PORVOO
A WAY FORWARD
AGREEMENT

EDITED BY
VALDIS TĒRAUDKALNS

University of Latvia Press

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Foreword

Valdis Tēraudkalns

This book is a compilation of papers read during "Porvoo Agreement: A Way Forward", an international seminar organized in 2021 by the Faculty of Theology (University of Latvia), as well as additional papers related to the theme. The authors are from several countries – Estonia, Germany, Latvia, the United Kingdom.

The Porvoo Agreement has been important to Latvia – its pre-history is connected to negotiations and subsequent agreements between the Church of England and Lutheran churches in Latvia and Estonia (in 1936 and in 1938). The membership in the Porvoo Communion of the Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church Worldwide has made this network expand globally.

Articles included here show our common history as a diverse resource that challenges us to think about expanding the Porvoo Communion (links to the Meissen Agreement, dialogues with Methodists, Reformed and others) and the ways in which different voices within Lutheranism and Anglicanism respond to ecclesiological and other challenges of contemporary ecumenism. It also invites us to think about what contemporary biblical studies and new contextual theologies can teach us about being together.

Family resemblance, an idea made popular by philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein, that argues that things which could be thought to be connected by one essential feature may, in fact, be connected by a series of overlapping similarities, where no one feature is common to all of the things, can be helpful as we think about denominations and different "parties" within them. The inescapable diversity of ecclesiological models and the need for differentiated consensus (a term often used in ecumenical relationships)[1] is grounded in the plurality of Christianities of the first centuries and in the political contexts of the past (for example, medieval monarchies and imperial colonialism of

1 See for example, materials of dialogue between the Roman Catholic German Bishops' Conference and the United Evangelical Lutheran Church of Germany. *God and the Dignity of Humans. Lutheran Theology*. German Perspectives and Positions. Vol. 2 (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2020).

a later period). Reflections on them could stimulate creative ideas for a post-modern ecclesiology that takes into account the characteristics of a network society. Many contemporary theologians acknowledge the polyphony of early Christianity (and also of the biblical text) and question whether it is possible to speak of a direct link between the teachings of the historical Jesus and their first followers, and with the law of faith (*regula fidei*) and creeds of the 4th century. Choosing what to take from the range of ideas and practices of the Christian tradition and what not to take is always selective. For example, speaking of first-century Christianity, many Christians will recognize the results of the development of Christological and Trinitarian doctrines, but not of the establishment of the papacy as an institution and related theology. Acknowledgement of these realities allows us to see the danger of what Orthodox theologian Christos Yannaras calls "ideological catholicity" – "faith ceases to be a struggle to attain trust, to attain relationships of loving communion […] Faith is transformed into an ideology, and its authenticity is confirmed now not by the dynamic of a shared experiential verification (the conciliar function) but by an institution of infallible authority."[2] It is no wonder that many find it difficult to see the point of the church as an institution. At the same time, creating and recreating institutions is part of human history. The Lutheran pastor (later Archbishop in exile, 1962–1966) Kārlis Kundziņš, one of the few Latvian theologians also known outside Latvia, has described the church (as well as theology and liturgy) as an institution which is an impossible and at the same time inevitable phenomenon.[3] We hope that these articles, written by theologians who are not only academicians but also practising Christians, will be read as a sympathetic critique that beckons us further along the way.

[2] Christos Yannaras, *Against Religion: The Alienation of the Ecclesial Event* (Brookline: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2013), 152–153.

[3] Kārlis Kundziņš, "Kristietības būtība", *Reliģiski-filozofiski raksti*, V (1936), 22.

Introductory Address

Welcome – in a distanced but nonetheless warm way – to this seminar, marking the 25th Anniversary of the signing of the Porvoo Declaration. I wonder what symbolism for us lies in the fact that today we are meeting virtually, and with the mediation of various forms of technology, brought together and yet separated by a variety of screens, networks and so on.

Given that the stated aim of the Porvoo Communion is to bring about a common mission, and to call churches together to proclaim God's love and presence, is it a blessing that we can meet together at all, or a source of profound regret that we cannot all sit together in the library of the University of Latvia?

To quote from the Porvoo Common Statement agreed in 1992,

> *In the face of all the questions arising from our common mission today, our churches are called together to proclaim a duty of service to the wider world and to the societies in which they are set. Equally, they are called together to proclaim the Christian hope, arising from faith, which gives meaning in societies characterized by ambiguity. Again they are called together to proclaim the healing love of God and reconciliation in communities wounded by persecution, oppression and injustice. This common proclamation in word and sacrament manifests the mystery of God's love, God's presence and God's Kingdom…*

Those of us involved in ecumenical dialogue and activities will recognise these words as being akin to so many hopeful reflections that can be found in our joint documents. There is no arguing against these high aims: of course, we wish to proclaim a duty of service and to the world, of course, we are called to proclaim the great Christian hope, the healing love of God and so on; and for those who believe in ecumenism, we are called to do this together whenever and wherever we can. That is the very basic foundation of ecumenical endeavour, reflected in the often repeated dictum "we *should* do together what we *can* do together".

In reality, of course, we do equally often fall short of all the high ideals expressed in officially signed and approved agreements. Individual desires and interests intervene; the urge to promote our own interests at the expense of others; old suspicions of other churches – and indeed new rifts that have developed – all hinder us in our journey towards a common proclamation of the good news of Jesus Christ.

However, despite all the negative thoughts and reflections that we might mention about the implementation and realisation of the Porvoo Agreement, and admittedly there have been weaknesses and failures, the Porvoo Communion of churches also carries within it a huge, and as yet partially untapped, potential for the development of ecumenical ministries and theologies.

Just imagine the positive influence that churches working together in close cooperation, in mutual respect, love and harmony could have on the major issues of today – the COVID-19 pandemic, the existential threat posed by climate change and the rise of intolerance and various forms of hateful discrimination. If we were truly to join minds and hearts "to proclaim the healing love of God and reconciliation in communities wounded by persecution, oppression and injustice", to model, in other words, cooperation and respect across denominational, historical, geographical and psychological boundaries, that would truly be a witness for healing to a world that seems increasingly fractured and feverish.

The great advantage that churches have is that we hold a longer-term view of the world than politicians are able to manage, since our perspective is a Kingdom view, a view bounded by eternity, rather than the need to win votes at the next election.

In their introduction to the Porvoo Agreement, written in 1993, Bishops David Tustin and Tore Furberg wrote:

> *Only in the course of time will the full consequences of the Declaration be able to be gauged [...]. If the gospel is to be allowed to define and shape the life of our communities, this requires us not only to be faithful to the tradition which we have inherited, but also to be responsive to new issues.*

Wise words, of course; and perhaps 25 years against the background of eternity is too short a time to gauge the way in which the Porvoo Communion will develop. After all, even the city of Porvoo itself is celebrating 675 years this year! But the tension between faithfulness to the Gospel and to our church traditions on the one hand, and a flexibility in responding to challenges both ecclesiastical and communal, is one of the most important features of Porvoo and its practical realisation in the lives of Christ's followers. The modern ecumenical movement was born out of several convergent impulses – the two world wars, a desire of the 1940s for the world never to experience such horror again, the founding of global organisations such as the United Nations and so on. We face once again such very major challenges to the very survival of humanity; so, may this era, in which new and unforeseen issues have arisen, lead to new energy in the whole ecumenical field, and within the Porvoo Community in particular.

To end with, a quote from *Unitatis Redindigratio*, in recognition of the fact that the Second Vatican Council afforded insights and impulses to the ecumenical process which were to prove crucially important beyond Roman Catholic dialogues with other churches.

> *Cooperation among Christians vividly expresses the relationship which in fact already unites them, and it sets in clearer relief the features of Christ the Servant. This cooperation, which has already begun in many countries, should be developed more and more, particularly in regions where a social and technical evolution is taking place be it in a just evaluation of the dignity of the human person, the establishment of the blessings of peace, the application of Gospel principles to social life, the advancement of the arts and sciences in a truly Christian spirit, or also in the use of various remedies to relieve the afflictions of our times such as famine and natural disasters, illiteracy and poverty, housing shortage and the unequal distribution of wealth. All believers in Christ can, through this cooperation, be led to acquire a better knowledge and appreciation of one another, and so pave the way to Christian unity.*

We have debated and discussed, we have written perceptive and innovative documents and we have made huge progress in breaking down the walls that divide us; but the next steps need to be practical, far-reaching and risky – leaps of faith, in truth, bringing us closer to full, visible, joyful unity.

Jāna Jēruma Grīnberga
Bishop Emerita

The Porvoo Agreement – Its (Historical) Context and Reception in Estonia

Riho Altnurme, *Dr. theol.*

Professor, University of Tartu

Historical context

1930s

The Porvoo Agreement, which established relations between Anglican and especially the Nordic Lutheran churches, has deep historical roots in Estonia. As an introduction to these relations, it is customary in Estonia to refer to the contacts of Bishop Hugo Bernhard Rahamägi (1934–1939) with the Anglican Church in the 1930s. Both the Estonian and Latvian Lutheran churches had signed an agreement with the Church of England in 1938,[1] following the example of the Finnish Lutheran church from 1934 – which obviously served as the incentive. The Latvian church was ahead here of the Estonian church, as Bishop Rahamägi started the correspondence after he heard in 1936 that the Latvians were invited to take part in negotiations with the Anglicans.[2] From this moment on, the churches acted together, having two English-Baltic conferences in 1936 and 1938. The main subjects were ordination and priesthood, particularly the episcopal office. The Anglicans wanted the Baltic churches to accept the principle that bishops should be ordained in historical succession – and it was easily accepted by the Estonian (Rahamägi was ordained by the Archbishop of Uppsala), but not by the Latvian side. On 24 June 1938, the parties in Tallinn signed a joint report in the form of a recommendation to the English, Latvian and Estonian heads of churches to formalise the following agreement points: (1) mutual participation of bishops

1 Priit Rohtmets and Veiko Vihuri, "Ecumenical Relations of the Lutheran Church", *History of Estonian Ecumenism*, Riho Altnurme, ed. (Tartu, Tallinn: University of Tartu, Estonian Council of Churches, 2009), 57.

2 Ibid., 58.

in the consecration of new bishops, (2) mutual admission of communicants to Communion, (3) mutual attendance at the conferences of bishops, (4) baptism and marriage of members of the other two churches who have no access to their own clergy.[3] The Consistory of the EELC endorsed the agreement on 7 June 1938. The Church of England took more time, because the recommendations of the joint report had to be adopted by the Lower and Upper Houses of the Convocations of Canterbury and York. Finally, on 19 June 1939, the Archbishop of Canterbury notified Rahamägi that both Convocations had approved the agreement. Duncan Jones, Dean of Chichester, visited Estonia in the summer of 1939, but further communication was blocked by the Second World War. In 1940, the EELC invited the Anglicans to participate in the consecration of the new Bishop, Johan Kõpp, but it was no longer possible because of the war.[4] The then EELC had doubts about this agreement because of fears of alleged Catholicism within the Church of England, and a possible weakening of ties with German Lutheranism. It was also seen as an approach to Catholicism from outside the Lutheran Church, for example, by the Orthodox Church.[5] In part, the interest in approaching the Anglican Church at that time could be justified by anti-Germanism, the desire to break free from ties with the German Church, which after 1933 received a new justification in addition to the historical one.

Signing the Porvoo Agreement

The regional and global dialogue between the Lutherans and the Anglicans reached the Baltic churches during a time of political change and newly opened religious freedom. The EELC was invited to join the talks by the Swedish Archbishop Bertil Werkström and by the Director of the Nordic Ecumenical Institute Kaj Engström.[6] The negotiations between the delegations started in August 1989 and one working group met from 5 to 12 May 1990 in Tallinn. Pastors Toomas Paul and Tiit Pädam were the members of the Estonian delegation.[7] The text of the document was finished and approved by the delegations,

3 Priit Rohtmets and Veiko Vihuri, "Ecumenical Relations of the Lutheran Church", *History of Estonian Ecumenism*, Riho Altnurme, ed. (Tartu, Tallinn: University of Tartu, Estonian Council of Churches, 2009), 59.

4 Ibid., 60.

5 Ibid., 60, 61.

6 Veiko Vihuri and Toivo Pilli, "Participation of Estonian Churches in Ecumenical Initiatives", *History of Estonian Ecumenism*, Riho Altnurme, ed. (Tartu, Tallinn: University of Tartu, Estonian Council of Churches, 2009), 480. The author of this section, Veiko Vihuri, refers here to an e-mail from Tiit Pädam.

7 Ibid., 480, 481. Their memories about signing and reflection: Sirje Semm [interview with Toomas Paul], "Porvoo ühisavaldus ei tekkinud tühjale kohale", *Eesti Kirik*, September 8, 2006, http://www.eestikirik.ee/porvoo-uhisavaldus-ei-tekkinud-tuhjale-kohale/

in October 1992, in Järvenpää, Finland. The negotiated agreement was celebrated with a joint Eucharist in the Cathedral of Porvoo.[8]

An interesting fact to point out is that the EELC became the first church (after ratification by The General Synod on 19 April 1994) to approve the founding document of the new communion.[9] There was no long discussion at the time about the approval. Estonia also gained a special place in the history of the Agreement, because the signing in 1996 happened, besides Trondheim Cathedral in Norway and Westminster Abbey in London, also in the Dom Church in Tallinn. The three locations were chosen to emphasise the specific nature and identity of the three regions of the Porvoo Communion – Great Britain and Ireland, the Nordic countries and the Baltic countries. In Tallinn, the ceremony of signing was held on 8 September. Archbishop Jaan Kiivit (1940–2005) signed the Porvoo Agreement on behalf of the EELC.[10]

Leuenberg and Porvoo

The fact that initially EELC was the only church to have signed both the Leuenberg Concord (now called the Communion of Protestant Churches in Europe) and the Porvoo Declaration offers some intrigue. It is recalled that Archbishop Alfred Tooming (1967–1977), who signed the Leuenberg Concord (1973), explained his decision as an act of kindness, which helped the agreement to take effect. The EELC was the fiftieth signatory of the Agreement, and at least fifty churches had to sign the Concord before it came into force.[11] After the EELC joined the Porvoo Communion, there were some questions about the possibility of belonging simultaneously to both communions, especially considering that the Porvoo Agreement was thoroughly discussed among clergy and in the General Synod, while the Leuenberg Concord had been signed without any previous debate.[12] Today, the Lutheran Churches of Denmark, Iceland and Norway are also members in both, thanks in part to the active expansion of Communion's membership. Now the Communion of

(accessed Jun. 30, 2022); Tiit Pädam, "Porvoo ja inetu pardipoeg", *Eesti Kirik*, April 28, 2006, http://www.eestikirik.ee/porvoo-ja-inetu-pardipoeg/ (accessed Jun. 30, 2022).

8 The Estonian text of the Porvoo Common Statement has been published in *Porvoo* ühisavaldus. *9.–13. oktoobril 1992 Soomes Järvenpääl toimunud Neljandal Plenaaristungil kokkulepitud tekst* (Tallinn: EELK Konsistooriumi Kirjastusosakond, 1996).

9 Vihuri, op. cit., 483.

10 Ibid.

11 Ibid., 479. Vihuri relies on the recollecting of Toomas Paul.

12 Ibid., 480. Vihuri quotes Tasmuth, who wrote in 2001: "It could be problematic that the EELC belongs to the Porvoo Communion and the Leuenberg Fellowship, but we – and several other churches – have not given any thought to the theology or significance of the simultaneous membership of these two communities." – Randar Tasmuth, "Meie usume ühte…", *Eesti Kirik,* August 15, 2001, 6.

Protestant Churches is seen as a representative of German theology, which it is not necessarily distanced from, unlike in the late 1930s.

Practical influence

In the following years, representatives of the EELC have attended the meetings of church leaders, theological conferences and the sessions of the contact group, which coordinates the cooperation between the churches. The most prominent event of the Porvoo Community in Estonia – after the signing of the Porvoo Declaration – was the meeting of the leaders of the Porvoo churches in Tallinn, in March 2002, to discuss issues of church management.[13]

The EELC newspaper "Eesti Kirik" recalls the Agreement mainly in connection with the celebrations of the anniversaries of the agreement[14], and the Agreement has not been forgotten in the discussion on the clergy held at the conference of pastors in 2015. Twenty years after signing, in 2016, it could be said that "the Porvoo Agreement has established strong relations with Anglicans" – a title of the article in church newspaper.[15] The direct outcome of the Porvoo Agreement was St. Timothy and St. Titus Anglican Congregation within the Congregation of the Holy Spirit in Tallinn, which started after the conclusion of the Agreement, where English-language services were held. Gustav Piir, a pastor of the Church of the Holy Spirit, who has also been a licensed Anglican priest since 2000, serves the local church. In January 2016, cooperation with the Rochester Diocese was also officially confirmed, when Bishop James Langstaff and EELC Archbishop Urmas Viilma signed a Statement of Intent between the Rochester Diocese and the EELC.[16] In 2020, Bishop James Langstaff was awarded the Order of Merit of the EELC 1st Class in recognition of his role in maintaining and promoting long-term partnerships.[17]

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[13] Vihuri, op. cit., 483. The presentations, final document and other texts and a list of participants have been published in *The Porvoo Communion Church Leaders' Consultation. National Library Conference Centre. Tallinn, Estonia. Thursday 7 March to Tuesday 12 March 2002* (Skövde: Svenska Kyrka, 2002).

[14] For example, Lea Jürgenstein, "Porvoo leping 10aastane", *Eesti Kirik,* October 9, 2002, http://www.eestikirik.ee/porvoo-leping-10aastane/ (accessed Jun. 30, 2022).

[15] Tiiu Pikkur, "Porvoo leping on loonud tugevad suhted anglikaanidega", *Eesti Kirik*, September 7, 2016, http://www.eestikirik.ee/porvoo-leping-on-loonud-tugevad-suhted-anglikaanidega/ (accessed Jun. 28, 2022).

[16] See the statement: https://eelk.ee/en/external-relations-and-ecumenism/co-operation-agreements/statement-of-intent-of-the-church-of-england-diocese-of-rochester-and-the-estonian-evangelical-lutheran-church/ (accessed Jun. 28, 2022).

[17] EK, "Eesti Evangeelne Luterlik Kirik tänab ja tunnustab", *Eesti Kirik*, October 14, 2020, http://www.eestikirik.ee/eesti-evangeelne-luterlik-kirik-tanab-ja-tunnustab-2/ (accessed Jun. 28, 2022).

Liberal and conservative attitudes

Does the EELC always behave as a member of Porvoo Communion? The most significant commitments for member churches include mutual acceptance of baptised members of the other churches and welcoming them to receive sacramental and pastoral ministrations; mutual acknowledgement of members of clergy, enabling them to serve in any church, in accordance with the applicable regulations, without re-ordination; inviting one another's bishops to participate at the consecrations of new bishops; and establishing appropriate structures for continued dialogue and exchange of information.[18] Attitudes in the church in the 1990s and today have changed somewhat, so attitudes towards cooperation with other churches have also altered. The most notable departure from the Porvoo understanding of mutuality comes with the laying on of hands (or the refusal to do so) at the ordination of clergy whose views or church practice are seen not to be acceptable.[19] Attitudes towards homosexuality are the main topic of conflict, not so much the ordination of women (that has not been an open object of discussion for the EELC). In March 2006, the Archbishop of EELC, Andres Põder signed a joint letter of the Baltic Lutheran church leaders to the Archbishop of Uppsala, expressing a critical attitude in connection with the official blessing of same-sex couples in the Church of Sweden.[20] In 2009, the EELC council made a similar statement with the bishops' letter, sharing a common position with the Estonian Council of Churches. The adoption of the Cohabitation Act in Estonia in 2014 clearly led to the positioning of the church among those who opposed the law, together with the representatives of the liberal position within the church.[21]

[18] Vihuri, op. cit., 482.

[19] See the discussion on the meaning of laying on of hands: Toomas Paul, "Hoia end puhtana (1Tm 5:22)", *Kirik ja Teoloogia*, September 9, 2016, https://kjt.ee/2016/09/hoia-end-puhtana-1tm-522/ (accessed Jul. 1, 2022). The most recent and curious case is the conflict inside the EELC when Bishop Tiit Salumäe took part in the ceremony in London on September 11, 2021, where the Lutheran Church in Great Britain (a member of Porvoo Communion since 2014) ordained Meelis Süld, who was not ordained by the EELC due to his homosexuality, as a pastor. See Liina Raudvassar, "Vaimulikuks Suurbritannias", *Eesti Kirik,* September 15, 2021, http://www.eestikirik.ee/vaimulikuks-suurbritannias/ (accessed Jul. 1, 2022).

[20] Vihuri, op. cit., 484. See also EK, "Balti piiskopid mures kiriku ühtsuse pärast", *Eesti Kirik*, March 15, 2006, http://www.eestikirik.ee/balti-piiskopid-mures-kiriku-uhtsuse-parast/ (accessed Jun. 29, 2022); Randar Tasmuth, "Ei paista päris ühist teed", *Eesti Kirik*, August 24, 2007, http://www.eestikirik.ee/ei-paista-paris-uhist-teed/ (accessed Jun. 29, 2022); "Russisch-orthodoxe und baltische Kritik an Schwedischer Kirche", *Diakrisis* 2 (2006), 88–89.

[21] Priit Rohtmets and Riho Altnurme, "Luterlus", *Eesti kiriku- ja religioonilugu*, Riho Altnurme, ed. (Tartu: Tartu Ülikooli Kirjastus, 2018), 244.

Contemporary reception

In September 2021, I sent some questions to the clergy of EELC, whose connection with the Porvoo Agreement is greater than others based on public data, as well as to church leaders (bishops, but also a member of the consistory responsible for ecumenical relations). The majority of those contacted (9 out of 12) responded, some responses in the form of a general discussion.

The questions were, as follows:

- What is your general assessment of the Porvoo Agreement?
- What do you consider most important about the Agreement?
- How important is the Porvoo Agreement for Estonian church life?
- What have been the real events or developments in Estonia that show the impact of the Porvoo Agreement?
- Has your opinion about the Porvoo Agreement changed over time, and if so, how?
- How can we proceed with the use of the Porvoo Agreement?

I have chosen from the answers to show the most typical ones and perhaps also some that slightly deviate from the mainline opinion.

What is your general assessment of the Porvoo Agreement?

“The Porvoo Communion (PC) together with the Lutheran World Federation and the Communion of Protestant Churches in Europe play a decisive role in EELC’s international relations. These three fellowships form a space / framework where EELC’s international communication largely takes place. In addition to direct co-operation in these congregations, most of EELC’s relations with various partner churches also fall within these frameworks. Because belonging to a community means that member churches fully recognize each other and are in fellowship with each other, the relationship is close and the churches are closely connected.”

“For EELC, it was probably the most important ecumenical step of the last century. However, I am not sure whether EELC has been able to use it to its full potential. And I am also not sure whether a large part of the members of EELC have understood its role.”

“I see this as a positive step, especially the awareness of Lutherans about the episcopate.”

What do you consider most important about the Agreement?

“The most important thing about the Porvoo Agreement is the possibility of church fellowship at the level of congregations and church members.”

“The Agreement gave EELC the opportunity to feel as a part of Europe, a part of global Christianity that is taken seriously.”

"Inviting EELC to the fellowship of the Nordic Lutheran Churches and the Anglican Churches is a visible sign that we are not alone."

"--- Strengthened the ecclesiological, hierarchical, and sacramental understanding of the evangelical faith, which, through the Reformed churches of continental Europe and the Leuenberg Church Fellowship, was moving too much toward Calvinism."

"I think it is very much possible that without belonging to the PC, our fellowship with, for example, the Swedish and Danish Lutheran Churches and perhaps also the Church of England would have long since been severed. The reasons why EELC participated in and joined the creation of the PC have so far proved to be more important than the arguments that have been made in recent years to demand the termination of the communion."

How important is the Porvoo Agreement for Estonian church life?

"Undoubtedly, it has brought Estonian Lutheranism closer to both Scandinavian Lutheranism and the Anglican Church (effects on liturgical reform, emphasis on the episcopal office, etc.)."

"The process of creating the PC meant serious theological work for the EELC on the self-understanding of the church; later, the theological work on the self-understanding of the church has been stimulated by the need to make sense / justify EELC's simultaneous membership in the PC and the Communion of Protestant Churches in Europe."

"The Porvoo Agreement could have a greater meaning. There are some things formulated there that should be considered at the level of the clergy."

What have been the real events or developments in Estonia that show the impact of the Porvoo Agreement?

"Understanding and practical implementation of ministry has become important, the prayer calendar of the Porvoo Community and the partner congregations, the mutual recognition of the ministry."

"--- Our ordination practice is based on the understanding of the Porvoo Agreement. After the signing of the declaration, the current picture in EELC was reorganized and the treatment of the ministry was adjusted according to this triple understanding [bishop-priest-deacon]. The ordination of deacon teachers, which had become customary until now, was stopped and the ordination of deacons was continued instead. A formal or incidental consequence of the same process is the formal introduction of the term "priest" alongside the term "teacher" as a terminological change. There was no substantive change, and even today both terms are used interchangeably, although the degree of ordination today is priest ordination instead of teacher ordination."

“One of the very concrete and valuable contributions of the PC to the life of EELC is the very warm and friendly relations with the Church of England (more precisely, with the diocese of Rochester). Without the PC, these relations would not be in this form, and our ecumenical and international life would be much poorer.”

“The Congregation of St. Timothy and St. Titus within the Congregation of the Holy Spirit is an example where the clergyman is on the church lists of both EELC and Anglican church. Here we can also add the partnership with the Anglican chaplain of St. Nicholas of Helsinki, with whom both liturgical material and clergy have been shared. For practical reasons, there is no separate Anglican Church in Estonia, but it is within the “EELC” framework.”

“In my opinion, a liturgical approach to Anglican practices can be seen in the case of some EELC clergy, where, in addition to enrichment, some Anglican customs are sometimes practiced to an unnecessary or excessive extent.”

Has your opinion about the Porvoo Agreement changed over time and, if so, how?

“No, it has not. Together in Mission and Ministry is a strong testimony to the world.”

“I have probably begun to understand that by concluding the Porvoo Agreement, the churches were blue-eyed and, of course, assumed things that did not become a reality.”

“It is to be feared that today it would be more difficult to reach the consensus that we had among ourselves at the time, because developments in the churches concerned have led in different directions on some issues.”

“--- Some member churches have made theological decisions and enacted regulations that are not only not negotiated with others, but also unacceptable to them. This applies in particular to issues related to the concept of family, sexuality and sin.”

“My opinion on the theological and practical content of the Porvoo Agreement has not changed, but over the last two decades there have been extremely unpleasant developments in several member churches of the PC – female bishops, reassessment of homosexuality, even greater liberalism.”

How could we proceed with the use of the Porvoo Agreement?

“I consider EELC’s membership in the PC to be continuously important, and I sincerely hope that the fellowship will withstand a situation in which there are unfortunate divisions and tensions between and within churches that are by no means central to the church’s mission. I hope that the PC will provide space for member churches for constructive theological discussions, an understanding of the diversity of Christianity, and a deeper understanding of fellowship (so that we do not give it away thoughtlessly).”

“Personally, I consider it important to know the text of Porvoo Agreement in order to understand the ministry of our church. I also see in the joint statement a practical output and an opportunity to organize the spiritual service of the Estonian-speaking diaspora in the future in places where Estonians have settled in the world and where some churches that have joined the Agreement operate.”

“It would be desirable to create certain inter-church implementation structures.”

“--- It would be necessary to align the threads of the Porvoo Agreement with the Waterloo Declaration (Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada and the Anglican Church in Canada) and Called to Common Mission (the agreement between the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the Episcopal Church).”

“Conducting a consultation on a common concept of development in the context of the promotion of diaconia and missionary work by the churches. Closer contacts of the Porvoo movement with the CPCE (Leuenberg) community can also be considered.”

“The fingers of two hands are enough to list the British partner congregations, some of the fingers are still left. Of course, the Nordic partner congregations could also be considered part of the Porvoo context. For some reason, I think that they, at least most of them, have arisen regardless of the Porvoo Agreement. No EELC congregation has established friendships with congregations in Ireland, Iceland, Spain or Portugal. So there is a lot, a lot of room for improvement here.”

