where those within could have disagreements yet belong to the same church. However it did set borders, something that Kaye's proposal is in need of.

The American Anglican theologian Victory Lee Austin's book, *Up With Authority*, is a philosophical and theological argument for the importance of authority, both inside and outside the church. It is an important book in this field as it addresses the concept of authority primarily in a theological manner instead of a practical one. He provides arguments, several of which I adapt in Chapter 5, as to why we need authority in the church. I have tried in this essay to balance his approach of providing a theological argument for authority, with also introduce an historic argument for it,

both of which are required before engaging directly with the current crisis in Anglicanism.

John W. Howe and Sam C. Pascoe wrote the book *Our Anglican Heritage* as a way of explaining the basics of Anglican theology to the layperson. The Anglicanism presented in this book is very much an evangelical Anglicanism that views itself as a confessional church. This emphasis on the Thirty-Nine Articles as a confession that binds the Anglican church is out of favour with most western Anglican theologians today. Although true on paper, in many Anglican churches it is not often followed in practice. These differences are traced back to early differences within Anglicanism in the first chapter. This book served in this thesis more as an example of a particularly type of theology, than an influence on the theology of it.

In 1987 the book of essays *Authority in the Anglican Communion: Essays Presented to Bishop John Howe* was released. Although all of these essays helped to broaden my understanding of the subject, the essay "Towards a Theology and Practice of the Bishop-In Synod" by K.S. Chittleborough was of great assistance in understanding the interaction between bishops and synods. In the essay, Chittleborough also brings up questions of ARCIC's treatment of primacy in *Authority I*, which helped narrow my own questions on the subject in chapter four of this thesis.

Another collection of essays from the late eighties is *The Study of Anglicanism*. On the whole, this was the most useful book I could find on answering specific questions about the polity of Anglicanism, but also in gaining a general understanding of the character of Anglicanism due to the many different scholars that

contributed, including Stephen Sykes, Paul Avis, Henry Chadwick, Paul F. Bradshaw, Mary Tanner... etc. This thesis would have been much more difficult to write if this work did not exist.

Several official reports are used in this thesis. First there are the *Virginia Report* (1997) and the *Windsor Report* (2004). These two reports, created by the Anglican Communion, have played heavily into discussions around authority. Both, among other things, try to give an explanation of how structural authority within the Anglican Communion operates and then provide ways to improve it. Both are seen, although *Windsor* more so, as attempting to move the Anglican Communion in a more centralized direction. My concern with these reports in general, again more so the *Windsor Report*, is that although it recognizes there are underlying issues that need to be addressed within the Communion, it moves quickly to searching out structural solutions. One of the arguments of this thesis is that there is a lot of theological work that the church needs to be involved with before it can look to find structural solutions.

Another set of reports used in this thesis are the ARCIC reports on authority: *Authority I*, produced in 1976, *Authority II* and the *Elucidation On Authority*, produced in 1981, and *The Gift of Authority*, produced in 1998. The proposals developed within these documents for how authority could operate once full communion is reached between Anglicans and Roman Catholics are applied in this thesis to the current Anglican church. This is done to see if approaching the subject from a somewhat outsider perspective could provide a different way forward.

Outline

The first chapter will give an overview of the history of the Anglican Communion, from the Reformation in England to today as a global communion. This overview will focus on moments within its history where the practice of authority came to the forefront.

The second chapter will examine the role of bishops and synods within the Anglican Communion today. It will also address the place of conciliarism within Anglicanism

The third chapter will look at how the constraints created by this history are being played out today with the debates over same-sex relationships within Anglicanism. To do this case studies of what occurred in the diocese of New Westminster and the 2016 Primates Gathering will be performed.

The fourth chapter will engage with the understanding of authority that has come out of the Anglican Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC) discussions. Here the proposals put forward by ARCIC for how authority could operate if the Anglican and Roman Catholic Churches were to enter into full communion will be examined to see if there things in them that could assist the Anglican Communion in its current crisis.

The fifth chapter serves as a conclusion to the argument of thesis to this point. But it also offers up new thoughts on the importance of authority from a theological perspective, and points to important thoughts from Anglican history that need to be reflected on before any search for solutions to the current crisis are moved forward.

Chapter 1 – The Historical Situation of Authority in the Anglican Communion

"Authority in Anglicanism can always be questioned – repeat, always."
– Paul Avis

Introduction

The Christian church has, from its earliest days, had divisions over questions of authority. We read about James and John's request to sit at the right and left hands of Christ in Glory in the gospel according to Mark.¹⁰ Jesus rebuked this request and taught that one gains leadership by being the servant of others. In an alternative version of this story, Jesus is specific that how authority is handled within the church is in opposition to the world around it.¹¹ Though this broad understanding of authority was originally given to a small band of close followers, the church has tried to stay faithful to its intent as it has grown to a billion members.

Already in the days of saint Paul we see new challenges arising as the church began to grow: who has authority within the church; the reasons they have authority and not others; and what to do when those with authority clash. We see general answers to these play out in the stories of Acts and Paul's letters: apostles and those chosen by God have authority; they have it based on their connection to Christ and faithfulness to his teaching; and when there is disagreement they brought it to a council. These answers formed the framework that the Anglican Communion has used in the day-to-day leading of the church. However, new situations always arise,

¹⁰ Mark 10:35-44

¹¹ Matthew 20:25-26

new questions are asked, and how to be faithful to scripture, tradition, and arrive at a reasonable solution to these new practical problems means that the working through of questions of authority will continue. The history of the Anglican Communion is one such working out. This chapter will examine some major historical events and debates within the Anglican church that have informed its understanding of authority.

Formation of the Anglican Church

The Anglican church was formed out of a debate over authority, and the debate continues. Although it is fashionable among Anglicans to jump as quickly as possible to the Elizabethan Settlement when discussing the formation of the Anglican church, it is important to give time to the initial break with Rome under King Henry VIII when discussing the question of authority.

Henry's break with Rome came down to a question of authority: who had authority over the church in England? What precipitated this question to be asked – primarily Henry's desire of an annulment from Catherine of Aragon, but also the politics of the time and the need to raise funds for his war with France – are interesting, but for our purposes they are less important than the question itself. Henry's desire to take control of the church of England did not arise out of an historical vacuum. Past English kings had notoriously run into conflict with the church in disputes over authority. For example, Saint Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury, had numerous conflicts with both William II and Henry I, which lead to multiple exiles for Anselm, and the well-known history of Archbishop Thomas Becket's fight with Henry II over the power of secular courts over church clergy eventually lead to his murder. Although drawing a direct line from these earlier

incidents to Henry VIII's conflict would be difficult, as the events that caused the disputes over authority varied, it's clear that there was a long-standing conflict between the crown and the church in English history over that question. Henry VIII was not initially covering new ground when he quarrelled with the church.

New ground did break in how far Henry VIII went. No previous king had outright rejected the authority of the Pope over the church of England and put himself as its head. Henry gave himself complete authority within the English church with the Act of Supremacy:

...that the king, our sovereign lord, his heirs and successors, kings of this realm, shall be taken, accepted, and reputed the only supreme head in earth of the Church of England, called Anglicans Ecclesia; and shall have and enjoy, annexed and united to the imperial crown of this realm, as well the title and style thereof, as all honors, dignities, preeminences, jurisdictions, privileges, authorities, immunities, profits, and commodities to the said dignity of the supreme head of the same Church belonging and appertaining; and that our said sovereign lord, his heirs and successors, kings of this realm, shall have full power and authority from time to time to visit, repress, redress, record, order, correct, restrain, and amend all such errors, heresies, abuses, offenses, contempts and enormities.¹²

Uniting the church and crown under the king was a massive shift in authority.

Although Henry was content to allow the church to carry on much as it had done before entering his control (setting aside the dissolution of the monasteries and a vernacular Bible), the church now found itself not as something that could critique the crown, but something that was part of it. It was wedded to the fortunes and directions of the crown in a way that it was never before.

The effects of this marriage to the crown is clear in the subsequent history of the next three monarchs of England. While Henry, once he had set himself as the head

¹² Act of Supremacy, 1534.

of the church, did not set out to reform doctrine, under the short reign of his son Edward VI the Church of England moved in a very protestant direction. Once Edward died, his half-sister Mary assumed the throne and reverted the church back to Catholicism. After Mary's short reign, her half-sister Elizabeth I came to power. Elizabeth had a long reign, forty-five years, and with that time she was able to give a stability to the church that was lacking under the quick reigns of the previous two monarchs. She attempted to settle some of the disputes that had arisen within the church due to the swings in doctrine and practice under her predecessors.

Elizabeth received a church that was polarized between conservatives, who wanted to retain the doctrine of the church as much in line with Roman Catholic doctrine as possible, and those who wanted the church to fully embrace Protestantism. She needed to find a way to navigate between these two positions, which lead her to take moderate positions that attempted to garner as much support as possible. This can be seen in the 1559 Prayer Book that was published in the first year of Elizabeth's reign. This book was a revision of the 1552 Prayer Book that was released under Edward VI, but was suppressed under Mary.¹³ The revisions of 1559 were made to try to satisfy the conservatives. They included the removal of a petition against the Pope, more freedom in the choice of vestments that clergy could wear, and changes to the wording of the communion service that introduced more ambiguity, allowing for a more sacramental understanding. These were not large alterations, but, according to the theologian Mark Chapman, "However modest these seemed, to some these could

¹³ Marion J. Hatchett, "Prayer Books," in *The Study of Anglicanism*, ed. Stephen Sykes, John Booty, and Jonathan Knight (Minnesota: Fortress Press, 2004), 138.

be understood as an attempt to introduce a *via media*.¹⁴ And this is what Elizabeth needed: a document that could draw in those who were looking for a way forward and appeal to the moderates on each side.

As with the Prayer Book, so with the Thirty-Nine Articles. The articles that were released in 1571 were a revision of the Forty-Two Articles that were released in 1552 under Edward VI. The articles were drafted by clergy and then sent to the Queen for her approval, but instead of simply approving them she made personally made two changes. First, she removed the full text of Article 29:

The Wicked, and such as be void of a lively faith, although they do carnally and visibly press with their teeth (as Saint Augustine saith) the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ; yet in no wise are they partakers of Christ: but rather, to their condemnation, do eat and drink the sign or Sacrament of so great a thing.¹⁵

This article was removed, "in order to avoid giving offense to the Romanist party, whom she wished to retain within the Church."¹⁶ This was later put back in when hope of reconciliation with Rome was abandoned, but that the Queen would remove it when there was hope of such a reconciliation shows her as an overseer of doctrinal correctness within the Anglican Church. The second change she made was to add the opening of Article 20:

The Church hath power to decree Rites or Ceremonies, and authority in Controversies of Faith: and yet it is not lawful for the Church to ordain any thing that is contrary to God's Word written, neither may it so expound one place of Scripture, that it be repugnant to another. Wherefore, although the Church be a witness and a keeper of Holy Writ, yet, as it ought not to decree

¹⁴ Mark Chapman, *Anglican Theology* (London: Bloomsbury, 2012), 55.

¹⁵ Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion, Article 29.

¹⁶ E.J. Bicknell and H.J. Carpenter, *A Theological Introduction To The Thirty-Nine Articles*, 3rd ed. (Great Britain: University Press Glasgow, 1961), 14.

any thing against the same, so besides the same ought it not to enforce any thing to be believed for necessity of Salvation.¹⁷

This change made explicit that the church had the authority, within the bounds of scripture, to set up rites and ceremonies. This would prove to be an important article for the future of the Anglican church because it would cause controversy with the more Calvinistic protestant wing of the church in the future. Once again it shows her taking moderate path: new ceremonies can be introduced, but they must not be opposed to scripture.

Both of these changes show a Queen that saw herself as having, and using, her authority to guide the English church between the extremes, willing to compromise to find the middle way. This is reflected in how Article 37 portrays the role of the monarch:

...we give not our Princes the ministering either of God's Word, or of the Sacraments...but that only prerogative, which we see to have been given always to all godly Princes in holy Scriptures by God himself; that is, that they should rule all estates and degrees committed to their charge by God, whether they be Ecclesiastical or Temporal, and restrain with the civil sword the stubborn and evil-doers.¹⁸

Because the church exists in England it falls under the monarch of England to be responsible for it. The article states that the monarch's role is not to interpret scripture for the people, nor is it to minister the sacraments. So then is the monarch's role? As a monarch wants a well-ordered state, so too do they want a well-ordered church. If there are disputes within the church of the nation they will cause dissent within the nation as a whole. It is the monarch's role to ensure this does not occur. This follows the pattern that Constantine set down long before with his calling of a council to force

¹⁷ Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion, Article 20.

¹⁸ Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion, Article 37.

the bishops of settle the question of the relationship between God and Christ. Here, Elizabeth produced a prayer book and created Articles to find a way forward for a divided church.

The Prayer Book and Articles are the result of Elizabeth's endeavours in church unity, but they don't fully tell the story of how she was able to have them put in place. Although Article 37 is clear that it is not the job of the monarch to minister the word of God, it says nothing about monarchs not being allowed to have their own private opinions on what the word of God means. Elizabeth clearly did have her own views. By aiming for a middle way of unity, she was in fact rejecting both the Catholic and Calvinistic protestant extremes. To have the church follow her views, she needed allies that would minister the word of God in the way that she saw fit. Even though she was monarch, for her views to become the law of the land she needed the support of both the House of Commons and the House of Lords. The House of Lords was made up both of nobility and bishops who were in favour of Catholicism when Elizabeth came to power. After trying and failing to have her laws regarding religion passed by these bishops, she resorted to removing the bishops that disagreed with her and installing ones that did. By the end of her reign, she had put in place seventeen bishops who had been exiled under Mary's Catholic reign.¹⁹ So, although on paper Elizabeth's authority in matters of interpreting the scriptures for her nation did not exist, she had the power to choose who did that interpretation. She used her power to remove those who disagreed with her and make bishops of those who agreed. By using this authority, she created a stable church for her reign that cautiously attempted to navigate the *via media*. We see then two types of authority in

¹⁹ Mark Chapman, *Anglican Theology* (London: Bloomsbury, 2012), 54.

Elizabeth: an outward appeal to keep as many within the church as possible, but also an internal organizational authority to allow her outward appeal to take place.

The type of authority we do not see in Elizabeth's church, or for that matter in Henry's earlier church, is the creation of a strong centralized authority. There was never a replacement for the Pope. Bishops were retained, and given more authority than they had under the Roman Catholic system, as we will see in the next chapter, but there was no centralized body to manage them. The crown came as close to the role of the Pope as any, Elizabeth creating for herself the title 'Supreme Governor of the Church of England' (a somewhat more humble title than Henry's 'Supreme Head'), but outside of setting limits on how far the church would go in its Reformation towards Protestantism and selecting bishops, the crown was not involved in the day-to-day running of the church. The crown was, after all, responsible for the country as a whole and the church was only part of it, though important. This allowed, as we will see, a diversity of views to take hold within the English church, among both the laity and ordained.

So why was no centralized authority structure created? There are at least two answers to this. First, the theologians behind the English Reformation saw no clear centralized authority of the church in the New Testament.²⁰ They saw Apostles, who they believed lead to bishops, meeting in council to make decisions, but they didn't see a human authority dictating down to them. Second, the crown would not have

²⁰ Gillian R. Evans, "The Anglican Doctrine of Primacy." *Anglican Theological Review* 72, no. 4 (September 1990): 366-370 has a discussion on the doctrine of primacy and what positions early leading Anglican theologians took on it. Although there were differences, nothing corresponding directly to a Pope for England was envisioned.

been keen to set up a powerful church authority that could challenge it.²¹ If the crown gave enough authority to the bishops to run the church on their own, yet retain enough authority within the church to be able to step in and have their way followed when a dispute that concerned them arose, tensions between the Roman English church and crown that had marked its history to this point would be reduced. At least, that was the theory.

Living Within Elizabeth's Framework

The Elizabethan Settlement was a success, but it was not an unqualified one. Elizabeth was able to hold the church together by carving out a space for it in the moderate center, between the Roman Catholic and Calvinistic Protestant extremes. The Settlement worked by allowing enough ambiguity that moderates from each side could still maintain enough of their own beliefs within the church alongside each other. This was a fragile unity because any center space is always under strain from the edges, and the Church of England was no exception. Three parties quickly arose within the church: Puritans, High-Church, and Latitudinarianism. Each of these in their mild form could function within the groundwork laid out in the Settlement, but each in its most rigorous form was also a challenge to the Settlement.

The Puritans wished to continue the reformation of the church of England and turn it completely protestant. They placed a high importance on scripture and believed all church life should be regulated by it and it alone. This included not only how worship was performed (rituals, vestments, music... etc.), but also how the church was lead. Puritans did not see a scriptural precedent for the role of bishop. They

²¹ Henry's experience obtaining an annulment was not going to be repeated.

accepted the office of the priest, but saw nothing in scripture that made a separate role of bishop.²² This put them at odds with the Settlement, which maintained the office of bishop.

The High-Church party was the opposite of the Puritans. They wished to restore much of the pre-reformation rituals and practice to the church: "Broadly speaking, High Churchmen stressed the apostolic order and authority of the visible Church and valued obedience to its ordinances and liturgy."²³ This put them into direct conflict with Puritans, but also created tension with the Settlement as they pushed the boundaries of what was acceptable ritual further and further.

Both the Puritan and High-Church movements would both eventually come into direct conflict with the church. The Puritan conflict would become a political one, leading to the English Civil War and the regicide of Charles I. During the time of the English Republic, Puritan religious doctrine and practices, as laid out in the Westminster Confession, would be imposed on the English church. Once the monarchy was restored, doctrine and practice returned to what they were before the revolution, albeit with more latitude allowed in practice than before due to a reaction against the Puritanism that was overthrown. Some Puritans re-entered the fold of the Anglican church, maintaining their private objections to many of the practices of the church but not openly dissenting, while others refused and remained dissenters outside of it.

²² Richard A. Norris, Jr. "Episcopacy," in *The Study of Anglicanism*, ed. Stephen Sykes, John Booty, and Jonathan Knight (Minnesota: Fortress Press, 2004), 335.

²³ Perry Butler, "From the Early Eighteenth Century to the Present Day," in *The Study of Anglicanism*, ed. Stephen Sykes, John Booty, and Jonathan Knight (Minnesota: Fortress Press, 2004), 35.

The High-Church party eventually reached its most extreme form with the Oxford movement. The attempt by the Oxford movement to re-interpret the history of the Anglican Church in a way that minimized its Protestant leanings while finding a greater acceptance of Roman Catholicism within it, caused much conflict. Given the reaction their ideas invoked within the Anglican Church, some of the movement's leaders left to join the Roman Catholic Church. However, the influence of those who left, as well as that of those who did not leave, remained within the Anglican church and brought about a doctrinal, and eventually liturgical renewal in those that followed them.

Latitudinarianism is different from both Puritanism and the High-Church movements, and came as a response to both of them. Whereas the former movements advocated for either side of the divide that the Settlement was meant to bridge, Latitudinarianism was an effort to change the Settlement itself. The Settlement set down boundaries of what was acceptable within the Church of England because it was believed that what occurred in worship and doctrine was important and should have some level of unity across the church. Latitudinarians challenged this belief and downplayed the importance of having unified views within the church; instead, they were "willing to allow wide latitude of religious belief within a broadly tolerant Church, and to accommodate their allegiance to new political realities."²⁴ This party viewed the conflicts between the Puritan and High-Church parties as being less important matters than personal piety.²⁵ The desire for the Latitudinarians was

²⁴ Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Christianity: The First Three Thousand Years* (New York: Penguin, 2011), 734.

²⁵ John Spurr, "'Latitudinarianism' and the Restoration Church," *The Historical Journal* 31,

therefore to expand the Settlement, making it more inclusive by having it demand less agreement of those in the church.

Each of these parties, Puritan, High-Church, and Latitudinarian, are an historic movement within the Anglican church, but they can also be seen as broad understandings of different views of authority that appear within Anglican history in different combinations down to the present. The Puritan understanding is one that places the highest authority on scripture, challenging the church to remain true to what it confessed to be believed. The High-Church movement brings forward tradition as an authoritative guide, connecting the church to its past and catholicity. Latitudinarianism aims to see authority in those that show personal piety, while downplaying the importance of tight doctrinal agreement within the church. As long as each of these viewpoints do not go to the extreme, there is room within the Settlement for them, but having them within the same church leads to continued tensions. How does one lead a church whose members disagree with each other on what authority they are following? How does one lead when the people over whom you have authority on paper do not recognize the source of your authority in different matters? How is the church led when there is disagreement over authority even among the leadership?

At the start of the Elizabethan Church the answer to these questions could be somewhat answered by the monarch who occupied the role of Governor of the Church of England. They could put people who agreed on authority into leadership, they could keep a balance of the various views on authority within the church, and they could set out definite positions on what was required to be believed and practised

no. 1 (March, 1988): 78-79.

to be Anglican. However, Elizabeth monarch's power over the church quickly began to lessen.²⁶ After the English Civil War, the Anglican church was restored, but it was no longer the only church in the land. The Puritan dissenters who were forced out of the church of England formed their own illegal churches. Eventually in 1689, with the 1689 Act of Toleration, they were legally allowed to do this.²⁷ This created a situation where the monarch was the governor of a church, but that church did not include all the monarch's subjects, lessening the importance of a unified Anglican church from a national perspective. As well, at the Restoration, the body known as the 'Court of High Commission,' which functioned as a judicial enforcement body for the monarch's ecclesial laws, was not revived and Parliament, "effectively sheared the supremacy of much of its authority by placing most of the enforcement of religious legislation into the hands of government authorities."²⁸ These specific changes, combined with the historical shift in power from the monarch to parliament, lead, over time, to the lessening of Royal Supremacy to the figurehead position it now has. The effects of this lack of a single voice giving direction will be examined further in

²⁶ A.G. Dickens, *The English Reformation: Second Edition* (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1993) 358-359.

