A view without : reflections on the old catholic church from an Angelican perspective

Autor(en): **Methuen, Charlotte**

Objekttyp: **Article**

Zeitschrift: **Internationale kirchliche Zeitschrift : neue Folge der Revue internationale de théologie**

Band (Jahr): **108 (2018)**

Heft 2

PDF erstellt am: **27.06.2024**

Persistenter Link: https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-939230

A view from without – Reflections on the Old Catholic Church from an Anglican Perspective

Charlotte Methuen

This paper reflects on Anglican perceptions of the Old Catholic Church, specifically offering my view of the German Old Catholic Church as an Anglican priest. From the outset I should make clear that the view "from without" is relative here: I have had a long and for me very valuable relationship with Old Catholic bishops and people, priests and theologians since I first came to Germany over twenty-five years ago. I should also emphasise that this is an impressionistic paper, and not a report of academic research; it draws on my experience of over a quarter of a century of gracious hospitality by Old Catholics in different parts of Germany, the Netherlands and Switzerland, although its focus is very much on the German Old Catholic Church. The paper begins with some scene-setting: a personal or biographical note, and a brief look at the Anglican Communion and the British and Irish Anglican churches, with a focus on the question of defining membership. It suggests that the Church of England may not always be the most appropriate partner for Old Catholics. Turning to Anglican perceptions of, and engagement with the Old Catholic Church, I highlight the problem that the Old Catholic Church is not well known amongst Anglicans (on indeed even amongst church-going Germans). I consider the Bonn Agreement and the relationships it makes possible, before turning to discuss the impact on Anglican churchmanship on relations with Old Catholics. Both Anglicans and Old Catholics have a strong ecumenical engagement, and I consider how Communion between Anglicans and Old Catholics has (or has not) played a role in relations to other churches. Finally, I close with three short sections: synodality (particularly as a means of engaging with disagreement), social responsibility, and liturgy.

1. A personal prelude

I initially came to Germany for a year abroad during my training for the priesthood, in 1989/90. It proved a formative year for Germany, with the fall of the Berlin Wall on 9 November 1989 changing the shape of the country. But it was a formative year for me as well, as I started to under-

stand and engage with the local churches. As an ordinand, I quickly sought out the English Church in Heidelberg, which met (and meets) in the Erlöserkirche in the Plöck. Once the chapel of a Dominican Convent, from 1844 to 1914 this was the English Church; having been closed down in the First World War, in 1936 it became the Old Catholic Church.[1] Who or what were the Old Catholics? I had no idea! But it soon became clear that they were friendly and welcoming, that their liturgy was beautiful and almost always eucharistic, and that their services would be more helpful in supporting my German language acquisition than the familiar English services. I left Heidelberg after a year, but returned frequently for short visits, and two years later for a longer period to undertake research for my doctoral thesis, getting to know the Heidelberg Old Catholic congregation a little better on each visit. I met Angela Berlis through the European Society for Women in Theological Research: we were two Catholic women who – particularly in Germany – did not quite fit confessionally with the other women, who were from the EKD *Landeskirchen* or the Roman Catholic Church.

When I was ordained priest in Heidelberg in 1999, Bishop Joachim Vobbe took part in the service and was one of those who laid on hands. He presented me with the German Old Catholic Altar Book: "Use it!" he said. (And I have.) A few years later, when I became Director of Training for the Diocese in Europe, it became important to have a local church to worship in, and the nearest Anglican church was at least a 40-minute drive. Bishop Joachim, with the approval of Ingo Reimer and the Old Catholic clergy in Nordrhein-Westfalen, agreed that I should serve as an assistant priest in Essen. Thanks to the Bonn Agreement (1931), this was possible without further formalities. A few years later, when my husband's work took him to Hanau, I transferred to the Old Catholic parish in Offenbach (2005–2007). Since Christmas 2007 I have been assistant priest in the Old Catholic parish in Bottrop. At the same time, I am attached too to the Scottish Episcopal parish of St Margaret Newlands in Glasgow, where I am Professor for Church History at the University of Glasgow. In many ways I have a sense of double-belonging; my own Anglican tradition remains vitally important, but the Old Catholic Church is my German church.

[1] See http://english-church-heidelberg.de/about-us/history/ (accessed 22.04.2018).

2. Who are the Anglicans?

To be Anglican is not necessarily to be a member of the Church of England. The Anglican Communion includes more than 70 million Christians in thirty-eight member churches spread across over more than 160 different countries. The Anglican Communion brings together an immensely diverse range of churches, rooted in many different contexts across the world. It struggles with the legacy of the churchmanship of the different Anglican missionary societies, as well as with the legacy of colonialism. Its structures are challenged by the shift of the Christian population from the global North to the global South. The typical Anglican is now said to be an African woman aged 25. Anglicanism has a global perspective which is invigorating but also challenging. This informs how I and other Anglicans view the Old Catholic Church. For although Archbishop Joris Vercammen has described the Old Catholic Church as "the smallest acknowledged Christian World Communion" its focus (as Vercammen concedes) is in Europe.[2] This close geographical focus means that the Old Catholic churches in the Union of Utrecht are culturally relatively coherent; they are not subject to quite the same kind of tensions that have threatened to tear apart the Anglican Communion. It means too that their relationships have tended to be with the British and Irish Anglican churches, and particularly with the Church of England through the Diocese in Europe, and with the (American) Episcopal Church through the Polish National Catholic Church in North America or through the Convocation of Episcopal Churches in Europe.

It is, however, also important to realise that there is more than one Anglican Church in the United Kingdom. The Church of England, the Church of Ireland, the Church in Wales, and the Scottish Episcopal Church (SEC) are all member Churches of the Anglican Communion. Each now has its own order and structures[3] and the four churches are entirely inde-

---

[2] Joris Vercammen. 'The Old-Catholic Churches and the "construction of Europe", *Analele* Ştiinţifice ale Universităţii "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" din Iaşi, *Teologie Ortodoxă* 2 (2011) 87–100: 88.

[3] From the time of the Reformation, the dioceses of the Church of Ireland and the Church in Wales were part of the Church of England. The Church of Ireland was disestablished and became independent of the Church of England by the Irish Churches Act of 1869, which took effect in 1871. The Church in Wales became disestablished through the 1914 Welsh Church Act, which was placed into abeyance on account of the First World War and eventually came into effect in 1920, when the Church in Wales became independent of the Church of England. The Scottish Episcopal Church

pendent institutions, save for their relationships via the Anglican Communion. There is, for instance, no formal British and Irish Bishops Meeting, although the bishops do occasionally meet. Moreover, Anglicans in Ireland, Scotland, and Wales form minority Churches, in contrast to the Church of England, which (still) dominates in size. Overall, in the UK, Anglicans currently make up about a quarter of all British Christians, a percentage which is expected to decline by 2022 to around one fifth (see fig. 1).

