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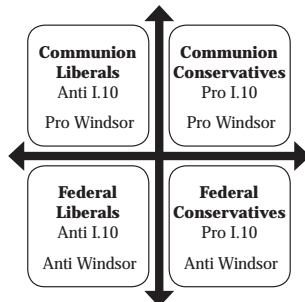
The Anglican Communion – Mapping the Terrain¹

In this survey, Andrew Goddard builds on his earlier account in the editorial of *Anvil 24.1* to suggest that it is necessary to distinguish four different perspectives within the sexuality debate and three different visions of life together in communion. He then discusses the inter-relation of these and in particular the Communion's conclusions in the Windsor Report. After highlighting the importance of the changing institutional context for these tensions he assesses the current state of the Windsor Process in the light of his proposed taxonomy.

1. Introduction: An earlier attempt at mapping

Over a year ago, following the Bishop of Exeter's address to the American House of Bishops, I floated the idea that the current tensions within the Communion could be captured by reference to four quadrants. These were created by mapping views on X-Y axes with the X-axis representing one's attitude to Lambeth I.10 on sexuality (Left to Right from anti-I.10 to pro-I.10) and the Y-axis representing one's attitude to the Windsor Report on the nature of communion (High being pro-Windsor, low being anti-Windsor). What I simply labelled as Groups I-IV were then given labels by Graham Kings:

- 'federal conservative' (bottom right, pro- I.10 but anti-Windsor)
- 'communion conservative' (top right, pro-I.10 and pro-Windsor),
- 'communion liberal' (top left, anti -I.10 but pro-Windsor)
- 'federal liberal' (bottom left, anti -I.10 and anti-Windsor).



¹ This is a slightly revised version of the November 2007 Fulcrum Newsletter which

is online at <http://www.fulcrum-anglican.org.uk/page.cfm?ID=250>.

While I believe this four-fold categorisation still has value, I am also coming to the view that it has a number of weaknesses in the present situation and that a more complex and nuanced account must now be offered. The two areas of tension remain homosexuality and ecclesiology but I think they perhaps are best treated separately and a more careful delineation of positions offered.

On homosexuality, part of the problem is that I.10 contains a variety of statements. Some people are very 'pro' parts of it while being very opposed to other parts – Gene Robinson is very pro a listening process, Archbishop Akinola is strongly pro-I.10 in many respects but perhaps not that one.

On ecclesiology, there are those whose opposition to Windsor was focussed on its ecclesiology and those for whom the problem was more its concrete proposals in relation to the life of ECUSA/TEC in the current context. Furthermore, there are at least two distinct views opposed to its ecclesiology which the earlier categorisation tended to merge as simply 'anti-Windsor'.

I therefore want to propose a four-fold categorisation in relation to homosexuality (§2) and a three-fold categorisation in relation to ecclesiology (§3) before discussing how these inter-relate (§4) and how these relationships and tensions are played out concretely in the life of the Communion (§5). Finally, in the light of this analysis, an assessment can be made of the current state of the Windsor Process (§6).

2. The Anglican spectrum on homosexuality

As I outlined earlier this year in an *Anvil* editorial (Vol 24 Issue 1), I'm not sure how helpful it is to identify simply two camps on homosexuality. While any compartmentalisation is clearly open to challenge given that there is a wide spectrum of views, I think a four-fold distinction may prove helpful in identifying some of the key differences among Anglicans on sexuality. This effectively subdivides each of the traditional 'conservative' and 'liberal' groupings into a more 'hard' and more 'soft' version. Building on the earlier model it can be seen as moving on a horizontal axis which from left to right ranges from a whole-hearted 'gospel'-based commitment to the full inclusion of same-sex partnered couples at all levels of church life through to an unshakeable conviction that all homosexual practice is sin and suggestions to the contrary must be resolutely opposed and rejected and those making them called back to the truth.

As always, labels are problematic and likely to annoy as much as elucidate but I am happy to stick with those I proposed in my earlier editorial and suggest that the 'conservative' view has those whose stance is more one of *rejection* and those whose approach is more one of *reassertion*. On the 'liberal' side, there are also two broad groupings which mirror these two 'conservative' groups and which I've labelled (the more central and paralleling reasserters) and *reinterpreters*.