"Over matters of dogma and ritual Elizabeth did not exercise the same personal and quasi-papal control. Moverover she had a partner. Parliament, having enhanced its status during the minority of her brother, was not becoming a co-ordinate power rather than a mere agent. Parliament now defined certain aspects of the Queen's legal authority over the Church. In effect it told her to act through ecclesiastical commissioners and it defined rather narrowly their powers. Never again could England see a viceregent like Thomas Cromwell, a personal deputy of the King, lording it over the episcopate in Convocation. And while Elizabeth took no small part in controlling the policies of the Anglican Church, she exercised her influence indirectly, often covertly and with an infuriating reluctance to appear responsible for contentious rulings."

²⁷ Mark Chapman, *Anglican Theology* (London: Bloomsbury, 2012), 159.

²⁸ William P. Haugaard, "From the Reformation to the Eighteenth Century," in *The Study of Anglicanism*, ed. Stephen Sykes, John Booty, and Jonathan Knight (Minnesota: Fortress Press, 2004), 26.

the next two chapters. For the moment it is enough to suggest that, with a lack of central authority, the role of bishop was pressured to include peacemaker, making it more of a politicalized role than a pastoral role.

From Church to Communion

Although the question of authority in the Church of England is important for the Anglican Communion as a whole, since it is the heritage of all the daughter churches in the Communion, it is also important to look at how the history of Anglicanism spreading across the globe bears on the question.

Generally, Anglicanism went where the British empire went. However, the church's success has varied dramatically between formerly British colonial nations. For example, in Uganda nearly half the population is Anglican, while in Pakistan it is less than one percent.²⁹ There have also been nations that were not former British colonies that now, through mission work, have Anglican churches in them, such as Japan, Korea, and Mexico.³⁰ In some of these nations the mission work was carried on not by the church but through missionary societies. For example, in North America the Anglican church was not self-sufficient in the 1700s outside of a few small areas. This state of affairs caused Rev. Dr. Thomas Bray to seek permission from King William III to found the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, which sent priests and teachers to North America.³¹ This created both a situation where an organization

²⁹ International and Development Affairs Committee of the Board for Social Responsibility, *From Power to Partnership: Britain in the Commonwealth The Church of England in the Anglican Communion* (England: Church House Publishing, 1991), 46.

³⁰ "Member Churches," Anglican Communion, accessed November 6, 2016, <http://www.anglicancommunion.org/structures/member-churches.aspx>.

³¹ John W. Howe, and Sam C. Pascoe, *Our Anglican Heritage, 2nd ed* (Eugene Oregon:

outside of the church hierarchy was sponsoring the teaching of the faith in many parts of the world, and those teaching that faith were largely cut off from contact with the church hierarchy by distance.

The growth of the Anglican Church outside of England was dramatic.

According to the Anglican historian J.R.H. Moorman,

In the year 1800 *Ecclesia Anglicana* meant the established Church of the people living in England, Wales, and Ireland with a handful of Episcopalians in Scotland and a few English people living overseas. By 1900 the whole thing had changed. What has been a national Church had now become universal and supra-national, extending over practically the whole world...³²

This rapid growth created new challenges for the Anglican Church. As the church was spreading, thought was not given to how it would be governed, or the relationship of the Church of England to these daughter churches. At the time it was a simple question of spreading the gospel (missionary work) or providing spiritual care to Britons living overseas (colonialism). These questions came to the forefront with the quick growth of the daughter churches.

Theoretically, since the time of Archbishop Laud (1663-1645), Anglicans who lived outside of Britain were under the authority of the Bishop of London.³³ But this was quickly shown to be ineffective with the growth of the Anglican Church in North America. Although there was a desire to setup a bishopric in America, these failed due political difficulties in both America and England. With Revolutionary War in

Cascade Books, 2010), 116-117.

³² John R. H. Moorman, *A History of the Church in England*, (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1953), 400-401.

³³ Perry Butler, "From the Early Eighteenth Century to the Present Day," in *The Study of Anglicanism*, ed. Stephen Sykes, John Booty, and Jonathan Knight (Minnesota: Fortress Press, 2004), 39.

American things became even more difficult. Even though the clergy of Connecticut had chosen Samuel Seabury to be their bishop, "Law forbade the Archbishop of Canterbury to consecrate a 'foreigner'."³⁴ This caused the American church to look to the Scottish disestablished Episcopal Church for consecration. In 1784, Seabury was so consecrated bishop and to America brought back the Scottish idea of synodical church governance. In 1786, the law was changed in England to allow the Archbishop of Canterbury to consecrate foreigners, which resulted in several more bishops being ordained for North America as well as the West Indies and Australia.

Even with bishops of their own, these churches of England, outside of England, were still very much connected to British culture and tradition. However, with the growth of these churches in the 1800s, this connection between "Anglican" and "British" began to be loosened. As the common cultural identity began to fade, the question of the relationship between the English church and the daughter churches began to come to the forefront. By the mid-1800s, some daughter churches had begun to experiment with synods of their own, but the road to self-governance was a long process. It was not until the fifth Lambeth Conference in 1908 that a clear, consistent, message on the subject was given to the Anglican church as a whole, by the Anglican Communion when it, "boldly went ahead to encourage independence and autonomy, the establishment of native episcopates, and the adaptation of services, discipline, and organization of the Church to local needs."³⁵ But by that time, synodical government

³⁴ Perry Butler, "From the Early Eighteenth Century to the Present Day," in *The Study of Anglicanism*, ed. Stephen Sykes, John Booty, and Jonathan Knight (Minnesota: Fortress Press, 2004), 40.

³⁵ John R. H. Moorman, *A History of the Church in England*, (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1953), 402.

had been in practice for several years in many parts of the communion, formed by necessity as decisions could not always wait to cross the great distances back to England. New Zealand had a cleric-only Synod first in 1847 and, in 1853, the first synod ever in British colonies to have lay participation occurred in Toronto.³⁶ Even with the Lambeth Conference declaration, the Archbishop of Canterbury was still setting up autonomous Anglican provinces in Africa in the 1950s. Not only was the road to self-governance long, it was also uneven, moving quicker in some areas of the world than others.³⁷

The path that Anglicanism followed from church to communion mirrors the events of the British Empire's movement towards Commonwealth. This comparison was made in *From Power to Partnership*, a report from the Church of England's Board for Social Responsibility, that pointed to several parallels. The ones that most matter for this thesis are the historic and organizational parallels.

First, the historic parallels. Anglicanism expanded with the empire. Although there are exceptions, the two flourished in unison. Anglican missions were run like British colonial administration stations and, as the British Empire lost influence in a region and gave up all (e.g. America) or parts of its authority (e.g. Canada), so was the Anglican church in that region given more autonomy.³⁸

³⁶ Thomas R. Millman, "Beginnings of the Synodical Movement in Colonial Anglican Churches with Special Reference to Canada," *Journal Of The Canadian Church Historical Society* 21, (1979): 6,9.

³⁷ At this point it in the paper it becomes more appropriate to speak of the Anglican Communion instead of the Anglican Church as there are now several independent churches that call themselves Anglican and are in communion with each other. When referring to the Anglican church in a specific nation the name of the nation will be used, ie. Anglican Church of England.

³⁸ International and Development Affairs Committee of the Board for Social Responsibility, *From Power to Partnership: Britain in the Commonwealth The Church of England in the Anglican*

There are also organizational parallels to the current Commonwealth. First, both are made up of independent members who cannot have their internal policies dictated to by another member. Second, the parliament structure that has been adopted by commonwealth countries is similar to the synod structure within the Anglican communion. There are also correlations in the various conferences between the heads of the commonwealth nations and the primates meeting within the communion. Thirdly, the role of the Queen as head of the commonwealth is similar to that of the Archbishop of Canterbury's role in the Communion. Both have an historic connection to their given bodies, but the authority they hold outside of England is more figurehead and not actual.³⁹

We see then in the Anglican Communion today the lack of any centralized authority. Each church is independent and free to make its own judgments. What holds the churches together is a shared past, a shared commitment to each other, and, mostly, a shared faith. To strengthen and give further institutional shape to these connections, a structure has developed that allows the independent Anglican churches to work together. Known as the instruments of communion, they are made up of The Archbishop of Canterbury, The Lambeth Conference, The Anglican Consultative Council, and The Primates Meeting.

None of these instruments has authority over an Anglican church. According to the *Virginia Report*, the Archbishop of Canterbury, "is neither a supreme legislator

Communion (England: Church House Publishing, 1991), 41-42.

³⁹ International and Development Affairs Committee of the Board for Social Responsibility, *From Power to Partnership: Britain in the Commonwealth The Church of England in the Anglican Communion* (England: Church House Publishing, 1991), 42-43.

nor a personification of central administrative power, but as a pastor in the service of unity, offers a ministry of service, care, and support to the Communion."⁴⁰

The Lambeth Conference meets traditionally every ten years and includes all the bishops within the Anglican Communion. While not legislative, "it offers the opportunity to bishops who come from churches in different cultures and social and political contexts, and with different agendas and problems, to live together, to worship together, to join in Bible study together, and to listen to each other."⁴¹ There is a sense that the Lambeth Conference has the most clout of all the instruments of communion as it has the most representation of the various Anglican churches.

The Consultative Council "is to represent the concerns of the Communion, in the Communion and for the Communion."⁴² The Consultative Council was created by Resolution 69 from the 1968 Lambeth Conference, and although it owes its genesis to that Conference it was created as a separate body not bound to follow directions from Lambeth. This is the one instrument that includes laity. It is also the only one that has a set constitution, approved of by member churches, which lays out the specific role that it has: "To advance the Christian religion and in particular to promote the unity and purposes of the Church of the Anglican Communion in mission, evangelism, ecumenical relations, communication, administration and finance."⁴³

⁴⁰ Inter-Anglican Theological and Doctrinal Commission, *The Virginia Report*. (London: Partnership House, 1997), 6.2.

⁴¹ Inter-Anglican Theological and Doctrinal Commission, *The Virginia Report*. (London: Partnership House, 1997), 6.8.

⁴² Inter-Anglican Theological and Doctrinal Commission, *The Virginia Report*. (London: Partnership House, 1997), 6.25.

⁴³ The Articles of Association of The Anglican Consultative Council, section 4.

The Primates Meeting is made up of all the heads of the various Anglican church bodies around the world and "provides the opportunity for mutual counsel and pastoral care and support of one another and of the Archbishop of Canterbury."⁴⁴

As these descriptions show, the approach taken to authority within the communion is collaborative, where consensus is reached through dialogue and spending time with each other. What is said in these meetings and conferences is binding on the Anglican Communion in so far as every church accepts what is agreed upon in them. This approach has been fairly successful in maintaining unified Anglican positions, but has, since the 1980s, began to show its weaknesses.

We showed earlier how there have always been divisions within the Church of England on questions of authority between different parties: Puritans who place an emphasis on scripture, High-Church who emphasize tradition, and Latitudinarians who emphasize personal piety. As the Church of England spread, so too did these divisions. They can now be seen in any Anglican Church that is examined. What has also occurred is that individual Anglican churches have taken on the character of versions of specific parties. This is not to suggest that a uniformity within the national Anglican churches exists, far from it, but that a dominant party viewpoint has arisen. The churches of the Global South have come to see scripture, and a more literal reading of it, as being the primary authority, while the Churches of the North have taken a position that privileges personal piety and freedom and lessened their appeals to doctrinal rigidity over time.⁴⁵ The traditionalists have by and large become less of a

⁴⁴ Inter-Anglican Theological and Doctrinal Commission, *The Virginia Report*. (London: Partnership House, 1997), 6.28.

⁴⁵ The strong personal piety of the Latitudinarians has morphed over time to allow the

force within any Anglican national church as they have created their own churches or joined themselves to other traditional communions.⁴⁶

Linking the southern churches to scripture and the northern churches to personal piety is not meant to exclude one from the other. Of course personal piety matters in southern churches and scripture matters in the northern ones, but the lenses through which these churches view authority are curved in very particular ways. These lenses were shaped by historical experience: who brought the gospels to the northern and southern churches and what has occurred in their nations since. It is not a judgment on either church to point out what has become the dominant way of looking at authority.

In the 1980s, the issues of divorce and female ordination were brought to the fore and divisions occurred both within Anglican churches and the Anglican Communion itself. A way forward through the divisions remaining within the Communion over the topic was searched for at Lambeth 1988, but soon after the issue homosexuality (if it is sinful behaviour or not and if it should be considered during ordination) came to dominate and deepened divisions to the point where many bishops from the Global South refused to attend the Lambeth Conference of 2008 and formal schisms within national Anglican churches occurred. Alternative structures for

emergence of the atomic individual we see in the northern churches. Piety itself in these churches has often moved away from a focus on the traditional biblical notion of sin to a focus on other concerns seen to a greater or lesser degree in scripture such as the environment, or other political causes. Yet this is still a piety, with rituals and penitence imposed on oneself to ensure they are devoted to the cause.

⁴⁶ Many traditionalists have formed their own churches, outside of communion with other Anglican Churches such as The Traditional Anglican Communion (<http://traditionalanglicancommunion.org/>) . Others have joined the Roman Catholic Church and through pastoral provision have been allowed to retain certain elements of their Anglican liturgy, while since late 2009 others have been able to enter the Roman Catholic Church through the personal ordinariate.

fellowship, such as the Global Anglican Futures Conference (GAFCON), were created by those churches holding to traditional views on sexuality, which included both churches that have remained within the traditional Anglican Communion and those that have left it. Today, the Anglican Communion's instruments of unity have broken down because various churches are unwilling to use them to even talk to each other. Yet they still remain the only structures that exist within the Anglican Communion to heal divisions.

Conclusion

In this brief encounter with Anglican history we have seen how confused the question of authority in the Anglican Communion has been from its earliest days, and continues to be today. Anglican engagement with the question of authority has been influenced by the political realities of Tudor England. From that starting point, a muddle of different structures have developed: governance with no central authority; maintaining bishops and embracing synods; doctrine being located in historical prayer books and Articles whose authority has always invoked differing opinions; a history of disputing theological parties; and a worldwide structural arrangement of churches created in a haphazard way. The results of this muddled legacy are seen throughout the Anglican Communion today: national churches have split over theological questions and practices; provinces that do not speak to other provinces; rejection of the instruments of communion; and attempts to create new structures within the Communion.

Chapter 2 – Exercising Authority

"Even when I was Archbishop of Wales and working with new bishops, I used to say, not realising quite how true it was, 'One of the things you will do as a bishop is disappoint people.'"
– Rowan Williams

Introduction

In the previous chapter the main historical pressures that played a role in the forming the question of authority within the Anglican Communion were laid out. We will now examine the polity that developed due to these historical pressures, in particular looking at the role of the bishop. Bishops have historically been the authority within the Anglican Communion, but recently the authority held by this role has been weakening. Here we will look at both how and why that has occurred.

What is a Bishop?

A Contentious Beginning

Anglicans are somewhat unique among Protestants for maintaining the role of bishop.⁴⁷ During the Reformation, when many Protestant groups were casting off the ecclesial hierarchy of Roman Catholicism, Anglicanism decided to keep it. This decision was not without controversy. During the reign of Elizabeth I, Puritans within the Church of England began to actively work for the "abolition of episcopacy and the establishment of a Presbyterian type of church government with a form of worship which gave complete liberty to the minister."⁴⁸ Bishops were rejected by the Puritan

⁴⁷ Some, but not all, Lutheran denominations have bishops. Methodists also have bishops, but that heritage flows from their birth out of Anglicanism.

⁴⁸ John R. H. Moorman, *A History of the Church in England*, (London: Adam and Charles

party, because Puritans believed that a group of Christians had the right to elect their own ministers. Their ministers did not need to receive ordination from any source outside of the local church. They also held that the role of the bishop was a custom that the church had adopted, but was not commended by scripture, and that the role of bishop was the same as a local minister.⁴⁹ During the period of the English Commonwealth the episcopacy was done away with, but during the Restoration it was brought back and remains within Anglicanism to today.⁵⁰

Over and against the Puritan view, the episcopacy was maintained within Anglican for three reasons. First, there was a biblical argument to be made for bishops. The difference between the sending of the twelve and seventy in Luke 9 and 10 could show distinct orders within those commissioned by Christ, and the letters of Timothy and Titus seem to set bishops above other elders.⁵¹ Second, there was an historical argument to make as bishops had a long history within the Church that was testified to by early Christian writers. Third, although bishops presented issues to the crown in their sometimes opposition to its religious policies, it was an historic relationship that the crown had the upper hand in at the time of the Reformation. According to Dickens, "To preserve sovereignty and the chain of command it was

Black, 1953), 209.

⁴⁹ E.J. Bicknell and H.J. Carpenter, *A Theological Introduction To The Thirty-Nine Articles*, 3rd ed. (Great Britain: University Press Glasgow, 1961), 332-333.

⁵⁰ John R. H. Moorman, *A History of the Church in England*, (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1953), 250.

⁵¹ Richard A. Norris, Jr. "Episcopacy," in *The Study of Anglicanism*, ed. Stephen Sykes, John Booty, and Jonathan Knight (Minnesota: Fortress Press, 2004), 335.

safer to retain the clerical hierarchy."⁵² If bishops were done away with and local congregations could select their own ministers, the crown would lose their ability to influence the religion of its people through selection of their leaders. Instead of dealing with a couple religious leaders who opposed the crown's policies, but could have a large amount of persuasion exerted on by the crown, the crown would run the risk of many leaders possibly disagreeing who were not as easy to persuade. With the monarch being one of the driving forces behind the creation of the Anglican church, it was important to keep the hierarchy in place.

Types of Bishops

The Anglican Communion divides itself up by geographic areas, the most important of which is the dioceses. It is at this level that the bishop resides. He or she is the chief pastoral leader of this geographic area. Because the bishop cannot be at all places at once within the diocese, it is broken into smaller areas called parishes. Within a parish is a church congregation that is lead by a priest to whom the bishop has delegated authority. This priest is responsible for the spiritual well-being of the people who reside within the parish. This delegation of authority in a local congregation to a priest allows the bishop freedom and time to focus on issues effecting the whole diocese: connecting the various parishes together; representing the universal church within them; ensuring the teaching of the catholic faith within the parishes; ordaining clergy; keeping harmony and peace within their diocese. It also sets up the bishop as a resource for clergy to go to for their own spiritual benefit. The bishops fulfill the role as pastor for the clergy under them.

⁵² A.G. Dickens, *The English Reformation: Second Edition* (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1993) 351.

The diocesan bishop is the authoritative office within the Anglican Communion polity. They have the final say in determining the direction and decisions taken within their diocese and cannot directly interfere with what is occurring within another bishop's diocese. To help maintain community and order, there are two other levels of bishops within Anglican polity, but unless a diocesan bishop has gone directly against the canons and laws of the Anglican Church they cannot step in and override a diocesan bishop. The first is the Metropolitan bishop, also sometimes known as an archbishop. This is a bishop who has responsibility for several dioceses, known as a province. The Metropolitan provides guidance for local diocesan bishops, and must give their approval of the selection of any new diocesan bishop within their province.⁵³

The second is the Primate. This role is also known as the national bishop as they have responsibility for all the provinces within a contemporary nation-state. Their responsibility for the national church as a whole does not, however, translate into direct authority over each diocese. They represent the provinces of the communion under their responsibility at the Primate's meeting and ecumenical gatherings, and can make statements on behalf of the church. They help guide the direction of the national church, but they cannot force a diocese bishop to take a particular action. To even preach and perform the sacraments within a diocese, the Primate must have approval of the diocesan bishop.⁵⁴ Their authority comes from the

⁵³ Paul Avis, *Becoming a Bishop: A Theological Handbook of Episcopal Ministry* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), 117.

⁵⁴ Within the Canadian context this is seen in Canon 3, part 1, section 6, subsection A. http://images.anglican.ca/pdf/handbook/203_canon_III.pdf

relationships and respect for the office that they generate and maintain among their fellow bishops.

Apostolic Succession

When discussing the Anglican episcopacy, it would be remiss not to address the topic of apostolic succession, particularly as this has been an issue dividing Anglicans and other Christian traditions in the past, and will play a role in understanding the theology of authority in Chapter 5. Apostolic succession is both an historical claim and a theological doctrine that results from it. The historical claim is that there is an unbroken line of ordination and apostolic doctrine from the Apostles down to the bishops of the Anglican Communion today.⁵⁵ This historical claim is thought to bring with it certain theological imports: "Apostolic succession is valued primarily as a guarantee of the church's continuity, of fidelity to the faith of the Apostles and or the church through the centuries. It is felt to constitute a bulwark against normal human disruptiveness."⁵⁶ Apostolic succession makes the church visible through history; the church is where the rightly ordained bishops are. It also gives the bishops an authority no one else has. They are the ones that were selected by those, who were selected by those, who were selected by the Apostles to continue their special role in the church.⁵⁷ By having a special role in the church, being heirs of

⁵⁵ Francis Gray, "The Apostolic Succession as an Ecumenical Issue: (An Anglican View)," *The Ecumenical Review* 4, no. 2 (January 1952): 140-141. Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox would make similar claims about their own bishops.

⁵⁶ Francis Gray, "The Apostolic Succession as an Ecumenical Issue: (An Anglican View)," *The Ecumenical Review* 4, no. 2 (January 1952): 142.

⁵⁷ This is not to equate apostle and bishop. Not all authority and roles in the church that the apostles had are now continued by bishops, but some of their authority and roles are now carried out by the bishop through the authority of the apostles.

the Apostles, and those responsible for upholding the faith given to them by the Apostles, bishops are imbued with an authority by virtue of their office. This authority is not beholden to any personal charisma, leadership skill, or popularity among the laity, but was given to them through their elevation to the episcopacy.