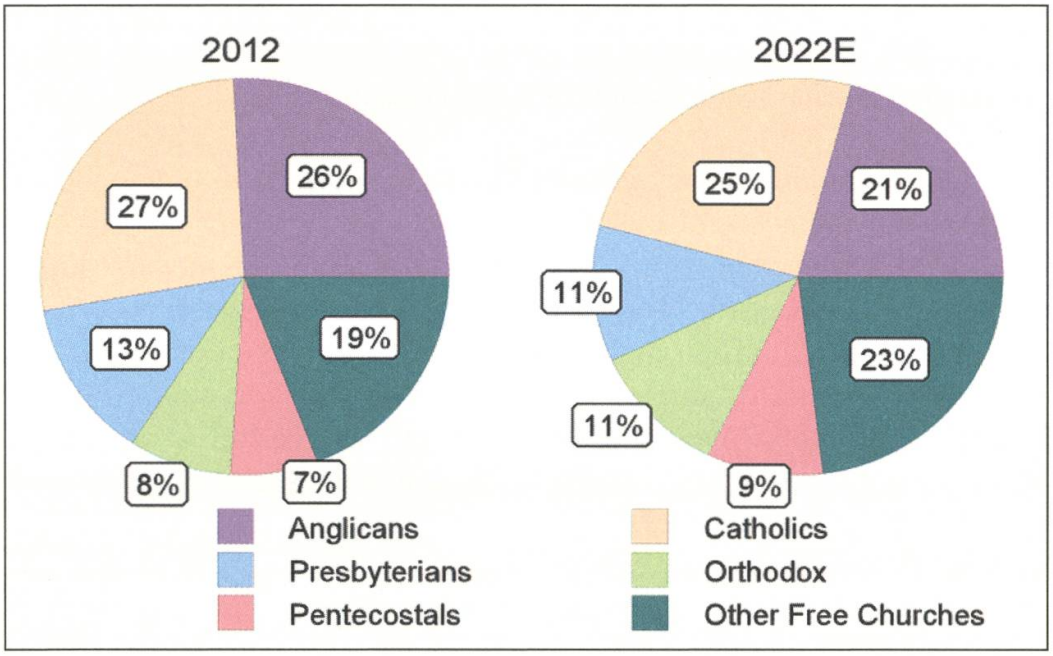


Fig. 1: UK church membership by denomination 2012 and projected for 2022.[4]

In 2008, a map of the Anglican Communion claimed that there were 13.4 million Anglicans in the United Kingdom.[5] The basis for this figure is unclear. It is certainly far larger than the number who actually attend church regularly. If that is taken a the measure of church membership, then

came into being in the course of the seventeenth century in the context of Scottish disputes over episcopacy. It has never been part of the Church of England and during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries it largely incorporated into itself the independent Church of England chapels which had become established in Scotland.

[4] Online at http://www.brierleyconsultancy.com/where-is-the-church-going/ (accessed 21.03.2018).

[5] This map can be found online at: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/3226753.stm (accessed 07.05.2015).

overall church membership across the whole UK was just over 5 million in 2017, having declined by about 7% between 2012 and 2017 (table 1).

Country	No of denominations	Total membership 2012	Total membership 2017	Change
England	237	3,715,253	3,521,472	–5%
N Ireland	71	821,383	760,116	–7%
Scotland	95	736,116	613,667	–17%
Wales	90	206,339	189,243	–8%
All UK churches	257	5,479,091	5,084,498	–7%

Table 1: UK church membership 2012–2017 comparison.[6]

Traditional denominations are declining fastest (see table 3). In contrast, Orthodox and Pentecostal and other new churches (Evangelical and Charismatic) experienced growth. Nonetheless, overall church membership in the UK has long been declining: from 10.6 million in 1930 (ca. 30% of the population) to 5.5 million in 2010 (ca. 11.2%) and to 5.4 million in 2013 (ca. 10.3%). The fastest rate of decline seems to be in Scotland. However, in 2015, within the United Kingdom, England had the lowest percentage of the population attending church (4.7%), whilst in Scotland the percentage of churchgoers was 8.9%.[7]

Anglican	4,490
Church of England	66,717
Church of Ireland	2,020
Church in Wales	453
Episcopalian	21,289
Scottish Episcopal Church	8,048
Total number of "Anglicans" in Scotland	103,017

Table 2: "Anglicans" according to the 2011 census data of the National Records of Scotland.[8]

[6] *UK Church Statistics* No 3: 2018 Edition, p. 6. Online at: https://static1.squarespace.com/static/54228e0ce4b059910e19e44e/t/w5a1591cb9140b7c306789dec/1511363021441/CS3+Page+0.2+Intro.pdf (accessed 21.03.2018).

[7] See https://faithsurvey.co.uk/uk-christianity.html (accessed 22.03.2018).

[8] *Scotland's Census 2011,* pp. 1–2 (online at http://www.scotlandscensus.gov.uk/documents/censusresults/release2a/ rel2A_Religion_detailed_Scotland.pdf (accessed 22.03.2018).

Church	Regular attenders 2012	Regular attenders 2017	Decline 2012 to 2017
Church of England	1,170,000	947,700	–19%
Church in Wales	55,000	42,350	–23%
Scottish Episcopal Church	35,000	24,500	–30%
Baptist Union of Wales	13,000	10,530	–19%
Roman Catholic Church in Scotland	130,000	107,900	–17%
Union of Welsh Independents	20,000	16,400	–18%
Methodist Church of Great Britain	181,000	155,660	–16%
Presbyterian Church of Wales	19,000	14,060	–26%
Church of Scotland	307,000	227,180	–26%

Table 3: Fastest declining denominations in the UK: UK Church Statistics No 3, 2018 Edition, p. 5.

Moreover, church membership in the UK is notoriously hard to define. Far more people claimed to be Anglican in the 2011 census than attend church regularly. This can be seen from a comparison of the statistics for religion produced by the 2011 Scottish Census (tables 2 and 4) and the figures for Scottish Episcopal Church membership in 2012, which are based on attendance records (table 3).

In the Scottish Census over 100,000 people self-identified as belonging to one of the British and Irish Anglican Churches, of whom only 29,337 identified as Episcopalian or Scottish Episcopal. (This may well reflect the fact that in the alphabetical list of possible religious affiliations, "Episcopalian" was placed several lines below "Anglican", "Church in Wales", "Church of England", and "Church of Ireland", and "Scottish Episcopal Church" appeared still further down the list.) The census data is difficult to reconcile with the 2012 attendance statistics which showed regular membership of the Scottish Episcopal Church to be ca. 35,000. By 2017 this had dropped to ca. 24,500.

The most recent statistics report of the Church of England, which presents the data for 2016, offers multiple ways of counting people's relationships to the Church:

- The "worshipping community" of Church of England churches in 2016 was 1.1 million people, of whom 20% were aged under 18, 49% were aged 18–69, and 31% were aged 70 or over.

