

The Roots of Renewal and Reform

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Introduction

‘If you want something to grow, don’t keep digging it up.’ It’s a reasonable point. When something is alive, when it’s trying to find a certain momentum, that’s not the time to pick it apart, to analyse it. A healthy plant needs a good root system, but it will never become healthy if you keep unearthing it to check how the roots are doing.

The programme of Renewal and Reform announced by the Archbishops of the Church of England in January 2015 is very much a living thing, a set of proposals for action based on discernment of the situation facing the church and identification of key areas that need to be addressed in response. While it is important to test those judgments, it would not be right to expect them all to flow logically from some kind of detailed theological blueprint. That is not the normal way that things happen in the life of the church, at any level. Yet with Renewal and Reform firmly established, now is an appropriate time to probe its roots, see where they lead and also how they might be strengthened to give greater nourishment to the activities that it is supporting. That is what I’m hoping to do in this reflection – or at least begin to do, as it may well be that other people’s responses will take things much further than I’m able to do here.

My starting point is to ask: what is the understanding of the church (what academic theologians call ‘ecclesiology’) implied in some of the key documents of the Renewal and Reform programme? Among the key documents I’ll be referring to are the statement from the Archbishops announcing the programme, the initial round of General Synod papers that set out the major project areas, and the ‘Vision and Narrative for Renewal and Reform’. References to these texts along with some further information can be found in the endnotes, but if you’ve never read any of these before, a glance at the first and last and at the current Renewal and Reform pages of the Church of England website may help to provide some orientation before diving into the detail of what follows.

As the answer to that first question comes into focus, we can start to explore the theological roots for this understanding of the church. Are there points where it resonates with themes in key documents and reports from the Church of England, from the churches more generally, or from academic theologians seeking to serve the church? We can also consider how it might be possible to deepen and extend those roots.

My approach will be to look at three key areas of ecclesiology for the Renewal and Reform programme: church and mission, church and nation, and church and reform. I’ll end with a short reflection on a couple of particular challenges that seem to be emerging.

Church and Mission

Perhaps the first and indeed most fundamental thing to say about the understanding of the church expressed in the Renewal and Reform programme is that it assumes mission is central to the life of the church. Mission is what the church does, and a church that is not engaging with mission is failing to be the church. In the statement announcing the programme in January 2015, the Archbishops began by affirming: ‘In obedience to the commission that Jesus gave to his disciples the Church’s vocation is to proclaim the good news afresh in each generation.’¹

The whole question of how mission is or is not bound up with growth – and what such growth measures, and how it should be assessed – remains a critical one for Renewal and Reform.

This is a theme with deep, strong roots in recent theology. The centrality of mission for the life of church has been prominent in Christian thinking internationally and ecumenically since the 1980s – any respectable attempt at a bibliography would have to be many pages long. In terms of the Church of England, perhaps the single most influential publication has been *Mission-Shaped Church*, which anchored its advocacy of ‘fresh expressions of church’ in a theological presentation of mission as that which primarily forms and shapes the church.²

Affirming that centrality, however, immediately raises at least two important issues. The first is just how we are to understand ‘mission’. What does it actually mean? One of the features of the initial tranche of documentation for Renewal and Reform was that ‘mission and growth’ often appeared as a pair, almost as if they were the same thing or that growth was the defining goal and outcome of mission.³ Although now well-known internationally, the Anglican Communion’s Five Marks of Mission, which attempt to capture the breadth of mission within a clear definition, are conspicuous by their absence.⁴ A somewhat broader range of themes for the theology of mission can be found in the initial report on leadership development, which refers, for instance, to the growth and the building of the kingdom of God, rather than focusing ‘growth’ only on the church.⁵ It also appeals early on to the idea of *missio dei*, a Latin expression meaning ‘the mission of God’.⁶

The concept of *missio dei*, according to which the church originates in and exists for the missionary work of God, was fundamental to the theological rationale of *Mission-Shaped Church*. Crucially, it frames what we ‘do’ in mission as a participation in action that is primarily God’s action, so that our activity must be constantly tethered to prayerful attention to what God is doing in our particular community, culture and society. *Mission-Shaped Church* is also clear, however, that church growth is the ‘normative’ outcome of the church’s faithful participation in God’s mission.⁷ That is not a claim that everyone would accept, and the whole question of how mission is or is not bound up with growth – and what such growth measures, and how it should be assessed – remains a critical one for Renewal and Reform.

