



Questioning Authority

ELLEN K. WONDRA*

Books Reviewed:

Beyond the Reformation:⁹ Authority, Primacy and Unity in the Conciliar Tradition. By Paul Avis. London: T&T Clark, 2006. xx + 256 pp. \$55.00 (paper).

Power and Christian Theology. By Stephen Sykes. New Century Theology. London: Continuum, 2006. xii + 160 pp. \$35.95 (paper).

An Introduction to World Anglicanism. By Bruce N. Kaye. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008. x + 276 pp. \$34.90 (paper).

Ecumenism, Christian Origins and the Practice of Communion. By Nicholas Sagovsky. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008. x + 232 pp. \$39.99 (paper).

Conflict and the Practice of Christian Faith: The Anglican Experiment. By Bruce N. Kaye. Eugene, Ore.: Cascade Books, 2009. x + 192 pp. \$22.00 (cloth).

Up with Authority: Why We Need Authority to Flourish as Human Beings. By Victor Lee Austin. London: T&T Clark, 2010. ix + 192 pp. \$34.95 (paper).

Many Parts, One Body: How the Episcopal Church Works. By James Dator with Jan Nunley. New York: Church Publishing, 2010. xv + 208 pp. \$25.00 (paper).

* Ellen K. Wondra is Research Professor of Theology and Ethics at the Bexley Seabury Seminary Federation. She is a member of the World Council of Churches' Commission on Faith and Order and a former member of the Anglican-Roman Catholic Consultation in the United States (ARCUSA).

The Church: Towards a Common Vision. By the Commission on Faith and Order of the World Council of Churches. Faith and Order Papers no. 214. Geneva: World Council of Churches Publishing, 2013. ix + 56 pp. \$10.00 (paper). <http://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/commissions/faith-and-order/i-unity-the-church-and-its-mission/the-church-towards-a-common-vision>.

A Polity of Persuasion: Gift and Grief of Anglicanism. By Jeffrey W. Driver. Eugene, Ore.: Cascade Books, 2014. xii + 184 pp. \$21.00 (paper).

Sources of Authority, Volume 1: The Early Church. Edited by Tamara Grdzeldze. Faith and Order Papers no. 217. Geneva: World Council of Churches, 2014. xxviii + 152 pp. \$20.00 (paper).

Sources of Authority, Volume 2: Contemporary Churches. Edited by Tamara Grdzeldze. Faith and Order Papers no. 218. Geneva: World Council of Churches, 2014. xviii + 184 pp. \$20.00 (paper).

It has been said often enough: The Anglican Communion is in crisis, and the root of the crisis is not disagreements about sexuality, or the ordination of women as bishops, or even the interpretation of scripture. At root, it is a crisis of authority.

Well, yes and no. Yes, the Anglican Communion is facing a variety of challenges that threaten its cohesion both now and in the future. And yes, authority is a key part of those challenges. But there is no time when the Anglican Communion has *not* faced significant challenges about how it understands and practices ecclesial authority. It is more accurate to say that the Anglican Communion, Anglican Christianity, Christianity in the British Isles has from the outset disagreed sharply about how to understand authority, and how to embody or practice it in the church.

Furthermore, many of the authors whose works are reviewed here would say that this ongoing struggle is not only characteristic to Anglicanism, but is also part of what Anglicanism has to offer to the body of Christ overall. The Anglican Communion has long dealt with difference and conflict in positive ways, that is, ways that both embrace difference and stimulate communion. That it is having difficulty now does not negate this fact. Indeed, how Anglicans face these

challenges may prove suggestive to other worldwide communions or federations as they face the same situation of global diversity.

This review article considers a number of publications since 2003 that lend support to this claim. 2003 is the year that the Diocese of New Hampshire elected Gene Robinson as its bishop, the General Convention consented to that election, and Robinson was consecrated. In 2003 the Diocese of New Westminster in the Anglican Church in Canada approved the blessing of same-sex unions in the church. In 2003 then-Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams established the Lambeth Commission on Communion, which in 2004 released *The Windsor Report*¹ and began the Windsor process of developing a covenant that (it was hoped) would provide ways to secure the “bonds of affection” among the provinces of the Anglican Communion. A lot has happened since.

Each of the authors² whose works are reviewed here deals with some aspect of the very complex topic of the theology and practice of authority in the Anglican Communion. Each book in its own way proposes a theological basis for a positive view of authority.

Grounded as much in philosophy as theology, Victor Lee Austin's *Up with Authority* argues that the exercise of authority is both a necessary and a desirable component of being fully human. Human beings are inherently relational and social; therefore, practices of authority allow humans to enhance each other's well-being, and that is an integral part of personal well-being. Thus, being in relations where authority is practiced well is an integral aspect of any person's ability to be fully human. Further, authority exists only in and through the performance of authoritative activities by actual persons

¹ The Lambeth Commission on Communion, *The Windsor Report 2004* (London: Anglican Communion Office, 2004); <http://www.anglicancommunion.org/windsor2004/index.cfm>.