“Personally, I see no possibility to move forward if it is not clear on what religious-doctrinal basis one wants to stand – both in EELC and in Nordic Lutheranism.”

Conclusions

Historically, the movement of the Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church towards closer communication and cooperation with the churches of the Nordic countries and Great Britain can be seen as a movement away from German Protestantism. The relationship with the Anglican Church also marks the approach to the ecumenical movement, especially in the 1930s, when the German churches were distant from the movement. For critics, it also meant a rapprochement with Catholicism, which was seen to be represented in the Anglican Church.

For Estonia, the signing of the Porvoo Declaration took place immediately after regaining independence, when becoming a member of such an association also symbolized rejoining the free world. Moreover, there was an opportunity to refer to restitution, similar to the restoration of statehood, in the restoration of relations with the Anglican Church. The EELC was initially the only church that had joined the Porvoo Agreement after the earlier signing of the Leuenberg Concordat, which also saw some controversy.

Putting it into practice has meant some development of relations with the Anglican Church (the development of relations with the Nordic churches has probably been natural for other reasons as well), the creation of an Anglican congregation within a Lutheran congregation, and relations with the Rochester Diocese. Undoubtedly, the reforms within the church have also had an impact – the development of the liturgy and the understanding of the clerical profession. However, there is a lack of structures to support the implementation of the agreement among churches more widely.

The conflict between more liberal and more conservative views, which dominates modern church life, has led to a sceptical attitude from a more conservative direction and in some cases (laying on of hands) to a disregard of the agreement. From a conservative point of view, compliance with the Porvoo Agreement today is difficult because of the diverging views of the participating churches on the controversial issues (especially regarding homosexuality). If initially the Porvoo Declaration could be seen as an agreement that supported a more High-Church understanding (emphasis on the episcopate) and reminded one of the old accusation of convergence with Catholicism, now this understanding has receded, to the extent that the opposition between high and low church has remained in the background in the life of the church.

Despite the fact that the Agreement has probably not realized its full potential and that it is not always followed, it has retained its symbolic value and the arguments for its continuation have been stronger than for its termination.

Biblical Language in Service of Ecumenism: Hermeneutics in Porvoo Statement

Dace Balode, *Dr. theol.*

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The Porvoo Statement is a significant ecumenical document that outlines the shared beliefs and practices of Anglican and Lutheran churches in Europe. The Porvoo Statement (hereinafter – PS) is also a significant document in the history of Christianity, as it represents a milestone in the ecumenical movement. PS was signed by Anglican and Lutheran churches from various European countries, and it outlined their commitment to work together towards greater unity and cooperation. One of the aspects of this statement is the use of biblical language in service of ecumenism. The hermeneutics employed in PS emphasizes a common understanding of scripture, which allows for greater unity among different Christian traditions. The ecumenical movement as "a vision, a movement, a theology, and a mode of action"[1] includes the theological work of interpretation of texts, symbols and practices, which are important to different Christian traditions.[2] This text also includes work with the Scriptures as one of the sources of theology, one of the important themes being the community of Christ's followers. Biblical hermeneutics serves, in this respect, to facilitate the interpretation and understanding of texts, but it must also serve ecumenical understanding.[3] In the interpretation of biblical texts it is necessary to consider the different confessional perspectives of the readers. Following the concept of interpretive communities coined by Stanley Fish, when we speak of ecumenical hermeneutics, we speak of the expansion of the interpretive community beyond the boundaries of an organization.[4]

1 Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopaedia. "Ecumenism". Encyclopedia Britannica, February 11, 2023, https://www.britannica.com/topic/ecumenism (accessed Apr. 4, 2023).

2 *A Treasure in Earthen Vessels. An Instrument for an Ecumenical Reflection on Hermeneutics* (Faith and Order Paper No. 182, WCC, 1998), 8.

3 "… it is a hermeneutics for the unity of the Church." *Treasure*, 9.

4 Stanley Fish, *Is There a Text in This Class? The Authority of Interpretive Communities* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1980).

The aim of this article is to examine how the Bible has been involved in the ecumenical work that found its written expression in "The Porvoo Common Statement" (1993).[5] Biblical texts have served as good example for ecumenism today – unity, although in diversity, is found in this early stage of Christianity. The entire inhabited world as a place of God's action and reconciliation (Mt 24:14, Heb 2:5) is just as inspiring today, especially against the background of an unjust war, which forces us to look for new visions of peace once again. The task of this study, however, will be to address the aspects pertaining to biblical hermeneutics found in the Porvoo document. If hermeneutics can be defined as the art of interpretation, as Friedrich Schleiermacher did[6] and as it is defined when thinking about ecumenical hermeneutics,[7] then the interest of this article is to point out that those are techniques that were used in PS.

To achieve this goal, the author, first of all, examines where in the document the references to the biblical text occur, and which biblical texts were important (see the section Biblical references in PS). In the next step, the hermeneutical work in PS can be identified. This is done by first examining the way biblical texts are interpreted in this ecumenical document (this is discussed in the sections Biblical texts in the service of ecumenism – identification and enrichment), then focusing on the analysis of the hermeneutical approach (Biblical texts in the service of ecumenism: Hermeneutics), and finally drawing some hermeneutical conclusions.

The following observations reveal some aspects of the practical application of the biblical text in this ecumenical process between Anglicans and Lutherans. Of course, the research could be broadened by delving into the discussions before and during the creation of the document, but this short paper does not permit of its inclusion.

The interest in this article is not guided by the fundamentalist understanding that every theological statement and practice should be biblically grounded. It is linked to an interest in how biblical hermeneutics serves and can serve the ecumenical movement, and the analysis of the Porvoo Agreement in this article is a kind of case study.

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5 The analysis and quotations in this study refer to the online edition of the *Porvoo Common Statement*, 1993, https://porvoocommunion.evlutkirkko.fi/porvoo_communion/statement/the-statement-in-english/ (accessed Apr. 5, 2023).

6 "… hermeneutics to mean both the art of interpretation and application of texts, symbols and practices in the present and from the past, and the theory about the methods of such interpretation and application". *Treasure*, 8.

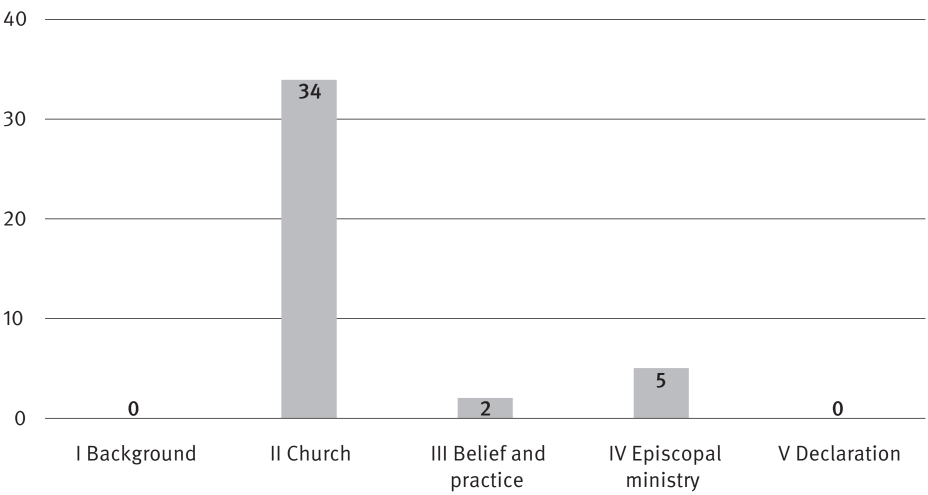
7 Andrew Bowie (ed.), *Schleiermacher: Hermeneutics and Criticism: and Other Writings* (N.p., 1998), 5.

Biblical references in the Porvoo Statement

In order to be able to carry out further steps of analysis, one must first be clear about the source data, so the first task is to gather information about which passages of PS contain references to the biblical text and which biblical texts are quoted. The document of PS consists of five parts: Chapter I sets the scene for the document, both historically and today; Chapter II explains the understanding of the Church (importantly, paras 20 and 28); Chapter III speaks about belief and practice that is common for Anglicans and Lutherans; Chapter IV deals with the question of episcopal ministry and succession; and, finally, Chapter V contains the Porvoo Declaration. Overall, while not heavily reliant on biblical quotations, the Porvoo Document does incorporate key scriptural references to reinforce its theological positions and emphasize its commitment to Christian unity.

The table below clearly shows which parts of the document contain the most references to the biblical text.

Table 1. Biblical Quotations, Paraphrases, Allusions in PS



It can be clearly observed where the need for biblical expressions arose in the writing of this declarative document. Basically, the role of the biblical texts is to explain the understanding of the Church (Part II, 34 references) and ministry (Part IV, 5 references), and the very speaking of the belief of the parties (Part III, 2 references), but there are no citations in the Declaration part (V) or in the explanation of the background of the document (I).

The next table reveals in detail the quotations (Q), paraphrases (P) and allusions (A) to biblical texts within PS.

Table 2.

Porvoo Statement	Biblical references	Porvoo Statement	Biblical references
Part II Church God's Kingdom and the Mystery and Purpose of the Church		**III What We Agree in Faith**	
14	**Eph. 2:19–20 (Q)** II Cor. 5:17–19 (P) Rom. 8:19–22 (P) Eph. 1:9–10 (P)	**32**	I Peter 2:5 (P) **Col. 1:20 (QinQ)**
15	John 3:16–18 (P) Rom. 6:1–11 (P) Gal. 4:5 (P) Rom. 8:14–17 (P) **I John 1:3 (Q)**	**Part IV Episcopal ministry** The Apostolicity of the Whole Church	
16	John 1:1–13 (P) I Cor. 12 (A) Eph. 2:8 (P)	**38**	Eph. 4:11–13 (P) I Cor. 12:4–11 (P)
17	Rom. 6:1–11(P) I Cor. 12:13 (P) I Cor. 10:16–17 (P)	The Episcopal Office in the Service of the Apostolic Succession	
18	Eph. 1:10 (P) Eph. 2:14 (P) Col. 1:19–27 (P) I John 4:14 (P) John 3:17 (P)	**47**	Is. 11:11–3
19	I Cor. 12 (vague A)	The Historic Episcopal Succession as Sign	
The Nature of Communion and the Goal of Unity		**54**	Eph. 1:23 (P) Eph. 3:17–19 (P)
21	I John 1:1–10 (P) John 17:21 (P) **Eph. 4:4–6 (Q)**		
22, 23	I Cor. 12 (A)		
24	**Acts 2:41ff (Q)**		
25	Acts Acts 15		
27	I Cor. 1:11–13 (P) I John 2:18–19 (P) Eph. 1(P) II Cor. 5 (P)		
28	(Phil 2:2)		

If we look more closely at the biblical texts cited, we can see that the ecclesiology of this Anglican-Lutheran document is largely based on Pauline theology, with the leader among the citations clearly being the Corpus Paulinum with 25 references. Most of them are texts from the Epistle to the Ephesians, 7 times in total, then the First Epistle to the Corinthians occurs 6 times, if the allusions to I Cor. 12 are included, speaking of diversity and the church as the body of Christ. Most of the references are paraphrases; direct quotations are used only five times, one of which is a quotation within a quotation. A reference to the Hebrew Bible appears only once in the Porvoo Declaration and it is recalled in the liturgy at the consecration of bishops by the prayer for the Holy Spirit (also the chant *Veni Sancte Spiritus*), leading to a reference to Is. 11:1–3 and the prophecy of the presence of the Spirit.

Biblical texts in service for ecumenism: Identification

Clearly, these are Biblical texts and not, for example, confessional texts or theological argumentations which gave the language to define the common basis of the understanding of the church. Most of the expressions that speak of the Church in the document are formulated in the first-person plural, thus directly linking the "we" of PS to the "us" of which the biblical texts speak. Here is one example of how it is done. Para. 17 in PS states: "In baptism the Holy Spirit unites us with Christ in his death and resurrection (Rom. 6:1–11; I Cor. 12:13); in the Eucharist we are nourished and sustained as members of the one Body by participation in the body and blood of Christ (I Cor. 10:16f)." In the case of the letter to the Romans, the "we" in PS corresponds to the Pauline first person plural when he writes: "By that baptism into his death we were buried with him, in order that, as Christ was raised from the dead by the glorious power of the Father, so also we might set out on a new life." (Rom. 6:4)[8] The same is true of I Cor 12:13: "for in the one Spirit we were all brought into one body by baptism, whether Jews or Greeks, slaves or free; we were all given that one Spirit to drink" and I Cor. 10:16–17 "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" The other biblical texts are also directly related to the current community, i.e. the community behind the statement's text, applying this method of identification.

[8] Unless otherwise specified, all biblical quotations in this study follow the Revised English Bible.

Biblical texts in service for ecumenism: Enrichment

Besides the identification with the biblical texts, PS also contains a reinterpretation of the meaning of the biblical text, or – to express it positively – an enrichment of the meaning. Two examples of the interpretation of the biblical text in PS to show how a certain shift of the meaning of the text has happened, giving new understanding to biblical expressions.

The first example is not a direct quotation of the biblical text, however, the expressions used in it can be considered as allusions to the biblical text. Paragraphs 22–23 of PS:

> *22 Viewed in this light, disunity must be regarded as an anomalous situation. Despite our sins and schisms, the unity to which we are summoned has already begun to be manifested in the Church. It demands fuller visible embodiment in structured form, so that the Church may be seen to be, through the Holy Spirit, the one Body of Christ and the sign, instrument and foretaste of the Kingdom. In this perspective, all existing denominational traditions are provisional.*
>
> *23 Visible unity, however, should not be confused with uniformity. `Unity in Christ does not exist despite and in opposition to diversity, but is given with and in diversity'.*[9] *Because this diversity corresponds with the many gifts of the Holy Spirit to the Church, it is a concept of fundamental ecclesial importance, with relevance to all aspects of the life of the Church, and is not a mere concession to theological pluralism. Both the unity and the diversity of the Church are ultimately grounded in the communion of God the Holy Trinity.*

Here, allusions to the text in I Corinthians 12 can be identified, where Paul speaks to the church in Corinth:

> *4. There are* varieties of gifts*, but the same* Spirit*. 5. There are* varieties *of service, but the same Lord.* […] *12. Christ is like a single* body *with its many limbs and organs, which, many as they are, together make up* one body*;* […] *24. so that there might be no* division *(or* schism*) in the body, 27. Now you are* Christ's body*, and each of you a limb or organ of it.*[10]

[9] Roman Catholic / Lutheran Joint Commission, *Ways to Community* (Geneva, 1981), para. 9.

[10] Since PS itself explicity uses the REB version, REB is chosen as reference for this study also. However, there are even more similarities with other English translations of the Bible, for example New King James Version: "There are *diversities of gifts*, but the same Spirit. 5. There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord… 12. For as the *body* is one and has many members, but all the members of that *one body*, being many, are *one body*, so also is Christ. 25. that there should be no *schism* in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another." There is also allusion to Eph. 4 (cf. Eph. 4:1–16), which states: "There is one body and one Spirit." Likewise, the expression in statements describing the Spirit as a foretaste of the kingdom of God

Obviously, there is not a direct quote of the Pauline text in the text of PS, but the language certainly is influenced by the biblical metaphors.

New Testament readers will recall the initial context of Paul's statements. Paul's text speaks about spiritual gifts in the context of worship in the Corinthian church. There is a problem or question in the Corinthian church about which is the most important gift, how to recognize a true spiritual person (12:1). In chapters 12–14, he explains how he evaluates spiritual gifts, that the most important is love (13), that speaking in tongues is good but not for community (14), and how the various spiritual gifts can work together as one body (12). [11]

PS articulates the expressions of the body of Christ and the differences and diversities in a different context. It is not about charismatic signs and the Spirit's presence, but about the diversity and unity of practices and theology, which is also a kind of gift for the Church. PS also brings the metaphor of "the body of Christ", which in the Pauline text in practice served to regulate life in the specific church at Corinth, much more into connection with the eschatological hope as in Ephesians 1:14 – "the instrument and storehouse of the kingdom of God" – and transforms this metaphor into an expression for the universal church.

Another example of the reinterpretation is the explicit Bible quotation at the beginning of the chapter "The Nature and Unity of the Church":

> *14. Our times demand something new of us as churches. Our agreement, as set out in this text, about the nature of the Church and its unity has implications for the ways in which we respond to the challenge of our age. We have come to see more clearly that we are not strangers to one another, but fellow-citizens with God's people, members of God's household […] built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone.*
>
> (Eph. 2: 19–20 REB).

In the Letter to the Ephesians, the two parties that are brought together through Christ are Jewish and non-Jewish people. The non-Jewish are those who were "far away" and "now are close". Through Christ, both groups are united and have a common way to God.

This meaning should definitely not be forgotten, especially after the very complicated and arduous history between Christianity and Judaism. There should always be very careful and sensitive exegesis, keeping in mind Jews as God's people, "members of God's household". PS lets the text of Ephesians

are linked to Ephesians 1:14: "and that Spirit is a pledge of the inheritance which will be ours when God has redeemed what is his own, to his glory and praise."

[11] See e.g. Wolfgang Schrage, *Der erste Brief an die Korinther, EKK 7:3* (Zürich; Braunschweig: Neukirchen-Vluyn: Benziger; Neukirchener Verlag, 1999), 111–113.

speak about the unity of the various churches of today. This reveals one of the shortcomings of this kind of interpretation, which applies the biblical text so directly to the current situation. The first meaning and history of the text disappear.

However, the text gains new additional meaning. According to the Epistle to the Ephesians, Christ's life was so much about peacemaking that it can be said, "He is our peace." (2:14) This can inspire us to tear down various walls in the modern world, and especially the walls that have been built between the churches.[12]

Biblical texts in service for ecumenism: Hermeneutics

Although PS does not contain much explicit biblical hermeneutics, it declares of Scripture in para. 32 stating the principal beliefs and practices which Anglicans and Lutherans have in common: "We accept the canonical scriptures of the Old and the New Testaments to be the sufficient, inspired and authoritative record and witness, prophetic and apostolic, to God's revelation in Jesus Christ." The designations "sufficient, inspired and authoritative" resonate with the Reformation heritage in the interpretation of the Holy Scriptures, and it should be noted that these epithets can be interpreted quite broadly; there is no closer definition of how, for example, the inspiration of the scriptures should be understood. This declarative and open statement of PS is oriented to Christology – the biblical texts are interpreted as a witness of God's revelations in Christ. With this, PS avoids appointing the Bible itself as the truth but shows the open nature of the Bible – the purpose of the Holy Scriptures is not to lead the reader to the text as absolute truth, but to guide them to Christ. How the two parts of the Bible, which are emphasized in this statement, are witnesses to Christ in a prophetic and apostolic way is not further elaborated. It emphasizes the unity of the Bible, but does not ask about the mutual relationship between the two parts of the Bible, which is a much-discussed topic of biblical interpretation.[13]

[12] Rudolf Schnackenburg, *Maßstab des Glaubens: Fragen heutiger Christen im Licht des Neuen Testaments* (Freiburg, Basel, Wien: Herder, 1978), 103–107.

[13] This is, of course, a very important topic in the context of another process of understanding, namely, in the context of Jewish-Christian dialogue. For example, in 2016, The Evangelical Church in Germany officially renounced the mission to evangelize and convert Jews. There was also a reaction to this dialogue in the context of biblical interpretation. See discussion: Frank Crüsemann, "Jesus Christus und das Alte Testament. Ein theologisches Modell Franz-Delitzsch-Vorlesung 2016 am 28.11. im Schloss der Universität Münster", https://www.uni-muenster.de/imperia/md/content/evtheol/ijd/crusemann_christus_und_das_alte_testament_fdv_2016_.pdf, (accessed Apr. 4, 2023).

From this declarative statement, which explains the common foundations of faith of the participants of the Agreement, we must nevertheless return to specific references to particular scriptural texts in order to arrive at conclusions about the method and hermeneutics that we can see in the PS document.

First, it was shown that there is a direct attribution of biblical texts to the community behind PS. The selected biblical texts basically serve to justify the unity of the church. First of all, as unity with God, but then also as God's work in Christ, "new humanity to reconciled to God and one another through Jesus Christ" (para. 18). As already indicated, the Bible serves to find a language to speak about the Church without argumentative definitions. Biblical expressions, essentially used to define the purpose and identity of the church, provide the language with which to speak about the church in a more idealistic and poetic way. Here, the biblical hermeneutics of PS offers the possibility of finding a way to agree on a content that can be full of theological tensions. It is to emphasize the helpful role of the biblical text, which can give a language to ecumenical statements.

Secondly, PS interest lies in the unity of the churches, and so the different groups in the New Testament become images of this unity in direct application and the historical meaning for their first readers is lost, as could be seen in the section on the enrichment of the text's meanings. In this respect, the biblical language and metaphors become shells of what our time wants to say. PS shows little of the historical consciousness that has been strongly demanded by some biblical scholars as necessary for interpreting biblical texts. For example, Hans Weder, who speaks of the biblical texts as a "stranger guest", whose foreignness must be taken into account before it becomes a text with which to identify,[14] or Ulrich Luz, who demands that exegesis takes into account the otherness of biblical texts. For him, it is even the main task of NT hermeneutics: "The main task of a theological hermeneutics of the New Testament is to listen to the texts, to discover their strangeness and to fathom the difference between what they have to say and what we ourselves are and say".[15] The Porvoo document omits such an exegetical step and applies the biblical statements very directly to the contemporary ecumenical community.

Thirdly, an open question remains as to the OT, and why it appears so rarely in the texts. On the one hand, it might already be said that it does not speak of the church; however, if it is already part of one testimony about

[14] Hans Weder, *Neutestamentliche Hermeneutik* (Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 1984), 28–435.

[15] Author's translation. "Die Hauptaufgabe einer theologischen Hermeneutik des Neuen Testament ist es, auf die Texte zu hören, ihre Fremdheit zu entdecken, und die Differenz auszuloten zwischen dem, was sie zu sagen haben, und dem, was wir selbst sind und sagen." Ulrich Luz, *Theologische Hermeneutik des Neuen Testaments* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 2014), 19.

God, as the Porvoo document itself emphasizes, then theological thought could also be developed ecumenically based on the statements of the Old Testament.

Finally, the biblical texts are not only focused on unity and togetherness. Although PS also points out problems in the first Christian communities (para. 27), it mostly uses texts that reflect the ideal (Acts 2:4, e.g., para. 24). Therefore, there is a need for conscious work with those biblical texts that have been used to divide – to lead to the awareness of the preference for one group, the church, over others. It seems that PS sees the hermeneutic key in the vision of the future – in the eschatological hope, which is also served by the decision for a visible community. However, it would have been worthwhile to include these hermeneutic considerations in a joint declaratory statement.

Conclusions

Overall, the use of biblical texts in the Porvoo Declaration underscores the importance of Scripture as a unifying force within Christianity. It also underscores how different Christian traditions can find common ground through their shared commitment to God's Word. It is clear that although the Porvoo Agreement did not aim to discuss the biblical texts as such, the usage of biblical texts serve in the first line for the ecumenical purposes. So, on the one hand, important theological results are achieved for the dialogue, but on the other hand, the texts themselves are absorbed in this ecumenical declaration. However, it is very important to reckon also with the distance of the historical texts, so that the biblical text does not become a mere confirmation of our goals, however good they may be. One of the conclusions for further ecumenical hermeneutics would therefore be to treat the biblical text as a "stranger guest" with something to say of its own.

Summarizing the observations and analyses of this study, the following should be emphasized: In conclusion, assessing both the arguments in favour of PS and against it, the contribution of biblical texts to ecumenical dialogue can be very significant.

1. The biblical text as common ground can provide a language for ecumenical dialogue, especially for speaking about sensitive issues.
2. The biblical text can help define the community in ecumenical dialogue and develop a new identity.
3. There is a need for a hermeneutical key, a centre or criterion to work with different, sometimes contradictory biblical statements. This can be the eschatological perspective, as in PS.

Meanwhile, there are the following counterarguments to be taken into account:

4. It is necessary to establish a distance from the biblical text, although in ecumenical dialogue the text is simply not used to express what is needed – even if it is a very good idea.
5. The interpretation of the text in a new situation will always be an enrichment of meanings. Moreover, it is clear that here the community of interpreters expands, a kind of merging of horizons takes place. This enrichment is realised methodologically through the way of dealing with the text, which juxtaposes different interpretations and can enable a more conscious choice today, finding a new common interpretation.

When interpreting a text, including the Bible, perspective is crucial. It is important to consider the historical and cultural context in which the text has been written, as well as the audience and purpose. In addition, it is essential to approach the text with an open mind and a willingness to challenge one's own preconceptions. While it is important to respect the religious beliefs of others, it is also necessary to find some distance from the biblical text. This does not mean dismissing its meaning or relevance, but recognising that our understanding of the text may be limited by our own biases and assumptions. In an ecumenical context, this means engaging in a respectful dialogue with those who hold different interpretations of Scripture. By listening to different perspectives and seeking common ground, we can deepen our understanding of the Bible and its role in shaping our lives and communities.

Unity and the Anglican Communion: The Problem of Bishops

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It is fascinating just how fixated Anglicans have been on bishops – even where many Anglicans, at least in the Church of England, do their best to avoid bishops as best as they possibly can, they frequently elevate them to the status of absolute necessity for a church to be a church. In my involvement with the Meissen process over a number of years now, I have come to appreciate that bishops remain the intractable problem and we go round in circles trying to find creative ways forward – the last two meetings of the Meissen Ecumenical Conference have twice discussed the problem of bishops from a number of different perspectives.[1] At least since 1888, it is clear that as Anglicanism developed as a global communion so it has come to be hemmed in by its self-understanding which was forged in some of the early efforts at ecumenism following the First Vatican Council, the American Civil War and then later the First World War. It is in dialogue with other churches that so much of the identity of the Anglican Communion has been created. The Porvoo Agreement itself is littered with references to ecumenical texts as proof texts for Anglican statements of belief (see, for example, §30). While this is a relatively modern phenomenon, it nevertheless functions to constrain ecumenical consensus – compared to other ecumenical discussions with protestant churches, it is important to note that Porvoo was an aberration, at least for the Churches of the British Isles, in that intercommunion was achieved. And this was for the very simple reason that the Nordic and Baltic churches more or less kept a version of episcopacy that most Anglicans thought resembled their own (even where there were obvious difficulties).

[1] See Mark D. Chapman, Matthias Grebe and Friedericke Nüssel (eds), *Revisiting the Meissen-agreement after 30 years: Beihefte zur Ökumenischen Rundschau, Vol. 126* (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2020); Mark Chapman, Matthias Grebe, Friederike Nüssel, Frank-Dieter Fischbach (eds), *Reflections on Episcopacy in Theory and Practice*, *Beihefte zur Ökumenischen Rundschau*, Vol. 135 (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2022).

In this paper,[2] I do not intend to rehearse the arguments for and against the necessity or *esse* of bishops – I have discussed this elsewhere and it is something for others to get worried about.[3] Instead, I want to do something quite simple: to explore some of the origins of the term "historic episcopate" which had come to define Anglicanism by the time of the First World War and which had become of central importance by the time of the Church of South India proposals of the 1930s. I will show that these discussions had crucial implications for ecumenical relations between Anglicans and protestant, including "non-episcopal", churches.[4] By this stage, the Anglican Communion had been recast into a denomination in which the "historic episcopate" had become the key part of its identity, a move that has even been described as the "episcopalization" of Anglicanism.[5] I want to demonstrate that, while there were alternative models to this sort of "Lambeth Anglicanism"[6] which continued to regard Anglicanism as a form of Protestantism adapted for a particular context, these were supplanted by an almost visceral fixation on the centrality of episcopacy as of the very *esse* of the church.

The historic episcopate and Lambeth 1888

A good illustration of this episcopalization of Anglicanism is offered by Frederic Hood (1895–1975), Principal of Pusey House in Oxford, which by that stage had established itself as a bastion of conservative Anglo-Catholicism working among students in the University. In 1935, Hood published a strong and simple defence of what might be regarded as a maximal understanding of the "historic episcopate":

> *The Historic Episcopate* […] *is of the very essence of the Church of England; and could not be suffered to be called in question by any body or individual desirous to be incorporated in our Communion.*[7]

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2 This paper is based on my contribution "Lambeth 1920, Bishops, and the Church of South India" in Chapman, Grebe, Nüssel, Fischbach (eds), *Reflections on Episcopacy*, 64–73.