2.1. Rejection

I would characterise the *rejectionist* position as marked not only by a very committed advocacy of traditional biblical teaching but also by features such as:

- a) a strong conviction that homosexuality is a 'first-order' and 'church-dividing' issue

- b) a clear and strong opposition to all homosexual practice (seen as supported by the classic negative biblical texts) and a view that any commendation of it therefore amounts to ‘heresy’
- c) a resultant belief that communion is impaired or broken with those (especially in church leadership) who take what I call below the “reinterpreter” or even the “reassessor” view
- d) a cautious or sceptical attitude to the Listening Process
- e) a pastoral response that places a strong emphasis on a Christian response of healing of sexual brokenness in order to enable people to experience heterosexual attraction and perhaps marriage.

2.2 Reassertion

The *reasserter* position agrees with the *rejectionist* in relation to the morality of homosexual behaviour. It too stresses the importance of upholding traditional church teaching that in God’s intention sexual intercourse is for a man and a woman who are married to each other and thus the church should not commend or bless other sexual relationships or ordain anyone in a non-marital sexual relationship.

This view differs, however, in a number of its emphases:

- a) it is less convinced that the issue is ‘first-order’ and may even be insistent that it is ‘second-order’
- b) it focuses more on offering a broader biblical, moral and theological defence of traditional teaching and trying to understand homosexual relationships and those who advocate them in relation to this broader picture
- c) it is less likely to reject the authority of leaders (or see communion as impaired or broken with Christians) who conscientiously disagree on this issue and it enters into genuine dialogue with those who are not convinced of this view, respecting their different perspective
- d) it is more positive about the Listening Process as it is eager to listen to the varied experiences of gay and lesbian Christians and expects to learn from these even though it does not believe they can determine Christian doctrine and ethics
- e) it seeks to offer a pastoral response to gay and lesbian Christians which is not so focussed on re-orientation

2.3 Reassessors

Mirroring the reasserters are the *reassessors* who believe we need to reassess (or, a possible alternative nomenclature, reappraise) the church’s traditional teaching and practice. They are marked by a number of features:

- a) appeal to such developments as new knowledge about sexuality
- b) recognition of the significance of the public visibility and moral qualities of Christians attracted to (and often in an intimate relationship with) someone of the same sex
- c) awareness of the church’s unloving attitude to those who identify as gay or lesbian

- d) attraction to new interpretations of Scripture both in relation to the traditional texts and its broader witness

This stance is (in its more moderate form) open to seeing the church entering a period of ‘reception’ in this area (as it has over the ordination of women). Even if not personally convinced of the correctness of change, many of this view are willing to treat the issues as one of indifference (*adiaphora*) and tolerate diversity and plurality within church teaching and practice in order to enable discernment of God’s will.

2.4 Reinterpreters

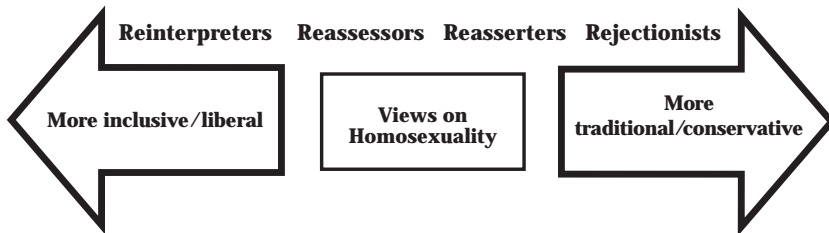
Finally, there are those Christians – I’ve called them *reinterpreters* – who are firmly convinced advocates for the reinterpretation (or revision or reconfiguration) of traditional teaching and practice in relation to sexual ethics. In addition to a strong commitment to the features noted above of reassessors, among the characteristics of those in this part of the spectrum are:

- a) strong belief that the church has perpetuated a long-standing injustice against gay and lesbian people
- b) perpetuation of this injustice as long as loving same-sex relationships are not recognized and affirmed by the church and whenever those in such relationships are barred from ordained ministry.
- c) determination to act in order to bring this to an end out of commitment to the gospel

Those at this end of the spectrum would therefore whole-heartedly support the stance of groups like Integrity, Changing Attitude and LGCM and, at the far extreme (mirroring the homophobic rejectionists), some are criticised for lacking or going beyond a distinctively Christian ethic.

