Examining the Role of Bishops

At its General Synod this year, the Anglican Church of Canada will consider important changes to its governance. As a contribution to this discussion, we have gathered essays from historians and theologians about the role of the historic episcopate within Anglican ecclesiology.

Essays published by The Living Church

June 2023

Seven Essays Examining the Role of Anglican Bishops

An Introduction to the Series

Is the General Synod a House of Parliament? For the past 120 years in Canada, the answer has been Yes for routine administrative resolutions, but No for matters related to doctrine, worship or discipline.

At the General Synod in 2019, 90% of the resolutions were discussed by delegates sitting together and passing them by a simple majority. Only four of the Resolutions were treated differently. These Resolutions, involving changes to doctrine, worship or discipline, required voting by Orders (bishops, clergy and laity separately) with a high bar for approval. While in the current system any Order or House can exercise a veto, the fact is that it is most likely to be the bishops who do so on important matters; it is also clear that their vote as a House in 2019 has been a motivating factor for the changes proposed in A030 and A031.

Forty years ago the Canadian Church called for a comprehensive review of the way Synod operated. The Governance Report of 1983 proposed that the requirement for approval in each order be raised from a simple majority to two thirds *only* when amending doctrine, liturgy or discipline. As was the case before 1983 such changes also had to be approved by the General Synod that followed. The current proposals presented by the Governance Working Group ask that the standards required since 1983 for important amendments be lowered, allowing Synod to operate more like a simple representative democracy.

One of the major unexamined assumptions related to the Governance Working Group's proposed changes is that "General Synod as a whole represents the entire Church."[1] This claim presumes that the proposed changes will achieve such representation, and that this has always been the purpose of General Synod. It is understandable that decision-making norms in our Parliamentary government be viewed as a model for Synod. The Church, however, is different, and Parliamentary models of voting by elected members, after vigorous debate, should not be equated with discernment. The purpose of General Synod is not to count votes; it is to discern the will of God for the Anglican Church of Canada. That should mean coming as close as possible to patient consensus, especially on important issues. The Anglican Church of Canada still has much to learn from our Indigenous brothers and sisters about what it means to wait patiently for consensus. Democratization of General Synod by majority voting at a single sitting of Synod pushes us away from discernment of God's will towards the implementation of our own will. Furthermore, our Parliamentary model relies on representative elections. Our Church's current system for selection of delegates may in fact be less representative than secular models – a statistical analysis would undoubtedly highlight the General Synod's significant underrepresentation of the diversity of the Anglican Church of Canada in the Orders of Clergy and Laity. The Order of Bishops, on the other hand, represents the entire Church by each bishop knowing and representing each parish of their

[1] Report of the Governance Working Group to General Synod 2023, para 20 (https://www.anglicanlutheran.ca/wp-content/uploads/8-Report-011-Governance-Working-Group.pdf)

Diocese as its chief pastor. Just as the sheep know the voice of their shepherd, diocesan bishops know the diverse voices of their sheep.

General Synod in 2023 should be attentive to this question of whether or not we want General Synod to remain distinctly Christian in character, or to adapt a more adversarial style and polarized political system like that of the Canadian Parliament or American Congress. What if we can't come to agreement? Then, "maybe we are being called to a deeper openness to God's guidance, and to a unity in the Holy Spirit that is patient and kind" (see Dr. Dane Neufeld, "There is Virtue in Waiting").

Bishops have had a special role in modelling discernment, throughout the history of the Church (see Dr. Ephraim Radner, "Bishops in Council: Cranmer on Episcopal Decision-making"). When they gather at General Synod our bishops join the people they serve to other Anglicans across the Church. And they gather not only for fellowship or even decision-making, but to live out their unique vocation to guard the faith and discipline of the Church, and to be, for the Church, a locus of unity.

As a contribution to our consideration of the proposed changes to Governance, we offer these essays, which we pray will be a blessing to the Church. Our deep thanks to The Living Church for publishing this series.

MOST gracious God, we humbly beseech thee for thy holy Catholic Church. Fill it with all truth; in all truth with all peace. Where it is corrupt, purify it; where it is in error, direct it; where any thing is amiss, reform it; where it is right, strengthen and confirm it; where it is in want, furnish it; where it is divided and rent asunder, make it whole again; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (Prayer for the Church Universal, BCP p. 39)

The Role of Bishops in the Governance of the Church

By Paul Avis

Principles of Church Governance

The Lord Jesus Christ is the Head of the Church, which is his Spirit-filled Body (Col. 1:18, etc.). The governance of the Church should always reflect the fact that Christ is its true Governor and that the whole body is endued with the Holy Spirit to enable it to take corporate responsibility for its life and mission. In councils and synods at various levels, the Church gathers around the open Bible and prays for the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The shorthand term for this dimension of the Church's life is "conciliarity" or "synodality."

In Anglican Churches, as in other churches, this conciliar or synodical life is grounded in certain theological principles.

(a) Responsibility for the Church ultimately rests with the whole body of Christ.

(b) Within the body some are called and commissioned for particular responsibilities and tasks.

(c) Synodality works through representation, by election or appointment.

(d) Synodality is governed by a constitution or legal/political framework, in which the scope and limits of the roles and authority of individuals and groups is laid down.

(e) The conceptual framework includes the principle that any legal provision ultimately finds its validity in the consent of those to whom it applies.

(f) The governance of the Church is structured by the obligation to consult the faithful and to seek consent, through a process of open reception, for decisions that are reached. It requires a constant awareness that people can and do "vote with their feet."

(g) In episcopally ordered churches, the episcopate has an indispensable role in the conciliar process. By virtue of their ordination, bishops — both individually and collectively — have a special (but not exclusive) responsibility for the faith and order of the Church. This aspect of their oversight centers on the three connected areas of doctrine, liturgy, and ministry.

Ordained to Oversight

To see how the episcopate fits into the overall governance of the Church, we need to begin with the ordination of a bishop, which in Anglicanism is always to a particular diocese or "portion of the people of God." A diocesan bishop is entrusted, by ordination and license, with the exercise of oversight (*episkope*) in his or her diocese, especially oversight of the ministry of word, sacrament, and pastoral care. All the responsibilities of a bishop, including their responsibility for the Church's faith and teaching, stem from the responsibility of oversight.

