



An Anglican View of the Papacy Post-Vatican II

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ABSTRACT

This article provides a current view of Anglican attitudes to the Papacy. First of all historical background is examined in relation to mutual perceptions of Anglicanism and Roman Catholicism going back to the early church and then moving forward through the Reformation to the twentieth century. The period from 1966 onwards saw the visit of Geoffrey Fisher to Pope John XXIII which began to change perceptions. The establishment of the Anglican Centre in Rome in 1966 was a crucial development. The setting up of the Anglican Roman Catholic International Commission, following the Malta Report in 1966 altered perceptions and understandings of Anglican and Roman Catholics mutually. There is still a variety of Anglican reactions to the Papacy.

KEYWORDS: Anglicanism, papacy, John XXIII, Geoffrey Fisher, Anglican Centre in Rome, ARCIC, Roman Catholicism

It was his novel *How Far Can You Go?* that established David Lodge as both a popular and serious novelist.² Lodge is a 'cradle Catholic' and many of his novels show great insight into Roman Catholicism, its understanding of Christian doctrine and most notably its mode of exercising authority. In the novel adverted to above, Lodge – both through humour and an ironic critique – makes clear his reservations about Roman Catholic patterns of authority before the Second Vatican

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2. David Lodge, *How Far Can You Go?* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1982).

Council. Through the eye of a Catholic student at the University of London in the 1960s, however, he also indicates how a relaxation of that mode of authority produces its own problematic.

None of this can be divorced from the nature of Papal Authority. It was Pope John XXIII's initiative in establishing the Second Vatican Council that began the process of so-called *aggiornamento* within the Roman Catholic Church, both in the Vatican curia and worldwide. John XXIII's successors have frequently been assessed through the attitudes which they have taken to the Vatican II reforms. On the basis of such critical standards, Pope Benedict XVI would fairly universally be seen as a pontiff who re-established a form of conservative revisionism. Ironically, however, journalistic assessment of his pontificate would most likely see his courageous decision to retire as the most radical action throughout his time in the See of Peter; it has been unthinkable within modern history for the Holy Father to resign. Popes die in office.

How far, then, does the 'monarchical' element within perceptions of the Bishop of Rome influence Anglican, and indeed other external views of the papacy? Certainly, on his election as Supreme Pontiff, Pope Francis I deliberately struck a much less monarchical and more relaxed note than had been the case with the papacy heretofore. Certainly the earlier monarchical view is part of what has alienated many Anglicans from the papacy. We should, however, note that the English church owes much to the papacy, notably in the person of Pope Gregory the Great who sent Augustine to lead a mission to the Angles. It could be argued that by applying that one name, Angles, to the diverse people and kingdoms of these islands, Gregory was instrumental in helping create a nation. The name Angles became synonymous with the Christianized peoples of the islands. Indeed the nation may have been united ecclesiastically before it was politically.³

Nonetheless in modern history, both the Church of England and Anglicans worldwide have often indicated an ambivalence in regard to the papacy and the model of authority which is focused in the Petrine ministry. This ambivalence reaches back to the time of the Reformation when there emerged a clear hostility to the authority of the Bishop of Rome when exercised within 'the realm of England'. In certain curious examples of historical continuity this hostility has been

3. Patrick Wormald, 'The Venerable Bede and the "Church of the English"' in Geoffrey Rowell (ed.), *The English Religious Tradition and the Genius of Anglicanism* (Wantage: Ikon, 1992), pp. 20–21.

enshrined in certain Church of England formularies. It is as if they have been preserved in aspic. So, every diocesan bishop in the Church of England is required to pay homage to the Sovereign as the Supreme Governor. In a brief ceremony enacted before the Lord Chancellor, at Buckingham Palace, the bishop is required to affirm the following oath:

I *AB* having been elected, confirmed and consecrated Bishop of *C*, do hereby declare that Your Majesty is the only supreme governor of this realm in spiritual and ecclesiastical things as well as in temporal and that no foreign prelate or potentate has any jurisdiction within this realm and I acknowledge that I hold the said bishopric as well as the spiritualities thereof only of Your Majesty and for the same temporalities I do my homage presently to Your Majesty so help me God. God save Queen Elizabeth.⁴