² Paul Avis has been General Secretary of the Church of England's Council for Christian Unity, Jeffrey Driver the Anglican Archbishop of Adelaide in Australia, Bruce Kaye the General Secretary of the Anglican Church of Australia, Nicholas Sagovsky a member of ARCIC, and Stephen Sykes a member and chair of the Inter-Anglican Theological and Doctrinal Commission (IATDC). John Gibaut, whose essays appear in both volumes edited by Tamara Grdzeldize, was until recently the director of the World Council of Churches' Commission on Faith and Order and is soon to be the director for Unity, Faith and Order of the Anglican Communion. Victor Lee Austin has for a number of years been Theologian-in-Residence at St. Thomas Church Fifth Avenue in New York, while James Dator is professor of political science and director of the Hawaii Research Center for Future Studies at the University of Hawaii at Manoa.

(Austin, 3); that is, authority has no reality in the abstract. Further, any performance of authority is always both personal (exercised by persons) and, in the broadest sense, political; it is performed only within groups or societies with some commonality and cohesion. Clearly, what kind of authority it is and how it is practiced will vary widely with cultural context, a point Bruce Kaye is at some pains to make as well in *Conflict and the Practice of Christian Faith*.

The materials from the World Council of Churches—the two slim volumes *Sources of Authority* and the 2013 study document *The Church: Towards a Common Vision*—build from the affirmation of authority as a gift from God, found in *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*.³ The study document as well as the essays and responses in *Sources* are grounded in the claim that authority in the church is to be properly understood and exercised as Christ exercised authority, as service rather than might or privilege. Christ's authority is entrusted to all the people of God, but within this body, the ordained—especially bishops—have a special role. This is all familiar stuff, found consistently in ecumenical studies and documents that address authority in the church. *Sources of Authority* then focuses on authoritative sources of knowledge. Volume 1 considers how each major tradition (including Anglicanism) casts the early church as authoritative. Volume 2 presents essays in which representatives of these traditions look at components of authority that are distinctive in each tradition. John Gibaut's essay focuses on reason as an authoritative source in Anglicanism.

The other texts reviewed here focus more directly and explicitly on the challenge of authority in contemporary Anglicanism. James Dator's *Many Parts, One Body* is a careful consideration of the political structure of the Episcopal Church. Is it federal, confederal, or unitary in type—or some combination of the three? The answer to this question then has quite practical and immediate implications for such questions as whether or not the structures and canons of the church permit a particular diocese to nullify an act of General Convention (Dator, x). Judgments made about concrete cases set precedents for future situations. And these and similar questions affect quite directly

³ Commission on Faith and Order of the World Council of Churches, *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*, Faith and Order Paper no. 111 (Geneva: World Council of Churches Publishing, 1982), III.B.15–16; <http://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/commissions/faith-and-order/i-unity-the-church-and-its-mission/baptism-eucharist-and-ministry-faith-and-order-paper-no-111-the-lima-text>.

questions about what communion means, how it is to be maintained, how divisive conflicts may be adjudicated, and the like.

The books by Paul Avis, Stephen Sykes, Nicholas Sagovsky, Bruce Kaye, and Jeffrey Driver look quite directly at how the question of authority is currently being considered in the Anglican Communion. These authors agree that the nature and purpose of authority has to be considered within the context of the human sciences as well as theology; conflict is a positive component of life in communion, arising from the very basis of our Christian faith; effective exercise of authority in the church is a matter of persuasion; practices of authority must actively involve all the people of God; and conciliarity and synodality at every level are characteristics of the Anglican heritage that must be recovered, renewed, and received.

These points are made in the particular context of the challenges Anglicans presently face regarding the theology and practice of authority. The events of 2003 created a new situation for Anglicans, but not an unfamiliar one.⁴ Driver helpfully places these events as a new turn in a reconsideration of authority in the church that was evident from the 1968 Lambeth Conference's affirmation of "ordered liberty" (Driver, 17) through the Inter-Anglican Theological and Doctrinal Commission (IATDC)'s *Virginia Report*⁵ prepared for the 1998 Lambeth Conference. The impetus for these developments comes from massive global changes in governance and power arrangements, not least of which are the emergence of new nations from colonial rule and the changing roles of women in society and the church.⁶ By 1978, two new "instruments of communion" had been established (the Anglican

⁴ As Avis, Driver, Kaye, and others note, the question of Anglicanism beyond the Church of England arose prior to the English Reformation when Henry VIII gave Archbishop Cranmer oversight of the church in Ireland, and Wales became part of England. The interrelationship of provinces within a fellowship of churches has been a pressing question from the eighteenth into the twenty-first century.