2.5 Conclusion

Clearly these are four groupings across a complex spectrum and they are not watertight. Individuals will also move between them over time. Even within one category there is a range of different attitudes and approaches. However, I believe most individuals and groupings can be helpfully classified and distinguished in terms of this taxonomy of views which also signals some of the key theological differences present among Anglicans.



3. The ecclesiology paradigms

Rather than simply labelling people as ‘pro’ or ‘anti’ Windsor, as in the original mapping, three broad visions of the nature of Anglican life in communion can be sketched.

3.1 Communion Catholicism

This is broadly the vision of the givenness of our inter-relationships in the body of Christ and the importance of interdependency and autonomy within our life in communion that is set out in the Windsor Report, especially section B where

a body is... ‘autonomous’ *only in relation to others*: autonomy exists in a relation with a wider community or system of which the autonomous entity forms part... The key idea is autonomy-in-communion, that is, freedom held within interdependence (para 76).

3.2 Connectional Confessionalism

This is broadly the vision of inter-relationships in which member churches define themselves on a confessional basis (which may be broad or narrow) and understand their relationships with others as connections made on the basis of that shared confession or, where necessary, broken because of a lack of common confession. It appears to be the vision of ecclesial life found in, for example, the Diocese of Sydney and some forms of conservative evangelicalism and is perhaps also expressed in recent changes to the constitution of the Nigerian church which define relationships of full communion in terms of maintaining ‘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 in the Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion’.

3.3 Autonomous Inclusivism

This is broadly the vision that each province determines its own actions within its own jurisdiction in accordance with its own canons and constitution and the Anglican vision of diversity, comprehensiveness and inclusion is such that other Anglican provinces should honour and respect those decisions and continue to include one another and maintain bonds of communion even where there are significant disagreements on matters of theology, ethics or practice between them. This understanding of Anglican identity finds expression in large parts of The Episcopal Church in America (TEC) and also some of the wider ‘inclusive church’ networks.

4. The practical interaction of ecclesiology models and sexuality issues

In one sense there is no necessary correlation between one’s place on the spectrum of views on homosexuality and one’s ecclesiology. However, there do appear to be certain connections and the Windsor Report clearly spelled out its own understanding of how its ‘communion catholicism’ vision impacted on the tensions in the Communion over homosexuality.

4.1 Connectional confessionalism and a rejectionist stance

In the current situation it would appear that there is often a strong link between a more rejectionist stance on sexuality and the 'connectional confessionalist' ecclesiology. This is in large part because rejectionists see the traditional sexual ethic as central to Christian confession and thus an issue where divergent paths or even moral disagreement in principle leads to impaired or broken communion. While that stance may fit within 'communion catholicism' it is often (perhaps in part because the way Windsor applied its vision to sexuality) connected to 'connectional confessionalism'.

4.2 Autonomous inclusivism and a reinterpreter stance

The mirror image of this first stance is the tendency of those most committed to challenging the current teaching of the Communion in I.10 to embrace 'autonomous inclusivism'. Once again there is here a tendency for a strong stance on sexuality issues to be tied to an ecclesiological vision which enables that stance to find fuller expression. There is here clearly a connection between emphasis on diversity and inclusivity in relation to human sexuality and in relation to life in a communion of churches. Again another pressure towards this correlation may be that the Windsor vision of the implications of 'communion catholicism' are particularly difficult for reinterpreters to accept.

4.3 Windsor's communion Catholicism and sexuality

The Windsor Report (TWR) set out an ecclesiology – broadly what I have categorised as 'communion catholicism' – and also applied it to the current situation in the communion especially in relation to differences over sexuality and the crisis that has resulted. It applied its vision in three ways:

4.3.1 Listening and Dialogue

TWR famously refused to take a stance of its own in relation to the spectrum of views on sexuality and the Commission's membership reflected a wide range of views on the issue: '*We repeat that we have not been invited, and are not intending, to comment or make recommendations on the theological and ethical matters concerning the practice of same sex relations and the blessing or ordination or consecration of those who engage in them*' (para 43, italics original).