Now this oath includes scarcely concealed references to the Bishop of Rome. It is perfectly clear to whom the words 'foreign prelate or potentate' apply. This is not the place to divert into an extensive discussion of the religio-political dimension of the Henrician Reformation in England, but a brief dilation may help set the context. Suffice to say that there were tensions on the matter of papal supremacy within the royal personage himself. Indeed, as Diarmaid MacCulloch indicates in his definitive biography of Thomas Cranmer (Henry's archbishop and loyal servant) both the archbishop's views and those of the king developed over the years. So MacCulloch notes that 'The evidence for Cranmer's anti-Papal zeal in the 1520s could hardly be less convincing.'⁵ MacCulloch sets out the marginal evidence and then notes a little later: 'So the balance of emotions in these marginalia reveals Cranmer certainly as a papalist, but even more a conciliarist.'⁶

This second reference picks up a key issue for Anglican views on Papal authority as they developed over the centuries. Even while Cranmer remained a papalist (at this point in contradiction to Martin Luther) another key element is identified. The conciliar movement, of which Nicholas of Cusa was a chief protagonist, had emerged in the latter part of the fourteenth century in Germany and spread more widely. Already then, in early modern Europe a nuanced view of papal and episcopal authority had begun to show its face. MacCulloch

4. Bishop's oath of allegiance and homage.

5. Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Thomas Cranmer: A Life* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1996), p. 27.

6. MacCulloch, *Thomas Cranmer*, p. 29.

indicates how the king's aggressive views toward the Papacy developed, aided and abetted by his metropolitan at Canterbury.⁷ He also indicates how Henry's own reactions were hardly novel within the realm of England; so talking of the irregular nature of Cranmer's consecration he notes:

Even in the light of more than four centuries of tensions between royal and papal jurisdiction, everyone present must have felt this consecration to be an extraordinary occasion.⁸

Indeed clear elements of these tensions are there in the time of Anselm as Archbishop of Canterbury in the later eleventh and early twelfth centuries, as both king and archbishop (often in acute tension) established the Norman dominion over England.⁹ Anselm himself was wary of continental authority and refused any other papal legate in England apart from the Archbishop of Canterbury himself.

Thus some of the earliest uncertainties about papal authority predate the Church of England and manifest clear political concerns alongside religious and theological reservations. The balance shifted, however, in the Edwardian reformation of 1548–52, where the infant king and his advisors declared more obvious theological objections to the exercise of papal authority. MacCulloch supplies clear evidence to show that these views were indeed those of the young monarch himself.¹⁰ Elizabeth steered the English church away from Puritan order, seeing the Pope as *primus inter pares*, as she told the Council of Trent, thus defending the catholicity of the English church, a catholicity distanced from more centralized ecclesiastical authority.¹¹ John Cosin noted that we are 'Protestant and Reformed' according to the ancient Catholic Church.¹²

The Elizabethan years with fears of 'fifth columnists' and treason did, however, further help entrench an instinctual fear of Roman

7. MacCulloch, *Thomas Cranmer*, p. 56.

8. MacCulloch, *Thomas Cranmer*, p. 89.

9. See most recently Sally N. Vaughn, *Archbishop Anselm, 1093–1109: Bec Missionary, Canterbury Primate, Patriarch of Another World* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012). Cf. also Christopher Haigh, *English Reformations: Religion, Politics, and Society under the Tudors* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), pp. 6–8.

10. Cf. Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Tudor Church Militant, Edward VI and the Protestant Reformation* (London: Allen Lane - The Penguin Press, 1999), pp. 26–27.

11. Henry McAdoo, 'Richard Hooker', in Geoffrey Rowell (ed.), *The English Religious Tradition and the Genius of Anglicanism* (Wantage: Ikon, 1992), p. 107, referring to Mandel Creighton, *Queen Elizabeth*.

12. McAdoo, 'Richard Hooker', p. 108.

Catholicism which even saw the Pope as anti-Christ. Such prejudiced views survived well into the twentieth century. These views were almost at the level of folk religion; they became part of the corporate English psyche. Furthermore, in the late nineteenth century, they were not eased at the more informed and theological level by the outcome of the theological conversations in Rome between E.F. Portal and Lord Halifax in 1894–95. When the results of these conversations were placed before the authorities in the Vatican, the response was Pope Leo XIII's Bull of September 1896, *Apostolicae Curae*, which condemned Anglican orders as invalid in both form and intention. Despite the *Responsio* of 1897 from the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, no further progress was made and this has ever since remained a negative milestone in Anglican relations to the papacy.