3 See my essay, "Bischofsamt und Politik", *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche 97:4 (2000): 434*–462; "The Politics of Episcopacy", *Anglican and Episcopal History* 69:4 (2000), 474–503. Also in Ingolf U. Dalferth (ed.), *Einheit bezeugen/Witnessing to Unity* (Frankfurt am Main: Lembeck, 2003), 150–197.

4 "Proposed Scheme of Union", March 1929, George Kennedy Allen Bell (ed.), *Documents on Christian Unity*, Second Series (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1930), 145.

5 On this, see Steffen Weishaupt, "The development of the concept of episcopacy in the Church of England from the nineteenth to the mid-twentieth centuries" (DPhil thesis, University of Oxford, 2013).

6 On this term, see Robert William Keith Wilson, *George Augustus Selwyn* (*1809–1878*): *Theological Formation, Life and work* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), 149–153.

7 Frederic Hood, *Some Comments on the South India Scheme* (Westminster: Church Literature Association, 1935), 3. Hood is citing a former Bishop of Oxford, the historian,

At least for a certain type of Anglo-Catholic, the historic episcopate alone functioned as the very centrepiece of Anglican self-understanding. The term had found its way into common usage in the Anglican Communion at the third Lambeth Conference of 1888, as one requirement for union with other churches, along with the Scriptures, the two dominical sacraments and the ecumenical creeds. Given that the other three points of the so-called Lambeth Quadrilateral would be acceptable to all doctrinally-orthodox sacramental churches, it was the historic episcopate that was to become the key distinguishing feature of Anglican identity.[8] It is important to note, however, that there was no clarification of precisely what was meant by "historic episcopate" at the 1888 Lambeth Conference. For many, such vagueness was unsatisfactory. In the years that followed, especially after the First World War, it was the very singular Anglo-Catholic view that stood in direct line to the thinking of the Tractarians themselves that came to dominate thinking about the historic episcopate.

Lambeth 1920

The claims of the 1888 Lambeth Quadrilateral were given an enormous boost following the famous Appeal to All Christian People of the 1920 Lambeth Conference,[9] which laid the foundations at an international level for Anglican ecumenism in the context of the post-First World War settlement. The emphasis was again on the episcopate as something to be graciously received through what it called "the apostolic rite of the laying-on of hands" (§ VII). While there was no denying the "spiritual reality" of the ministry of those churches that did not possess episcopacy (§ VII), the Appeal nevertheless expressed the hope that "would lead ministers who have not received it to accept a commission through episcopal ordination" (§ VIII).

For many, the Anglican Communion was understood as the ecclesiastical equivalent of the nascent British Commonwealth as it began to develop into a federation of self-governing dominions.[10] The Lambeth Appeal amounted to

William Stubbs. See William Stubbs, in Ernest Edward Holmes (ed.), *Visitation Charges Delivered to the Clergy and Churchwardens of the Dioceses of Chester and Oxford* (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1904), 130.

8 On the emergence of the Lambeth Quadrilateral, see my essay, "William Reed Huntington, American Catholicity and the Chicago–Lambeth Quadrilateral" in Paul Avis, Benjamin M. Guyer (eds), *The Lambeth Conference: Theology, History, Polity and Purpose* (*London: Bloomsbury,* 2017), 84–106.

9 'An Appeal To All Christian People from the Bishops Assembled in the Lambeth Conference of 1920', (Resolution 9: Reunion of Christendom), https://www.anglican-communion.org/media/127731/1920.pdf (accessed Febr. 10, 2021).

10 On this, see my essay, "Un-Protestant and Un-English: Anglicanism and the 1920 Lambeth Conference 'Appeal to All Christian People'", *Ecclesiology* 16 (2020), 159–174.

a call for a kind of League of Nations for the churches so that denominations, including Anglicanism, at least in its limited Protestant and English form, would cease. There were other changes affecting ecumenism in the post-First World War world. Much of the earlier pan-Protestantism represented by many Anglicans in pre-War years through the appropriation of German liberal scholarship had run into the sands through the accusations of liberalism as guilty by association with Germany's war aims.[11] Following the War Anglo-Catholicism, which had always been hostile to German liberalism, had risen to the ascendant in part because of its attraction to the Orthodoxy of the Eastern Allies such as Serbia.[12]

That said, one of the ironies of Anglican ecumenical involvement is that the commitment to church unity expressed in the Lambeth Appeal of 1920 was at the same time a strong affirmation of Anglicanism as an exclusive kind of church based on its allegiance to the historic episcopate: the very impetus towards stating the minimum requirements for ecumenism helped shape a global denominational identity which made it far less willing to embrace its historic Protestantism.

Mission, India, and ecumenism

The main spur to ecumenical co-operation in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries had come from the problems that emerged alongside missionary expansion. Some of the key features that had originally set the European churches and denominations of the Reformation against each other in such matters as church government or liturgical practice came to be seen as increasingly irrelevant in the completely new contexts represented in Africa as well as in south and east Asia. In many places so-called comity arrangements were put in place so that missionary societies were given their own sphere of influence and were no longer in competition with one another. It is no surprise that some of the earliest efforts at ecumenical co-operation on these lines took place in India and sometimes these practical arrangements were combined with the perceived need to be more responsive to local voices. In 1870, for instance, the Indian convert to the Free Church of Scotland,

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11 See my *Theology at War and Peace: English Theology and Germany in the First World War* (London: Routledge, 2017); and "William Sanday, Modernism, and the First World War", in Andrew Mein, Nathan MacDonald, Matthew A. Collins (eds), *The First World War and the Mobilization of Biblical Scholarship* (London: T & T Clark, 2019), 69–88.

12 See Mark Chapman, "The Church of England, Serbia and the Serbian Orthodox Church in the First World War" in Vladislav Puzović (ed.), Зборник радова са Међународног начног скупа Православни свет и Први светски рат [Proceedings of the Orthodox World and the First World War, 5–6 December 2014], (Belgrade: Faculty of Orthodox Theology, 2015), 385–401.

the Reverend Lal Behari Day (1824–1892) had proposed a union for Bengal on the basis of Episcopal, Presbyterian and Congregationalist principles in order to free Christianity from its European forms which he regarded as constricting the proclamation of the Gospel. In turn, by the outbreak of the First World War, reunion conferences were becoming more and more frequent as Anglicans and representatives of other denominations discussed possible routes towards reunion.

By 1919, the well-known Conference held at Tranquebar resulted in a Manifesto proposing a scheme for reunion agreed by Anglicans and members of the South India United Church, a church which comprised a union of Presbyterians and Congregationalists.[13] With the renewed emphasis on reunion after the Lambeth Appeal there were further moves through the 1920s towards a more substantial set of proposals to bring about a new united church. In 1929, E. H. M. Waller (1871–1942) Bishop of Madras, noted that the Gospel imperative "that all might be one" was the principal consideration.[14] The "Proposed Scheme of Union" which was completed in March 1929 emphasised the role of the Spirit in promoting the "bond of peace".[15] The pattern of faith for the new church was to all intents and purposes identical to that of the Lambeth Quadrilateral as developed by the Lambeth Appeal: it would require the acceptance of the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds, as well as the dominical Sacraments of Baptism and the Eucharist.[16] More complex, however, was the issue of church order, especially the exercise of episcopacy. While there was acceptance of "the historic episcopate in a constitutional form as part of their basis of union", this did not mean that there was any intention "thereby to imply, or to express a judgement on, any theory concerning episcopacy".[17] Acceptance of the historic episcopate was about the future and was not a judgement about the validity of ministry in the past.

In formulating the final set of proposals Edwin James Palmer (1869–1954), Bishop of Bombay had long advocated the centrality of the historic episcopate for any future unity. Ministers in the new church should "accept a commission through Episcopal ordination".[18] This point, however, was modified in 1926 and there would be no retrospective or conditional ordinations. While

13 'Statement drawn up by Thirty-three Ministers of the Anglican and South India United Churches at Tranquebar, May 1 and 2, 1919, in George Kennedy Allen Bell (ed.), *Documents on Christian Unity: 1920–4* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, First Series, 1924), 278.

14 Edward Harry Mansfield Waller, *Church Union in South India: The Story of the Negotiations* (London: SPCK, 1929), 19.

15 "Proposed Scheme of Union", March 1929, in George Kennedy Allen Bell (ed.), *Documents on Christian Unity,* Second Series, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1930), 145.

16 "Proposed Scheme of Union", 146.

17 Ibid., 146–147.

18 Henry Whitehead, cited in Sundkler, *Church of South India*, 63.

this allowed the proposals to go forward, it also caused significant problems for many Anglicans: until such time as all bishops and clergy conformed to the historic order there was to be a thirty-year interim period where all ministers would be recognised whether or not they had been episcopally-ordained. Consequently, while in the long run all those in ministry would be episcopally-ordained ministers in the historic succession, there would be exceptions until that time.[19] The chief problem with the South India proposals was not the long-term future or the question of episcopacy per se, but the interim period which seemed to some to open the floodgates.

Opposition

For opponents to these proposals from South India the historic episcopate had come to be treated as an all or nothing affair: since churches needed bishops and all ministers had to be episcopally-ordained to guarantee the validity of their sacraments, there could be no compromises, even for thirty years. Despite the acceptance of the centrality of episcopacy in the proposals, the interim measures meant that there were exceptions "to the general principle of an episcopally ordained ministry", which would be quite unacceptable to many.[20] Even though former Anglican congregations would remain unaffected by the changes and would not have non-episcopally-ordained clergy foisted upon them, the fact that there was the possibility of a church living with seeming anomalies was enough to ensure that the orders and sacraments of the whole church were open to question. According to Frederic Hood, the interim period contradicted the Preface of the Ordinal as well as the Constitution of the Church of India, Burma and Ceylon,[21] while also ruling out the longed-for union with Rome.[22] Consequently, he suggested, "Great harm will be done to the very cause which we all have at heart, if this scheme is approved without drastic revision".[23] This sort of opposition reveals that the South India proposals on episcopacy, however limited they were in practice, functioned as a red rag to the Anglo-Catholic bull: the very identity of their vision of the Church was at risk.

For many Anglo-Catholics, episcopacy had come to function as the guarantee of the church's authority against any encroachment either from theological liberalism, an increasingly secular state or from other denominations.

19 "Proposed Scheme of Union", 153.

20 Ibid.

21 Hood, *Some Comments*, 4.

22 Ibid., 8.

23 Ibid., 2.

As N. P. Williams (1883–1943), Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity at Oxford and one of the leading academic spokesmen for Anglo-Catholicism, put it in 1930: "I venture to suggest that such a geographically-conditioned priesthood", as proposed in South India, "would be practically as productive of irritation as it would be theoretically incapable of justification".[24] For many, there was a fear that it marked the thin end of the wedge as the irregularity of non-episcopally-ordained clergy presiding over eucharists might set the pattern for future developments elsewhere, even possibly with protestant denominations in England.

One of the harshest critics of the proposals, however, was the Anglo-Catholic poet T. S. Eliot who attacked what he regarded as the denial of Christian truth which could never be dependent purely on context. Furthermore, what happened on one side of the globe could easily affect the church at home:

> *Between the "missionary field" and the "home field" there can be no radical difference* […] *If it is accepted in India, it will inevitably be proposed in England. Not only logic will compel it, but circumstance. A precedent will have been established; the inconsistency will become intolerable; and we shall be told that if we do not conform to the precedent of India, it is we who will be responsible for the consequent disorder.*[25]

The support that had been given by some English Churchmen to the South India proposals raised the question of "whether the Church of England shall survive or perish".[26] In particular, the thirty year interim period was nothing more than an "amiable masquerade"[27] and would deny the ideal of "a National Church" representing all people. "As a Church, it would be only a shell".[28] Clearly, for Eliot, a great deal was at stake.

Another variety of Anglican Ecumenism

At the same time, however, some other Anglicans held a quite different understanding of the historic episcopate. This had earlier become apparent at one of the most important early international missionary conferences which took place in London in 1888 shortly before the Lambeth Conference and

[24] Norman Powell Williams, *Lausanne, Lambeth and South India: Notes on the Present Position of the Reunion Movement* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1930), 43.

[25] Thomas Stearns Eliot, *Reunion by Destruction: Reflections on a Scheme for Church Union in South India* (Council for the Defence of Church Principles, Pamphlet 7) (London: The Pax House, 1943), 5–6.

[26] Eliot, *Reunion by Destruction*, 1.

[27] Ibid., 12.

[28] Ibid., 20–21.

which has received little scholarly attention. Anglican attendance at what was billed the Centenary Conference on the Protestant Missions of the World was limited to the predominantly evangelical Church Missionary Society. In a paper on Missionary Comity, C. C. Fenn (1823–1913), CMS Secretary from 1864 to 1891, noted that although there were "great varieties of church government", all Christians were nevertheless understood as "belonging to the same outward visible Church".[29] According to Fenn, "those sectional differences among Protestant Christians, which are purely owing to historical causes or to local causes, will disappear among converts gathered in bodies so divided, if the converts act for themselves in countries where those historical or local causes are inoperative".[30]

Fenn recognised that there would obviously be many repercussions for denominational self-identity, most especially the different polities expressed in the various denominations which ranged from episcopal to independent. However, while recognising that Church Government would remain a problem, he nonetheless made some practical suggestions which seemed appropriate to the particular circumstances of India:

> *The unity that exists among the Nagercoil Christians might be manifested by an annual or half-yearly gathering of ministers and lay delegates in a Congregational Union, presided over by a president chosen at each occasion. The corresponding body in Tinnevely might be a Central Church Council, presided over by a bishop. But the two central representative bodies might each regard the other as representing a part of the visible Church.*[31]

Fenn also felt that the same sort of solution would apply to Presbyterians as well as Congregationalists: "The difference in Church government would not really break or even obscure their visible and evident union".[32] As an episcopal witness for his cause, Fenn cited J. B. Lightfoot, Bishop of Durham and one of the leading textual scholars of the New Testament and apostolic age who had suggested: "In the epistles of Ignatius there is no indication that he is upholding the Episcopal against any other form of Church Government, as, for instance the Presbyteral".[33] In a celebrated essay in his commentary on Philippians Lightfoot had maintained that church orders were simply "aids and expedients". Even though "a Christian could not afford to hold lightly or

[29] Christopher Cyprian Fenn, "Missionary Comity", in James Johnston (ed.), *Report of the Centenary Conference on the Protestant Missions of the World*, 9th–19th June 1888 (London: Nisbet, 1889), Vol. 2, 470–477.

[30] "Missionary Comity", 473.

[31] Ibid., 474.

[32] Ibid., 475.

[33] Joseph Barber Lightfoot (ed.), *The Apostolic Fathers, Second Part, Vol. 1 (Epistles of St Ignatius)* (London: Macmillan, 1885), 382, cited in "Missionary Comity", 475.

to neglect", he went on, they "were no part of the essence of God's message to man in the Gospel".[34]

While the breakdown of Presbyteral government might have been best for the specific circumstances of the early church, Fenn observed, its replacement with Episcopal government was not something that could have universal validity for all time. Drawing parallels from the secular world, he noted:

> *Among the more progressive Christian countries of the world, the non-monarchic element of civil government seems, on the whole, at the present moment to be growing stronger and stronger. And, therefore, it would almost seem as if the self-same cause which at one time led to the introduction of Episcopacy, might now have a tendency in the exact opposite direction.*[35]

Fenn concluded by predicting a church that would embrace diversity in which "great varieties of Church government will co-exist". In such a church, all would "recognise each other as belonging to the same outward visible Church, the union being manifested by some corporate and representative action, and by very free intercommunion".[36]

Conclusions

Fenn's view was obviously quite distinct from the view maintained by most of the bishops gathered at the Lambeth Conference of 1888 and even more so in 1920. It was also quite distinct from what was eventually adopted in the Church of South India where one model of episcopacy was gradually assumed into the system, even if it was only after a number of years. What Fenn's missionary example reveals is that "Lambeth Anglicanism" or the establishment of a denomination founded principally on a particular theology of bishops, which has become the Anglicanism of ecumenism, is only one variety among the diversity of historical Anglicanisms.[37] However, it has come to be treated with a reverence and finality that means that other alternatives, including the understanding of ministry maintained by such key scholarly figures as J. B. Lightfoot, have hardly ever been brought to the ecumenical table.

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[34] Joseph Barber Lightfoot, *Philippians* (refs to 6th ed. London: Macmillan, 1881), 184.

[35] "Missionary Comity", 476.

[36] Ibid.

[37] I have charted elsewhere the sorts of stories different Anglicans have told themselves about the nature of their identity. See *Anglican Theology* (London: T & T Clark, 2012).

There is a further problem about the historic episcopate which is important to note in the face of the imperialist underpinning of the Anglican Communion. The adoption of the gift of the "historic episcopate" in 1920 can also be read as a mechanism for the continuation of the cultural hegemony of the Anglo-American world: the vision for the end of denominations did not amount to the triumph of contextualization or indeed to the euthanasia of the mission. Indeed, it is possible that the idea of episcopacy which came to dominate the discussions around the formation of the Church of South India through the 1930s and in subsequent ecumenical dialogues, was in part a mechanism for ensuring that the church remained firmly in the hands of a particular type of white man. The vast majority of bishops shared a similar educational and political outlook: formed in a particular set of virtues, they sought to educate churches, races and nations in the art of self-government on their own terms. As the great historian E. H. Carr put it: "International order and "international solidarity" will always be slogans of those who feel strong enough to impose them on others".[38]

I am not quite sure how the theology behind the Porvoo Agreement fits into this wider story – but the language of sign and the language of gift says something about how that which is signified might be perceived. The Anglo-American Church of the Lambeth Conference of 1920 defined through its bishops as a kind of alternative to the global communions of Roman Catholicism and Orthodoxy may not be completely unrelated to the Anglo-Nordic-Baltic Porvoo Communion establishing itself in another new order following the collapse of the Berlin Wall. There is much more to explore about the political context of ecumenical agreements and their cultural presuppositions.

[38] Edward Hallett Carr, *The Twenty Years Crisis, 1919–1939: An Introduction to the Study of International Relations (London: Macmillan, 1981), 87.*

Ecumenism and Lutheran Churches in Latvia

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This article is result of a conference dedicated to the principles of the Porvoo Declaration and the community. The dictum of the Porvoo Declaration is: Visible Unity and Ecclesial Diversity. Referring to this statement, I would like to put forward the thesis that Lutheran churches in Latvia are ecclesiastically diverse, but not visibly united.

Currently, I am performing the duties of a Member of the Riga City Council and within the framework of these duties I have to face situations when issues that coincide with religious content, processes or phenomena have to be solved. The most pressing case at the moment is the question of the ownership St. Peter's church in Riga.[1] It seems that the simplest solution may be that this edifice should belong to the Church. However, as we delve into the problem, a number of issues arise. One of them is which Church to transfer ownership to? St. Peter's Church has a long and complicated history, but here I will only add that several Lutheran churches are eligible for this church building. If ecumenism in all Lutheran churches were to conform to the defined principles of ecumenism, then the question of property rights would probably be resolved a long time ago.

There are more than 34 religious organizations registered in Latvia; about half of them are various Christian denominations, four of which are Lutheran: ELCL (including Estonian and Russian congregations), as well as the German Church and Confessional Lutherans, and the so-called "exile church", or congregations of the Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church Worldwide (LELCW).[2] It is often necessary to look for points of contact internally in

1 Raivis Spalvēns, "Saeima lemj nodot Pēterbaznīcu LELB un Vācu draudzei", *Delfi*, 24.03.2022., https://www.delfi.lv/news/national/politics/saeima-lemj-nodot-peterbaznicu-lelb-un-vacu-draudzei.d?id=54179924 (accessed Apr. 5, 2023).

2 Voldemārs Lauciņš, "Divas Latvijas luterānisma sejas", *Telos*, 14.05.2021. Available: https://telos.lv/divas-latvijas-luteranisma-sejas/ (accessed Apr. 5, 2023). "Valstī reģistrēto reliģisko draudžu skaits sadalījumā pa konfesijām gada beigās", https://stat.gov.lv/lv/statistikas-temas/izglitiba-kultura-zinatne/kulturas-organizacijas/tabulas/kur010-valsti-registreto (accessed Apr. 5, 2023).

one tradition in order to demonstrate to the secular society the unity in its faith, ethics and service. Ecumenism has a long history, reaching back to the existence of the catholic (universal) church. As in other world religions, Christianity does not have a unified, homogeneous theology and practice. Unity has been the principal theme of Christian ecumenism from the World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh in 1910 onward. The quest for Christian unity has manifested itself in six principal forms or types of Christian unity.[3]

Unity of faith

At a minimum, unity of faith among Christians is a common expression of faith in Jesus Christ as "the Way, the Truth and the Life" (Jn. 14:6). A more advanced trinitarian expression of faith is the self-definition of the WCC[4] as "a fellowship of churches which confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the scriptures, and therefore seek to fulfil together their common calling to the glory of the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit."[5] This is one of the most difficult principles of unity to implement. One manifestation of such ecumenism is the Apostles' Creed, which has become the unified creed of the Western Church. Notably, all Lutheran churches in Latvia are united in faith through the Apostles' Creed.

Institutional unity

Returning to the fact that there are four Lutheran churches in Latvia, it is possible to outline the diversity of the institutions of these churches.

In 1999, nine independent Lutheran congregations in Latvia merged into one church, which was named the Confessional Lutheran Church (CLC, still unregistered). The self-identity of this church is described in the following quote: The reason for this was differing views on fundamental issues of Christian teaching and practice. The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Latvia (ELCL) generally follows the direction of modern ecumenism, especially the Roman Catholics, while the CLC has a strict denominational stance.

3 Laima Geikina, *Lūk, cilvēks!* (*Ecce Homo*): *praktiskā teoloģija: no dievbijības kopšanas līdz starpdisciplinārai prakses pētniecībai* (Rīga: LU Akadēmiskais apgāds, 2021), 212.

4 Paul Ladouceur, "Christian Ecumenism and Interreligious Dialogue: Convergences and Divergences", *Journal of Ecumenical Studies*, Vol. 55, No. 2, (2020), 179.

5 Constitution and Rules of the World Council of Churches (as amended by the 10th Assembly of the WCC in Busan, Republic of Korea, 2013); see also https://www.oikoumene.org/sites/default/files/Document/WCC_Constitution_and_Rules_Amended_Busan_2013_EN.pdf (accessed Apr. 5, 2023), https://data.stat.gov.lv/pxweb/lv/OSP_PUB/START__IZG__KU__KUR/KUR010/table/tableViewLayout1/ (accessed Apr. 5, 2023).

The denominational direction in Lutheranism emphasizes that until consensus is reached on Christian teaching, church fellowship is not possible. First, it is determined by the Bible, and second, such fellowship creates uncertainties that threaten faith."[6] On 27 May 1997, six congregations agreed on a joint service and two more pastors were ordained, Gundars Bākulis and Uģis Sildegs, in addition to the existing Ilārs Plūme, Uldis Fandejevs and Kārlis Bušs. In 2008, after mutual disagreements, some pastors left the Confessional Lutheran Church.

In the case of church ownership, there have been mergers and withdrawals from various international church unions. The German Evangelical Lutheran Church in Latvia (GELCL) is a union of congregations registered in Latvia as a church, one that has maintained services in German for years, and has cultivated German Lutheran culture. On 28 September 2021, GELCL received notification stating that the Protestant Church in Germany (Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland, EKD) is terminating financial and personnel support to GELCL. It was this support that was central during the years of GELCL's independence, EKD treated GELCL as its diaspora church and provided the GELCL congregations with the necessary pastor (who was sent to Latvia from Germany) and funding for its maintenance. This ensured the continued existence of this church and its identity. This decision was taken because GELCL planned to join ELCL, taking over its position against other churches, rejecting them as a union of heretical non-Lutheran churches, at least in its official documents.

In Latvia, there has been an attempt to re-unite ELCL and the Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church Worldwide (LELCW), which are the united heirs of the Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church, separated due to the Soviet occupation during the Second World War. Merger talks took place in the early 1990s, but they broke down because no agreement was reached on issues concerning women's ordination and the participation of homosexuals. As a result, we have ELCL, which made the decision to join the conservative International Lutheran Council (ILC) at the 28th Synod of ELCL in Roja in August 2021 and withdrew from the Communion of European Protestant Churches (CPCE). In turn, the Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church Worldwide has its own identity, which is described, as follows: "LELCW is a member of the Lutheran World Federation, the World Council of Churches and the Conference of European Churches."[7]

Since the 18th century, there has been an Estonian Lutheran congregation in Riga, which officially continued its activities even during the Soviet era.

6 Par KLB. Available: https://latvijasluteranis.lv/par-klb/ (accessed Apr. 5, 2023), see also https://data.stat.gov.lv/pxweb/lv/OSP_PUB/START__IZG__KU__KUR/KUR010/table/tableViewLayout1/ (accessed Apr. 5, 2023).

7 "Par mums", *LELBP*. Available: https://www.lelbpasaule.lv/par-mums/ (accessed Apr. 5, 2023), see also https://data.stat.gov.lv/pxweb/lv/OSP_PUB/START__IZG__KU__KUR/KUR010/table/tableViewLayout1/

Another Estonian Lutheran congregation operated in Alūksne. St. Peter and St. Paul Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Congregation is currently active in Rīga. At one time this congregation used St. James' Church (now the Roman Catholic Cathedral in Rīga), and later the Church of St. Peter and St. Paul, now a concert hall called “Ave Sol” (this was handed to the Estonian congregation after the First World War). Back in 2018, the Estonian congregation in Riga gathered once a month in St. John’s Church.[8]

From the list of specific facts it can be seen that Lutherans in Latvia still have a long way to go to implement the principle of institutional unity of ecumenism, not only for property rights and pragmatic reasons, but to become a visibly unified church for the world.

Unity of worship

This is the most widely used principle of ecumenism among various Christian denominations in Latvia. It is emphasized that Latvia is one of the most favourable countries for ecumenism. However, upon examination of the principles of ecumenism, it is clear that this is an uncritical self-understanding of ecumenical cooperation. In addition, ecumenical services most often show paternalistic treatment of smaller Protestant denominations – Pentecostal churches have been ignored for a long time (perhaps because of their decentralized structure, which hinders the identification of a particular legitimate representation). Confessional Lutherans are also not involved in and/or do not participate in the community of worship. The ministry of clergy of different genders in ecumenical worship is a problematic issue.[9]

Ministerial unity

Sometimes, due to limited circumstances, congregations of different denominations co-ordinate clergy to provide pastoral care for church members – similarly, the principle of multidenominationality operates in the chaplaincy service to provide pastoral care for the military or prisons. In Latvia, this principle can be observed in the service of chaplains both in health care institutions and in the military service. A rare event for Latvia’s Christian

8 Dace Kokareviča, “Kuras vietas un lietas Rīgā saistītas ar igauņiem?”, *Latvijas Avīze*, 24 Febr. 2018. Available: https://www.la.lv/pasbilde-ar-igaunijas-karodzinu (accessed Apr. 5, 2023), see also https://data.stat.gov.lv/pxweb/lv/OSP_PUB/START__IZG__KU__KUR/KUR010/table/tableViewLayout1/ (accessed Apr. 5, 2023).

