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EVANGELICALISM AND THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND IN THE TWENTIETH
CENTURY

REFORM, RESISTANCE AND RENEWAL

STUDIES IN MODERN BRITISH RELIGIOUS HISTORY

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EVANGELICALISM AND THE
CHURCH OF ENGLAND IN
THE TWENTIETH CENTURY
REFORM, RESISTANCE AND RENEWAL

EDITED BY
ANDREW ATHERSTONE AND JOHN MAIDEN

THE BOYDELL PRESS

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Archbishop Michael Ramsey and Evangelicals in the Church of England

Peter Webster

Should Michael Ramsey, archbishop of Canterbury from 1961 to 1974, appear in a volume concerning evangelicalism in the Church of England? After all, Ramsey was no evangelical, and was indeed strongly associated with Anglo-Catholicism. However, his time at Lambeth spans a key period for the evangelical constituency in the Church of England, since two parallel stories often told about the movement converge in the late 1960s. The story of the liberal evangelical movement, as represented by the Anglican Evangelical Group Movement, reaches a terminal point in 1967 with the disbandment of the group. The decline of liberal influence is mirrored by the rise of conservative Anglican evangelicalism, led by such figures as John Stott and J. I. Packer. This conservative turn, which had gradually gathered strength since the Second World War, has been seen to have culminated at the National Evangelical Anglican Congress at Keele in 1967. For David Bebbington, Alister Chapman and others, Keele represented a conservative triumph.¹

Keele not only represented the consolidation of conservative leadership within the movement, but it also triggered a change in attitude towards the rest of the Church of England, as Andrew Atherstone has shown.² It is with this relationship, between evangelicals and the central institutions of the church, that this chapter is concerned. Since at least the Prayer Book Crisis of 1927–28, conservative evangelicals had suspected that the church hierarchy, dominated by what John Maiden has aptly described as a ‘centre-high consensus’, consciously disdained conservative evangelical opinion, and that it had systematically excluded them from positions of influence within

¹ David Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s* (London, 1989), pp. 249–50; Alister Chapman, *Godly Ambition: John Stott and the Evangelical Movement* (Oxford, 2012), pp. 91–92, 95–97.

² Andrew Atherstone, ‘The Keele Congress of 1967: A Paradigm Shift in Anglican Evangelical Attitudes’, *Journal of Anglican Studies* vol. 9 (November 2011), pp. 175–97.

the church.³ Timothy Dudley-Smith ascribed the failure of the church to appoint John Stott as a bishop in part to a vestigial feeling that conservative evangelicals had (in Owen Chadwick's phrase) 'a touch of the alien intruder'.⁴

Conservative evangelicals thus perceived themselves excluded by the central institutions of the Church of England. This narrative of exclusion and discrimination is complicated by a sense that this exclusion was self-inflicted. 'At worst', thought Randle Manwaring, 'Evangelicalism is always meeting trouble half way and is disappointed, almost, if there is no battle.'⁵ For Alister McGrath, the movement was beset by 'a siege mentality ... expressed in an aggressiveness which ultimately rested upon a deep sense of insecurity and defensiveness.'⁶ At the Keele Congress John Stott acknowledged the reputation for 'narrow partisanship and obstructionism' and added that 'for the most part we have no-one but ourselves to blame.'⁷ Two events have together been taken as symbolic of a change in atmosphere during the 1960s: the confrontation between John Stott and Martyn Lloyd-Jones at the second National Assembly of Evangelicals in 1966, and Keele the following year.⁸ This chapter examines some of the prehistory to that putatively key period.

Using Ramsey as a reference point, the following analysis aims to do three things: first, and most briefly, to explore the still important position of at least some liberal and centrist evangelicals up to the late 1960s, in contrast to the established narrative of liberal decline and absorption into a centre ground which was itself narrowing.⁹ Through an examination of evangelical involvement in the structures of the church, it will also emphasise constructive conservative evangelical involvement before 1967, in distinction to the established emphasis on Keele. In doing so, it also interrogates the conservative evangelical movement's narrative of its own history. It will suggest that

³ John Maiden, *National Religion and the Prayer Book Controversy, 1927–1928* (Woodbridge, 2009), pp. 8–10; Randle Manwaring, *From Controversy to Co-existence: Evangelicals in the Church of England 1914–1980* (Cambridge, 1985), p. 43.

⁴ Timothy Dudley-Smith, *John Stott: A Global Ministry* (Leicester, 2001), p. 43.

⁵ Manwaring, *From Controversy to Co-existence*, p. 84.

⁶ Alister McGrath, *To Know and Serve God: A Life of James I. Packer* (London, 1997), p. 117.

⁷ Quoted in Philip Crowe (ed.), *Keele '67: The National Evangelical Anglican Congress Statement* (London, 1967), p. 8.

⁸ On the 1966 Assembly, see Andrew Atherstone, 'Lloyd-Jones and the Anglican Secession Crisis', in Andrew Atherstone and David Ceri Jones (eds), *Engaging with Martyn Lloyd-Jones: The Life and Legacy of 'The Doctor'* (Nottingham, 2011), pp. 269–78; McGrath, *Packer*, pp. 121–26; John Brencher, *Martyn Lloyd-Jones (1899–1981) and Twentieth-Century Evangelicalism* (Carlisle, 2002), pp. 94–102.

⁹ I adopt the terminology of Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*, pp. 252–53.

whilst relationships between conservative evangelicals and the hierarchy of the Church were rarely effusive, there was little evidence of calculated exclusion.

It is important to stress that the chapter leaves aside any assessment of whether or not Keele did indeed represent a sea change in evangelical attitudes. Its preoccupation is with *perceptions of evangelicals* by those outside the constituency, rather than evangelicals' sense of themselves. That said, the self-consciously oppositional approach adopted by many evangelicals, particularly before the 1964 Vesture of Ministers Measure, was never likely to be effective. Ramsey had a good deal of sympathy with evangelical priorities, but it was clear that, in order to be heard, evangelicals needed to engage on terms other than their own. It will also be shown that, even though the intention to change so clearly declared at Keele was real, the change was not always evident outside the constituency.

Michael Ramsey and his critics

Amongst some evangelical commentators outside the Church of England, Michael Ramsey has gained a reputation for doubtful orthodoxy. For one such as Martyn Lloyd-Jones, Ramsey was barely within the pale, after his 1961 comment that he expected 'to meet some present-day atheists' in heaven.¹⁰ Ramsey's 1966 visit to Pope Paul VI in Rome was one of the straws in the wind that prompted Lloyd-Jones to call for evangelical secession from the mainline denominations.¹¹ In Iain Murray's *Evangelicalism Divided* (2000), Ramsey appears as just one more liberal archbishop: soft on soteriology, the Virgin Birth and far too accommodating towards Rome, as well as being guilty of deliberate deception and bad faith. Far from being a positive symbol of Anglican evangelicals' turn towards their church, the invitation to Ramsey to address the congress at Keele is for Murray an indication that that turn had been in the wrong direction.¹²

By and large, evangelical scholars from within the Church of England have been more measured; but their verdict has nonetheless been mixed. John Stott's first biographer ascribed Stott's exclusion from the bench of bishops as in part due to Ramsey's 'lack of understanding of (not to say distaste for) Anglican evangelicals; in general, Ramsey 'gave little indication of understanding evangelicals nor even of much wishing to do so'.¹³ If there

¹⁰ Rhona Churchill, 'The Archbishop of Canterbury: Morals and Crime, A Mistaken View', *Daily Mail*, 2 October 1961, p. 8.