The second issue that arises from claiming that mission is central for the life of the church concerns just how the relationship between the church and mission is to be conceived. At times, the implication in Renewal and Reform documents can seem to be that the church exists purely for the sake of mission, with attention to the well-being of the church justified only in instrumental terms as necessary for the better performance of this activity. So in his introductory note to the first leadership development report, the Bishop of Ely can speak of ‘Christ’s great gift, the Church – a body which needs constant nurturing and stewarding to ensure that its organisational life flourishes and resources our call to mission.’⁸ The introduction to the report itself makes a similar point when it argues that ‘Being spiritual and strategic go together in witness and action as senior ordained leaders seek to take the Church forward into growth: organisational flourishing is as necessary a springboard as active mission.’⁹ This also, however, seems to end up suggesting that mission itself is ultimately a means to ‘take the Church forward into growth’.

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Such questions about means and ends echo some of the discussion that followed the publication of *Mission-Shaped Church* back in 2004.¹⁰ Critics were concerned about the perceived ‘instrumentalisation’ of the church: if the church exists only for the sake of mission, then it could appear to be an ultimately disposable means or ‘instrument’ to that end, with no final value in its own right. What of the church as the bride of Christ whose wedding feast will be the beginning of the age to come, or as his body, intimately connected to him, and the fullness of the one who fills all things? Daniel Hardy, an influential Anglican theologian who died in 2007, argued that both church and mission have a common source in worship, and that mission should be seen as the ‘overflow’ of our praise and thanks to God.¹¹ That would be one way of affirming that mission is integral to the life of the church without getting trapped in a ‘means-end’ way of framing the relationship.

Another way of doing this would be to focus on the phrase borrowed from contemporary Roman Catholic thinking that appeared in the original statement from the Archbishops and was then picked up in the report on discipleship: the church as a community of missionary disciples.¹² The accent here falls on discipleship: the church is the company of those called to follow Christ faithfully, and being ‘missionary’ is intrinsic to being a disciple, so that to follow Christ faithfully means to share in his mission. The deepest source for the church’s commitment to mission is therefore following Jesus, the desire to be with him where he is and to travel on the journey he is travelling. If we were confident that the growth of the church is the ‘natural’ fruit of a faithful community of missionary disciples, then the best way to

seek such growth might be to foster deeper realization across the church of what it means to be such a community. Something of that reasoning is reflected in the final paragraph of the ‘Vision and Narrative for Renewal and Reform’ presented to General Synod in July, which in its section on ‘A Growing Church’ lists the first goal as being to ‘Grow disciples in every place who are committed to conforming their own lives to the pattern of Christ and confident in sharing their faith with others and making Christ known’.¹³

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As has been indicated already, much of the thinking in this area is common territory with other churches and denominations. Are there distinctively ‘Anglican’ roots for understanding church and mission, and to what extent can we link them with Renewal and Reform? One direction in which we might look for an answer is a seminal book written between the wars by a former Archbishop of Canterbury, Michael Ramsey, called *The Gospel and the Catholic Church*.¹⁴ As the title suggests, Ramsey believed that what was distinctively ‘Anglican’ was an appreciation of the relationship between proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ and ordering the life of the church in a way that strives to maintain and express its catholicity – for instance through its traditions of worship, through its celebration of the sacraments, through its ordained ministry and through its adherence to the historic episcopate. He might have wanted to underline the desire of the task group on ministerial education ‘to strengthen the ministry of the Church to bring and to *be* [my emphasis] the Good News of Jesus Christ for the communities which the Church of England serves.’¹⁵ His thinking challenges us both to be more explicit about communication of the gospel as the heart of our participation in God’s mission, and also to ask whether the texture of our communal life, including liturgy, sacraments and orders of ministry, *speaks* that gospel with power to our culture today, and, if not, what kind of renewal might be needed that it should be so. For if ‘The structure of Catholicism is an utterance of the Gospel,’ it should.¹⁶