⁵ Inter-Anglican Theological and Doctrinal Commission, *The Virginia Report* (London: Anglican Consultative Council, 1997); <http://www.lambethconference.org/1998/documents/report-1.pdf>.

⁶ The influence of imperialism and colonialism on Anglican ecclesiology and its understanding of authority is an important but largely undiscussed topic. Bruce Kaye's *Introduction to World Anglicanism* lays important groundwork here, as do, for example, *Beyond Colonial Anglicanism: The Anglican Communion in the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Ian T. Douglas and Kwok Pui-Lan (New York: Church Publishing, 2001); and Lamin Sanneh, *Whose Religion Is Christianity? The Gospel beyond the West* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans Publishing, 2003).

Consultative Council in 1969 and the Council of Primates in 1978),⁷ and discourse about maintaining “the highest possible degree of communion [among] provinces which differ” had become standard.⁸ *The Virginia Report* proposed using these instruments of communion to provide a centralized authority that would adjudicate conflict at the global level. The events of 2003 made it clear that theories of authority within an interdependent communion did not translate cleanly or congenially into practice.

The churches of the Anglican Communion, indeed all Christian churches, have not been alone in grappling with how authority can be configured to deal effectively with cultural diversity in an increasingly secularized and pluralistic world. Given that contemporary Anglicanism is set in this postcolonial, pluralistic, and secularized context, how can we helpfully understand authority and its various components, notably interdependence (or the relationship of diversity and unity, dispersal and cohesion), conflict, and the relation of power to persuasion? This question shapes the remainder of this article.

The Nature and Purpose of Authority

Virtually all discussions of authority in the church begin by affirming that the ultimate source of authority in the church is God, who has in Jesus Christ given us a manifestation of divine authority in creation and an example for the faithful to follow. This is foundational, but it is not sufficient either to describe the nature of authority in the church or to guide the practices of that authority. A great deal more must be said from foundational theology: the nature of God, the relation of the divine and human, the nature of the human, the nature and purpose of the church, and so on. Contemporary ecclesiology puts great emphasis on communion (*koinonia*) as the best way of understanding each of these, beginning with the communion that is the Trinity and therefore the basic pattern of creation, redemption, and fulfillment.

Insofar as human beings are created, sustained, and fulfilled in the image and likeness of God, human being is fundamentally constituted in and through relationship—with God and with others. At the

⁷ The Lambeth Conference came into being in 1867 in large measure because of disputes about authority in worldwide Anglicanism.

⁸ Lambeth 1988 Resolution 1.1; <http://www.lambethconference.org/resolutions/1988/1988-1.cfm>.

same time, to be fully human is to be free to act in accord with one's human nature in choosing appropriate goods (Austin, 33–36). These aspects of human nature stand in some tension with each other, in that relationality always means that one's own good is interdependent with the good of others; but how this may be so is in many cases not readily discernible. Therefore, Christian life in communion must be structured to enhance common flourishing so that personal creativity and vision can be used collaboratively for the good of the whole.

Such freedom is interdependent; no one person can approach her or his aspiration without the active cooperation of others (Austin, 17). The performance (or exercise) of authority is, along with knowledge of and affiliation with others, the means by which cooperation among humans is enhanced. That is, authority is the means by which decisions are made “amongst alternatives which have equal reason.” In making such decisions, “authority enhances the freedom to participate in corporate action, as it also enhances freedom for individual fulfillment within corporate action.” To put it concretely, “in a symphony, authority enhances what the musicians are capable of doing freely by promoting their good as distinct musicians and by making it possible for them to participate in the complex good of music played together” (Austin, 17–19). In other words, “the necessity of authority is a manifestation of the glory of being human” (Austin, 1) because it makes possible human *koinonia* that mirrors the communion that is God. Authority is a gift only insofar its performance enhances communion.

But how the reality of God's communion is best enacted among humans in church and society as they actually are is not as straightforward as some have made it appear (Driver, 34–37; Kaye, *Conflict*, 91–93; Sagovsky, 202–207). As the IATDC said in 2004, “Too close an identification of the doctrine of the church with that of God in Trinity idealizes institutional decisions made by particular ecclesial bodies. It runs the danger of confusing a theological *is* with an empirical *ought*.”⁹ For Driver and Kaye, especially, the centralizing tendency shown in *The Virginia Report*, *The Windsor Report*, and some of the drafts of the Anglican Covenant are “set against an emerging emphasis on the relationality and mutuality of the Holy Trinity as the basis for communion” (Driver, 30). The emphasis on four global instruments

⁹ Inter-Anglican Theological and Doctrinal Commission, “Summary Argument from the IATDC's ‘Communion Study,’” para. 5; http://www.anglicancommunion.org/commission/process/lc_commission/docs/200406iatdc.pdf.

of communion as the guardians of *koinonia* ignores the importance of the wide variety of formal and informal networks throughout the Communion and in individual provinces in actually embodying and enacting communion within the local and worldwide church (Kaye, *Conflict*, 100–102). Indeed, in *An Introduction to World Anglicanism*, Kaye addresses these multiple forms of interdependence thematically, showing just how rich actual *koinonia* is beyond the designated instruments.