In the Ordination of a Bishop in the Anglican Church of Canada, the bishop-elect promises to "guard the faith, unity, and discipline of the Church," in other words to exercise oversight of it. The Ordination Prayer that follows includes the petition that God will enable the new bishop to be a wise teacher and a steadfast guardian of the Church's faith: "Enable him/her as a true shepherd to feed and govern your flock; make him/her wise as a teacher, and steadfast as a guardian of its faith and sacraments. Guide and direct him/her in presiding at the worship of your people." All these tasks are expressions of oversight (*episkope*).

In the Episcopal Church, the Ordination of a Bishop similarly affirms that the bishop is "called to guard the faith, unity, and discipline of the Church; to celebrate and to provide for the administration of the sacraments of the New Covenant; to ordain priests and deacons and to join in ordaining bishops; and to be in all things a faithful pastor and wholesome example for the entire flock of Christ" (The Examination). The bishop-elect is then asked whether he/she will work collaboratively, sharing with fellow bishops in the governance of the Church, sustaining fellow presbyters, and guiding and strengthening the deacons and all other ministers of the Church.

The Church of England's provision for the ordination of a bishop follows very similar lines. Canon C 18.4 describes the bishop as "the principal minister" (i.e., of word and sacrament) within the diocese and the one who celebrates "the rites of ordination and confirmation" and who oversees the churches and chapels and the church services of parishes within the diocese (except those that are legally exempt), institutes clergy to benefices, and licenses them for ministry. Clearly the bishop carries out all these tasks, including the ministry of word and sacrament, as the outworking of his or her responsibility for oversight. The responsibility "to teach and uphold sound and wholesome doctrine, and to banish and drive away all erroneous and strange opinions" and to promote unity, love, and peace in the church (C 18.1) also belongs to episcopal oversight.

Suffragan and assistant bishops share in the diocesan's oversight by delegation, whether formal through an area scheme or informal. By virtue of their ordination, they also share the responsibility for faith and order — to teach and uphold sound doctrine and to promote love, peace, and unity in the Church, quite apart from the extent of jurisdiction that they receive.

The Church of England's *Common Worship* Ordination Services begin by affirming the royal priesthood of the baptized and then adds:

> [Quote]To serve this royal priesthood, God has given particular ministries. Bishops are ordained to be shepherds of Christ's flock and guardians of the faith of the apostles, proclaiming the gospel of God's kingdom and leading his people in mission. Obedient to the call of Christ and in the power of the Holy Spirit, they are to gather God's people and celebrate with them the sacraments of the new covenant. Thus formed into a single communion of faith and love, the Church in each place and time is united with the Church in every place and time.[/end]

Thus bishops gather the Christian people of God in a particular community, provide for their spiritual needs through word and sacrament, and watch over their souls and bodies in love.

The Bishop in Synod

A bishop's responsibility for oversight is not confined to the bishop's own diocese, but is also exercised in the wider Church, especially in the General Synod or its equivalent, such as General Convention (TEC), and always in a corporate and collegial manner. Bishops properly have a role in formal governance, as well as in pastoral care and leadership. The phrase "the bishop in synod" aptly describes the role of the episcopate within the polity of Anglican churches. A bishop is always in the midst of his or her people and called to work actively with them. But the special responsibility that bishops have for oversight, including the guardianship of the faith and of their Church's doctrine, entails that provision should be made in the rules of governance (Standing Orders or their equivalent) for the voice of the episcopate collectively to be heard and heeded when doctrinal changes are being considered (and this includes liturgical changes because doctrine and liturgy are inseparable).

In the procedures of the General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada, this safety net is currently in place, as it is in the Church of England, where changes in doctrine or liturgy come before the General Synod in terms approved by the House of Bishops. If the House of Bishops' proposals prove unacceptable to a majority of clergy and laity in the synod, voting by houses, the bishops must take the matter back for further reflection; they have to think again.

Although bishops have a special responsibility for doctrine, worship, and ministry by virtue of their order, they alone do not ultimately decide issues of doctrine, worship, or ministry for the Church. Only the General Synod, following the lead of the bishops, can so decide and can then speak for the Church. Governance of the Church resides ultimately in the General Synod, which includes all serving diocesan bishops. The principle at stake in the functioning of both the Anglican Church of Canada and the Church of England is that each house or constituency has a right of veto in such matters. For example, the laity may have concerns about their duties and rights within the Church, and it would be unjust for the synod as a whole to impose something on the laity that they remained unhappy about. How much more with the episcopate in view of its God-given responsibility for the oversight of doctrine, liturgy, and ministry.

The Rev. Dr. Paul Avis is Honorary Professor in the School of Divinity, University of Edinburgh, UK, and editor-in-chief of Ecclesiology. His recent publications include Jesus and the Church *(2020);* Reconciling Theology *(2022); and* Theology and the Enlightenment *(2022).*

There Is Virtue in Waiting

By Dane Neufeld

What follows are a few comments on the proposals made by the Governance Working Group (GWG) that will be presented to the General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada this summer. Unfortunately, these comments are not likely to be more interesting than the proposals, but I would like to assure readers that beneath the dry, housecleaning appearance of these proposals, there are weighty and serious theological matters to consider. These matters include the nature of Christian doctrine, the role of bishops, and the character of ecclesial discernment.

The proposals of the GWG that are being placed before General Synod are essentially aimed at making it easier for General Synod to change canons related to doctrine. As routine as these proposals may seem, they clearly stem from the direct experience of GS 2019 and the failure of the marriage canon amendment to pass a second reading. It is obvious from the documents presented to the Council of General Synod that a number of specific circumstances from 2019 have been thoroughly discussed.

There are two main proposals that impinge upon a wide variety of larger theological concerns. First, there is a proposal to remove the need for two successive synods to amend canons that deal with doctrine, worship, or discipline. While there may be no God-given time frame in which to make these decisions, the rationale for shortening the time frame to just one General Synod is threefold: modern communication methods make the sharing of information much easier, the composition of successive synods is often very different, and this would allow the church to change its doctrine much more quickly, in response to "more quickly changing circumstances" (5).

On the matter of the changing composition of successive synods, it is difficult to grasp the point. In part, the fact that different people, though not entirely, comprise each synod ensures that the circumstances and context of each synod do not have a disproportionate influence on the whole. This is a good thing, especially when related to central teachings of the Church: one group of delegates cannot make the change on their own, and whatever they approve will need the blessing of another whole group of representatives. This is indeed cumbersome, but if we are to believe that the Holy Spirit is our guide in these matters, in theory we should not fear entrusting the gospel, given to us in jars of clay, to our brothers and sisters in the Lord who will gather after us.