¹¹ Brencher, *Lloyd-Jones*, pp. 93, 126, 168.

¹² Iain Murray, *Evangelicalism Divided: A Record of Crucial Change in the Years 1950 to 2000* (Edinburgh, 2000), pp. 13, 49, 80, 263.

¹³ Dudley-Smith, *John Stott: A Global Ministry* p. 43; Timothy Dudley-Smith, *John Stott: The*

is a single episode that has served to colour evangelical views of Ramsey, it is his involvement in the ‘fundamentalism controversy’ of the mid-1950s.¹⁴ After the first Billy Graham crusade in 1954, there was a lengthy controversy in print concerning the threat of ‘fundamentalism’. Subsequently, a mission to Durham University by Stott and others in 1956 provoked a short article by Ramsey for his diocesan newsletter at Durham, entitled ‘The Menace of Fundamentalism’.¹⁵ It is not my concern here to assess the theological point directly. However, in order for Ramsey to gain a reputation as a ‘hammer of evangelicals’, it was enough that his piece be taken on explicitly in J. I. Packer’s highly influential *Fundamentalism and the Word of God*, and from thence cascade into the footnotes of others since.¹⁶ For Packer’s biographer, Ramsey and others had ‘grossly misunderstood and misrepresented’ the ‘Hodge–Warfield’ position on the inspiration of scripture, and Ramsey’s article had been a ‘serious error of judgment’.¹⁷ Ramsey’s ‘launch into intemperate condemnation and rebuttal’ was, for Dudley-Smith, the reaction of a complacent hierarchy to the threat of a newly invigorated evangelicalism.¹⁸

So far as Ramsey has been acknowledged in the literature on Anglican evangelicalism at all, then, it has been to record a mixture of incomprehension, hostility and fear. However, a different picture emerges when one considers his working relationships with the older evangelical men in positions of influence when he arrived at Lambeth. One such figure was Max Warren, general secretary of the Church Missionary Society and later canon of Westminster, whom Ramsey had known since their undergraduate days in Cambridge.¹⁹ Warren was so trusted by Ramsey that he acted as go-between for the archbishop and Mervyn Stockwood, bishop of Southwark, during the controversy over John Robinson’s *Honest to God* in 1963.²⁰ He was also Ramsey’s first choice as chairman of the important commission on Church

Making of a Leader (Leicester, 1999), p. 351. See also Chapman, *Godly Ambition*, pp. 43, 111.

¹⁴ Chapman, *Godly Ambition*, pp. 40–48.

¹⁵ The episode is treated at length, including extracts of the various interventions, in Dudley-Smith, *John Stott: The Making of a Leader*, pp. 344–53.

¹⁶ J. I. Packer, *Fundamentalism and the Word of God* (London, 1958), pp. 10–15; Derek Tidball, *Who are the Evangelicals? Tracing the Roots of Today’s Movements* (London, 1994), p. 50.

¹⁷ McGrath, *Packer*, pp. 84, 81. See also Alister McGrath and R. T. France, ‘Introduction’, in R. T. France and Alister McGrath (eds), *Evangelical Anglicans: Their Role and Influence in the Church Today* (London, 1993), p. 8.

¹⁸ Dudley-Smith, *John Stott: The Making of a Leader*, p. 350; Chapman, *Godly Ambition*, p. 44.

¹⁹ Manwaring, *From Controversy to Co-existence*, p. 118.

²⁰ Michael De-la-Noy, *Mervyn Stockwood: A Lonely Life* (London, 1996), p. 170; Max Warren, *Crowded Canvas: Some Experiences of a Life-Time* (London, 1974), pp. 50, 156, 226, 234–35.

and State set up in 1965; a position which Warren accepted only to relinquish it because of ill health. Ramsey received Warren's resignation as 'very grievous news'.²¹

Another older evangelical was John Tiarks, who moved from an outstanding preaching ministry at Bradford Cathedral to be bishop of Chelmsford in 1962. Some evangelicals viewed the Vesture of Ministers Measure passing through parliament in 1964 as part of a conspiracy to move the Church of England inch by inch closer to Rome.²² Far from being so concerned, Tiarks wrote personally to the MPs with constituencies in his diocese, urging them to support the measure, and later expressed to Ramsey his pleasure, as an evangelical, that it had passed. The church needed the insights of evangelicalism, but more so it needed 'the balance of theological & ecclesiastical emphases which has made the Church of England the unique force it has always been'.²³ An example of a younger man who came to preferment in Ramsey's time was Cyril Bowles. Formerly vice-principal and then principal of Ridley Hall, Bowles served on the Liturgical Commission, and chaired the ministry committee of the Anglican Consultative Committee on the Ministry.²⁴ Whilst archdeacon of Swindon, Bowles was Ramsey's second choice for the see of Sodor and Man in 1966; whilst Ramsey thought the Isle of Man not the best use of Bowles' gifts, the archbishop predicted his 'eligibility for the episcopate will soon be arising clearly'.²⁵ By the time the see of Derby became vacant in 1969, Bowles' star had completed its rising, and despite his name not being amongst those first proposed by the vacancy-in-see committee, Ramsey strongly recommended him to Prime Minister Wilson.²⁶

So, in the 1960s there were still some evangelicals finding their way to prominence from outside the conservative wing of the movement. It is conservative evangelicals, however, who feature most prominently in the

²¹ Michael Ramsey to Donald Coggan, 22 December 1965, Lambeth Palace Library [LPL], Ramsey Papers vol. 74, fos 120–22; Max Warren to Ramsey, 23 February 1966, LPL, Ramsey Papers vol. 94, fos 200–1; Ramsey to Coggan, 23 February 1966, LPL, Ramsey Papers vol. 94, f. 203. The Ramsey Papers are cited with the kind permission of the Librarian of Lambeth Palace.

²² See John Maiden and Peter Webster, 'Parliament, the Church of England and the Last Gasp of Political Protestantism, 1963–4', *Parliamentary History* vol. 32 (June 2013), pp. 361–77.

²³ John G. Tiarks to Michael Ramsey, 4 and 11 September 1964, LPL, Ramsey Papers vol. 69, fos 73, 75.

²⁴ Gerald Phizackerley, 'Obituaries: The Right Rev Cyril Bowles', *Independent*, 25 September 1999 (Weekend Review), p. 7.

²⁵ Michael Ramsey to Donald Coggan, 10 May 1966, LPL, Ramsey Papers vol. 108, f. 155.

²⁶ Michael Ramsey to Prime Minister Harold Wilson, 18 July 1969, LPL, Ramsey Papers vol. 157, fos 129–30.