9 Laima Geikina, *Lūk, cilvēks!* (*Ecce Homo*): *praktiskā teoloģija: no dievbijības kopšanas līdz starpdisciplinārai prakses pētniecībai*, 213.

environment should be noted here, – the confirmation of women in the service of military chaplains – the graduation of Estere Tumoviča and Anna Dobele from of the Faculty of Theology of the University of Latvia as chaplains of the Military Police and Land Forces Battalion.[10]

Unity of action

Unity of action is most typically reflected in common action on social, economic, environmental, and political issues. This aspect of unity is at the heart of the World Council of Churches. In Latvia, Christians are able to agree not only with each other, but also with secular society, for example, by organizing Taizé youth days in Riga. However, the most visible joint action projects have been related to the (non-) ratification of the Istanbul Convention, support for "virtue amendments", the "Pro-Life and Traditional Family" campaign, the Prayer Breakfast, the pilgrimage to Aglona. Ecumenical activity, such as the Night of Churches was initially compromised in terms of ecumenical principles, because the Riga Anglican Church was initially denied the opportunity to participate in the organization and implementation of the event. Following the intervention of the Anglican Church at the international level, this interdenominational conflict was smoothed out.[11]

Sacramental unity

Sacramental unity is often defined as "the restoration of communion", as it is stated in Porvoo declaration. "The restoration of sacramental unity is usually closely linked with unity of faith, even on a minimal basis, as a prerequisite. In multilateral ecumenism, there have been successes in the mutual recognition of baptism among Christian denominations in some countries."[12]

It is interesting that in Latvia, in the case of ELCL and LELCW, even sacramental unity or the opportunity to participate in Holy Communion sometimes is not possible. However, under the Porvoo Agreement Holy Communion is offered in all member churches – the Nordic and Baltic Lutheran Churches and the Anglican Churches in Britain and Ireland are in full communion with each other, and called to share a common life in mission and service. As stated on the website of Porvoo communion:

[10] Laima Geikina, *Lūk, cilvēks!* (*Ecce Homo*): *praktiskā teoloģija: no dievbijības kopšanas līdz starpdisciplinārai prakses pētniecībai*, 213–214.

[11] Ibid., 214.

[12] Paul Ladouceur, "Christian Ecumenism and Interreligious Dialogue: Convergences and Divergences", *Journal of Ecumenical Studies*, Vol. 55, No. 2 (2020), 180.

> *After 20 years, we can say that in many ways we have concretely experienced growth in unity and friendship. On the other hand, we have also experienced the challenges in living in communion. The mutual bonds in our common Christian faith, ministry and friendship within our communion have proved to be strong enough to deal with difficult questions, which have proven to be even church dividing at times, not only between the churches, but also in the churches.*[13]

We can try to understand the reasons of Church division in Latvia by comparing the belonging of local denominations to global organizations and their attitude to Porvoo Agreement.

Table 1.

Church	Participation into wider organizations	Attitude to Porvoo
Evangelical Lutheran Church of Latvia	International Lutheran Council (ILC) LWF, WCC	In 1996, the 18th Synod decided to postpone the ratification of the Porvoo Declaration and ELCL still has observer status.
Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church Worldwide	WCC, LWF , CPCE	In 2014, joined the Porvoo community as a full member
Confessional Lutheran Church	Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference (CELC)	"The nature of these changes is so far-reaching [in] the Swedish theologian Dr. Hardt's judgment, which it expressed regarding the "Porvoo Declaration": "He who knowingly signs the Porvoo Declaration, knowing what it means, no longer belongs to the Lutheran Church.""[14]

[13] *Towards Closer Unity: Communion of the Porvoo Churches 20 Years*. Beate Fagerli, Leslie Nathaniel and Tomi Karttunen (eds), Porvoo Communion of Churches. (2016). Available: http://porvoocommunion.evlutkirkko.fi/wp-content/uploads/sites/13/2012/10/Porvoo-20-years-web.pdf (accessed Apr. 5, 2023), see also https://data.stat.gov.lv/pxweb/lv/OSP_PUB/START__IZG__KU__KUR/KUR010/table/tableViewLayout1/ (accessed Apr. 5, 2023).

[14] Ilārs Plūme, "Luteriskā ticība un tās liktenis", *Latvijas Luterānis*, 02.03.2014. Available: https://www.ebaznica.lv/luteriska-ticiba-un-tas-liktenis-4705/ (accessed Apr. 5, 2023), see also https://data.stat.gov.lv/pxweb/lv/OSP_PUB/START__IZG__KU__KUR/KUR010/table/tableViewLayout1/

Another one way to find reasons for the inability to celebrate Sacramental unity is to explore the differences in the defined sources and activities. Considering self-definitions of global ecumenical organization, it is possible to observe the differences.

Table 2.

Organization / Institution	**WCC**	**LWF**	**ILC**	**LCMS**	**CELC**
Credo/ self-definition	A fellowship of churches which **confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the scriptures**, and therefore seek to fulfil together their common calling to the glory of the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.	Member churches **confess the Triune God and proclaim the Word of God**. We are **united in pulpit and altar fellowship.**	Association of established confessional Lutheran church bodies which **proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ on the basis of an unconditional commitment to the Holy Scriptures as the inspired and infallible Word of God** and to the **Lutheran Confessions contained in the Book of Concord** as the true and faithful exposition of the Word of God.	**Teaches and responds to the love of the Triune God**: the Father, creator of all that exists; Jesus Christ, the Son, who became human to suffer and die for the sins of all human beings and to rise to life again in the ultimate victory over death and Satan; the Holy Spirit, who creates faith through God's Word and Sacraments.	Worldwide fellowship of Lutheran church bodies, **committed to the teachings of the Lutheran Church found in the Book of Concord of 1580.**

The main difference with the CLC is the treatment of historical Lutheran creeds: whoever knowingly signs the Porvoo Declaration, being aware of what it means, no longer belongs to the Lutheran Church.

In case of ELCL and LELCW, before the two churches began to move apart, they were very similar internationally and ecumenically. Both were members of the World Council of Churches (WCC) and the Lutheran World Federation (LWF).

Since 1993, ELCL which is still part of the two organisations (LWF and ILC), has kept its activities in them to a minimum. In addition, in 2001, ELCL concluded an altar and pulpit communion with the world's leading conservative Lutheran church, the US Missouri Synod. ELCL has joined the International Lutheran Council – an association of conservative churches. In 1993, both Latvian Lutheran churches were in the process of negotiating accession to the Anglican and Nordic Lutheran Association – the Porvoo Declaration. LELCW joined the Porvoo Communion in 2014, whereas ELCL is still only an observer. Thereby, both churches have taken steps in very opposite theological directions.

Voldemārs Lauciņš note: "Currently, the two churches are so far apart that it is difficult to find common ground. Unified church management remains an impossible dream, although such a scenario has materialized in the Estonian Lutheran Church, which is historically the closest to Latvian Lutherans."[15]

Our conclusions are the following: 1) we cannot clearly state that all six principles of ecumenism are represented in relationships among Latvian Lutheran churches; 2) different churches belong to different global organizations and have differing attitudes to the Porvoo Agreement as one of the significant ecumenical movements in Europe; 3) if we talk about Latvian Lutheran churches, then only one of them is a member of the Porvoo Communion.

To conclude, there is a single question for all of us: Do we believe ourselves to be truly part of God's one, holy, catholic and apostolic church? If yes, what can we do to fulfil this ideal of ecumenism?

[15] Voldemārs Lauciņš, "Divas Latvijas luterānisma sejas", *Telos*, 14.05.2021. See also https://data.stat.gov.lv/pxweb/lv/OSP_PUB/START__IZG__KU__KUR/KUR010/table/tableViewLayout1/(accessed Apr. 5, 2023).

Adapt – Transform – Let Die

On the Future of the Church After Postmodernism[1]

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> "We are a generation whose task it is to contribute to the emergence of a new, vital form of Christianity and to test it in our own lives"[2], writes the German theologian Marion Kuestenmacher (1956) in her book "Integral Christianity".

Changes

Living not so much in an age of change, but in an age that is changing, the types of religions and their role in individual societies and cultures cannot but undergo change. Instead of contributing to the end of religion, secularisation has advanced its transformation. While some forms of religion are experiencing unprecedented upheavals, others are so vital that they are expanding far beyond their previous boundaries. Traditional religious institutions, on the other hand, have lost their monopoly on religion.[3] Some of their forms and contents are losing their validity and require updating. Many once sufficiently clear

1 This article is part of a project "Success of societal sustainable and integrated development in the context of the movement "Rebirth and Renewal"" (No. 1.1.1.2/VIAA/3/19/498), a research project within the University of Latvia, and the measure "Support for postdoctoral research".

2 Marion Kuestenmacher, *Integrales Christentum. Einuebung in eine neue spirituelle Intelligenz* (Guetersloh, Guetersloher Verlagshaus, 2018), 14.

3 Tomaš Halik, *Der Nachmittag des Chistentums. Eine Zeitansage*, Marketa Barth, Udo Richter (trans.) (Freiburg im Breisgau, Verlag Herder, 2022), 11.

explanations are now themselves no longer comprehensible without explanation. This is a sign that it is time to look for new explanations rather than continuing to explain explanations that are no longer able to explain. This is no longer avoidable. But what will the future look like, in which the old and the new will be in a common meta-perspective, able to withstand the instability, the constant process of interacting learning, resulting in a great and more complex inner richness, we do not know yet. The German theologian and pastor Andreas Ebert (1952–2022) said in an interview: "I don't think it is enough to "repackage" dogmas in order to sell the faith more easily – that is too dangerous. Jesus speaks of not pouring old wine into new wineskins; the wineskins have to change, too. If old answers are given to new problems and new questions, it is a repetition that does not convince anyone in the long run. We ask ourselves: what of the old is still relevant, what makes us believe and have faith, what makes others believe that this is for real and not a repetition of old dogmas"[4].

The history of Christianity does not guarantee its future. We may be living in a time in which the current forms of church and church communities are in the process of Exodus. People who are on this journey – even if they live at the same time – are often not of the same time, because today we are living side by side with people in different stages of consciousness who have different views of religion, the church, God, self and society, in other words, of all reality.

The church must change

To see the need for change and what the new "pictures" of church and congregation might be, a certain distance is needed, which comes from taking a step back from the forms of church and congregation to which the spiritual seeker has an emotional attachment. A theological perspective can also help: the biblical God is a God of change, inviting and challenging people to dare to trust him and to make very radical changes. This is also related to the nature of the church's main task, the communication of the gospel. The church is the structure that implements, supports, promotes and enables this communication, which is based on the call of Jesus. If the current structures, forms, language, content of the church are no longer able to provide this task in the best way for the most people, then the church is not only allowed to change, but it must not remain unchanged, it must necessarily change.[5]

4 Anna Peipiņa, "Eneagrammas un meditācijas skolotājs Andrēass Eberts: Mēs baidāmies no dzīves", *Vīru sarunas*, 10. Apr. 2020, https://www.santa.lv/raksts/ieva/eneagrammas-un-meditacijas-skolotajs-andreass-eberts-mes-baidamies-no-dzives-32762/ (accessed Apr. 5, 2023).

5 Uta Pohl-Patalong, *Kirche gestalten. Wie die Zukunft gelingen kann* (Guetersloh, Guetersloher Verlagshaus, 2021), 27.

The church must change because it must evolve with man, with society. This evolution and development implies many changes – in behaviour, in attitudes, and of course also in spirituality and how this spirituality expresses itself. If the church does not change, people's spiritual quest and spiritual life will evolve out of the church and into other forms and contents of religion.

There are many ways of structuring the course of human history and the forms and contents of the historical expression of the church. It should also be borne in mind that the time in which our life stories and historical events unfold is not a one-way street, but a multidimensional space; what is repressed or forgotten in the past may appear dead and over only in appearance[6].

The Czech theologian Tomáš Halík (1948), speaking of the pre-modern, modern and post-modern eras, uses the metaphor of the day in relation to religion: pre-modern time symbolises the forenoon, modern time the midday fatigue and crises, and post-modern time the afternoon. He points out, however, that we have to take into account that on our planet it can be morning and spring in some places and evening and late autumn in others, which means that in our globally connected society, pre-modern, modern, hypermodern and postmodern ways of life are coextensive and sometimes collide in quite surprising ways.[7]

Michael Habecker (1953) and Sonja Student (1953), protagonists of the integral movement in Germany, are of a similar mind. In their definition, pre-modernity is a historical epoch that lasted until around 1500 and is still a current pre-scientific way of perceiving and knowing reality, based mostly on unquestionable, subjective and collective prejudices, in which dogma takes precedence over critical thinking. Modernity, on the other hand, is a historical epoch that began around the beginning of the 16th century and which is still a current, scientific way of perceiving and knowing reality, representing general principles that are valid for all human beings. By contrast, postmodernity is a historical epoch that began around the 1960s, which is largely concerned with the critique of modernity and still represents a current way of perceiving and knowing reality that emphasises multiculturalism, context and relativity. But the integral age, or integration, is today's opportunity to recognise, heal and integrate the achievements, values and benefits of pre-modernity, modernity and postmodernity, as well as their limits and limitations.[8]

The model we use in this article is based on Ken Wilber's (1949) concept of stages of consciousness development. In his model, Wilber has integrated Piaget's logico-mathematical stages model (2010), Loevinger's development

6 Tomaš Halik, *Der Nachmittag des Chistentums. Eine Zeitansage*, 61.

7 Tomaš Halik, op. cit., 61.

8 Michael Habecker, Sonja Student, *Wissen, Weisheit, Wirklichkeit: Perspektiven einer aufgeklärten Spiritualität* (Bielefeld, J. Kamphausen Verlag, 2011), 18–19.

of the self-model (1976), Fowler's development of faith model (1991), and many models that originated before the emergence of psychology as a science and are associated with important theologians and mystics, for example, Pseudo-Dionysius[9]. Wilber distinguishes between Instinctive Self, Magical/Animistic Self, Power Self, Rule/Role Self, Rational Self, Sensitive Self, Integral Self, Holistic Self and Unitive Self[10]. Wilber's model is most influenced by the Spiral Dynamic framework developed by Don Edward Beck (1937–2022) and Christopher C. Cowan, who were inspired by the research of the American social psychologist Clare Graves (1914–1986) in this field and developed the Emergent Cyclical Levels of Existence Theory.

The stages of consciousness model describes the development of humanity and the individual. These stages can be called self-organising waves of growth, psychosocial memory spaces, grand narratives, repositories of cultural values in which different priorities of existence are expressed. Wilber describes the stages as holistic growth musts[11]. Developmental psychologist Robert Kegan (1946), on the other hand, mentions the Socialised Mind, which is formed in youth and ensures socialisation in society, family, faith community, state and nation, membership of and loyalty to a particular group. The next space of consciousness is the Self-Authoring Mind, in which one acquires the ability to identify with the authority of one's personality, to question the values of the whole to which one has hitherto naturally belonged and to create one's own internal code, personal ideology or personal belief system. The next space of consciousness, according to Kegan, is Self-Transformation, in which one develops the ability to look at one's individual views, beliefs, belief systems, one's internal codes from the outside and to identify in them strategies for survival. A Self-Transforming space of consciousness can be the salvation of humanity if its problems can no longer be solved only within the confines of national identities and social institutions, each acting only in its own interests and concerned only with its own existence, but ignoring the larger system in which it finds itself and the need for common cooperation.[12]

The German theologians Marion Kuestenmacher (1956), Tilmann Haberer (1955) and Werner Tiki Kuestenmacher (1953) adapted the consciousness development model to the context of religion, Christianity, church and

9 Anton A. Bucher, "Stuf'um Stufe? Modelle der spirituellen Entwicklung", in *Spiritualitaet und spirituelle Krisen. Handbuch zu Theorie, Forschung und Praxis*, Liane Hofmann, Patrizia Heise (Hg.) (Stuttgart: Schattauer, 2017), 87–88.

10 Ken Wilber, *Integral Spirituality. A Startling New Role for Religion in the Modern and Postmodern World* (Boston & London: Integral Book, 2011), 21.

11 Marion Kuestenmacher, *Integrales Christentum. Einuebung in eine neue spirituelle Intelligenz*, 56.

12 Robert Kegan, "Bewahren um zu wachsen. Zwei Seitens unseres Menschseins" *evolve 33* (2022), 43–47.

spirituality in their book “Gott 9.0”.[13] Many readers – as the author of this book points out – have criticised the notion of stages of consciousness development. This article will therefore use the concept of “space of consciousness”, which is less likely to evoke hierarchical associations, as if “lower” stages were less valuable than “higher” ones. Since there are no concepts of “higher”, “further”, “better” in spiritual growth, the concept of “space of consciousness” more successfully communicates the concept that these spaces are side by side, the larger ones encompassing the smaller ones, and can be different in size – like the rooms of a house.

Spaces of consciousness[14]

The thesis of this article is that people move from one space of consciousness to the next as they evolve, as external or internal life conditions change. When the solutions offered by one space of consciousness are no longer appropriate for the issues of life, an evolution to the next space takes place[15]. This new space of consciousness surrounds the previous one – like a new tree leaf leafing out. The new space is therefore more spacious and comprehensive than the previous one.

The pre-modern or traditional space of consciousness

The thinking of this space values order and law. People in the pre-modern space of consciousness feel comfortable with clear rules of the game and clear hierarchies. Religion is also a clearly structured system: God, unambiguously male, is the king of heaven who rules over all that is. He rules the world and has laid down the laws that people must obey. Whoever breaks these laws is a sinner and deserves God’s punishment. However, Jesus Christ took that punishment for man by dying on the cross, so God forgives us. The Bible is God’s Word and must be believed. The miracles described in the Gospels happened just as the Bible says.

[13] Marion Kuestenmacher, Tilmann Haberer, Werner Tiki Kuestenmacher, *Gott 9.0. Wohin unsere Gesselschaft spirituell wachsen wird* (Guetersloh: Guetersloher Verlaghaus, 2010).

[14] cf. Marion Kuestenmacher, Tilmann Haberer, Werner Tiki Kuestenmacher, *Gott 9.0. Wohin unsere Gesselschaft spirituell wachsen wird*; Haberer Tilmann. *Von der Anmut der Welt. Entwurf einer integralen Theologie* (Guetersloh: Guetersloher Verlaghaus, 2021); Marion Kuestenmacher. *Integrales Christentum. Einuebung in eine neue spirituelle Intelligenz* (Guetersloh: Guetersloher Verlagshaus, 2018); Ken Wilber. *Integral Spirituality. A Startling New Role for Religion in the Modern and Postmodern World* (Boston & London: Integral Book, 2011).

[15] cf. Don Edward Beck and Christopher C. Cowan, *Spiral Dynamics: Mastering Values, Leadership and Change* (New Jersey, Wiley-Blackwell, 2005).

This traditional pre-modern space is to a large extent reflected in the liturgy of the Lutheran service, and the Lutheran Church in Germany and also in Latvia still feels to some extent very well embedded in this space. Yet, many areas of society and many individuals have emerged from this traditional and pre-modern space of consciousness into the modern space.

The modern or rational space of consciousness

At the centre of modernity is the individual, his common sense and conscience, and the measure of all things is no longer God but man. With science playing a central role, the miracle stories of the Bible can no longer be believed literally insofar as they contradict the laws of nature. Religion, in general, is in a difficult situation. Often, atheism, or at least agnosticism, becomes the option instead. A typical example of this space is the US Declaration of Independence of 1776, which states that one of the basic human rights is the individual pursuit of happiness, something that would not be so self-evident in traditional and pre-modern societies.

Consequently, people in this space of consciousness encounter difficulties in relation to the traditional, pre-modern church, even though enough people continue to practice their spiritual practices in this space as well, internally experiencing spirituality as a small, separate space of pre-modern consciousness within their modern, rational consciousness. At the same time, academic theology and those church reform efforts aimed at its greater effectiveness and performance reflect in this space of consciousness. However, the development does not stop with the rational space of consciousness.

The postmodern or late modern space of consciousness

In this space of consciousness there is an awareness of the limitations and problems of reason, caused by thinking and acting solely on the basis of rationality in the interests of economic gain - the destruction of the environment, the oppression and exploitation of people and groups of people or even nations. The themes of the postmodern space of consciousness are cooperation, equality, inclusion. The interests and rights of minorities are respected. The strongest no longer dictate the rules to others, instead the discursive search is for the good of all, striving for consensus and harmony.

There is no longer an outward orientation, as in the previous space of consciousness, but an inward path and a rediscovery of spirituality, which is often contrasted with religion. Religion is seen as rigid, formal, legalistic and stuck, whereas spirituality is a space of lived experience. Spiritual practices such as meditation and contemplation become an important part of spirituality. The role of denominational boundaries is diminishing, and ecumenical movements such as the brotherhood of Theseus are emerging. The boundaries between religions are also becoming diffuse and spiritual practices of all kinds are being tried: today Sufi dance, tomorrow Zen meditation, the next day Kundalini yoga. It can be assumed that about a quarter of the population of the European Union lives in this post-modern space of consciousness; in the Lutheran Church this percentage might be lower.

Transition problems

What processes are involved when people move from one space of consciousness to another? They have to find or create living conditions in the outside world that are in line with their inner development. In particular, when a person belonging to a traditional space of consciousness evolves from it into a modern space of consciousness, many phenomena of the traditional space of consciousness lose their meaning, applicability, usefulness for him. A person identified with and emotionally connected to the modern space of consciousness and thinking and living in the categories of this space will no longer be addressed by the worship that reflects the traditional and pre-modern space of consciousness – except for those people who still retain within themselves an enclave of the religiosity of the pre-modern space of consciousness. Nevertheless, this inner enclave is not destined to last. As man moves from the modern into the postmodern, traditional forms of religiosity become even stranger and more distant. With luck, such a person finds a community where the postmodern way of perceiving reality has a place – a congregation where meditation and contemplation are cultivated and practised, where content is not just "preached from the pulpit" but discourses are enacted at eye-level with one another.

The integral space of consciousness

As this space of consciousness develops, the situation becomes even more complex. A new space of consciousness, inclusive and transcending the post-modern space of consciousness, began to emerge at the turn of the millennium. It is called the integral space of consciousness because in this space it is possible to integrate apparently contradictory ideas and phenomena and to tolerate paradoxes, coming to understand that often only paradoxical statements can adequately describe reality in all its complexity. From the perspective of an integral space of consciousness, it is possible to accept as valuable and necessary all previous spaces of consciousness and to realise that human beings are at different stages of their development and therefore also need different social forms or different spiritual and religious choices. For example, while in the traditional space of consciousness a person often rejects everything modern and postmodern as heretical, in the integral space of consciousness it can be recognised and accepted that this person needs a pre-modern, mythical religiosity. Every space of consciousness and its specific forms has the right to exist. It is thus possible, at least theoretically, to integrate the various churches and congregations and their respective traditions into a single ecclesial whole in this space of consciousness.

The development of the church and congregations: Translation and transformation

The future development of the church and congregations can be seen from the perspective of "translation" and "transformation", two distinct tasks of religion, introduced by Wilber[16]. In several works, Wilber has stressed that religion has two important but distinct functions. One is that of myths, narratives, stories, descriptions, rituals and memories that help to interpret the fate of a particular person and provide comfort and support. This function of religion does not necessarily involve an inner transformation of the person; it does not seek to liberate the person from himself or herself, but rather to strengthen the human self. The other function of religion is to bring about a radical transformation and liberation of man from his own self. It does not offer consolation, satisfaction, shelter, but emptiness, emptiness, turmoil, revolution. The first meaning-making function is described as a horizontal movement: translation, and the second self-transcending function as a vertical movement: transformation. Translation offers the individual the opportunity to look at reality from a different perspective, to acquire a new kind of belief, and to "translate" himself, the world, reality into terms of this new belief, language or paradigm. In transformation, the process of translation itself is questioned, concepts and formulations are abandoned. Translation provides a new vision of the self, but transformation wants to transcend the self as such.

Translation

"Translation" means – transferring the same content into a different language.

In the 1960s and 1970s, Ernst Lange (1927–1974) developed the concept of "Communication of the Gospel"[17], defining it as the task of the church.

[16] Ken Wilber, *Einfach „Das". Tagebuch eines ereignisreichen Jahres*, Clemens Wilhelm (trans.) (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 2001), 42f.

[17] Uta Pohl-Patalong, Eberhard Hauschildt, *Kirche verstehen* (Guetersloh: Guetersloher Verlagshaus, 2020), 202–204.

This concept is more capacious than the previously used “proclamation of the Gospel”, because it does not imply one-way “preaching”, but two-way or even many-way communication. Communication is interaction, dialogue; the Gospel is taking a stand. Gospel communication is “translation”, the expression of content in different ways – not only in words, but also in actions, gestures, symbols, rituals. Communication does not consist only of words. Our actions, forms of worship, liturgical gestures, music, the life of the parish as a whole, also “speak”. “Translating” is finding a new verbal language – new Bible translations, liturgical reforms, attempts to formulate prayers and other liturgical texts in a more contemporary way, on the one hand. On the other hand, “translation” can also refer to worship, social and ecclesial activity, and to the organisation of the church in general.

The category of “translation” can include the many efforts that are being made to confront the crisis that the church is experiencing. Church structures are undergoing major changes: parishes are merging, pastoral positions are being reduced, church or parish buildings are being sold or rented, pastors are being replaced by pastoral teams, regional cooperations are taking place. Not all pastors are involved in the same activities; often they take on different tasks as team members according to their strengths and interests. But however radical some of these structural changes may be, they do not change the basic structure of the church. Also in the area of parish work, in most parishes – at least in Germany – there is a wide variety of “translation” approaches. Many congregations have become aware of the need to modernise their congregational “profiles”, to adapt their activities to the needs of their contemporaries, to try out new ways of doing congregational work. There is a “second order of worship”, a wide variety of group activities, online meetings and social media activities. These important and in many cases successful ideas, implemented with great love and passion, can reach new target groups, reaching out to those who have not attended before. People who have developed further, in the next spaces of awareness, can reconnect with the church.

However, the overall structure of the work of the church remains intact. At the centre is the local congregation with its own church and parish house, in which the pastor plays a leading role. The implicit, but often overt, aim is usually to get as many people as possible to come to the traditional Sunday services, or at least to visit the parish house and to stay within the outreach of the local parish and its community.

“Translation” initiatives are often based on the principle of the opposition between the church and the surrounding community, or the concept of the inside-outside. “We”, on the inside, are the church and “we” have something we want to give to others on the outside – a certain way of seeing the world. In other words, “we” have a product that “they” need.

Fresh Expressions of Church

The shift in this concept of opposition is most evident in the Fresh Expressions of Church (FreshX) movement, founded in the UK, which has now spread to many countries in Europe and around the world. FreshX is indeed a breath of fresh air in the conventional church segment. For the sake of clarity, let us sketch some examples of this movement[18].

St. Andrew's Fulham Fields

St Andrew's was at a critical juncture in its life when Guy Wilkinson took up the pastorate and began to make a decisive change in the congregation. The pews were removed from the church building and heated parquet floors were installed. A multi-storey glass extension was built at the front of the church, with a café downstairs and offices upstairs. The work of the parish also underwent major changes. While on Sundays the church held a High Church Service with a full Anglican liturgy, during the week children's work was organised in the church hall, while parents spent time in the café, interacting with each other and with the congregation. Secondary school-aged young people were offered help with homework and preparing for their high school and grammar school exams, and food for the homeless was offered on Saturdays – all in the converted church premises. Each week, the two pastors of the parish walk around the parish area and are identifiable by their collared shirts and thus are easily approachable. In this way they keep in touch with their parishioners and experience first-hand what is happening in their lives, what inspires them, what kind of support they need.

Cornerstone Church Cranbrook

Pastor Mark Gilborson in Exeter, south-west England, took a very different approach to building Cranbrook Church. When the neighbourhood was formed, it was not originally intended to be a church. So the various Christian denominations came together and embarked on an ecumenical church project. For the first year, there was no offer of worship. Instead, the pastor went from house to house, offering people cloth bags containing biscuits, bus timetables and other useful items. Thus, throughout the year, there was communication with the people of the neighbourhood to find out their needs. As a result, the parish initiated a new bus route to the nearest major shopping centre,

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[18] Cf. Sebastian Baer-Henney, *FreshX live erlebt. Wie Kirche auch sein kann* (Giessen: Brunnen-Verlag, 2015).

because the architect, the builder and the transport company had simply forgotten that people needed to shop.

As far as spiritual activities were concerned, at the beginning only a small circle of volunteers and staff met for prayer once a week. After one year, the first church service was offered at a local school. Once a month there is a “messy church” – a loud and colourful service for children and families. But every two months, instead of a liturgical event, the congregation organises an activity for the local community: litter-picking or car-washing... It is a ministry to the people. As far as we know, Cornerstone Church has not yet built a church or a parish building.

St. Paul’s Hounslow

There is a church in Hounslow – near Heathrow Airport – which serves coffee in the church hall on weekdays. The poor and not so poor can get a cheap lunch, the church works hard with children, runs regular Alpha courses – all in all, nothing particularly noteworthy. The motivation behind the work of this church is remarkable – in the words of Pastor Libby Etherington, “The real secret is to listen to God, and to listen to God is to hear the Gospel in the local language”. This motivation is consistent with one of the most important aspects of postmodernity: contextuality. The crucial question is what the people themselves need, because the most important thing is the people.