The point about modern communication methods is also interesting. Of course, great books have been written about the development of doctrine, and there is a whole theological tradition that discusses this very topic, but it would seem there is not enough time to get into this kind of thing. The world is quickly changing, the church must quickly change as well. This new provision could be so successful that we could conceivably change our doctrine every three years if needed, a time frame which may itself prove onerous in due course. Why not every year? If the wonders of modern communications are the decisive element when considering the doctrines of the Church, why would we stop at every three years?

As everyone knows, there is value is pausing before taking advantage of the lightning speeds of modern communication. If anything, modern communication has only served to underscore the importance of careful and prayerful discernment in the life of a community, which I understood was more at issue in this procedure than waiting for the mail to arrive. Though it only takes days for matters of importance to be devoured and forgotten in our media cycles, one would hope that the Church could witness to a more enduring and stable reality that is set apart from, and not trying to catch up to, the frantic pace of modern media. There might be a reason to change the time frame of two successive synods to alter church doctrine, but I would hope for something much deeper and theologically reasoned than what has been offered here.

The other proposal of note recommends that canons of doctrine, worship, or discipline be amendable by two-thirds of the entire General Synod and only a majority of each house. Again, we are not aware of any specific scriptural voting procedure or method, but the rationale for such a change should probably be substantial and rooted in theological and spiritual reasoning. The rationale given, however, is largely statistical. Because one-third of the bishops could veto a motion, in essence, 6 percent of the members of General Synod could ruin it for all the others. While I did not know that the number was 6 percent, I was generally aware that a small number could defeat a proposal. I also understood that was part of the idea. The agreement of the houses represents the different areas of ministry within the Church, which we all understand is not directly proportionate to the numbers of people. The time may come when there are as many bishops as priests, and as many bishops as lay people in our Church, but we are not there yet.

Bishops are indeed representative figures in our church, not merely of population, but as it says in the Book of Alternative Services, “You are called to guard the faith, unity, and discipline of the Church” (636). This commitment to represent the teaching of the Church — “I do believe the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the word of God” (BAS, 635) — and its unity across time and geography is really the central calling of bishops. The rationale for this amendment suggests that we should be gravely concerned that 6 percent of General Synod could veto the desires of the rest, while the amendment proposes a situation in which General Synod could overrule nearly half of the House of Bishops. Would we feel comfortable as a Church making a major change to our doctrines that only half of our bishops supported? In an already divided church, this feels like an invitation to further division. If this is what we want as a Church, we should say so, defend it, and not bury it in the latent implications of a governance working group.

Perhaps one thing that unites us as Anglicans is our love of indirect discourse, especially in the face of controversial matters. It is much easier to discuss canons than sex, much easier to speak about the details of procedures and voting than the character, possibilities, and limitations of our sexual lives, carried out within God’s creation. While some will say that we have been talking about these issues for decades, some of us wonder if we have even begun. What guidance does our church offer today for young people navigating the powerful and confusing reality of sexual desire?

These proposals from the GWG take indirect discourse to a whole new level. I too would feel uneasy and nervous about an initiative to get at the heart of the matter on human sexuality. At this point it may not even be possible. But these shortcuts and end runs only make the situation worse. One cannot bracket out elements of the Christian life from theological reality, or avoid the theological implications of one problem by diving into another. Every direction we turn, we are held accountable: "Where can I go from your Spirit" (Ps. 139). If it is not sexuality, then it is episcopacy, the development of doctrine, the consensus of the Holy Spirit, and the character of the Church as Christ's body.

In the end, there is not an exact number or ratio in our voting procedures that will guarantee a truthful outcome. As our articles say: "councils … may err, and sometimes have erred" (Article XXI). The authority of any council is dependent on Scripture: "it is not lawful for the Church to ordain anything that is contrary to God's word written" (Article XX). I am aware that this does not make complicated matters simple, but perhaps our fundamental orientation toward complex doctrinal questions should be driven primarily by further and deeper scriptural engagement. If there is no agreement, if the way forward is not clear, rather than trying to force certain outcomes, maybe we are being called to a deeper openness to God's guidance, and to a unity in the Holy Spirit that is patient and kind.

Dane Neufeld is the incumbent of St. James, in the diocese of Calgary. He and his family moved to Calgary 2 years ago, after 7 years in Fort McMurray, where he served as rector of All Saints. Dane is a proud graduate of Wycliffe College and a lover of the great outdoors.

Bishops in Council: Cranmer on Episcopal Decision-Making

By Ephraim Radner

Why has Anglicanism more broadly granted to bishops a special vote within the councils of the church? The details of synodical voting in this regard have varied over time. But a designated vote for bishops, often as a separate "house" and with a power of veto over a council's decision as a whole, has been a continuous feature of Anglicanism since the inception of the reformed Church of England. Although, more recently, the rationale for such a practice has also varied, and the practice itself is now being questioned and even threatened, it is important to understand the initial justification for such episcopal preference in the church's decision-making. In essence, that justification comes down to scriptural wisdom.

As is well-known, Thomas Cranmer's theology of the ordained ministry eschewed the claim of specially imbued powers injected into priest or bishop. While he believed that God gives "grace" to an ordained person for this work, it is a grace analogous to that conferred on, e.g., a magistrate for his office. God equips every Christian to fulfill her or his calling. The issue, by which divine promises are gleaned, is the vocation itself. In the case of bishops (and priests in a subordinate fashion), that calling is one of "edifying" the church according to the Word of God. The criterion of episcopal ministry is, at root, the sound teaching of Scripture.