Ramsey Papers. Despite their initial wariness of Ramsey, there were some positive encounters in his early months at Canterbury. Maurice Wood, vicar of Islington, sent a congratulatory telegram on the occasion of Ramsey's enthronement in June 1961, on behalf of the Islington Clerical Conference.²⁷ Shortly afterwards, Ramsey received a delegation, led by Philip Hughes, editor of *The Churchman*, which included J. I. Packer, John Goss and Donald Robinson, and the laymen Malcolm McQueen and Gervase Duffield. The intention was to discuss 'certain matters which are of moment in our Church at the present time',²⁸ including ecumenism, baptism, confirmation, church discipline, liturgical revision and the second coming. Hughes afterwards thought it 'an extremely happy & encouraging colloquy'.²⁹

Despite these early and positive contacts, in general the representations made to Ramsey in the years before Keele were negative. The use of petitions, remembrances and deputations may have tended to reinforce the impression of a party organisation; an impression to which Ramsey was to some extent disposed by previous experience. In 1956 the Protestant Truth Society had made an attempt to disrupt Ramsey's confirmation as archbishop of York. Ramsey was somewhat shaken by the experience, and anti-Catholic agitation was a constant undertow to Ramsey's life as archbishop.³⁰ The Protestant Truth Society continued to campaign against any apparent movement within the British churches towards Rome and 'her vile, unscriptural teaching' and 'her man-made traditions and superstitions'.³¹ The British Council of Protestant Christian Churches, a body set up to oppose the ecumenical movement and the 'arch-traitor' Ramsey, marched in protest against the Joint Preparatory Commission for theological discussion with Rome in 1967, branding it yet another subtle attempt by Rome to rob Englishmen of their 'glorious Protestant heritage'.³² In this polemical atmosphere Ramsey may perhaps be forgiven for not always distinguishing these views from those of more moderate evangelical groups.

In the years to 1964 the prevailing mood among even the more moderate was one of anxiety, particularly concerning the reform of the Church of England's canon law. In October 1962 Ramsey was visited by Thomas Hewitt, secretary of the Church Society, and needed to assure him that evangelicals had nothing to fear concerning eucharistic vestments, stone

²⁷ Maurice Wood to Michael Ramsey, 26 June 1961, LPL, Ramsey Papers vol. 8, f. 1.

²⁸ Philip Hughes to Michael Ramsey 1 August 1961, LPL, Ramsey Papers vol. 8, f. 3.

²⁹ Philip Hughes to Michael Ramsey, 26 September 1961, LPL, Ramsey Papers vol. 8, f. 8.

³⁰ Owen Chadwick, *Michael Ramsey: A Life* (Oxford, 1990), pp. 91–92; 'Dr Ramsey's Election Confirmed', *Times*, 17 March 1956, p. 8.

³¹ Protestant Truth Society leaflet, October 1963, LPL, Ramsey Papers vol. 63, f. 349.

³² 'Editorial', *Revivalist* (October 1980), p. 2; Brian Green to Michael Ramsey, 29 August 1967, LPL, Ramsey Papers vol. 120, f. 343.

altars and liturgical reform.³³ Similar concerns were expressed by a group of evangelical laymen the following year, in a joint letter organised by Lieutenant-General Arthur Smith, president of the Church Pastoral Aid Society. The group feared a concerted movement towards Rome, with toleration of illegal ritualist practices, apparent restrictions on intercommunion with the Free Churches, and a stigmatisation of evangelicals as ‘fundamentalist’ and unreasonable.³⁴ Nevile Wallace, general secretary of the Protestant Reformation Society, was less anxious but called for a cessation of new church measures in parliament ‘because Legislation will only send us scuttling back to our siege mentality’.³⁵

The safe passage of the Vesture of Ministers Measure in 1964 was a watershed in evangelical attitudes to parliament and its role in governing the Church of England; and from the mid-decade there is a discernible change in tone in the correspondence that Ramsey’s office received, especially concerning relations with Rome.³⁶ A. T. Houghton, chairman of the Church of England Evangelical Council and general secretary of the Bible Churchmen’s Missionary Society, cautiously welcomed Ramsey’s frankness when visiting Rome in 1966 concerning the formidable barriers to reunion that remained.³⁷ Some went further still: John Wenham of Tyndale Hall, Bristol, wrote to Ramsey professing himself moved by the visit, which augured well for the reunion of the churches even in his lifetime: ‘God is purposing things for his Church beyond our wildest dreams.’ Wenham too appreciated Ramsey’s refusal to minimise genuine obstacles, and hoped that if some evangelicals seemed ‘rather angular over what may seem to be misguided scruples’, Ramsey might understand it as part of the same desire for truth.³⁸ Ramsey appreciated Wenham’s letter ‘knowing that it comes from one with Protestant convictions and theological principles. But your letter does not surprise me as people with a genuinely theological approach are usually near together knowing that there are things which cannot be blurred.’³⁹

Despite these signs of a cooling in the polemical temperature, they ought not to be overstressed. The extravagant anti-Catholic gestures continued, such as the invasion of Ramsey’s aeroplane to Rome on the runway at

³³ Notes on a meeting between Hewitt and Ramsey, 4 October 1962, LPL, Ramsey Papers vol. 18, fos 101–3.

³⁴ Arthur Smith et al. to Michael Ramsey, 9 July 1963, LPL, Ramsey Papers vol. 38, fos 351–54.

³⁵ Nevile Wallace to Michael Ramsey, 28 March 1963, LPL, Ramsey Papers vol. 45, f. 182.

³⁶ See chapter 6, above.

³⁷ A. T. Houghton to Michael Ramsey, 7 April 1966, LPL, Ramsey Papers vol. 107, f. 31. See Houghton’s own openness to engagement with ecumenical endeavour in his *Evangelicals and the World Council of Churches* (London, 1962), pp. 7–8.

³⁸ John Wenham to Michael Ramsey, 27 March 1966, LPL, Ramsey Papers vol. 106, f. 308.

³⁹ Michael Ramsey to John Wenham, 30 March 1966, LPL, Ramsey Papers vol. 106, f. 309.

London Airport in 1966 by a group led by Ian Paisley.⁴⁰ There were also two incidents in which Ramsey seemed to confirm conservative evangelical suspicions. During his visit to Australia in March 1965, he was quoted in a newspaper interview as describing the conservative evangelicalism he had encountered in Sydney as ‘wretched, narrow minded out-of-date partisanship’.⁴¹ Despite an emollient intervention by Hugh Gough, archbishop of Sydney, and Ramsey’s insistence that he had been misquoted, the news reached England, prompting one parochial church council in London to tell Ramsey of their resolution that the ‘evangelical position [was] the only one which is in conformity with the doctrines of holy Scripture’ and that liberal and Anglo-Catholic doctrines ‘cannot be proved by the word of God but are rather repugnant to it’.⁴²

The second incident concerned the visit of Billy Graham to Earls Court in June 1966. The two men had been acquainted for some years, and the Ramseys made a point of entertaining Graham and his wife on their several visits to England; their friendship was warm and genuine.⁴³ However, their correspondence shows that both were well aware how limited was the public support for Graham’s missions that any archbishop of Canterbury could show. In private Ramsey had to field as many calls to distance himself from Graham as to support him. Whilst the churches stood ready to receive and nurture new converts from Graham’s meetings, he had personal reservations about both the theology and methods of mass evangelism – the very same reservations expressed in the ‘fundamentalism controversy’ of the mid-1950s, if now more gently expressed.⁴⁴ In the autumn of 1966, however, the press caught particular hold of comments made by Ramsey in a radio interview whilst in Canada. The garbled version reported in the press (which Ramsey attempted to correct) had him calling for evangelism without ‘bursts of emotionalism’.⁴⁵ The reaction was swift. One Anglican

⁴⁰ Chadwick, *Ramsey*, p. 318.