Implicitly it therefore held that it was possible for *bona fide* Anglicans to hold any of the four viewpoints on sexuality sketched above (with perhaps a few exceptions at either extreme). Indeed, the four categories I've offered have some similarity to the four sketched in the report from the subgroup on human sexuality at Lambeth 1998.

The existence of different conscientious convictions among Anglicans along the spectrum was not considered in itself a threat to our life together in communion. Nor was this diversity of view a reason for 'walking apart'. Rather, the report stressed the need for further, ongoing discussion, listening and study in this area, most fully in paras 145-146 ('debate on this issue cannot be closed whilst sincerely but radically different positions continue to be held across the Communion') but also para 26 ('further serious Communion-wide discussion of the relevant issues

is clearly needed as a matter of urgency'). This clearly presented a challenge to certain people, especially those in the 'rejection' part of the spectrum.

4.3.2 Constraints on action

Alongside this 'inclusive' position, however, *TWR* was also clear (as have been the Instruments) that the common mind of the Communion as a whole on this subject has been stated, notably in I.10. That common mind is broadly in the reasserter part of the spectrum (*TWR* paras 23-26, 43).

TWR therefore concluded that this meant that certain actions were not acceptable given its Anglican ecclesiology ('Communion Catholicism'). As a result, specific requests were made of TEC – an apology for past actions and a commitment to future moratoria. These are clearly major constraints for those who are convinced reinterpreters and, to a lesser extent, for reassessors. This is also where the vision of Windsor is most in tension with that of 'autonomous inclusivism'.

4.3.3. Good order

TWR also made clear that its ecclesiology rendered it unacceptable for churches within the Communion to act in the jurisdiction of another diocese or province without the consent of its bishop. It therefore sought an end to these interventions. This goal was subsequently sought more directly by the Primates at Dar who even more explicitly recognised that it was the failure in TEC to constrain action which was the precipitating cause for such interventions. This is where the vision of Windsor is most in tension with that of 'connectional confessionality' and also a restraint on the temptations faced by 'rejectionists'.

5. Agents in the crisis

Before using this analysis to examine our current situation, its more theoretical and conceptual framework needs to engage with the material and political realities of life in the Communion.

The life of the Communion has traditionally worked at two levels:

- the four Instruments of Unity/Communion – The Archbishop of Canterbury, the Lambeth Conference, the Primates' Meeting and the Anglican Consultative Council.
- the decisions of the autonomous provinces (including the network of inter-provincial relationships) and

To these now need to be added two more recent developments:

- the growth of coalitions of provinces (notably the Global South) and
- the rise of theologically defined and politically directed networks (in part deriving from divisions over sexuality in Northern provinces which have become globalised).

5.1 The Instruments

Over recent decades the Instruments have had to develop significantly to oversee and facilitate the Communion's common, diverse and often conflictual life. In

particular, there have developed both the Anglican Consultative Council (ACC) and the Primates' Meeting (and their respective Standing Committees) with the Anglican Communion Office (ACO) acting as the permanent secretariat of the ACC and facilitating the work not only of the Instruments but also various Communion-wide ministries and self-funding networks.

In recent years (and particularly during the current crisis) it has become clear that there are perceived to be tensions or even a power-play between the ACC/ACO and the Primates as to their respective roles and influence within the Instruments. Some see the ACO as too Western and liberal dominated (and point to its reliance on certain sources for funding) and have expressed frustration at the slowness of its processes. Others view the Primates as seeking – through their more regular meetings, their actions at Dromantine (especially in relation to ACC participation) and the role proposed for them in the draft covenant – to take on a more curial role and seize control of the Communion. There is also, of course, the role of the Archbishop of Canterbury's staff at Lambeth with some evidence of divergences between their perception and agenda of events in the Communion and those of the ACO.

5.2 Autonomous provinces

The slowness and relative powerlessness of the Instruments mean autonomous provinces continue to be a more powerful agent of change in the life of the Communion. It is actions at these levels – such as those in ECUSA/TEC and the appointment of missionary bishops and American missions by some African provinces – which tend to set the agenda to which the Instruments have to respond.