- On average, 930,000 people (86% adults, 14% children under 16) attended Church of England services and acts of worship each week in October 2016. A further 180,000 people attended services for schools in Church of England churches each week.
- Usual Sunday attendance at Church of England churches in 2016 was 740,000 people (86% adults, 14% children under 16).
- 1.2 million people attended Church of England churches at Easter 2016 (of whom 71% received communion).
- 2.6 million people attended Church of England churches at Christmas 2016 (of whom 34% received communion).
- During Advent, 2.5 million people attended special services for the congregation and local community, and 2.8 million people attended special services for civic organisations and schools.[9]

These figures reveal the different, creative and mutually incompatible ways in which church membership has to be measured in the UK, which has no registration for church tax, compared to, say, Germany, which does. They also, however, offer the German churches (not only the Old Catholic Church) a reminder of the need when discussing membership to think carefully about the extent to which registration with the *Standesamt* relates to direct involvement in the life of the church, and especially its worshipping life, and specifically attendance at Sunday services, at festivals such as Easter and Christmas and at other events. It seems unwise to base statistics on membership primarily on the numbers who have registered to pay church tax, for it is contact with the church that breeds continued contact in the next generation. For a small church, this is vital. It is still a surprise to me that many Old Catholic parishes keep no service registers from which figures about regular attendance can be derived.

It should be immediately apparent from the figures discussed above that the Church of England is much larger than the other Anglican Churches in Britain and Ireland. It is still a majority church in a way that none of the other three Anglican churches in the UK are. In Scotland, for instance, the 2011 census suggested that just 3.9% of Scottish Christians are Anglicans (see table 4). Moreover, the Church of England has a quite different relationship to the state, with ties to Parliament which mean that it is still required to approve many of the Measures passed by the General Synod

[9] Church of England, *Statistics for Mission 2016,* p. 3. Online at https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2017-10/2016statisticsformission.pdf (accessed 22.03.2018).

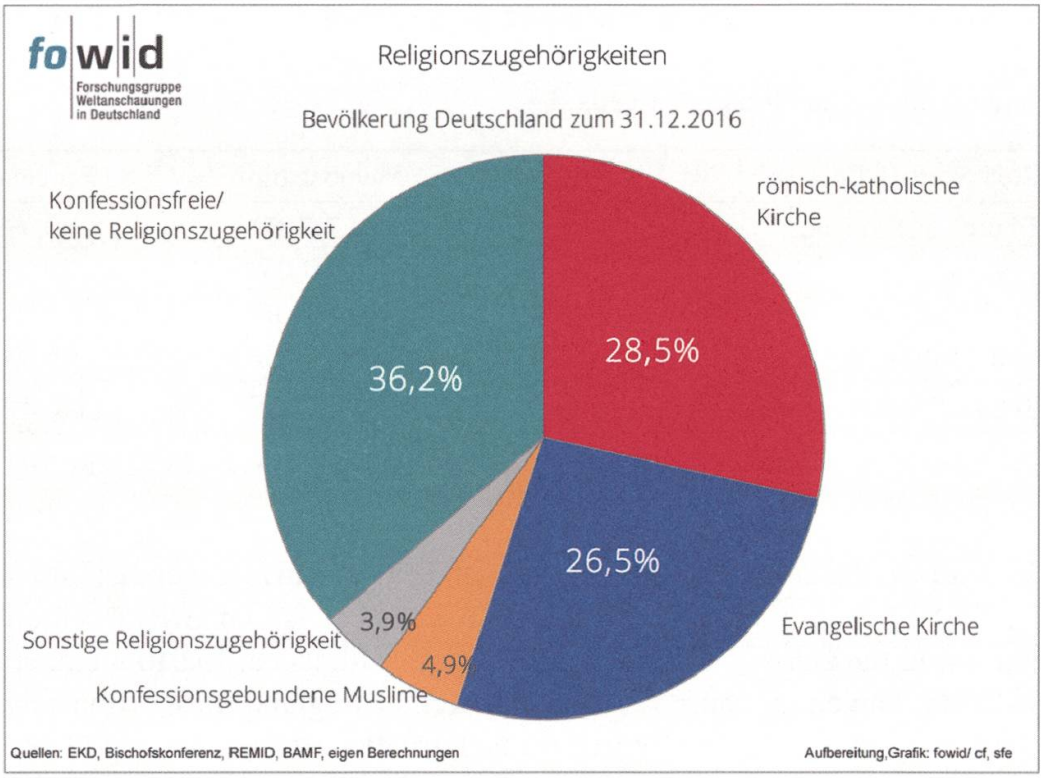
of the Church of England, including all changes to Canon Law, to the Church of England's doctrine and to its liturgy; twenty-six English bishops have seats in the House of Lords.

2011 Scottish Census	Membership	Per cent
Church of Scotland	1,717,871	60.3%
Roman Catholic	841,053	29.5%
SEC/Anglican	103,017	3.6%
Other Christian	188,258	6.6%
Total Christian	2,850,199	100.0%

Table 4: Distribution of Christians across denominations, *Scotland's Census 2011*, pp. 1–2.

In contrast, the Scottish Episcopal Church, with its current membership of ca. 24,500, as a small minority church in Scotland, is in many ways more similar to the German Old Catholic Church, with its ca. 15,910 members in 2016, than either church is to the Church of England. Proportionately, the German Old Catholic Church is much smaller; its membership figures rendering it too small to appear in the overall statistics relating to religion in Germany (see fig. 2). Nonetheless it seems to me that the Scottish Episcopal Church and the Old Catholic Church in Germany find themselves in similar contexts – as small minority churches in a church landscape dominated by large Protestant (in Scotland, the Church of Scotland; in Germany, the *Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland*, EKD) and Roman Catholic presences. They face similar challenges of seeking to minister to relatively small and often far-flung communities, and they might benefit from sharing insights into how not only to survive but to undertake mission in this situation.[10]

[10] I have little experience of the Church of Ireland or the Church in Wales, so I cannot comment on the situation there. However, I have much closer experience of the Scottish Episcopal Church, having trained for ministry at the Scottish Episcopal Seminary and returned to Glasgow to teach Church History in 2011.



Deutschland. Religionszugehörigkeit der Bevölkerung , 31.12.2016

	2016		2015		2016 zu 2015	
	Anzahl	Prozent	Anzahl	Prozent	Absolut	Prozent
Römisch-Katholische Kirche (2016)	23.580.000	28,5	23.760.000	28,9	-180.000	-0,8
Evangelische Kirche, EKD (2016)	21.930.000	26,5	22.270.000	27,1	-340.000	-1,5
Konfessionsgebundene Muslime (2016)	4.050.000	4,9	3.600.000	4,4	+450.000	+12,5
Sonstige Religionszugehörige (2012-2016)*	3.250.000	3,9	2.960.000	3,6	+290.000	+9,8
Keine Religionszugehörigkeit (2016)	29.990.000	36,2	29.610.000	36	+380.000	+1,3
Summe (Bevölkerung)	82.800.000	100	82.200.000	100	+600.000	+0,7

* Sonstige Religionszugehörige: Orthodoxe Kirchen 1,9 % / Sonstige christliche Gemeinschaften (u. a. Freikirchen, Neuapostolische Kirche, Zeugen Jehovas, Mennoniten, u. a. m.) 1,1 % / Judentum 0,1 % / Buddhismus 0,2 %, Hinduismus 0,1 %, Jesiden 0,1 % / Weitere 0,4 %.