In 1552, towards the end of his career, Cranmer wrote a letter to John Calvin urging the organization of a general Protestant council that might articulate agreed teaching on matters that were dividing Europe. Cranmer proposed that Calvin help in gathering "learned and pious men [*docti et pii viri*], who excel others in erudition and judgment, [who] would assemble in some convenient place, where holding a mutual consultation, and comparing their opinions, they might discuss all the heads of ecclesiastical doctrine, and agree." This would constitute a "pious synod." Calvin responded with far more venom than Cranmer's assessment of the situation, but agreed that "pious and resolute men, exercised in the school of God, should meet among themselves, and publicly profess their agreement in the doctrines of religion." These would be "learned and stable men [*docti et graves*]."[1]

The notion of "learnedness" was paramount in Cranmer's view when it came to legitimate members of an ecclesial synod. So was "piousness." Taken together, these two characteristics informed his understanding of the bishop's ministry, and were enshrined in the liturgy of the Ordinal that became part of the Book of Common Prayer. To be a minister is to be "learned" in the sense of knowledgeable in the "Word of God," the Scriptures; to be "pious" is to lead a life in conformity with these Scriptures. For Cranmer, the ordained ministry, with bishops as their font, is a "vocational" role, one into which a person is called by God for a set of commitments and duties, formed in a way that might permit their fulfilment, and empowered by the grace of God to this end: knowledge, work, wisdom, accountability.

The English Reformation, unlike other reforming churches on the Continent especially, made a clear decision, early on, in favor of the conciliar or synodical authority of "bishops and

[1] *The Life of Calvin by Theodore Beza*, trans. Francis Sibson (Philadelphia: J. Whetham, 1836), 295-98.

priests."[2] But "learnedness," and the piety that arises from faithfulness to what is learned, is the basis for council. Thus, in statements from the first years of England's Reformation, Cranmer (and other church leaders with whom he was associated), suggested that it was important to understand

> How no great thing is to be determined, principally matters of Christ's religion, without long, great, and mature deliberation … [And] how evil it hath succeeded, when in provincial, yea, or yet in general councils, men have gone about to set forth any thing as in the force of God's law, without the manifest word of God, or else without apparent reasons infallibly deduced out of the word of God.[3]

And finally, how

> In all the ancient councils of the church, in matters of the faith and interpretation of scripture, no man made definitive subscription, but bishops and priests; forsomuch as the declaration of the word of God pertaineth unto them.[4]

Obviously, much hinges on the integrity of this "pertaining." The BCP's Ordinal makes clear what the promises are that the episcopal candidate makes: "exercising yourself in the Holy Scriptures," teaching and exhorting on their basis, driving away false doctrine and pursuing discipline on their basis, praying and ordering one's personal life in accord with them. And thereby is made clear the standard to which bishops are to be held. But what will guarantee that bishops in fact fulfill such a calling? The BCP service obviously appeals to God's grace, to the people's prayers, to the individual's commitment. But Cranmer was hardly naïve in this respect. To be "learned and pious" is not a fate.

In this regard, it seems that Cranmer simply relies on the continuity of discernment that "elects" bishops in the first place. In his earliest discussions of the matter, he outlines how it is that the monarch in England (Henry) has ended up having such a prominent role in the choice of bishops. Despite popular claims to the contrary, Cranmer is not an Erastian in any essential fashion (i.e., believing that civil authority should ultimately control the church). Having the monarch govern the church is not some kind of divine order for all time. This is just the way it is in England. It was not always thus, it will not be so in the future, and different places and times will do things differently. So what does he think is "essential" in the appointment and grace of the Christian ministry?

There are two principles, if you will, in play for Cranmer, as he explains it. First, the appointment of bishops and other ministers comes from the "consent" or choice of the "people" of the church as a whole, the "Christian multitude" "by uniform consent." Second, that consent is properly informed by wise Christians, imbued with the Holy Spirit — saintly leaders,

---

[2] cf. Malcolm B. Yarnell III, *Royal Priesthood in the English Reformation* (Oxford University Press, 2013).

[3] "Considerations Offered to the King."

[4] "The Opinion of certain of the Bishops and Clergy of this Realm, subscribed with their hands, touching the General Council," in *Miscellaneous Writings and Letters of Thomas Cranmer* (Cambridge University Press/Parker Society, 1846), 466-67.

demonstrably touched by God: "so replete with the Spirit of God, with such knowledge in the profession of Christ, such wisdom, such conversation and counsel, that they ought even of very conscience to give credit unto them, and to accept such as by them were presented."[5] Who are these grace-led counsellors of the church, whose very lives and profession "inform" the conscience and consent of the actual Christian people? In the earliest Church, they were the apostles, Cranmer explains. As times and cultures changed, they were embodied by bishops, and only later by bishops and priests as distinguished (they are not so distinguished in Scripture, Cranmer insists). And — it must be said — not only by bishops but by other holy witnesses, whom God had equipped to work for the people's "edification and benefit" (these might be theologians, or princes and counsellors).

The space for authoritative lay counsel is, for Cranmer, a primordial given. If all are "learned and pious" who come to council, then the decision falls to all in an equal measure. Moses well desired that "all of God's people" would be "prophets" touched by the "Spirit" (Num. 11:29). But the practicalities of order precluded this, and grounds of "jealousy" are irrelevant. For nothing about this has to do with "democracy" or "parliamentary" structure. It has to do with the Holy Spirit ordering people to divine wisdom. The standards for such counsel are consistent: wisdom in the truth of Christ, which, as the Anglican tradition has always insisted, is given in the Scriptural Word. One must be "learned" in this Word, and "pious" in its enactment.

In this, bishops are singled out, not because they are born such or assume such a character through the laying on of hands, but because their choice has been governed by the careful formation and discernment of their well-formed and Spirit-filled elders and their preparation has been ordered by the demands of this office. If Anglicanism has, in its origins, a concept of the "historic episcopate" as essential, it is one properly understood in this vital, pneumatic, scriptural continuity of generational wisdom. Absent such a continuity, ecclesial counsel of any kind is likely to be deformed. If, under the best of circumstances, "no great thing is to be determined, principally matters of Christ's religion, without long, great, and mature deliberation," then, when unformed and scripturally untutored and careless leadership would take command, no decision of any kind ought properly to be forthcoming. Personally, I believe we are in such a time!

The author of our Book of Common Prayer, in any case, justified the special place of bishops in the councils of the church by this original ordering of the Anglican tradition on the basis of a given vocation's "learned" skills, gifts, responsibilities, and "pious" obedience, as well as by the larger church's dependence on the discerning wisdom of past generations. What often appears as a constraining weight upon ecclesial decision-making — the consent of the episcopacy — was viewed as either its ordering presupposition at best, or as its protective guard even amid the church's own general mediocrity or error.

