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In Communion with the See of Canterbury?

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The place of Canterbury in the Anglican Communion is increasingly contested. The current Archbishop of Canterbury's leadership as 'primus inter pares' (first among equals) is no longer recognized by provinces within the Global South Fellowship of Anglican Churches. Yet being 'in communion with the See of Canterbury' is often viewed as an essential part of Anglican identity. This article interrogates the origins and ambiguities of that famous phrase.

Describing the Anglican Communion: Lambeth 1930

The evolving identity of the Anglican Communion has been a subject of wide discussion at each of the fifteen Lambeth Conferences, held between 1867 and 2022. The conference of 1930 – almost a century ago – was particularly significant in shaping the conversation for decades afterwards, with repercussions which are still deeply felt today.

Resolution 49 of the 1930 conference embedded the phrase 'in communion with the See of Canterbury' within all subsequent Anglican ecclesiology. Yet the wider context for that Resolution is often forgotten. It emerged from an episcopal workstream which argued that, in light of rapid global changes taking place since the 1880s, the identity of the Anglican Communion was now 'a subject of quite paramount importance, and raises far-reaching questions of principle which demand consideration'. These dilemmas were partly generated by global expansion:

> Our Communion has come to occupy a large place in the thought of the Christian world, and provokes questionings as a world-wide institution. But the development has not only been in numbers. Flourishing young Churches are now in existence, conscious of themselves, and conscious of the world outside them, where half a century ago there were but struggling Missions or possibly no Christian work at all.[1]

This expansion raised questions about the very purpose of Anglicanism, and its place in twentieth-century global Christianity, on which the bishops commented further:

[1] 'The Lambeth Conference, 1930: Reports of Committees, The Anglican Communion', in *The Lambeth Conferences, 1867–1930* (London: SPCK, 1948), 245.

> Our ideal is nothing less than the Catholic Church in its entirety. Viewed in its widest relations, the Anglican Communion is seen as in some sense an incident in the history of the Church Universal. It has arisen out of the situation caused by the divisions of Christendom. It has indeed been clearly blessed of God, as we thankfully acknowledge; but in its present character we believe that it is transitional, and we forecast the day when the racial and historical connections which at present characterize it will be transcended, and the life of our Communion will be merged in a larger fellowship in the Catholic Church.[2]

Organizationally, the bishops contrasted 'centralized government' (as typified by the Church of Rome) and 'regional autonomy within one fellowship' (as typified by the Orthodox Churches of the East). They viewed the second model as older, and closer to early Christianity: 'The Provinces and Patriarchates of the first four centuries were bound together by no administrative bond: the real nexus was a common life resting upon a common faith, common Sacraments, and a common allegiance to an Unseen Head.' This was the constituent principle of the Anglican Communion, the bishops argued:

> It is a fellowship of Churches historically associated with the British Isles. While these Churches preserve apostolic doctrine and order they are independent in their self-government, and are growing up freely on their own soil and in their own environment as integral parts of the Church Universal.[3]

But they affirmed that 'Anglican' no longer meant English, because 'the Anglican Communion includes not merely those who are racially connected with England, but many others whose faith has been grounded in the doctrines and ideals for which the Church of England has always stood.'[4] They went on to encourage the formation of new Anglican provinces in regions across the globe, and noted that

> the racial bond has begun to disappear. The Churches growing up in China, Japan, India and other parts of the world, are joined to us solely by the tie of common beliefs and common life; and the historical connection whereby they owe their existence in the first

[2] 'The Lambeth Conference, 1930', 245–6.
[3] 'The Lambeth Conference, 1930', 246.
[4] 'The Lambeth Conference, 1930', 246.

> instance to Anglican missionaries is receding into the past. The future is big with further possibilities.[5]

After considering this report by the Anglican Communion episcopal workstream, the 1930 conference, meeting in plenary, agreed several related resolutions of which Resolution 49 has been particularly significant in subsequent discussions of Anglican identity. It reads, in full:

> 49: The Conference approves the following statement of the nature and status of the Anglican Communion, as that term is used in its Resolutions:
>
> The Anglican Communion is a fellowship, within the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church, of those duly constituted Dioceses, Provinces or Regional Churches in communion with the See of Canterbury, which have the following characteristics in common:
>
> (a) they uphold and propagate the Catholic and Apostolic faith and order as they are generally set forth in the Book of Common Prayer as authorized in their several Churches;
>
> (b) they are particular or national Churches, and, as such, promote within each of their territories a national expression of Christian faith, life and worship; and
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> (c) they are bound together not by a central legislative and executive authority, but by mutual loyalty sustained through the common counsel of the Bishops in conference.
>
> The Conference makes this statement praying for and eagerly awaiting the time when the Churches of the present Anglican Communion will enter into communion with other parts of the Catholic Church not definable as Anglican in the above sense, as a step towards the ultimate reunion of all Christendom in one visibly united fellowship.[6]

This statement about the Anglican Communion (minus the wider ecumenical framing of Resolution 49, and minus the important contextual setting of the workstream report) has cascaded down the generations in numerous popular textbooks narrating Anglican identity, giving it an unexpected life beyond its original setting. In those textbooks, the explicit provisionality of Resolution 49 is usually overlooked completely. It should best be understood as a contemporary *description* of the Anglican

[5] 'The Lambeth Conference, 1930', 247.

[6] 'The Lambeth Conference, 1930: Resolutions', in *The Lambeth Conferences, 1867–1930* (London: SPCK, 1948), 173–4.

Communion as perceived by the gathered bishops in 1930, rather than as a fixed *definition* of the Anglican Communion in perpetuity.

The phrase 'in communion with the See of Canterbury' deserves particular scrutiny. Sometimes the identity of the Anglican Communion has been reduced to this single strand. For example, the official report of the 1954 Anglican Congress (held in Minneapolis) stated:

> A special position of honor is accorded to the Archbishop of Canterbury as head of the primatial See of the mother Church of England, and the test of membership in the Anglican Communion has traditionally been whether or not a diocese is in communion with the See of Canterbury.[7]

This understanding is frequently rehearsed by Anglican commentators in the twenty-first century. As one columnist in the *Church Times* puts it: 'Communion with the see of Canterbury has always been the defining feature of what it means to be an Anglican.'[8] The idea has become commonplace. Paul Avis asserts in *The Identity of Anglicanism: Essentials of Anglican Ecclesiology* (2008): 'The litmus-test of membership of the Anglican Communion is to be in communion with the See of Canterbury.' He goes so far as to call it 'the ultimate criterion'.[9] Yet this concept is now highly contested, and its meaning is more obscure than it first appears.

Victorian theological origins

The phrase 'in communion with the See of Canterbury' goes back a century earlier than the 1930 Lambeth Conference. It was popularized in the Victorian period, especially in polemical writing contrasting the Church of Rome with the Church of England, by writers within the Roman Catholic and Anglo-Catholic traditions. Just as Roman Catholicism was conceived as a global communion united around the See of Rome, so Anglicanism was conceived as a global communion united around the See of Canterbury. This idea was often referenced in an un-ecumenical contest for ecclesiastical one-upmanship.

A few examples from nineteenth-century theological literature illustrate this trend. Joseph Woolfrey, a Roman Catholic pub landlord at Newport, on the Isle of Wight, died in 1838, but when his widow erected

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[7] Walter H. Gray, 'Introduction', in *Report of the Anglican Congress, 1954*, edited by Powel Mills Dawley (London: SPCK, 1955), 1–2.

[8] Giles Fraser, 'Dispose of the Messy Anglican Covenant', *Church Times* (17 February 2012), 11.

[9] Paul Avis, *The Identity of Anglicanism: Essentials of Anglican Ecclesiology* (London: Bloomsbury, 2008), 62.

a gravestone in the local churchyard encouraging prayer for his soul, it caused a scandal and she was prosecuted in the Church of England's Court of Arches. Among her defenders was Roman Catholic priest Joseph Rathborne, who wrote under the pseudonym *Alethphilos* ('Lover of Truth') to the Anglican ecclesiastical lawyer Sir John Dodson:

> You are in communion with the See of Canterbury, we are in communion with the Mother of all Christian sees – the See of Rome; and as the former circumstance does not make you Canterburians, or prevent your Church from being the Protestant Established Church of England; so neither does a kindred reason deprive our Church of the right and prerogative of being always styled the Catholic Church, or the Universal Church of Christendom.[10]