Despite this setback, Lord Halifax set in motion a further dialogue in cooperation with Cardinal D.J. Mercier in Belgium. The Malines Conversations, as they became known, set out areas of agreement on a number of theological issues. Alongside an affirmation of the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist, it was agreed that the Pope should be given a primacy of honour. More Protestant opinion in the Church of England responded negatively to the Conversations, and this division of opinion within the Church of England raises an issue to which we shall return later. Even so, despite a further hindering of the process through Pope Pius XI's encyclical *Mortalium Animos* of 1928, the Conversations did contribute to greater cooperation between the Church of England and the Roman Catholic Church.

Fisher and Ramsey in Rome

Setting the historical context is essential to understanding Anglican attitudes to the Papacy post-Vatican II, as indeed is the visit of the Archbishop of Canterbury, Geoffrey Fisher, to Pope John XXIII in 1960. Geoffrey Fisher was an unlikely pioneer in the realm of ecumenical initiations with the Roman Catholic Church. Although not a Protestant in any campaigning sense, Fisher was certainly no admirer of Rome. He noted at one point (after his meeting with the Pope): 'I grew up with an inbred opposition of anything that came from Rome. I objected to their doctrine; objected to their methods of reasoning; I objected to their methods of operation in this country.'¹³

13. Quoted in William Purcell, *Fisher of Lambeth: A Portrait from Life* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1969), p. 271.

Indeed one commentator reflects that this attitude to Rome was clear in his relationships within England.¹⁴ But his attitude changed, and once again Purcell quotes the Archbishop himself explaining why:

Without any doubt, the personality of Pope John. It was quite obvious to the whole world that Pope John was a different kind of pope, whom I should like to meet, and could meet, on grounds of Christian brotherhood without any kind of ecclesiastical compromise on either side. Of this I felt certain already.¹⁵

The visit was extraordinary in a number of ways. It was the first visit to a Pope ever of a post-Reformation Archbishop of Canterbury. Second, it was the first archiepiscopal visit since that of Archbishop Arundel in 1397. Third, it is clear that many at the Vatican were unenthusiastic about the initiative of this English (and as they saw it) Protestant prelate. In his account of the visit Bernard Pawley, one of the Anglican observers at Vatican II, noted:

The Secretariat of State had done its best to discourage the visit of the Archbishop and had tried to give it the minimum of publicity ... Cardinal Tardini had laid down four conditions for the Archbishop's visit ... there should be no photographs of the Archbishop with the Pope, that the Archbishop was not to see Cardinal Bea, that there was to be no press release after the visit, and that the Minister was not to invite any Vatican official to meet the Archbishop at his house.¹⁶

In his account of the visit, Canon John Satterthwaite, head of the Archbishop's Council for Foreign Relations at the time and who accompanied the Archbishop, remarked on the warmth of the encounter. Most movingly, the Holy Father had noted, in Satterthwaite's words:

Before saying our farewells the Holy Fr. repeated how grateful he was for the visit ... He said that in his meditations earlier that morning he had again thought of the two Disciples on the road to Emmaus in the presence of their Risen Saviour.¹⁷

Ultimately, despite the efforts of the curial staff the Pope defeated their schemes, ordering Cardinal Bea to meet the Archbishop; this led

14. Andrew Chandler and David Hein, *Archbishop Fisher, 1945–1961: Church, State and World* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012), p. 106.

15. Purcell, *Fisher of Lambeth*, p. 273.

16. Bernard Pawley and Margaret Pawley, *Rome and Canterbury through Four Centuries: A Study of the Relations between the Church of Rome and the Anglican Churches* (London and Oxford: Mowbray, 1974), p. 335.

17. Chandler and Hein, *Archbishop Fisher*, p. 237.

to establishing a liaison person in Rome from the Church of England to study the preparations for the Council. The seeds of the Anglican Centre in Rome had been planted; the Centre's role in papal-archiepiscopal relations is now seminal in a quite different sense. Lines of communication breaking down centuries of division were now the order of the day. These events prepared the ground for an equally historic visit by Fisher's pupil, Michael Ramsey, some six years later. However, ironically the very secrecy which surrounded Fisher's visit was itself suppressed and kept secret; Hebblethwaite's biography of Paul VI even describes the Fisher visit as a 'hole in the corner' affair. This initial visit, historic as it was, did little to change Anglican attitudes. The Ramsey visit to Montini was very different. Ramsey, despite being Fisher's pupil at Repton, brought with him contrasting gifts. He had been successively Van Mildert Professor of Theology in Durham, Regius Professor of Theology in Cambridge, Bishop of Durham, and Archbishop of York. Where Fisher had been a great administrator, coming from the central or even low end of the Church of England, Ramsey was a scholar and a Tractarian; as a catholic Anglican himself, then, he felt strong resonances with Rome without being captive to it.