5.3 Coalitions of provinces

The establishment of the Global South grouping of provinces, partly out of a frustration that they were not properly represented through ACO and the Instruments, has also added a new dynamic to the politics and discernment processes of the Communion. More recently there has also been the creation of a Global Center grouping. Particularly given the lack of formal regional instruments these intermediary bodies between the province and the Communion-wide Instruments could prove increasingly influential in the creation of power blocs that either fuel or diminish tensions and disagreements within the Communion as a whole.

5.4 International networks

The importance of inter-provincial meetings and coalitions is increased because these inter-provincial groupings are often closely related to the various non-provincial but international networks, movements and pressure groups that have been established over recent years. These increasingly brief primates and appear on the fringes of meetings of the Instruments.

6. The Windsor Process: Where are we now and where might we be going?

6.1 Where are we now?: Joint Standing Committee's Conclusion

Following the meeting of TEC's House of Bishops, in September the Joint Standing Committees of the ACC and the Primates (JSC) issued a report. Although a clear

and strong minority view was expressed by Bishop Mouneer Anis, the majority viewpoint was effectively that the second of Windsor's concerns outlined above – the need for apology and moratoria (see 4.3.2) – had now been adequately responded to by TEC. It was therefore argued that, as a result, the focus of the Instruments needed to be turned instead to the other two areas – listening and dialogue on sexuality (4.3.1) and resolving the problem of extra-provincial interventions in TEC (4.3.3) – and the wider covenant process as the next stage in articulating, and making a commitment to, the Windsor/Communion Catholicism view of our life together as an Anglican Communion.

6.2 Challenges to JSC: Different assessments and agendas for the Communion's future

In taking stock of where we now find ourselves in the 'Windsor process' post-JSC there are three different levels of potentially serious disagreement:

- (1) Is the JSC assessment of TEC correct?
- (2) Is Windsor's three-fold response on sexuality and ecclesial order right?
- (3) Is Windsor's ecclesiology one that the Communion should accept?

6.2.1 Is JSC correct?

The most pressing issue is, of course, whether JSC is correct to see TEC as now 'Windsor-compliant' or whether in fact TEC has failed to provide the necessary assurances requested by the Primates at Dar. I am not personally convinced by JSC's analysis and it appears that a significant number of primates – probably a majority – are also unconvinced. In particular, the JSC's belief that the American church has now agreed a moratorium on public rites of blessing appears – especially in the light of subsequent statements by a number of bishops – to be overly generous, bordering on the naïve.² If JSC's assessment is, indeed, flawed then the Communion cannot simply focus on listening and ending interventions. Other major questions also remain for the Communion and its Instruments, particularly in relation to the Lambeth Conference. Here an Advent Letter from the Archbishop is promised shortly and will have to address these concerns with signs that he may – both because of Anglican ecclesiology and the fact that same-sex blessings are not authorised by any province but are authorised in some dioceses – focus less on the adequacy of the province's response to Windsor and more on the conduct of individual diocesan bishops.

The further challenge is that even if the Instruments (5.1) commit themselves to JSC's positive assessment, it is clear that a significant number of the other key players identified above – particular provinces (5.2), the Global South coalition (5.3), and powerful political networks (5.4) – do not hold this view. Furthermore, they are likely to act on the basis of their negative judgment. In addition, it is clear that a good number of American bishops do not intend to act as JSC believe they have committed to act (and that more Canadian bishops are likely to join them). This means that the Windsor moratoria will probably not apply in practice in a number of dioceses, certainly in relation to authorised public rites of blessing.

2 Fuller accounts and assessments of both the New Orleans statement and the JSC report can be found online at <http://www.fulcrum->

[anglican.org.uk/page.cfm?ID=238](http://www.fulcrum-anglican.org.uk/page.cfm?ID=238) and <http://www.fulcrum-anglican.org.uk/page.cfm?ID=241> respectively.

This pressing question is, however, only the tip of the iceberg. It appears that although the three-fold Windsor response outlined above (4.3) continues to have much support (if only as 'the only poker game in town') it is not acceptable to a significant number of Anglicans.