FreshX guiding principles

We have observed the following unwritten guiding principles of the FreshX movement.

Contextuality

The offer of the church must be relevant to local people. FreshX churches have very different social structures, educational levels, age structures and other criteria, because each church is located in a particular place with its own conditions: infrastructure, ethnic composition of the population and other parameters. Therefore, the first thing to do is to respond to them – to interview the people before starting any action. There are no abstract “people” or “congregations” – there are always only concrete individuals, concrete groups and concrete places with their concrete circumstances.

People are more important than buildings

In the FreshX movement, old and venerable church buildings are being converted and are beginning to serve as playgrounds or dining halls for children, for seminars and lectures or concerts, sometimes even for dance events.

In a new development, the church is not the first thing to be built – it is more important to talk to the residents and find out what they need, but events and services can also take place in rented premises.

Diaconal activities

It has been observed that in all churches where there are diaconal activities – sharing meals, helping with housekeeping or shopping, and other initiatives – the life of the congregation itself becomes more active and even attendance at services increases. People who had no previous contact with the parish come to the parish because they realise: something good is happening here for the people and the neighbourhood. Interest in the church is also awakening in people who belong to the modern and more distant spaces of consciousness, who have lost their attachment to the traditional, pre-modern church.

Inter-confessional and inter-religious cooperation

In the FreshX movement – at least in the UK – such collaboration can be seen even in working relationships. The Cranbrook congregation is funded by the Anglican Church, but the pastor is a Methodist. This is good post-modern action, because this space of consciousness is more for collaboration and mutual recognition than for disengagement and jealous self-protection.

Transformation

If "translation" is about transferring content from one "language" to another – creating new forms, new language, new music – then transformation is about forming the church and the church anew – creating a new structure and breaking away from the usual church structure and system. In its most radical form, this means moving away from the principle of "inside-outside" opposites. It is a rejection of the goal of "bringing" people into the church to become members and converts to Jesus Christ as we understand him. Instead, the task of the church and the congregation becomes to serve people. Consequently, it is possible that in some places the church will no longer be recognisable and identifiable as "church", which may not be such a bad thing.

Here are some examples that go beyond the FreshX movement.

De Nieuwe Poort, Amsterdam[19]

During the economic crisis in 2012, a pastor in Amsterdam started a training and employment programme for the long-term unemployed. A large

[19] Cf. De Nieuwe Poort webpage, https://denieuwepoort.org/ (accessed Apr. 5, 2023).

building, empty due to the crisis, in an elite office district was conveniently rented and a restaurant and coffee roastery opened, where people newly released from penitentiaries and the long-term unemployed could learn a trade and work. The project is financed by the restaurant's income and the rental of conference rooms. In parallel, the pastor founded the New University, which offered "courses for life and work", giving people the opportunity to reflect on their lives and their meaning. Nowhere in this offer is the word "church" mentioned, but De Nieuwe Poort is undoubtedly a successful example of church transformation. People get what they need: good food and excellent coffee, talks and seminars on questions of meaning – in which the Bible plays an important role, but not as the only source. It serves as a source alongside other sources.

Refo Moabit

In the Moabit neighbourhood of Berlin, the Reformation church had almost completely disintegrated, also in a metropolitan context where the church as such had become a marginal entity. A group of young people came to the area looking for new ways of being Christian and took over the church, the parsonage and the pastor's flats that no one wanted anymore. A "convent" was established – a modern form of community living together, with certain obligations, but without celibacy or similar monastic duties.

The first activity of the group was to walk around the neighbourhood and ask people what they needed. The first activity of the youth group was to set up a large day-care centre for children and youth theatre projects, as well as a weekly dinner for the people of the neighbourhood. Worship services were also held, but only once a month. However, there was meditation every Wednesday, modelled on the Ignatius Loyola Exercises, and twice a month a meditation moment.

This initiative differs from the FreshX projects in that it is not funded by the official church, but is an initiative of people – young Christians – who simply want to be with others. The Evangelical Church did provide start-up funding for the youth group – for the renovation of the buildings. However, the operating costs are covered by donations and income from renting the space. Refo Moabit understands itself as "an open, welcoming place of God" and at the same time stresses, "We can welcome people into our hope and live hopefully with them, but these people do not have to accept our reason for hope."[20]

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[20] Cf. REFO Moabit webpage, https://www.refo-moabit.de/ (accessed Apr. 5, 2023).

Online Church

With digitalisation offering entirely new opportunities, many churches have learned to make good use of online communication during the pandemic. This kind of communication is particularly useful for Christians who do not easily find nearby like-minded people who think, believe and want to live in the same way.

One example is a community that operates exclusively online through the communication platform Slack. Every four months, Zoom hosts a collaborative event where participants are invited to reflect on the past trimester and plan for the next. In between, during the four months, there are meetings of all kinds: book reading groups, meditation groups, spiritual fellowship, exchange groups where participants can talk about their life in the parish, and much more. These meetings are organised by the participants themselves and are not imposed “from above”: whoever has an idea, implements it. There is a steering committee, but it is not fixed: everyone who wants to participate and take responsibility participates here too. Face-to-face meetings are planned in the summer.

Another example is the community-based YouTube channel created four years ago and run several times a week by Pastor Joerg Urbschat of Nordkirche (Germany)[21]. The main themes of the channel are nature and spirituality. The channel has built up a following of more than 4000. There is also networking where like-minded people can find each other locally and meet remotely. The organisational structure of this community is very loose, there are no hierarchies, activities take place at each other’s eye level.

Is there a future for such initiatives? Are they fit to become models for the church of the future? Although it is difficult to predict, they meet practically all the criteria for transformation, which we will look at later in this article.

Finally, one last model that only partially exists in reality. This is my (Tilmann Haberer’s) personal vision of the church.

My dream

I spent the last 15 years of my active professional life working in a Crisis Counselling Centre in a tunnel under Munich’s central square. People are given the opportunity to simply walk into the centre and find someone to talk to about their problems and life issues, without an appointment. It was my ideal church – almost. All it lacks is a Quiet Space (Raum der Stille), where

[21] Theos Welt (1.0), https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC7tY4wvQGxkLpJkxxUq4fYg (accessed Apr. 5, 2023).

people could distance themselves from the hustle and bustle of the big city for a few minutes, a space where communal prayers could also take place, meditation courses, etc. In a city like Munich, 8–10 such centres would be needed and they should be able to function without funding from the official church.[22]

Criteria for transformation

The decisive criteria for a new kind of formed and structured church are

- Independence from the “Kirchensteuer” (church tax, in Germany);
- the lack of permanent paid staff (if any, they are elected on a temporary basis) to underline the time-limited nature of any commitment, professional or voluntary, for example for 2–3 years, which is then evaluated and reviewed;
- governance structures are democratic and fluid;
- no need for recognisable church buildings (if there are buildings, they should be able to accommodate daily life);
- the community is more inter-denominational and inter-religiously open in its thinking, prayer and action.

Letting die

The most radical transformation and transformation imaginable would be to let the church die.[23] We are proposing a thought experiment – not a practical proposal – because sometimes it is the most radical ideas that help us to look more clearly at the present and the future.

What would happen if the Synod of the Church announced today: “In seven years’ time the Church will be dissolved. By 1 November 2029, all properties will be sold, all staff will be dismissed, all activities will cease.”

Seven years is a good and meaningful time – first of all, “seven” is a biblical number. On the other hand, seven years will give enough time to sell churches, parsonages and other properties. Pastors could use this time to retrain as therapists, drivers, HR administrators, artists or craftsmen, depending on their skills.

[22] Tilmann Haberer, *Von der Anmut der Welt. Entwurf einer integralen Spiritualität* (Guetersloh: Guetersloher Verlagshaus, 2021), 287–289.

[23] More than half a century ago, Swiss theologian Hans Heinrich Brunner designed a similar vision. He imagined the Swiss church abandoning church taxes and considered what the consequences would be for the church. The result is not unlike to my thought experiment (Hans Heinrich Brunner. *Kirche ohne Illusionen. Experimenteller Report aus der Zeit nach dem 7. Juli 1983*. Zuerich/Stuttgart: Zwingli Verlag, 1968).

This would prevent the slow obsolescence, the slow death, of an institution outliving its usefulness – at least that might be one view of history.

What would happen then?

When the church, as an institution and an organisation, would cease to exist, Christians would not necessarily disappear. Church workers who would no longer have a job would still be able to continue their faith practice and express their convictions in some way – in home groups, clubs, initiatives of various kinds. Christians who are no longer cared for by the church can organise themselves: “They broke bread here and there in their homes, ate their meals with joy and open hearts, praised God and found favour with all the people.” (Acts 4:46). If this was possible 2000 years ago, why would it not be possible today?

It would not be an easy time – as if between Good Friday and Easter. However, this very comparison shows that God’s possibilities are far from exhausted. “Unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone. But if it dies, it bears much fruit.” (Jn 12:24)

What fruitful fantasies does this thought release?

How can the imaginary situation of Silent Saturday in the Church stir our imagination towards the transformation of the Church?

“Translation” is already an intentional and ongoing reform of the church and the congregation in many places, which can still be greatly intensified.

“Transformation” – breaking with familiar and loved traditions and going in completely new directions - can lead to completely new and surprising forms of church.

“Letting die” – this thought experiment encourages us to break all the prohibitions of thinking and to think and imagine the church radically anew in the spaces of consciousness that come after postmodernity.

Pastoral-Prophetic and Ecumenical Endeavour in Redress for Victims of Abuse

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It is no exaggeration to state that ecumenism has endured a long winter in the 21st century. The buoyant optimism and progress of ecumenical endeavour that emerged out of the ashes of the Second Word War has been held in check by other forces, and if anything, many of the gains seen in the latter half of the twentieth century have been reversed. This essay does not engage with the factors that have contributed to this moment, but we can note the most significant.

First, secularisation in the developed world has thrown most mainstream denominations back on their resources, as churches and congregations have struggled to maintain their position in civic and public life. This has inevitably led to greater individualism and tribalism, and a decline in the spirit of mutuality co-operation that might normally have underpinned ecumenism. I have only to recall the amount of time given to ecumenism when training at seminary – the assumption being we denominations would work together closely – and its absence now, to appreciate how different the ecclesial landscape now is.

Second, where there has been some sign of numerical growth in the past seventy-five years, those movements and new churches at the forefront of such development showed little appetite for ecumenism. Indeed, much of the numerical growth was produced by way of transfer – individuals migrating from mainstream denominations to newer, more fashionable churches. Perhaps inevitably, this is somewhat inimical to the spirit of ecumenism, and replaces pan-ecclesial co-operation with outright competition. Under these conditions, ecumenism is left with some functional and symbolic currency, but little that can be built upon.

Third, the theological and ecclesial disputes of the late twentieth and twenty-first century have ushered in a new spirit of intra-denominational fragmentation. For example, if Anglicans cannot hold together on issues such as sexuality or gender, then the spirit of ecumenism is a consequential casualty. Critics of this thesis may point to a different kind of cooperation emerging, say between Conservative Evangelical Anglican churches and Strict and Particular Baptist congregations, or other ultra-conservative churches. However, these realignments are not concerned with working together despite differences, and rejoicing in diversity. They are, rather, an indication that ecclesial alliances have been developed that no longer require ecumenism, which finds itself supplanted by a communion of confessional agreement.

Fourth, the emerging ecumenism of the past century to a large extent depended upon the bedrock of a political and social culture that was united in developing closer intra-dependent ties between nations. This was easier to fathom in an age that required bulwarks against communist states, and the development of political-ideological 'blocs'. The European Union, NATO and other unions developed out of a spirit of mutuality and cooperation, but that has morphed into something quite different in a post-communist world. True, the ties that bind are still political, cultural and economic, but as the United Kingdom's post-Brexit relationship with the EU member states has shown, unity is no longer a necessity, with nationalism and tribalism once again in the ascendancy.

The Porvoo Communion is a communion of fifteen Anglican and Evangelical Lutheran churches in Europe. The communion was established in 1992 by a theological agreement entitled the Porvoo Common Statement which establishes full communion between and among these churches. In some respects, we can regard this as one of the mature fruits of ecumenism, as the Porvoo Declaration confers unity and equality upon its members. However, in this essay I want to argue that far from being some end-game or result for ecumenism, it is in fact the basis to begin some comprehensive work as churches together, and facing common problems.

We are not short of problems to dwell upon, and sexuality and gender are obvious candidates. Member churches of the Porvoo Communion have engineered different solutions to their own intra-schismatic arguments. Yet they have rarely learned much from their intercourse as national churches. For example, the elegant solution to same-sex marriage in the (Presbyterian) Church of Scotland has left dissenting congregations with freedoms and liberty of conscience. Danish Lutherans might be argued to have an easier path, as once same-sex marriage is legitimated in law, the Church – as a servant of the people and supported by the state – does not enjoy the opportunity to opt out. The law is the law, and Danish Lutherans are law-abiding. When same-sex marriages were approved, the Church assented, as it had done with female clergy. Dissenters are free to leave, which is the logical outcome of exercising their liberty of conscience. Likewise, Danish Lutherans follow the law of the land on child protection and safeguarding – the Church is not 'a law unto itself'.

This brings us to the subject of this essay. What could an ecumenical modelling such as is enshrined in the Porvoo Communion contribute towards an ecclesial problem that is common to all the member churches? Specifically, how can member churches atone for their culpability in child-sexual abuse, and the cultures of clerisy that colluded with the abusers? How can victims of such abuse be engaged with, and what shared resources might the Porvoo Communion member-churches develop, in terms of approaches, best practice and redress?

Put another way, I ask in this essay a quite different question to the ones that are normally posed in ecumenism. Instead of overcoming historic ecclesial differences between member-denominations, we ask how the churches can face a common issue with prophetic, prescient and forward-looking ecumenical endeavour? Suppose the Porvoo Communion adopted a pattern of pastoral-prophetic ecclesiology going forward, which anticipated the need for unity is redress, atonement, reform and renewal, and genuinely sought – together – to work in harmony to right the wrongs of the past, present and future? As the Civil Rights campaigner John Lewis, “there is never a wrong time to do the right thing”.

I cannot claim to be a prophet, but I am advocate and activist for the prophetic voice. By this, I mean the prophet is the person or community that sees, judges and acts. The prophetic gift – it is more of a vocation or cross to bear – is to tell it like it is, so witnesses can see what is before them too, comprehend what could be in there in its place, and understand the consequences for church, culture and society if things are not changed.

All synodical approaches within denominations present an opportunity to re-engage with the foundations of the Church, test its stability and flexibility, and if needed, do some re-founding. The closeness and intimacy of a synod provides a regulated space for what Michel Foucault termed *parrhesia* – meaning ‘free speech’, or speaking candidly, and in so doing, seeking forgiveness and a new way forward. Synods of course confirm the past, but they are also honest about things – and that is why they need this simple voices of courage and conviction to face reality whilst being faithful to tradition. So the words I offer here are in a sense a plea for a fusion of emotional and ecclesial intelligence, in order that the Church can rediscover its prophetic edge, and own a proper place for righteous anger – as needed.

Righteous anger

Correspondingly, I make no apology, therefore, for dwelling on the corruption and collusion we find in our church safeguarding cultures, and for considering this as an ecumenical matter, and a prophetic calling for justice. John’s account of Jesus cleansing the temple (John 2: 13–22) gives us some clues. Jesus is supposed to be a peaceable and wise teacher. But he creates mayhem in the temple, and upsets all the people going about their lawful trading in dubious "religious tat" and offerings. He goes to the whole hog too, driving them out with a whip that he made himself. That must have taken time, so this is a planned attack.

The story in John's gospel is a meditation on Jesus's manifesting wisdom, and also his alleged foolishness. Because Jesus spends much of his ministry being cast not as a hero, but as something of a loose cannon; and possibly even a deranged prophet. His words and works are prejudged by his critics, because even in first century Palestine, the social and theological construction of reality seems to prejudice many people's perceptions of Jesus.

To casual onlookers, turning out the traders from the Temple is a foolish thing to do: they don't mean any harm, do they? Why pick on merchandisers selling religious "tat", offerings and souvenirs? Or money-changers, who we all have need of? But there is a difference between hot anger and cold, perhaps righteous anger. Jesus actually went away and *made* the whip of cords he used on the hapless traders. This is a cold premeditated attack; not a rush of blood to the head. He has, as the *Epistle of James* puts it, 'been slow to anger' – but he's got there. And now he's meting out some discipline.

As Harvey Cox noted[1] the first and original sin is not disobedience. It is, rather, indifference. We can no longer ignore the pain and alienation that others experience from within the church – and especially when this is *because* of the church, and its sins in safeguarding and abuse. Indifference is pitiful, and it is the enemy of compassion. Ecumenism needs to find its prophetic and honest edge, and call this out. Abuse is a shared problem, and we must address this together.

There are three things to say in relation to Jesus' emotional temperament here. First, what is Jesus so upset about in the Temple? It seems to me that it lies in assumptions: about the 'natural order of things'; about status and privilege; about possessions; about prevailing wisdom. This is, in other words, un-examined lives and practices lived in unexamined contexts. Everyone is blind. Jesus' action forces us to confront the futile sight before us. His anger forces us to look again.[2]

Second, the story chides us all for that most simple of venial sins: over-looking. The trading has been happening for donkey's years. It is simply part of the furniture; it barely merits a look, let alone comment. Jesus, of course, always looks deeper. But the lesson of the story is that, having looked into us

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1 Harvey Cox, *On Not Leaving it to the Snake* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1968).

2 On this, see Lytta Bassett's excellent *Holy Anger*: *Jacob, Job, Jesus* (London: Continuum, 2007).

with such penetration, his gaze then often shifts – to those who are below us, and unseen. That is, those with less wealth, health, intelligence, conversation and social skills; or just less life.

Third, the besetting sin is that the Temple traders accept the status quo. The story has one thing to say about this: *don't*. Don't accept that a simple small gesture cannot ripple out and begin to change things. Don't accept, wearily, that you can't make a difference. You can. Sometimes the change may be radical; but more often than not, change comes about through small degrees. Reform can be glacial, and adaptationist. We need to stop waiting and start acting. Nigel Biggar writes that,

> *True prophets are ones who don't much enjoy playing prophet. They don't enjoy alienating people, as speakers of uncomfortable truths tend to do. They don't enjoy the sound of their own solitary righteousness and they don't enjoy being in a minority of one. True prophets tend to find the whole business irksome and painful. They want to wriggle out of it, and they only take to it with reluctance. So beware of those who take to prophesy like a duck to water, and who revel in the role. They probably aren't the real thing.*[3]

True prophets can be thoughtful, cautious creatures. Caricatures of raging fire-storm preachers should be set aside. True prophets are more emotionally integrated. They are pastoral, contextual and political theologians. They care about people and places. They have virtues such as compassion, care, kindness, self-control, humility and gentleness. But they have passion and energy for change too; often reluctantly expressed, and only occasionally finding voice in anger. Pure compassion can actually be quite ruthless. (Ask any parent who loves their child).

A thorough practical-prophetic-pastoral theology always seeks change. The churches of the Porvoo Communion need to develop an ecclesiology that capable of speaking truth to power – and capable of shaking the foundations of complacency in order to reform the churches. Such a vocation requires energetic, mindful and prophetic visionaries, who are unafraid, and yet remain in a relationship with the churches, with constant attentive love for the Church they seek to reform. But such theological outlooks need to be rooted not just in frustration, but also in hope. Indeed, in the hope of the Kingdom of God that is to come, and so critical of the institution in the present. That is why we pray, so often, and so much, "thy kingdom come".

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3 Nigel Biggar, "On Judgment, Repentance and Restoration", a Sermon preached at Christ Church Cathedral, 5th March 2017, and quoted in Martyn Percy (ed.), *Untamed Gospel: Protests, Poems, Prose* (London: Canterbury Press, 2017).

The ecumenical endeavour

It is a curious feature of the twenty-first century, that the tribal-religious identity conflicts that dogged Christianity for half a millennium now seem to be a thing of the past. Paradoxically, ecumenism itself can sometimes seem as though it belongs to a bygone era of inter-denominational rivalry – the kind in Great Britain, for example, that can now only be found in Northern Ireland, Liverpool or parts of Glasgow. For most of the developed world, however, religious identity is no longer centred on inheritance, but rather on consumerism.

The ecumenical Movement never arrived at the promised land called Unity. If anything many churches seem to be specialising in fragmentation and exacerbating their differences. Arguments over gender, sexuality and other issues seem to mock the prayer of Jesus, "that they may all be one" (John 17: 21). There are deep pulses that still drive the ecumenical endeavour. These include reception and hospitality, mutuality in learning, the valuing of diversity and difference, and dialogue and discernment. Each in their way calls for a degree of openness and vulnerability. But to detractors, it only presumes that our most cherished theological and ecclesial proclivities are about to be watered down, or negotiated away. Correspondingly, there has been an assumption that ecumenism, as an agent or catalyst, has some kind of liberal agenda – a kind of reductively-driven homogenisation and pasteurisation of 'organic-raw' truth.

Of course, ecumenism is no such agent. Moreover, the appeal to mutuality, hospitality, mutual learning and dialogue are well-scripted in the scriptures. I will go further here, and say that we can find Jesus practising a kind of ecumenism in the gospels. Jesus regularly praises the faith of foreigners, gentiles and those outside his own tradition. Jesus is something of an itinerant cross-border trespasser, reaching out beyond, and telling stories about Good Samaritans, ministering in non-Jewish territory, and affirming what he finds beyond his own margins and faith precincts. Here, and in many respects, Jesus is the "body language of God". Simultaneously communicative and receptive; mutual, yet firm; learning, yet teaching. Jesus, moreover, sees the unseen, hears the unheard, and touches the untouchable. His body is richly sensate, and unafraid of receiving as well as giving.

Though we are many, we are one body, because we all share in one bread. It is bread for the world. And ecumenical endeavour is something of a leaven for churches and denominations as they seek a unity that might feed and nourish the wider world. In this, Christians need pray only one prayer: "may we all be one" (John 17: 20–21). But we still thank God that we have been created as distinct and different, each of us in the image of the one whom fashioned us. Ultimately, the ecumenical endeavour witnesses to that simple truth: we are better together than apart. Unity, not uniformity, remains our truest calling.

The imperative of confession and forgiveness

Forgiveness is not about forgetting. It is a fertile, fecund act – one of generative remembering. But nobody can compel another to forgive, and nobody can demand to be reconciled. Forgiveness takes time. It cannot be forced. To err is human; to forgive is divine. But though we may pray "forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us", no-one can make you forgive. The hurt caused by harm is a wilderness of pain, and you may spend as long in that place as the Israelites spent in the desert. You may have secured freedom from your oppressor, but the oasis and promised lands may take decades to get to. Nothing anyone can say or write will diminish the pain and suffering of victims. Nor should it. The wounds, hurts, sin and evil need addressing. They are not to be wished away. The gospel is love, but it also conveys tough home truths. Christianity is not a fairy tale with a happy ending.

God's Easter-work is the greatest act of forgiveness. Good Friday is packed with violence, travesties of justice, betrayal, desertion, humiliation, cruelty and the banality of evil. It is the wanton rejection and destruction of God's love in Jesus. But Easter – in a springtime garden – is new life, new hope and new starts. All is forgiven. There is no reckoning or retribution. But neither is there forgetting. Jesus is still marked by the violence of Good Friday. He shows those scars to his disciples. Even in his resurrection body. So we can remember.

So how are victims supposed to move forward, marked by Good Friday, yet freed by Easter Sunday? Archbishop Bergoglio of Buenos Aires (1998–2013) – before he became Pope Francis – lived through some of the darkest political times in Argentinian history. The military dictatorships accounted for between 10,000 and 30,000 deaths during the (so-called) Dirty War. Many of the deaths were young men who had been kidnapped, tortured, and then killed by the military or police. These 'Disappeared' remain a national wound, and an irrevocable indictment – a scar on the culture of the time. Bergoglio's writings from that time made an important distinction between sin and corruption. In distinguishing the two, he suggests sin and corruption call for very different responses. Sins, argued Bergoglio, were more singular acts that need not be self-perpetuating. Corruption on the other hand, though clearly connected to sin, and resulting from sins committed and repeated over time, evolves to become a culture in its own right.

In Peter Drucker's famous maxim, "culture eats strategy for breakfast". Daringly, Bergoglio suggested that while sin could be forgiven, corruption should not be. Bergoglio held that at the root of corruption was the refusal of God's forgiveness. Because the corrupted person, institution or organization denies the need for repentance, and with that, correction. The body that refuses to repent believes it is near-perfect. Or perhaps worse, must maintain the appearance of that perfection. This is why we grind our teeth every time a government minister or Prime Minister refuses to ever say sorry.

Likewise, bishops and church leaders are exactly the same when they say they will do better with child-protection, safeguarding, or announce another review, or try and distract and dilute the deep, boiling anger of victims with some other new initiative. Corruption, unless named, acknowledged and corrected, only grows – like a slow cancer. Those who – it must be said, usually unwittingly – become the guardians of such systems of abusive culture have forgotten their shared humanity and Christianity. Far from being earthenware vessels containing the treasure of the gospel, the corrupted become hard of heart; and hardened to the hurt they continue to cause. In protecting their reputations, power, privilege, status or wealth, their hearts and the treasure they guard become entwined.

To conceal this entrapment and enslavement, a culture of corruption will often energetically cultivate an appearance of righteousness and civility. Those caught up in this, justifying themselves, finally become convinced of their own moral superiority. They will never apologise. In contrast, a sinner (even when not ready to repent) will usually have sufficient self-awareness to know they are a sinner. They will know something of the taste of the quality of mercy, and will ask for forgiveness. In so doing, they will be open to grace. The corrupt, by denying their sin, and believing with pride in their own sanctity and superiority, invariably spurn and close down the possibility of grace.

Thus, whilst sin can be forgiven, Bergoglio argued that corruption must be treated and cured. Here, in terms of corruption, churches are at their most dangerous and vulnerable. Those guarding or perpetuating their own cultures of corruption will eventually engage in "dialogue" – on gender, sexuality and safeguarding for example – and may even grant you some concessions. This only serves to feed their sense of worth, and might even help them believe that they are genuinely accommodating, and perhaps even a bit sorry. But in fact they are not. They do not want to lose their power and privilege. They cannot say sorry. They cannot repent. What happens next is even more dangerous for institutions. A kind of cancer-like 'purity spiral' will develop. The drivers of the oppressive culture cannot believe that they are participating in and perpetrating any wickedness or cruelty. They are, after all, not bad people. But they have become hard-wired into the culture, and they defend it as they might the gospel.

At this point, even the most passive agents in the abusive culture will work harder and harder to disassociate themselves from any suggestion of being impure, wicked or offensive. It is at this point the authority of the Church to preach forgiveness is profoundly compromised by the sexual abuse crisis. The church loses its moral bearings. It cannot tell other people that sins must be forgiven when it cannot see that its own culture remains intact, and will continue to abuse.

Churches may say they are sorry for another abusive, botched or suppressed lessons learned review. But without repentance and condemnation, the pattern of abuse and cover-ups continues. If the corrupt culture is not going to be changed, then you can forgive as many sins as you like. It will make no difference to previous, current and future victims. As Bergoglio observed, Jesus does cure the corrupt. Yet not through acts of mercy, but rather through engineering major trials and the deliberate infliction of disturbing trauma. In Luke 8, Jairus is made to wait for Jesus to heal his daughter. Jesus, running late, and quite deliberately so, does nothing to prevent her untimely death. But in the act of healing the woman with continuous menstrual bleeding, he enables her to participate in synagogue worship once again. Her stigmatisation is taken away by Jesus. No longer impure, she has her status restored.

Jairus, a synagogue ruler, would have been instrumental in excluding this woman from such worship. The healing of the woman, and the raising of Jairus' daughter, is both a blessing and a trauma for Jairus. It is bitter-sweet. For Jairus must now face the culture of exclusion he was instrumental in upholding. He must face this woman. To get Jairus to this point, he is, arguably, made to lose and grieve for his daughter. She dies. The moral lesson of the miracle lies in the judgment it makes against the culture of exclusion in ritual purity. Only when the culture is exposed to trauma can it change. Jairus may now repent of his participation in decades of structural oppression. But it is only the trauma of his daughter's loss that got him there.