Quellen: Bischofskonferenz, EKD, REMID, BAMF, eigene Berechnungen

Fig. 2: Religion in Germany 2016.[11]

So from this perspective, how is the Old Catholic Church perceived by Anglicans? To gain some impressions beyond my own, I posted a similar question to colleagues – fellow Anglican priests – on my Facebook page. I shall use their responses combined with my own experiences and insights emerging from my research to reflect on Anglican perceptions of the Old Catholic Church.

[11] See: https://fowid.de/meldung/religionszugehoerigkeiten-deutschland-2016 (accessed 22.04.2018).

3. The Old Catholic Church is not well known

The most frequent response was a simple profession of ignorance. Several colleagues wrote a response that equated to, "I don't know anything about the Old Catholics and I have never met one that I know of." This exemplifies the fact that there are many Anglicans who have never heard of the Old Catholic Church (and until 1989 I was one of them). Anglicans who have not lived in a country where the Old Catholic Church is present, are unlikely to have encountered them. Lived ecumenism in the day-to-day focuses on local churches: the Methodists, the United Reformed Church, the Baptists, the Roman Catholics. Increasingly, particularly in cities, Pentecostal and Independent Churches are becoming conversation partners. International ecumenism generally functions through links: parishes, deaneries or dioceses. Old Catholics tend not to feature in such partnerships, partly because of their size, and partly because when the Bonn Agreement was signed in 1931, the idea of implementation committees had not yet been invented. Considerable effort has been expended in the context of the Meissen and Porvoo relationships to establish links and partnerships, which have certainly increased the profile of the EKD and the Scandinavian and Baltic Lutheran churches in the UK. I am not aware of any such Anglian-Old Catholic partnerships. It should not be a surprise, given that the Old Catholic Church is not well-known in Germany, that many Anglicans in the UK have not even heard of it. This poses a major challenge to Old Catholics: how can a relatively small church make itself more visible and better known? In June 1947, in the context of the post-Second World War reconstituting of the Old Catholic Church in the Netherlands, Germany and Austria, Archbishop Andreas Rinkel wrote to the Archbishop of Canterbury: "It is necessary that our Church be better known here in England."[12] His plaintive plea is still relevant today.

4. The Bonn Agreement

Some did have a vague cognizance that the Old Catholic church exists and that some form of agreement has been signed. One wrote (tongue-in-

[12] Lambeth Palace Library [hereafter LPL] Council for Foreign Relations [hereafter CFR], CFR [meetings] DOC 1/311-478, C.F.R. 421, 'The Old Catholic Churches and the Church of England', statement before the Council on Foreign Relations made by the Most Revd. Dr. Andreas Rinkel, Archbishop of Utrecht, on 20 June 1947 (marked 'Private and Confidential').

cheek): "When I was younger (& much naughtier) I thought they were Catholics with a minimum age of 60. Now I think the Church of England has some kind of understanding with them, but I have never had an encounter." This awareness of "some kind of understanding" of course underplays the significance of the relationship, arguably the earliest agreement of communion to be agreed by and for the Anglican Communion: it dates from 1931.

Those who know of the Old Catholics generally also understand and value the possibilities offered by the Bonn Agreement. Signed in 1931, the Bonn Agreement naturally used the language of the era to describe the agreement established: "intercommunion".[13] This relationship is now valued as (full) communion: it allows mutual recognition of each other's churches, bishops, and sacraments. That both Anglican and Old Catholic churches are episcopal churches certainly made this relationship simpler to negotiate. The Bonn Agreement was particularly supported by Anglo-Catholic Anglicans who hoped it would open a door to the recognition of Anglican orders by the Roman Catholic Church, bringing about a revision of Pope Leo XIII's declaration of Anglican orders to be "absolutely null and utterly void" in his 1896 bull *apostolicae curae ("pronunciamus et declaramus, ordinationes ritu anglicano actas, irritas prorsus fuisse et esse, omninoque nullas").*[14] The key second point in the Bonn agreement was very quickly used as the basis for mutual invitations for Anglican and Old Catholic bishops to participate in each other's episcopal consecrations, specifically at the consecration of Graham Brown as Bishop of Jerusalem on 24 June 1932.[15]

---

[13] The text of the (very concise) Bonn Agreement reads:
"1. Each Communion recognises the Catholicity and independence of the other, and maintains its own.
2. Each Communion agrees to admit members of the other Communion to participate in the Sacraments.
3. Intercommunion does not require from either Communion the acceptance of all doctrinal opinion, sacramental devotion or liturgical practice characteristic of the other, but implies that each believes the other to hold all the essentials of the Christian Faith."

[14] For the text of *Apostolicae Curae*, see https://w2.vatican.va/content/leo-xiii/la/apost_letters/documents/litterae-apostolicae-apostolicae-curae-13-septembris-1896.html; for an English translation http://www.papalencyclicals.net/leo13/l13curae.htm (both accessed 23.03.2018).

[15] See Charlotte Methuen, 'The Bonn Agreement and the Catholicization of Anglicanism: Anglicans and Old Catholics in the Lang Papers and the Douglas Papers

By September 1962, however, a Swedish enquiry to the Church of England's Council for Foreign Relations regarding participation of Old Catholics in the consecration of Anglican bishops listed just seven bishops consecrated on four separate occasions: Graham Brown as Bishop of Jerusalem and Bertram Fitzgerald Simpson as Bishop of Kensington, on 24 June 1932, "both consecrated by Dr. Van Vlijmen, Bishop of Haarlem"; Harold Jocelyn Buxton as Bishop of Gibraltar and Alfred Morris Gelsthorpe as Assistant Bishop on the Niger on 24 February 1933, "both consecrated by Dr. Berends, Bishop of Deventer"; Geoffrey Francis Allen as Bishop in Egypt and Kenneth Charles Harman as Assistant Bishop on the Upper Nile on 25 January 1947, "both consecrated by Dr. Andreas Rinkel, Archbishop of Utrecht"; and Stanley A. Eley as Bishop of Gibraltar, John H. L. Phillips as Bishop of Portsmouth, and A. W. Goodwin Hudson as Bishop Co-adjutor of Sydney, on 25 March 1960, "all consecrated by Dr Andreas Rinkel, Archbishop of Utrecht and Dr. P. J. Jans, Bishop of Deventer".[16] This list would now be much longer: for instance, the German Bishop Dr. Sigisbert Kraft was present at the consecration of Rowan Williams, and Bishop Joachim Vobbe travelled to attend the consecration of David Hamid, but was taken ill (however, Bishop Joachim laid hands on the newly consecrated Bishop David when the latter visited him in hospital[17]).