William Dodsworth was a Tractarian convert to Rome around the time of the Gorham Judgment, and in his apologia, *Anglicanism Considered in Its Results* (1851), he compared the Church of England unfavourably with his new spiritual home. He observed: 'The Catholic theory is at least consistent. It admits of but one church, comprehending all in communion with the See of Rome, and no others.' Anglicans, by contrast, in practice admitted that the 'one church' was divided into separate communions, which Dodsworth thought was 'absurd'. He did, however, acknowledge that Anglicans might choose to mirror Rome's exclusive ecclesiology, and that the Anglican theory of the oneness of the church 'would be vindicated by maintaining that the one Church is that in communion with the See of Canterbury'.[11]

Members of the Church of England also began to emphasize the concept of being 'in communion with the See of Canterbury' in order to defend the historic origins and claims of their own church. This was typical of polemics defending the Church of England's right to be known as the true representative of Catholic Christianity in England, against the rival claims of Roman Catholicism. Welsh clergyman Leicester Darwall's *The Church of England a True Branch of the Holy Catholic Church* (1853) discussed whether the See of Rome took precedence over the See of Constantinople. He commented: 'Nor is the reformed Catholic Church [i.e. Anglicanism] so insignificant as the Romanists represent it, there being more than a hundred bishops (including our own) in communion with

[10] *Letters of Alethphilos; Occasioned by the Late Prosecution of the Widow Woolfrey* (Newport: Samuel Lelli, 1839), 19.

[11] William Dodsworth, *Anglicanism Considered In Its Results* (London: Pickering, 1851), 22.

the See of Canterbury.'[12] Likewise, Devon clergyman James Patterson's *The Church of England versus the Roman Church in England* (1872) included a chapter on apostolic succession in Anglicanism, tracing the episcopal lineage back to Augustine of Canterbury, and then, via the early Bishops of Rome, back to St Paul and St Peter, and to Jesus Christ himself. Patterson asserted:

> Thus we come down at last to the great founder of the whole Catholic Church, whether in communion with the See of Canterbury, or with the older See of Rome, or with the still older Sees of Antioch and Jerusalem. Every priest in each of these branches of the Church Catholic, receives through the medium of the Apostolic Succession, a commission from Christ Himself, the great head of the Church, and the only primal source of all its power.[13]

Communion with the See of Canterbury was also harnessed in *Union and Unity* (1860), an address by Colin Lindsay, president of the English Church Union, an Anglo-Catholic pressure group. Some were concerned that by calling itself the *English* Church Union, it was excluding churches outside England, but Lindsay explained that they in fact had a global purview:

> When we speak of the 'English nation', the 'English people', the 'English language', we simply mean the British empire, and even more than this, all other states, independent of the British Crown, the inhabitants of which are of our race and speak our language. In fact, the word 'English' is as universal in its application as the Roman or Greek was in ancient history. When we allude to the Roman or Greek Church, we usually understand all the churches throughout the world, which are in communion either with Rome or Constantinople. As therefore the churches which own either of these two sees as their centre of unity, have ever been, by reason of the celebrity of those great cities, recognised as the Roman or Greek communion, so it has come to pass, through the overwhelming influence of England and her Church, that all churches which are

[12] Leicester Darwall, *The Church of England a True Branch of the Holy Catholic Church* (London: Rivington, 1853), 83.

[13] James W. Patterson, *The Church of England versus the Roman Church in England* (London: Simpkin, Marshall, 1872), 231.

> in communion with the see of Canterbury should be known by all the world, and commonly styled, as the Church of England.[14]

Constituting this 'great English Church', Lindsay numbered the Church of England, the Church of Ireland, the Scottish Episcopal Church, the 'colonial churches', and the Episcopal Church of the United States, noting that all except Ireland had derived their orders and mission from England. 'When therefore we speak of the Church of England in general terms, we include *all* the churches which are in communion with her.'[15]

The phrase 'in communion with the See of Canterbury' gained increasing currency during the later Victorian period, especially in reference to bishops and dioceses. One Anglican clergyman in 1867, for example, referred to the inaugural Lambeth Conference as 'The Holy Synod of Bishops of Christ's Holy Catholic Church, Most Reverend and Right Reverend Fathers in God in Communion with the See of Canterbury'. He described himself as 'A Priest of the Catholic Church in Communion with the See of Canterbury'.[16] When Roman Catholic priest Count Enrico di Campello (1831-1903) broke with Rome and founded the Italian Catholic Church in 1882, he looked to the Church of England, and to the Archbishop of Canterbury, for assistance – or as Di Campello's American Episcopalian supporter Robert Nevin (founding rector of St Paul's within the Walls, the first non-Catholic church in Rome) put it, he had turned 'to the Catholic Episcopate in communion with the see of Canterbury for Episcopal help and protection'.[17] This soon became a familiar designation for the Anglican Communion. *The Spectator*, for example, in its analysis in 1888 of the third Lambeth Conference and the development of global Anglican identity, remarked that:

> The Churches in communion with the See of Canterbury have increased and multiplied with remarkable rapidity. As yet, therefore, the younger among them have hardly realised their independent existence. There is little question, however, that this realisation will come, and will exercise, when it does come, a very strong separating force.

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[14] Colin Lindsay, *Union and Unity: An Address to the Members of the English Church Union, and Others, on the Constitution, Organization, and Objects of the Union* (London: Joseph Masters, 1860), 4.

[15] Lindsay, *Union and Unity,* 4.

[16] S. G. F. Perry, *An Ancient Syriac Document, Purporting To Be the Record, in its Chief Features, of the Second Synod of Ephesus* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1867), iii.

[17] C. R. Conybeare, *The Church Reform Movement at Rome and Conte Enrico di Campello* (Winchester: Jacob and Johnson, 1883), 20.

The Spectator had in mind the growing strength of Anglicans in Canada and Australasia, who would soon want to 'try their wings', and it argued that the decennial Lambeth Conference was a helpful restraint upon this separatist tendency by strengthening Anglican unity. It concluded:

> In an Episcopal as opposed to a Papal communion, the submission of distant Sees to a central authority must be founded wholly on consent. The chair of Augustine is not a divine institution, and any authority it possesses must be exercised over willing subjects. From anything more than this there would be a constant temptation to revolt; but where this temptation is wanting, the advantages of a dignified and historic arbitrator whose decisions may secure the due combination of continuity with development, will be obvious to all.[18]

As this brief survey illustrates, the concept of being 'in communion with the See of Canterbury' was in circulation for a century before it appeared in Resolution 49 of the 1930 Lambeth Conference. Its origins were in a polemical theological context of rival churches competing for global dominance. It represented a desire by Catholic-minded members of the Church of England to defend the historicity, validity, and catholicity of their church. It was rooted especially in a 'branch theory' of apostolic succession, which focused on lineal descent from famous episcopal sees such as Rome and Constantinople. These theological and ecclesiological assumptions were popular in the nineteenth century, and still held sway in 1930, but the old 'branch theory' of Roman / Greek / Anglican communions has long since fallen out of favour. Therefore, the meaning and relevance of 'in communion with the See of Canterbury' deserves fresh interrogation. In popular commentary it has shifted significantly from an external focus in the Victorian period on defending the Church of England against the universalizing claims of the Church of Rome, to a new internal focus since the 1930s on relations between Anglicans.

Complexities of interpretation

In our contemporary twenty-first-century context, there are additional complexities in interpreting the phrase 'in communion with the See of Canterbury'.

[18] 'The Lambeth Conference and Anglican Unity', *The Spectator* (7 July 1888), 928.

i) What is the difference between 'in communion with the See of Canterbury' and 'in communion with the Archbishop of Canterbury'?

The former phrase emphasizes historic roots in the sixth century (e.g. Augustine), the latter phrase emphasizes contemporary relationships in the twenty-first century (e.g. Justin Welby). These ideas overlap, but they are not synonymous. Nevertheless, in ecclesiological discussions they are often unhelpfully elided or used interchangeably. For example, the formal constitution of the Anglican Consultative Council defines member provinces as 'churches in communion with the Archbishop of Canterbury'.[19] *Towards a Symphony of Instruments* (2012) explicitly combines the two ideas, asserting that 'it is not possible for a Church to be a member of the Communion without being in communion with the archbishop as bishop of the See of Canterbury'.[20] This combination of ideas was picked up by the former Secretary General of the Anglican Communion, Bishop Josiah Idowu-Fearon, who insists: 'For Anglicans, communion with the See of Canterbury – and with its Archbishop – is the visible expression of our communion with one another.'[21]