Such traumas have the potential to pierce the armour of corruption and allow grace to enter. To treat faith as a suit of armour – a means of self-defence – is to deny the possibility of God surprising us with amazing grace, the compassion of the stranger, and the revelation of Christ in the prisoner, hungry, sick and homeless. If we encase ourselves in our own armoured-personal faith, we will only mummify ourselves. But never enough, so our body soon degrades and decomposes. The body that we armour too tightly becomes pallid, compromised, corrupted – and eventually stinks.

Throughout the gospels, we see Jesus *not* forgiving the sins of the Scribes, Pharisees and Sadducees. Their culture is a bellwether indicator of a religion that regards itself as morally self-sufficient and superior to others. Jesus' caustic castigations – straining gnats whilst swallowing camels, or picking out specks in someone else's eye when there is a plank in your own – are *unforgiving.*

Yet in the parable of the Pharisee and sinner, the latter articulates not only their guilt, but also their sense of shame. In contrast, the corrupt will usually be triumphantly, shamelessly and morally smug. Moreover, the agents of this culture of corruption can easily recruit more accomplices, as they are offering them an experience of graduation into moral-spiritual superiority, self-satisfaction and self-sufficiency. This culture eats all nascent initiatives designed to correct it. In the end, it will of course consume itself.

Jesus had to reject the religious elites of his day, because they had taken possession of the law and tradition, its meanings and applications. We have an old saying: "possession is nine-tenths of the law". By claiming ownership of faith, religion and morality, the religious elites of Jesus' time were able to remain aloof. These religious leaders could issue edicts. They could decide if and when they went into "dialogue", and with whom. Most difficult questions could be left unanswered, and difficult questioners were censured and censored. To most victims of safeguarding processes, that is their ongoing experience too: a daily diet of stones, snakes and scorpions from the denominational hierarchies. There is never any bread.

By purloining religion – in theory to protect it, but in the end to possess it – the religious elites of Jesus' day were able put themselves above others. The elite were not like the people. Leaders could not be weighed, cross-examined, investigated, inspected or judged. Anyone who joined this elite acquired power and privilege, with immunity from accountability. Here, bishops and church leaders and others in power are the direct descendants of Pharisees and Sadducees.

As Pope Francis noted, Jesus, by walking with the poor and outcast, befriending them as valued equals in the Kingdom of Heaven, simply "smashed the wall that prevented [them] from coming close to God". So we are back with the necessity of creative rage and constructive destruction.

Why? Because the offer of dialogue by those remaining in power can never heal corruption. The only way to deal with corruption is to cause the powerful serious trials, tribulations and traumas, so that grace can finally break through; light pierce the fog of bureaucracy; and the winds of the Spirit scatter the secrets shrouded in darkness.

Lest there be any doubt about this remember Jesus' words in Matthew 18: 6–7 – "whoever causes one of these little ones […] to sin, it is better for them that a heavy millstone be hung around their neck, and that they be drowned in the depths of the sea. Woe to the world because of the things that cause people to stumble! Such things must come, but woe to those through whom they come!".

On the face of it, this issue is apparently a 'tripping point'. Romans 14:13 bears that out: "let us not judge one another anymore, but rather resolve to not put an obstacle or a stumbling block in the way of a fellow believer". Yet a millstone around your neck is a pretty heavy block. Yet our term "stumbling block" is not what it seems. It comes from the Greek word *skandalon*, (used 15 times in the New Testament) and is the source of our word *scandal*. The corresponding verb, "to cause to stumble," is *skandalizō,* (used 30 times in the NT) from which we get our word *scandalize*.

The scandal of Jesus, and the Church as scandalous:

To us moderns, a scandal is just toxic gossip and celebrity-tittle-tattle. Later, it came to mean the actual trap as a whole, or something that tripped a person up, causing them to stumble and fall. In the Bible, a stumbling block is anything that causes a person to fall – be that into sin, false teaching or unbelief. But there is another side to this. Jesus Christ was a *skandalon*: "we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block, and to gentiles, foolishness" (see I Corinthians 1: 23).

It might surprise you to learn that Pope Francis argued that the merciful response to the corrupt is to place a stumbling-block, a *skandalon*, in their path, which is the only way of forcing them to seriously contemplate taking a different road. One thinks of the rich man who obeys all the law, and excels at good works. What else is he to do? A *skandalon* is placed before him. Jesus tells him, "If you want to be complete, go *and* sell your possessions and give to *the* poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me". But when the young man heard this statement, he went away grieving; for he owned much property and had enormous wealth (Matthew 19: 21–22).

The way to deal with the culture of corruption in the Church of England's safeguarding is to put many *skandalon* in their way. It forces those following these paths to divert and deviate. Eventually it will impede them. Only when they renounce the corruption can they escape and be free. Only then, when there is sorrow, contrition and personal responsibility, can there be confession and forgiveness. Only then, can one welcome them back, and begin to speak of authentic dialogue, reconciliation and healing.

The reality in the Church of England is an ecumenical problem. Can we name any denomination that has pre-emptively anticipated the claims to be made against them for previous and current abuses, and set up a scheme of redress, well-funded, and rooted in remorse, repentance and restoration? No church does, because no church understand how the scandal of Jesus indicts the church. In her excellent *Queer Virtue*[4] Elizabeth Edman explains the double-bind of scandal we find in the gospels. God manifest in a defenceless infant is a scandal – not the kind of god that the ancient near-East could easily comprehend. The instrument of Jesus' death and torture – of shame – is another scandal. A community gathered around a common meal for their worship – communion – is another scandal. As a disciple, Peter clearly believes that Jesus should neither be exposed to scandal or become one. Jesus tells Peter "get thee behind me, Satan" (Matthew 16: 23). Jesus' course is set: that is the scandal of the cross. But Peter is scandalised by the notion that Jesus will be humiliated, falsely accused, put through rigged trials and then killed.

[4] Elizabeth Edman, *Queer Virtue* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2016).

What then unfolds is multiple layers of scandal. Jesus will become a stumbling block. He tells his disciples they will desert him – they will in their actions become a scandal of cowardice and failure. As Edman notes, what Peter and the disciples seek is security, safety and the status quo. Jesus does not offer that, and to participate in the gospel story of salvation exposes us to loss, humiliation, contrition, confession and genuine repentance. All of these are pre-conditions for resurrection and new life. The power of God is going to be witnessed in shame, destruction, weakness and abuse. The scandal of the cross is that Jesus endures it, and is killed by it. The early church struggled to embrace this. As does today's church.

As I have remarked before, the church too easily slips into a pattern of behaviour in which it imagines itself as Christ alive, yet on the cross, struggling for breath, dignity and life. The way of the cross teaches us that death will come, and that giving up – yielding to what we cannot control – is not wrong, bad or evil. We are crucified with Christ. The churches have nothing to lose, in the end, by giving the victims of abuse what they need for life. But the church does not do this. It fights and gasps for every breath. Here, it is not Christ on the cross at all. These are the urges of the thieves either side of Jesus.

Yet we know that to be fully alive means having hope and being able to forgive. That means being released from our past burdens and being open to the hope of the future. The Eucharist is a *skandalon* too. It expresses a fearless, daring, brave and defiant hope in the midst of gross injustice, cruelty and violence. The Eucharist is an audacious act of generosity and grace in the face of these forces of evil that are bent on destruction and death. "On the night before he died, he had supper with his friends". Obviously, that is what everyone does before meeting their end in violent cruel torture and a slow lingering death. Supper. With friends. I mean, why not? For tomorrow we die.

The Eucharist is not meant to be a convivial gathering for a meal accompanied with cheerful songs and sentiments. It is the taking of bread, breaking it, and sharing it. It is the taking of the cup, and sharing it. It is this act of remembrance – even in pre-empting the crucifixion – that we may now gather and share, and know the presence and love of God, despite whatever may come next. Yet the Jesus who is the true *skandalon* is not the usual Christ that first comes into our minds. Sometimes the expression of passionate anger and acting it out is important, and even prophetic. What are we to make of Jesus driving out the money-changers and traders from the temple precincts, recorded in the Gospel of John (2: 13–16)? Jesus creates mayhem in the temple, and upsets all the people going about their lawful trading in dubious religious tat. Jesus drives them out with a whip that he made himself.

Jesus doesn't do things by halves. Jesus' apparent rush of blood to the head in this temple story, where he not only conducts himself like a teenager in-line for an anti-social behaviour order, but also goes on claim the Temple for his own ends. So Jesus' action in the Temple – reckless, violent and apparently intemperate – contains a strong message. It is a message of wisdom. Breaking oppressive frames of reference requires dramatic action. This is about smashing a culture of corruption. There is really no point trading up from a pigeon to a dove. Neither sacrifice brings you closer to God; both are a waste of your money. There was no point in going for the "three for two" offer on goats; nor this month's "buy one get one free" offer on lambs. And this is why Jesus' 'anger' in the gospel is so interesting. For it seems not be a hot, quick irrational 'temper-snap'; but rather a cold and calculating anger. There is a difference between hot anger and cold, perhaps righteous anger. The latter is a derivative of passion and virtue. It has a deep ethical intentionality.

John's gospel records that Jesus saw what was going on in the Temple. He then left, went away and *made* the whips of cords. Then he returned. This is a cold premeditated attack; not a rush of blood to the head. He has, as the Epistle to James puts it, 'been slow to anger' – but he's got there. This is how to disrupt a corrupt culture. Dialogue won't do. As noted earlier, the first and original sin is not disobedience. It is indifference. We can no longer ignore the pain and alienation that others in the church experience – and especially when this is *because* of the church. Indifference is pitiful, and it is the enemy of compassion. The stranglehold of a corrupted culture must be broken.

The scandal of safeguarding in the churches is one of learned indifference; double-standards; strained gnats, then camels swallowed whole; beams and motes; the amount of money spent on process, but not people; the lies, secrecy, double-speak, "PR and Comms"; the offer of dialogue that leads to no change; picking off victims one-by-one; endless, slow, treacle-like procedures; gross misconduct; even grosser incompetence; the hypocrisy and the hype.

I believe we can get beyond enduring this – beyond surviving church. Yet this can only be done by bringing religious leaders to their knees. Not, initially, for them to be asking for forgiveness. That is for later. Bringing the presiders of safeguarding to their knees is about breaking a corrupt culture with *skandalon,* and these must be financial and reputational. In Canada, Australia and the USA, denominations with significant histories of abuse only began to repent when the financial consequences became extremely serious. Up until then, it was decades of victims being given the run-around in the search for truth, justice and redress. And the churches (or church schools) going through the gears of Non-Disclosure Agreements, endless reviews, false promises, blaming the past, victim-blaming; and all so very, very slowly.

Something has to give. The victims of cruel, unaccountable and indifferent process came together and litigated. Ultimately, there is always a body liable for such corruption, abuses, harm and cover-ups. Our ecumenism in Great Britain and in the Porvoo Communion churches must encourage and facilitate the same.

Yet as the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Boston and the Anglican Churches of Australia and Canada found to their (great, considerable) cost, somewhere in these places, ultimately, there *is* to be found responsibility and liability. This has led to church buildings and church land being sold for redress and compensation. It means victims can finally get the therapeutic care they need, and perhaps investment leading to new work. They can get their legal fees back. And their lives. The falsely accused drummed out of the church without trial or rights can feed and house their families.

To get beyond surviving church, victims of sexual abuse and miscarriages of justice in this corrupted safeguarding culture of the member churches of the Porvoo Communion need to work together. To name those who seek to remain nameless; and to shine a light on the things still hidden in darkness. The offer of forgiveness and reconciliation only comes when the culture of corruption has been completely smashed to smithereens, repented of, rendered utterly obsolete and finally defeated. That day will surely come. There is little to fear, and much to hope for.

It is well-known – especially by those who are suffering with incurable conditions – that sometimes it is the giving up hope leads to unexpected release and joy. The loss of hope, or a deliberate parting with it, is seldom done in an instant. It happens over time, as we struggle for any and all routes to what we hope for. But giving up hope is not necessarily an act of despair. It can be creative and freeing. In giving up hope of a miracle recovery from imminent death (your own, or someone else's), or of some other amazing cure, we embrace our identity and learn to live with and accept what we have, and what we are.

This is the essence of C. S. Lewis' *Surprised by Joy* (1955). His acceptance of his own tragic loss and grief allows him to rediscover joy. In so doing, he finds his way back to gratitude and grace. So letting go of hope can be a pathway to joy. But let me also say that hopelessness is a freedom and position few possess. Because it only works if there is a safety net that can save you from utter despair.

Those grieving, or living with chronic conditions, or degenerative disabilities, or for that matter, the scars of abuse, need to be loved, supported and held as much as any other person. You can therefore depart in peace from what you had yearned and hoped for. But only if there is enough hope and joy around you to sustain you in your identity, and with the experiences of loss, pain, trauma and trial that you carry.

Principles, principalities and powers

The rough places need levelling, and the oppressed raising up. This must mean a different approach to the current impasse. This corrupt culture must be broken. As it must be in all our denominations. As long as churches evade their lawful responsibilities in safeguarding, the joy will continue to drain away from the office of bishop and the church leadership. At the same time, the hope in that office will evaporate. But the settlement must be significant, and of a proportion that signals a genuine act of deep, permanent repentance. The settlement cannot leave the perpetrators in power. Nor can it leave the structures in place. To repent, these must be set aside. Forever.

All denominations in the Porvoo Communion could commit to schemes that aided, compensated and supported victims of abuse, and those abused by the processes of the church (e.g., false accusations, botched investigations, etc). If this were ecumenical, and shaped by prescient-prophetic initiative, then the churches might – just might – survive as communities of character, virtue and formation into the next century. My fear is that without proactive remedial action and redress, nobody will want to know the church in the future. It will be a scandal to belong to and support it. But not in the way the gospels envisaged Christ being a stumbling block. The church will become a millstone.

Victims will still be coming forward for the first time in the decades ahead. This means taking on the body that is ultimately responsible for the gross negligence, indifference, obfuscation, misconduct, corruption and other failings we see all the time in safeguarding. The fund will need to be very, very large, carefully set up, completely out of the hands of the Church, and able to compensate, support and help other victims in the future, yet to emerge. That will require major funding.[5] However, the precedents exist in English law[6]. Clearly, achieving the goal of establishing a well-funded and completely Independent Redress Scheme could take years. But there are already beacons to guide us, and to aim for[7]. There are other examples too for the Roman Catholic and Anglican churches. This may not take years to achieve, especially if this is a prophetic-ecumenical action brought by victims, with support from within the churches and worshipping communities of Great Britain. An important step forward for the Church of England will be the complete adoption of the Human Rights Act 1998, the Equality Act 2010, standard employment law, full compliance with Freedom of Information requests and legislation on data (GDPR).

[5] See Louis Goss, "Exclusive: UK becomes Europe's leading jurisdiction for class-action lawsuits". *City A. M.*, 12.07.2022, https://www.cityam.com/exclusive-uk-becomes-europes-leading-jurisdiction-for-class-action-lawsuits/ (accessed Apr. 5, 2023).

[6] See Group litigation order, *Wikipedia*, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Group_litigation_order (accessed Apr. 5, 2023).

[7] See National Redress Scheme, *Anglican Church of Australia*, https://anglican.org.au/our-work/professional-standards-commission/national-redress-scheme/ (accessed Apr. 5, 2023).

If our churches still seek to be public bodies in the future, then we will have to model a level of fairness, justice, equality, accountability, transparency and integrity that at present, it shows no sign of wishing on itself. A culture resistant to openness, honesty and objectivity will simply lead to missional marginality. Perhaps the only way forward will be to regulate the churches in order to prevent abuses of power and authority. The alternative is to not regard it as a public body, and allow it to slowly deflate into becoming a members-based sect.

For sure, when it comes to the church, our struggle is not against flesh and blood. It is against Principalities and Powers (Ephesians 6: 12). The orbit in which the demonic forces of denial, abuse, cover ups and continued concealment flourish is the scandal that defines our denominations. Our cultures – all different, yet so similar – need to exorcised, dismantled, banished, expelled, refuted and cast out. Alas, our ecumenical endeavour – prophetic change to bring redress, reform, redemption, renewal and restoration – will be stifled by the churches, so long as they want to survive without owning up to their shame.

It is vital, therefore, that the churches are broken by the law and the prophets in this case. It is only when the churches lose their reputations – and with it, their moral, social, spiritual and pastoral capital – that we will see change. To repent, the churches need to be confronted with the genuine prospect of annihilation. Until then, our churches are in search of principles, and remain governed by the Principalities and Powers of this present darkness. That is a darkness that seeks to conceal abuse, hide perpetrators, and cover up incompetence, malfeasance and gross misconduct. Whilst such forces remain in the church, it is a scandal – a stumbling block for us all.

Prophetic challenge and change

Our besetting sins recall the first sin. And our attempts to cover it up should make us wince. Adam and Eve give us a familiar paradigm for individuals and institutions. Thinking that they might know more than God, they succumbed to temptation. Blame and denial is passed around, and no one takes responsibility. In an otiose effort to cover their shame, they sew fig leaves together to cover their sense of disgrace and nakedness. If you ever want to run a Bible study on the early chapters of Genesis, a compelling exercise for attendees is to give them a needle and thread and some fig leaves, and see what they come up with. It is futile and very funny. For this is midrash – a kind of espresso shot of dark humour. Only when Adam and Eve are expelled from the Garden of Eden do they get to wear proper clothes – and even these are tailored by God from animal skins. Fig leaves are not mentioned again!

The first sin was indifference, but it was also a kind of contempt. That God need not be relied upon, or even trusted. That we could do better if we helped ourselves a bit more and depended upon God a little less. That God might think our self-motivated attempts at self-improvement would not amount to a breach of covenant. That we could blame a third party (a serpent) for our hubris or blame each other (s/he made me do it). The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. When we lose that humility, foolishness finds a home. A ready one too, with vacant possession – for wisdom has been evicted.

In a compelling sociological monograph by Malcolm Gladwell he remarks that ultimately it is contempt that finally destroys an institution.[8] When we cease to respect the leaders, symbols or very foundations of any institution – its purpose and values – the ensuing lack of trust is deeply corrosive for all future relationships. (This is what topples regimes, leads to revolutions and revolts, or simmering socio-political resentment and rebellion).

Hannah Arendt made similar remarks in her Gifford Lectures at the University of Aberdeen in 1975.[9] What was so striking about those on trial for the holocaust was not so much their collusion or agency, but their sheer thoughtlessness. They never thought about the victims. They had shut down as thinking-feeling humans, so they could just “obey orders”.

When the people sense their government or leaders are choosing to regard and treat their fellow citizens with contempt, the seeds of uprising are planted deep. When bishops and church leaders treat the laity as mere pew-fodder, as mere numbers in pi and flow charts flush with potential, then perhaps as malleable consumers to merchandise and experiment on with new products and ideas, or just another round of disappointing statistics, you can begin to scent rebellion. When clergy are treated as though they don’t matter, and as merely expendable employees who need to be kept in line, then the very womb of the church begins to groan with insurgency.

The institution – whether it be a government, parliament, the police, a university, school, health or social service, church, or indeed a marriage – can survive most crises. It can usually cope with competing convictions and can even flourish with them if each party stays faithful and true to one another, their greater good, and the future and integrity of that institution.

Yet it cannot survive the contempt it breeds That is, contempt for its public and the people it serves. It cannot survive if it shows contempt or duplicity towards its core values, or mainstay people, companions, colleagues or partners. It cannot explain away its hypocrisy, or blame others for its own failures,

8 Malcolm Gladwell, *Tipping Point* (Boston: Beacon Press 2000).

9 The best volumes that develop these themes are Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* (London: Penguin, 1977); On Violence (New York: Harcourt Brace Javanovich, 1970); *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (London: Andre Deutsch Ltd, 1986).

as that only adds to the sense of an institution serving itself. Reputation management is as futile as clothes made out of fig leaves.

Contempt is a step towards self-destruction, and institutions that have the contagion are mostly destroyed from the inside out. The tipping point will just be the proverbial straw that breaks the camel's back; the one extra snowflake that made the roof cave in. So if the first sin was contempt, what are asked recall?

First, loyal dissent is important for institutions, and is to be encouraged and valued. Institutions – whether it is a marriage, church, school, hospital or university – deal in established norms, patterns and paradigms for behavioural relations that express good values and practices. Dissent is how we learn from difference and diversity. Good and honest disagreement – adiaphora – has a role in preventing bad argument and fracture on non-essential issues. Unity does not mean uniformity. In being united, we confess our differences within a framework of mutuality and peace.

Second, institutions are, for the most part, free (or very heavily subsidised at their point of delivery, though some are paid-for and private, and universities and colleges vary hugely). As services, they also rest on largely voluntary and free associations that bond us by shared values and commitments, and do not oblige us by contract. Institutions can rarely compel and will be limited in what they can enforce. Yet they are essential in a civil society, and they primarily lead by example. As such, they cannot afford to be held in contempt by those they serve; nor do they treat those that they serve with contempt.

Towards an anatomy of authentic remorse and redress

As Wade Mullen notes in his prescient work those who need freeing from abuse need the very threads that bind them to be undone, or to be cut.[10] Prophetic ecumenism has a vital role here. As Mullen notes, too often the words "we are sorry" are casually offered and easily accepted, as if they possess a supernatural power to resolve every grievance and heal any wound. Yet, in his own experience working with abuses in organizations, "sorry", offered as a bridge of reconciliation, is surrounded by other messages that serve a different purpose, and conceal numerous walls of defence. These walls are established to repel the shame that threatens from without and to protect the legitimacy hoarded within, ensuring that the bridge of apology allows no shame to enter and no legitimacy to exit.

[10] Wade Mullen, *Something's Not Right: Decoding the Tactics of Abuse and Freeing Yourself from its Power* (Cambridge: Tyndale Press, 2020).

Many public statements of apology quickly pitch for why organizations and leaders are still worthy of support from the followers, and the wider public. Churches only appear to apologise in order to survive the scandal. There is never any hint of genuine repentance and the making of true amends. The church thinks that “the show must go on”. In truth, it is now unwatchable, as the hypocrisy, scandals and abuse have ruined the rest of the acts on the programme.

Worse still, the institution in the wrong might ask their victims to carry their shame so they can retain legitimacy in the eyes of their followers, unwilling to fully acknowledge that the shameful behaviour belongs to them and the legitimacy belongs to the ones speaking the truth about their behaviour. Why are authentic apologies so feared? Perhaps because the shame would expose their illegitimacy, and they would lose what is no longer their right to have: following, influence, power, status, (and what is often most important to them): money. The simple truth is that many organizations will not apologize as they ought because their leaders fear being seen as unqualified (an identity crisis), and because they fear costly lawsuits or loss of a following (a monetary crisis).

Reform will take a long time to arrive. It takes moral courage and compassion to do the right thing, and this seems to be absent among our church leaders. Victims of abuse will only secure justice when all of our churches accept they have an inherent conflict of interest in trying to self-correct its failings, corruptions and abuses whilst simultaneously preserving its reputation. When transparency, honesty and integrity are absent, all that is left to victims is legal action. Repentance and redress must precede any attempt at reconciliation. At present, we have victims of abuse waiting many, many years for investigations to start or conclude. These investigations are often half-baked, and lack the resources, expertise and regulatory framework to compel subjects to engage with them.

We live in an age that has been weaned on stability, predictability and reliability. COVID-19 and its variants have probably knocked our self-assurance forever. That is no bad thing. Our self-directed teleology has been tampered with, and we no longer quite know how this will all end. Our confidence has been quietly shattered by the turmoil and lack of trust in politics and international relations, the trials and tribulations of our migrants and refugees, and the uncertainty of climate change and other ecological disasters. It is in such uncertain and unstable times that churches need to remember that they too, rightly, are subject to such forces. This is part of the common framework and context in which all Porvoo Communion churches now find themselves operating within.

Churches are not meant to exist in order to withstand such challenges and remain aloof from them. Rather, we are to be the field hospitals of every age, pitching our tents where they are most needed for those with the most needs. Only to be great for those who are least. Our common Christian and ecumenical calling is one of risk and responsibility for those who have nothing. The Kingdom of God was first practised and proclaimed by a bunch of ragamuffin disciples and their itinerant rabbi-leader. It was a precarious venture, that went where the needs of others took them. There was little sign of a plan, strategy or campaign. The task was to be the love of God wherever they found themselves.

I believe that the churches of the Porvoo Communion can take a lead by addressing this common problem – one of shame, loss of integrity and sin – and by coming to a common mind, develop authentic, accountable, fair and compassionate means of redress. My fear is that without such pastoral-prophetic ecumenical endeavour, few will care about the churches in the future – our unity, diversity and differences will count for nothing if we cannot demonstrate authenticity, accountability, truth and justice. The scandal of our churches is that we prefer to survive rather than be true; we choose optics over justice; we pride our reputation over honesty and integrity. To Jesus, this is a scandal. To the world, it is a scandal. To the emerging generations, it means a long sojourn in the wilderness of worldly indifference. Few will care for a church that refuses care for others.

We are in exile of our own accord. Pastoral-prophetic ecumenism has a role in shaking us out of our complacencies. It is time to repent, and only when we have, can we return to the public square. So let us cast aside these works of darkness, deception and denial and that are baked into our denominations, and prevent us from embracing that precarious incarnational risk – the calling of Jesus we were called take-up, inhabit and embody. Sometimes less is so much more. It is where Jesus begins his life and will later continue in his ministry; the where, with whom and in what Jesus abides. Be there.

Prehistory of the Porvoo Communion: Conversations Between Anglicans and Lutherans in Latvia in 1920s and 1930s

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This article is about dialogue between representatives of the Church of England and the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Latvia (ELCL) who, together with representatives of the Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church (EELC), had several meetings that resulted in signing an agreement in 1938, which had the following points: (1) mutual participation of bishops in the consecration of new bishops; (2) mutual admission of communicants to Holy Communion; (3) mutual attendance of bishops at conferences, (4) baptism and marriage of members of the other two churches who have no access to their own clergyman.[1] They went further than the Lambeth Resolution of 1920 relating to the Church of Sweden, including not only intercommunion, but also an affirmation that mutual invitations to episcopal consecrations should be issued.[2] Unfortunately, the outbreak of the Second World War and the loss of national independence as a result of Soviet occupation did not enable the practice of new relations. However the impact remained – Latvian Lutheran congregations in exile often found it easier than others to rent premises of Anglican churches in various countries based on pre-war conversations. During the Cold War era Lutheran churches in Latvia and Estonia re-established contacts with the Church of England. Again, memories of pre-war co-operation formed the basis for such contacts.

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1 Edgars Rumba, “Sarunas ar Anglijas baznīcas pārstāvjiem”, *Ceļš* 4 (1938), 234–235.

2 Charlotte Methuen, “Coming into Communion: Anglican involvement in agreements of (Full) Communion and Reunion”, *Sri Lanka Journal of Theological Reflection* (2018), 7, http://eprints.gla.ac.uk/171447/8/171447.pdf (accessed Apr. 4, 2023).

Anglicans and Lutherans in search for new ecumenical partners

It is not an exaggeration to state that the Baltic and English Lutheran-Anglican dialogue that took place in the 1930s is part of a range of ecumenical efforts (like the ones between Lutherans in Nordic countries and Anglicans) that later were formalized in the Porvoo Agreement.[3] Baltic Lutheran-Anglican conversations were part of wider ecumenical aspirations undertaken in various, sometimes contradictory directions.

Reacting against the rejection of Anglican orders by Pope Leo XIII in 1896, Anglicans (at least some of them) anxiously wanted to establish their episcopal credentials and started to be preoccupied with apostolic succession in relation to Lutheran, Old Catholic and Orthodox churches. In 1920, the Lambeth Conference issued an appeal to other churches to strive for visible unity by accepting the episcopate.[4] It was a call to leave aside differences – "We do not ask that any one Communion should consent to be absorbed into another. We do ask that all should unite in a new and great endeavour to recover and to manifest to the world the unity of the Body of Christ for which he prayed."[5] It was also a symbolic turning point for Anglican identity – at least for the authors and supporters of that appeal Anglican identity "no longer required adherence to anything English or to any Protestant formularies but was defined in the most minimal way possible around Scripture, Creeds, the two dominical Sacraments and the 'historic Episcopate.'"[6] The last concept is wide enough to include an extensive range of interpretations. There is also nothing specifically Anglican in this minimalist approach.