Ephraim Radner (Ph.D., Yale University) is Professor of Historical Theology at Wycliffe College at the University of Toronto, and an Anglican/Episcopal priest. He is the author, most recently, of A Time to Keep (2016), Time and the Word (2016), Church (2017), and A Profound Ignorance: Modern Pneumatology and Its Antimodern Redemption (2019). A former

[5] "Questions and Answers Concerning the Sacraments and the Appointment and Power of Bishops and Priests," in *Miscellaneous Writings*, 116-17.

missionary in Burundi (Africa), he has been active in the affairs of the global Anglican Communion.

Bishops and Coherence

By John Bauerschmidt

A scriptural threshold for doctrine, and retention of an episcopal polity, marked the nascent Anglican ecclesiology of the 16th-century Church of England. The first had immediate application to the church's situation in a time of reform; the implications of the second remained to be teased out over time. In regard to this teasing out, it's arguable that proposed changes in the governance of the Anglican Church in Canada are a case in point. They are a sign that the Church continues to come to grips with the implications of its episcopal ordering. At the same time, the suggested reason for these changes in polity bears on the scriptural threshold for doctrine established in the 16th century.

The common thread that connects both these building blocks of Anglican ecclesiology, then and now, is the notion of coherence. Coherence does not require uniformity, a singleness of expression, but it does require holding together. Coherence involves the correspondence of one thing with another. In the 16th century's doctrinal conflicts, the Church of England set a course in the Articles of Religion marked by notions of scriptural coherence. Article 20, "Of the Authority of the Church," is the locus classicus:

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

The article acknowledges the Church's authority in doctrinal matters, and its capacity for action in ordering what we would now call the liturgical life of the Church, yet that authority and activity must be in accordance with the Holy Scriptures. The standard is not that nothing can be established in the Church except what is expressly authorized by the Scriptures, but rather that nothing can be established that is contrary to them. In its decrees and its enforcements, the Church's teaching and its life must cohere with the scriptural witness.

Embedded in the article, as well, is a test for what constitutes that witness. No part of the Holy Scriptures can be raised up against another, so that one part becomes "repugnant" to the other. Implied here is the coherence of the Scriptures themselves, in which no part of the whole can become a hermeneutical trump card. Article Seven, "Of the Old Testament," says, "The Old Testament is not contrary to the New: for both in the Old and New Testament everlasting life is offered to Mankind by Christ, who is the only mediator between God and Man, being both God and Man." The principle in the article finds its liturgical expression in the longstanding Anglican custom of reading chapters of both Testaments beside each other in Morning and Evening Prayer. Between the two Testaments, there is concordance and correspondence, a coherence undiminished by any hermeneutic of suspicion.

The retention of episcopal polity figures as a second characteristic basis from which Anglican ecclesiology developed. Whether as a conscious policy, or simply as a conservative result of the abbreviated reign of Edward VI, the Church of England's embrace of episcopal order gradually strengthened until the crucible of the English Civil War, which solidified the commitment. Abolished by Parliament in the 1640s, the bishops came back with a vengeance, along with the king, in 1660.

The articles had little to say about bishops by way of theory, beyond marking their presence in the Church, but the retention of episcopal order functioned as an example of coherence in another vein. In the order and succession of ministry, there was to be no "before" and "after," no radical break in an English reformation that had a number of other radical breaks. As Patrick Collinson remarks in *The Religion of Protestants*, reformers once given the title of "bishop" began to conceive of themselves as bishops, successors in a longer line of precedent (22).

Given the particular circumstances of the English reformation, the authority of the Crown functioned as an ordering principle, bringing coherence to the whole; but with the global growth of what eventually became the Anglican Communion, and with the diminishment of both royal authority and the church establishment in England, episcopal leadership moved to the forefront. In Church teaching, the episcopal polity of the Church came to carry more weight; in official pronouncement, it became a load-bearing mechanism in the life of the Church.

In describing the Anglican Communion, the 1930 Lambeth Conference spoke of the "national" or "particular" churches of the Communion as "bound together" by "mutual loyalty sustained through the common counsel of the bishops in conference" (Res. 49). Here we see the foreshadowing of the Lambeth Conference as an Instrument of Communion. Mutual loyalty is a function of coherence; common counsel in conference an expression of correspondence between parts. The episcopal order has a primary role in connection between the churches.

The 1948 Conference carried this further in its committee Report on the Anglican Communion, in describing the episcopacy as "the source and centre of our order." This center holds together an authority that is "dispersed rather than … centralized," "distributed among Scripture, Tradition, Creeds, the Ministry of the Word and Sacraments, the witness of the saints, and the consensus fidelium, which is the continuing experience of the Holy Spirit through His faithful people in the Church." Once again, episcopal order, exercised by "divine commission and in synodical association" with clergy and laity, is part of a network of coherence between multiple elements and multiple bishops (pt. III).

In these 20th-century expressions of an Anglican ecclesiology there is the authentic echo of earlier strains. In articulating a role for a collective "episcopacy," the report reflects a dynamic that goes back at least as far as the time of St. Cyprian, who in the third century called upon the bishops of the church collectively to bear the theological weight of the church's unity. For Cyprian, the agreement of the church's bishops was central to the church's unity. The episcopate is one, and though spread throughout the world, is a harmonious multitude (Epistle 55). "The authority of the bishops forms a unity, of which each holds his part in its totality. And the Church forms a unity, however far she spreads and multiplies by the progeny of her fecundity" (*The Unity of the Catholic Church*, 5, trans. Bevenot).

A concern for coherence marks the origin of the Anglican tradition, and continues to be played out in the expression of Anglican ecclesiology. This is a conserving strain, a concern for the correspondence of parts. Reorderings of the Church's polity, with potentially revolutionary implications, fit uneasily into that tradition. To the extent that coherence is undercut, the Church will be poorly served.

The Rt. Rev. John Bauerschmidt is Bishop of Tennessee.

What We Need From Our Bishops

By Dean Mercer

In answer to the question *What do humble lay people and parish priests need from their bishops*? two experiences stand out.

The first may seem indirect, but when my sister fought cancer, as she did for many years, the hardest temptation she faced were all the siren voices on the sidelines scorning the advice of her doctors and offering quick and pain-free solutions. Her cancer was deep and complex. It required harsh treatment. And every treatment was harder than the last. She told me about the company of fellow cancer patients who arrived at the clinic and had to circle the block repeatedly in order to build up their nerve for the next dose of chemotherapy.