Church and nation

One of the factors that clearly shapes the distinctive ecclesiology of the Church of England is a particular emphasis on the relation between church and nation. We are a church of and for England as a nation (with all the political and cultural ambiguities involved there). Renewal and Reform is based on the perception that the place of the Church of England within England has changed and is changing. Although that change can be characterised in various ways, ‘decline’ is a key word for capturing it. So the ‘Vision and Narrative for Renewal and Reform’ begins its list of ‘challenges and realities facing the church’ with ‘a significant and continuing decline in and ageing of church attendance’.¹⁷ An earlier report had begun by announcing ‘a new direction for the Church, after many decades of steady decline.’¹⁸

If growth is God's purpose for the church, then does the absence of growth and the presence of decline mean that the church is not being faithful in its discipleship?

It might be presumed that the analysis of this decline – exactly what is declining and why – is the domain of sociologists rather than theologians. Yet if decline is the contrary of growth, and growth is part of God's mission, then theology must have something to say about decline as well. For instance, does decline mean that the church is failing in some way? If growth is God's purpose for the church, then does the absence of growth and the presence of decline mean that the church is not being faithful in its discipleship? Documents from Renewal and Reform have not, so far as I am aware, said so directly.¹⁹ On the other hand, they are underpinned by strong resistance to 'fatalism' that decline is inevitable,²⁰ and record hopes for 'the re-evangelisation of our nation'²¹, that proposals 'will help to turnaround the Church's decline, and that the risen Christ will be at the centre of our society.'²² In somewhat more muted form, confident hope for change in the church's relation to the nation emerges as an overriding theme in the 'Vision and Narrative for Renewal and Reform'.²³

Such statements draw on the positive teaching about church growth as 'normative' found in *Mission-Shaped Church*.²⁴ Growth is seen to be an ever-present possibility for the church that is faithful to its calling. *Mission-Shaped Church* was, however, clear that what it referred to as 'post-Christendom' posed particular challenges.²⁵ This is a somewhat slippery term, but we might say that 'Christendom' refers to a society where a particular institutional church has widespread political and cultural influence. The Church of England has been such a 'Christendom' church for most of its history, and still retains some of the vestiges of that legacy, but in a hugely changed context. Is Renewal and Reform part of how the Church of England is now re-positioning itself in a post-Christendom era, embracing its radically altered status? Or is it a serious attempt to reverse such change and recover something at least of what Christendom might continue to mean ('the risen Christ will be at the centre of our society')? To the extent that some kind of affirmative answer to the latter question is implied, we may need to look for roots beyond the recovery of the centrality of mission for Christian theology over the past thirty years or so, to a Church of England report produced soon after the Second World War, *Towards the Conversion of England*.²⁶ Whilst being blunt about the already far-reaching decline in the Church of England's influence in society and England's need for 'conversion', it set out a wide-ranging series of measures intended to address that situation and restore the country as a Christian nation. One might argue that this report – whose recommendations were largely ignored – is in fact one of the deeper roots for Renewal and Reform.

What might it mean to still be a 'Christendom' church – a church with a particular, indeed in various ways privileged, relationship to the social and political order – in a post-Christendom society, where Christian belief has ceased to be the norm? That is a question that clearly goes well beyond Renewal and Reform itself, and yet it is one that any kind of co-ordinated national programme on the part of the Church of

England has to face. Part of the answer has to be about the way that the Church of England engages with other churches. Will it use its particular position for the good of the whole church in this land? Can it make its unique place a hospitable gathering point for the different churches here? The relation between a particular church and other churches within the whole church of Christ is a critical issue for any ecclesiology.