Without the doctrine of Apostolic Succession, a church loses a level of catholicity and authority. Catholicity is lessened because there is not a visible historical chain of bishops connecting the church of each age together. Authority is reduced because, without that chain, it becomes more difficult to speak on behalf of the Church universal. Yet even as Anglicans have acknowledged this, and insist with vigour that their bishops have apostolic succession, they have not made a historically connected episcopacy a mark of a valid church.⁵⁸ Apostolic Succession is not one of the four marks of the church (One, holy, catholic, and apostolic), but instead servers these marks as a visible reminder of them. However, as seen in the Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral, the historic episcopate is not something Anglicans can give up for full unity with other churches.⁵⁹ It is viewed as integral to what it means to be Anglican.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ Consider the wording of the 1988 Meissen Agreement between the Church of England and the German Evangelical Churches: "Lutheran, Reformed and United Churches, though being increasingly prepared to appreciate episcopal succession 'as a sign of the apostolicity of the life of the whole Church', hold that this particular form of episkope should not become a necessary condition for 'full, visible unity'. The Anglican understanding of full, visible unity includes the historic episcopate and full interchangeability of ministers. Because of this remaining difference our mutual recognition of one another's ministries does not yet result in the full interchangeability of ministers. ('Yet even this remaining difference, when seen in the light of our agreements and convergences, cannot be regarded as a hindrance to closer fellowship between our Churches')." Here we have both an assertion of Apostolic succession within Anglicanism, but a willingness to identify those without such an episcopacy as churches to have a close level of fellowship with.

The Meissen Agreement, https://www.churchofengland.org/media/36074/meissen_english.rtf

⁵⁹ Lambeth Conference, *Resolution II, 1888*, http://anglicanonline.org/basics/Chicago_Lambeth.html#Lambeth%20Conference%20%20of%201888%20Resol

⁶⁰ The Anglican position on how integral Apostolic Succession and the Historical Episcopate is to Anglicans has undergone re-evaluations throughout history. Hooker held that the episcopate was not essential to Christianity and was in place by custom that the church chose, no matter how ancient.

Although Apostolic succession gives a bishop authority within the framework of Anglican theology, that authority is not accepted uncritically by priests and laity in practice, nor does the theological framework require it to be. Apostolic succession does not guarantee that each bishop will uphold the apostolic faith without error. It is the office that has the authority, and it is the duty of those who hold the office to live up to it, some will inevitably fall short. However, what Apostolic Succession implies is that, although the bishop can, and sometimes should, be challenged by those under his authority, their authority goes only as far as maintaining the Apostles' teachings. When a bishop is challenged, they are challenged to live up to their Apostolic Succession. The office of bishop is therefore as much a duty to perform, as an authority they have.

The Changing Role of the Bishop

Although the general description of the role of the bishop as the chief pastoral leader over a geographic area has been generally accepted throughout Anglican history, how this has been understood in practice has undergone changes. That the office of bishop has changed should not be surprising, as the canon lawyer Spencer Ervin wrote about Anglican polity: "Political forms and institutions grow and change internally, and not always in the manner or direction expected at the time of their

Therefore it could be removed if it became expedient to do so. At the other extreme is the Tractarians, particularly Newman, held the episcopate to be ordained from Christ, through the Apostles, and to the present day. (For a discussion of the differences see, Stephen W Sykes, and Sheridan Gilley. "No Bishop, No Church': The Tractarian Impact on Anglicanism," *Tradition Renewed: The Oxford Movement Conference Papers*, (1986): 120-139). Although differing views within the Communion still exist, with the Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral being accepted across the provinces, there is a general consensus that there the historical episcopate is an essential feature of Anglicanism, even if the theological argument for it may have some variation.

establishment."⁶¹ These changes, usually better understood as adaptations, take place due to pressures from both within the church and changes in the understanding of authority in the overall culture. The role of the bishop has been in the process of changing over the life of the Anglican church, with the two largest shifts coming due to a shift in the relationship between bishops and those under their authority, and a growing plurality of beliefs among the laity and clergy.

For the majority of the Anglican church's history of the voice of the clergy and laity had little power but, as class barriers broke down and the education levels of those outside the episcopacy rose, demand for clergy and laity to have greater say in the running of dioceses also rose. The old concept of a rigid hierarchy within the church was questioned, and a flattening of it in occurred with much authority being given to the synod that had representatives from the episcopacy, clergy, and laity.⁶² Seeking the input of the laity, and giving them a vote in decisions about the church to which they belong was a fairly significant structural change.⁶³ This change also went along with allowing roles that were once reserved for clergy to now be held by the laity. Administrative roles within the dioceses and churches, as well as in organizations closely associated with the church such as religious schools, were taken over by laity. These lay members were not under the authority of local bishops in the

⁶¹ Spencer Ervin, "Brief look at Anglican Polity," *Anglican Theological Review* 44, no. 2 (April 1962): 192.

⁶² Thomas R Millman, "Beginnings of the Synodical Movement in Colonial Anglican Churches with Special Reference to Canada." *Journal Of The Canadian Church Historical Society* 21, (1979) provides timelines around the decisions that lead up to Synods being legalized in Canada in 1857. For a longer discussion of synod see below.

⁶³ Discussion of this change continues later in this chapter when discussing Conciliar method and synods.

same strict manner as the clergy, who had promised to obey their bishop when they were ordained and required the bishop's continued approval to go about their priestly duties. The laity in these roles could therefore more freely voice dissent. However, a social change was soon to create a bigger shift in how bishops carried out their role.

According to the Anglican theologian Paul Avis, there are three complementary ways authority is accorded: by appointment to an office that has standing and recognition; by having skills and expertise that are widely valued; and by displaying through example personal qualities associated with leadership.⁶⁴ Historically, one who has authority will be able to back his authority by some combination from each of these areas. There is now, though, according to Bishop Frederick H. Borsch a, "general suspicion of any 'authority' in our society."⁶⁵ This societal shift, from trusting and respecting authority figures to being suspicious of them, has fundamentally altered how bishops assume the authority of their role. No longer can they expect to have their authority recognized by virtue of their office; their office creates suspicion. Instead, they must be able to show their authority through their integrity, learning, and effectiveness as a leader.⁶⁶ Only once they have proven themselves to those theoretically under their authority will their authority be recognized in practice. This fundamentally changes the three-fold source of authority that Avis puts forward. Previously, a bishop was still seen as an authority even if their

⁶⁴ Paul Avis, *Becoming a Bishop: A Theological Handbook of Episcopal Ministry* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), 42-43.

⁶⁵ Frederick Houk Borsch, "The Ministry and Authority of Bishops in a Changing World and Church." *Anglican Theological Review* 77, no. 1 (1995): 21.

⁶⁶ Frederick Houk Borsch, "The Ministry and Authority of Bishops in a Changing World and Church." *Anglican Theological Review* 77, no. 1 (1995): 24.

performance was less than satisfactory. Even if they were not skilled at dealing with conflict, and were not charismatic, because they had the title of bishop they still had the authority that went with it. Today, however, the office of bishop does not carry authority with it for many within the church, and therefore a bishop struggling to fulfill their role has less practical authority than previous bishops have had.

The American Episcopal theologian Philip Turner picked up on this shift in a paper written for the Canadian Conference of Anglican Bishops. In it he argues that the role bishops are commissioned to fulfill no longer matches the authority they have: "At their consecrations as bishops, there was, in all likelihood, a false transmission of authority. The church through its formularies said one thing, but its members may actually have meant another."⁶⁷ The authority given by the formularies no longer matches what authority the laity and clergy believe they have over them. This places all but the most able of bishops into an impossible situation where they act like a bishop with authority, for the betterment of those under their care, but those under their care do not recognize their authority. In this situation, as soon as there is a crisis between conflicting ideological and theological viewpoints that requires the bishop to act, they find that they do not have the practical authority required to take effective action.⁶⁸ Crisis works against unity because the bishop does not have enough authority to draw those with differing views together. Instead of creating unity, the

⁶⁷ Philip Turner, "Episcopal Authority Within a Communion of Churches" in *The Fate of Communion: The Agony of Anglicanism and the Future of a Global Church*, ed. by Ephraim Radner and Philip Turner (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 137.

⁶⁸ By crisis we do not mean the daily issues that require the bishop to make a decision, but issues that arise which reveal a fundamental different understanding of the Christian tradition between people, organizations, or churches. The examples of female ordination and homosexuality in the Anglican communion are the most easily identifiable. With communication technology the way it is today, if the crisis is occurring in another dioceses or even province it becomes an issue for each local bishop.

role of the bishop is reduced to attempting to keep those with diverse views within the same church.⁶⁹ From historically being a leader who directs the way forward, they have become conflict managers.

Synodality and Conciliar Method

Historically, Anglicans have had components of conciliarism within their polity, but with social patterns shifting away from authority in a single person to the outright suspicion of authority discussed above, and the inability for many bishops to handle crisis on their own, there has been a renewed emphasis on the conciliar method within Anglicanism.

According to Paul Avis, Anglicanism has picked up on the following central tenets of the medieval conciliar movement and embraced them as its own:⁷⁰

- Constitutionality – the scope and authority of the offices that hold power must be written down.
- Representation – responsibility for the church is held by all who are part of the church and therefore all have a place in the authority structures.
- Consent – how authority is used over those within the church is not forced onto them, but is acquiesced to.
- *Epieikeia* – flexibility is allowed in applying organizational laws and rules.
- *Aequitas* – fairness is expected in applying organizational laws and rules.

These are seen most clearly in the synodical governing of Anglican dioceses, but components can also be seen in other Anglican structures, such as the Lambeth

⁶⁹ Philip Turner, "Episcopal Authority Within a Communion of Churches" in *The Fate of Communion: The Agony of Anglicanism and the Future of a Global Church*, ed. by Ephraim Radner and Philip Turner (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 144.

⁷⁰ Paul Avis, *The Identity of Anglicanism: Essentials Of Anglican Ecclesiology* (London: Continuum, 2007), 164.

Conferences.⁷¹

Some of these principles would seem to be in conflict with the understanding of bishops laid out above. How can a bishop have authority within their diocese yet allow everyone in it to have representation in the decisions made? How does one consent to having a bishop use their authority to take an action you do not approve of? To answer these questions we will need to take a closer look at the relationship between bishop and synod.

Bishop and Synod

It is important to first recognize that synods are not a group of priests and lay people coming together and thereby gaining an authority that rivals the bishop. There is both a difference in roles and authority between synods and bishops. As K.S. Chittleborough makes clear in a discussion of the formation of synods, "Authority was thus shared between the episcopate and synod, and the bishop had certain powers and responsibilities proper to his episcopal office which he could not delegate to his synod."⁷² Shared authority does not mean equal authority. While it is the role of the synod to vote on the legislative matters of the diocese it is the role of the bishop, within the context of the synod, to concur with, or veto, the vote.

Anglicans have historically used the term "Bishop in Synod" to refer to the

⁷¹ The Lambeth Conferences may only be made up of bishops, but each bishop has a vote and every area of the Anglican Communion is represented by their bishop, providing a type of both consent and representation.

⁷² K.S. Chittleborough, "Towards a Theology and Practice of the Bishop-in-Synod," in *Authority in the Anglican Communion: Essays Presented to Bishop John Howe*, ed. by Stephen W. Sykes (Toronto: Anglican Book Centre, 1987), 144.

relationship between bishops and synods.⁷³ This term conveys that only by working together is synodical authority exercised. Following conciliar principles means everyone, ordained or lay, within a diocese has a responsibility for the well-being of the diocese. Yet, particular authority is given to bishops to provide direct oversight of the diocese and the working out of this relationship is what occurs within synod. The fact that this is often messy is almost applied in the word 'synod,' which comes from the Greek *sun hodos* and means "together on the way."⁷⁴ Synods are a journey where bishops, clergy, and laity come to decisions on the best course of a diocese. Such a journey, no matter how many laws, canons, and rules are followed, is never a straight path.

Synods give the ordained and laity the opportunity to talk to each other openly. This is important because, although each is seeking the best for the diocese, their roles within it give them different perspectives on how to move forward. Each house – bishop, priest, and lay – have both different and overlapping concerns: "Thus a dispersed, non-centralized structure such as synodical government give the laity as well as the clergy constitutional opportunity for the kinds of consultation, criticism, and comment which promote genuinely free consensus."⁷⁵ When the synod is generally in agreement on what is best for the diocese, synodical government runs smoothly, but disagreement within the synod can quickly lead to open conflict that

⁷³ Paul Avis, *Becoming a Bishop: A Theological Handbook of Episcopal Ministry* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), 80.

⁷⁴ Paul Avis, *Becoming a Bishop: A Theological Handbook of Episcopal Ministry* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), 81.

⁷⁵ K.S Chittleborough, "Towards a Theology and Practice of the Bishop-in-Synod." in *Authority in the Anglican Communion: Essays Presented to Bishop John Howe*, ed. by Stephen W. Sykes (Toronto: Anglican Book Centre, 1987), 152.

damages the diocese.

Some conflict at synods is inevitable. As important it is to include representatives with different concerns in the synod, there will still be disagreements in how to prioritize concerns, even when those concerns are not incompatible with each other. If conflicting concerns are brought forward, sides will quickly be taken. Yet, would such conflict not occur if synods did not exist? If the bishops simply made all decisions themselves and there was no place for the clergy and laypersons to have a voice, would there be less conflict? As bishop Jeffery W. Driver suggests, "At a practical level, there is little doubt that resolution of difficult issues is achieved more readily when people have a voice in the process that concerns them."⁷⁶ This may be true, but not only does synod allow conflicting voices to be heard, it also increases the audience for those voices. Issues that previously may not have been given much consideration by many people are now put in front of an audience and deliberation on them is expected. Passionate arguments are made in synod, and many may be swayed to take a stronger stance than they may have previously.

Synods, therefore, often make it harder for the bishop to carry out their unifying work. On the one hand, many in today's church do not see the bishop as a unifying force, but as one who should be won over to their partisan position.⁷⁷ This follows how democratic politics have played out in general in late modern western

⁷⁶Jeffrey W. Driver, *A Polity of Persuasion: Gift and Grief of Anglicanism* (Eugene Oregon: Cascade Books, 2014), 118.

⁷⁷ According to Philip Turner bishops themselves have fallen into this trap: "Bishops, deans, and rectors, more frequently than one would like to think, see themselves as advocates not for the people of God but for some segment of that body."

Philip Turner, "Episcopal Authority Within a Communion of Churches," in *The Fate of Communion: The Agony of Anglicanism and the Future of a Global Church*, ed. by Ephraim Radner and Philip Turner (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 142.

civilization. On the other hand, the general rejection of authority discussed above limits what bishops can do when confronted with a divisive synod. Both extremes fail to recognize what a bishop in synod truly is. It is not a purely democratic exercise in legislating the diocese, nor is it an exercise in bowing to whatever the bishop wishes. It is a working together of all for the betterment of the diocese, with all the debate, discussion, argument, and joy that brings.

Within this framework the balance of power still resides with the bishop. The bishops vote as their own house when a vote is by house, and also has the ability to withhold their consent on any motion put forward. This power not only gives them final say on what the decision will be, but it also gives them the ability to direct what issues the synod will discuss.⁷⁸ A well-skilled bishop will use these powers sparingly, respecting the importance of hearing the voices of those under their authority and being willing to work with them.

Bishops with other Bishops

Bishops must not only engage with those within their diocese, they must also work with bishops of other dioceses. With no central authority of the Anglican Communion, bishops have had to use the principles of conciliarism to work with each other. One of the most important ways this is done is through the Lambeth Conferences.⁷⁹

⁷⁸ If the bishop makes it clear at the start of a motion that they will not move forward with it if it is passed, then the discussion is over before it starts. The synod may be able to sway the bishop's mind on certain issues, but when they make it clear that they are not ready to move as the rest of the synod wishes, the synod has no recourse and the best approach is to use the intervening years until the next synod to work with the bishop of the issue.

⁷¹ One method used within national churches for bishops to provide support to each other is a House of Bishops. This is a gathering where a national church's bishops discuss issues, concerns, and

The Lambeth Conference is an unique, distinctly Anglican gathering of bishops that has historically met every ten years. The first conference was held in 1867 at the behest of Canadian bishops who wished "to clarify the nature of the Anglican Church as the legal connections between England and her colonies were beginning to unravel [to] firm up doctrinal commitments in the church."⁸⁰ The effort to have a conference was opposed by both evangelicals and high-church Anglicans. The evangelicals feared the conference would make wrong decisions regarding doctrine and had a general distrust of councils from church history, while the high-church movement feared the cracking down on their liturgical innovations.⁸¹ One of the aspects that caused the worry was the lack of clarity about what the meeting was going to be. Was it a council, a synod, or something else? Ecumenical councils were known and understood, but to have one that was binding required the whole church, something Anglicans refused to believe they were.⁸² To have a synod would have meant creating a new level of governance within the communion that could impose doctrine onto dioceses, and that had no biblical or historical backing. In the end, it

give guidance to each other. However, as will be shown in the next chapter, this assisting of each other has no legal authority within Anglican polity, and can result in confusion among the laity. The House of Bishops therefore is similar to the Lambeth Conference: a formal gathering of bishops, without any formal power over anything but their own dioceses. The issues the Lambeth Conference has caused for authority within the Anglican Communion discussed below are therefore quite similar for the House of Bishops at a national level.

⁸⁰ Ephraim Radner. "The World Is Waiting for Holiness" in *The Fate of Communion: The Agony of Anglicanism and the Future of a Global Church*, ed. by Ephraim Radner and Philip Turner (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 288.

⁸¹ Radner, Ephraim. "The World Is Waiting for Holiness" in *The Fate of Communion: The Agony of Anglicanism and the Future of a Global Church*, ed. by Ephraim Radner and Philip Turner (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 288-289.

⁸² Anglicans hold that they are only one part of the Church of Christ. Other denominations are also part of it. Therefore, as only a part of the Church they cannot hold an ecumenical council on their own, as it would not be ecumenical.

was decided that it would be something new: a conference. The conference went ahead, meeting for four days, its greatest accomplishment only begin that it was held at all.⁸³

Although the first Lambeth Conference did not produce much of anything in way of agreements on important and pressing issues, it also did not turn into a debacle. Bishops from across the Communion were able to meet and discuss issues, which was itself something welcomed. Plans were soon underway for another conference, which occurred in 1878, and a third in 1888. The 1888 conference is notable for adopting the Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral, but it is also where greater clarification was given as to what exactly these conferences were going to be. Writing in his diary of the address he had opened the conference with, Archbishop Benson was clear: "I opened the Conference by pointing out that the Conference was in no sense a Synod and not adapted, or competent, or within its powers, if it should attempt to make binding decisions on doctrines or discipline"⁸⁴ But if the Lambeth Conferences are not able to make binding decisions on doctrine or discipline, what authority do they have?

There is the idea that the Lambeth Conferences have a "moral and pastoral authority in the Communion."⁸⁵ Legally, resolutions from Lambeth cannot be used to force a particular bishop of a particular diocese to follow some policy, but there is

⁸³ Frederick H. Shriver, "Council, Conference and Synods," in *The Study of Anglicanism*, ed. by Stephen Sykes, John Booty, and Jonathan Knight (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2004), 210.

⁸⁴ A.C. Benson, *Life of Edward White Benson* (London, 1899), Vol. ii, 214, quoted in Frederick H. Shriver, "Council, Conference and Synod," in *The Study of Anglicanism*, ed. by Stephen Sykes, John Booty, and Jonathan Knight (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2004), 211.

⁸⁵ Paul Avis, *The Identity of Anglicanism: Essentials Of Anglican Ecclesiology* (London: Continuum, 2007), 61.

clout that a resolution from Lambeth holds as it shows the mind of the Communion. The mind of the Communion is not by any means a final authority – it is far less than the authority of the Vincentian Canon – but what is believed here and now by the majority of Anglicans should have some weight.⁸⁶

There has also been, as Lambeth Conferences became routine, an expansion in the popular mind of what authority it has. Bishop Jeffrey W. Driver has written, "Despite the repeated denial of any binding authority for Lambeth, it has nevertheless become increasingly authoritative for the Communion because of the nature of the gathering it has become, the quality and sanctity of some of those gathered, and a developing history of reception of many of its recommendations within the Communion."⁸⁷ When all the bishops of the Communion gather together and hold votes, is it any shock that authority is ascribed to the outcome? Furthermore, with the worldwide communications that exist today, those attending the Conferences have little control over how the media portrays their decisions. It can all become very confusing for Anglicans in the pews when their bishop has done something with authority.

Yet it has also been painfully clear that the Lambeth Conferences of late have lost a lot of their authority. When Resolution I.10 reaffirming a traditional understanding of human sexuality was passed at Lambeth 1998, many in the Communion thought it displayed the mind of the Communion and that the bishops

⁸⁶ The Vincentian canon, "That Faith which has been believed everywhere, always, by all" has been an historic test of orthodox doctrine.

⁸⁷ Jeffrey W. Driver, *A Polity of Persuasion: Gift and Grief of Anglicanism* (Eugene Oregon: Cascade Books, 2014), 113.

would follow it. Yet it was promptly ignored by portions of the Episcopal and Canadian churches, who had already been moving in a different direction on this topic for many years. Even many who voted in favour of it quickly began to oppose it, raising questions regarding even the moral and pastoral authority possessed by Lambeth.⁸⁸ This in turn has created questions not only among the laity, but also among traditionalists bishops who refused to attend the 2008 Lambeth Conference, not seeing what could be accomplished at it that would last.