The mutual recognition of Anglican and Old Catholic bishops is fundamental to the relationship between Anglican and Old Catholic churches. It expresses itself also in invitations to act as assistant or assisting bishop in the other church. Thus Joachim Vobbe, as the German Old Catholic bishop, was an assistant bishop in the Diocese in Europe (and frequently presided at confirmations in the Church of England's German chaplaincies), a link continued by Harald Rein as Bishop of the *Christkatholische Kirche der Schweiz*. From the mutual recognition of episcopal ministries, mutual recognition of presbyteral ministries flows, and it is that which makes it possible for me, as an Anglican priest (with competent German), to be recognized as an assistant priest in the Old Catholic church. This close relationship also finds expression in those places where Church of

1920–1939', *IKZ* 97 (2007) 1–22: 13–17.

[16] LPL CFR Churches in Full Communion (hereafter CFC) 14, JMB to Docent Bengt Stolt, Uppsala, Sweden, 21 September 1962.

[17] See David Hamid, 'Ein Wort über einen guten Freund', in: *Christen heute* 61 (2017) 12–13.

England chaplaincies of the Diocese in Europe or the congregations of the Convocation in Europe of The Episcopal Church[18] share a vision of mission with local Old Catholic parishes in the Netherlands, Germany, Austria, Switzerland. In the Czech Republic, indeed, the Anglican chaplaincy is legally part of the Czech Old Catholic Church, although it remains under the oversight of the Church of England's Bishop in Europe. Old Catholics, in my experience, are proud of the ecumenical links fostered by their church, and perhaps particularly of the eucharistic hospitality their church offers. This expresses itself also in small ways, such as the Old Catholic tote bag: "Verheiratete katholische Priesterin feiert ökumenisch Eucharistie. Fiktion? Wirklichkeit!"[19] That tote bag describes my own role in the Old Catholic church very precisely, a role which is made possible by the Bonn Agreement.

5. The "Dutch Touch": the role of churchmanship in Anglican-Old Catholic relations

Another response to my Facebook question was "The Dutch Touch", a direct reference by an Anglo-Catholic colleague to the hope that through communion with the Old Catholic churches Anglican orders would come to be recognised by the Roman Catholic Church. This illustrates the way in which Anglican knowledge of the Old Catholic church is affected by churchmanship. There is a closer affinity between High Church Anglicans and Old Catholics than between Low Church or evangelical Anglicans and Old Catholics. This expresses itself not only in familiarity (or otherwise) with the Old Catholic church but also in the level of engagement between local congregations and parishes on the European mainland. In particular, whilst more traditional, liturgically-focused Church of England chaplaincies often find that they have a close affinity to their local Old Catholic parish, with divisions being more about language than about worship, more evangelical chaplaincies are likely to find a closer affinity with parishes in their local *Landeskirche*, or with free church congregations such as Baptists. The chaplaincy in Düsseldorf, for instance, works much more closely with the local Baptist Church than with the Düsseldorf's Old

[18] TEC – formerly referred to as the Episcopal Church of the USA [ECUSA] and even earlier as the Protestant Episcopal Church of the USA (PECUSA).

[19] "Married Catholic woman priest celebrates the eucharist ecumenically. Fiction? Fact!"

Catholic parish. Years ago, a member of the Old Catholic congregation in Heidelberg who had grown up in the joint Anglican-Old Catholic parish in Munich which existed after the Second World War, commented to me that it had always been clear to him that the communion established by the Bonn Agreement was between Old Catholics and High Church Anglicans, and not with Evangelical Anglicans.

Andrew Atherstone has explored the attitudes of Evangelicals towards Old Catholics in the period leading up to the Bonn Agreement.[20] He suggests that, while "many evangelicals were also intrigued by this small European church, which had boldly stood against the extravagant claims of the papacy and the mighty Church of Rome,"[21] there were also concerns: the proposals for reunion were, some thought, "'fraught with peril' and a 'very grave danger'", and there were concerns that closer relations with the Old Catholics would make it impossible to reach agreement with the English non-conformists or with other "non-episcopal" churches (to use the language of the time).[22] A particular evangelical concern was that a closer relationship with the Old Catholic Church would compromise the Church of England's identity as "a Catholic, Apostolic, Reformed and Protestant Church."[23] High Church Anglican relations to the Old Catholics were thus seen as perpetuating a tendency amongst some Anglo Catholics and in their writing of Church History to deny the Church of England's legacy as a church profoundly shaped by the Protestant Reformation.[24]

Differences – and tensions – between the different churchmanships within the Church of England play out in attitudes towards and relationships with the Old Catholic Churches, as is perhaps particularly apparent in the Netherlands. High Church, Anglo-Catholic Anglicans may feel more affinity to Old Catholics because of their shared appreciation of liturgy and their similar understandings of the theology of order. Old Catholics do not always understand the breadth of views and of liturgical prac-

---

[20] Andrew Atherstone, 'Anglican Evangelicals, Old Catholics and the Bonn Agreement', *IKZ* 97 (2007) 23–47.

[21] Ibid., 25.

[22] Ibid., 26–32 (quotation at 27).

[23] W.H. Mackean, 'In Relation to the Old Catholic Churches', *Churchman* 45 (July 1931) 20; cited according to Atherstone, 'Anglican Evangelicals' (as note 18), 31.

[24] See for this tendency, Diarmaid MacCulloch, 'The Myth of the English Reformation', *Journal of British Studies* 30 (1991) 1–19; and more recently, Charlotte Methuen, 'The Reformation and Brexit: history, historiography and the position of the UK in Europe', *IKZ* 108 (2018) forthcoming.

tice that exits within Anglicanism. The daughter of one of the German Old Catholic priests was shocked when on a visit to Oxford she went to the Sunday morning service at the Anglican Church closest to where she was staying. It was one of the charismatic Anglican parishes, with a largely non-liturgical service. "I thought the Anglicans were like us!" she wrote to me. I could only send her a list of other Oxford churches where she was likely to feel more at home. The wide theological range which underlies these differences can make strategic collaboration difficult and frustrating, as Archbishop Vercammen has commented.[25] However, it is important that Old Catholics (and indeed Anglicans themselves) find ways of valuing and exploring the insights and opportunities to which this breadth gives rise. The theological breadth of Anglicanism needs to find expression in living, dynamic interactions of mutual enrichment and not in fragmentation or ecclesial apartheid.

Such tensions are not only a factor of churchmanship. Specific regional relationships can also play a role. The Bonn Agreement was confirmed at the 1948 Lambeth Conference as applying to the whole Anglican Communion, agreement having been sought from each of the Communion's member churches. However, relationships between ECUSA and the Polish National Catholic Church (PNCC; also based in North America) became poor and the PNCC withdrew from Communion.[26] This led to a considerable lack of clarity within TEC as to whether or not it was still a signatory of the Bonn Agreement. This uncertainty – and specifically the conviction that ECUSA was no longer in Communion with the Union of Utrecht – has sometimes played out in the form of difficult relationships between some priests of the Convocation and their local Old Catholic parishes, for instance in Bavaria.[27]

Another source of tension in the relationship is the ongoing situation of overlapping Anglican jurisdictions on the European mainland, which, despite the concerns expressed by the Lambeth Conference in the early

[25] This was one of the points discussed in his presentation to the English Willibrord Society's AGM, Edinburgh, in 2016.