Ramsey's interlocutor on his visit to Rome was an equally contrasting figure to his predecessor, Pope John XXIII. Gianbattista Montini had been Cardinal Archbishop of Milan after a lifetime's service as a Vatican diplomat and curial official. Instead of Roncalli's (John XXIII) simple and warm extraversion, Montini presented a quieter, more inner-directed and reflective personality. He was also no stranger to Anglicanism. Indeed, he had met with a group of Anglican clergy when he was still in Milan. In 1955, Wilfrid Browning, a young Anglican priest and secretary/editor of the *Bulletin Anglican Ecuménique*, was encouraged by Father Louis Bouyer to write to Montini to set up a visit of clergy from the Church of England to Milan. Browning wrote a diplomatic note (in Latin) and received a charming reply (in Italian), which included an invitation for four young clergymen to visit the archdiocese of Milan. The group was to include the then Bishop of Ripon, John Moorman, a great Franciscan scholar; ultimately he would not go, for reasons of ill-health. Bernard Pawley, however, later Archdeacon of Canterbury and an observer of Vatican II, was a member of the party.¹⁸

18. See Stephen Platten, 'Focusing a Vision: Affect and Effect in Ecumenical Dialogue', in Clive Barrett (ed.), *Unity in Process: Reflections on Ecumenism* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 2012), pp. 95-107.

The visit was an unqualified success and was an important part in Montini's ecumenical education, especially in relation to the Church of England and Anglicanism. The report from Prebendary Charles Gage-Brown, written for the Archbishop of Canterbury's Council for Foreign Relations and now in the Lambeth Palace archives, includes this passage:

Archbishop Montini said how much he had enjoyed being in England. Montini had visited England in 1934 with his Sicilian friend, Marialla Rampolla da Tindaro,¹⁹ and praised our cathedrals and their music. His tours in the diocese were in the nature of royal progresses, yet he was modest and simple, without a trace of pomposity.²⁰

Hebblethwaite notes:

This Anglican visit was a great success. Its first result was that durable friendships were formed – Pawley, Dickinson and Hickling all stayed in touch before and after Montini became Pope. So Paul VI became better informed about Anglican matters than any of his predecessors.²¹

All this augured well for Archbishop Michael Ramsey's visit to Montini, now Pope Paul VI, in 1966. Ramsey stayed as the Pope's guest at the Venerable English College. From there he went to the Sistine Chapel to meet with the Pope. Here the Holy Father addressed the Archbishop thus:

By your coming, you rebuild a bridge, a bridge which for centuries has fallen between the Church of Rome and Canterbury ... As you cross our threshold, we want you especially to feel that you are not entering the house of strangers, but that this is your home, where you have a right to be.²²

Neither prelate was naïve and Ramsey characteristically began by suggesting that the first steps forward from there might be through common prayer and common translation of the Lord's Prayer and the Creeds. The Pope noted that even the vexed issue of Anglican orders might be revisited in a new light, not changing Leo XIII's decree but instead investigating the issue in a new context.

Ramsey's personality, presence, theological depth and spiritual seriousness left a clear impression on the Pope, and it was the next day in their meeting at St Paul-Outside-the-Walls that another historic landmark was established. The traditional exchange of gifts

19. Peter Hebblethwaite, *Paul VI: the First Modern Pope* (London: Harper Collins, 1993), pp. 125–26.

20. Hebblethwaite, *Paul VI*, pp. 269–70.

21. Hebblethwaite, *Paul VI*, p. 271.

22. Hebblethwaite, *Paul VI*, p. 461.

took place. The Pope gave the archbishop a fresco which still hangs in the crypt at Lambeth Palace; the archbishop gave the Holy Father a pectoral cross. But it was the Pope's parting gesture which moved Anglican attitudes to the papacy forward by several leagues. He took off his episcopal ring and placed it on the ring finger of the archbishop's hand. It was a gesture of great symbolic power. What prompted the idea in the mind of the Pope? It is likely that it was the memory of Cardinal Mercier giving his ring to Lord Halifax at the time of the Malines Conversations (the ring is now fitted into the pedestal of a chalice which is still used at York Minster).²³ This gesture has been seen as little short of a sign or symbol of *engagement* or re-engagement between the two communions. Every time an Archbishop of Canterbury has since visited the Pope, this ring has been worn. Indeed on occasion, a fast car has been hired to run between Lambeth Palace and Heathrow Airport in London, when an official has forgotten this key element in the development of the relationship between Anglicans and the papal office.