Synods, Conferences, Bishops, and Reception

One final topic that must be addressed in regards to Synods and Conferences is the idea of reception.⁸⁹ Once a synod, or conference, comes to a decision, in many ways it is final. It may have set new legislation in place, decided the priorities of the diocese by assigning budget, or, as in the case of the Lambeth Conference, give the mind of the bishops on a topic. Yet, where its decision has touched on doctrine and practice of the Anglican church, it is not final. Although synods speak for the diocese, and Lambeth for all the bishops, it is the church as a whole that decides if a decision is final. This process of the church coming to the finality of a decision is known as reception.

It must be made clear that reception is not thought to be a determination of truth. According to theologian Mary Tanner, "It is not the reception itself that creates

⁸⁸ It is important to note that the resolution was passed by a large majority: 526 in favour and 70 opposing. Yet an apology letter to gay and lesbians for the resolution was endorsed by 146 bishops. It is difficult not to see the letter as a repudiation of 76 votes in favour at Lambeth which casts doubt on its authority.

Jeffrey W. Driver, *A Polity of Persuasion: Gift and Grief of Anglicanism* (Eugene Oregon: Cascade Books, 2014), 28.

⁸⁹ Here we will discuss reception purely as it relates to internal Anglican discussions. In the next chapter we will revisit the topic again to examine how it operates in discussions between the Anglican and Roman Catholic churches.

the truth of a matter. Reception is, rather, the final indication that a decision has fulfilled the necessary conditions for it to be a true expression of the faith."⁹⁰

Reception does not create truth, but the process recognizes when true doctrine or practice has been put forward. Nor should it be thought of as a democratic stamp of approval in the sense of a political democracy. Instead, reception, as has been practised by Anglicans of late, should be seen as a gradual testing over time to see if the church comes to accept a clarified doctrine or practice.⁹¹

The importance of reception within the Anglican communion has grown as different national churches have come to different synodical decisions on human sexuality. Several reports have been issued, looking for ways to move the Communion forward, starting with the Grindrod report in 1988, specifically dealing with the effects of female ordination on the Communion. All of the reports have discussed the topic of reception.⁹²

Yet for all the writing on the topic, how reception works in practice is vague. The Ninth Report of the Joint Working Group between the Roman Catholic Church and World Council of Churches states that, "Reception cannot and must not be understood only as a purely technical or instrumental concept or even as just a sociological process in a purely numerical or quantitative manner. Signs in the community confirming that reception has taken place must be evident, not only in

⁹⁰ Mary Tanner, "Reception and Provisionality Among Anglicans." *Mid-Stream* 29, no. 1 (January 1990): 57.

⁹¹ Lambeth Commission on Communion, *The Windsor Report, 2004*, paragraph 68.

⁹² For a discussion that covers the Grindrod, Virginia, and Windsor reports on reception see: Jeffrey W. Driver, *A Polity of Persuasion: Gift and Grief of Anglicanism* (Eugene Oregon: Cascade Books, 2014), 77-83.

words but also in life."⁹³ Here we see the concept cannot be reduced only to a technical, instrumental, or sociological, numerical examination of acceptance. Yet, by saying that there is an acceptance that it is at least in part these things. The other part is made up of changes in the community to show an embrace of the issue undergoing this process. This second part defies easy quantification and therefore leaves open many questions when trying to determine if reception has occurred. Is an embrace of a practice in the life of a church related to the issue under reception enough to show that the whole issue under reception has been accepted? How long does the process of reception last? Can one see in the moment if a decision has passed the test of reception, or can such a determination only be made by looking back over a good deal of history to make such a determination?⁹⁴

Reception also creates confusion among Anglican churches. One historically expects bishops to have authority to maintain doctrine and practice. One, on democratic principles, expects synods to be able to make decisions on matters that touch on doctrine and practice. Yet, with the idea of reception, the church as a whole seems to be able to make the determination if the bishop and synod were correct in their discernment of the truth. The process is a messy one, and made more so by the passion on either side of controversial questions. Often times what is imagined to be a prayerful and spirit-lead process seems more akin to politicians trying to sway public opinion.

⁹³ Joint Working Group between the Roman Catholic Church and World Council of Churches, *The Ninth Report*, 2012, section 17.

⁹⁴ These question, when applied to historical disputes of the Christian church, create some hard test cases. Would those alive at the height of Arianism or iconoclasm not have thought that the test of reception had been passed? If they were brought up again as issues, and a large number of people were convinced they were correct, would another process of reception in regards to them need to be undergone? It is not clear with the Anglican doctrine of reception how to answer these questions.

The political swaying of options seems to be the case with the current back and forth between the Canadian House of Bishops and the Council of the General Synod over the matter of same-sex marriages up for debate at the July 2016 Canadian General Synod. The House of Bishops released a statement in February where one of the reasons they gave for an unwillingness on their part of approving same-sex marriages at the upcoming synod was "That there has not been much engagement with this document [*This Holy Estate*, a report on the issue] across the Church since that time. We felt that we needed to recommit ourselves to promoting the document for study, and especially among our synod delegates."⁹⁵ This was responded to be a statement from the Council of General Synod in March which said in part, "Our hope is that going into General Synod our whole church will have read and engaged with *This Holy Estate*. We have encouraged the House of Bishops to ensure that members of their diocese and delegates to General Synod do so."⁹⁶ It is difficult to not see these duelling statements around reception in a political context. The bishops using the lack of reception to keep themselves from having to take a definitive position on this highly controversial topic, and the Council using the lack of reception as a way to show that the bishops have not done their duty on this topic and are therefore dragging their feet. None, one, or both of these things may be true, but by bringing these issues forward in such a political manner, both groups lessen the importance of reaching true reception.

⁹⁵ House of Bishops, "Statement from the House of Bishops from its Special Meeting," *Anglican Church of Canada*, February 29, 2016. <http://www.anglican.ca/news/statement-from-the-house-of-bishops-from-its-special-meeting/30015170/>.

⁹⁶ Council of General Synod, "Statement from the Council of General Synod to the Church," *Anglican Church of Canada*, March 12, 2016. <http://www.anglican.ca/news/statement-council-general-synod-church/30015252/>.

Furthermore, how one defines "the church" is important for the question of reception. Currently, the majority of Christian churches disagree with the direction that many Anglican provinces have taken on human sexuality. How do their views play into the process of reception within the Anglican Communion? Many churches have broken fellowship with other parts of the Communion over sexuality. Do their voices still play into the process, or have they removed themselves from the process by breaking fellowship? With no unified understanding of how the process of reception works in practice, the Anglican Communion cannot answer these questions. The process to bring clarity and invest disputed doctrines and practices with the authority of the whole church has only created more uncertainty around the question of authority.

Conclusion

The role of the bishop has never been an easy one, and changes in society at large have made it more difficult. As democracy has ascended to be the theory of government outside of the church, so too have the clergy and laity voices become more prominent in the decision making within the church. Although retaining their traditional titles and duties, bishops in practice have passed on much of their authority to synods. This creates challenges as the bishop's agenda and the synod's do not always line up. Even more difficult to work through has been the general suspicion of those in authority; the office of bishop no longer carries the clout it has in the past. On top of all this, the Communion as a whole is undergoing a polarization on issues of human sexuality. This polarization has brought the weakened role of the bishop to the forefront. The process of reception, that is imagined to bring unity to the church on

these issues, has not operated as such, but instead brought more confusion to the question of where authority within the Anglican Communion lies.

Chapter 3 – Authority in Practice

"The reality is that a Church such as the Anglican Communion is such a mixture of histories, and of theological difference, that inevitably there will be deep differences and from time to time these will lead to grave crises, such as the one faced in recent years."

– Justin Welby

Introduction

In the previous chapter we examined Anglican bishops and synods: what authority they have and how they interact. In this chapter we will look how this works itself out in practice, by examining first the events around the creation of the rite of same-sex blessings in the Canadian diocese of New Westminster, and, second the most recent meeting of Anglican primates that occurred in January 2016. Both of these examples will serve to give clarity to how the history and theory of instructional authority laid out above is applied today. We will then explore the concept of authority itself in order to discover confusion around it has continued to grow in the Anglican Communion.

New Westminster

The diocese of New Westminster consists of sixty-eight worshipping and serving communities in the southwest corner of mainland British Columbia.⁹⁷ In 2002, New Westminster began formally sanctioning the blessing of same-sex unions, making it the first Anglican diocese in the world to do so. This decision, along with the 2003 decision of the Episcopal Church of the United States of America to ordain an openly homosexual man to the episcopacy, were the inciting events of the current crisis of authority within the Anglican Communion. Although it would be easy to place the blame for this crisis of authority at the feet of the diocese of New

⁹⁷ "Diocese Profile," Diocese of New Westminster, accessed April 4, 2016, [Http://www.vancouver.anglican.ca/anglican-church/the-diocese-of-new-westminster](http://www.vancouver.anglican.ca/anglican-church/the-diocese-of-new-westminster).

Westminster, the decisions made by the diocese were within the historic structure of authority within Anglicanism. One may disagree with the decisions the diocese made, but how they were made fits within Anglican polity.

The facts of how New Westminster came to approve same-sex blessings are fairly straightforward. At the New Westminster diocesan synod of 1998 the issue of same-sex blessings was raised for a vote for the first time. That vote ended narrowly in favour, 179 to 170, for permitting blessing same-sex unions, but Bishop Michael Ingham withheld his consent as he did not believe the burden of reception had been met.⁹⁸ The matter was brought up at the next synod in 2001, again passing; again Bishop Ingham withheld consent.⁹⁹ In 2002 it was again taken up and passed. This time the vote was 215 to 129 in favour, and Bishop Ingham gave his consent.¹⁰⁰ However, the bare facts of what occurred and why it brought upon a crisis of authority requires context.

In 1997, the Canadian House of Bishops released a statement on human sexuality. This statement replaced their previous 1979 statement on the subject and was to act as a guideline on how to handle the relationship between the church and same-sex persons. On the specific question of blessing same-sex relationships, the statement said:

We are not ready to authorize the blessing of relationships between persons of the same sex. However, in interpreting the Gospel, we must always reflect on

⁹⁸ Kathy Blair, "Dialogue on Same Sex-Unions Criticized [Diocese of New Westminster]," *Anglican Journal*, April 2000.

⁹⁹ Lambeth Commission on Communion, *The Windsor Report, 2004*, paragraph 137

¹⁰⁰ "Vancouver Anglicans Give Blessing to Blessing Same-Sex Unions," *Canadian Press NewWire*, June 15, 2002.

the context to which it is addressed. We are, therefore, committed to ongoing study of human sexuality and of the nature and characteristics of human intimacy and family life as it exists in our society.¹⁰¹

This statement was taken by those who opposed same-sex blessings to mean that same-sex blessings would not be allowed by the Anglican Church in Canada. This interpretation received further support by Resolution 1.10 from the 1998 Lambeth Conference, which said, in part, that they "cannot advise the legitimizing or blessing of same sex unions nor ordaining those involved in same gender unions."¹⁰² When Bishop Ingham gave his consent to approve blessings within his diocese, this was perceived by those opposed as going beyond his authority, overriding the will of the larger communion of bishops.

This view was not limited to a laity ignorant of the nature and operation of Anglican authority; it also found support among some Canadian bishops. Notably the bishop of Algoma, Right Rev. Ronald Ferris, believed the Bishop Ingham overstepped the bounds according to the constitution of the Anglican Church of Canada.¹⁰³

Referring to the Canadian church's constitution was a more sophisticated rebuttal than just pointing to the statement from the Canadian House of Bishops or Lambeth.

Within the Canadian church's constitution is a section entitled the Solemn Declaration, which holds the Canadian church to maintaining the faith as laid out in

¹⁰¹ Anglican Bishops of Canada, *Human Sexuality: A Statement by the Anglican Bishops of Canada*. Accessed April 3, 2016. <http://www.anglican.ca/faith/identity/hob-statement>.

¹⁰² Lambeth Conference, *Section I.10 - Human Sexuality, 1998*. Accessed January 6, 2016. <http://www.anglicancommunion.org/resources/document-library/lambeth-conference/1998/section-i-called-to-full-humanity/section-i10-human-sexuality?author=Lambeth+Conference&subject=Human+sexuality&year=1998>

¹⁰³ Todd Douglas, "Bishop Claims Anglican Church Structure Offers Dioceses Freedom to Allow Same-Sex Unions," *CanWest News*, June 2004.

the scriptures and the creeds of the undivided church. It also commits the church to keeping communion with the Church of England, maintaining the same doctrine found in the traditional Anglican documents: The Book of Common Prayer and the Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion.¹⁰⁴ In section 6, Jurisdiction of the General Synod, it reads:

Subject to the provisions of section 7 the General Synod shall have authority and jurisdiction in all matters affecting in any way the general interest and well-being of the whole Church and in particular: [...] the definition of the doctrines of the Church in harmony with the Solemn Declaration adopted by this synod.¹⁰⁵

These passages came up for much discussion across the Canadian church in relation to the New Westminster decision. By this criteria, are same-sex unions a matter that can be decided at an individual diocesan level, or are they a matter for the full church?

In Chapter 2 we noted that bishops cannot in a normal situation interfere within the jurisdiction of another bishop within the Anglican tradition. The very fact that the Canadian church was discussing that very issue showed how important many people within the church felt it to be. However, as important as the issue may be, Anglican polity still applies to decisions taken by Anglican bishops. On the question of the 1997 House of Bishop Statement on Sexuality, and the 1998 Lambeth Conference, it is clear that they are not binding on an individual diocese. The House

¹⁰⁴ Anglican Church of Canada, "Constitution: Declaration of Principles", 1. Access April 4, 2016. http://images.anglican.ca/pdf/handbook/102_Declaration.pdf.

¹⁰⁵ Anglican Church of Canada, "Constitution: Declaration of Principles", 6.I. Access April 4, 2016. http://images.anglican.ca/pdf/handbook/102_Declaration.pdf.

of Bishops is only advisory.¹⁰⁶ It is a place for bishops from across Canada to gather and discuss issues that affect each other, and present to the church a thought out, and somewhat common, mind on an issue. Each individual bishop still needs to decide for themselves what they will do in their own diocese, in theory taking the advice of their fellow bishops into consideration.¹⁰⁷ Likewise, as noted in Chapter 2, the Lambeth Conference cannot enforce its resolutions on the bishops that come to the conference. Yet, both the House of Bishops and the Lambeth Conference do have a moral authority, and they show the mind of the larger church. When a bishop chooses to proceed with a decision against the recommendations of these larger bodies, it will always be controversial and have larger repercussions, which we will discuss later in the chapter.

The question of the constitution of the Canadian church in relation to a change of doctrine by an individual diocese is not nearly so cut and dried. The constitution makes clear that there is some doctrine that an individual diocese cannot change, but that can only be changed by the General Synod. The question of whether same-sex blessings fell into that category of doctrine became central to the discussion. The Primate's Theological Commission was asked to produce a report on the doctrinal

¹⁰⁶ Greg Joyce, "Sometime Early in the New Year, and Anglican Parish in the Diocese of New Westminster is Going to Bless a Same-Sex Union," *Canadian Press NewsWire*, December 23, 2002.

¹⁰⁷ Where the House of Bishops does have authority is when General Synod meets. In the synod the bishops will vote 'as a house' on certain matters, just as the laity and clergy will also vote as houses. Although each bishop will cast their own vote, the motion needs to pass with the required majority of bishops in favour. As this house is smaller than the other two, it places more deciding power in the hands of a smaller group of people who likely already know each others minds on the issue and can therefore more easily coordinate their voting if they wish to. Outside of the synod, any statements or actions the house of bishops take is not binding on any individual diocese.

status of same-sex blessings, which they did in the St. Michael's Report.¹⁰⁸ The conclusion of this report was accepted by the 2007 General Synod, which determined that "the blessing of same-sex unions is a matter of doctrine, but is not core doctrine in the sense of being creedal and should not be a communion breaking issue."¹⁰⁹ This division of doctrine into "core" and "non-core" and placing same-sex blessings into the later, created room for the General Synod to leave the matter to individual dioceses.¹¹⁰ Thus, in spite of much vocal opposition, it was affirmed that the same-sex blessing was not a doctrinal question that required the whole Canadian church to pronounce on.

Reactions to the 2002 decision by New Westminster to allow same-sex blessings were felt both inside and outside of Canada. Initially Bishop Terrence Buckle of the Yukon offered to provide oversight to parishes within New Westminster that did not agree with the new position of their diocese, and seven parishes accepted his offer.¹¹¹ However, this was a clear violation of not interfering in another bishop's jurisdiction and the diocese of New Westminster made the Archbishop for British

¹⁰⁸ Although it is tempting to engage with issues in the St. Michael Report, the scope of this thesis only allows for the briefest look at its conclusions as they relate to whether the decision on same-sex blessings can be decided at a diocesan or national level. For a critical engagement with the report see the early chapters in:

Catherine Hamilton, Peter Sider, M.N. Robinson, and Geroge Sumner, ed. *In Spirit and in Truth: The Challenge of Discernment for Canadian Anglicans Today* (Vancouver: Regent College Publishing, 2009).

¹⁰⁹ Anglican Church of Canada, "General Synod Resolutions Related to Issues of Sexuality 1989-2004." Accessed April 4, 2016. <http://www.anglican.ca/faith/focus/hs/ssbh/resolutions>.

¹¹⁰ The idea that there are things essential to faith, and non-essential (*adiaphora*) is not new to Anglicanism, however how narrow the list of essentials are is a matter of debate, as is how that concept has been used in the current debate on same-sex blessings.

¹¹¹ Emily Yearwood-Lee, "B.C. Anglican Diocese Says Yukon Bishop Should be Disciplined," *Canadian Press NewsWire*. March 27, 2003.

Columbia and the Yukon aware that they wanted something done about it.¹¹² It is unclear what discussion transpired between the Bishop Buckle and the Archbishop, but shortly after Bishop Buckle withdrew his offer.¹¹³ Eventually several parishes ended up seceding from the diocese and joining the Anglican Church in North America.¹¹⁴

Outside of Canada, the Anglican Communion made its displeasure with the decision known through a meeting of the primates. At the 2003 Primates Meeting, the heads of the Anglican churches met and released a statement that said, in part, "as a body we deeply regret the actions of the Diocese of New Westminster," and went on to say, "we must make clear that recent actions in New Westminster and in the Episcopal Church (U.S.A.) do not express the mind of our Communion as a whole, and these decisions jeopardise our sacramental fellowship with each other."¹¹⁵ Although this statement was a clear rebuke to New Westminster, it carried no authority to force change. The Primates Meeting is a meeting among equals, much like the House of Bishops meeting, where discussion can occur, but it cannot force any particular church, or diocese within a church, to take a particular action. As Canadian Primate Michael Peers said at the time, "The primates do not, at our

¹¹² Emily Yearwood-Lee, "B.C. Anglican Diocese Says Yukon Bishop Should be Disciplined," *Canadian Press NewsWire*. March 27, 2003.

¹¹³ Solange Santis De, "Buckle Withdraws Offer to New West Parishes," *Anglican Journal*. December 1, 2003.

¹¹⁴ The Anglican Church in North America is made up of parishes that have broken away from the American and Canadian Anglican churches over various issues related to homosexuality. This church has its own primate that is recognized by many primates of The Global South. It is currently unclear what its relationship is to the Anglican Communion.

¹¹⁵ Primates Meeting, *Final Statement, 2003*, Accessed April 4, 2016, <http://rowanwilliams.archbishopofcanterbury.org/articles.php/653/primates-meeting-2003-final-statement>.

meetings, either move resolutions or take votes. We seek the deepest possible expression of unity in whatever terms are available to us."¹¹⁶

In this brief outline of events we see the general principles of Anglican polity earlier discussed being worked out in a specific situation:

- The synod of New Westminster brought forward a motion to create a rite for same-sex blessings. This was narrowly passed, but in his role as bishop, Michael Ingham refused to give his consent to the motion. This process repeated itself, highlighting the clear authority of the bishop.
- The third time the motion was brought forward at a synod and passed, Bishop Ingham gave his consent, believing that the diocese now had undergone a period of reception, and support for the proposal was widespread enough that it was clear what the diocese had decided.
- Challenges to the decision were made on the basis of it being out of accord with the mind of the bishops of both the national church and whole communion. Although the decision was in opposition to a majority of bishops both at the national and international level, Bishop Ingham's decision did not require approval of any bishop outside of himself.
- The Canadian church's General Synod decided that the decision did not represent a change in core doctrine, and therefore could be made at the diocesan level instead of requiring the national church to make a decision.
- An attempt was made by another bishop to give oversight to parishes within Bishop Ingham's jurisdiction. This was deemed against the constitution of the

¹¹⁶ "Primates decline to support same-sex rites: statement not a repudiation: Peers," *Anglican Journal*, September 2003.

church and the offer was withdrawn.

- The Communion made its displeasure with the decision known, but lacked any authority to force Bishop Ingham to change his mind.

From the point of view of pure Anglican polity, the actions taken by Bishop Ingham conformed to the Anglican tradition.¹¹⁷

It also should be pointed out that the differences between those opposed to same-sex blessings and those in favour follow some of the fault lines within Anglicanism that were addressed within the first chapter. One of the local churches driving the opposition to the same-sex blessings was St. John's Shaughnessy. Most of the opposition within worldwide Anglicanism seemed to come from the evangelical wing, whose lineage could be traced back through the First Great Awakening and the Methodist revival to the Puritans, but with St. John's Shaughnessy the connection is even more explicit. The teaching at the church was a distinct brand of reformed Anglicanism that drew on the Puritans for inspiration. One of the leaders of this strain of Anglicanism, the theologian J.I. Packer, made this particular church his home.¹¹⁸ The fierce adherence to the literal word of scripture, and unwillingness to compromise, eventually resulting in their leaving the diocese, clearly shows the Puritan strain.¹¹⁹ On the other side, Bishop Ingham displayed connections with the

¹¹⁷ Here we are only examining the decision within the lenses of Anglican polity. There are legitimate questions that can, and should, be raised as to the scriptural basis for such a decision, as well as if same-sex blessings really are *adiaphora*. Both of these questions are outside the scope of this thesis.