6.2.2 Is Windsor's three-fold response on sexuality and ecclesial order right?

The challenges to Windsor apply in each of the three areas –

6.2.2.1 Listening and dialogue

While obviously having the support of those who disagree with the status quo (broadly *reassessors* and *reinterpreters*) there are many within the majority of Anglicans who support the status quo – some *reasserters* and all *rejectionists* – who have varying degrees of unease with the ongoing process of dialogue, listening and discernment.

For some, the very acceptance of the legitimacy of this range of views within Anglicanism (particularly among its leadership) is inconsistent with the clear statement of Lambeth I.10 (and biblical teaching) and this diversity of belief is the fundamental problem that needs addressing by the Communion. This leads to calls for people (certainly *reinterpreters* but also, as Rowan Williams discovered on his appointment, in some cases, also *reassessors*) to repent not simply of actions but of holding and articulating certain beliefs. Those who hold this view – especially if they are committed to or tempted by a *connectional confessionalist* ecclesiology – will find it very difficult to embrace this part of the post-Windsor process as they hold that differences of belief in this area are so serious that they must lead to impaired or broken communion.

For others, there is a concern about the process of listening and dialogue and its implicit agenda. Looking at how such processes have developed in certain provinces, there is a suspicion that this commitment is aimed at moving people to the left on the spectrum of views and creating a position where the Communion may begin to classify this subject as *adiaphora* and therefore change its stance in the second area of Windsor –

6.2.2.2 Constraints on action

As noted above (4.3.2), this conclusion of Windsor is particularly objectionable to *reinterpreters* (and to a lesser extent *reassessors*). This is because it requires them not to act on their beliefs and on what they believe the Spirit is saying to the church. While some from that perspective will hold back on acting because of their ecclesiological convictions and out of a desire for unity, others (particularly if they are *autonomous inclusivists*) are likely to reject this as an unwarranted and oppressive constraint.

It would, however, be wrong to think all on the 'conservative' side are happy with the Windsor proposals here. They (particularly *rejectionists* but also many *reasserters*) have a number of concerns of which the five most serious are:

- (a) the restriction of the moratorium to candidates for the episcopacy when I.10 clearly refers to ordination and it is difficult to justify a distinction between these two orders

- (b) the ambiguity over what counts as an authorised rite of blessing and the toleration of blessings even when they are not officially authorised
- (c) the acceptance that the church could (in principle and perhaps in the future) lift these constraints and sanction or permit such developments
- (d) the reality that provinces, even if they refrain from such actions, are currently pressuring other provinces to accept these developments within Anglicanism's common life
- (e) the fact that the Instruments appear to be unable and/or unwilling to implement any sanctions against those who reject these constraints.

6.2.2.3 Good order

Those provinces who have suffered interventions are clearly eager for them to be brought to an end and denied Communion recognition. However, TEC has recently rejected the Communion's attempt to establish structures that would facilitate this (with appeals to what sounded like a more *autonomous inclusivist* rather than *Communion Catholic* ecclesiology) and now faces not just parishes but dioceses seeking to affiliate with another province of the Communion.

Some object to Windsor's proposals in this area because of their different (*connectional confessionalist*) ecclesiology or because (even within a communion Catholicism mindset) they believe that the demands of mission require a rethinking of this particular aspect of traditional Anglican polity.

The more serious, but largely unanswered question, is what situation, within Windsor's own *Communion catholic* ecclesiology, could justify continuing (or, as sought by the Pastoral Scheme proposed by the Primates at Dar, containing in an orderly manner) the sort of interventions *TWR* wished to bring to an end. The main possible justifications appear to fall into three (not mutually exclusive) categories:

- (a) That bishops or provinces who hold *reinterpreter* or even *reassessor* views are heretical, have departed from the catholic church and have lost authoritative jurisdiction
- (b) That bishops or provinces that fail to adhere to the constraints sought by the Communion have 'walked apart' from it and those who wish to 'walk together' need a means to do so
- (c) That bishops or provinces (even while speaking of 'inclusion' and the importance of dialogue and listening) are effectively persecuting those who hold *reasserter* or *rejectionist* views or perpetuating a culture that excludes them from the life of the church.

One major political problem is that although such views in defence of intervention or realignment are held or treated sympathetically by many provinces, many in the Global South network and by certain lobby groups, they have been given little or no attention by the Instruments and are simply rejected outright by *reinterpreters* (especially those of an autonomous inclusivist viewpoint) and many *reassessors*.