Conflict and Communion

But *koinonia* does not mean only contented harmony. Communion is constituted in and through conflict, which arises from the diversity of gifts bestowed by God (Kaye, *Conflict*, chap. 1). This diversity of gifts means that persons will disagree about how best to utilize this wealth to enhance both common and individual well-being; hence the positive value of authority (Austin). Conflict approached properly is generative and creative; it enhances *koinonia* and provides opportunities and stimulates reform and renewal (Driver, 50).¹⁰ As Sagovsky says:

When we speak of *koinonia* between or among humans we are speaking of a process which involves conflict, reconciliation, and risk. When we speak of *koinonia* between members of churches or between churches, exactly the same dynamics are present, but they are explicitly set against an eschatological horizon of unbreakable communion, that is to say the unbroken coinherence of the Trinity. (Sagovsky, 206)

Kaye comes at the meaning of conflict from another angle, arguing in *Conflict and the Practice of Christian Faith* that conflict is given with the very basis of our Christian faith. It “arises because we believe that Jesus of Nazareth is the incarnate Son of God” (Kaye, *Conflict*, 3). That is, the “universal scope” of God’s invitation through Christ must be met with a personal response of faith. That response is always concrete and local, developed and lived out in a community of faith that is always made up of people living in quite particular and diverse societies, locations, and historical moments. At the same time, God’s

¹⁰ See also Paul Avis, *Authority, Leadership, and Conflict in the Church* (Philadelphia, Pa.: Trinity Press International, 1992).

invitation is universal in scope, so it is imperative to figure out how this scope can be practiced in networks and webs of interrelationship (chosen and not). And that involves conflict.

In other words, conflict as such has a fundamentally positive valence in that it arises from the gifts that God gives us in our creation and for our salvation, flourishing, and fulfillment. It has to do most basically with diversity that enriches. Of course conflict may also be divisive, fragmenting, and destructive. But to begin with this negative assumption is fundamentally a misunderstanding of reality. This misunderstanding results in strategies of containment, suppression, centralization of authority, and so on. These strategies are widely evident outside the church and they certainly affect how the church understands both its internal conflicts and its witness to the world. Yet this is an area where the church is called to be in but not of the world. The church must embrace the various phenomena arising from God's gift of difference in ways that manifest and proclaim God's saving presence in a broken and fragmented world.

Baptism, Mission, and the Dispersal of Authority

In baptism the faithful are knit up into one body whose full scope and measure is manifested eschatologically. Within history, there are glimpses, moments, and events that anticipate eschatological fullness; and part of the Christian vocation and mission is to be open to such manifestations and to make them available beyond the church. Indeed, in baptism every Christian receives authority from God to do just that, as Paul Avis has noted:

Baptism constitutes the primary ground of our unity—the unity that exists and cries out to be realised in shared Holy Communion, shared mission and shared oversight. . . . We do not deny one another's baptism; therefore we cannot deny our mutual status in Christ. This is the starting point for a journey of mutual understanding on the basis of unreserved mutual acceptance. We seek to be in communion with those who are already in communion with our Lord and to realise this to the fullest extent, as far as the full visible unity of Christ's presently divided Church.¹¹

¹¹ Paul Avis, *Anglicanism and the Christian Church: Theological Resources in Historical Perspective*, revised and expanded edition (London: T&T Clark, 2002), 348.

In other words, at some basic level, authority is always already dispersed among the baptized, including the authority to discern how the church might at any given time live out its vocation and mission.¹² Mission, in itself, is also always a matter of dispersal. At the same time, the vocation and mission of Christians must be carried out in the context of Christian community, enhanced by structures and practices of authority. The rich description of dispersed authority submitted to the 1948 Lambeth Conference is prefaced by this statement: "It may be said that authority of this [dispersed] kind is much harder to understand and obey than authority of a more imperious character. This is true and we glory in the appeal which it makes to faith."¹³

From one angle, the challenges currently facing the Anglican Communion pertain to precisely how in practice the authority conferred in baptism for the sake of mission can best be enacted. The current challenges may signal that a shift in fundamental ecclesiology is indeed underway, eliciting both consensus and resistance. In rooting authority in the theology of baptism rather than the theology of ordination, received understandings of the purposes of authority and how it ought to be exercised are unsettled, shifted, and reconfigured. When baptism is understood as not only an incorporation into the body of Christ but also a commissioning for mission in accord with the *missio Dei*, the purpose of authority is oriented toward the activity of God in the world and the exercise of authority within the church is always in service of this mission. Faithful and effective mission entails form, purpose, and orderliness on the church's part. But when enacted well, these point away from the church to the purposes of God. Orderliness, that is, is not an end in itself.