Renewal and Reform documents seem to be strangely silent about the fact that we are not, in fact, alone in the harvest field

Renewal and Reform documents seem to be strangely silent about the fact that we are not, in fact, alone in the harvest field, to use the biblical image highlighted in the 'Vision and Narrative for Renewal and Reform'. There are many other Christians, and many other churches, indeed an increasing number of them, labouring alongside us, seeking with us the growth of the one church of Jesus Christ. Indeed, although it depends how you count, there are more of them than there are of us. Do we notice them? Do we care about them? If we are serious about bringing in the Lord's harvest, should we not be asking why we have been called to work together for the same Lord, with the same purpose, in the same place?

Part of the changing face of our nation is the proliferation of different churches and the apparently increasing ease with which, at least outside Orthodoxy and Roman Catholicism, Christians move between churches and denominations. That means that many people who are drawn to faith in the Church of England will not remain life-long Anglicans, and many people who come to faith in other churches will at some point become members of the Church of England. That continual traffic between churches makes it likely that long-term growth for the Church of England will come in a context where other churches are also growing alongside it. If that is correct, it will be critical for the success of Renewal and Reform that the Church of England can show effective leadership in promoting partnership in mission between the churches in England.

One of the most striking features of Renewal and Reform is the way it carefully distinguishes what belongs at 'national' level and what belongs with the dioceses. There have been repeated statements to the effect that there is no single, national strategy for mission and growth, but rather the role of the national church and its institutions is to support 42 different strategies as developed by each diocese.²⁷ The 'national' part of Renewal and Reform is about getting ready to provide that support: the real work, the actual content of what is envisaged, will take place within the institutional context of the diocese and be shaped by its priorities and perceptions.²⁸ This reflects the need for thinking about mission to draw on careful listening to what is happening in the communities where the church is seeking to share the gospel.

The danger, however, of assigning leadership in mission to dioceses, and then implying that the ‘church’ is either the national body (‘the whole church’) or a particular parish, cathedral, fresh expression, chaplaincy, is implying that the diocese is no more than a convenience of management

It also corresponds to an important feature of Anglican ecclesiology, which is the significance of the diocese as the ‘local’ church, the church in a particular place, overseeing the many and various gatherings of Christians that take place within it, and forming with other dioceses a Province that, in the case of the Church of England, joins with another Province to constitute a national church. On this as on many other matters, not all Anglicans see things the same way, but to make the diocese the lead ‘agency’ for mission accords well with that strand in Anglican thinking about the church that would make the diocese the primary form of the local (as opposed to universal) church, united around the bishop in synod. Given all that, it seems curious that, to the best of my knowledge, documents relating to Renewal and Reform do not appear to talk about dioceses as *churches*. Perhaps that is simply because it might sound odd to the average Anglican these days, and the documents are written to be accessible. The danger, however, of assigning leadership in mission to dioceses, and then implying that the ‘church’ is *either* the national body (‘the whole church’) *or* a particular parish, cathedral, fresh expression, chaplaincy, is implying that the diocese is no more than a convenience of management.²⁹ Not only would this contradict historic Anglican ecclesiology, it also risks separating responsibility for mission from the actual being of the church itself.