⁴¹ *Sydney Sunday Telegraph*, 21 March 1965, copy at LPL, Ramsey Papers vol. 333, f. 25.

⁴² Gough, ‘Archbishop’s Letter’, 10 April 1965, LPL, Ramsey Papers vol. 71, f. 257; Victor Wakeford (PCC secretary, Christ Church, North Brixton) to Michael Ramsey, 13 April 1965, LPL, Ramsey Papers vol. 71, f. 258.

⁴³ See, *inter alia*, Billy Graham to Michael Ramsey, 16 June 1966, LPL, Ramsey Papers vol. 91, f. 232.

⁴⁴ ‘Primate Under Fire For Attacking Billy Graham’, *Sunday Telegraph*, 2 October 1966, p. 3.

⁴⁵ ‘Church “Does Not Need Billy Graham”’, *Guardian*, 28 September 1966, p. 11; letter from Ramsey, *Times*, 4 October 1966, p. 11. The precise transcript reads: ‘I think the recent Billy Graham Crusade in London, I think it made some converts. I don’t think it had a very big impact on the total situation in England. I believe, myself, that the Billy Graham type of evangelism isn’t what we need for these days. I think we need an evangelism which has strong conviction, but also pays more attention to intellectual difficulties and puts more

evangelical layman from Vancouver thought Ramsey's words a calculated attack on the worldwide evangelical constituency as a whole.⁴⁶ Peter Johnston, vicar of Islington, asked, 'How many drug addicts, delinquents and prostitutes has Dr Ramsey converted? Scores have been converted by Dr Graham.'⁴⁷ How much better the results might have been, mused another, had more of the bishops 'given the crusade their whole-hearted support instead of sitting on the fence or making dubious comments in diocesan journals'.⁴⁸ The two episodes together show that, despite the signs of a more constructive engagement in the mid-1960s, there were nonetheless many for whom Ramsey had form, and who were disposed to take the benefit of the doubt for themselves when it came to the archbishop's real intentions.

Points of theological contact

So far this chapter, when discussing Ramsey's own background, has stressed his Anglo-Catholicism. There were, however, a number of areas in which Ramsey (who had been raised as a Congregationalist in Cambridge) was sympathetic to evangelical priorities.⁴⁹ The first of these was his stress on the Bible. John Stott later recalled Ramsey's declaration of 'the supremacy of Holy Scripture, salvation by faith not by merit, and the priesthood of all believers. He really believed these evangelical truths.'⁵⁰ Although Ramsey's precise view of the nature of scripture did not match that of Packer's *Fundamentalism and the Word of God*, he was nonetheless known as a biblical theologian.⁵¹ His contribution to *Peake's Commentary on the Bible* on the authority of scripture, whilst hardly inerrantist, combines an awareness of critical scholarship with a passionate conviction of the power and inspiration of the Word.⁵² Some of this was visible in his address to the Keele Congress (republished in *The Churchman*), which Stott described as 'the splendid Biblical study you gave us, which illumined our minds and warmed our hearts'.⁵³

Ramsey's theology was also widely regarded as inhabiting the ground of central orthodoxy, when set against the liberal trends which caused such

emphasis on the social content of Christianity.' Transcript from Canadian radio, LPL, Ramsey Papers vol. 91, f. 244.

⁴⁶ Daniel McAlister to Michael Ramsey, 7 October 1966, LPL, Ramsey Papers vol. 91, f. 253.

⁴⁷ Quoted in 'Primate Under Fire'.

⁴⁸ Letter from A. F. Mellows, *Times*, 3 October 1966, p. 11.

⁴⁹ Chadwick, *Ramsey*, pp. 4–7.

⁵⁰ Quoted in Dudley-Smith, *John Stott: The Making of a Leader*, p. 352.

⁵¹ John M. Court, 'Michael Ramsey and Biblical Theology', in Robin Gill and Lorna Kendall (eds), *Michael Ramsey as Theologian* (London, 1995), pp. 82–100.

⁵² Reprinted as a separate pamphlet: *The Authority of the Bible* (London, 1962).

⁵³ John Stott to Michael Ramsey, 8 April 1967, LPL, Ramsey Papers vol. 118, f. 241.

concern in evangelical circles. Although recent historians have damned his action with faint praise, Ramsey publicly censured John Robinson, bishop of Woolwich, for his infamous *Honest to God*, at considerable personal cost to the relationship between the two men.⁵⁴ Michael Green related the excitement caused by Ramsey's lecture to the 1965 New Testament Congress in Oxford, which caused 'much rejoicing among the orthodox and much gloom among the post-Bultmannians!'⁵⁵ Roger Beckwith, defending Ramsey against the strictures of Iain Murray in 2002, referred to his 'unusually orthodox books',⁵⁶ such as *The Resurrection of Christ* (1946), which Norman Anderson was to cite extensively in his *A Lawyer among the Theologians*.⁵⁷ Michael Saward, in the five years he worked at Lambeth as Ramsey's Radio and Television Officer could 'hardly recall any occasion when what he said was not incisive, coherent and, in Christian terms, totally orthodox'.⁵⁸

Whilst never crucicentric in the sense expounded by David Bebbington, Ramsey's theology was also one of the cross. *The Gospel and the Catholic Church*, first published in 1936 and regarded by many theologians as his most enduring work, opened with the statement that 'the meaning of the Christian Church becomes most clear when it is studied in terms of the Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ'. The events of Easter 'were intelligible only to those who shared in them by a more than metaphorical dying and rising again with Christ'.⁵⁹ Ramsey's theology cannot easily be grasped without connecting it with that of Karl Barth, by whom his work was deeply influenced at an early stage, and to whose 1966 Festschrift he contributed an article.⁶⁰ It was Barth's work on Romans that explained the sharpness of the passages cited above; it had prompted 'a kind of theological dark night in which I felt I saw humanism, liberalism, ecclesiasticism and devotional pietism as all being under divine judgement'.⁶¹ It was here also that

⁵⁴ Michael Ramsey, *Image Old and New* (London, 1963); Eric James, *A Life of Bishop John A.T. Robinson: Scholar, Pastor, Prophet* (London, 1987), pp. 118–23. Cf. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*, p. 255.

⁵⁵ Michael Green to Michael Ramsey, 24 January 1966, LPL, Ramsey Papers vol. 96, f. 296.

⁵⁶ Roger Beckwith, 'Evangelicalism Divided: An Extended Review', *Churchman* vol. 116 (Summer 2002), p. 161.