¹¹⁸ "Anglican Congregation Votes to Split Over Same-Sex Blessings," Canada.Com. Accessed April 4, 2016. <http://www.canada.com/vancouversun/story.html?id=55cf38f7-b342-4f85-bb3e-c89057694be7&k=25745>

¹¹⁹ Although within the Puritan stream, no stream is historically pure. Along with the adherence to the literal word of scripture there was also a desire to be within historical Anglican

Latitudinarian position. He was trying to keep a diversity of views within his diocese, widening the boundaries of what Anglicans could believe and creating a smaller core of what was needed to be believed.

The 2016 Primates Meeting

In early 2016, the primates of the Anglican Communion met to discuss the state and future of the Anglican Communion. This meeting was the first time the primates had gathered since 2011, when many of them refused to attend due to their disagreement with the American church over issues related to homosexuality.¹²⁰ Going into the meeting, many of the traditionalists primates made it clear by that they would demand godly order be restored within the Communion. What was meant by this concept of "godly order" was expounded on by Archbishop Stanley Ntagali of Uganda, when he wrote that, "The Primates Meeting in 2007 in Dar es Salaam laid out a plan to bring discipline and restore order, and was unanimously supported by all 38 Primates of the Anglican Communion."¹²¹ The plan laid out in the communiqué that was released by the primates after their 2007 meeting consists of several sections. It is not clear exactly if Archbishop Ntagali was referring to specific parts of the communiqué or the whole, but two main themes show up in relation to the way forward with the American church.

teachings that is not quite Puritan. This can be seen in a video interview with Rev David Short, the pastor of St. John's Shaughnessy where both arguments come out.

Rev. David Short, interviewed by Susan Marnug. Uploaded February 22, 2008. Accessed April 30, 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vnxaV4Hnae0>

¹²⁰ Katherine T. Phan, "Anglican Primates Meeting to Take Place Despite Boycott," *Christian Post*. January 24, 2011. <http://www.christianpost.com/news/anglican-meeting-to-move-forward-despite-boycott-48635/>

¹²¹ Stanley Ntagali, "A Pastoral Message and Call to Prayer from Archbishop Stanley Ntagali," GAFCON. Accessed April 4, 2016. <http://gafcon.org/2016/01/07/a-pastoral-message-and-call-to-prayer-from-archbishop-stanley-ntagali/>

First, the primates called for the establishment of a Pastoral Council.¹²² This council was to work with the leadership of the American church to provide pastoral care for those who were dissenting from the positions taken by their national church. This pastoral care was to include, among other things, the negotiating of "the necessary structures for pastoral care" and determining how to authorize bishops, dioceses, and congregations to be involved in the plan.¹²³ As the former General Secretary of the Anglican Church of Australia Bruce Kaye said, "This was an attempt to establish a joint operation of the Primates within a particular Province that would have some decision-making powers in relation to the recognition of pastoral care for churches within that province. The Pastoral Council was thus a clear incursion into the life of a province."¹²⁴

Second, the Dar es Salaam plan requested that the American House of Bishops would not "authorise any Rite of Blessing for same-sex unions in their dioceses or through General Convention" and confirm that "a candidate for episcopal orders living in a same-sex union shall not receive the necessary consent" to become ordained.¹²⁵ Much like the Canadian House of Bishops, the American version cannot dictate to individual dioceses how to conduct their affairs. This request was therefore

¹²² Primates Meeting, *The Communiqué Of the Primates' Meeting in Dar es Salaam*, 8-9, Accessed April 4, 2016, http://www.anglicancommunion.org/media/68393/communiqué2007_english.pdf.

¹²³ Primates Meeting, *The Communiqué Of the Primates' Meeting in Dar es Salaam*, 8, Accessed April 4, 2016, http://www.anglicancommunion.org/media/68393/communiqué2007_english.pdf.

¹²⁴ Bruce N Kaye, *Conflict and the Practice of Christian Faith* (Eugene OR: Cascade Books, 2009), 131.

¹²⁵ Primates Meeting, *Statement From the 2016 Primates Meeting*, 9. Accessed April 4, 2016. http://www.anglicancommunion.org/media/206038/Primates_Meeting_2016_Statement.pdf

impossible to fulfill even if the American church wanted to.¹²⁶ Commenting on the whole of the Dar es Salaam plan Kaye writes, "It implied a role for the Primates Meeting, which was not supported by any decision of any body that could be imagined to have any authority to make such a decision."¹²⁷ Yet, in 2007, the primates called for the above actions to be taken, and again in 2016 the traditionalists primates were still believing this was how to fix the crisis of authority within the Anglican Communion.

The 2016 Primates Meeting ended with consequences being levelled against the American church. These were in many ways less far reaching than what was called for at Dar es Salaam:

Given the seriousness of these matters we formally acknowledge this distance by requiring that for a period of three years The Episcopal Church no longer represent us on ecumenical and interfaith bodies, should not be appointed or elected to an internal standing committee and that while participating in the internal bodies of the Anglican Communion, they will not take part in decision making on any issues pertaining to doctrine or polity.¹²⁸

Yet, there is still an element of interference in a national church that overreaches the authority of the Primates Meeting. This was quickly point out by the canon lawyer Norman Doe, who asserted that, "What we have with the Primates' meeting is an assumption of authority which has no basis in law. It is merely the result of assertion

¹²⁶ Bruce N Kaye, *Conflict and the Practice of Christian Faith* (Eugene OR: Cascade Books, 2009), 131.

¹²⁷ Bruce N Kaye, *Conflict and the Practice of Christian Faith* (Eugene OR: Cascade Books, 2009), 131.

¹²⁸ Primates Meeting, *Statement From the 2016 Primates Meeting*, Accessed April 4, 2016. http://www.anglicancommunion.org/media/206038/Primates_Meeting_2016_Statement.pdf.

and assumption."¹²⁹ This was echoed by the theologian Ephraim Radner who wrote, "A meeting of the Primates has no legislative authority over individual churches, even though, of course, each Primate exercises considerable authority within their own church."¹³⁰ Primates cannot dictate to other international bodies, such as ecumenical commissions, who they can and cannot have representing the Anglican Communion. Nor can they tell the other Anglican instruments of communion who they can and cannot have at decision-making meetings.¹³¹ It is clear that the Primates Meetings have continually overstepped their authority in recent years due to the pressure to keep the Communion together. Traditionalists bishops are demanding something of them that they are not in a position to provide, which has added to the confusion around authority within the Communion and deepened the crisis.

Authority Within the Church

Up to this point, this thesis has concerned itself with two subjects: the historical factors that went into creating Anglican polity and the confusion that has resulted because of it when the exercise of authority is within the Communion today. For the remainder of this chapter we will diverge from that approach and look at

¹²⁹ Madeleine Davies, "Primates' Ruling is Not Binding, Says Canon Lawyer," *Church Times*, January 29, 2016. <https://www.churchtimes.co.uk/articles/2016/22-january/news/uk/primates-ruling-is-not-binding-says-canon-lawyer>.

¹³⁰ Ephraim Radner, "Reaffirming Communion: An Act of Hope," *First Things*. Accessed April 4, 2016. <http://www.firstthings.com/web-exclusives/2016/01/reaffirming-communion-an-act-of-hope>

The second part of his statement is very debatable given the previous discussion of New Westminster.

¹³¹ It seems that the Archbishop of Canterbury will call the next Lambeth Conference for 2020, outside of the three-year window for not including the American church in such decision making positions. Even if he did call it early, he may be under moral authority of the Primates not to include the American church, but there is no legal binding preventing him from doing so. The Anglican Consultative Committee likewise is not required to follow this direction.

issues that bishops must consider when they act in authority. From the two proceeding case studies there are three important points to draw out in this regard: the interplay between scripture and authority; authority as personal; and those in authority overstepping what authority they have.

Authority and Scripture

Within Anglicanism, scripture has always been the primary source of authority¹³² and those who wield authority within the tradition have justified so by pointing to scripture. From Henry VIII, who pointed to it as justification for a monarch to have authority over a national church, to bishops within the Anglican Communion today who claim their position by its authority, scripture provides the basis for their actions.¹³³ Yet, basing one's authority on a document presents problems. A document is open to interpretation, and conflicting interpretations will arise given enough time.¹³⁴ The sources of these differences are many: different cultural assumptions, differing knowledge of the background of the text, cognitive biases, and translation differences all contribute to varieties of interpretations. Once the understanding of a text becomes disputed, it is hard to maintain any authority that is based upon it. This is particularly difficult within the church, where the role of bishop

¹³² This is true, even if what it actually means is more complicated. The complicatedness will be examined in the next section.

¹³³ Consider the following statement, which a bishop must agree to during their consecration within the Anglican Church of Canada: "Will you maintain and set forward, as much as shall lie in you, quietness, peace, and love among all men; and such as be unquiet, disobedient, and criminous within your Diocese, correct and punish, according to such authority as you have by God's Word, and as to you shall be committed by the Ordinance of this Church?"

The Book of Common Prayer 1962. Canada: Best Book Manufactures, 1997, 720.
<http://prayerbook.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/BCP.pdf>

¹³⁴ This is not a problem unique to scripture, or even religious documents. If it was, nations would not need courts to interpret laws and constitutions.

is not only to maintain order, but also to safeguard and proclaim the scriptures. When the role both derives authority from a disputed text and is responsible for putting forward an interpretation of that text, those who disagree with the interpretation put forward can quickly begin to question the overall authority of the bishop.

This is part of the problem that occurred for Bishop Ingham in New Westminster. He sought to exercise his authority as bishop by making a ruling on what was allowable in the realm of sexuality according to scripture. His interpretation was disputed, and on that question he ceased to exercise authority over the churches that disagreed with him. In time the dispute on that particular issue led to a full out rupture of his authority over those churches, and the churches left his diocese. The authority of the bishop is therefore very much tied to their interpretation of scripture, and how "orthodox" they appear in the eyes of their congregants.¹³⁵ For the church to function there must be a wide agreement between the bishop and those under the bishop's authority on how scripture is understood. This is because the community is only under the bishop's authority in so far as the bishop is under Christ's authority; the community makes that judgment each time they judge their bishop's actions. If the communities do not see the bishop as orthodox, they will remove themselves from the bishop's authority, leaving a bishop with authority in letter but little-to-none in practice.

Anglican theologian Victor Lee Austin has begun to work out the interplay between the authority of the bishop and the community under them when he writes, "It is the individual who is to have authority, and she has that authority, yes, thanks to

¹³⁵ By 'orthodox' here I do not mean traditional Christian orthodoxy, although that may overlap, but the understanding that those under the authority of a bishop have of scripture.

the work of bishops and councils. But her relationship to them is not the relationship she has to Christ. She is most properly under Christ's authority – as, of course, bishops and council also are."¹³⁶ For the community of the faithful, the bishop's authority, although undoubtedly an authority, is not the final authority. That title can alone lie with Christ, as understood through each person's interpretation of the scriptures. A bishop may have legal authority to take action, such as creating a rite for same-sex blessings, but the community will work out if they will go along with it. In the case of New Westminster, seven of the parishes could not see scripture approving the Bishop Ingham's decision and were forced by their conscience to leave his authority. Conversely, all the other seventy-two parishes found enough level of agreement between Bishop Ingham's decision and what they saw in scripture to remain under his authority.

On issues like this, where there are two sides that cannot be reconciled with each other's position, it may be impossible for the bishop to maintain authority over all the communities under them. Yet, not all differing interpretations of scripture need to end in a rupture; there is often room for either an agreement which all interpretations can agree ¹³⁷ or on lesser matters an agreement that the matter is *adiaphora*.¹³⁸ What is required for each of these is a respect of the authority by those

¹³⁶ Victor Lee Austin, *Up With Authority: Why we Need Authority to Flourish as Human Beings* (Continuum: London, 2010), 103.

¹³⁷ Victor Lee Austin gives the example of the Lambeth Quadrilateral, where the office of bishop is required in the polity of any future unified church, yet by having the language of "locally adopted" room is left open for a variety of views around how they are selected and the authority that they have. See *Up With Authority*, 138.

¹³⁸ *Adiaphora* means non-essential. It is a belief that a Christian can in good conscious agree or disagree with and still maintain the essential Christian faith.

who disagree and an understanding of the importance of remaining under that authority.

Authority is Personal

In the last section the authority of scripture was spoken of, but it is important to maintain that, although scripture is often cited as the ultimate authority in Anglicanism, the final authority is in fact Jesus. As N.T. Wright argues, "When John declares that 'in the beginning was the word,' he does not reach a climax with 'and the word was written down' but 'and the word become flesh'."¹³⁹ In this way, Christian authority is deeply personal. The scriptures we have are written words about the true Word. They are authoritative in that they give insight and understanding about Jesus. They connect the church to him, and in so doing carry his authority. But it is Jesus who is the authority, not the written word, and maintaining this claim keeps authority personal. When a bishop leads their communities they do so in the place of Christ, maintaining the personal nature of the authoritative relationship.

The importance of having personal authority is a major theme in Victor Lee Austin's work. He maintains that:

Those of us who are Anglicans like to say that we have three sources of authority: Scripture, tradition, and reason. But what needs to be seen is that Scripture is just words on a page, reason but a name for an activity, and tradition just a ghost of an idea, until we have a person or persons, authorities, who are actively doing what authorities do.¹⁴⁰

Authority is not a thing that exists on a shelf and can be taken down and applied when

¹³⁹ N.T. Wright, *The Last Word* (New York: HarperCollins, 2005), 23.

¹⁴⁰ Victor Lee Austin, *Up With Authority: Why we Need Authority to Flourish as Human Beings* (Continuum: London, 2010), 37.

needed. It is something that needs to be exercised, developed, and strengthened, and because of that it can only be personal. Understanding authority as residing primarily in a person, and only secondary in a document, opens up new dimensions into how it is acted out. The individual situation can be evaluated and approached based on what the best past authorities have said and done. No longer are long lists of "do and do not" required, but instead a walking together with those in authority and those under authority occurs. Trust is built, understanding reached, the limits of each role are discovered, and doctrinal and moral rectitude are modeled. The scriptures and creeds do not disappear – instead they exist as a guide to the relationship – but it is a person who holds you accountable and makes decisions for the betterment of the church.

This personal view of authority can sound idyllic, and perhaps if Jesus were here in flesh it would be. In the church however, bishops stand in the place of Christ, and while Jesus was a man who knew no sin, bishops do: favouritism, anger, pride, and a host of other sins will strain authority and eventually outright destroy it. People are fallible, and as such personal authority is going to sometimes lead to undesired outcomes. Sometimes a relationship can become so strained that it ends and a new relationship is needed so that authority can continue to operate. This is what was seen with the Primates Meeting. Under Archbishop Williams, the relationship between the primates became so strained that they refused to speak to each other.¹⁴¹ It took his successor, Archbishop Welby, a lot of one-on-one meetings with the various primates before he could gather them all together for discussion. Although I have criticized the outcome of the 2016 Primates Meeting above, and will do so again below, the fact

¹⁴¹ Whose fault the strained relationship was is besides the point. Williams ended up lacking the authority required to keep them talking and a new person was needed to take over.

that it occurred, and that everyone showed up, displays Archbishop Welby's personal authority being exercised. Such a feat cannot be accomplished by scripture alone, but only by an embodied authority.

Authority and the Spirit

When a bishop is ordained in the Anglican Church of Canada, hands are laid on him or her and the ordination prayer begins with, "RECEIVE the Holy Ghost for the office and work of a Bishop in the Church of God []." ¹⁴² This prayer reflects the understanding that those ordained to an office of authority are in possession of the Holy Spirit in a particular way, both spiritually identifying them as holder of that office and assisting them in carrying out the duties of it. Although this understanding has been traditional Anglican teaching, it is problematic in practice.

The dwelling of the Holy Spirit is not limited to the bishops of the church. At baptism it is believed that the Holy Spirit comes and dwells with the baptized. This puts all members of all Anglican churches in direct contact with the Holy Spirit, the same Holy Spirit that is guiding bishops in their decision making. Yet, there are disagreements within the church over decisions that bishops make. If all have the same Spirit, why do these disagreements exist?

This is not a new question. ¹⁴³ Solutions to this problem often involve attempting to devise ways to identify who is correctly understanding what the Holy Spirit is saying. For example, the virtue of one's life could give one better insight into

¹⁴² The Book of Common Prayer 1962. Canada: Best Book Manufactures, 1997, 666.
<http://prayerbook.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/BCP.pdf>

¹⁴³ The problem of spirit filled Christians disagreeing with each other is recurring in St. Paul. A not all together satisfactory answer he gives in 1 Corinthians 11:18-19 is that divisions exist so that those who hold to the truth can be identified.

the Holy Spirit's direction, or a life situation has made one more keen in understanding the Holy Spirit. None of these solutions are satisfying because none really provide a way forward. Each tries to use impersonal criteria as a way of determining what direction a personal Spirit is leading. How the Holy Spirit leads is a mystery,¹⁴⁴ yet it does so not as something easily quantifiable, but as an encounter that changes a person.¹⁴⁵ Because of this the Anglican church has adopted a posture of openness to the Spirit in its decision making.¹⁴⁶ This anticipation of the Holy Spirit's guidance doesn't fit easily into the actual polity of Anglicanism. It is an unknown that at its best reveals new insights into the questions under discussion, and at worse is degraded to a rhetorical argument in favour of a particular position.¹⁴⁷ This is further complicated by the idea that the scriptures should be used to test if the insights brought forward by those in the church are in fact from the Spirit or not. Such a test may seem simple, but it introduces the problem of differing scriptural interpretation,

¹⁴⁴ And one that the biblical authors themselves struggled to articulate. Consider John 3:8.

¹⁴⁵ Robert D. Sider has an interesting, if ambiguous, quote where I think he is putting forward something similar to my thought, but it is difficult to discern exactly what he means: "On the other hand, our distant predecessors [Tertullian, Didymus the Blind, and Augustine] point us in directions that promise to be fruitful in our present circumstances, inviting us to find in catholic consensus a reasonable assurance that our synodal actions will be forward-looking precisely as they are rooted in a vital tradition of an enduring Christian faith, and to find in the creeds not only documents that attest to orthodoxy or legitimize majority votes, but living doctrine that becomes for us a theological matrix out of which can emerge an expansive corporate experience of the divine in the power of which we move forward."

Robert D. Sider, "Spirit-Led." In *In Spirit and in Truth: The Challenge of Discernment for Canadian Anglicans Today*, ed. Catherine Hamilton, Peter Sider, M.N. Robinson, and Geroje Sumner (Vancouver: Regent College Publishing, 2009), 79.

¹⁴⁶ Inter-Anglican Theological and Doctrinal Commission, *The Virginia Report, 1997*, paragraph 4.20.

¹⁴⁷ It is difficult to argue a contrary position when someone says, "The Holy Spirit is working out a new thing here, it is important to follow where it is leading." That is not how openness to the Spirit leading works.

and a vicious circle between those who disagree can be introduced.¹⁴⁸ Yet, no matter how difficult, the idea that authority is given through the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit assists those in authority is woven into Anglican theology and an examination of it would be incomplete without raising it. In the final chapter the subject of the Holy Spirit will be returned to.

Overstepping Authority

Within the church, questions that invoke strong reactions are addressed on a daily basis in sermons and discussions whenever a local church meets. What is just to do in a particular situation? How should one understand their moral obligation? What is the ultimate truth and reality of the world around us? The answers to these questions often unify people to do great things, but they also just as easily divide. Both case studies above show that the division between those who are in favour of same-sex blessings and those opposed is a deep division. Not only are they divided, but in their division they believe fundamental concepts are at stake, such as justice, mercy, and the gospel. When a division becomes fully engaged around these bigger issues, ordered authority itself can come into crisis. This is what is occurring within the Anglican Communion today, as illustrated by both New Westminster and the 2016 Primates Meeting. A crisis of authority occurs when an authority oversteps their authority. They attempt to impose something that they believe to be for the good of all, but it is outside of their power to do so.

All authority exist within a specific sphere. For example, the mayor and city

¹⁴⁸ I know that my interpretation of scripture is correct because the Spirit has affirmed it to me, and I know that it is the Spirit affirming it because my interpretation of scripture matches what the Spirit is saying to me.

council have authority within the city that voted them in to enact and enforce laws, but they do not have the authority to do so in a different city. Likewise, their jurisdiction is limited even within their own city. The laws they can enact and enforce fall within a very limited scope. For example, they cannot order a university within their city to confer a degree on someone, as the authority to do that belongs to a different sphere than their own. If they were to attempt to do so, other authorities, such as the courts, would become involved. Something akin to this is occurring within Anglicanism. In our look at New Westminster we saw Bishop Terrence Buckle of the Yukon attempt to extend his authority outside of the Yukon and into Bishop Ingham's sphere. As Anglican polity has never allowed this, Bishop Buckle must have known that what he was attempting to do was against Anglican polity, yet he attempted it anyways. He did so because he believed, at least when he made the initial offer, that there was something more important at stake than ordered authority. The same issue has played out as primates from the Global South have put parishes in North America under their care, far outside of their own sphere and within the sphere of the Episcopal Church. It is clear that doing so is in violation of Anglican polity, yet calls to cease the practice went unheeded.¹⁴⁹

We see a different overstepping of authority, but the same underlying desire to "do what is right" regardless of authority within the 2016 Primate's Meeting.¹⁵⁰ The

¹⁴⁹ Section 155 of the Windsor Report is clear in the call for the ceasing of this practice. However, with the formation of the Anglican Church in North America with its own Primate, it is now less an intervention by foreign bishops and more a different denomination. This will be an issue that will need to be dealt with when determining if the Anglican Church of North America should be part of the Anglican Communion or not.