Both these pioneering meetings – between Pope John XXIII and Archbishop Geoffrey Fisher, and Pope Paul VI and Archbishop Michael Ramsey – remind all who would advance ecumenical relations of one key fact. It is the establishment of human friendships between separated communions that is one of the crucial keys to unlocking greater understanding. Indeed, during his meeting with Archbishop Robert Runcie in 1989, as they were sharing lunch together, Pope John Paul II remarked that: 'affective communion leads to effective communion'.²⁴

Changing Attitudes

Not only has this series of encounters set the scene, it has also begun to paint the first strokes on to the canvas of a contemporary picture of Anglican (or rather Church of England) attitudes to the papacy. Already we can see ways in which the somewhat stereotypical and populist anti-papal attitudes in England were beginning to break down. Such stereotypes have been written into history and into the formularies which define the Church of England. Hence, we must remind ourselves of the continuing formal Church of England position on the papacy. A brief reversion to history and formularies

23. See Frederick Bliss, *Anglicans in Rome: A History* (London: Canterbury Press, 2006), p. 94 n.

24. Platten, 'Focusing a Vision', p. 95; note the subheading of the chapter: 'Affect and Effect in Ecumenical Dialogue'.

clarifies this. Every time a priest is inducted into a new parish or licensed for new work in the church, he or she must make the *Declaration of Assent*. This is a remarkably cleverly worded document which allows clergy of any flavour or opinion within the Church of England to declare his or her loyalty to the tradition. Nowhere is there any mention of the papacy or of the authority of other churches, but there is one key phrase which does at least have implications for present attitudes to the authority of the Roman Catholic Church and notably the Bishop of Rome. This passage runs: 'Led by the Holy Spirit, it has borne witness to Christian truth in its historic formularies, the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion, The Book of Common Prayer, and the Ordering of Bishop, Priests and Deacons.'

Once again, the subtlety of the declaration is remarkable. The priests or other individuals are called simply to affirm their 'loyalty to this inheritance of faith'. Second, some of the formularies are spelt out, but the preceding comma implies that that list is not necessarily exhaustive. Nonetheless, included there are the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion. These Tudor articles embrace two particular phrases that are pertinent to our discussion here. First, in the nineteenth article we read: 'As the Church of *Jerusalem, Alexandria and Antioch*, have erred; so also the Church of *Rome* hath erred, not only in their living and manner of Ceremonies, but also in matters of faith.'

Elsewhere (i.e. in Article XXII) there is reference to 'Romish Doctrine', but none of these thus far make comment on the Bishop of Rome. However, in Article XXVII we read: 'The Bishop of Rome hath no jurisdiction in this Realm of *England*.'

Even this final reference needs to be read with the nuance of understanding sixteenth-century political and religious attitudes. We have referred earlier to a continuing concern within England (and notably among English monarchs and prelates) to the jurisdiction of the Bishop of Rome. Often the motivation behind the sixteenth-century Henrician Reformation is seen to be entirely woven into Henry's need to declare his first marriage to be annulled. Instead, that specific controversy needs to be seen as part of a much longer continuum of concern about the Bishop of Rome's 'foreign' jurisdiction being applied in the realm of England. Furthermore, the shift in preoccupation of preconceptions over the past 500 years has been enormous. In his study of the Thirty-nine Articles, Oliver O'Donovan writes:

There is, in truth, a great gulf between the preoccupations of the sixteenth and of the seventeenth centuries – so great that one could almost, at a pinch, claim the Reformation as the last great flowering of the mediaeval era and the seventeenth century as the moment at which

the modern broke in. Of course, it is more complicated than that; already in the Reformation we find ourselves peering across the threshold of modernity.²⁵

Furthermore, O'Donovan points to the over-extensive claims made for the role of the Articles, particularly by some Protestant scholars.²⁶ So it would be naïve to argue for the dominant part played in the Articles in defining the nature of belief in the contemporary Church of England, let alone in worldwide Anglicanism. They do, however, advert to influences which help fashion and form some of the traditional prejudices in England about the Papacy, prejudices which go well beyond the boundaries of those who regularly attend services within the 'Church by law established'.