But hard as the treatments were, they worked, rising from the mainstream tradition of medicine that had the expertise, seriousness, and confidence to lead her through. And someone whose life was at risk from the beginning was given another quarter-century, realizing her hope of seeing her sons grow to maturity, presented in fact, with four grandchildren before she died.

The second experience, I think, connects the dots. In 2004, the Diocese of Toronto held diocesan-wide seminars on same-sex blessings. Every bishop, priest, and synod delegate was required to attend. The case in full, both its merits and demerits, was presented, and when it was all over, I asked a lay delegate — bright, able, engaged — who worked in the provincial courts, and whom I was meeting for the first time what she thought. She said: "I was completely baffled. How, on one sitting, am I supposed to understand a matter as complex as this?"

The motion coming to General Synod from the Council of General Synod (COGS), which COGS was prevented from even studying, assumes that the doctrine of the church is simple and transparently clear. And it assumes that simplicity and quick adaptation is the expectation of every member, in particular the lay members.

It is not!

Because all have submitted themselves to the mainstream traditions of medicine, law, or the Christian faith know — and know gladly — that they are entrusting their lives to a living tradition beyond what any one person can fully understand, but who know it has been public and open for all to see over many generations, who have every reason to trust it and certainly understand what stands at the center: the Hippocratic Oath, the Presumption of Innocence, the Apostles' Creed.

By the way, the motion also assumes that the delegates will accept this as a new, fresh, and inspired path.

Wrong again!

After all, Synod delegates do not live in caves. On every corner stands an independent or congregational church whose members may do as they wish, as quickly as they wish, with their doctrine and discipline. There's nothing fresh about what COGS presents. But there are plenty of red flags waving about denominations that act in haste because they either drink too deeply from modern society or react too strongly against it.

What do humble lay people and parish priests need from their bishops at General Synod? They need a House of Bishops that will ensure that the church remains true to Jesus Christ and faithful to the living and catholic tradition from which it has descended. They need a ship tough enough to steer through storms and hold its course. They need captains at the helm brave enough for the challenges, strong enough to remain true when facing waves of popular opinion and societal scorn.

And they need a House of Bishops that is confident enough to counsel patience when needed, to say no when necessary. The doctrines of the church, and similar fundamentals, are conservative by their very nature. It has nothing to do with recalcitrance and everything to do with care about that which is most precious, that which has been received as a gift.

And saying no?

There are times when individuals and groups are so far outside the boundaries of the tradition from within which they speak that to act on their recommendations can do nothing else than insert contradiction, division, and demoralization.

Here is a perfect example of a motion to be quashed before seeing the light of day. Because the members of COGS were prohibited from debating the motion before approving it, suggesting the very worst about the motion's integrity.

Because in a divided church this is a clearly partisan motion, revenge by the progressive party for the failure at the last General Synod to steamroll over the historic standards of Scripture, liturgy, canons, and discipline and charge forward with a top-to-bottom revision of the church.

And because it is untimely. Why in the world now, when the most recent church-wide study before COVID gave the church only a few more years? Why in the aftermath of COVID would COGS scream down a road that has no chance other than to further divide and discourage the church?

What do humble lay people and priests need from their bishops?

A House of Bishops that will ensure that the church remains true to Jesus Christ and part of the living and catholic tradition from which it has descended.

A House of Bishops that is confident enough to counsel patience when needed, to say no when necessary.

The Rev. Dr. Dean Mercer is incumbent of the Anglican Church of St. Paul, L'Amoreaux, an instructor in liturgy at Wycliffe College, Toronto, and a member of the Canadian chapter of the Anglican Communion Institute.

A Modest Proposal

By Catherine Sider-Hamilton

A motion is proposed to General Synod to level the synodical playing field. Let there be no distinction of orders in canonical matters. Synod shall be ruled by majority vote of the whole. Since this is already the case in small matters, let it be the case in large matters, too. It is, this motion says, the voice of the majority at synod that we need to hear, and not the voice of the bishops speaking as bishops.

The proposal is a response to the events of General Synod 2019, in which the voice of the Order of Bishops differed from the voice of the orders of laity and clergy. The bishops, voting as an order, said no to canon change. The clergy and laity said yes.

The people cried foul: should not the voice of the majority reign? Look at Pilate, after all. He listened to the crowd. Majority rule: it is the way of the world.

This motion proposes that it be the way of the church. The motion proposes the following changes to General Synod: "change the threshold of *required* votes by Orders from two-thirds of each Order to two-thirds of General Synod as a whole with a majority in each Order."

Concomitantly, the motion proposes eliminating the need for approval on matters of canon change by two successive sessions of General Synod.

In their rationale, the proposers of the motion note that the current procedure (voting by order) "effectively allows one-third + 1 member of any Order to be able to veto" a motion on canon change. In the case of the Order of Bishops, this means 6 percent of the members of General Synod could "exercise a veto" over the whole. The proposers say it again: 94 percent of General Synod could be in favor of a motion, but if it fails in the Order of Bishops, it would nevertheless fail.

How undemocratic. To the proposers of this constitutional change, the problem is self-evident, and they make a modest proposal for the betterment of the church: Eliminate the distinction between orders. In matters of doctrine, eliminate the voice of the bishops *qua* bishops.

The proposers may stress the modesty of their proposal: we will take away the authority of the bishop just at the national level, just at the level of doctrine. Bishops will still be bishops in their own dioceses. Yet if a bishop has no particular authority in the council of the whole church and in the matter of doctrine – those quintessentially episcopal loci of authority – why anywhere else?

The proposers are too modest. The proposal has implications – advantages, even – that reach far beyond General Synod.

How much simpler, now, the life of the diocese. The bishop has, this motion declares, no special voice in the decisions of the church; in his or her diocese, then, the bishop is, by the council's estimation, only one voice among others. No need now for episcopal prerogative, or leadership,

for that matter. The bishop, as one voice among others, should be governed by the voice of the whole.

On what grounds shall the bishop in her own diocese withhold permission for a vote of synod once taken? On none, for there is no distinction between the voice of the bishop and the voice of the people.

On what grounds shall the bishop, as provided by the proposed change to the marriage canon, grant permission to this parish or to that in the matter of same-sex marriage? On none, for the bishop has no especial voice in the matter of marriage.

On what ground shall the bishop declare, over against the canon, a new "pastoral" practice of marriage within his diocese? On none, except the people agree.