⁵⁷ J. N. D. Anderson, *A Lawyer Among the Theologians* (London, 1973), *passim*.

⁵⁸ Michael Saward, *A Faint Streak of Humility: An Autobiography* (Carlisle, 1999), p. 286.

⁵⁹ Michael Ramsey, *The Gospel and the Catholic Church* (London, 1936), p. v.

⁶⁰ On the connection between Barth and *The Gospel and the Catholic Church*, see Rowan Williams, 'Theology and the Churches', in Gill and Kendall, *Michael Ramsey*, pp. 10–11; Michael Ramsey, 'Diakonia in Some of the Churches Today: Anglican Communion', in T. H. L. Parker and James I. McCord (eds), *Service in Christ: Essays Presented to Karl Barth on his 80th Birthday* (London, 1966), pp. 162–65.

⁶¹ Michael Ramsey to James Lemler, as cited by James Griffiss, 'Michael Ramsey: Catholic

Ramsey's Congregational past was at its most influential: his respect for Reformed theologians predated, and was not extinguished by, his adoption of Anglican Catholicism as an undergraduate. A particular influence may have been P. T. Forsyth, a former minister of Ramsey's parental congregation, Emmanuel Church in Cambridge, whose work Ramsey was to cite throughout his career.⁶²

Ramsey was also concerned for renewed mission to the nation at large. He told the Canterbury Convocation in May 1962 that a church 'will overcome its internal troubles if there is in its members both the self-abasement and the joy of the adoration of our Creator and Redeemer, and where that self-abasement and joy are authentically seen there is the power to win souls to share in them'.⁶³ According to Maurice Wood, hearts among the members of the Islington Clerical Conference had been 'warmed by the continual reiteration [the night before his enthronement] of one of your three duties to be the presentation of the Gospel afresh to the people of our country'.⁶⁴ A further point of contact between Ramsey and evangelical concerns was his evident personal holiness. In 1952 Michael Green, then president of the Oxford Inter-Collegiate Christian Union, urged his fellow students to venture to hear Ramsey speak at a mission to the university, as the new bishop of Durham was known as 'a holy man, a forceful speaker and an orthodox theologian'.⁶⁵ The students that Ramsey met at St John's College, Nottingham, in 1972 (at Green's invitation as principal) were as impressed with the same quality of personal holiness, Ramsey having 'led us all closer to our Lord'.⁶⁶ Stott later recalled that 'the lasting impression which he left on people who met him was one of goodness and godliness. He loved and worshipped Christ'.⁶⁷

So Ramsey was known as an orthodox theologian, and with several areas of temperamental sympathy with evangelical priorities. However, the key area of divergence was over the manner in which evangelicals engaged with

Theologian', in Gill and Kendall, *Michael Ramsey*, p. 40.

⁶² Gordon Wakefield, 'Michael Ramsey and Ecumenical Theology', in Gill and Kendall, *Michael Ramsey*, p. 64. For citations of Forsyth, see Ramsey, *The Gospel and the Catholic Church*, pp. 47–48; Michael Ramsey, *Jesus and the Living Past* (Oxford, 1980), *passim*. I am grateful to David Bebbington for drawing the Forsyth–Cambridge connection to my attention.

⁶³ Typescript excerpt of Ramsey's Presidential Address to Convocation, 15 May 1962, LPL, Ramsey Papers vol. 23, fos 240–45.

⁶⁴ Maurice Wood to Michael Ramsey, 26 June 1961, LPL, Ramsey Papers vol. 8, f. 1.

⁶⁵ Michael Green, *Adventure of Faith: Reflections on Fifty Years of Christian Service* (Grand Rapids, 2001), pp. 53–54.

⁶⁶ Michael Green to Michael Ramsey, 17 November 1972, LPL, Ramsey Papers vol. 3, f. 285.

⁶⁷ Quoted in Dudley-Smith, *John Stott: The Making of a Leader*, p. 352.

others in the Church of England. Shortly after the passage of the Vesture of Ministers Measure, Ramsey wrote with relief to Bishop Tiarks, professing himself 'so anxious that Evangelicals should generally see that they are valued in the Church of England and need have no fear that their essential values are going to be snuffed out'. However, if there was to be greater engagement, 'they on their part must tolerate and learn from other people'.⁶⁸ For Ramsey, a great respecter of the intellect, some of the qualities valued by evangelicals – clarity and a readiness to contend for the truth – manifested themselves as rigidity and an unwillingness to acknowledge any merit in an opposing position. Thus in 1962, when Ramsey and Donald Coggan were assembling a delegation for a World Council of Churches conference in Montreal, Ramsey reported finding Packer's writings 'very narrow and rigid', whereas he had heard many good things of Michael Green, 'a lively and not inflexible mind'.⁶⁹ Ramsey's complaint of John Stott, as reported by Saward (and laid to his charge by Dudley-Smith) was 'I do find that man so intransigent'. Maurice Wood was 'not the finest mind'.⁷⁰

The most insoluble incompatibility between Ramsey and conservative evangelicals was evident in an exchange with Roger Beckwith, Packer's colleague at Latimer House, Oxford. *The Anglican Synthesis* (1964) was a volume of essays by Anglo-Catholics and evangelicals of different shades, including Beckwith on the inspiration of scripture and Stott on baptism.⁷¹ Its theological method, with which Ramsey had a good deal of sympathy, was to attempt to hold together elements within Anglican theology that were seemingly in tension. Then, by dialogue preceded by mutual recognition, some genuine synthesis of positions might be achieved.⁷² Ramsey had reviewed the book, and Beckwith wrote to him, disappointed to think that his essay in particular had failed: 'But perhaps I have not appreciated what the real difficulties are, and would be genuinely grateful if you could find time to help me here.' Beckwith admitted, however, that the essay was 'written in a very intransigent style – the minority complex perhaps!'⁷³ Ramsey replied at length, as was often his practice when dealing with a substantive issue of theology. There was still a need for the kind of uncompromising statement that Beckwith had produced. However, the task of synthesis was also

⁶⁸ Michael Ramsey to John Chelmsford, 9 September 1964, LPL, Ramsey Papers vol. 69, f. 74.

⁶⁹ Michael Ramsey to Donald Coggan 23 November 1962, LPL, Ramsey Papers vol. 50, fos 295–96.

⁷⁰ Saward, *A Faint Streak of Humility*, p. 291.

⁷¹ W. R. F. Browning (ed.), *The Anglican Synthesis: Essays by Catholics and Evangelicals* (Derby, 1964).

⁷² W. R. F. Browning, 'No Pale Compromise', in Browning, *The Anglican Synthesis*, p. 4.

⁷³ Roger Beckwith to Michael Ramsey, 1 February 1965, LPL, Ramsey Papers vol. 71, f. 337.

crucial: it involved ‘an attempt to appreciate a position which is not one’s own, and to see what can be learnt from it’. This type of synthesis Beckwith had not attempted, ‘and I assume that to that extent you do not judge my comment to be unjust’. Historical discrepancies within the scriptural record

cannot, I think, be met by saying that there may be facts unknown to us which if they were known would provide a reconciliation. I think that to take that line is to dismiss historical science in a most facile way, and to make the view of inspiration, which you are commending, frankly incredible to many of us who take historical science more seriously.⁷⁴

Beckwith, it would seem, did not respond; but the episode neatly demonstrates Ramsey’s general position: no one was served by theological discussion that did not face squarely the difficulties involved, but conservative evangelicals would need to engage much more openly with others within the Church of England if any progress was to be made.