[26] For the North American situation, see J. Robert Wright, 'Intercommunion and Full communion. The meanings of these terms for Anglicans and for their relations with Old Catholics', in: Angela Berlis/Klaus-Dieter Gerth (eds), *Christus Spes. Liturgie und Glaube im ökumenischen Kontext. Festschrift für Bischof Sigisbert Kraft* (Frankfurt a. M.: P. Lang, 1994), 335–345.

[27] For TEC's current clear affirmation of the Bonn Agreement, see https://www.episcopalchurch.org/page/old-catholic-churches-union-utrecht (accessed 23.03.2018).

twentieth century, have persisted.[28] Four separate Anglican jurisdictions now exist: the Church of England's Diocese in Europe, TEC's Convocation, the Spanish Reformed Episcopal Church and the Portuguese Lusitanian Church. The first two of these overlap with Old Catholic jurisdictions. The latter two churches became independent diocesan members of the Anglican Communion (that is, not provinces, but extra-Provincial to the Archbishop of Canterbury and under his jurisdiction) in 1980; Old Catholics have been in communion with both since 1965. The overlapping Anglican jurisdictions have become still more complicated with the establishment of the Porvoo communion. This raises the question, should Anglicans in Austria, the Czech Republic, Germany, the Netherlands, and Switzerland not in any case fall under Old Catholic jurisdiction, in Sweden under the Church of Sweden, and so on?

In considering this question, the response of the 1908 Lambeth Conference to the attempts by Bishop Arnold Harris Mathew to set up an Old Catholic Church in England is instructive. The Anglican Bishops requested that the Old Catholics bishops should not support Mathew's initiative:

> With a view to the avoidance of further ecclesiastical confusion, the Conference would earnestly deprecate the setting up of a new organised body in regions where a Church with apostolic ministry and Catholic doctrine offers religious privileges without the imposition of uncatholic terms of communion, more especially in cases where no difference of language or nationality exists; and, in view of the friendly relations referred to in the previous Reso-

[28] See, for instance, Lambeth Conference 1878, recommendation 12.2 (online at http://www.anglicancommunion.org/resources/document-library/lambeth-conference/1878/recommendation-12-anglican-chaplains-and-chaplaincies-encyclical-letter-41-5?author=Lambeth+Conference&year=1878; accessed 07.05.2018): "it is desirable, as a general rule, that two chapels shall not be established where one is sufficient for the members of both Churches, American and English." Similarly, resolution 15 of the 1888 Lambeth Conference, expressed support for the Old Catholic churches and movements in the Netherlands, Germany, Austria, Italy, France, Spain, and Portugal, but emphasised that the Anglican bishops would "deprecate any action that does not regard primitive and established principles of jurisdiction and the interests of the whole Anglican Communion" (online at http://www.anglicancommunion.org/resources/document-library/lambeth-conference/1888/resolution-15.aspx; accessed 07.05.2018). Compare also resolution 24 of the 1897 Lambeth Conference, which affirmed the principle that "that two bishops of [the Anglican] may not exercise jurisdiction in the same place": http://www.anglicancommunion.org/resources/document-library/lambeth-conference/1897/resolution-24.aspx (accessed 07.05.2018).

> lution, it would respectfully request the Archbishop of Canterbury, if he thinks fit, to bring this Resolution to the notice of the Old Catholic bishops.[29]

Whilst decrying the establishment of an English Old Catholic Church on the basis that disaffected English Catholics should become Anglicans, this resolution implicitly justifies the existence of Anglican chaplaincies and congregations in areas where an Old Catholic bishop had jurisdiction on the basis of "difference of language or nationality". Whether these non-theological factors are sufficiently determinative of ecclesiastical identity to justify the continuation of the current situation of overlapping jurisdictions continues to be a point of discussion. The challenge is to move beyond collaboration to a deeper expression of the unity we purport to express in our shared communion, through mutual recognition of ministries, and in the invitations to each other's bishops to participate in episcopal consecrations.[30]

6. A church with an ecumenical mission

Old Catholics take ecumenism very seriously, to the extent that it is possible for them to speak of "the ecumenical self-understanding of the Union of Utrecht,"[31] and to affirm that "to be engaged in ecumenical dialogues is one of the earliest and characteristic features of Old Catholicism."[32] This means that they are well known to ecumenical theologians. Matthew Ross,

---

[29] Lambeth Conference 1908, Resolution 69 (online at http://www.anglicancommunion.org/media/127728/1908.pdf; (accessed 23.03.2018). For the Mathew affair see also Christoph Schuler, *The Mathew Affair. The failure to establish an Old Catholic Church in England in the context of Anglican Old Catholic relations between 1902 and 1925 (*Amersfoort: Stichting Oud-Katholiek Seminarie, 1997), and Angela Berlis, 'Een bisschop met twee ringen. De gehuwde bisschop in de Oud-Katholieke Kerk', in: Angela Berlis/Peter de Haan (eds), *Met passie en precisie. Vriendenbundel voor Jan Jacobs bij zijn afscheid als hoogleraar geschiedenis van kerk en theologie (*Nijmegen: Valkhofpers, 2010), 114–145: 131–138.

[30] For a discussion of this challenge to our churches, see Anglican Old Catholic International Coordinating Council, *Belonging together in Europe. A joint statement on aspects of ecclesiology and mission (2011),* especially paragraph 12. Online at: http://www.anglicancommunion.org/media/102933/AOCICC_Paper_Belonging_together_in_Europe_final.pdf (accessed 10.05.2018).

[31] See 'The Ecumenical Mission of the Old Catholic Churches of the Union of Utrecht: A present-day position-fixing', subtitle of section III. Online at http://www.utrechter-union.org/seite/280/the_ecumenical_mission; (accessed 23.03.2018).

[32] Ibid., § 8.

until recently General Secretary of Action of Churches Together in Scotland, commented: "I had very good experiences of relations with the Old Catholics when I worked with CEC. In particular, the 2014 annual meeting of the General Secretaries of the European National Council of Churches was held in an Old Catholic Church in the Netherlands, with excellent hospitality and moving worship." Alyson Barnett-Cowan, then the Anglican Communion's Director of Unity, Faith and Order, describes how Anglicans and Old Catholics worked together at the 2011 meeting of the Global Christian Forum.[33] This ecumenical approach is not confined to church leaders or to clergy, but permeates the whole church: in my experience members of local congregations are aware of – and proud of – their church's ecumenical engagement.

The sense of the close relationship between the churches can be seen in the years immediately following the Second World War, when the Archbishop of Canterbury, Geoffrey Fisher, urged chaplains to

> look out for opportunities of contact with Old Catholic clergy and [...] to express on my behalf our affection and sympathy with their sufferings and our eager desire to demonstrate how dear to us are the bonds of Intercommunion between us and the Old Catholic Churches.[34]

Anglicans were encouraged to give generously to assist the rebuilding of Old Catholic churches.[35] The Church of England was particularly concerned that the reorganisation of the German Old Catholic Church should be supported.