Instead of dwelling further on these formularies it makes more sense to look to the impact of those first two archiepiscopal visits to Rome in the 1960s, notably in terms of the ecumenical dialogue which has ensued. From the encounter of Pope Paul VI two very significant initiatives emerged. First was the formal inauguration of the Anglican Centre in Rome by the Archbishop of Canterbury, Michael Ramsey, on 22 March 1966, two days before the historic farewell when Pope Paul VI would give the archbishop his episcopal ring. The archbishop noted: 'The Anglican student is often a debtor to writers within the Roman Catholic Church. This Centre is an attempt to repay that debt by making available the resources of Anglican learning to any who will come and enjoy them.'²⁷

So the Centre was set up as a place of learning; a place of meeting and exchange and also as a key location for the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Anglican Communion worldwide to maintain and deepen relations with the Roman Catholic Church. From the beginning there was the intention that the Director of the Anglican Centre and the Archbishop of Canterbury's Representative to the Holy See were to be one and the same person. Increasingly this twofold office within one individual has become an essential part in developing a new understanding and relationship with the Papacy itself.

The other key initiative to be borne of the encounter between Pope Paul II and Archbishop Michael Ramsey was the inauguration of a formal bilateral dialogue between the two communions. The Common

25. Oliver O'Donovan, *On the Thirty Nine Articles: Conversations with Tudor Christianity* (London: SCM Press, 2011), p. 7.

26. O'Donovan, *On the Thirty Nine Articles*, p. 5.

27. Bliss, *Anglicans in Rome*, p. 94.

Declaration gave birth first to the 'preparatory commission', which resulted in the *Malta Report* of January 1968. This had been set up with the assistance of Cardinal Jan Willebrands, who headed what was then titled the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity (SPCU). Willebrands' support proved to be an enormous asset as the bilateral dialogue got underway. The Malta Report proposed the establishment of a 'Permanent Commission' which soon became the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC). The first phase of ARCIC [ARCIC I] ran from 1967 to 1981 after which the so-called *Final Report* was published in 1982. This first phase arrived at agreement on both the *Eucharist* and *Ministry* and partial agreement on authority. The method used from the beginning aimed to get behind the controversies of the sixteenth century and to seek instead those things held in common. This methodology remains at the heart of the dialogue through to the present day. In one of the final paragraphs of the *Malta Report*, it is noted that 'Real or apparent differences between us came to the surface in such matters as the unity and indefectibility of the Church and its teaching authority, the *Petrine primacy, infallibility*, [my italics] and Mariological definitions.'²⁸

In the second statement on *Authority*, in the *Final Report*, there is a key paragraph on the Papacy and the Petrine Office:

In spite of our agreement over the need of a universal primacy in a united Church, Anglicans do not accept the guaranteed possession of such a gift of divine assistance in judgement necessarily attached to the office of the bishop of Rome by virtue of which his formal decisions can be known to be wholly assured before their reception by the faithful.²⁹

Earlier on, in paragraph 29, this issue of infallibility and preserving the church from error is broached and there is again a reservation on how a definition of this sort by a pope could be more widely received. Another earlier key paragraph (19) notes a way forward in understanding the role of the Pope as a universal primate, who 'should exercise, and be seen to exercise, his ministry not in isolation but in collegial association with his brother bishops'.³⁰

This is a crucial sentence set within the context of the whole of the *Authority II* Document in the *Final Report*. It reflects the collegial thinking of the Second Vatican Council in the document on the

28. Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission II, *The Final Report* (London: CTS/SPCK, 1982), p. 115, para. 20.

29. *Final Report*, p. 97, para. 31.

30. *Final Report*, p. 89, para. 19.

Constitution of the Church, *Lumen Gentium*. It also speaks directly to issues focused by Anglican polity. It reminds us of the point, made early on in this essay, that Cranmer and the Reformation divines within the Church of England were already influenced by the pre-Reformation conciliar movement within Western Catholic Christianity.³¹ It speaks too to the significance of collegiality within Anglican synodical polity, and of the part taken by the college of bishops alongside the houses of clergy and laity. So within this first phase of the ARCIC dialogue already there is clear resonance on the place of some form of Petrine office within the wider collegiality of the bishops. This is not to say that agreement is recorded here, but it does point to a measure of resonance within the Commission's agreed statement. One might describe this as 'work in progress'.