The World Council's *The Church: Towards a Common Vision* is a good example of the received ecclesiology that is in process of revision.

¹² Austin helpfully points out that this is a consistent theme in the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission's three statements on authority. This is particularly telling in that the Roman Catholic Church's structures in actuality do not disperse authority as widely as Anglican structures do.

¹³ The 1948 statement is widely used and challenged in contemporary Anglican discussions of authority. The passage quoted is used in IATDC's 2008 *Communion, Conflict and Hope*, part 1 para. 17; http://www.anglicancommunion.org/ministry/theological/iatdc/docs/communion_conflict_&_hope.pdf. In various works, both Stephen Sykes and Paul Avis see this statement as expressing a key component of Anglican ecclesiology, as do Driver and Kaye in the present works. The full statement is found in the Lambeth Committee Report on "The Anglican Communion," available in *Lambeth Conference 1948* (London: SPCK, 1948), 85.

After describing the authority exercised by Jesus (*Church*, III.49), which is to be the model of authority in the church, *The Church* then summarizes various sources of authority (*Church*, III.50). But when *The Church* turns to exercise of authority by persons, it begins with the ordained, secondarily noting that the exercise of authority “includes the participation of the whole community, whose sense of the faith (*sensus fidei*) contributes to the overall understanding of God’s Word and whose reception of the guidance and teaching of the ordained ministers testifies to the authenticity of the leadership. A relation of mutual love and dialogue *unites those who exercise authority and those who are subject to it*” (*Church*, III.51, emphasis added). Yes, the *sensus fidei* is a matter of collaboration among all, but it remains the case that decision-making resides with those “especially consecrated for the ministry of oversight and elicits the consensus of all.”¹⁴ *The Virginia Report*, *The Windsor Report*, and various drafts of the Anglican Covenant continue this approach,¹⁵ and it grounds the concentration of authority in the instruments of communion.

However, when the locus of authority is shifted from ordination to baptism, the result is that in practice authority in the church *must* be dispersed throughout the body such that what concerns all must be approved by all,¹⁶ and in practical, meaningful ways. This is precisely what synodality is about: the actual walking together of all the faithful, which is a matter of concrete performance in time and place rather than abstract theory alone. Nor can such synodality be left to chance; it must be incorporated in the authority-bearing structures of the church. How the church configures its polity—its internal political arrangements—either assists or inhibits the walking together of the faithful. When authority is conferred at baptism, synodality must be structured so that two potentially contradictory elements are held in a constant and, it is to be hoped, creative tension. Because in the church all are authorized, all ought to participate in exercising authority.¹⁷ At

¹⁴ The World Council’s 1982 statement *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* says that oversight (*episkopé*) is exercised in “various forms” among Christian churches, though churches without the historic episcopate “may need to recover the sign of the episcopal succession” (*Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*, VI.53).

¹⁵ *The Virginia Report*, 5.2; *The Windsor Report*, B.63–65, and Section D.

¹⁶ Paul Avis, *In Search of Authority: Anglican Theological Method from the Reformation to the Enlightenment* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), 18.

¹⁷ The process of reception is an important correlate to the exercise of authority, but beyond the scope of this essay. From the 1987 *Grindrod Report* forward through *The Windsor Report* and beyond, official reports have built a case for “open reception,”

the same time, the church is a body, a coming together in communion, a visible foretaste of the eschatological fulfillment of the human as both social and personal. This means that in some ways at some points the church must express in performance both its unity and its catholicity as a cohesive communion. Or, more simply, authority is both dispersed and gathered. But how ought this to be done in ways that are both theologically sound and practically effective? There's the rub.

In their respective works, Avis, Driver, Kaye, and Sagovsky argue that the necessary tension here between dispersal and gathering is in danger of being prematurely and provisionally dissolved in favor of an overemphasis on centralized structures and juridical processes, and on unity as uniformity by binding agreement to particular doctrinal and ecclesiological claims. For these four authors, synodality and conciliarity are currently not given adequate consideration even within existing formal structures. Rather, concrete proposals such as those in *The Virginia Report*, *The Windsor Report*, and various iterations of the Anglican Covenant tend to centralize decision-making and juridical authority, removing it formally from the provinces and their component dioceses in a variety of ways. While explicitly affirming subsidiarity—the notion that decisions ought to be made at the most local level of competent authority possible—these proposals actually work against it. In no way do any of these authors challenge the importance of the episcopate. But they all note that three of the four instruments of communion currently include only bishops, while only the Anglican Consultative Council includes laity, deacons, and priests. All this is for the purposes of dealing with divisive conflict. But the approach is one of containment, suppression, “premature foreclosure of debates,” and “the illegitimate manufacture and imposition of consensus” (Sagovsky, 204).