Evangelicals and the appointment of bishops

As already noted, there was a persistent belief amongst some evangelicals that they were stigmatised by Anglicans more widely, and excluded, systematically or otherwise, from the various representative offices and bodies of the Church of England. To what extent were evangelicals actually excluded from the bench of bishops, the Church Assembly, and the many commissions and other bodies charged with examining particular issues?

The most symbolic element in the evangelical sense of their marginalisation was the bench of bishops. Since the retirement of Christopher Chavasse from Rochester in 1960, and the translation of Hugh Gough from Barking to Sydney in 1959, there had been a feeling that conservative evangelicals were without a champion among the bishops. Thomas Hewitt of the Church Society had voiced this sense of neglect to Ramsey in 1962; and in 1968 John Stott could still see no representative of the conservative constituency on the bench.⁷⁵ When Ramsey suggested that there were already several evangelical bishops, Hewitt grudgingly accepted the point in relation to Clifford Martin of Liverpool, John Tiarks of Chelmsford and Thomas Bloomer of Carlisle. But Falkner Allison of Winchester, a former principal of Ridley Hall, had in Hewitt’s view ceased to be evangelical and was now hostile towards

⁷⁴ Michael Ramsey to Roger Beckwith, 9 February 1965, LPL, Ramsey Papers vol. 71, f. 338.

⁷⁵ John Stott to Michael Ramsey, 22 July 1968, LPL, Ramsey Papers vol. 143, fos 27–28.

the conservatives. Hewitt also suggested that some expected to be similarly disappointed by Donald Coggan, archbishop of York.⁷⁶ Ramsey's response was that conservative evangelicals could of course be made bishops; but such a man would need to be able to work with others not of his own stamp. He recommended Cyril Bowles as bishop of Derby as a 'very broad-minded Evangelical' who would be able to 'get on with and gain the confidence of churchmen of different kinds of outlook'.⁷⁷ Such a criterion was automatically suspect to some evangelicals, as Saward wryly noted. When Saward related the gratitude of many evangelicals over the elevation of Maurice Wood to Norwich in 1971, Ramsey's response was, 'Yes, and how long will it be before they repudiate him?' 'He knows our lot' was Saward's unspoken response.⁷⁸

Regrettably, the usual papers at Lambeth relating to Wood's elevation to Norwich have not survived; but Wood's appointment was preceded by that of another evangelical to a rather more polemically charged position. David Sheppard was appointed to the suffragan see of Woolwich in 1969, succeeding John Robinson. However, Sheppard's evangelicalism does not appear to have played much part in his appointment. He had involved himself little in the politics of the church up to that point, and it was his work at the Mayflower Centre in east London which had attracted most attention: a type of embedded social mission less common amongst evangelicals, and indeed regarded with suspicion by some.⁷⁹ Ramsey told Harold Wilson that Sheppard 'has identified himself with the life of the people in this dockland area and gained a wide knowledge of their spiritual and material need'. Sheppard was 'a man of integrity, spiritual depth, simplicity of character, and real goodness' and likely to prove 'a true and wise pastor'.⁸⁰ The appointment was at the request of Mervyn Stockwood, bishop of Southwark and no evangelical, who had also noted Sheppard's 'passionate conviction in the truths and converting power of the Christian Gospel'. The key for Stockwood, however, was Sheppard's principled stand on race and cricket in South Africa – an asset in ethnically diverse south London in the wake of Enoch Powell's 'rivers of blood' speech the previous year.⁸¹ Evangelicals could and did become bishops during Ramsey's tenure at Lambeth;

⁷⁶ Notes on meeting between Hewitt and Ramsey, 4 October 1962, LPL, Ramsey Papers vol. 18, fos 101–3.

⁷⁷ Michael Ramsey to Harold Wilson, 18 July 1969, LPL, Ramsey Papers vol. 157, fos 129–30.

⁷⁸ Saward, *A Faint Streak of Humility*, p. 291.

⁷⁹ On John Stott's conversion to the social gospel, see Chapman, *Godly Ambition*, pp. 114–21.

⁸⁰ Michael Ramsey to Harold Wilson, 14 February 1969, LPL, Ramsey Papers vol. 173, f. 240

⁸¹ Mervyn Stockwood, 'The Day I Decided: That Chap Should Be a Bishop!', *Evening Standard*, 24 February 1969, p. 11.

but the decisions were made on the basis of their personal qualities and fitness for the role, rather than on any calculation of party balance.

The Church Assembly and the commissions

A major systematic study of the composition of the Church Assembly still awaits a willing and patient scholar; but there was certainly some evangelical distrust of the Assembly's operation. In May 1962 an emergency meeting was called to consider the draft revised Canon B.15, which seemed to encroach on the historic right claimed by some Free Churchmen to communicate occasionally within the Church of England. Invited were all those who had put down proposed amendments, which included Gervase Duffield, Anglican evangelical layman, publisher and later editor of *The Churchman*, who was to continue to campaign on the issue for some years afterwards.⁸² However, another young evangelical layman, Timothy Hoare, was not included, since his amendment was thought to be a simple point of drafting. Subsequently, Ramsey's office became aware that some of Hoare's associates in the 'Evangelical underworld' (the phrase is of Ramsey's lay secretary) 'have been suggesting to him that there is some evil intent in omission from the Conference', and thus Hoare was hurriedly invited.⁸³

Although there was a widely held view that the House of Laity was short of evangelicals, there were throughout Ramsey's time a number of active members who succeeded in making an evangelical case on most issues. Malcolm McQueen was vocal in opposition to elements of the Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction Measure of 1963, amongst other things.⁸⁴ Despite this, in 1964 he was a member of the powerful Church Assembly Legislative Committee, responsible for the presentation of potentially controversial measures to parliament.⁸⁵ The controversial revisions of the canon law which reached parliament in 1963–64 were piloted through the Church Assembly by a committee which included Maurice Wood, then principal of Oak Hill theological college.⁸⁶ Professor Norman Anderson was a member of the Church Assembly throughout the period, and indeed the first chairman of the House of Laity of the new General Synod from 1970. Anderson was a signatory of a 1963 letter expressing concerns over the apparent drift to

⁸² See the exchange of June 1962 at LPL, Ramsey Papers vol. 22, fos 70–72.

⁸³ Robert Beloe memorandum, 1 May 1962, LPL, Ramsey Papers vol. 29, fos 243–44.

⁸⁴ Letter from Malcolm McQueen, *Times*, 15 July 1963, p. 11.

⁸⁵ Minutes of meeting of Church Assembly Legislative Committee, 5 November 1964, LPL, Ramsey Papers vol. 63, f. 311

⁸⁶ Minutes of the Joint Steering Committee on Revision of the Canon Law, 20 March 1962, LPL, Ramsey Papers vol. 29, fos 194–95.