6.2.2.4 Conclusion on The Windsor Process

Although there is probably still a fairly solid consensus behind the Windsor recommendations, taken as a whole, being the only way forward with integrity, in each of these three areas there are clearly powerful and opposing theological and political forces which are dissenting from this consensus. This makes the current situation and the future of the Windsor Process very fragile.

6.2.3 Is Windsor's ecclesiology one that the Communion should accept?

Finally, in addition to the question of whether Windsor has been accepted in TEC and whether its proposals in relation to sexuality are acceptable, there is the yet deeper question of Windsor's ecclesiology. This is now being subjected to scrutiny through the covenant process which, if the Communion can hold together, it is hoped will provide a firmer foundation for its future.

Some of the conflict over the proposed covenant relates to specific ways of implementing *TWR's* vision, especially as it relates to the political institutions of the Communion (eg the role it gives to the Primates' Meeting).

Some conflict also arises because of the effect of the acceptance of the covenant on the dynamics of the sexuality debate where both *reinterpreters* and *rejectionists* may believe it will handicap them.

Some disagreement and conflict, however, relates to the deeper level of the competing ecclesiologies and visions of Anglicanism which I've categorised above in terms of *connectional confessionalism* (3.2) and *autonomous inclusivism* (3.3). Here, although there is little support for either of these ecclesiological perspectives within the Instruments (who are, of course, driving the covenant process), some provinces have at least tendencies in these directions (and these may spread through the development of Global South and Global Center blocs). In addition – perhaps reflecting their own status as autonomous, voluntarist and connectional groupings – there are signs that the various theological and political networks may be being drawn into propagating such understandings and thus resisting the covenant process.

7 Conclusion

There are clearly a number of centrifugal forces currently threatening the unity of the Anglican Communion. The focus of these for many is the issue of the proper response to same-sex unions. Here I have suggested there is a wide spectrum of views among Anglicans which can be broadly classified into four groups: rejection, reassertion, reassessment and reinterpretation.

Faced with these divisions, the Communion responded by addressing the underlying ecclesiological questions relating to how we live together in communion and maintain our unity in the face of diversity. This produced the Windsor Report and now the Windsor Process (and within it the covenant process). This has articulated a vision of life in communion that I have called 'communion Catholicism'. It sought to apply that ecclesiology to the differences over sexuality.

The danger is that this process has, in turn, produced (or perhaps uncovered) further points of tension. At the level of principle there are new fracture lines developing as, competing with the Windsor vision, there are at least two other alternative ways of envisioning our life together – what I've called connectional confessionalism and autonomous inclusivism. These now supplement the tensions over sexuality and (in as much as there is a correlation between these and the two extremes of the sexuality spectrum) they may strengthen and reinforce them. At the level of practice there are those who, even if they share Windsor's vision of life in communion and reject these two alternative paradigms, are unhappy with at least some of Windsor's practical outworkings of this vision in relation to how the Communion should respond to its diversity over sexuality.

In addition to these three different levels of tension over more theoretical areas – attitudes to sexuality, visions of life in Communion, the implications of Windsor for sexuality – there is now the added and most pressing concrete question of discerning whether, if one accepts Windsor's proposals in relation to the current crisis, TEC has (as JSC argue) accepted and implemented Windsor's recommendations.

Finally, these forces are at play within and between at least four different institutional arenas within the Communion's life – individual provinces and their relationships with other provinces, the Instruments of Communion, coalitions of provinces, and unofficial networks of committed protagonists.

Miraculously, for the last five years (since the current high-level tensions really began with the decisions of New Westminster diocese) the Instruments have been able to bring together all the provinces (though at ACC Nottingham, TEC and Canada attended as observers) and facilitate ongoing conversation across these various divides and wide spectra of beliefs and visions for the Communion. It has done so even as inter-provincial relationships and eucharistic fellowship among the primates broke down. The challenge now is whether and how that achievement can be maintained, especially in relation to Lambeth 2008, and, if it cannot, what sort of viable 'second best' arrangements can be developed or 'amicable separations' negotiated.

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