In what ways might it be possible to be in communion with the See, but not in communion with the current (or any particular) occupant of the See? As has been shown, for the Victorian originators of the concept, their primary focus was on the Church of England's historic origins, and the derivation of its episcopal and presbyteral orders from Augustine's mission – rather than on relationships with Victorian archbishops like Howley, Sumner, Longley, or Tait. Therefore, how might this core concept be retained and re-expressed more appropriately for modern Anglican identities in the twenty-first century? For example, 'in communion with the See of Canterbury', in Resolution 49 of the 1930 Lambeth Conference, could be creatively revised to 'cherishing their roots in the early Christian missions to England in the sixth century'. Augustine of Canterbury continues to hold a position of honour in the shared Anglican story, drawing global Anglicans together, whereas the more recent occupants of Augustine's seat often drive global Anglicans apart.

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[19] Anglican Consultative Council articles of association.

[20] *Towards a Symphony of Instruments: A Historical and Theological Consideration of the Instruments of Communion of the Anglican Communion. A Working Paper prepared by the Inter-Anglican Standing Commission on Unity, Faith and Order* (2012), §3.4.3.

[21] Josiah Idowu-Fearon, 'The Ties that Bind our Anglican Communion Family' (14 December 2017), Anglican Communion News Service, www.anglicannews.org.

ii) How does a diocese, province or regional church enter 'communion with the See of Canterbury'?

If it is not possible to enter communion with the See of Canterbury, what practical purpose does the concept hold for ecclesial relations? At present, there is no mechanism for entering communion with the See of Canterbury, and therefore no mechanism for joining the Anglican Communion. The Anglican Communion has expanded over the last century by the multiplication of Anglican provinces via sub-division – Mozambique and Angola from the Province of Southern Africa (2021), Alexandria from the Province of Jerusalem and the Middle East (2020), Chile from the Province of South America (2018), and so on – not by the addition of new dioceses or provinces from outside the Communion. In other words, a new province is assumed to be in communion with the See of Canterbury, because its constituent dioceses were *already* in communion with the See of Canterbury.

In modern ecumenical relations, communion (whether expressed as 'full communion', or 'intercommunion', or some other similar relationship) is usually between churches not between sees. At the time of the 1930 Lambeth Conference, the Church of England was in communion with other Anglican churches worldwide, but not with any other church – therefore 'in communion with the See of Canterbury' and 'in communion with the Church of England' were, in effect, interchangeable. But over the last century, the ecumenical picture has changed considerably, beginning with the inauguration of full communion between the Church of England and the Old Catholics in the 1931 Bonn Agreement. There are therefore now many churches which are 'in communion' with Anglicans globally, but which are not part of the Anglican Communion because they do not derive their episcopal and presbyteral orders, or their family history, from Augustine's mission. *Towards a Symphony of Instruments* expresses this tangled web of modern ecumenical relationships: 'Through communion with the Archbishop of Canterbury, Anglican Churches are held in communion with the Church of England and with each other, while those Churches that are in communion with the Anglican Communion are also in communion with the See of Canterbury.'[22] But if being in communion with the See of Canterbury is truly considered the ultimate criterion of membership of the Anglican Communion, why are these Churches not invited to join the Communion? The complexities and illogicalities are rife. It is better to reimagine the Anglican Communion not as a denomination but as an evolving network of ecumenical partnerships, and to remove Canterbury as guardian of the entrance door to the Communion.

[22] *Towards a Symphony of Instruments*, §3.4.3.

Provincial constitutions

Many Anglican provinces have adopted the idea of being 'in communion with the See of Canterbury' as part of their self-definition and identity. A study of provincial constitutions is instructive.[23]

For example, in the United States, the Episcopal Church added the phrase to its constitution for the first time in 1967, in a new preamble. The preamble signalled a name change for TEC, away from its earlier 'Protestant' self-identity, and also positioned the province explicitly as part of the global Anglican Communion, deliberately echoing some of the phraseology of Resolution 49 of the 1930 Lambeth Conference:

> The Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America, otherwise known as The Episcopal Church (which name is hereby recognized as also designating the Church), is a constituent member of the Anglican Communion, a Fellowship within the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church, of those duly constituted Dioceses, Provinces, and regional Churches in communion with the See of Canterbury, upholding and propagating the historic Faith and Order as set forth in the Book of Common Prayer.[24]

Newer provinces, created in the twentieth century, adopted similar language in their constitutions. However, in a postcolonial context, some Global South provinces have been moving in the opposite direction. In the twenty-first century, they have begun to reconsider the place of Canterbury as part of their self-identity as reflected in their constitutions.