Rinkel was also, however, exercised by the ecumenical direction being taken by the Church of England and the Anglican Communion, particularly relating to "your South India scheme" and relations with Presbyterian Churches and with the Lutheran Churches of Sweden and Finland, with which Anglicans had also entered into agreement in the interwar period. He raised the question of what is now known as transitivity: "What will the Old Catholic position be against a Presbyterian Church that would be

---

[33] See http://www.anglicannews.org/news/2011/10/anglicans-and-old-catholics-gather-with-global-christian-forum.aspx (accessed 23.03.2018).

[34] LPL, Fisher Papers, vol. 9, fol. 267.

[35] See for this period, Charlotte Methuen, '"Close and friendly relations": The Church of England and the Old Catholic Churches 1933–1950,' in: Anja Goller et al. (eds), *Weg-Gemeinschaft: Festschrift für Günter Esser* (Bonn: Alt-Katholischer Bistumsverlag, 2015), 89–106: 99–105.

in a kind of intercommunion with yours?"[36] He did not believe that the Old Catholics should interfere or seek to prevent these new relationships, but urged that Old Catholics should be involved in discussions about the implications. No communion agreement between Anglicans and Presbyterians has yet been achieved, other than in the context of a United Church. In 1993/94, Sweden and Finland, Estonia, Norway and later Denmark entered into communion with the British and Irish Anglican Churches through the Porvoo Agreement. The challenges and possibilities of these touching relationships of communion was evidenced in 2001, when Angela Berlis, Hanna Stenström and I, priests of the Old Catholic Church of Germany, the Church of Sweden and the Church of England respectively, concelebrated at a Eucharist at the Conference of the European Society for Women in Theological Research. At that time, although the Old Catholic Church and the Church of Sweden were both in communion with the Church of England, they were not in communion with each other. That changed in 2016, with the signing of the Utrecht-Uppsala Agreement between the Union of Utrecht and the Church of Sweden.[37] As Archbishop Vercammen put it, "although there are of course differences between the churches, they share a rich liturgical tradition, a Eucharistic spirituality, an uninterrupted apostolic succession, a critical openness to today's society and culture, and a great commitment to ecumenism."[38]

Similarly, in the 1960s, Old Catholics expressed some reservations about proposals for reunion with the Methodist. They observed that in the proposals the Methodists were being treated not as a "schismatic daughter church" but as a "sister church", so that questions of the validity of orders arose, and they were not convinced that the proposed service of reconciliation addressed these questions adequately.[39] The position of the Old Catholic Church, as a daughter church of Rome whose orders were (and

---

[36] LPL CFR, CFR DOC 1/311-478, C.F.R. 421, 20 June 1947.

[37] Angela Berlis (ed.), *Utrecht and Uppsala on the Way to Communion. Report from the official dialogue between the Old Catholic Churches of the Union of Utrecht and the Church of Sweden (2013) with a revised translation "Utrecht und Uppsala auf dem Weg zu kirchlicher Gemeinschaft" (2018),* (Beiheft zu IKZ 108; Bern: Stämpfli, 2nd edn, 2018); also with a mention of the joint Eucharist, ibid., 31 note 94. Compare also Joris Vercammen, 'Enthusiasm for the Utrecht and Uppsala Agreement', online at: http://www.utrechter-union.org/?b=547 (accessed 23.03.2018).

[38] Vercammen, 'Enthusiasm for the Utrecht and Uppsala Agreement' (as note 37).

[39] LPL, MS 3556, Papers of Bishop Eric Kemp on Anglican Methodist Relations 1956–72, Statement by the Old Catholics, fol. 17–21.

are) recognised by Rome clearly informed the distinction made here between a daughter church and a sister church. Eric Kemp, then Chaplain of Exeter College Oxford, later Dean of Worcester and Bishop of Chichester, who ("contrary to the expectations of his supporters", as one of his obituaries comments[40]) was in favour of the proposed reunion and the proposed means of achieving reconciliation of ministries, set up a meeting on 5 February 1965 with Archbishop Rinkel of Utrecht and Bishop Jans of Deventer, at which he ascertained their objections:

> The Old Catholics accept that within a uniform practice the same liberty of interpretation of episcopacy and priesthood must be allowed to the Methodists as is allowed within the Church of England, but they want to be sure that Methodist ministers who take part in the Service of Reconciliation are ready to receive a gift from God, even though we do not try to define precisely what that gift is.[41]

He noted, however, also that

> the Archbishop of Utrecht was emphatic that the immediate implementation of the scheme would not cause the Old Catholics to break off communion with the C of E. They would not feel themselves committed to any new relationship with the Methodists, but they would hold that the Catholicity of the Church of England remained unaffected in its essentials.[42]

It is clear that both parties to this discussion took the questions raised by the proposed reunion very seriously. Rinkel responded to Kemp's visit with a further expression of Old Catholic concerns, asking whether the proposed service of reconciliation "is really doing the same as the BCP ordinal?" Moreover, he wrote, while Old Catholics recognised that there is "a liberty of interpretation of episcopacy and priesthood" in the Church of England,

> this does not mean that we agree with that liberty. [...] There is some danger in letting Methodists free to think about this "office of priest" in the Serv[ice] of Reconc[iliation] what they like. [...] For us also remains the question that the Anglican priest cannot receive something more from the side of the Methodist ministry than he already possesses, if *[sic! – the sense suggests that "except" may be meant]* only a kind of jurisdiction to officiate among the Methodists.[43]

---

[40] See https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/obituaries/religion-obituaries/6693850/The-Right-Reverend-Eric-Kemp.html (accessed 23.03.2018).

[41] LPL, MS 3556, fol. 22v.

[42] Ibid.

[43] LPL, MS 3556, 24.

Rinkel here articulated precisely the position that Anglicans had been at pains to lay to rest: the idea that Methodist orders were deficient whilst Anglican orders were complete. The Anglican Methodist scheme, supported by the Methodists, failed to achieve the required 755 majority in the Church of England's General Synod in 1972, in part for precisely the kind of reasons articulated by Rinkel, although probably not influenced by him. A new proposal for full communion between the Church of England and the Methodist Church of Great Britain has recently been given support by General Synod, despite similar concerns being raised by some Anglo-Catholics. I have the impression that Old Catholics have become considerably more nuanced in their articulation of their theology of orders through their work with the United Evangelical Lutheran Church of Germany (VELKD) and the Church of Sweden; it would be interesting to hear Old Catholic views on the new proposals.