ARCIC II focused on five key areas: *Salvation and the Church; Church as Communion; Life in Christ: Morals, Communion and the Church; The Gift of Authority*; and finally the place of Mary in *Mary: Grace and Hope in Christ*. The notion of universal primacy and the acknowledgement that movement toward agreement on this remains 'work in progress' is echoed again towards the end of the *Church as Communion* agreed statement: 'Further study will be needed of episcopal authority, particularly of universal primacy, and of the office of the Bishop of Rome ...'.³²

Progress on universal primacy is clear in the penultimate document produced by ARCIC II, *The Gift of Authority*. Indeed its final section is titled 'Universal Primacy: A Gift to Be Shared':

The Commission's work has resulted in sufficient agreement on universal primacy as a gift to be shared, for us to propose that such a primacy could be offered and received even before our churches are in full communion. Both Roman Catholics and Anglicans look to this ministry being exercised in collegiality and synodality – a ministry of *servus servorum Dei* (Gregory the Great, cited in *Ut Unum Sint*, 88).³³

This leads to a further conclusion:

An experience of universal primacy of this kind would confirm two particular conclusions we have reached: that Anglicans be open to and

31. See Paul Avis, *Beyond the Reformation: Authority, Primacy and Unity in the Conciliar Tradition* (London: T & T Clark, 2006).

32. Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission II, *Church as Communion* (London: Church House Publishing, 1991), pp. 35–36, para. 57.

33. Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission, *The Gift of Authority* (London, Toronto, and New York: CTS/Anglican Book Centre/Church Publishing Incorporated 1999), p. 42, para. h 60.

desire a recovery and re-reception under certain clear conditions of the exercise of universal primacy by the Bishop of Rome ...³⁴

Anglicans, then, in *The Gift of Authority* were ready to embrace a Gregorian-style primacy, presided in love, as hinted at in *Ut Unum Sint*, a primacy less bound by curial complexities and hierarchies, as set out in paragraphs 94 and 96 of the Encyclical. This Encyclical received a generally encouraging response from the House of Bishops of the Church of England, and that document too pointed to a primacy in love.³⁵ Such a primacy would embrace a *primus inter pares* model and would encourage the Roman Catholic Church further to develop its synodality, thus complementing a universal primacy and regional episcopate.

Throughout the ARCIC dialogues, then, one can trace a broadening measure of understanding of the role of the Bishop of Rome. This process was further fed by a continuing series of encounters between successive Popes and Archbishops of Canterbury: Archbishop Donald Coggan met with Pope Paul VI; Archbishop Robert Runcie met on a number of occasions with Pope John Paul II; Archbishop Rowan Williams met with both Pope John Paul II, at the end of his long pontificate and on a number of occasions with Pope Benedict XVI; Archbishop Justin Welby has now met twice with Pope Francis I. In his first meeting with Archbishop Welby on 14 June 2013, Pope Francis noted that 'we must walk together'. The archbishop, who has been much influenced by Roman Catholic social teaching, noted: 'I pray that the nearness of our two inaugurations may serve the reconciliation of the world and the Church.' Once again the archbishop wore the episcopal ring given by the Pope Paul VI to Archbishop Michael Ramsey. Pope Francis noted encouragingly the words of Pope Paul to Archbishop Ramsey in 1966, and in his own concluding words noted: 'Let us travel the path towards unity, fraternally united in charity and with Jesus Christ as our constant point of reference.' This first meeting offered very positive hopes for the future.

In his 1989 meeting with Pope John Paul II, Archbishop Robert Runcie included within his address a key reflection on the role of a universal primacy. He noted:

...for the universal Church I renew the plea I made at the [1988] Lambeth Conference: could not all Christians come to reconsider the

34. *Gift of Authority*, p. 42, para. 62. See also *Mary: Grace and Hope in Christ* (New York: Morehouse Publishing 2005), especially pp. 55–63 on the Papal Definitions.

35. *May They All Be One: A Response of the House of Bishops of the Church of England to Ut Unum Sint* (London: Church House Publishing), 1997.

kind of Primacy the Bishop of Rome exercised within the early Church, a 'presiding in love' for the sake of the unity of the Church in the diversity of their mission?³⁶

There is no doubt that Anglicans suffer from the lack of a clear primacy, and so the above statement would echo a broad agreement among Anglicans, but would still not be acceptable to all. Nonetheless the possibility of further progress along this road issued from the warmth of the relationship between Pope Benedict XVI and Archbishop Rowan Williams. Both had agreed early on in their pattern of talks together that informal conversation should continue to keep contacts alive, despite the problematic nature for Roman Catholics of developments in the Anglican Communion. It was this arrangement on informal talks which led to the agreement to establish a third phase of dialogue within the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC III). Already this third dialogue has included within its methodology a new approach described as 'receptive ecumenism'. The intention within this is, with honesty, to expose those areas of weakness, or those lacunae, which might profitably be enriched through encounters with the theological insights and tradition of another communion within a bilateral dialogue. The area of the Petrine office and universal primacy is fertile ground for such an approach.