Church and reform

It might be expected that Renewal and Reform would have a fair amount to say about reform, and how this relates to the life of the church. Next year, Lutherans – and other Christians – around the world will be marking the 500th anniversary of ‘the’ Reformation, as dated from Luther’s posting of the 95 Theses in Wittenberg. The language of church reform has, since the mid-twentieth century at least, been one that contemporary Roman Catholics as well as Protestants are happy to use. Whilst it is of course closely linked to renewal in the documents we are considering, and there are some fascinating questions about the distinction and connection between the two terms, on this occasion I’m just going to focus on reform, in part because of this long and weighty history in Christian theology.³⁰

I have so far been unable to locate in the official Renewal and Reform documentation a straightforward use of the phrase ‘reform of the church’

It may be for want of looking carefully enough, but I have so far been unable to locate in the official Renewal and Reform documentation a straightforward use of the phrase ‘reform of the church’, although a blog from the previous Secretary General talks at one point about the ‘renewal and reform of the Church of England’.³¹ Yet in terms of Christian history since the 16th century, it is the church that has been the

usual ‘object’ of reform. The church is characteristically what is – or needs to be – reformed. Yet this way of thinking seems, however oddly, not to be characteristic of the Renewal and Reform documents. So what does ‘reform’ refer to here? What is it that Renewal and Reform wants to reform, if not the church?

In the very first paragraph of the Archbishops’ original statement, the second sentence asserts that ‘As disciples of our Risen Lord we are called to be loyal to the inheritance of faith which we have received and open to God’s Spirit so that we can be constantly renewed and reformed for the task entrusted to us.’³² Here the object of reform is simply us, which can be read as one way of talking about the church: after all, the church is a communion of persons, so reform of the church means the reform of those persons. The reference to the Holy Spirit here is also consistent with what might be called the normal, theological understanding of reform in Christian tradition: the primary ‘agent’ of reform is God, with particular reference to God the Holy Spirit, and the ‘object’ of reform is the church as the communion of the faithful. We might just see something of the same perspective elsewhere in the comment that a prayer quoted in the text ‘has reminded us of the need for deep-seated reform within the Church and of our need to depend on the true and living God to transform people’s hearts and minds.’³³ Pope Benedict once observed that ‘Saints, in fact, reformed the Church in depth, not by working up plans for new structures, but by reforming themselves.’³⁴

There are rather more occasions, however, when the term is used in what might be described as the contemporary secular sense, the sense in which it is endlessly invoked by people in public life, as in ‘reforming the NHS’ etc. Most starkly, this is more or less precisely how it appears in the passage of the report from the Church Commissioners summarising the ‘four major reforms’ recently achieved with regard to the Church of England’s financial management.³⁵ In this usage, the agent of reform is human beings – perhaps more precisely those in positions of leadership and management – and the object of reforms is specific features of institutional life, policies, systems and procedures. Reform means changing these features so that institutions deliver the outcomes sought from them more efficiently and effectively. So, for instance, in his introduction to the report on leadership development, the Bishop of Ely writes of the Renewal and Reform programme as a whole that ‘The Task Groups are looking at a portfolio of reforms being proposed [to] cover the whole range of our ministry and mission and proposing fundamental changes to ensure effective ministry and mission to the many communities we serve.’³⁶

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By ‘secular’, I do not mean ‘anti-Christian’, but simply that this is a sense of ‘reform’ which has no explicit theological reference. It is perfectly possible to combine this secular sense of reform with the theological sense. This could most obviously be done by making our efforts at ‘reform’ of institutional features of the church a part of how

we seek to respond to and cooperate with the work of the Holy Spirit in reforming the church (including us) as a communion of persons.³⁷ This kind of integrating approach is signalled in the initial statement from the Archbishops, most obviously in their early comment that ‘The spiritual challenge of reform and renewal is both personal and institutional,’ echoed in a subsequent remark that ‘Renewing and reforming aspects of our institutional life is a necessary but far from sufficient response to the challenges facing the Church of England.’³⁸

The relationship between personal and institutional reform is never really explored, however.³⁹ Indeed, nothing is ever said explicitly about the nature of personal reform. The passage just quoted from the initial statement proceeds to imply that the ‘personal’ will be dealt with in the work on discipleship, yet the paper presented to Synod on this subject only uses ‘reform’ in a historical sense. It is unfortunate that it could not somehow be made explicit that the way to personal reform is the path of discipleship, and that this is inseparable from institutional reform and reform of the church as a whole. There must be a relationship between Renewal and Reform as ‘programme’ and renewal and reform as the movement of God’s grace in the life of God’s people. The former will bear no lasting fruit without the latter. Is it possible that it could also become a catalyst, a focus for it?