Anglican-Nordic Lutheran dialogue has a long history. In America, Episcopalians and Swedish Lutherans worked closely together during the colonial period. Lutherans in New York and Episcopalians talked of union in 1797.[7] The modern dialog between Nordic Lutheran churches and the Church of England started at the end of 19th century. The first step toward intercommunion between the Church of Sweden and the Church of England was made at the Lambeth Conference of 1888 and an Anglican Commission under Herbert Edward Ryle, Bishop of Winchester, sent to Sweden by the Archbishop of Canterbury to investigate the possibility of closer relations between the English

3 For a summary of this wider context see: John Arnold, "From Meissen to Porvoo and Beyond", *Anglican and Episcopal History* 73:4 (2004), 466–482.

4 "The Lambeth Conference. Resolutions Archive from 1920, https://www.anglicancommunion.org/media/127731/1920.pdf (accessed Apr. 4, 2023).

5 "Reunion of Christendom", Ibid.

6 Mark D. Chapman, "Un-Protestant and Un-English: Anglicanism and the 1920 Lambeth Conference 'Appeal to All Christian People'", *Ecclesiology* 16 (2020), 59.

7 Don S. Armentrout, "Lutheran-Episcopal Conversations in the Nineteenth Century", *Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church* 44: 2 (1975), 168.

and Swedish churches, reported favourably on the validity of Swedish orders in 1911. Intercommunion with the Church of Finland was a more complicated issue, because in the 19th century the new Archbishop of Turku was consecrated by a Canon Professor in the absence of a bishop, and thus from the point of view of the adherents of high ecclesiology, the apostolic succession was interrupted. Nevertheless, in this case the negotiating sides also diplomatically found a solution. As stated by Bishop Arthur Headlam, the Quadrilateral followed by the Lambeth Conference did not cast doubt on spiritual efficacy of other ministries by emphasizing importance of the historical episcopate.[8]

The Anglican path to communion with Nordic Lutheran churches was not always easy, as not all Lutherans were supportive at first. In the 1830s, Carl F. Wingård, Bishop of Gothenburg, who became Archbishop of Uppsala in 1839, criticized the Oxford movement as crypto-Catholic. The Anglo-Catholics responded with the accusation that the Swedish Lutherans had no sacramental understanding of the Lord's Supper.[9] Some Lutherans in Finland considered Anglicans to be too close to the Reformed. Before 1809, more than 100 books of the English spiritual genre were translated into Finnish. However, in order for the books to conform to the Lutheran confessional norms, they had to be adapted during translation. All the texts about the Lord's Supper and predestination were removed. Lutherans did not always know how to distinguish Puritan literature from publications of the Anglican Catholic wing, hence the attitude towards the texts of Anglican authors in the beginning was generally negative.[10]

Besides Lutherans in Scandinavia, the interest in developing closer relationships with Anglicans and others was also shown by some Orthodox churches. In 1920, the Patriarchate of Constantinople issued an encyclical – a call for Christian unity. It encouraged close relations between churches and theological schools, as well as for Christian denominations to study doctrinal differences in depth, to respect different traditions, to allow each other to use churches and cemeteries for funerals, and to resolve marriages between partners of different denominations. The Patriarchate called on the churches to form a league similar to the League of Nations, an idea that later came to fruition

8 Ronald Jasper, *Arthur Cayley Headlam: Life and Letters of a Bishop* (London: Faith Press: 1960), 253–255.

9 Nigel Yates, "Ecumenical Leadership in the Church of England: The Role of Bishop John Wordsworth", *Epicopacy, Authority, and Gender: Aspects of Religious Leadership in Europe, 1100–2000*, Jan Wim Buisman, Marjet Derks, Peter Raedts (eds), (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2015), 55.

10 Risto Saarinen, "The Porvoo Common Statement and the Leuenberg Concord – are they Compatible?", *Apostolicity and Unity: Essays on the Porvoo Common Statement: Essays on the Porvoo Statement*, ed. Ola Tjørhom (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2002), 261.

with the establishment of the World Council of Churches.[11] It should be noted that the political context of its creation cannot be ignored – the Patriarchate of Constantinople, through the Western Churches, sought political support after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, when there were fears that Turkish Republicans would force the Patriarch to leave Istanbul. Representatives of the Patriarchate, who attended the Anglican Lambeth Conference in 1920, used the visit to gain the favour of influential British officials. The then Archbishop of Canterbury, Randall Davidson, was their ally. A year earlier, he addressed the House of Lords, calling on all Christians to be freed from the Turkish yoke.[12]

At the same time, newly established Baltic Lutheran churches were reconsidering their German heritage and looking for new partners. Kārlis Irbe (later bishop) brought greetings from five heads of churches in Denmark, Germany, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland to the first nation-wide synod of the ELCL (in 1921). Correspondence with these people helped to develop the structure of the new church. In particular, Irbe made a connection with Nathan Söderblom, Archbishop of Uppsala, which continued until the death of the Archbishop. N. Söderblom consecrated Irbe in 1922. Thanks to correspondence between the two church leaders he was well acquainted with issues like the tension around St. James church in Riga.[13] These events stirred up anti-Catholic feelings – in his sermon in Eisenach, during the Lutheran World Convention Irbe accused Catholics of anti-ecumenism (a characteristic of pre-Vatican II Catholicism) and of making alliances with "enemies of Christianity" in order to weaken the Lutheran Church (he was most probably thinking of the political decision by the Latvian Government to pass St. James Church in Riga over to Catholics in 1923).[14] Contacts of the ELCL with the Swedish and Finnish Lutheran churches had a political background, for example, Finland's assistance to the new state of Latvia and to the Lutheran Church.[15] The newly formed state of Latvia was interested in expanding friendly relationships

[11] "Encyclical of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, 1920. Unto the Churches of Christ everywhere", *The Orthodox Church in the Ecumenical Movement: Documents and Statements 1902–1975*, ed. Constantin G. Patelos (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1978), 40–43.

[12] Bryn Geffert, "Anglican Orders and Orthodox Politics", *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 2 (2006), 273.

[13] Voldemārs Lauciņš, *The Right Man in the Right Place: The Role of Kārlis Irbe* (*1861–1934*) *in the Formation and Development of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Latvia, 1916–1928* (Author's publication: 2015), 92–93.

[14] "Mūsu bīskapa sprediķis Eizenahā 1923. gada 23. augustā", *Latvijas evaņģēliski luteriskās baznīcas bīskaps Dr. theol. Kārlis Irbe.* Ēriks Mesters, sast. (Rīga: Svētdienas Rīts, 1994), 111.

[15] In 1921, 27 174 Finnish marks donated to Finnish congregations were handed over to the Latvian ambassador for the renovation of the ruined Latvian Lutheran churches. (Ārzemēs, *Svētdienas Rīts* 5 (08.05.1921)), 7.

with neighbouring countries and means of cultural diplomacy were part of that process. In 1926, Bishop Irbe visited Finland with Pastor Ernests Stange. Latvian Lutherans learned about differences between various trends of Lutheranism. In his travel notes, Stange pointed to the vestments of Finnish pastors and their similarity to those of Catholic priests.[16]

Later in the 1930s the young Latvian theologians who learned other foreign languages besides German became aware of English and Scandinavian theology. For example, Edgars Rumba brought Söderblom's ideas into theological circulation in Latvia – in 1937, he had used the private archive of the then deceased Archbishop. He also used the works of English theologians, such as Bishop Arthur Cayley Headlam.[17]

We need to keep in mind the differences between various church "parties" in Anglicanism and various versions of Lutheranism. Any ecumenical dialogue must take into account that no denomination is homogeneous. If Anglo-Catholics were interested in forming closer friendships with Roman Catholics, Orthodox and Old Catholics, then Evangelicals – with non-conformists (Baptists, Presbyterians and others). In the middle were those Anglicans who believed that one could agree with both. In general, Anglicans, more than Lutherans, have a pragmatic attitude towards confessional documents and coexistence of multiple traditions within one denomination. Anglicanism is an umbrella denomination for people holding various viewpoints. However, Lutherans are not exempt from that, either. For example, Nordic, traditionally more High-Church, Lutherans have also minority voices raised by movements inspired by Pietism and revivalism. Anglicanism has often positioned itself as *via media*, but this term is not helpful because it can be understood in different ways. Archbishop William Temple represented the common position in the first half of the 20th century that Anglicanism was a synthesis, the middle ground between Protestantism and Catholicism.[18] However, critics at the time and later argued that this was a new position represented in another faction of the church. If we look to the 39 Articles, they, similarly to other Protestant confessional documents of their time, position the church between Anabaptists and Roman Catholics.

[16] Ernests Stange, "Mana Somijas ceļojuma atmiņas", *Svētdienas Rīts* 11 (14.03.1926.), 82.

[17] Edgars Rumba, *Baznīca un garīgais amats oikumeniski-luteriskā uztverē.* Latvijas Universitātes Raksti. Teoloģijas fakultātes sērija I.3. (Rīga: Latvijas Universitāte, 1938), 68.

[18] Edward Loane, *William Temple and Church Unity: The Politics and Practice of Ecumenical Theology* ([no place indicated]: Macmillan, 2016), 59.

Political context

In the second half of the 1930s, the Latvian government hoped for economic and political rapprochement with Britain, which did not happen. Britain did not want to make any commitment to guaranteeing the security of the Baltic states. In 1935, the government of Stanley Baldwin came to power, which, like the previous government, continued its policy of concessions in relations with Germany. As the situation in Europe worsened, the British government gave security guarantees to Poland, Greece, Romania and Turkey in 1939, but not to the Baltic states. Britain did not plan to provide any military assistance to the Baltic states; its only suggestion was to guarantee the safety of these countries (doing so together with France and the USSR). Latvia raised concern about this plan, because it was afraid that the USSR would use this mechanism of guarantees to justify its intervention.[19] Kārlis Zariņš, Ambassador of Latvia to the United Kingdom, dispelled hopes of Britain's involvement in the fate of small Eastern European countries. "The British want peace not because of idealism but because of basic self-interest."[20] The visit of Vilhems Munters, Minister of Foreign Affairs, to Britain in 1937 and his dinner with newly crowned King George VI were praised by media in Latvia, however, it did not achieve notable results. As Kārlis Ulmanis, the authoritarian leader of the state from 1934 to 1940, was later to admit during his deportation to Siberia, visits of top British diplomats to Latvia were rare.[21] At the end of 1939, Great Britain was relatively indifferent to the growing influence of the USSR in the Baltics, believing that it was detrimental to Germany. The only thing that worried the British ruling politicians was the rapprochement between the USSR and Germany.[22] The politically left-wing British Ambassador in Moscow, Stafford Cripps, said after the occupation of Baltic states that he saw no reason not to recognize de facto the Soviet presence in the Baltics. He also did not support the fact that the British government did not return the gold reserves of Baltic states to the USSR.[23] The authoritarian regime in Latvia tried to give a deceptive sense of security in the public space, until it ended with the Soviet occupation in 1940.

This was the political context in which the Latvian government sought to intensify other relations between the two countries, including channels

19 Antonijs Zunda, *Latvija un Lielbritānija: partneri vai sabiedrotie* (*1930–1940*). (Rīga: LU Akadēmiskais apgāds, 2012), 32, 66–67.

20 Rihards Treijs, *Latvijas diplomātija un diplomāti* (*1918–1940*) (Rīga: Latvijas Vēstnesis, 2003), 288.

21 Ibid., 331.

22 Zunda, *Latvija un Lielbritānija: partneri vai sabiedrotie* (*1930–1940*), 84.

23 Martin Kitchen, *British Policy towards the Soviet Union during the Second World War* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1986), 36.

of cultural diplomacy and various gestures of goodwill including compulsory English in schools from 1934.[24] Negotiations between the churches of England and Latvia took place through the authorities. In 1935, the Latvian Ambassador to London, K. Zariņš, wrote to the Prime Minister, de facto authoritarian leader of Latvia K. Ulmanis, about a conversation with the Archbishop of Canterbury about the rapprochement of the two churches. K. Zariņš told the Anglican Archbishop that after their first conversation in the spring of 1935 he had already reported to the leadership of the Lutheran Church and the Latvian government, and received a favourable response from both sides.[25] The government was also involved in further development of negotiations. An official letter of invitation from the Archbishop of Canterbury to Archbishop T. Grīnbergs to visit London in the spring of 1936 with his companions was also first sent to K. Zariņš, who forwarded it to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.[26] The Latvian Lutheran theologian Voldemārs Maldonis positioned himself in this political discourse; and in the book written after two ecumenical conferences of 1937 (in Oxford and in Edinburgh) he wrote: “England’s political influence is great all over the world, so the Church of England has a large network of threads that covers the whole world. The head of the Church of England, the Archbishop of Canterbury, has great power in all fields, not just religious.”[27] Likewise, there is a political aspect in the speech of Estonian bishop during the first conference in 1936: “When the Estonians wanted freedom they received assistance from His Majesty the King.”[28] References to influential political powers like Britain and the USA can also be found in the writings by Jānis Jansons, a Latvian Orthodox priest who was interested in ecumenical contacts (especially with Anglicans) and corresponded with church leaders in Europe. He wrote to John Albert Douglas, Anglican clergyman and a major figure in Anglican-Orthodox relations, that “great Russia waits for great England and America to help her and deliver her from the nails of Satan” (Communism, V. T.).[29]

The visit of the delegation of the Church of England to Latvia in 1938 was not just given visibility in religious circles (A. Headlam, Bishop of Gloucester,

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[24] Zunda, *Latvija un Lielbritānija: partneri vai sabiedrotie* (*1930–1940*), 29.

[25] Latvijas Nacionālais arhīvs Latvijas Valsts vēstures arhīvs (Latvian National Archive-Latvian State Historical Archive, LNA-LVVA), Latvijas sūtņa Lielbritānijā Kārļa Zariņa vēstule Ministru prezidentam un ārlietu ministram Kārlim Ulmanim, 01.11.1935., 295-1-671, 6–8.

[26] LNA-LVVA, Latvijas sūtņa Lielbritānijā Kārļa Zariņa vēstule ārlietu ministrijas ģenerālsekretāram V. Munteram, 18.12.1935., 295-1-671, 10–11.

[27] Voldemārs Maldonis, *Praktiskā kristietība* (Rīga: Ev. lut. baznīcas virsvalde, 1938), 149.

[28] First conference. Reply of the bishop of Estonia. 17.03.1936, http://anglicanhistory.org/lutherania/latvia_estonia1938.html (accessed Apr. 4, 2023).

[29] John Jansons, Letter to J. A. Douglas (in Russian), 12.01.1926., J.A. Douglas Papers, Vol. 60, Lambeth Palace Library, 71.

preached in the Riga Dome Cathedral), but also a national significance – the delegation was received by K. Ulmanis; bishops of the three participating countries visited the Cemetery of the Brethren.[30]

Conversations of 1936 and 1938, and their prehistory

Anglican contacts with Latvian Lutherans had a prehistory, because even before the First World War, representatives of the Church of England had contacts with Orthodox in Latvia. In 1900 Thomas Edward Wilkinson, coadjutor bishop of London for North and Central Europe visited Riga for to carry out confirmation, and also attended a service at the Orthodox Cathedral, where he was given a place near the altar as a guest of honour.[31] In 1910, the Orthodox Religious-Educational Association (Pravoslavnoje religiozno-prosvetitelnoje obschestvo) in Riga organized guest lectures by Pavel Mansurov and Nikolai Lodzhensky. They were both advocates of the Orthodox-Anglican rapprochement. The lectures praised the role of the Oxford movement, but acknowledged that a large proportion of Anglicans adhere to Protestant beliefs and that this is "an insurmountable obstacle to the unification of Anglican and Orthodox churches."[32] On the way to St. Petersburg in 1914 Walter Howard Frere, one of the founders of the Community of the Resurrection, later bishop, stayed in Riga and settled in the house of the Deacon of the Orthodox convent. At the invitation of the Orthodox Archbishop of Riga, he gave a lecture to Orthodox laity and clergy.[33] These Anglican-Orthodox contacts continued in the 1920s. In 1927, Basil S. Batty, Bishop of Fulham, visited Riga and met with Latvian Orthodox Archbishop Jānis Pommers.[34] The interest in keeping contacts with Orthodox was upheld by Arthur Harrison, an Anglican chaplain in Riga. It is symbolic that after his death in 1936 prayers for him in the Orthodox Cathedral were led by the head of the Orthodox seminary Jānis Jansons. [35] Cosmo Lang, the Archbishop of Canterbury, wrote to J. Pommers, expressing hope "that the present official discussions between our Communions may ultimately result in the development of that relationships into their full

[30] "Ārzemju bīskapi Latvijā", *Svētdienas Rīts* 26 (26.06.1938.), 208.

[31] "Riga", *The Anglican Church Magazine* CLXIV (1900), 118–119.

[32] *Po puti sblizhenija anglikanskoi cerkvi c pravoslavno-vostochnoi* (Riga: Pravoslavnoje religiozno-prosvetitelnoje obschestvo, 1911), 11.

[33] "The Russian Church. Father Frere's Impressions on His Visit", *Church Times* LXXI: 2681 (12.06.1914), 842.

[34] "Anglikāņu bīskaps Betti Rīgā", *Pēdējā Brīdī* 72 (30.05.1927.), 5.

[35] "Rīgā miris anglikāņu baznīcas kapelāns", *Jaunākās Ziņas* 45 (24.02.1936.), 7.

Intercommunion."[36] In the present situation these words sound naïve, but in the inter-war period conversations between Orthodox patriarchates and Anglicans were received with optimism by many. We also should keep in mind the High-Church perspective of C. Lang – he was the first Archbishop of Canterbury since the Reformation who wore an episcopal mitre and cope. He also stood for canonical changes to make legal the usage of liturgical vestments, altar candles, incense, oblates (instead of ordinary bread) and mixing wine with water in Holy Communion.[37]

Anglican-Baltic Lutheran conversations took place in 1936 and in 1938. Representatives of the EELC also joined the ELCL in these meetings. When Bishop Hugo Bernhard Rahamägi learned from T. Grīnbergs in 1936 that the ELCL had been invited to talks with the Church of England, he also began correspondence. He had previously sought such contacts through the Lutheran Bishop of Tampere.[38] The first English-Baltic Conference, as it was called, took place on 17–18 March 1936 at Lambeth Palace in London. The English delegation was headed by Bishop A. Headlam, the Latvian delegation by Archbishop T. Grīnbergs accompanied by Ādolfs Kundziņš, Dean of Rīga, and Edgars Rumba, Docent of the Faculty of Theology at the University of Latvia,[39] while Estonia was represented by Bishop Rahamägi and Jaak Taul, because the latter spoke English and could act as an interpreter. The report on the ELCL delegation's visit to England in 1936 mentions as a positive aspect the "richness of liturgical forms" in the Church of England.[40] Similarly, Latvian theologian Alberts Freijs, who travelled for two months in Denmark, Sweden, Germany, the Netherlands and Great Britain later in 1939, collecting material for a book on dogmatics, was thrilled to experience Anglican services (probably more High-Church) – "personally, the Anglican Holy Communion service […] gave me what no other worship service has been able to give so far: highly uplifting religious experience, a complete understanding of "holy, holy, holy ..." and melting in it. […] And so the question is: has the Anglican Church, which is Calvinist in its teaching but has retained ritualism in the Catholic spirit, not found the right path?"[41] At that time, High-Church tradition did not receive

[36] Cosmo Lang, *Letter to John Pommers.* A draft by J. A. Douglas (in English) (July 1930, J. A. Douglas Papers, Vol. 60, Lambeth Palace Library), 73.

[37] Kelvin Randall, *Evangelicals Etcetera: Conflict and Conviction in the Church of England Parties* (Aldershot, Burlington: Ashgate, 2005), 18.

[38] Priit Rohtmets, Veiko Vihuri, "Ecumenical Relations of the Lutheran Church", *History of Estonian Ecumenism*, ed. Riho Altnurme (Tallin, Tartu: Estonian Council of Churches, 2009), 58.

[39] LNA-LVVA, Latvijas sūtņa Lielbritānijā Kārļa Zariņa vēstule Kenterberijas arhibīskapam, 17.02.1936., 295-1-671, 30.

[40] "Mūsu baznīcas sarunas ar anglikāņu baznīcas pārstāvjiem Londonā", *Svētdienas Rīts* 16 (12.04.1936.), 124.

[41] Alberts Freijs, "Pieredzējumi un pārdomas", *Ceļš* (septembris/oktobris, 1939), 315.

a response in Latvian Lutheranism. On the other hand, the ELCL leadership paid attention to the visual aspects of highlighting the office of the clergy: Archbishop Grīnbergs introduced pectoral crosses – silver for pastors, gold for deans and ordained professors of theology (as well as to pastors for special merits).[42] But it is more an expression of the mood of this authoritarian period.

Presumably the visit to England and subsequent meetings in Riga and Tallinn helped Grīnbergs to get first-hand experience of Anglicanism and to obtain some knowledge of its various branches. In an article written later in exile, Grīnbergs mentions the tension which arose in the 1920s around the Revised Prayer Book, dramatically describing it as "struggle of faith that divided parliament and nation in two parts."[43] According to Grīnbergs, the cause of that was a small note in the text of the liturgy that consecrated bread might be reserved for distribution to the sick without re-consecration.[44] Grīnbergs himself described the Holy Communion as, first of all, a memorial meal. "By receiving the bread and wine of the Lord with his merit, we renew the memory of the event of Calvary."[45] Grīnbergs performatively distanced himself from the Roman Catholic perspective by making a sign of cross during the Holy Communion not at the words "this is my body" but at "gave thanks."[46] It is interesting to note that the Anglican Book of Common Prayer (1552) does not require the making sign of cross during Communion, only during baptism (the previous version (1549) had 5 occasions for its use by clergy).

This view is far removed from another version of Latvian Lutheran eucharistic theology dominant nowadays and found, for example, in instructions given by Archbishop Jānis Vanags which in their emphasis on ritualistic details (mixing wine with water, ceremonial washing of hands before the Holy Communion etc.) and elements of religious material culture are almost identical to Roman Catholicism (for example, the corporal, a piece of fabric that symbolically marks the place of consecration, now is considered obligatory, which was not so in the past).[47] It has similarities with Anglo-Catholic attempts

42 "Noteikumi par garīdznieku krustiem", *Svētdienas Rīts* 32 (02.08.1936.), 253.

43 Teodors Grīnbergs, "Svētais Vakarēdiens", *Reliģija un dzīve. Reliģiski un filozofiski raksti* 1, E. Ķiploks. red. ([b. v.]: A. Ozoliņa apgāds, 1950), 87.

44 Ibid., 87–88.

45 Ibid., 88.

46 Ibid., 91.

47 Jānis Vanags, *Par Sv*ētā vakarēdiena svinēšanas praksi Latvijas evaņģēliski luteriskajā Baznīcā, http://www.malpilsbaznica.lv/noderigi/ (accessed Mar. 22, 2022). These guidelines are based on regulations accepted by 19th Synod of the ELCL (1998). See also Jānis Vanags, "Atjaunosim savu draudžu dievgalda piederumus un tradīcijas!", Latvijas evaņģēliski luteriskās baznīcas gadagrāmata 1999: Latvijas ev. lut. Baznīcas Konsistorijas un ārpus Latvijas ev. lut. Baznīcas Virsvaldes kopīgs izdevums (Rīga: Svētdienas Rīts, 1998), pp. 221–228. Typical of the High-Church movement, references are made to the past (without discussing the constructed and selective nature of such references); laments that

to mainstream their tradition. In comparison the Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church Worldwide has been less influenced by the High-Church movement.

The second English-Baltic Conference was held on 19–24 June 1938 in Riga and Tallinn in two sessions. The Latvian delegation subscribed at the start of negotiations to the position expressed in the letter by the Swedish bishops to the Anglican bishops (1922), stating that the formal organisation of church ministry is not instituted jure divino but jure humano, i.e., not by divine but by human law. Another problem was the fact that, while Rahamägi had been consecrated by the Archbishop of Uppsala, the head of the Latvian church, Teodors Grīnbergs, had not been consecrated by a bishop.[48]

Apostolic succession was on the list of topics debated during these Anglican-Lutheran meetings. Anglican representatives used the term "succession" (a term which is not in the Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral of 1886/1888), as well as referring to the historical episcopate (the term used in the Quadrilateral). We need to take into account that these were days when Anglo-Catholic movement was influential in the Church of England. The form of Anglicanism they practised left little room for appreciation of the Reformation. In the 19th century, the episcopate was elevated by the Tractarians to the level of absolute necessity and acquired a mystical status. It was contrary to the opinion of many Anglicans of previous generations, including those belonging to the High-Church "party". For example, Thomas Bilson, a 17th-century Anglican bishop, made a distinction between what came from Christ himself and what came from the Apostles, and accepted that episcopacy was of the second kind. In the case of metropolitans, he kept open the possibility that their institution was not apostolic but had been merely a practical device. For him, the different opinions on this matter did not concern the essentials of the Christian religion.[49]

The methodology used in meetings was the comparison of doctrines and church practice with confessional documents like the 39 Articles of Religion, as well as the Augsburg Confession and other documents (for example, liturgies). In the Anglican case, we should take into consideration their ambiguous attitude towards the 39 Articles. In the 1930s, in conversation with the Church of Finland the Anglican delegation expressed the opinion that "The Articles had always been Articles of Comprehension, not Articles of

not all churches have kept traditions are expressed while liturgical practices are exegetically linked to the temple worship mentioned in the Old Testament (Ibid., pp. 221–222).

48 The previous Bishop Kārlis Irbe resigned in 1931 due to tension between German and Latvian Lutherans, the loss of the Church of St. James and issues over the Dome Church (Cathedral), which resulted in the departure of the German congregation.

49 Jean-Louis Quantin, *The Church of England and Christian Antiquity: The Construction of a Confessional Identity in the 17th Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 101–102.

Exclusion."[50] Bishop Headlam had the opinion that the Book of Common Prayer is more important than the 39 Articles. According to him, there was no other document in the Church of England that for many, including those who wanted to be clergy, was such a stumbling block as these articles.[51] He was speaking about Anglo-Catholics, who disliked the Protestant character of the 39 Articles. This document, influenced by the Augsburg Confession, is a sign of the Reformation heritage of Anglicanism. The 39 Articles were included in various compendia of Reformation churches in the 16th century itself, and in the 19th century. Philip Schaff included them among "The Creeds of the Evangelical Reformed Churches".[52]

Remaining differences and impact of agreement

The sides involved in negotiations were keen to find common ground. This should be viewed in the international context of enthusiasm for ecumenism in various Christian traditions of the time. Divergences in the understanding of the Lord's Supper, which for centuries had been an issue raised by Lutheran orthodoxy, were not an obstacle this time.[53]

At the same time, negotiations showed remaining differences. Some of them were more imagined than real. For example, Bishop Henry Williams reporting in 1939 on the visit of the Church of England delegation to Latvia and Estonia, mentioned as a difference that the Lutheran churches there "emphasize predestination and justification by faith more than the Church of England."[54] Regarding predestination, this seems a misleading statement, because Lutherans in Latvia did not emphasize it. Latvian theologian Nikolajs

[50] *Lambeth Occasional Reports 1931–8* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1948), 130.

[51] Arthur C. Headlam, *The Anglicans, The Orthodox, and the Old Catholics. Notes on the Lambeth Report on Unity* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge), pp. 5–6. (no date).

[52] Pauls Avis, "Called to be a Confessing Church", *Reimagining Religious Belonging: Ecumenical Responses to Changing Religiosity in Europe*, Ivana Noble, Ulrike Link-Wieczorek, Peter De Ley, (eds). (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstzalt, 2011), 212–213.

[53] In the report of 1938 on meetings with Baltic Lutherans, the chairman of the Anglican delegation states that "the official Eucharistic teaching of these, as of other Lutheran Churches, is certainly not less in accordance with Catholic tradition than that of the Church of England" (Letter of the Chairman of the Delegation to the Archbishop of Canterbury. 25.10.1938, http://anglicanhistory.org/lutherania/latvia_estonia1938.html (accessed Apr. 4, 2023)). It is noteworthy that dogmatic differences between confessional documents or diverse views within each of confessional families (especially between Anglo-Catholics and Evangelicals) are ignored in this statement. However, they were acknowledged during meetings – "there was much variety of teaching in the Church of England about the Holy Communion" (A. Headlam).