¹⁵⁰ Since the meeting the Archbishop of Canterbury has clarified the extent of the 2016 Primates Meeting authority and the consequences that came from it. He said, "This decision binds the Primates as a group, but not any Province or other Instrument of Communion." Although he is correct,

Primates Meeting does not have the authority to enforce a decision on a national church. To repeat Michael Peers again, "The primates do not, at our meetings, either move resolutions or take votes. We seek the deepest possible expression of unity in whatever terms are available to us."¹⁵¹ Yet in the intervening thirteen years since he said this and 2016, the Primates Meetings have taken on a new shape without the authority to do so. In a desire to do what is best for the Communion in their eyes the primates have overstepped their authority.

Both examples of authorities overstepping their bounds given above are those seeking not maintain an established doctrine in the church, but those wanting to change long-standing doctrines are also guilty of this. An example of this is the ordination of female priests in the Episcopal Church. Twice their General Convention had refused to ordain women as priests, yet in 1974 three retired bishops went ahead and ordained eleven women to the priesthood, violating canonical law.¹⁵² Actions where an authority goes beyond the limits of their authority are hailed by those in favour of them as "restoring order" if the action is to keep the status quo, or as "prophetic" if the action seeks to change the current state of affairs. But regardless of what they are called, they show the limits of ordered authority. When someone in

it is difficult to match this statement to what was said in the actual 2016 Primates Statement, or in the response to that statement among bishops and church leaders across the Anglican Communion. This seems like an attempt to walk back authority that was originally claimed.

Justin Welby," Archbishop Reflects on Primates; Meeting in Synod Address," The Archbishop of Canterbury, Accessed April 4, 2016, <http://www.archbishopofcanterbury.org/articles.php/5669/archbishop-reflects-on-primates-meeting-in-synod-address>.

¹⁵¹ "Primates decline to support same-sex rites: statement not a repudiation: Peers," *Anglican Journal*, September 2003.

¹⁵² Philip Turner, "The End of a Church and the Triumph of Denominationalism: On How to Think About What is Happening in the Episcopal Church." in *The Fate of Communion: The Agony of Anglicanism and the Future of a Global Church*, ed. Ephraim Radner and Philip Turner (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 17-18.

authority believes that their cause is righteous it is easy to overstep the bounds of that authority for the greater good. This creates a crisis in authority that has two consequences. First, those whose sphere of authority has been encroached on by another authority find their own authority being questioned. Second, those under the authority who overstepped their bounds may have to work through a crossroad as they recognize the authority over them but disagree with their actions.¹⁵³ Bishops who overstep their authority are in the end working against themselves. Although their decisions may be temporarily popular, it calls into question their legitimate authority. If they can overstep their authority when they believe the greater good calls for it, what is stopping those under their authority from doing the same thing? Bishops need to model the behaviour they want to see in their priests and laity.

Conclusion

In this chapter we examined Bishop Ingham's exercise of authority in New Westminster around the issue of same-sex blessings. We then looked at the 2016 Primates Meeting's use of authority in response to this. We concluded that in the first case Bishop Ingham acted within Anglican polity, while in the second the Primates went beyond it. Our focus then shifted to examining three issues about authority that the two situations raised: the interplay between scripture and authority, authority as

¹⁵³ Anglican history provides one of the best example of this second issue in the nonjuring schism. Opposed to King James II's religious policies, five bishops (including Archbishop Sancroft) were imprisoned. When James II was overthrown by William III in the Glorious Revolution the bishops were released. However, all clergy were then required to sign their allegiance to the new king. The five bishops (joined by many other clergy) refused to do so on the grounds that even if they disagreed with James II's religious policies, he was still the legitimate sovereign and William III was not. The bishops were deposed by the new King and a schism began. We see here bishops trying to navigate what obedience to give to authorities that were, in their eyes, overstepping their authority.

John R. H. Moorman, *A History of the Church in England*, (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1953), 264-266.

personal, and those in authority overstepping their authority. These issues show that there are more questions to exercising authority than if polity allows an action to be taken. Other considerations, such as keeping parishes under authority, the relationships leaders have with others, and how actions are forming those under your authority, all will enter into the decision making process when deciding if, and how to, exercise authority.

Chapter 4 – The ARCIC Perspective on Authority

"As we have seen repeatedly, it is Anglican's view of *authority*, more than any other single issue, that distinguishes it from Roman Catholicism, and from this all other issues flow."

– John Howe and Sam Pascoe

Introduction

In this chapter we will examine the Anglican Roman Catholic International Commission's (ARCIC) statements on authority. ARCIC has been an ongoing ecumenical theological dialogue since the 1970s, searching for unity between the Anglican Communion and Roman Catholic Church in hopes of achieving full communion between the churches. ARCIC has released four documents on the question of authority: *Authority in the Church I* (1976), *The Elucidation on Authority in the Church* (1981), *Authority in the Church II* (1981), and *The Gift of Authority* (1998). These documents attempt to find and articulate theological positions on authority that are acceptable to both traditions.¹⁵⁴

ARCIC is an important case study in how Anglicans understand authority for three reasons. First, it has been a sustained theological engagement with this question over many decades and involving many different Anglicans on the commission. Second, it not only engages with those within the Anglican Communion, but also involves the Roman Catholic Church, whose own view of authority often contrasts

¹⁵⁴ The earlier documents have been reviewed by their respective churches and feedback given to the commission, while *The Gift of Authority* has not yet have official feedback. None of these statements represent an authoritative teaching of either the Anglican or Roman Catholic Church's position, except when one of them has offered official comment or response on a document, but are a dialogue encouraged by each church in hopes of finding an agreement that will eventually allow full communion.

with Anglicanism. Anglicans have thus had to explain their understanding to a different tradition, while at the same time trying to find unity with the other. This has allowed greater self-reflection on what is essential to Anglicanism. Third, the proposals of ARCIC have been widely discussed, debated, and criticised within Anglicanism and Roman Catholicism. This larger discussion, and conflict of views on whether to accept the final ARCIC documents on authority as compatible with Anglicanism, has been insightful to how authority works in practice within the Communion.

Many themes run through the ARCIC documents on authority, but here we will focus only on three of them as they are either central to ARCIC's position, or correspond with the examination of Anglican authority within this document: synodality, bishops, and primacy. We will also focus on the newest ARCIC document on authority, *The Gift of Authority*, as it represents the most advanced thinking of ARCIC on the question. However, the earlier documents will be brought in when they help clarify an issue.

In looking at ARCIC we will consider how the proposals it put forward could assist the Anglican Communion in its current crisis of authority. As there have been calls within Anglicanism to centralize authority at a universal level, the sustained consideration of ARCIC on this topic can assist Anglicans, many of whom are considering it for the first time.

Synodality

Synodality is seen in *The Gift of Authority* as an expression of the faithful

walking together.¹⁵⁵ This matches well with the understanding we have seen of it in the Anglican Communion. Where things become more complicated is when addressing how different churches are joined together through synods. *The Gift of Authority* recognizes four levels of synods: local, provincial, worldwide, and ecumenical.¹⁵⁶ According to *The Gift of Authority*, "The mutual interdependence of all churches is integral to the reality of the Church as God wills it to be. No local church that participates in the living Tradition can regard itself as self-sufficient."¹⁵⁷ This is true for the lower level in the Anglican tradition. Synods provide the connections between churches that allow them to support each other and come to, and act on, a common mind at the local diocesan, provincial, and national levels. The working out of this common mind in practice at the worldwide level has been difficult. The Anglican Communion does not have the synodical structure at the worldwide level that *The Gift of Authority* seems to want here. Although the Anglican instruments of unity are recognized as being expressions of synodality,¹⁵⁸ they vary from how synodality is expressed in the Roman Catholic Church at a worldwide level. When the bishops of the Anglican Communion meet together it is a meeting of churches, and therefore the Common as a whole cannot create binding decisions, as each church must make the decision for itself.

¹⁵⁵ Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission, *The Gift of Authority: Authority in the Church III*, 1998, paragraph 34.

¹⁵⁶ Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission, *The Gift of Authority: Authority in the Church III*, 1998, paragraph 37.

¹⁵⁷ Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission, *The Gift of Authority: Authority in the Church III*, 1998, paragraph 37.

¹⁵⁸ Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission, *The Gift of Authority: Authority in the Church III*, 1998, paragraph 39.

Conversely, Roman Catholicism is a worldwide church and, therefore, can make decisions binding on local churches at a worldwide level.¹⁵⁹ Decisions made at a worldwide level must come through either the College of Bishops, with the Pope as its head, or by the Pope alone. Decisions made by the College of Bishops will either be an united action, which the Pope approves of, or through an Ecumenical council's decrees, which the Pope gives ascent to.¹⁶⁰ ¹⁶¹ The Pope himself can also directly address the church as a whole and make a binding decision on it.¹⁶² The Pope may also bring together a synod of bishops to assist him in coming to a decision. This synod will "discuss the questions for consideration and express its wishes but not to resolve them or issue decrees about them unless in certain cases the Roman Pontiff has endowed it with deliberative power, in which case he ratifies the decisions of the synod."¹⁶³ This synod allows bishops to speak, deliberate, and advise, but not normally to resolve matters. This type of Roman Catholic synod differs from Anglican synods in three ways: it is a synod of the worldwide church, it does not have lay participation, and unless it is given deliberative powers it cannot make a decision.

The interdependence that *The Gift of Authority* puts forward seems to be closer to Roman Catholic polity. Structurally, each Anglican province is self-

¹⁵⁹ Vatican II is an example of a recent council that clarified doctrine and set practice for the whole Roman Catholic Church.

¹⁶⁰ Paul VI, *Lumen Gentium*, 1964, paragraph 22. http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19641121_lumen-gentium_en.html.

¹⁶¹ Code of Canon Law, c. 336, in Code of Canon Law: Latin English Edition (Washington D.C. : Canon Law Society of America, 1983), http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG1104/_P17.HTM.

¹⁶² Code of Canon Law, c. 333, in Code of Canon Law: Latin English Edition (Washington D.C. : Canon Law Society of America, 1983), http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG1104/___P16.HTM.

¹⁶³ Code of Canon Law, c. 343, in Code of Canon Law: Latin English Edition (Washington D.C. : Canon Law Society of America, 1983), http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG1104/___P18.HTM.

sufficient, and although they recognize that for the sake of catholicity they need each other, in the actual exercise of authority they do not require the agreement of any other church in the Anglican Communion. Therefore, when *The Gift of Authority* says that, "No local church that participates in the living Tradition can regard itself as self-sufficient. Forms of synodality, then, are needed to manifest the communion of the local churches and to sustain each of them in fidelity to the Gospel,"¹⁶⁴ the Anglican Communion is not yet where *The Gift of Authority* suggests it needs to be at the worldwide level. The synodality that exists at that level for Anglicans in the instruments of communion is still developing. It is recognized that the churches of the Communion need each other, have a level of unity in Christ, and a desire to walk together, but, as this is still a structurally new worldwide Communion compared to Roman Catholicism, it is unrealistic to expect the same maturity in their structures.¹⁶⁵

Therefore, although in principle there is agreement with in the importance of synodality in *The Gift of Authority*, it is unclear if the Anglican Communion can meet the requirements *The Gift of Authority* puts in place: "The maintenance of communion requires that at every level there is a capacity to take decisions appropriate to that level. When those decisions raise serious questions for the wider communion of church, synodality must find a wider expression."¹⁶⁶ There is no level of synodality

¹⁶⁴ Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission, *The Gift of Authority: Authority in the Church III*, 1998, paragraph 37.

¹⁶⁵ This is not to suggest that the Anglican Communion will mature into a structure similar to Roman Catholicism. This may occur, or it may find a different structure. This is simply suggesting that, because of the short length of existence of a worldwide Anglican Communion, there are still many issues that need time to be worked out, unlike Roman Catholicism that has had a much longer history to work out some of the same issues on their own terms.

¹⁶⁶ Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission. *The Gift of Authority: Authority in*

that can make decisions for the Anglican Communion at its widest level. As we saw in the previous chapters, statements can be made by the instruments of communion, but they cannot be enforced unless a national church decides to do so.

Bishops

It is not the role of ARCIC to put forward solutions to the internal problems of the Anglican or Roman Catholic Churches, but to understand both the differences and similarities in each church and work towards a convergence of understanding.

However, sometimes convergences in understanding can be potential solutions to pre-existing internal problems. In the case of the lack of worldwide authority over doctrine and practice in Anglicanism, the convergence that has occurred on the subject of universal primacy provides a possible way forward through the current crisis of authority in the Anglican Communion.

The Gift of Authority holds a very traditional Anglican position on bishops. They have "the pastoral authority needed for the effective exercise of episcopate within a local church."¹⁶⁷ This authority is binding, and decisions that the bishop takes while fulfilling their duties have an authority over the faithful. However, *The Gift of Authority* lacks discussion on how the clergy and laity play into decisions made by local bishops. This may be because the decisions do not touch on doctrine or practice, but instead focus more administrative decisions which would limit laity involvement, or because they wish to reduce the role of the non-bishops in decision making as compared to the Anglican Communion today. It is my belief from looking at *The Gift*

the Church III, 1998, paragraph 37.

¹⁶⁷ Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission, *The Gift of Authority: Authority in the Church III, 1998, paragraph 36.*

of Authority that is it the latter.

The best that *The Gift of Authority* does with reception at the local level is acknowledge the duty of the faithful to their bishop: "By their *sensus fidei* the faithful are able in conscience both to recognize God at work in the bishop's exercise of authority, and also to respond to it as believers. This is what motivates their obedience, and obedience of freedom and not slavery."¹⁶⁸ *The Gift of Authority* does not discuss the role of the clergy and laity in local synods, only synods between bishops.¹⁶⁹ This is not to say that *The Gift of Authority* doesn't recognize the importance of clergy and the laity; it does earlier make note that bishops need to pay attention to the faithful and be alert to the discernment that they provide the church: "The bishops, the clergy and the other faithful must all recognise and receive what is mediated from God through each other."¹⁷⁰ It also notes that when the church faces challenging situations, the whole body of believers must take up the challenge and participate in the teaching of the church.¹⁷¹ However, when it comes to the structures of authority it is the bishops that are invested with authority. The participation of the body of believers is done, "in their distinctive ways, which once again refers to

¹⁶⁸ Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission, *The Gift of Authority: Authority in the Church III, 1998*, paragraph 36.

The discernment that is suggested here is one that occurs after the bishops has exercised authority. No mention is made of the clergy or laity being involved in the process of exercising the authority itself.

¹⁶⁹ Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission, *The Gift of Authority: Authority in the Church III, 1998*, paragraph 37.

¹⁷⁰ Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission, *The Gift of Authority: Authority in the Church III, 1998*, paragraph 30.

¹⁷¹ Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission, *The Gift of Authority: Authority in the Church III, 1998*, paragraph 43.

reception for the laity.¹⁷² This model is out of step with the modern Anglican synodical structure where both clergy and laity have a much greater say in decisions, although as was pointed out above the situation with Anglicanism is not itself so clear, with final say still residing with the bishops.

The Gift of Authority does not imagine the relationship between bishops, clergy, and laity to be confrontational or overbearing. One could look at the structure that *The Gift of Authority* puts forward and see a balance of power in favour of bishops, but *The Gift of Authority* views the differences between bishops and those under their authority not in terms of power, but in terms of duty.¹⁷³ This is an important difference, as power implies privilege, while duty implies burden. This is not to say that bishops do not have "power," they most certainly do, but that power is to be used in the carrying out of their duty. Likewise, the laity must perform their duty to the church in recognizing the truth expressed in the voice of the bishops, and when found, giving their assent to it.¹⁷⁴ *The Gift of Authority* sees these duties as working together for the life of the church. The bishops lead and the people follow, but this is not done blindly. They consider what is taught to them, and in their freedom choose to follow while offering reforms and criticisms as needed.¹⁷⁵ In turn the bishops take this response and absorb it into their own thinking. So although structurally excluded

¹⁷² Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission, *The Gift of Authority: Authority in the Church III*, 1998, paragraph 43.

¹⁷³ Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission, *The Gift of Authority: Authority in the Church III*, 1998, paragraph 44.

¹⁷⁴ Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission, *The Gift of Authority: Authority in the Church III*, 1998, paragraph 41-44.

¹⁷⁵ Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission, *The Gift of Authority: Authority in the Church III*, 1998, paragraph 48-49.

from authority, *The Gift of Authority* does see a place for the laity in the decision making process of the church.

The lack of structural placement for laity within *The Gift of Authority* may be due to an underemphasis on laity in general. The earlier *Elucidation on Authority* addressed this accusation against ARCIC. Its response was that, in the discussion between the Anglican and Roman Catholic churches, it is the ordained ministries, "where most difficulties appear to exist."¹⁷⁶ Even if this is so, as we saw in the previous chapters, the role that the clergy and laity play in making decisions with the bishop in synod is important within Anglicanism, but adds a level of confusion to who has authority and how it is used, and should be clarified by ARCIC as it is a difference between Anglican and Roman Catholic polity. It is also interesting that *Authority I* makes explicit note of the differences between laity involvement in the two churches' polity: "The Roman Catholic Church has much to learn from the Anglican synodical tradition of involving the laity in the life and mission of the Church."¹⁷⁷ Yet, there is no further discussion of this difference within ARCIC and a more Roman Catholic authority structure is assumed where the laity has less formal input.

Primacy and the Exercise of Authority

Primacy is the role of oversight over other bishops. For example, within Anglicanism the national bishop is known as the Primate because they have

¹⁷⁶ Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission, *Elucidation On Authority In The Church*, 1981, paragraph 4.

¹⁷⁷ Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission, *Authority In the Church I*, 1976, Preface.

oversight, although not direct authority as laid out above, of a particular national church and the bishops within it. Within Roman Catholicism, Metropolitans have a kind of primacy over the bishops under their jurisdiction.¹⁷⁸ In both of these communions national primacy involves not only formal structures, but also includes, perhaps primarily, moral authority. Although the primate may not be able to directly tell the bishops who they have oversight over or what actions to take, what the primate says, and the actions they take, has weight that must be taken seriously.

In the ARCIC discussions primacy takes on a specific significance. What level of primacy can exist within the church, and what authority and powers come with the role, is a major difference between the Roman Catholic and Anglican churches. *The Gift of Authority* discusses the possibility of a universal primate overseeing both the Anglican and Roman Catholic Churches. Such a primacy is unknown within Anglicanism. National churches have primates, but there is no universal primate.¹⁷⁹ This lack of historical precedent within Anglican is not directly addressed, but instead within the *Elucidation on Authority* it is noted that:

Anglicanism has never rejected the principle and practice of primacy. New reflection upon it has been stimulated by the evolving role of the archbishop of Canterbury within the Anglican Communion. The development of this form of primacy arose precisely from the need for a service of unity in the faith as expanding communion of Churches.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁸ Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission, *The Gift of Authority: Authority in the Church III*, 1998, paragraph 45.

¹⁷⁹ *The Gift of Authority* does put forward that "The Archbishop of Canterbury exercises a primatial ministry in the Whole Anglican Communion" This is interesting wording. As has been shown above, there is a moral authority that the Archbishop carries, but there is no structural authority that comes with it. So it is clear he is not a primate, but he is expected to bring the Communion together like a primate would. TGA is therefore correct that there is a "primatial ministry," but without the tools to do so. This will be further examined below.

Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission, *The Gift of Authority: Authority in the Church III*, 1998, paragraph 45.

¹⁸⁰ Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission, *Elucidation On Authority In The*

This is somewhat an over simplification. As has been shown in the first two chapters of this thesis, Anglicanism has rejected a universal primate in practice. Some Anglicans have put forward plans to give the Archbishop of Canterbury more authority in the past, and none have succeeded. Commenting on the *Windsor Report's* and the Anglican Covenant's proposals to strengthen and centralize authority within the Anglican Communion¹⁸¹, Jeffrey Driver wrote, "Although the debate about the Anglican Covenant is continuing, it seems clear that the Communion as a whole is far from ready to move away from its model of dispersed authority towards one which see authority working to a greater extent through structures at the center."¹⁸² The role of the Archbishop of Canterbury has been evolving to be a better source of unity within the Communion, but that evolution is within the framework the tradition has laid out for authority. This framework highly values dispersed authority, and the moderate steps some proposals have looked to as ways to strength authority have not been embraced by the Communion as a whole.

The understanding of the role and authority of the universal primate *The Gift of Authority* lays out would be radically new to Anglican polity. *The Gift of Authority* sees a universal primate as representing the universality and unity of the church, while exercising its ministry "collegially in the context of synodality".¹⁸³ In previous

Church, 1981, paragraph 8.

¹⁸¹ *The Anglican Communion Covenant*, section 4.2.

¹⁸² Jeffrey W. Driver, *A Polity of Persuasion: Gift and Grief of Anglicanism* (Eugene Oregon: Cascade Books, 2014), 64.

¹⁸³ Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission, *The Gift of Authority: Authority in the Church III*, 1998, paragraph 46-53.