Conclusion

Renewal and Reform will continue to develop as it seeks to support the Church of England in the missionary challenges it faces, and as it does so will continue to generate theological questions. This brief review of three key areas for its implied theology of the church – church and mission, church and nation, church and reform – has thrown up a whole range of issues, and I’m not going to try to summarise them all here. It has however highlighted two particular challenges as to where deeper roots may be important.

The emphasis of Christian doctrine has been to say of both that the primary agent is God, and our contribution while vital needs to be acknowledged as a humble cooperation with the work of God that can only be enabled and sustained by the grace of God

The first concerns how we understand God to be at work, in the church and in the world. What difference does it make to how we pursue a programme of action if we perceive ourselves to be doing what we can in recognition of a divine command, as opposed to participating in work that is first and last God’s rather than ours? Parallels have emerged regarding the theology of mission and the theology of reform. The emphasis of Christian doctrine has been to say of both that the primary agent is God, and our contribution while vital needs to be acknowledged as a humble cooperation with the work of God that can only be enabled and sustained by the grace of God. Because of our sins and weaknesses, such cooperation is not only a matter of effective and efficient activity on our part but must also draw us into the path of repentance and indeed sanctification.

The second, related point concerns the challenge of speaking about and still more importantly acting as the church in an age of extreme individualism. We live in a culture that recognizes individuals and institutions: individuals who are free to seek their own fulfilment, and institutions that must be mechanistically managed to optimize their efficiency as systems in delivering what individuals want. It therefore has no space for the church, as it appears in the Bible and Christian tradition – the church as a real communion of persons in Christ, created by God, Christ’s body and his bride.⁴⁰

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So we know we’re swimming against the tide when we seek to think and act as the church, not just as individuals trying to affect an institution. If we are going to avoid getting dragged along by the current here, we will need a strong sense of who we are as the church called to share in God’s mission. That needs to include a clear, robust understanding of the particular vocation of the Church of England, *and* a grateful awareness that our church is only one part of the whole church of God in this place, called to mission in unity and unity in mission.

NOTES

¹ Archbishops of Canterbury and York, *'In Each Generation': A Programme for Reform and Renewal*, 2015, <http://cofecomms.tumblr.com/post/107894352727/in-each-generation-a-programme-for-reform-and>, §1.

² Church of England's Mission and Public Affairs Council, *Mission-Shaped Church: Church Planting and Fresh Expressions of Church in a Changing Context* (London: Church House Publishing, 2004; GS 1523); see in particular chapter 5. 'Theology for a Missionary Church'.

³ E.g. General Synod of the Church of England, *Report of the Task Force on Resourcing the Future of the Church of England*, GS 1978, 2015,

<https://www.churchofengland.org/media/2139976/gs%201978%20-%20resourcing%20the%20future%20task%20group%20report.pdf>, §§2, 4, 5, 24 and 46. It records some theological discussion taking place around mission and growth, in particular what 'good growth' means in the context of mission (§11), while also acknowledging the restriction of information for its proposed assessment of 'mission strength' to numerical evidence (§17). See also General Synod of the Church of England, *Report of the Simplification Task Group*, 2015, GS 1980, <https://www.churchofengland.org/media/2212180/gs%201980%20-%20simplification%20task%20group%20report.pdf>, §4 of main report on terms of reference; Lord Green Steering Group, *Talent Management for Future Leaders and Leadership Development for Bishops and Deans: A New Approach*, 2014, <https://www.churchofengland.org/media/2130591/report.pdf>, §10.

⁴ See <http://www.anglicancommunion.org/identity/marks-of-mission.aspx>. This formulation itself draws on earlier work, including the report on *The Measure of Mission* from the Mission and Theology Advisory Group (London: Church House Publishing, 1994; GS 780A), which lists ten marks of mission.