In 2005, the Church of Nigeria deleted all reference to 'in communion with the See of Canterbury' from its constitution. Instead, it substituted a new paragraph, explaining that the Church of Nigeria

> shall be in communion with all Anglican Churches, Dioceses and Provinces that hold and maintain the historic faith, Doctrine, Sacrament and Discipline of the one Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church as the Lord has commanded in His holy word and as the same are received as taught in the Book of Common Prayer and the Ordinal of 1662 and the Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion.[25]

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[23] See also, 'The Archbishop of Canterbury in Provincial Constitutions', in Alexander Ross, *A Still More Excellent Way: Authority and Polity in the Anglican Communion* (London: SCM Press, 2020), 96–100.

[24] *Constitution and Canons for the Government of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America, otherwise known as The Episcopal Church, adopted in General Conventions 1789–1967* (1967).

[25] 'Nigerians Distance Themselves From Canterbury', *Church Times* (23 September 2005), 7. See further, Evan F. Kuehn, 'Instruments of Faith and Unity in Canon

Arguably, therefore, Nigeria replaced an English archiepiscopal see (established in the sixth century) with three English theological texts (published in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries). Its emphasis is no longer on relationship with Canterbury, but on doctrinal and liturgical continuity with the three 'historic formularies' of the Reformation, the Book of Common Prayer, the Ordinal, and Thirty-Nine Articles.

This trend away from Canterbury has been replicated in other contexts. For example, *Igelsia Anglicana de Chile* (IACH) was inaugurated in 2018 as the 40th province of the Anglican Communion. Its constitution lays out its relationship with other Anglican provinces worldwide – both with Anglicans who share the historic faith of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, and specifically with the Archbishop of Canterbury – as part of Article V on Ecclesial Relations:

> *2. Con otras Provincias.*
>
> *i. La IACH busca estar y permanecer en comunión con todas las Iglesias Anglicanas que afirman y mantienen la Fe Histórica, Doctrina, Sacramentos y Disciplina de la Iglesia que es Una, Santa, Universal y Apostólica tal como esta Constitución y los Cánones que la acompañan lo establecen.*
>
> *ii. La IACH estará en comunión con el Arzobispo de Canterbury.*[26]

It is striking that the Chile constitution speaks of being 'in communion with the Archbishop of Canterbury', rather than the more traditional phrase, 'in communion with the See of Canterbury', further evidence of the eliding of terms. However, in light of recent developments in the Church of England, *Iglesia Anglicana de Chile* has now begun the formal synodical process of revising its constitution to delete section V.2.ii. Other Anglican provinces in the Global South are re-examining their constitutions in a similar way. The Province of Alexandria, for instance, was launched in 2020 with a constitution supplied for them by the Anglican Communion Office in London, but that constitution is now being re-written in Cairo to take better account of current Anglican realities.

Law: The Church of Nigeria Constitutional Revision of 2005', *Ecclesiastical Law Journal* vol. 10 (May 2008), 161–73.

[26] *Constitución Provincia Anglicana de Chile* (May 2018), Artículo V: Relaciones Eclesiales.

Conclusion

Resolution 49 of the 1930 Lambeth Conference has long since served its purpose. Its portrait of Anglican Communion identity has been asked to bear weight far beyond what was intended by the gathered bishops almost a century ago. It has mutated from a contemporary description of global Anglican relationships in the 1930s into an essentialist definition of Anglican relationships for all time. A flood of Anglican textbooks have parroted Resolution 49 without properly interrogating it. The moment is ripe for a better description to emerge for today's generation which takes seriously global Anglican dynamics in the 2020s. In particular, the phrase 'in communion with the See of Canterbury' should be dropped or revised. The See of Canterbury, planted by Augustine's mission, is still held in high esteem across the Anglican Communion as part of the family story of origins. But the Victorian concept of being 'in communion' with that See, promoted by an older generation of Anglo-Catholic ecclesiologists in the nineteenth century, is now defunct. By reimagining the global Anglican Communion for today's postcolonial context, a better description can be found which no longer fixes 'communion' with the ancient See of Canterbury, or with the current Archbishop of Canterbury, as an essential criterion of membership.

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