Kaye in particular goes further in arguing that synodality and conciliarity are never matters of formal or official authority structures alone. They are also enacted through formal and informal networks of various sorts, each in its own particular scope and purposes contributing to the universal scope of Christian witness and mission (Kaye, *Introduction*). Indeed, though these formal and informal

a process that considers developments in a way that may or may not lead to their acceptance, but in any event is characterized by living with diversity, maintaining openness, and recognizing provisionality (Driver, chap. 4).

networks are generally not considered in commissioned documents such as *The Virginia Report* and *The Windsor Report*, in reality they are highly significant in how communion and the authority of the baptized are actually enacted in the Anglican Communion. Or, as Kaye says, when it comes to worldwide communion, “The Windsor Report is not the only game in town” (Kaye, *Conflict*, 88).

Performing Catholicity

So if not the juridical centralization of *The Windsor Report* and the earlier drafts of the Anglican Covenant, then what? What can facilitate “the highest degree of communion possible” in a worldwide church living out its faith in such widely varied contexts? In various ways each of these authors affirms that not only synodality but more broadly participatory conciliarity and in some circumstances primacy are needed at the worldwide as well as provincial and local levels. This is not merely a matter of practicality, though it is that. As we have seen with Austin, appropriate performance of authority enhances rather than inhibits participation because of the fundamental sociality or relationality of human beings as created by God. Insofar as centralized structures and juridical processes enact this enhancement, they are necessary and valuable. But their operations must be arranged in structures that are inherently synodal and conciliar. And this does happen in the Anglican Communion even in its current situation of great stress. Lambeth Conferences have for decades received reports and recommendations from various networks, formal and informal, and in turn in its reports and resolutions commended particular actions to its member provinces.

An important example here is the affirmation in principle and practice of the Five Marks of Mission throughout the Communion. The impetus for the Five Marks arose from a widespread reconsideration of mission taking place in formal and informal groups as imperial and colonial government (both secular and ecclesial) was ended. The ACC officially established first the Mission Issues and Strategy Advisory Group (MISAG; ACC-5, 1981) and then the Standing Commission for Mission of the Anglican Communion (MISSIO; ACC-9, 1993) not only to advise the ACC, but “to explore and develop strategies of evangelism and development to help the member Churches of the Communion in their task of mission” and to explore “ways of developing theological perspectives for mission and evangelism for

the Communion.”¹⁸ MISAG and MISSIO regularly reported to the ACC, including recommendations for more effective mission and for revision of the Five Marks themselves. MISSIO commended the Five Marks to the provinces of the Anglican Communion, some of whom (including the Anglican Church of Canada and the Episcopal Church) have adopted them as part of their strategies for becoming more mission-oriented. All of this has been in many ways an informal rather than a formal exercise of authority, in that the Five Marks have never been formally adopted by either the ACC or the Lambeth Conference.¹⁹

These developments provide an example of a number of major points made throughout by the authors considered here.

First, synodality, exercised both formally and informally, can and does strengthen the “bonds of affection” which help foster and maintain communion. Indeed, it has been suggested that the Five Marks of Mission may be the best basis for an effective Anglican Covenant.²⁰

Second, this is an example of widespread consensus and coordinated activity developed without the exercise of any worldwide legislative authority, and with relatively little restriction on who may participate. Rather, what brings about consensus and coordination are persuasion and engagement. That is, the subject matter itself is attractive and compelling because it resonates deeply with an interest broadly shared by Anglicans, who are looking for fresh approaches. And the mode of building interest is invitational and expansive (both of knowledge and inclusion). Many may participate, and in a wide variety of ways that can express fidelity to vocation and mission. This is an offer, not a directive.

Third, the example of the Five Marks of Mission instantiates Kaye’s argument that love, not “a form of order or an organizational structure” (Kaye, *Conflict*, 16), is what is needed in response to diversity, and love is something that is practiced, and necessarily practiced in different ways in different contexts. What’s involved in

¹⁸ <http://www.anglicancommunion.org/communion/acc/meetings/acc9/resolutions.cfm#s43>. This paragraph draws directly on information from <http://www.aco.org/ministry/mission/index.cfm>, <http://www.aco.org/communion/acc/index.cfm>, and Kaye, *Introduction*.

¹⁹ <http://www.anglican.ca/help/faq/marks-of-mission/>.