ARCIC discussions, the role was defined as a "servant and focus of visible unity in truth and love."¹⁸⁴ This primate would be able to "discern and declare [...] the authentic faith of the whole Church, that is the faith proclaimed from the beginning."¹⁸⁵ However, this ability to "discern and declare" is not the ability to create new teachings, but only to reiterate what is believed by the church. *Authority II* had previously provided that this reiteration can include applying the faith to new situations, but it is still the same faith.¹⁸⁶

It should be noted that the role of universal primate does not eliminate the need for regional bishops and councils.¹⁸⁷ In ARCIC's vision, the universal primate works together with local bishops, receiving guidance and understanding of local situations from them. There is a suggestion in *Authority II* that, due to the separation between the Anglican and Roman Catholic churches, an imbalance has occurred in each thinking on the question of primacy and conciliarity.¹⁸⁸ Primacy grew in stature within Roman Catholicism, while conciliarity within Anglican, and it is only through coming together that the balance in each church can be restored.

¹⁸⁴ Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission, *Authority In the Church II*, 1981, Paragraph 33.

¹⁸⁵ Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission, *The Gift of Authority: Authority in the Church III*, 1998, paragraph 47.

¹⁸⁶ Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission, *Authority In the Church II*, 1981, Paragraph 24.

¹⁸⁷ Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission, *Authority In the Church I*, 1976, Paragraph 21-24.

¹⁸⁸ Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission, *Authority In the Church I*, 1976, Paragraph 22.

The ARCIC Proposal in Practice

What does ARCIC's proposals on polity do for the situation the Anglican Communion finds itself in? *The Gift of Authority* devotes two paragraphs to laying out the practical workings of a universal primacy. The first paragraph notes that the primate must work in collegiality and synodality, uphold legitimate diverse traditions, keep fidelity to the Gospel, support the church's mission, and maintain the balance between keeping unity and allowing for diversity.¹⁸⁹ The second paragraph speaks of the universal primate as a prophetic voice, not being constrained by sectional interests, offering teaching on difficult theological and moral questions, welcoming theological enquiry, and gathering voices from throughout the church for consultation and discussion.¹⁹⁰

Both of these lists are full of principled goals for a universal primate to strive for, and in theory no Anglican should be opposed to what is on the lists. But imagining how these goals will be carried out is difficult. ARCIC in its documents does not give time to imagining how to live out the agreement it is attempting to forge. The living out of the agreement is something that by definition must be lived after agreement is made. Such imaginings are really beyond the scope of ARCIC, yet they are also the first things that come to mind when the ARCIC documents are read. Even to one who would agree with every word within ARCIC, the next natural question to ask is, "How will that work in the real world?" Given the discussion in the previous three chapters, the natural question to ask at this point is, "With the issues

¹⁸⁹ Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission, *The Gift of Authority: Authority in the Church III*, 1998, paragraph 60.

¹⁹⁰ Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission, *The Gift of Authority: Authority in the Church III*, 1998, paragraph 61.

identified so far, how would ARCIC's proposals work towards providing an alternative solution to the question of Authority in the Anglican Church?"

Reinvesting Power in Bishops

As discussed in Chapter 2, bishops within the Anglican church have become much more partners with the clergy and laity. The bishop still holds authority to make certain decisions by virtue of their office, but the broader changes to western culture have brought the power they once had to order their diocese by the authority of their office alone under increased scrutiny. The voices of the people in the pews cannot be ignored. Through their participation in synods at both local and national levels they make not only their opinions well known to the bishops, but also have a say in making decisions regarding the direction of the church.

The ARCIC discussions put bishops back at the center of structural authority within the church and appear to underemphasize the role of the clergy and laity.¹⁹¹ Laity are to accept the decisions made by bishops on the basis of the authority of their office.¹⁹² Although some criticism is allowed by the laity, there is not a sense of collaboration with bishops, nor official space for clergy and laity to have a voice in the structures of the church. The bishops and laity are two distinct spheres. Such a shift in polity would cause much anguish, but would it really result in many differences in policy and doctrine for the Anglican Communion? Could it provide a clearer working out of authority within Anglicanism?

¹⁹¹ Carlos Eduardo Brandão Calvani, et al, "Report On The Document "The Gift of Authority," *Anglican Theological Review* 87, no. 2 (March 1, 2005): 295.

¹⁹² Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission, *Authority In the Church II*, 1981, Paragraph 17.

A shift in official polity cannot undo the wider societal shifts that have given the laity their place at local and national synods. As discussed in Chapter 2, the office of the bishop no longer carries the innate authority over the laity it once did. The bishop may still have the final say, that is power, in many situations within their diocese as laid out in canon law, but authority cannot be granted only by law. Authority is not something one can receive by title alone, but, as Paul Avis says, "They have that authority because it is recognized by others."¹⁹³ For a bishop to have authority they need to convince the clergy and laity that their direction and decisions are worth following. If the clergy and laity are not convinced of this they will not follow their bishop, leaving the bishop with power but no one to exercise it over. Today, much of the convincing of the laity and clergy comes from giving them a voice in the decisions of the church. Even if official structures of authority were to change to lessen the role of clergy and laity in official decisions, the bishops would not have the authority to implement their decisions on the clergy and laity without their input into them. Unofficial structures would develop as a necessity for bishops to maintain their authority. The policy and doctrinal direction of the church before any changes in polity would also need to be maintained. A shift would be seen as being done without authority to do so.

Although divesting clergy and laity of authority and centralizing it in the bishops may seem to be a resolution to disputes within the church and be clear on doctrinal positions, it would in fact lessen the authority of bishops. As is noted in *Baptism, Eucharist, and Ministry*:

¹⁹³ Paul Avis, *Becoming a Bishop: A Theological Handbook of Episcopal Ministry* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), 40.

The intimate relationship between the ordained ministry and the community should find expression in a communal dimension where the exercise of the ordained ministry is rooted in the life of the community and requires the community's effective participation in the discovery of God's will and the guidance of the Spirit.¹⁹⁴

The whole Church must be involved in discerning God's will for the church. It cannot be the bishops exercising their authority and the laity following them. Such a system is ripe for even more disputes, as the bishop's direction is ignored by a laity that feels unheard in the process.

A Universal Primate in Practice

Would a universal primate be able to offer a new way forward on the question of authority for the Anglican Communion? When answering this it is very important to note the scope of what is envisioned for the role within *The Gift of Authority*:

Such a universal primate will exercise leadership in the world and also in both communions, addressing them in a prophetic way. He will promote the common good in ways that are not constrained by sectional interests, and offer a continuing and distinctive teaching ministry, particularly in addressing difficult theological and moral issues. A universal primacy of this style will welcome and protect theological enquiry and other forms of the search for truth, so that their results may enrich and strengthen both human wisdom and the Church's faith. Such a universal primacy might gather the churches in various ways for consultation and discussion.¹⁹⁵

This vision of the primacy is written as un-ultramontane as possible.¹⁹⁶ The universal primate here is envisioned as one who would "promote" not dictate, encourage theological enquiry instead of controlling it, and not become a promoter of sectarian

¹⁹⁴ World Council of Churches, *Baptism, Eucharist, and Ministry*, 1982, paragraph 26.

¹⁹⁵ Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission, *The Gift of Authority: Authority in the Church III*, 1998., paragraph 61.

¹⁹⁶ Ultramontane is a term referring to the centralization of power in the Pope against the independence of local churches.

interests. All of these are things that Anglicans want to hear. Yet, how realistic is this vision?

One way to approach the plausability of this outline of the role of universal primate would be to compare it to how Anglicans currently see the role of the Archbishop of Canterbury. The role of the Archbishop of Canterbury as laid out in the *Virginia Report* has him covering some of the same ground as the universal primate would. They both have a teaching ministry and gather churches for consultation.¹⁹⁷ Both would promote the common good, and both would be expected to be somewhat above sectional interests. Yet, there are also differences of emphasis here. The Archbishop of Canterbury's role is described as one of unity.¹⁹⁸ Within the Communion his other ministries are submerged under, and only exist for, the creating of unity. This is a recent trend to counter the disunity that is growing within the Anglican Communion, but an important one¹⁹⁹ *The Gift of Authority* does discuss unity in the role of the primate – "This sort of primacy will already assist the Church on earth to be the authentic catholic *koinonia* in which unity does not curtail diversity, and diversity does not endanger but enhances unity,"²⁰⁰ – but when one reads earlier sections within *The Gift of Authority* on universal primacy, the impression of how this unity is achieved differs between the roles. The Archbishop of Canterbury works to

¹⁹⁷ Inter-Anglican Theological and Doctrinal Commission, *The Virginia Report, 1997*, paragraph 6.4.

¹⁹⁸ Inter-Anglican Theological and Doctrinal Commission, *The Virginia Report, 1997*, paragraph 6.2, 6.5.

¹⁹⁹ Perry Butler, "From the Early Eighteenth Century to the Present Day," in *The Study of Anglicanism*, ed. Stephen Sykes, John Booty, and Jonathan Knight (Minnesota: Fortress Press, 2004), 50.

²⁰⁰ Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission, *The Gift of Authority: Authority in the Church III, 1998, paragraph 60.*

achieve unity through the personal role of his pastorate;²⁰¹ he has no ability to lead beyond convincing others to follow him. His office does not carry with it a formal mechanism to lead the Communion. Therefore, the unity he seeks to achieve is a unity not so much of leadership, but of facilitation. He brings the Communion together to discover the unity between them.

The role of the universal primate, however, does have some mechanisms with which to lead. The chief mechanism is the ability to pronounce on what is the faith of the church.²⁰² Once the universal primate has discerned and declared a teaching of the church, it is the responsibility of the bishops to support and teach it. This allows for the creation of an imposed unity. Even if this mechanism is used only after a period of discernment where the laity, priests, and bishops are consulted in various ways, imposing the final answer on a question of faith and morals for the whole Communion would fundamentally change the relationship between Anglicans and authority. Promoting the common good could now mean encouraging the adherence to a position that many in the church are opposed to, while the teaching ministry would take on a required deference that does not currently characterize the Archbishop of Canterbury's ministry.

There is an attraction to having a role that can finally arbitrate on controversial issues for a church. As seen in the previous chapter, the Anglican Communion is in a time currently where the facilitation towards unity in the Communion that the Archbishop of Canterbury has worked for seems to be failing.

²⁰¹ Inter-Anglican Theological and Doctrinal Commission, *The Virginia Report, 1997*, paragraph 6.3, 6.5.

²⁰² Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission, *The Gift of Authority: Authority in the Church III, 1998*, paragraph 47.

Having the ability to put forward the "truth" for the churches of the Communion to accept offers a possible way forward.²⁰³ Yet, it is not clear if the Archbishop of Canterbury had the power to point to the "truth" and require the churches of the Communion to accept it, things would be going differently. There is an important practical and theological consideration to examine here: You cannot force someone to believe something, and you shouldn't try.²⁰⁴

There is no human power to force a person to believe something by decree. Simply informing someone of what they should believe does nothing. What this means is that, once a binding decision is made, those within the church must still be swayed to accept it. The binding decision is what the church will teach, but the people still need to be brought around to accepting it through teaching and participation in the life of the church. There are advantages here. Unlike within the Anglican Communion where multiple contradictory views can be taught in different provinces, dioceses, or even individual churches, when a universal primate speaks definitively on an issue all the teaching within the church should conform. This would seem in

²⁰³ Consider proposal of The Windsor Report for the role of the Archbishop of Canterbury, "As *the* significant focus of unity, mission and teaching, 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."

Lambeth Commission on Communion, *The Windsor Report, 2004*, paragraph 109.

²⁰⁴ It also needs to be remembered that there is a pastoral role that bishops provide, and that role requires that the bishops in some ways mirror the faith of the people under them. This is not to suggest that the bishop needs to go along with whatever his flock thinks is correct, the bishop also has the role of guarding the faith and this sometimes requires them to step in and set their flock straight on an issue of doctrine. There is however a kind of balance that any bishop, including the archbishop, must play. For them to be effective in pastoral matters they need to have a common faith of those they are pastorally helping. If they were to force beliefs on someone, you do not hold to the same faith. This prevents pastoral care from being effective when attempted.

practice to remove confusion about the church's teaching, and make it easier to convince those within the church of the correctness of the imposed view by eliminating the voicing of alternative views. Yet, there is no guarantee of this. Although setting down a definitive doctrine can enforce a single teaching within the church, depending on the subject, there may be strong teaching on church members from outside the church opposed to it. It is unclear then how much practical effect the imposed outward conformity within the church has on encouraging those within it to internalize the teaching of the church. Dissent will always exist, and, whether a universal primate can pronounce definitely on an issue or not, it is always going to be a task of listening, teaching, and argument to bring the people in the church to a position.

Furthermore, the importance of conscience must also be considered. As *The Gift of Authority* itself points out, "The exercise of authority must always respect conscience, because the divine work of salvation affirms human freedom."²⁰⁵ Even when one can definitely proclaim the truth, individuals must choose to believe it on their own. Forcing outward conformity may be a good thing for the church as it is important to present a clear message to the world, but inward conformity is quite different. Each person is responsible to God for their own actions and beliefs. The leaders of the church can teach the proclaimed truth, and show it through their actions, but as Christ in the gospels did not force His message on those he preached to, neither should the leaders of His church.

These practical and theological considerations do not make having a universal

²⁰⁵ Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission, *The Gift of Authority: Authority in the Church III*, 1998, paragraph 49.

primate a non-starter, but instead show that having a final arbitrator on issues of faith and morals will solve the issues of authority within the Anglican Communion. Such a position would be a radical departure from traditional Anglican polity, but as *The Gift of Authority* notes, with the disputes within the Anglican Communion over the last several decades, "there is a reaching towards universal structures which promote koinonia."²⁰⁶ Is this proposal for a universal primate what the Anglican Communion has been reaching towards? We now turn to the reactions to this proposal.

Reactions to a Proposed Universal Primate

Although *The Gift of Authority* is the most clear ARCIC document on what is envisioned by a universal primacy, the idea has been in the ARCIC documents on authority from the beginning. This has allowed Anglican theologians a fair amount of time to reflect on the proposal. In those reflections there have been several approaches taken to the proposal, two major ones of which will be highlighted here.

Bishop Stephen Sykes was an early critical voice of the direction ARCIC took on authority. On the theoretical side he was dissatisfied with how he believed traditional Anglican thinking on the subject was being replaced with Roman Catholic thought.²⁰⁷ He believed that Anglican thought on ecclesiology was unique from Roman Catholicism and the working out of a joint understanding of authority within ARCIC resulted in something that was not within traditional Anglicanism. A practical example he gave of this was submission to a final arbiter of questions of doctrine.

²⁰⁶ Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission, *The Gift of Authority: Authority in the Church III*, 1998, paragraph 55.

²⁰⁷ Stephen W Sykes, "ARCIC and The Papacy: An Examination of The Documents On Authority." *Modern Churchman* 25, no. 1 (January 1, 1982): 18.

According to Sykes, "Anglicans, by contrast, hold an ecclesiology which enabled them to admit that, in the past, they may have made mistakes."²⁰⁸ Thus, the Anglican church, for example, was able to reverse its previous decision on the acceptability of artificial birth control. If a universal primate could pronounce on doctrine and morals this would do away with the ability to reverse such a decision. It is important to note that the ability to go back and correct an interpretation that was once taken as true is foundational to Anglicanism. The Thirty-Nine Articles makes it clear in Article 19 that the church can, and has, erred in the past, while Article 21 makes the same claim against general councils. To embrace the idea that, under certain conditions, judgments without error could be made would be unacceptable to many Anglicans who hold that maintaining historical Anglican doctrine is important.

In response to the discussion around the role of universal primate coming out of ARCIC, the historian Gillian R. Evans examined the historical position toward primacy within the Anglican church. She found that Anglicans have an inconsistent attitude to universal primacy.²⁰⁹ Anglicans have refused to extend a place of structural authority to the Archbishop of Canterbury, but at the same time look to that role to provide moral authority and leadership to the Anglican Communion. Evans does not believe that it is because Anglican theology demands a rejection of universal primacy, but is instead because the Archbishop of Canterbury was put in this position due to the historical situation. She points to the development of national churches outside of

²⁰⁸ Stephen W Sykes, "ARCIC and The Papacy: An Examination of The Documents On Authority." *Modern Churchman* 25, no. 1 (January 1, 1982): 14.

²⁰⁹ Gillian R. Evans, "The Anglican Doctrine of Primacy." *Anglican Theological Review* 72, no. 4 (September 1990): 377.

the Church of England that were originally independent and only later began to develop into a more formalized Communion.²¹⁰ This situation was not anticipated when the role of the Archbishop of Canterbury was first being developed in the Church of England. At that time it was seen to be similar to that of the historical patriarchates, but for England. However, with Anglicanism spreading to other nations and their own local leaders assuming responsibility for their national church in a way similar to the Archbishop of Canterbury, it became difficult to determine what the relationship would be between the original leader of the "mother" Anglican church, and the leaders of the "child" churches. Taking this historical approach, one can make room for a universal primate as the Anglican Communion's situation changes.

The underlying differences in approach between Sykes and Evans is very important. Sykes looks to see if the powers given to a universal primate as explained in ARCIC would be compatible with historical Anglican doctrine and finds it not to be. Evans looks to see the historical development of the Archbishop of Canterbury and determines that their lack of being given the role of universal primate is due to historical accidents and not something inherent in Anglican theology. A clear division can be seen here on how history is used in theological debate. For Sykes, it is a rule to measure proposals by, for Evans it is a tool to explain the current status quo. Both approaches must be given weight. As noted by Paul Avis, "No single period of Anglican history is definitive, such as to serve a paradigm of Anglican ecclesiology. The 'historic formularies' for the Church of England have shaped all churches of the

²¹⁰ Gillian R. Evans, "The Anglican Doctrine of Primacy." *Anglican Theological Review* 72, no. 4 (September 1990): 377.

Anglican Communion, while being adapted or revised in various ways by them."²¹¹
This situation was only able to occur because the "historic formularies" acknowledged that churches and councils could err.²¹² By allowing room to change and adapt, the historical doctrines of the Anglican Communion continue to matter to Anglicans. There is therefore a tension between the historical process and the historical doctrine of the Anglican church. Like two rocks being smoothed by rubbing against one another, both are needed to bring out the hidden shape in the other.

Yet, on the proposal for a universal primate there is not yet within Anglicanism a consensus if a universal primate is an acceptable change to Anglican polity.²¹³ The rocks on the topic have not had enough time to smooth each other out and reveal what is desired. Therefore, before the proposal can move forward it must undergo a time of discussion, debate, and consideration within the Anglican Communion to determine if it has practical merit and if it will be acceptable to Anglicans.

Conclusion

The purpose of the ARCIC discussions on authority are not to fix the problems we have identified with authority in the Anglican Communion. The discussions exist to work towards theological agreements that can eventually build to full visible unity between the Anglican Communion and Roman Catholic church. However, these discussions present new understandings that can lead to possible

²¹¹ Paul Avis, *The Identity of Anglicanism: Essentials Of Anglican Ecclesiology* (London: Continuum, 2007), 159.

²¹² The Thirty-Nine Articles, 19 and 21.

²¹³ Carlos Eduardo Brandão Calvani, et al, "Report On The Document "The Gift of Authority," *Anglican Theological Review* 87, no. 2 (March 1, 2005): 298, 300-301.

solutions for the problems that exist within Anglicanism. We have examined two such proposals here: moving authority away from the laity and onto the bishops, and a universal primate. On the first we concluded it would not be workable in the Anglican Communion. The second has possibility but would not create the immediate conformity some within Anglicanism would like to see, and would be a significant change with much opposition for the foreseeable future.

More importantly we have seen that there is no quick fix to the crisis of authority within Anglicanism. By looking at both Roman Catholic and Anglican authority structures the ARCIC discussions have provided much for Anglicans to consider about how their structures work, presented possible new alternatives, and lessened the hostility to previously considered and rejected Roman Catholic ideas. They have also exposed that structural changes, although needed and important, are only possible with a theology to go along with them. This was seen in the conflicting position between Sykes and Evans on how Anglicanism has arrived at its understanding of authority and how important that is. It is therefore to a theological understanding of authority that we finally turn.

Chapter 5 –Thoughts For a Way Forward

"Keep, we beseech thee, O Lord, thy Church with thy perpetual mercy."
– Collect for the fifteenth Sunday after Trinity, 1662 Book of Common Prayer

Introduction

We are at the end of our analysis of Anglican authority and can now put forward some conclusions and areas for further research. With everything that has been examined so far on authority – the confused history of the Anglican Communion, the problems with bishops and synods exercising their authority, and the current crisis of authority in the Anglican Communion over same-sex relationships – it is important to remind ourselves why authority is important. In this concluding chapter we will examine why authority is needed in the Anglican Communion, and show why, even with all the problems that exist, there is still hope for the Communion.

We will also look at the theological imperative for authority: how it is needed for good to come about and how without it we could not know truth. Then we will consider how this theological understanding of authority can assist the thinking of those wrestling on what to do with the crisis of authority in the Anglican Communion today.

Authority and the Good

Authority allows for a greater good to come about than would without it. The American Anglican theologian Victor Lee Austin, in a recent book-length examination of authority, uses the example of a symphony to illustrate this point:

They do need authority; they need, for starters, a conductor. This is because, with any given piece of music, there is a range of legitimate interpretations. Decisions must be made about phrasings, about temp, about volume and blend of various instruments. On each of these questions there are many wrong answers; but there is also seldom just one right answer. So decisions must be made.²¹⁴

As with a symphony, so much more with the church. The church can work towards many goods, but there are only so many people, so much time and money, available to pursue the various goods. Decisions must be made on the best way to spend finite resources, and this requires someone in authority. If the right decision for the church to move forward in being the body of Christ was obvious, then every local body would be doing the same thing, but they are not. Some local churches devote much of their time to prayer; others see their focus as celebrating the liturgy; others focus on providing help for those in great need; some see missionary activity as their calling; still others see their role as trying to influence the broader social conversation. None of these things are outside of what the church is called to do, and they all have the potential to further carry on the mission of the church, but if each local church tried to do them all it would fail. Decisions need to be made regarding the best way to use each church's skills and resources.