⁵ Lord Green Steering Group, *Talent Management*, §§22 and 24.

⁶ Lord Green Steering Group, *Talent Management*, §6.

⁷ Mission and Public Affairs Council, *Mission-Shaped Church*, p. 93.

⁸ The Rt Revd Stephen Conway, 'A Note from the Bishop of Ely on the Green Report', 2014, <https://churchofengland.org/media-centre/news/2014/12/a-note-from-the-bishop-of-ely-on-%E2%80%9Cthe-green-report%E2%80%9D.aspx>.

⁹ Lord Green Steering Group, *Talent Management*, §29.

¹⁰ For a review of the debate, see Roland Riem, 'Mission-Shaped Church: An Emerging Critique', *Ecclesiology* 3.1 (2006): 125–139.

¹¹ Daniel W. Hardy, 'The Missionary Being of the Church,' in *Finding the Church: The Dynamic Truth of Anglicanism* (London: SCM, 2001), pp. 24–40.

¹² Archbishops of Canterbury and York, *'In Each Generation'*, §5; General Synod of the Church of England, *Developing Discipleship*, GS 1977, 2015, <https://www.churchofengland.org/media/2144200/gs%201977%20-%20developing%20discipleship.pdf>, §§16–21. Cf. Pope Francis, *Evangelii gaudium: Apostolic Exhortation to the Bishops, Clergy, Consecrated Persons and the Lay Faithful on the Proclamation of the Gospel in Today's World*,

http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20131124_evangelii-gaudium.html, §§119–21.

¹³ General Synod, 'Vision and Narrative for Renewal and Reform', 2016, GS 2038, https://churchofengland.org/media/2529194/gs_2038_-_a_vision_for_renewal_and_reform.pdf, §12.

¹⁴ Michael Ramsey, *The Gospel and the Catholic Church* (London: SPCK, 1990).

¹⁵ General Synod, *Resourcing Ministerial Education in the Church of England*, GS 1979, 2015, <https://www.churchofengland.org/media/2140023/gs%201979%20-%20resourcing%20ministerial%20education%20task%20group%20report.pdf>, §2.