Prospects and Possibilities

Within this swift and brief overview of the bilateral dialogue we have seen a real convergence which has helped transform Anglican views of the papacy since the Second Vatican Council. There is a need, however, to embrace a realism in this journey. The common statements and documents of agreement we have reviewed have been the products either of encounters between two leaders of communions, or of a select group of individuals within a continuing commission. Anglicanism includes within itself a very broad spectrum of views ranging from a near 'Anglican Papalism' across to virtually Calvinistic Protestant opinion, as might be encountered, for example, within the Diocese of Sydney in Australia. Even within carefully argued responses to the ARCIC documents it is not difficult to identify significant reservations about some of the statements already cited.³⁷

36. *One in Hope: Documents of the Visit of Archbishop Robert Runcie to Pope John Paul II* (London: CHP/CTS, 1989), p. 21.

37. See, for example, Martin Davie's essay "'Yes" and "No" – A Response to *The Gift of Authority*', in Peter Fisher (ed.), *Unpacking the Gift: Anglican Resources for Theological Reflection on The Gift of Authority* (London: CHP, 2002), pp. 33–59.

This is hardly a surprising discovery. Even within the Roman Catholic Church, where patterns of authority are more sharply defined, there is a wide spectrum of opinion. Nonetheless, within the Anglican Communion, we have seen very significant divergences of opinion on issues of sexuality, the ordination of women, and some other issues in the past 25 years. So great have these divergences been that they have even threatened to divide or fragment the body politic. This has clear implications when one is asked 'what is *the* Anglican view of the Papacy?' The short answer is that there is no single view, although the progress made in bilateral dialogue does suggest an increasing convergence which implies a more positive attitude among many Anglicans worldwide to the papacy.

The six most recent Popes have themselves demonstrated very different qualities, experiences and modes of operation. Pope John XXIII's warmth of personality and willingness to 'open the Vatican windows' broke with 400 years of tradition in calling the Second Vatican Council; sadly he died before the Council set out on its main work. It was, then, Pope Paul VI, to whom it would fall to preside over the Council. Both in his magisterial handling of the Council and in his response to the presence of communism in Eastern Europe and to liberation theology in South America, Paul VI showed himself to be someone of extraordinary sensitivity, intelligence and vision. It was he who developed an *Ostpolitik* for the church in response to the Soviet bloc.³⁸ At the bishop's conference at Medellin in South America he allowed freedom for the church to respond to the new breathings of liberation theology in that continent. The subtitle of Peter Hebblethwaite's biography of Paul VI is 'the first modern Pope'. Certainly it was the new spirit which he allowed to breathe alongside his reforms within the curia that helped change Anglican attitudes to the Bishop of Rome.

John Paul I's reign was tragically brief. John Paul II has been admired by all for his strength of response as the Soviet bloc moved towards collapse. However, his lack of knowledge and interest in curial affairs spelt the end of further reform, and his formation under an oppressive, communist, totalitarian regime fashioned in him a counter-culturalism which brought more conservative policies and, notably, appointments. Similarly, Benedict XVI, who as John Paul II's enforcer had further pressed towards a more inward looking and

38. Peter Hebblethwaite, *The Runaway Church: Post-conciliar Growth or Decline* (London: William Collins, 1975), especially ch. 11.

fortress-like church, further consolidated conservative policies, even allowing a conservative gloss to be placed upon the Vatican II reforms. The revolutions of 1968 left an indelible mark on Ratzinger and thereafter he viewed the secularizing tendencies in Europe with an understandably suspicious gaze. His knowledge of Anglicanism was at the most slight, and the initiative to set up an ordinariate for dissident catholic Anglicans further coloured the view that many Anglicans had of the papacy.³⁹ Certainly the high-point under Paul VI was a water mark never since regained by either general Church of England opinion, and to some extent by worldwide Anglicanism. Pope Francis' reign is, of course, too fresh to assess, although the early signs feel promising from an Anglican point of view.

Looking back now over almost two generations, both bilateral dialogue and aspects of engagement between different Popes and Archbishops of Canterbury have changed radically the response of Anglicans to the papacy. The new pontificate offers real opportunities to broaden out these changing perceptions. The humility of Pope Francis and the opportunities afforded by the new concept of 'receptive ecumenism' bode well. Some form of universal primacy of honour ought to be something that all Anglicans could welcome and embrace. The challenge is for both communions to build on the extraordinary progress that has been made since the Second Vatican Council.

39. Hebblethwaite, *The Runaway Church*, pp. 125–26.