The bishop has no more authority to bind or to loose, to uproot or to plant. With this motion the bishop cedes that authority to the majority. The bishop has only the will of the people.

The bishop has now no more responsibility for guarding the faith: let it be upon us to bind and to loose, the people of the church will have said. Doctrine is to be determined by the crowd. What a weight off the episcopal shoulders.

How much simpler, Confirmation, now, and Ordination, too. No need any longer for the hand of the bishop, for there is no special charism, no authority passed on from the apostles by the gift of the Holy Spirit in the breath of the risen, present Christ. For the busy bishop, what a relief.

This motion offers the church a modest proposal for relieving the bishop of the authority that has rested till now so heavy upon episcopal shoulders.

Why have we not thought of this before?

Imagine the money that can be saved. We do not need an expensive episcopal office. We do not need an elaborate system of archdeacons to uphold the bishops in their diocesan labors. The bishop's work is the work of all the people. The bishop's voice is the voice of all the people. We need only relieve the bishops of their descent from the confession of Peter, and from the power of the Holy Spirit breathed upon the apostles by the risen Christ in the upper room (cf. John 20:19-23).

"You are Peter," Jesus said to Simon when Simon confessed him to be the Christ, the Son of the living God. "You are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it" (Matt 16:18). And then Jesus as the Christ, the Son of the Living God, gives to Peter — to Peter — the power to bind or to loose on earth.

Peter, tradition tells us, took the gift and the authority seriously, as did the church that sprang up at his witness. Peter became the first bishop of the church in Rome. We have liked to say that our bishops are descended by the laying on of hands in unbroken succession from him, and his confession, and the gift of authority from the living Christ.

But if the bishop of an Anglican Synod has no special voice in the deliberations of that body, no authority *qua* bishop to bind or loose; if the voice of a bishop is a scandal where it rises against

the majority even, especially, on a question of doctrine, the faith that the church has guarded; if it is only ever the people, we the people, all the people (or at least the most and loudest of us) who speak in the synods of the church with authority to bind and to loose, then there is no special claim for the bishop to relationship with Peter, or to any of the apostles who received the gift of the Holy Spirit, precisely the gift of doctrinal authority, in that upper room.

It is a neat proposal, the proposal to erase the distinctive voice and role of the Order of Bishops at Synod. It will please the people (for now). And it has a long reach. It will save time and money in the diocese. In fact, it might do away with the need for episcopally led dioceses altogether. It clarifies a long-standing point of contention between Anglicans and Roman Catholics. It turns out the Catholics were right all along, in looking askance at us in the matter of episcopal succession. We don't actually want to be episcopalian. We can go now and join the Congregationalists.

In view of the sweeping practical advantages, it is hard to object to the proposal before General Synod, this modest proposal for episcopal effacement. Yet I confess to some nostalgia, a sadness at the loss: nostalgia for the pomp of bishops, the robes befitting a throne like that of the thorn-crowned Christ; the staff as symbol of leadership, of the bishop's teaching role in doctrine and worship, the bishop as guide and shepherd of the people. I feel some nostalgia for the apostolic succession born from the breath of the risen Christ, trailing glory and new creation, and a vast responsibility.

But this motion proposes progress, and who am I — who is Peter, come to that, and the whole long train of bishops who followed our Lord in Peter's crucified footsteps — who are we to stand in its way?

The Rev. Dr. Catherine Sider-Hamilton teaches New Testament and Greek at Wycliffe College, University of Toronto, and serves as Priest-in-Charge of St. Matthew's Anglican Church, Riverdale.

The Episcopate in Anglican History: Received in Humility Yet Exercised with Responsibility

By Calvin Lane

Anglicans have historically understood the episcopate to encompass the unique ministry of connection-building and leadership. Bishops, therefore, are entrusted with a particular and, in the most literal sense of the word, *incomparable* role in synods and councils. While bishops receive this ministry in humility, partnering with and maintaining obligations to presbyters, deacons, and laypeople, they are nevertheless called to exercise leadership in a way that is unique among the other orders of ministry.

To bring such a description into relief, we will canvas three formative moments in Anglican history: Richard Hooker's discussion of bishops in his *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*, part of the initial constitution of the Anglican tradition in the late 16th century; the role of bishops during the Interregnum and Restoration, c1650-70, a season of uncertainty and challenge; and finally the Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral's emphasis on the irreducible nature of the episcopate in a global and ecumenical context.

Moment One: "Chiefty in Government"

"A bishop," Hooker writes in Book VII of his *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*, "is a minister of God to whom with permanent continuance there is given not only power of administering the Word and Sacraments … but also a further power to ordain ecclesiastical persons and a power of chiefty in government above presbyters as well as laymen, a power to be by way of jurisdiction a pastor even to pastors themselves."

A bishop, Hooker writes, has the twin responsibility of governance and teaching; in other words, bishops hold the Church together by maintaining accountability and passing on the faith, order, life, and witness they have received. For Hooker, the episcopate is (1) permanent; it is (2) the order that ensures the continuation of other orders; (3) it includes pastoral oversight; and finally, (4) bishops continue a historic ministry, one handed down in the organic, often messy life of the Church. This is a ministry that these bishops will one day — in light of their finitude — also hand over and down until the true shepherd and bishop of our souls returns (1 Pet. 2:25).

But more should be said about their obligations and how they undertake such commitments. In Book VIII, Hooker criticizes Roman Catholics as erring in not distinguishing between those in whom the power resides and those who may exercise the power on their behalf. This idea, first found among more progressive conciliarists of the later Middle Ages, is that the whole Church, a divine society, has the apostolic mantle, and the bishops exercise jurisdiction on behalf of the body. This is profoundly important to recognize at this moment in the life of the Anglican Church of Canada.

Bishops should be able to affirm, with humility, that they are not the sum total of the apostolic witness of the Church. The Pentecostal gift of the Spirit is found in the whole body. But it is bishops who, properly called and ordained for a purpose, exercise unique leadership on behalf of the whole body. That too is an exercise in humility, a responsiveness to the gift they are called to steward for the Church.

Bishops should not be tempted by the false equation that by reducing their role in leadership in the economy of the Church's life and witness — in this case the governance structure of the Anglican Church of Canada's General Synod — they are somehow practicing humility. It is the other way around. To reduce the role of bishops as it currently stands in the Canadian church would be an abdication of one of the core and most beneficial characteristics of the episcopate, according to Richard Hooker.