[54] "The Churches of Latvia and Estonia", *Church Times* (26.05.1939), 558.

Plāte in his book written several decades later, quotes the pre-war theologian Voldemārs Maldonis, who participated in negotiations with the Anglicans: "We believe in the predestination of God's love. […] God has predestined us in his love and guides us with his providence."[55]

There were also differences in how Holy Communion was practiced – Lutheran pastors rarely took Communion themselves if they were sole celebrants, because of the strong link between Absolution and Communion. This tradition also persisted after the Second World War. In 1960 in the USA Latvian pastor Kārlis T. Kuškevics wrote that it was still an unsolved question for Latvian churches, even if in other American Lutheran churches self-communion was allowed.[56] However, this difference was not considered essential by Anglicans.

One of the remaining issues was about the right to ordain and the doctrine of apostolic succession related to this issue. Anglicans stressed the importance of episcopal ordination. Still, it should be noted that in general Anglicans negotiating with Baltic and Nordic Lutherans did not have a strict position. There was a diversity of opinions among Anglicans – in conversations with Finnish Lutherans Walter Robert Matthews, who was a well-known theologian of the Anglican liberal wing (President of the Modern Churchmen's Union), admitted that he personally did not attach much importance to succession, if by this we understand imposition of a bishop's hands – as stated, "he would consider such a belief sub-Christian". More important than that was the question of how to agree on universal recognition of spiritual offices.[57] Bishop Headlam was a representative of the Catholic wing of the Church of England, but not extremely so. His argument, based on the Lambeth Conference of 1930, was that emphasizing the historical episcopate does not mean that ordination by presbyters has no value.[58] Likewise, he did not consider the method of confirmation (for example, in Finland, the Lutheran rite did not include laying on of hands, while in the mission fields people were admitted to the communion table without being confirmed) to be an obstacle to fellowship (his Anglo-Catholic orientation, however, appears in the opinion that he considered the absence of laying on of hands in the Lutheran rite as a deficiency, although not essential).[59]

[55] Nikolajs Plāte, *Kompendijs dogmatikā*. Studia Theologica. Tomus III (Rīga: LU Akadēmiskais apgāds, 2020), 85.

[56] Kārlis T. Kuškevics, "Mūsu baznīcas dievkalpojums", *Ceļa Biedrs* 8 (1960), 121.

[57] *Lambeth Occasional Reports 1931–8* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1948), 166.

[58] Ronald Jasper, *Arthur Cayley Headlam: Life and Letters of a Bishop* (London: Faith Press, 1960), 260.

[59] Ibid., 256–257.

Estonian Bishop Rahamägi held that "when there was no priest a layman could celebrate in emergencies. Sacraments were not given by us, they were given by God."[60] Jaak Taul, a theologian from Estonia, later the chairman of the Lutheran Council of Great Britain and as Dean of Britain's Estonian congregations, referred to the ambiguity of Anglican confessional documents (he quoted from the report of the negotiations with the Church of Finland) – "The twenty-third article [of the 39 Articles] was ambiguous. It might mean that the proper ministers of ordination were those who had already authority to ordain – i.e., the bishops. It could also be held to mean that anyone was competent to ordain if he was commissioned by the Church to do so." It seemed to him that the Church of England in theory would allow presbyters to ordain in emergency.[61] Viktor Grüner, who taught systematic theology at Herder Institute (a Baltic-German institution of higher education) in Riga, – from 1929, he was the Institute's Vice Principal – drew a distinction between the spiritual value of the bishop's office and its canonical and legal aspects. He wished to emphasise the agreement about its spiritual value. The essential concept is the function of oversight rather than the particular office of a bishop.[62] Grüner was interested in ecclesiology, and tried to develop a religious-philosophical basis for it. He thought that a starting point for Luther and the Reformation in general were not psycho-historical factors but a subjective faith experience of the individual.[63] In order to understand his context better we should keep in mind that Baltic-German Lutherans in the inter-war period were even less supportive of "high" ecclesiology and regalia associated with it than Latvians. In contrast to K. Irbe, Harald Poelchau, Baltic-German Bishop in Latvia, continued to wear the black gown characteristic to pastors of his time and did not carry a bishop's crosier.[64]

Even though the first Latvian Lutheran Bishop Irbe was consecrated by the Swedish Archbishop, the doctrine of apostolic succession was understood by most of Latvian Lutherans in broad terms. Characteristic to that time are the thoughts published by an anonymous author in 1922 in the church newspaper ("Sunday Morning"), shortly before K. Irbe's consecration. He wrote that there was no teaching in Lutheranism about the succession of ecclesiastical offices and rejected the idea that the bishop's consecration was more special than the ordination of any other clergyman. "When a senior office holder

[60] First Conference. Fourth Session at Lambeth. Thursday morning, 19.03.1936, http://anglicanhistory.org/lutherania/latvia_estonia1938.html (accessed Apr. 4, 2023).

[61] Second Conference. *Second Session at Riga. Monday, 20th June*, 1938, http://anglicanhistory.org/lutherania/latvia_estonia1938.html (accessed Apr. 4, 2023).

[62] Ibid.

[63] Jouko Talonen, *Evangelical Lutheran Theology in Latvia from 1920 to 1940* (Rovaniemi: Pohjois-Suomen Historiallinen Yhdistys, 2021), 126.

[64] R. Zariņš, "Baznīcas ārlietas", *Laiks* 50 (24.06.1995), 7.

takes his post, we bless him by praying for God's help for his office."[65] This position prevailed also for a long time after the war. When in 1962 Kārlis Kundziņš, a well-known Latvian theologian of the pre-war period, became Archbishop of the Latvian Lutheran Church in exile,[66] he wrote that questions about the ritual of consecration and bishop's crosier are irrelevant to him. He was interested in the presence of other bishops in the ceremony, albeit not because of succession (he had already rejected that before the Second World War, stating that the community of believers itself is the custodian of the Spirit of Christ and his gifts, so the Christian community is also the one which confers this authority), but in order to use that event to raise awareness of the Latvian Church.[67] After the Second World War, Latvian Lutherans continued to use the term "apostolic succession" broadly. When in 1966 Arveds Celms was ordained by Dean Ringolds Mužiks during the Latvian Synod in United Kingdom, the rite was called "apostolic laying on of hands" in the synod's Minutes.[68]

However, it should be added that some younger Latvian theologians in the 1930s developed a "higher" ecclesiology. E. Rumba was critical of German ecclesiology and its influence on Latvian Lutheranism, believing that the concept of the church in Germany had perished.[69] Swedish Lutheranism for him was an example of another view: "The Swedish Evangelical folk church has maintained closer ties to the past of the church than any other Lutheran group."[70] He mentioned historical episcopate as a proof of this. He also introduced Latvian readers to various ecclesiological terms that were in ecumenical circulation (church as a mystery, church as a sacrament, church as communio sanctorum, etc.). Based on Söderblom's theology, in his view, "a church without a catholic consciousness is not really a church."[71] Later, at the end of the Soviet period, these views served as a background for the spread of High-Church ecclesiology among clergy of the ELCL (especially thanks to Rumba's disciple, Pastor Roberts Feldmanis). However, it is ironic that Jānis Vanags, the present ELCL Archbishop known for his High-Church views, was

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65 "Bīskapa iesvētīšana", *Svētdienas Rīts* 26 (25.06.1922), 2.

66 Nowadays, it is called The Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church Worldwide, whereas before it was called The Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church Abroad (LELCA), often also the term "The Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church in Exile" was used.

67 Alberts Ozols, "Baznīcas vadītājs", *Kalpošana garā un patiesībā*, Edgars Ķiploks, sast. ([b. v.]: Latviešu ev. lut. baznīca Amerikā, 1978), 140–141.

68 LELBĀL Lielbritānijā 1966. gada sinodes protokols, 21.–22.05.1966., LNA-LVA, 2303-11-v-15, 85. lp., op.

69 Edgars Rumba, *Baznīca un garīgais amats oikumeniski-luteriskā uztverē*. Latvijas Universitātes Raksti. Teoloģijas fakultātes sērija I.3. (Rīga: Latvijas Universitāte, 1938), 60; He supported this statement by quoting German theologian Otto Dibelius.

70 Ibid., 63.

71 Ibid., 172.

ordained while a student of theology in 1985 as an assistant pastor not by a bishop, but by Dean Jānis Bērziņš.[72]

After the Second World War, the question of succession was used as an argument by conflicting parties in LELCA. In the 1950s, a Latvian congregation in London, which existed outside LELCA and was led by Roberts Slokenbergs, referred to the doctrine of succession in its publication "Trimdas draudzes vēstnesis" ("The Messenger of an Exile Congregation"), in order to question the authority of Archbishop T. Grīnbergs. "After the death of Bishop K. Irbe, we no longer have a consecrated bishop of *successio apostolica*. If this situation remains, we will continue our existence as a sect."[73] Thus, the congregation justified the fact that its pastor Jēkabs Gailis had been ordained by R. Slokenbergs without a permission of Archbishop T. Grīnbergs – if there is no bishop "correctly" ordained, then it is also acceptable that the pastor ordains.

Another remaining difference was that in the Lutheran churches of Latvia and Estonia the diaconate did not exist as an order of ministry, but the office of deacon existed.[74] Edgars Rumba said that "while Anglicans laid stress on the three orders of ministry, Lutherans chiefly regarded the difference between bishop and presbyter as one of function and activity rather than one of order."[75] Anglicans then and now have often pointed to the threefold order of bishops, priests and deacon, but even today the diaconate is mainly transitional. This ecclesial hierarchical system has its origins in twists and turns of the English Reformation, and is not the result of sustained, deliberate theological reflections. Anglican churches differ in understanding what would be the scope of duties of deacons – Anglicans in Kenya in 1985 made a decision to allow deacons authorised by bishops to preside at the Eucharist, where no pastor was available.[76]

Historically, Latvian Lutherans also had one transitional year for those going to be ordained, the so-called "candidate's year." The 1928 constitution of the church also talks about assistant pastors. Deacons and deaconesses are mentioned, but under the section "Non-ordained workers".[77] Currently, Lutherans in Latvia are ordaining deacons according to the model of threefold

[72] "Svarīgākie notikumi Latvijas ev. lut. baznīcas dzīvē 1985./86. Baznīcas gadā," *Latvijas ev. lut. baznīcas kalendārs 1987. gadam* (Rīga: LELB konsistorija, b. g.), 135.

[73] E. Grants, "Apustuliskā sukcesija ev. lut. baznīcā", *Trimdas Draudzes Vēstnesis* 15 (1958), 5.

[74] First conference. Fourth Session at Lambeth. Thursday morning, 19.03.1936, http://anglicanhistory.org/lutherania/latvia_estonia1938.html (accessed Apr. 4, 2023).

[75] First conference. Fourth Session at Lambeth. Thursday morning, 19.03.1936, http://anglicanhistory.org/lutherania/latvia_estonia1938.html (accessed Apr. 4, 2023).

[76] Nicholas Taylor, *Lay Presidency at the Eucharist?: An Anglican Approach* (London, New York: Mowbray, 2009), 240.

[77] LELB 1928. gada Satversme, https://www.lelbpasaule.lv/par-mums/dokumenti/satversme/ (accessed Nov. 10, 2022).

order, however, some of arguments expressed in this connection are more emotional than historically grounded, and it is not clear what the difference between evangelist and deacon is.[78] One formally is part of clergy, while the other one is not, but it is more a question of symbolic power. The same can be said about the differences between evangelist and pastor, because evangelists (both male and female) have a variety of roles depending on local context – starting from pastoral assistants to deputies of pastors doing most of pastoral ministry. As experienced by the author of this article during his recent field-work, ordinary church-goers and some clergy often do not see the difference between the office of evangelist and that of the pastor.[79]

The Convocations of the Church of England debated and accepted the proposal to build closer relations with Lutheran churches of Latvia and Estonia in 1939, but not without anecdotal remarks. Canon Beresford Kidd (Oxford) said in the Lower House of Convocation of Canterbury that, when Luther discovered that general superintendents were cheaper than bishops, he abolished the office of bishop.[80]

As a result of contacts between the churches of England and Latvia, several Latvian Lutheran pastors resided in Great Britain. In 1937, Roberts Slokenbergs studied English in Cambridge, and he also had "a private assignment to learn about the structures and life of the Church of England."[81] The wording on the private nature of the visit is interesting – as can be seen from R. Slokenbergs' correspondence, T. Grīnbergs' diplomatic position was that his "collaboration with that church is private. Of course, the Supreme Church Board knows this, but I cannot be [officially] sent for formal reasons."[82] In 1938, Pastor Jānis Janelsītis stayed in Great Britain.[83] All these contacts were halted in 1940 with Soviet occupation. The Lambeth Conference of 1948 adopted a resolution that not only mentioned the 1936 and 1938 talks and subsequent reports, but also

[78] For example, Kaspars Lauris, newly ordained deacon, wrote in 2021 that "evangelist and parishioners are in a brother-sister relationship, but after ordination the deacon becomes a father. So, the status in relations with church members changes" (Kaspars Lauris, "Vislielākais Baznīcas dārgums ir draudze", *Svētdienas Rīts* 9 (2021), 9).

[79] The project "Living and believing gender in a neo-conservative future: the case of women's (non) ordination in Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church", No. lzp-2021/1-0182, 2022-2024.

[80] "The Churches of Latvia and Estonia", *Church Times* (26.05.1939), 558.

[81] LNA-LVVA, Latvijas sūtņa Lielbritānijā Kārļa Zariņa vēstule Ārlietu ministrijas saimniecības un finanšu nodaļai, 10.09.1937., 295-1-674, 14.

[82] LNA-LVVA, Rūjienas svētā Bērtuļa baznīcas Ziemeļu draudzes mācītāja Roberta Slokenberga vēstule Latvijas sūtnim Lielbritānijā Kārlim Zariņam, 09.03.1937., 295-1-674, 1.

[83] LNA-LVVA, Ārlietu ministrijas Administratīvās un protokola nodaļas vadītāja V. Olava vēstule Latvijas sūtniecībai Lielbritānijā, 04.11.1938., 295-1-674, 22.

expressed sympathy for the Latvians and Estonians who had been scattered as refugees and recommended that Anglicans support them.[84]

When in 1955 the Archbishop of Canterbury in his capacity as President of the British Council of Churches sent an invitation to ELCL Archbishop Gustavs Turs, he mentioned inter-war conversations between Baltic Lutheran and Anglican churches.[85] It was a historic event, a sign of political changes in the USSR after Stalin's death. International contacts by Soviet churches were part of the attempts of Nikita S. Khrushchev and other Soviet leaders to show the "human face" of socialism, as well as ways to influence international organizations (including religious ones). This new openness was only external, as religious organizations continued to be tightly controlled by the state and experienced a new wave of restrictions in the late 1950s. The ELCL had very limited opportunities to publicize the visit mentioned above. However, in an article published in the annual Church Calendar, Tūrs mentioned that the Archbishops of Estonia and Latvia received Holy Communion from Archbishop of Canterbury as a sign of intercommunion.[86] Before the visit, the Supreme Church Board of ELCL once again approved the text of the agreement of 1938.[87] At the same time, the renewal of the agreement should be viewed as a pragmatic move of using "windows" in contacts with the West, not as a rising interest in a particular type of ecclesiology. In 1960, in the worship service on the occasion of his seventy years of life and forty years of ordination G. Tūrs had no problem in being blessed by Adams Šernas, Superintendent of the Reformed Church of Lithuania, as the most senior pastor among the honoured guests.[88]

The pre-war agreement with Anglicans helped Latvian Lutherans in exile to make arrangements with Anglican churches in various countries to use their buildings for church services. For example, when Latvian Lutherans started services on the island of Newfoundland (Canada), Anglicans in Canada allowed the use of their premises for worship.[89] Sometimes Anglicans were

[84] "Resolution 71. The Unity of the Church – The Churches of Latvia and Estonia", https://www.anglicancommunion.org/resources/document-library/lambeth-conference/1948/resolution-71-the-unity-of-the-church-the-churches-of-latvia-and.aspx (accessed Nov. 10, 2022).

[85] Geoffrey Fisher to Gustavs Turss, 19.02.1955., Lambeth Palace Library, CFR LRC 95/2, Latvia: Contacts: Archbishop Gustavs Turs, 4.

[86] Gustavs Tūrs, "Arhibīskapa atskaite draudzēm par viņa ceļojumu uz Lielbritāniju 1955. g. no 4.–18. jūlijam", *Latvijas Evaņģēliskās luteriskās baznīcas kalendārs 1956. gadam* (Rīga: b. i., b. g.), 42.

[87] Latvijas PSR Ev. lut. baznīcas virsvaldes plenārsēžu protokoli (24.01.1952.–16.11.1959.), LELB arhīvs (ELCL Archive), Protokols nr. 28, 04.05.1955, 94–95.

[88] Redakcija. "Arhibīskapa Dr. theol. Gustava Tūra mūža un darba goda diena,", *Ev. lut. baznīcas kalendārs 1961. gadam,* (Rīga: b. i.), 36. lpp.

[89] Alfrēds Skrodelis, "Latviešu draudzes – siržu ugunskuri un latvietības cietokšņi", *Baznīcas kalendārs 1953. gadam* ([Eslingene]: Latvijas ev. lut. baznīcas virsvalde), 48–49.

not sure what to do. Among the files of the Lambeth Palace archive, there is a correspondence between Archbishop Frank Woods of Melbourne and John Satterthwaite of the Church of England, in which F. Woods asks for advice on what to do with Latvian pastor Elmārs Kociņš, who wanted to be ordained by Anglicans in Australia.[90] The Archbishop wrote that Kociņš no longer wanted to serve in the Lutheran Church, which in his opinion was too narrow, but wanted to convert to Anglicanism together with the Latvian congregation. However, the problem was that the older members of this congregation would not want to be reconfirmed by Anglicans. In the Archbishop's opinion, these congregation members should seek pastoral care in a Lutheran church. Kociņš, once an ordained Anglican, would not be able to continue serving in the Lutheran church, as it would mean admitting unconfirmed people (from the Anglican perspective) to Holy Communion..[91] The contradiction is that the Archbishop notes as positive the fact that Kociņš accepts the 39 Articles of Religion as theologically close to the Augsburg Confession, but there is nothing in these documents that would support F. Wood's views on confirmation. J. Satterthwaite was more positive as he suggested contacting the local Lutheran leadership so that the transition would not look like Anglican proselytizing, and noted that there had been cases in the past of communion being given to people who were not confirmed by a bishop.[92] E. Kociņš, however, remained to serve in the Lutheran church and retired from ministry in the Latvian congregation in Melbourne in 2003.[93]

Conclusion: lessons to be learnt

There have been a number of issues raised in the past (including events analysed in this article), which still retain their importance. The tradition of the church is a never-ending conversation, a "project" of translation that combines the vision of the past with the realities of today. There are also issues

[90] Kociņš was ordained by the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Australia (ELCA), which had close links with the Missouri Synod. There was also a second Lutheran church in Australia that was a member of the Lutheran World Federation. Differences between these two churches also affected Latvian congregations. In 1952, when a conference of Australian Latvian Lutheran pastors was convened to settle differences, the clergy who belonged to the ELCA did not attend. Arnolds Grosbahs, "Latviešu ev. lut draudzes", *Latvieši Austrālijā,* red. Alberts Priedītis (Melburna: Austra, 1953), 97–98.

[91] Letter from F. Woods to the Secretary, The Church of England Council of Inter-Church Relations, 25.07.1963, Lambeth Palace Library, CFR LRC 94/1, Latvia: Anglican Relations, 18.03.1936.–27.05.1988, 22–24.

[92] John Satterthwaite, Letter to F. Woods, 26.07.1963, Ibid., 25.

[93] A. Grimms, "Mācītājs Dr. E. Kociņš atvadās no savas draudzes", *Austrālijas Latvietis* 2656 (04.06.2003), 3.

behind the scene (role of other ecumenical partners (Catholics, Orthodox), church "parties", cultural wars over sexuality, etc.) we should be aware of, because these factors – even if they are not always openly acknowledged – play a role in the process of making alliances within denominations and in the wider ecumenical scene. For example, issues of sexuality lead to caution among the predominantly conservative Baltic Lutherans who are building alliances with similarly minded Anglicans – Archbishop Vanags has met with his ACNA (The Anglican Church in North America) counterparts several times.[94] In 2022, ACNA bishops took part in consecration of two new Lutheran bishops in Latvia. A similar process can be seen in the United Kingdom, where conservative Anglican Evangelicals who otherwise would find a lot in common with low-church Methodists in the United Kingdom, are opposed to a possible union between Anglicans and Methodists.[95] This is a divisive issue in the Church of England that makes it marginal in the eyes of the majority of the population of England despite its claim that, as an established church, it serves everyone. At the same time, the debates show that stereotypes about various church "parties" are blurring, and the current scene is much more complicated. Steven Croft, the bishop of Oxford, who openly backed fully equal same-sex marriage in November 2022, falls within the open evangelical tradition of Anglicanism.

The ecumenical scene is influenced also by the ongoing dialogue with Roman Catholics and Orthodox. Catholics are more consistent in formulating their views than many Protestants, who speak of the "discovery" of Catholicism. Visible unity should not be a goal in itself. We should be honest in mutual acknowledgement that on some issues we maybe will never agree and that should not be an obstacle to cooperation. For example, if we are waiting for Roman Catholics to accept womens ordination, we are not likely to experience it in our lifetime. We also should be clear what Catholic views we are talking about – the views of the Magisterium or the voices of theologians that reject some of Roman Catholic dogma as unhistorical. Hans Küng was the one who wrote of the view that "the New Testament does not allow us to 'canonize' any one form of community constitution."[96] Leonardo Boff showed how the development of hierarchy is connected with urbanization which is turn is related to the rationalization of religion. It created a class of "experts"

[94] Mary Ann Mueller, 'The Lutherans Came to Visit and met with ACNA Bishops, https://virtueonline.org/lutherans-came-visit-and-met-acna-bishops (accessed Jan. 9, 2023).

[95] In 2021 British Methodists decided to allow same sex marriages. As stated by the author of an article in "Christianity Today", "Evangelicals should also actively oppose any further steps to unity with this rudderless Methodist vessel." David Baker, "Methodism? Dead. Anglicanism? Not yet", *Christianity Today*, 05.07.2021, https://www.christiantoday.com/article/methodism.dead.anglicanism.not.yet/137051.htm (accessed Apr. 4, 2023).

[96] Hans Küng, *Why Priests?* (London: Collins, 1977), 36.

charged with the preservation of tradition.[97] This is a process of historical development that should not be mystified with a rhetoric of "sacred orders" (as if other ecclesial offices are less sacred), or by church design that depicts signs of power (for example, larger chairs for clergy), and titles that remind one more of medieval hierarchies than servanthood.

The COVID crisis has exacerbated questions about the relevance of traditional ecclesiology to today's context of networking and mistrust of institutions. At the same time, the issue is not simply about dismantling old structures. Times of crisis shed light on the fact that this is not either/or – structures have their place, but they are not absolute and not an end in themselves, but only an instrument. The contemporary Anglican concept of "mixed economy" (various models of being church existing side by side) has some resemblance to what Pentecostal theologian Andy Lord calls "network catholicity" in which networks are formed, characterised by partnerships.[98] At the first glance, the parallels seem too distant, but if we take into account the present fragmentation and diversification of church life (despite the trends of managerialism), it is a realistic model. In fact, Anglican "flying bishops" serving Anglo-Catholic traditionalists and conservative Evangelicals who reject the ministry of women bishops or priests is an example of such a "network theology", only badly articulated and resulting in the creation of almost separate church sub-cultures. It has the negative effect of turning church leaders into diversity managers afraid of expressing their own views. Unfortunately it is difficult to imagine personalities like bishops John Spong and John Robinson in leadership positions in the prevailing ecclesial climate. The question also remains: at which point is a real, visible unity simply not possible, becoming instead a false appearance of unity?[99]

The postponement of ordinations due to the COVID crisis, a similar delay in confirmations, suggests that it could be appropriate to revive the ancient Protestant practice that, if necessary, a pastor or dean as a bishop's representative may also ordain. When in 1705 the SPCK started missionary work in South India and turned to University of Halle for missionaries, two ordained Lutheran pastors were commissioned to work as Anglican missionaries in Tranquebar.[100] J. B. Lightfoot later wrote – "an emergency may arise

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97 Leonardo Boff, *Church: Charism and Power. Liberation Theology and the Institutional Church* (London: SCM Press, 1985), 140–141.

98 Andy Lord, *Network Church: A Pentecostal Ecclesiology Shaped by Mission* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2012), 238.

99 To the author of this article, the ocasions when traditionalists do not take part in Holy Communion or in common prayers are indicators that such a unity no longer exists.

100 Jeremy Morris, "Porvoo: the long durée – setting the scene from the Anglican side", *Together in Mission and Ministry. Papers presented in October 2008 in Åkersberg, Höor, Sweden*, ed. Jaakko Rusama (Uppsala: Nordic Ecumenical Council, 2013), 39–40.

when the spirit and not the letter must decide. […] The higher ordinance of the universal priesthood will overrule all special limitations. The layman will assume functions which are otherwise restricted to the ordained minister."[101]

We also should point to the strange-looking Anglican practice in the ecumenical context that confirmation can only be performed by a bishop. The current rules of the Church of England state that members of the Church of England who have not been episcopally confirmed should be confirmed before they can be regarded as full communicant members.

The requirement for episcopal confirmation has become more complex in the light of the increased use of presbyteral confirmation in the Roman Catholic Church and the regular practice of presbyteral confirmation in the Nordic and Baltic Lutheran churches of the Porvoo Agreement.

Moreover, the insistence on the absolute necessity of episcopal ordination turns bishops into "ordaining machines" and demonstrates a mechanically-magical understanding of the spiritual office, which is difficult to justify by the historical confessional documents of Anglicanism and Lutheranism (the 39 Articles and the Augsburg Confession) where questions of church offices are adiaphora. Yes, both – Anglicans and Lutherans – emphasize the importance of order; this helps to avoid the negative effects of religious individualism, but that should not preclude exceptions and a pragmatic approach, according to which ecclesiological issues, which were so crucial to some participants of the inter-war meetings described here, are no longer of a primary importance. It should be noted that even many of those Anglicans who have a "high" ecclesiology nowadays have more nuanced view on apostolic succession. As John Wright, American Episcopal theologian, writes: "the basic qualification is not so much whether each bishop "possesses" individually the historic succession, like a magic trick that can guarantee sacramental validation, but rather what counts is the doctrinal content that each bishop represents in their own church and what kind of ecclesiological relationship exists between the churches involved."[102]

In conclusion, a few words about the methodology of comparing confessional documents used in meetings analysed here. The Augsburg Confession and the 39 Articles of Religion are texts of their time. Therefore, it is not helpful to use them uncritically as a basis for constructing new orthodoxies or reviving old ones. However, they still can serve as bearers of the Protestant

[101] Jeremy Morris, "Porvoo: the long durée – setting the scene from the Anglican side", *Together in Mission and Ministry. Papers presented in October 2008 in Åkersberg, Höör, Sweden*, ed. Jaakko Rusama (Uppsala: Nordic Ecumenical Council, 2013), 45.

[102] John Robert Wright, "O Felix Culpa! Should Old Catholic Bishops Participate in the Laying-on-of-Hands at Anglican Consecrations when Lutheran Bishops are Co-Consecrators?", http://anglicanhistory.org/essays/wright/prague2002.pdf (accessed Apr. 4, 2023).

principle as understood by Paul Tillich – the protest against any absolute claim made for a relative reality.[103] As expressed by the Articles of Religion, "they (even general councils) may err, and sometimes have erred, even in things pertaining unto God."[104] It stands against the attempts to build strongholds of religious identities based on dogma, hierarchies or any other aspects of church life. It can be taken as an invitation to the journey, not retreat into the imagined past.

[103] Paul Tillich, *The Protestant Era* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1948), 163.

[104] "Articles of Religion", https://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-and-worship/worship-texts-and-resources/book-common-prayer/articles-religion#XXI (accessed Apr. 4, 2023).

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