Rome (mentioned above);⁸⁷ and also of an Open Letter calling for the abandonment of the proposed scheme for Anglican–Methodist union.⁸⁸ As in the case of McQueen, this willingness to make trouble did not keep him from positions of influence – most prominently on the group of lawyers and theologians that produced the highly influential *Putting Asunder*, the 1966 report on reform of the divorce law.⁸⁹

Gervase Duffield was another example of an evangelical acting as a critical friend. Duffield was equally robust in his advocacy of the evangelical position, most particularly over the proposed Canon B.15 and intercommunion with the Nonconformist churches, and later over Anglican–Methodist unity.⁹⁰ He did, however, describe himself to Ramsey as one who ‘could call myself an Evangelical though not in the narrow or partisan sense. I hope I have learned to live with other Christians even when I disagree strongly.’ This approach was evident in his attempt to find a seconder from the Anglo-Catholic organisation the Church Union for a motion concerning relations with the Church of Scotland.⁹¹

Neither were evangelicals systematically excluded from the several commissions or other representative groups set up to consider key issues. Whilst Ramsey and Coggan were careful that appointees were men who had shown themselves able to engage with others, the correspondence shows them scrupulous in attempting to represent all shades of opinion. Whilst it would be difficult to describe Ramsey as enthusiastic about some of these appointments, the exercise was not mere tokenism. Ramsey knew that it was not only necessary for the sake of appearances but right that a conservative perspective be included in these discussions. The analysis which follows makes no attempt to assess whether the composition of the groups reflected the numerical balance of the church and is not exhaustive.

The appointments made to these groups were closely scrutinised for signs of imbalance. In July 1962 the Liturgical Commission was reconstituted, including some evangelicals, Cyril Bowles among them.⁹² Nonethe-

⁸⁷ Arthur Smith et al. to Michael Ramsey, 9 July 1963, LPL, Ramsey Papers vol. 38, fos 351–54.

⁸⁸ Open letter from members of the House of Laity, c. July 1969, LPL, Ramsey Papers vol. 166, fos 88–92.

⁸⁹ *Putting Asunder: A Divorce Law for Contemporary Society* (London, 1966). See also Todd M. Thompson, ‘Anderson, Sir (James) Norman Dalrymple (1908–1994)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* online supplement (Oxford, 2010).

⁹⁰ Gervase Duffield, *Admission to Holy Communion: Two Essays in the Historical Tradition of the Church of England and its Underlying Theology* (Abingdon, 1964); letter from Gervase Duffield, *Times*, 15 July 1963, p. 11 (on the Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction Measure); letter from Gervase Duffield and others, *Times*, 16 July 1969, p. 9 (on Anglican–Methodist unity).

⁹¹ Gervase Duffield to Michael Ramsey, 20 June 1961, LPL, Ramsey Papers vol. 11, f. 103.

⁹² ‘Changed Liturgical Commission’, *Times*, 20 July 1962, p.17.

less, Ramsey received a letter from the secretary of the Leicester Diocesan Evangelical Clergy Union, calling for the inclusion of a ‘convinced and fair-minded Conservative Evangelical’ – a role subsequently filled by Colin Buchanan, at the suggestion of John Wenham.⁹³ For the 1963 World Council of Churches conference in Montreal, names discussed were J. I. Packer, Michael Green, William Leathem and Alec Motyer, all conservative evangelicals. On Coggan’s recommendation Green was approached, but was unavailable.⁹⁴ Philip Hughes had earlier expressed a willingness to go, having attended the meeting of the WCC Faith and Order Commission at St Andrews in 1960, and so was invited in Green’s stead.⁹⁵ Green was also invited to be part of the panel of fifty for the renewed Conversations with the Church of Scotland in 1962, along with Duffield and George Marchant, incumbent of St Nicholas, Durham (and thus well known to Ramsey from his time as bishop).⁹⁶ The 1964 commission on synodical government included William Chadwick, suffragan bishop of Barking and alumnus of Wycliffe Hall, and P. H. C. Walker, a solicitor from West Yorkshire and lay member of the Church Assembly.⁹⁷ Green declined a place on the intercommunion commission set up in 1965, and after consideration of Beckwith, Packer and James Atkinson, the place went to Duffield.⁹⁸ Atkinson, an expert on Luther at the University of Hull and canon theologian of Leicester Cathedral, had many years previously been supervised by Ramsey as a graduate student at Durham University. Atkinson was known as one to ‘stand for Reformation theology’, and was trusted by others who did the same. As such, he was one of only four Englishmen in the Anglican delegation to the 1966 Joint Preparatory Commission for pan-Anglican conversations with Rome.⁹⁹

⁹³ George F. Crate to Michael Ramsey, 15 October 1962, LPL, Ramsey Papers vol. 23, f. 334; Colin Buchanan, *Taking the Long View: Three and a Half Decades of General Synod* (London, 2006), p. 2.

⁹⁴ Michael Ramsey to Donald Coggan, 23 November 1962, LPL, Ramsey Papers vol. 50, fos 295–96, and reply, 26 November 1962, f. 302.

⁹⁵ Philip Hughes to Michael Ramsey, 25 August 1962, LPL, Ramsey Papers vol. 50, f. 286; N. M. Kennaby to Hughes, 4 December 1962, LPL, Ramsey Papers vol. 50, f. 316.

⁹⁶ Gervase Duffield to Michael Ramsey, 20 March 1962, LPL, Ramsey Papers vol. 26, f. 34; Ramsey to George Marchant, 22 November 1962, LPL, Ramsey Papers vol. 26, f. 67.

⁹⁷ List of members at LPL, Ramsey Papers vol. 68, fos 136–37.

⁹⁸ See the sequence of papers at LPL, Ramsey Papers vol. 79, fos 146–76.

⁹⁹ Michael Ramsey to James Atkinson, 22 June 1966, LPL, Ramsey Papers vol. 107, f. 109. Atkinson contributed an article on Luther to the 1966 Festschrift for Karl Barth, in which Ramsey’s article on the diaconate appeared. See Anthony C. Thiselton, ‘James Atkinson: Theologian, Professor and Churchman’, in W. P. Stephens (ed.), *The Bible, the Reformation and the Church: Essays in Honour of James Atkinson* (Sheffield, 1995), pp. 11–36; Anthony C. Thiselton, ‘Obituaries: The Rev James Atkinson’, *Guardian*, 8 September 2011, p. 35.

Anglican–Methodist unity

Important work has recently been done on evangelical reactions to the Anglican–Methodist unity scheme, and it is not the intention of this chapter to consider the question as a whole.¹⁰⁰ However, the suggestion was often made that the process had militated against a fair hearing of the evangelical, and indeed the catholic, dissentient view. For Packer, both the Keele Congress and Anglo–Catholic opponents of the scheme had set forward alternative proposals, but ‘such a choice has not been put to the Churches; but has merely been ruled out by a few persons in strategic positions discounting it as an alternative’. The commission had thus been set up consciously to exclude from consideration anything other than the scheme being proposed.¹⁰¹ Whilst leaving aside the question of whether this was the unintended effect of the process, this section now considers the extent to which suggestions of deliberate marginalisation can be sustained.¹⁰² Despite the strength of feeling about the scheme, a closer examination of the process suggests that, as in the case of the various other commissions, considerable trouble was taken to ensure that evangelical views were taken into account.