7. Synodality and decision-making

I want to close with three much shorter reflections on aspects of the Old Catholic Church and the Union of Utrecht from which I believe Anglican Churches could learn. The first of these is the Old Catholics' conscious commitment to both episcopacy and synodality, and their use of these two aspects to help them to manage disagreement. The Churches of the Union of Utrecht have not always agreed on questions such as the ordination of women or same-sex marriage, but do seem to have agreed in their recognition that these were questions they needed to address. For a long time (until the PNCC withdrew from the Union of Utrecht in 2003), they found ways of living with profound disagreement over the ordination of women. This was probably a more fraught experience than it looked from outside, but from my perspective appeared well managed, with far more transparency and clarity about decision-making structures and about the theological issues than I encounter(ed) in similar debates in Anglican contexts. The explicit reflection on the relationships between bishops and synods, and the discussion about the locus of decision-making which was one of the side-effects of the debate about the ordination of women is something of which many Anglican churches might do well to take cognizance. The Old Catholics also seem so far to be managing the discussions of same-sex relationships with more grace than some other churches have achieved. This is perhaps made easier by the shared European context of the Union of Utrecht, although differences between Eastern and Western Europe

may emerge as tensions. It may also be helped by being a gathered church. Whatever the cause, Old Catholics seem to have managed to develop ways of living well with disagreement (and without finding any need for provisions for alternative oversight which have proved so divisive in the context of the Church of England and the Anglican Communion).

8. Social responsibility with theological enrichment

Despite the small size of Old Catholic Church, it is closely involved in development projects. I did not know until I posed my Facebook question, that the Old Catholics offered considerable financial support for the establishment of the Institut Supérieur Théologique Anglican (ISThA, the Anglican Seminary, now integrated into the Université Anglicane du Congo) in Bunia, Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of the Congo), have continued to support it by providing solar-powered lighting and computers, and helping to fund a more reliable water supply.[44] Old Catholics support other projects, often with an Anglican link (such as this year's Lent appeal in the German Old Catholic Church which is seeking to fund a tractor for the Anglican Community of St. Mary of Nazareth and Calvary in Tanzania).

The Old Catholic Church also has a long-standing partnership with the Philippine Independent Church (IFI), with which it has been in communion since 1965; the IFI is also in communion with TEC and has a concordat with the Anglican Communion. Old Catholic support of the IFI's development work in the Philippines is ongoing, but what is striking to me as an Anglican is the high level of theological debate which this partnership has generated. Regular conferences between TEC, the IFI, and the Old Catholics, more recently also involving the Church of Sweden, have resulted in some excellent work on the relationship between globalisation and Catholicity, and a strong theological critique of the assumptions underpinning globalisation.[45] Anglicans have much to gain from closer engagement with the ideas emerging from this work.

---

[44] See for this the contribution by Christoph Schuler in this issue: 129–135.

[45] Marsha L. Dutton with Emily K. Stuckey (eds), *Globalization and Catholicity. Ecumenical Conversations on God's Abundance and the People's Need* (Beiheft zu IKZ 100; Bern: Stämpfli, 2010); see also the subsequent, follow-up conference on the Philippines in 2016, which became part of the WCC's "Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace": "An Ongoing Conversation on Catholicity and Globalization", *IKZ* 107 (2017) 157–264.

9. A church with a deep and creative liturgical tradition

In marking the agreement with the Church of Sweden, Archbishop Vercammen highlighted the "rich liturgical tradition [and] Eucharistic spirituality" of the Old Catholics. Matthew Ross commented on the "moving worship" he had experienced. This has been my experience too: I have been enriched, nourished and inspired by Old Catholic liturgy, by the extraordinary range of thought-provoking Eucharistic prayers provided for the German liturgy, and particularly by the creative way in which music is used to shape worship and articulate devotion. This last aspect is one from which Anglicans could learn a great deal: it offers a creative way of integrating a traditional "catholic" liturgy with a more "evangelical" approach to worship, and I have used it successfully in a number of contexts to do just that.

Some time ago, I translated Eucharistic Prayer X from the German liturgy into English, and I generally use it annually at a Eucharist with our Church of Scotland candidates for ministry at the University of Glasgow. They are "poetic, powerful words" as one of my students wrote to me. They speak hope into the challenges and the darknesses of our human existence: they are words of Gospel truth. They articulate something I have found deeply important in the Old Catholic tradition: the way that the Old Catholics take seriously their Gospel gift and their Gospel responsibility, they way they – at least in my experience – engage with the crucial question of how the Gospel is to be heard in today's world:

> Lord, we stand before you with out-stretched hands: showing our vulnerability and our need. All that we call ours is not enough if we do not have you. You are the meaning, the true end, and the depth of our being.
> You are not a God who remains alone. You take into yourself our poverty and weakness, and into our out-stretched hands you place your greatest gift, your Son. He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. …[46]

Charlotte Methuen PhD is Professor of Church History at the University of Glasgow with research interests in the Reformation, the history of women's ministry, and the history of the ecumenical movement. She read mathematics at Cambridge and theology at Edinburgh, Heidelberg and Tübingen. She is closely involved with Anglican ecumenism: she is a member of the Inter-

[46] *Die Feier der Eucharistie im Katholischen Bistum der Alt-Katholiken in Deutschland* (Bonn: Alt-Katholischer Bistumsverlag, 2006), 323 (Eucharistiegebet X), my translation.

Anglican Standing Committee on Unity, Faith and Order and of the Scottish Episcopal Church's Inter-Church Relations Committee, and has served on the Church of England's Faith and Order Commission and its predecessor body the Faith and Order Advisory Group, the Meissen Commission and the Anglican Luther International Commission (III). She is assistant priest at St Margaret Newlands (Scottish Episcopal Church) and in the Old Catholic parish of Bottrop, and is Canon Theologian of the Diocese of Leeds.

Address: Theology and Religious Studies, No 4 The Square, University of Glasgow G12 8QQ, Scotland
E-Mail: charlotte.methuen@glasgow.ac.uk

Zusammenfassung

Dieser Beitrag ist eine persönliche Reflexion über die altkatholische Kirche aus anglikanischer Perspektive. Die globale Natur des Anglikanismus und die Herausforderungen (aber auch die Vorteile) seines kolonialen Erbes stehen dem mehr auf Europa zentrierten Profil der altkatholischen Kirchen gegenüber. Die Kirche von England mag nicht immer die geeignetste Gesprächspartnerin für Altkatholiken sein; grössere Ähnlichkeiten bestehen beispielsweise mit der Schottischen Episkopalkirche. Die Kirchengemeinschaft zwischen Anglikanern und Altkatholiken ist im Bonner Abkommen (1931) begründet, das die Sakramentsgemeinschaft sowie den Austausch der Ämter ermöglicht. Trotzdem ist die altkatholische Kirche in Grossbritannien relativ unbekannt (ähnlich wie in Deutschland selbst). Der Beitrag erkundet die mit dem Bonner Abkommen verbundenen Hoffnungen und die sich daraus entwickelnde Beziehung. Die Ausrichtung der Altkatholiken auf Ökumene und auf liturgische Entwicklung sowie das Engagement in diakonischen Projekten werden hervorgehoben. Die altkatholische Kirche ist eine kleine Kirche, die grösseren Kirchen etwas zu bieten hat, insbesondere im Hinblick auf die gewissenhafte Art, wie mit internem Dissens umgegangen wird.

Key Words – Schlüsselwörter

Anglican – Old Catholic – Bonn Agreement – ecumenical mission