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- ¹⁶ Ramsey, *Gospel and the Catholic Church*, p. 54.
- ¹⁷ General Synod, 'Vision and Narrative', §8.
- ¹⁸ General Synod, *Resourcing the Future*, §1.
- ¹⁹ Compare in this respect Mission and Public Affairs Council, *Mission-Shaped Church*, pp. 13–14.
- ²⁰ William Fittall, 'Reform and Renewal – A Guide to the Debate', 2015, <http://cofecomms.tumblr.com/post/117780432712/reform-and-renewal-a-guide-to-the-debate>.
- ²¹ General Synod of the Church of England, *Report of the Simplification Task Group*, GS 1980, 2015, Executive Summary (iii), <https://www.churchofengland.org/media/2212180/gs%201980%20-%20simplification%20task%20group%20report.pdf>.
- ²² General Synod, *Resourcing the Future*, §3.
- ²³ General Synod, 'Vision and Narrative', e.g. §10. One might contrast for instance the analysis of the situation facing the Roman Catholic Church in Europe in a recent book by Cardinal Kasper, which accepts that continuing numerical decline is likely if not inevitable for the foreseeable future and will be especially severe for churches that previously benefited from Christendom relationships, yet sets out a sustained vision of renewal for mission that has potential points of overlap with Renewal and Reform; see Walter Kasper, *The Catholic Church: Nature, Reality and Mission*, trans. Thomas Hoebel (Bloomsbury Academic, 2013), especially pp. 331–32.
- ²⁴ Mission and Public Affairs Council, *Mission-Shaped Church*, p. 93.
- ²⁵ Mission and Public Affairs Council, *Mission-Shaped Church*, pp. 11–12; see also p. 94.
- ²⁶ Archbishops' Commission on Evangelism, *Towards the Conversion of England: A Plan Dedicated to the Memory of Archbishop William Temple* (London: Press and Publications Board of the Church Assembly, 1945).
- ²⁷ E.g. Archbishops of Canterbury and York, 'In Each Generation', §15; General Synod, *Resourcing the Future*, §3 and p. 13. The first main slide of the presentation on Renewal and Reform to the General Synod in February 2016 defined Renewal and Reform as 'a multi-faceted response to a commonly held need and a set of diocesan ambitions and strategies'; see https://www.churchofengland.org/media/2452408/renewal_and_reform_presentation_160217_item_17.pdf.
- ²⁸ General Synod, *Optimising the Role of the NCIs*, GS Misc 1094, 2015, <https://www.churchofengland.org/media/2141359/gs%20misc%201094%20-%20optimising%20the%20role%20of%20the%20ncis.pdf>; cf. §5.
- ²⁹ Cf. General Synod, 'Vision and Narrative', §6.
- ³⁰ I discuss the relationship between renewal and reform in 'What's New about Renewal in *Evangelii Gaudium?*', *Ecclesiology* 12 (2016): 73-90.
- ³¹ William Fittall, 'Reform and Renewal'.
- ³² Archbishops of Canterbury and York, 'In Each Generation', §1.
- ³³ General Synod, *Resourcing the Future*, §46.
- ³⁴ Cited in Gill K. Goulding, *A Church of Passion and Hope: The Formation of an Ecclesial Disposition from Ignatius Loyola to Pope Francis and the New Evangelization* (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2016), p. 231.
- ³⁵ General Synod, *Church Commissioners' Funds and Inter-Generational Equity*, GS 1981, 2015, <https://www.churchofengland.org/media/2140036/gs%201981%20-%20church%20commissioners%20funds%20and%20inter-generational%20equity.pdf>, §§6–9.
- ³⁶ Stephen Conway, 'A Note from the Bishop of Ely'.
- ³⁷ Compare the Roman Catholic theologian Henri de Lubac, writing as early as the 1950s, in *The Splendour of the Church*, trans. Michael Mason (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1956), p. 219: 'Realistic views, objective enquiry, statistics, the elucidation of sociological laws, the drawing up of methodical plans, breaks with the forms of the apostolate both large and small belonging to the past, the perfecting of new techniques – all these things may be made use of by zeal that is really pure and upright, and anyone who belittles them puts himself in the right with a facility somewhat suspect if

he makes a mere opposition between them and the methods of the Curé d'Ars. Yet all these things have to be kept in their proper place, in the service of the Spirit of God alone.'

³⁸ Archbishops of Canterbury and York, *'In Each Generation'*, §§2 and 5. The challenge of integrating 'theological' and 'secular' meanings of reform emerges as an important issue in the detailed review of parallel initiatives across Europe conducted by the Communion of Protestant Churches in Europe, *Ecclesia Semper Reformanda: Reform and Renewal within the Life of European Protestant Churches*, 2012, <http://www.cpce-assembly.eu/media/pdf/Unterlagen/11%20Ecclesia%20semper%20reformanda.pdf>.

³⁹ On the long history of Christian thinking about personal, communal and institutional dimensions of reform, see the classic study by Gerhart B. Ladner, *The Idea of Reform: Its Impact on Christian Thought and Action in the Age of the Fathers* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1959), and more recently Christopher M. Bellitto and David Z. Flanagin, eds., *Reassessing Reform: A Historical Investigation into Church Renewal* (Washington D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2012).

⁴⁰ Cf. John P. Bradbury, *Perpetually Reforming: A Theology of Church Reform and Renewal* (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2013), p. 13: 'Fundamental to Christian life is to be baptized into the body of Christ, which relativizes all human identities and brings us into a fundamental relationship with Christ through our relationships with the community of the church. This does not, in a world where we construe our own identities and "opt-in" to human groups, make sense.'