Together a church can be more effective than its individual members; the sum is greater than the parts. Again Victor Lee Austin comments, "It is the complexities of social organization, with their attendant localizations and focusing authority, that make possible large-scale coordinative actions of human creativity."²¹⁵ Without

²¹⁴ Victor Lee Austin, *Up With Authority: Why we Need Authority to Flourish as Human Beings* (Continuum: London, 2010), 17.

²¹⁵ Victor Lee Austin, *Up With Authority: Why we Need Authority to Flourish as Human*

authority individuals will do what is best in their own eyes. It might be good that they do, but it will not be as much good then if they worked together to accomplish something, even if they accomplish only one thing instead of two. For the church to fulfill its telos, for it to be the body of Christ in the world, it needs many goods being worked towards, but to do so it needs direction. It needs people in authority to guide the work being done. It needs wise local leaders who can look at the immediate situation and see what is required to be Christ in it, and it needs future-thinking leaders who look at the larger situation and direct the church as a whole to respond in Christ-honouring ways. When it has these things, the good that the church can do is far greater than what anyone on their own can accomplish.

This is not to give undue importance to those within authority in the church. To expand on St. Paul's analogy of the body, each part of the body is needed.²¹⁶ The head without a neck to support it is not useful, and it could not affect the physical world around it without limbs. Yet, for the hand to fulfill its role, for it to be the best hand possible, it requires the head to give it direction. For a person's hands to work together, the head must coordinate them both. Authority is needed to bring about good, but it cannot do so without those under it. Nor will authorities always bring about a good. There are both evil and bad authorities. Evil authorities actively try to bring about an end that is not good, while bad authorities fail in bring about a good end out of incompetence. Authorities like this exist both inside and outside the Church. But living in a fallen world does not invalidate what good that authority will do when properly used.

Beings (Continuum: London, 2010), 18.

²¹⁶ 1 Corinthians 12:12-26

Authority and the Truth

Without trusting an authority, the amount of truth that one can accept is very small. Our interactions with the world are quite few and we rely on an authority for any truth beyond our own senses. I have never seen a black hole, but I trust the authority of scientists who teach that they exist, so I trust that black holes exist. I have never been to Australia, but I know people who have, and I trust what they have told me about what it is like there is true because I trust them. In both of these situations I believe that I know truths about the world, but my knowledge is completely reliant in accepting an authority. Building knowledge based on authorities has allowed humanity to create the civilization we have. Without it each person would start their accumulation of knowledge as a *tabula rasa*, but we don't. Each person does not need to rediscover the laws of science, work through proving all mathematical formula, or create their own world atlas because we can all use what came before and build on it.

This same concept applies to the doctrine that the church teaches. Each individual church member does not go out and re-prove the Trinity to themselves.²¹⁷ They accept it on the basis of an authority that taught them it. Over time this process has allowed a body of doctrine to grow up within the church. Once the Trinity was accepted, new questions could be asked about God that were not able to be asked before, and a better understanding of God could be brought forward to affect the life of the church. We see this working out with St. Anselm's prayer, "For I do not seek to

²¹⁷ Some do, most don't. Even among those that do, it is unlikely that they start without the knowledge of what arguments the early church entered into on the subject. They are starting with the formulas of the councils that defined the Trinity and are working backwards to see if they in fact believe it to be true. Those within the church are not starting from the question, "Who is god" and working up to the Trinity.

understand so that I may believe; but I believe so that I may understand."²¹⁸ He could ask the questions he did of God because he first had a foundation of belief in God that was given to him by those that came before. He didn't try to understand the truth of that belief before accepting it, but accepted it on the authority he was taught, and then later went further with it. The church is very much made up of dwarves standing on the shoulders of giants. Each generation of authorities in the church add to the expansion of truth that the church teaches, building upon the greater truths that form the foundation that was set long ago.

Although the church has accepted the role of authorities to determine and pass on the truth so that the next generation can build on it, isn't this a method fraught with risks? Are not mistakes inevitable? In addressing, this question Victor Lee Austin examined the example of a judge.²¹⁹ In our common law system we entrust judges with authority to tell us what the truth of a matter is. We require them to go to school to be educated on what past law cases have said, we have them practice as lawyers for a time to learn how the law works and gain experience and knowledge, and we appoint intelligent people to the bench who have a proven track record of understanding the law well. And, when they become judges, we expect them to use all the skill they have, as well as their personal experience, to ascertain the truth in the case before them. When they render their judgment we accept it as a true interpretation of the facts and laws they had to work with, because we recognize them as an authority in these matters.

²¹⁸ Anselm, "Proslogion," in *The Major Works*, ed. Brian Davies and G.R. Evans (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 87.

²¹⁹ Victor Lee Austin, *Up With Authority: Why we Need Authority to Flourish as Human Beings* (Continuum: London, 2010), 43-44.

The same process occurs in the church. Priests are trained in seminary, formed through their priestly work and devotional practices, and when one is selected as bishop they are expected to hold to the doctrine of the church and decide in matters of it using their skills, knowledge, and experience. There is a risk here, mistakes are made and people not up to the task are appointed to be judges and bishops, but again an unworthy appointee does not does not invalidate the need for authorities to exist for the truth to known.

Retracing the Argument

Since authority is needed in the church, where does that leave the situation in the Anglican Communion? In this study we have seen that the issue of authority has been with the Communion from its earliest days. Even before the English church separated from Rome over a question of authority there was a history of arguments between the kings of England and the popes over who could exercise control over the church. Once the separation occurred, that question of authority did not go away.

Although the English church separated, it was the King's wish to keep the doctrine of his new church the same as his old, except with himself as head instead of the Pope. King Henry VIII believed the faith as he had learned it as a Roman Catholic, he was given the title Defender of the Faith previously by the Pope, but due to historical events and pragmatic considerations, he did not believe that authority over a national church should reside outside of the king.

This was the period of the European Reformation, and ideas of Reform from the continent began to influence England. This caused dissension within the church, and different factions formed. After King Henry VIII's, death the official view of the

church moved in different directions depending who was on the throne. It wasn't until Queen Elizabeth that an attempt was made to find a middle way between the various extreme positions. Although this Elizabethan Settlement was fairly successful in creating a church that could have both moderate Protestants and Catholics within it, factions rose up among those that remained. The history of the church for the next several hundred years would be dominated by differences between the Puritan, High-Church, and Latitudinarianism parties. We have seen how even today, the general positions of these parties, if not always the specifics, continue to influence different bodies of Anglicans, causing divisions within the church.

We saw how the Anglican Communion developed without a plan, and how it was the result of British colonialism. Traditional Anglican polity never expected to be applied to a situation where different nations each had their own church, but as it began to occur with the Church of Scotland, American, and then the rest of the Commonwealth, the church was slow to react even though events were moving quickly. The English church saw itself as privileged, and even today the center of power within the Communion is seen still as resting there. This creates tension within the Communion as the churches in the northern hemisphere take a much more liberal view of Christianity than the traditional one taken in the southern hemisphere. The examination of the history of the Anglican Church, and then the Communion, in this thesis, has shown it to be one of disputes over authority. This is not a new phenomenon, but one that has always been there.

We then moved from an examination of history, to an examination of Anglican polity, where the tensions within the system, between bishops and synods, came to the

forefront. The role of bishop itself has lost prestige as society, in general, is less trustful of authority figures. They can no longer rely on the authority inherent in their office, but need to prove themselves as worthy leaders to their parishioners and convince them to follow their authority. Yet, at the same time, they are expected to lead their diocese and maintain a large amount of power at synods by being able to withhold their consent thereby determining outcome. This forces them to become more managers of conflict than leaders.

We also explored how Anglicanism holds together at a global by investigating the instruments of unity and showing that, although they carry moral weight, their actual power in practice is minimal. As Anglicanism sees each national church to be its own church with its own decision making-powers, there is no mechanism to enforce conformity in doctrine or practice across them.

At this point, the examples of New Westminster and the 2016 Primate Gathering were put forward to show how history and polity have caused a crisis within Anglicanism on the question of authority. Confusion, the overstepping of boundaries by those with authority, and the lack of respect for the moral authorities that have held the Communion together, were displayed in these situations. The steady increase of the breakdown of authority within the history and polity of Anglicanism is now on full display. In the twentieth century the issues of divorce and female ordination increased the level of stress on the Communion but it was able to maintain itself; it is unclear if that will still be possible with the new question of same-sex relationships. The historically-created polity at the local and Communion levels has not yet shown the ability to handle this issue.

Is there help to be found in the ARCIC discussions? That was the question addressed in the fourth chapter. What learnings can be taken from discussions on authority between Anglican and Roman Catholics? Although ARCIC was not created to come up with proposals on how to deal with authority within Anglicanism, there are ideas from the discussion it has had that can be applied here. The most interesting idea is to have a universal primate. Within the context of ARCIC that would be the Pope, but the idea of centralizing more authority in the Archbishop of Canterbury has been seen within recent Anglican discussions. Using ARCIC we then looked at how a universal primate could work out in practice and saw it would not be a simple fix to solve the existing problems. Such a change in polity would be strongly opposed by certain segments of Anglicanism, and is therefore not a viable way forward.

From all this we can see that there is a current crisis of authority within the Anglican Communion that has no easy way forward. Various solutions have been tried to this point and they have failed to stop it. Other possible solutions out there do not seem to hold much hope due to lack of agreement among Anglicans on them. The whole of Anglican history has been a struggle with authority, yet it has not reached the intensity of this current crisis since the Elizabethan Settlement.

Opportunities for Further Investigation and Application

A structural change in Anglican polity may not save the Communion. The current structures are broken, and must be fixed, but if that is done without looking at the divisions themselves and finding a way to repair them, any new structures will collapse just like the old ones are. What follows here then are not solutions to the crisis of authority within Anglicanism, but are potential areas from the preceding

discussion where further investigation in assisting in the repair of the divisions within the Communion appears to be promising.

Return to the Elizabethan Settlement

The Elizabethan Settlement set the pattern for the Anglican church. When conflict existed in doctrine, it found a middle way between the two extreme positions, attempting to keep as many people within the church as possible. Can the Anglican church today look to this again as a way forward through its current crisis? The situation today is both similar and quite different to the one in which Elizabeth found her church in. At both points the church was badly divided, but unlike during the crisis the Settlement sought to solve, today no one is dying for their theological convictions. That is something to celebrate, but it also means that people today can be more vocal with little fear of repercussions. If there is no persecution between church members, if you can fight for the "truth with little cost to yourself, why not keep fighting?

Another difference is in the political power the church no longer has. Under Elizabeth the church was established. Today, everywhere except in England, the Anglican church is independent from the state. The issues of the church in Tudor England were the issues of the state, and unity was demanded for the stability of the nation. Today, the church's position on issues of sexuality do not represent those of the state, even though the state is also making laws on those issues. Church and state can come to different conclusions. Again, this lessens the effects of the decision of the church in the day-to-day affairs of its members, but it also means that there are not outside forces working on the church to push it to a settlement. Yet, as an entity that

exists within the physical boundaries of the state, the church has a responsibility to speak out on the important moral issues of the day and provide a theological critique of what exists today.

Lastly, the Elizabethan Settlement was only possible because of Elizabeth. The Settlement succeeded because Elizabeth had the skill and power to force it through, and then the determination to hold to it. The Communion has no Elizabeth today.²²⁰ And even if someone today had the skills, there is no position of authority that would be able to force through a settlement.

While all of these differences make a similar settlement today impossible, there is still much to be learned for today from the Settlement. The Settlement is the foundation story of Anglicanism, and in being so it carries much authority itself. There is a legendary quality in it that has led to the idea that it is the Anglican way to find a middle way through difficult issues. Can such ideas be harnessed, even without political backing, to provide the starting point for a way forward? The philosopher Alasdair MacIntyre²²¹ wrote that, "Moreover when a tradition is in good order it is always partially constituted by an argument about the goods the pursuit of which gives to that tradition its particular point and purpose."²²² It is time for a critical look

²²⁰ The English Church may have Elizabeth II as its Supreme Governor, but the power she retains in reality is only to appoint archbishops, bishops and deans of cathedrals on the advice of the Prime Minister. She has no say in the rest of the churches in the Communion.

The Church of England Structure . Accessed July 10, 2016. <https://www.churchofengland.org/about-us/structure.aspx>.

²²¹ Alasdair MacIntyre is an American Roman Catholic philosopher. He is distinguished in the area of moral and political philosophy; his most notable works, *After Virtue* and *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* trace how we came to be a multi-tradition society and what that means for understanding the concepts of virtue and morality. This is of particular importance to the Anglican Communion today as it finds itself a microcosm of this large societal change.

²²² Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue 2nd ed.* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press,

at the Settlement's place within Anglicanism, and a discussion around if the church of the middle way is fundamental to the identity of Anglicanism. Is the middle way the unique good that Anglicanism has among all Christian churches? Is it our central identity? These are important questions that neither extreme within Anglicanism are currently asking. Answers to these will give shape to how the current crisis is handled, and what the role is for authority within the church.

Revaluation of Apostolic Succession

The doctrine of apostolic succession has lost prominence within the Anglican Communion. Chapter 2 showed that it is an important issue for ecumenical endeavours, and still a belief that most Anglicans hold to in some version. However, there is little connection to that doctrine for those in the pews. This is a shame because it is my belief that this doctrine could be useful in working through the meaning of authority within the Communion.

Is there a way to understand apostolic succession as both a guarantee that the church teaches the truth and a promise to which bishops are held by their parishioners? Within Anglicanism the bishop is not seen as one who brings in new doctrines that are unfamiliar to their clergy and laity, but, "is essentially an exponent of the faith of the Church through the ages."²²³ The person in the pew can understand the faith as well as the bishop if they both study, pray, and live a virtuous life, because the faith the bishop holds is the faith the church believed before that bishop temporally arrived. Apostolic succession doesn't make the bishop's understanding of

1984), 222.

²²³ Paul Avis, *Becoming a Bishop: A Theological Handbook of Episcopal Ministry* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), 23.

the faith unchallengeable by the clergy and laity. It is however, among other things, a mark of acknowledgment passed on through the consecration to the episcopacy that other bishops agree that the bishop-to-be understands and teaches the apostolic faith. As witnesses to the consecration of a bishop, is it the role of the clergy and laity to hold them to the apostolic faith? If the faith is the same for all, then it is difficult to see an argument against such an idea.

It is important not to turn this idea into an argument that everyone is equal with the bishop in all ways. Another part of apostolic succession is the role the bishop has in leading the church.²²⁴ Unlike understanding the faith, this is a role that clearly is not given to everyone according to scripture.²²⁵ There are some things on which clergy and laity stand equally with the bishop, and others where the bishops, due to their particular office, exercises authority over the church. The key here is the need to better define these differences, and this can be done through an invigorated understanding of Apostolic Succession. This would be a discussion not of the technical aspects of how succession is conferred, as there has been in the past, but on what the doctrine means for the church as a whole. What authority is passed on in Apostolic Succession, and how does that interact with the authority of Christ that each believe receives in their baptism?

An Articulation of Spirit-Led Discernment

It is difficult to address questions surrounding the Holy Spirit and its role in the ongoing crisis of authority in a scholarly manner. The Holy Spirit defies easy

²²⁴ The ability to ordain would be another unique power of the office of bishop that they receive through Apostolic Succession.

²²⁵ 1 Corinthians 12:27-29

analysis. We only see what people claim is the results of its actions, never the Spirit itself. This, however, does not lessen the Holy Spirit's importance for those engaged in the ongoing discussions on authority within Anglicanism. All positions represented in the Anglican Communion desire to understand what the Holy Spirit is saying to the church, so how does one do this?

Instead of trying to identify which position or person is following the Spirit's lead, a different approach is needed. The possibility that being lead by the Spirit is something that occurs to the church as a whole requires more research. When the church comes together, attempting to do God's will, should the assumption be that the Holy Spirit is there approving of it? Something similar to this seems to have occurred in the report we have of the first church council in Acts 15. The church came together on a contentious issue, there was much debate and many speeches, and eventually a common mind was achieved. In the account of these events in scripture, it is not until everything occurred that the author makes mention of the Spirit: "For it has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us."²²⁶ The author makes no to link the Spirit with positions or arguments during the council, but instead to what the church decided on in the end. The Spirit works on the whole of the church, each person in it, but can only be recognized when the church finds a common voice.

There is the possibility to abuse this approach. Some may take it to mean that the church can believe new things and devise new doctrines if the Spirit leads it to. Such a view has historically been rejected by all Christian churches.²²⁷ Therefore, this

²²⁶ Acts 15:28

²²⁷ Paul Avis, *Reshaping Ecumenical Theology: The Church Made Whole?* (London: Continuum, 2010), 88.

approach must be balanced with the other approaches to authority discussed earlier. The scriptures and creeds provide boundaries. Knowing that the Holy Spirit would not lead against the word of God or the historic faith of the church, any council that went against these standards could not call on the leading of the Holy Spirit as justification. For Christians, scripture is always the most important test of any actions the church feels the Spirit leading it to take. Reception provides another boundary; if the Holy Spirit lead a council to a specific answer, then eventually it would be expected to lead the whole church.

This approach does not solve all issues related to understanding how the Holy Spirit works in directing authorities, but it does begin to give a framework that puts less emphasis on what individuals hear the Spirit say to them, and more on what the Spirit says to the church as a whole. This makes continued dialogue more important, as no one goes into the discussion knowing for sure that their ideas match exactly how the Holy Spirit is leading.

Our Ecumenical Future

Lastly, what can be learned from the Anglican Communion's partners in Ecumenical dialogue on authority? Within this thesis we spent time looking at what has come out of the ARCIC dialogue on the question of authority, but the Communion has also had long-term ecumenical discussions with other Christian churches: Baptist, Lutheran, Methodist, Old Catholic, Oriental Orthodox, Eastern Orthodox, and Reformed.²²⁸ These discussions have not produced as clear proposals

²²⁸ This list compiled from <http://www.anglicancommunion.org/relationships/ecumenical-dialogues.aspx>

as ARCIC has on the question of authority, but what they have produced is worthy of more examination as Anglicans struggle to sort out this question within the Communion. Of Particular interest are the discussions with Eastern Orthodox churches, which have bishops, but not as centralized authority as Roman Catholics, perhaps allowing for insights that the ARCIC discussions have not yet found. These other church bodies have their own histories working out how authority operates within their churches, and the Anglican Communion would do well to listen to their experiences and learn from them.

There is also the question of what effects any proposed changes in how authority operates within Anglicanism will have on current ecumenical relations. It is important for the Anglican church to remain catholic. It cannot be an island to itself, disconnected from other churches. If it were ever to go that route then the lines between it being a church or a sect would be blurred. It is therefore extremely important that it make decisions about its future in conversation with other churches. This is not a new concept to Anglicanism. During the English Reformation many protestant thinkers from mainland Europe corresponded with the leaders of the English church or went to England themselves, most notably Martin Bucer, to give advice and exchange views on how to reform the church. The decisions made by the English church in this period did not always satisfy their partner in dialogue, but that dialogue kept them closer together than they would have been without it. The same principle needs to be acted on today.

As Mary Tanner points out, "The question of limits to diversity is one of the

most urgent questions on the ecumenical agenda."²²⁹ The decisions Anglicans have made on contentious issues has already put them at odds with other denominations²³⁰, and further separation may occur with whatever is decided on same-sex issues. Other churches will not dictate how the Anglican Communion moves forward, but the Communion should not do so without serious discussion with other churches and thinking through how any changes in authority's operation would help or hinder further ecumenical discussions.

Conclusion

Throughout this essay it has been shown how confused the concept of authority is within the Anglican Communion. Now, today, the Communion has already had large numbers of churches leave it within North America, and the very real possibility exists that churches in the southern hemisphere that are more conservative on moral issues may also leave. Proposals have been put forward on how to save the Communion, and more will no doubt come. Yet, there seems to be another discussion needed before any structural changes are put in place: why is authority important, and what can we learn from the past about authority? It is into that discussion that I have attempted to point to some areas that I believe can be fruitful.

The concept of authority within Anglicanism has reached a low point where it is viewed at its root as something political. This view needs to be challenged. A robust theological defence of authority needs to be mounted. My modest contribution to this

²²⁹ Mary Tanner, "The Ecumenical Future," In *The Study of Anglicanism*, ed. Stephen Sykes, John Booty, and Jonathan Knight (Minnesota: Fortress Press, 2004), 444.

²³⁰ For example, the much strained relationship almost resulting in the ceasing of ecumenical discussions with the Eastern Orthodox church after the decision to ordain female priests.

is examining the concept through the lenses of the good and the true, but this is only the start. A deeper look into the theology of creation and order is needed. Only with this can the concept of authority be taken out of the mire of political debate and put into a place of honour in the church. In a similar manner, those working to move the Communion out of its crisis of authority need to take a step back and examine the history of authority within the communion to see what can be drawn from it to assist in the current discussion. Here I put forward the Elizabethan Settlement, Apostolic Succession, the Holy Spirit, and the ecumenical movement as sources that should be drawn on to assist in understanding the current crisis. These four were selected because they showed up in the historical analysis that formed the earlier parts of this thesis, but there are no doubt other areas of Anglican history that can also be drawn upon. The Oxford movement's development from challenging many traditional Anglican practices and beliefs, to becoming widely accepted within mainstream Anglicanism, is a story that has potential to bear fruit in further discussion.

The overreaching argument of this thesis was two-fold. First, that Anglicanism has historically never had an uncontested practice, or doctrine, of authority up to the present day. Second, that because of this, the history of Anglicanism needs to play a much larger role in the current discussions around the crisis of authority as there is much to learn from it. A discussion deeper than a search for structural solutions is required.

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