²⁰ For example, Inter-Anglican Standing Commission on Mission and Evangelism, “A Covenant for Communion in Mission,” 2005; http://www.anglicancommunion.org/ministry/mission/commissions/iascome/covenant/covenant_english.cfm.

each context is “a process of pragmatic adaptation to the existing social realities” (Kaye, *Conflict*, 19) in which love of God and love of neighbor actually take place. Kaye’s point here is not that there is no need for organizational structure; rather, organizational structure is instrumental. Structure, ideally, enhances the practices of love. That would appear to be the case in this example.

Indeed, organizational structures at the provincial level, which are widely varied, have proven to work quite well, generally speaking. Dator’s work on the polity of the Episcopal Church provides one analysis of how polity can serve synodality. As Dator says, the polity of the Episcopal Church is unitary but “hugely decentralized” (Dator, 144), thus facilitating broad participation while also enabling binding decisions regarding many areas of the church’s life—worship, formation, mission, provision for ministry and pastoral care of many sorts, as well as governance and discipline. In chapter 3 of his *Introduction to World Anglicanism*, Kaye gives three examples of how church structure facilitates mission, but in very different ways in the very different contexts of Australia, Kenya, and Japan. There are many others.²¹

And the fact that authority at the provincial and local levels can be and is exercised (performed) in such diverse ways means that worldwide Anglicanism has a vast array of resources on which to draw as it seeks to maintain and strengthen its “bonds of affection.” Indeed, less centralization rather than more would make it possible to draw on this array in different ways in different contexts and for different matters of interest and concern (Kaye, *Conflict*, 100–102). Less centralization also entails a wider range of participants. Along these lines, it is significant that talk of a worldwide Anglican gathering involving more and other than bishops has recently reemerged after the last proposal of this sort disappeared in 2008. The Archbishop of Canterbury’s plan to make calling a next Lambeth Conference a more collaborative process is another indication that alternatives to centralized governance are being used.²²

²¹ See *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to the Anglican Communion*, ed. Ian S. Markham, J. Barney Hawkins IV, Justyn Terry, and Leslie Nuñez Steffensen, Wiley-Blackwell Companions to Religion (Malden, Mass.: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013); and Norman Doe, *Canon Law in the Anglican Communion: A Worldwide Perspective* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).

²² Justin Welby, “Address to the General Synod of the Church of England,” November 17, 2014; <http://episcopaldigitalnetwork.com/ens/2014/11/17/archbishop-on-the-communions-challenges-and-the-way-forward/>.

In other words, it makes sense to talk of *koinonia* among Anglican churches in terms of catholicity rather than unity, a point emphasized by both Kaye (*Conflict*, chap. 9) and Avis (13 and throughout).²³ Kaye argues that

Catholicity within a sub-tradition of Christianity like Anglicanism combines some very important elements for the present crisis of imagination for Anglicans. It asserts the presence of God in the church through the gifts that are given to the church for its life and mission. It locates the life of faith in the actual local context where Christians are called to be faithful. It highlights the fallibility of the church and of Christians in both practice and belief, in judgment and imagination. It sets the interdependence of the local and other locals of the wider church in the context of humility, and it sets the key issues of epistemology, authority, and discipleship in the context of eschatology, of hope. (Kaye, *Conflict*, 163)

Notions of unity, on the other hand, quite often include an expectation of uniformity, agreement, and finality as well as of connection, commitment, and mutual interdependence. Catholicity encompasses these last three expectations while at the same time suggesting a broader scope of possibilities, relationships, and contexts.

In sum, Anglicanism already has many of the resources it needs to deal with the challenges of authority that it is facing. What is needed as well is a shift in our prevailing understanding of authority. Anglicanism, perhaps particularly official Anglicanism, should see both conflict and the exercise of authority as fundamentally positive, both as gifts from God and as processes that contribute to creativity. These processes respect and even treasure the diversity of gifts and the widely varied contexts in which faith is embodied, and enhance true *koinonia* that embodies catholicity. Understanding conflict and authority as positive does not in and of itself solve problems. It may, however, revive hope and determination.

²³ Also Paul Avis, *The Identity of Anglicanism: Essentials of Anglican Ecclesiology* (London: T&T Clark, 2007), 32. Catholicity was a major component of Archbishop Rowan Williams's presidential addresses at the 2008 Lambeth Conference; <http://rowanwilliams.archbishopofcanterbury.org/tags.php?action=view&id=63>.

Scripture and Tradition as Well as Reason

Throughout this review, I have highlighted some major themes in the works considered here, though I have said little about how the authors back up their arguments and proposal. The matter of sources is in fact an extremely important part of what these works have to offer. The scriptural roots have been, I expect, rather apparent throughout this review. Paul's notions of the body made up of interdependent parts, of the variety of gifts in the same Spirit, of the importance of love in dealing with difference that engenders conflict—each of these recurs often. The Gospel of John's insistence both that communion always entails difference (as between Father and Son) and that the communion that is God grounds and is expressed throughout creation is also key. The various traditions that these authors draw on yield an amplified and reoriented sense of Anglican identity, particularly for those most influenced by accounts of the development of Christianity in Western Europe.