Moment Two: Sustaining Witness in Adversity

From 1645 to 1660, the pillars of the established Church of England were pulled down and those Christians who voluntarily continued to use the prayer book and who prioritized the ministry of bishops were on their own. Anglicanism manifested no longer as a state church but as a voluntary movement of Christians. One curious angle to the story of the Interregnum, this period of intense shaping, is the phenomenon of young aspirants for ordination appearing on the private doorsteps of the ousted, formally jobless, and often aging bishops who remained in England.

During this 14-year period, scholars estimate there were about 3,000 illegal living-room ordinations. These aspirants had become convinced, often by reading patristic texts, that they needed both ordination from a bishop and continued guidance and direction of a bishop. To be clear, this was not needed to get a paying job in the churches of Oliver Cromwell's England. Nor was there any sense in the 1650s that an episcopalian church would ever resurface. And yet the aspirants kept showing up and the bishops kept ordaining them.

For most of its history, Anglicanism has invested in the *sustaining* expressions and elements of Christianity. Although we have often been comparatively relaxed in some social conventions, we have been commensurately careful about the structures that, as a precious inheritance, hold the Church together. Can anyone deny that we in North America are living in a time in which little about the Church's place in our wider culture can be assumed or taken for granted? Surely this lack of certain "givens" in the work of the church in the post-Christendom West is something both conservative and progressive Anglicans can recognize.

The leadership of bishops, then, is one of those *sustaining* elements. Reducing their role as pastoral guides — in this case in the decision-making bodies of the Anglican Church of Canada — jeopardizes the Anglican project's most basic operating system. Following the Restoration in the 1660s, one finds a resurgent Anglicanism, one that was emphatically clear about the necessity of episcopal ordination and the importance of bishops as pastoral shepherds in the life of the Church.

This emphasis on bishops is not merely an artifact of the past, but rather how Anglicans live and move and how our being as Christians in this world. It is a core and indispensable part of the Church as we have received it. This is not an issue of fussy privilege, a facile strawman prelate. Rather, the explicit leadership of bishops signals our understanding of the Church as shaped by high-touch, hard-wrought, and costly relationships: bishops have obligations to the rest of us as we trust in the authority, the *episcope*, invested in them in this season of our life together.

Moment Three: An Irreducible Essential

William Reed Huntington was rector of All Saints' Church in Worcester, Massachusetts, when he wrote *The Church Idea* in 1870. His principal concern was ecumenical unity, taking seriously Christ's prayer that we all be one (John 17:21). While much of his vision is rather romantic, he presented a fourfold model for what was, in his estimation, the irreducible essentials of Anglicanism.

"What are the essential, the absolutely essential features of the Anglican position? … The word brings before the eyes of some a flutter of surplices, a vision of village spires, and cathedral towers, … the picturesque costume which English life has thrown around it." Huntington argued that these trappings might distract us from the bedrock essentials: the Holy Scriptures, the creeds, the sacraments of baptism and Holy Eucharist using the elements and words employed by Christ, and, finally, the historic episcopate.

Huntington's ideas were so well-received that the House of Bishops of the Episcopal Church, meeting in Chicago in 1886, produced an ecumenical statement built on these four essentials. Two years later, the 1888 Lambeth Conference adopted the language and presented it as a teaching for the whole Anglican Communion. Today we refer to these four points as the Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral, and they have been unfailingly invoked in every official Anglican Communion-level document ever since. The Quadrilateral certainly has ecumenical intent, but it is also a tool for self-analysis. It reveals what is essential to our Anglican understanding of the Church.

Consider that this list of absolute essentials does not include any edition of the Book of Common Prayer, no Reformation-era doctrine or confessional statement, nor any of the "formularies." That is not to say that the Quadrilateral's list stands in opposition to these, but rather that even these seemingly cherished features are not, in themselves, absolutely essential. The historic episcopate, however, is. It is an irreducible *sine qua non*. Less than a decade after the 1888 Lambeth Conference, when Anglican claims about ministry were challenged by Pope Leo XIII in his bull *Apostolicae Curae* (1896), the archbishops of Canterbury and York, Frederick Temple and William Maclagan, released a response, *Saepius Officio*. What must be underlined is that there was a response at all, instead of simply waving it off.

Historically, Anglicans have robustly understood the ministry of bishops — as opposed to congregational autonomy, synods of presbyters, term-bound superintendents, or a pope — as the essential, biblical, and historic way to organize our church. That certainly does not preclude recognizing congregational decision-making, the importance of calling councils with all orders of ministry, or sharing leadership with non-episcopal officers. Nevertheless, in light of the fact that bishops have this unique ministry, one they receive in humility as gift and must steward with care, were the Anglican Church of Canada to reduce the bishops' unique role in leadership, decision-making, and pastoral guidance, the church would face structural and ecclesiological problems one can only begin to imagine.

Conclusion: Stewarding This Gift

The Thirty-Nine Articles, composed well before any of the moments described here, describe the Church as a congregation of the faithful in which "the pure Word of God is preached, and the Sacraments be duly ministered according to Christ's ordinance." If one carefully reflects on the language in Article 19, "sacraments duly ministered according to Christ's ordinance," if one thinks of Christ setting apart the 12, if one thinks of the good order of the body, enshrined in Scripture and generously handed down, if one thinks of high-touch and cruciform relationships, then the unique ministry of bishops is embedded even in the earliest and most longstanding material of Anglicanism.

While Article 19 might not spell out the claims surveyed in this essay, they seem embryonic: Hooker's "chiefty in government," the Restoration era's commitment to bishops as features that uniquely sustain us, and the Quadrilateral's insistence that the historic episcopate is irreducible. In the sense of relational accountability and humility, and in light of the givenness of the Church and the gospel that the Church proclaims, the unique ministry of bishops — their role in decision-making, their position as pastoral guides, their sustaining and confident witness through seasons of uncertainty and challenge — is a gift that should be prayerfully stewarded rather than weakened.

The Rev. Calvin Lane, PhD is associate rector of St. George's Episcopal Church, Dayton, OH and affiliate professor at Nashotah House Theological Seminary. He is the author of two books on the reformation and currently serves on TEC's General Board of Examining Chaplains. Lane was elected a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society in 2013. Other teaching appointments include United Theological Seminary and Wright State University.