Paul Avis's work is of great importance here. In *Beyond the Reformation?*²⁴ he develops a theme found in much of his earlier work:²⁴ the importance of conciliarism in the history of the English Church, and the balance it provides in ecclesiology with the more monarchical approach to authority in the Western church from the papacy of Gregory the Great onward. Avis's argument is that throughout its history, and especially from the twelfth-century investiture controversy through the seventeenth century, the ecclesiology of the church in England and its "daughter churches" has been characterized by the conciliar axiom that "responsibility for the well-being (the doctrine, worship and mission) of the Church rests with the whole Church" (Avis, 184). This axiom came to the fore particularly in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries and again in the Reformation, through the development of strong and effective conciliar practices that shape modern understandings of ecclesial authority and how it is appropriately exercised.²⁵ On this

²⁴ *Anglicanism and the Christian Church* (2002); "Anglican Conciliarity: History, Theology and Practice," submitted to the Lambeth Commission on Communion, 2004; http://www.anglicancommunion.org/commission/process/lc_commission/docs/200402conciliarity.pdf; *Identity of Anglicanism* (2007); and elsewhere.

²⁵ Avis draws on the writings of Marsilius of Padua, William of Ockham, Thomas Aquinas, John Wycliffe, Richard Hooker, John Henry Newman, and many others;

view, “the Reformation was essentially an unresolved argument about authority in the Latin Church, an argument that was—and remains—internal to Western Christendom” (Avis, xii; see Kaye, *Conflict*, 105). The tradition of conciliarism, Avis maintains, is a vital component of Anglican identity that offers resources that can serve both Anglicanism and ecumenism well.

But, Avis notes, the conciliar tradition is today largely ignored. A major purpose of *Beyond the Reformation?*⁹ is to spur its rediscovery and reconstruction, and with it a recovery of what Avis considers “classical Anglicanism,” which viewed the Anglican branch of the Catholic Church as “a complex, diverse, interdependent communion made up of (mostly national) churches, sharing a common faith and common principles of order, with differences of liturgies, ceremonies, and traditions, and where responsibility for decision-making was dispersed and operated at various levels of conciliarity” (Avis, 13).

Avis also maintains that the conciliar tradition, reappropriated, can shift the discussion of authority away from its primary focus on institutional structures and more toward the church’s most fundamental identity as “a mystery ‘hidden in Christ with God’” (Avis, 1) that is on earth “a visible, organic society, held together by the means of grace” and “united in its mission” (Avis, 204). Conciliarity, Avis insists, is not a panacea; it is as “compromised, flawed, imperfect, and ambiguous” as anything else (Avis, 185). At the same time, this tradition includes an imperative for reform in its recognition that every part of the church, however it is structured, whatever its worship and mission, always falls short of its reality in God and its eschatological future.

Conclusion

Authority is always a challenge—describing it, structuring it, exercising it, living with it—and that is particularly evident in the contemporary life of the Anglican Communion. At the same time, Anglicans are now at some distance from what seemed at the time the cataclysmic events of 2003. A different kind of Lambeth Conference has been held; formal debate of the Anglican Covenant appears, for the moment, to have subsided; and while each of the Anglican churches faces significant and difficult challenges of its own, in each there are

and on events associated with the Councils of Constance and Basel, the century-long English Reformation, and the Second Vatican Council.

also many concrete signs of vitality and even new life and mission. How authority ought to be structured and exercised at the worldwide level remains unclear. At the same time, each of the provinces offers resources for sorting this out.

In various ways, the works considered here present quite a rich array of ideas, practices, and traditions that offer real possibilities for a different approach to authority from the ones that often seem worn out if not outdated. We may, that is, see authority as something that, performed well, enhances human well-being rather than hindering it (Austin). We may recognize that authority is instrumental in drawing together what often appears to be a daunting range of insights and practices arising from widely varying contexts (Kaye). We may come to appreciate conflict more than fear it (Austin, Driver, Sagovsky) and regain some confidence in the arts of persuasion (Driver). Authority is given in baptism (Avis, WCC), and there are multiple ways it can be structured so that the practices of authority are both dispersed and gathered (Dator, Kaye, Sykes). There are multiple traditions of both theology and practice that can guide us (Avis). Nothing short of God's eschaton can make authority in the church anything but an ongoing challenge. It is fitting to return to the report to the 1948 Lambeth Conference and let it have the last word: "It may be said that authority of this kind is much harder to understand and obey than authority of a more imperious character. This is true and we glory in the appeal which it makes to faith."

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