The Anglican–Methodist conversations had got underway in 1956, issuing in a report in 1963. Although without a conservative evangelical among its Anglican participants, they did include four liberal evangelicals out of a total membership of thirteen: bishops Falkner Allison of Winchester and Clifford Martin of Liverpool; the dean of Carlisle, Lionel du Toit; and the regius professor of ecclesiastical history at Oxford, Stanley Greenslade.¹⁰³ Once the *Conversations* report was published, a Joint Committee of the Convocations was set up in May 1963 to consider it, which reported in 1965. This once again included Allison, Martin and du Toit, but also Robin Woods, dean of Windsor, and, from amongst the conservatives, Peter Johnston, vicar of Islington, and Malcolm McQueen, appointed as one of four lay assessors. Johnston found himself unable to accept the resolutions of the committee and contributed a minority report, duly included in the published report. Thinking the proposed Service of Reconciliation beyond rescue, he proposed amendments that would have in effect removed the service as

¹⁰⁰ Andrew Atherstone, ‘Evangelical Dissentients and the Defeat of the Anglican–Methodist Unity Scheme’, *Epworth Review* vol. 35 (October 2008), online edition; Andrew Atherstone, ‘A Mad Hatter’s Tea Party in the Old Mitre Tavern? Ecumenical Reactions to *Growing into Union*’, *Ecclesiology* vol. 6 (January 2010), pp. 39–67.

¹⁰¹ Eric Mascall, Graham Leonard, J. I. Packer and Colin Buchanan to Michael Ramsey, 15 July 1969, LPL, Ramsey Papers vol. 166, f. 236.

¹⁰² Murray, *Evangelicalism Divided*, pp. 263–64.

¹⁰³ *Conversations between the Church of England and the Methodist Church* (London, 1963), p. 4

a named component part of the process. Perhaps unsurprisingly, on the strength of a single dissident, these amendments were not accepted.¹⁰⁴

A commission was duly set up in 1965, with terms of reference set by the Joint Committee. Far from fearing that his constituency was likely to be excluded, Johnston contacted Ramsey both directly and through others, asking that the Anglican half of the commission bear the weight of representing evangelical dissentients on both sides, since the Methodists with whom Johnston was in contact felt that their man, Howard Belben, was not conservative enough.¹⁰⁵ As with the other commissions already considered, Coggan and Ramsey considered several names, Green, Johnston and Wenham among them; and despite his numerous and critical writings against the scheme, Packer was invited to join.¹⁰⁶ This commission produced in April 1968 a comprehensive blueprint for union, along with an ordinal and a substantially revised Service of Reconciliation. The report contained substantial sections devoted to the several theological and practical objections to the scheme, incorporating criticism from many quarters including Buchanan, and to the various alternative schemes that had been suggested. Packer found himself unable to endorse the report, and contributed a note as to why.¹⁰⁷ By and large, then, the picture that emerges from an examination of the process is not one of deliberate exclusion, but of a minority given repeated hearings, but against whom the decision of the majority eventually went. If it is true that the process itself by its very assumptions stifled an evangelical critique, this was due to the partially self-imposed absence of evangelicals from the deliberations that set the frame of reference at its very inception decades before, as Alister Chapman has noted.¹⁰⁸

The events that followed show clearly the different perceptions of what greater evangelical engagement after Keele ought to look like in practice. In July 1968 an open letter went out to evangelical clergy over the signatures of Stott, Packer and Johnston, proposing a poll on the scheme. Although the exercise was presented as an aid to the deliberative process, the covering letter made clear the authors' view that the Service of Reconciliation was unacceptable, and to assent to the scheme as proposed would amount to a 'corporate failure to obey the truth'.¹⁰⁹ Whilst accepting the difficulties of

¹⁰⁴ *Relations between the Church of England and the Methodist Church* (London, 1965), pp. 22–24.

¹⁰⁵ Peter Johnston to Michael Ramsey, 16 July 1965, LPL, Ramsey Papers vol. 85, f. 3.

¹⁰⁶ Michael Ramsey to Donald Coggan, 15 July 1965, LPL, Ramsey Papers vol. 85, fos 13–15; Coggan to Ramsey, 16 July 1965, LPL, Ramsey Papers vol. 85, f. 20. J. I. Packer (ed.), *The Church of England and the Methodist Church* (Abingdon, 1963); J. I. Packer (ed.), *All in Each Place: Towards Reunion in England* (Abingdon, 1965).

¹⁰⁷ *Anglican–Methodist Unity: The Scheme* (London, 1968). Packer's note is at pp. 182–83.

¹⁰⁸ Chapman, *Godly Ambition*, p. 100.

¹⁰⁹ Covering letter from John Stott, J. I. Packer and Peter Johnston, copy at LPL, Ramsey Papers vol. 143, f. 9.

this particular strategy, Stott referred Ramsey to Keele and to ‘the genuine desire of evangelicals to take their place loyally and constructively in the Church of England’. However, he and his colleagues had been surprised that ‘several reasoned statements of a considerable group of thoughtful and loyal churchmen have been ignored’ and thus saw no alternative. Stott granted that Packer had been part of the commission ‘but of course he joined it half way through the negotiations and was hampered in his contributions by the restricted brief given’. A year after the supposedly decisive change in direction at Keele, Stott still felt the need to add, ‘We are neither idiots nor mischief makers nor stubborn obscurantists.’¹¹⁰

In reply, Ramsey stressed that the mechanisms in place for governing the church, creaky and in need of reform though they were, were nonetheless the ones to be used; it was not the fault of the system if the conservative evangelicals had not got involved in it. There was a need for the greatest degree of discussion and mutual learning, and for seeking divine guidance for the Church Assembly with which the decision would eventually rest; only after then would there be a final referendum of the clergy in 1969. Instead, Stott’s proposed poll ‘inevitably encourages a partisan approach to the matter’ and risked triggering parallel exercises elsewhere in the Church. As a result, ‘instead of the mutual learning from one another which we all need so badly we are to discuss the matter in terms of party groupings and caucuses.’¹¹¹ As far as Ramsey and his staff could see, the Keele Congress did not appear to have changed the Anglican evangelical approach to the structures of the Church all that much.

Conclusion

This chapter has attempted three things. First, it has examined the relationship of Michael Ramsey with Anglican evangelicalism, and in doing so has tested the reputation of incomprehension and hostility which has been imputed to him. Despite Ramsey’s closeness to the Anglo-Catholic wing of the church, there were significant areas of sympathy with key evangelical concerns, and he enjoyed cordial or better relationships with many of those with whom he dealt. Whilst he insisted that evangelicals, and particularly conservative evangelicals, needed to engage with the church and its other members as they found them, both intellectually and within the church’s structures, Ramsey was clear that the Church of England needed them as much as they needed it.

A second theme has been the continued strength of liberal or centrist

¹¹⁰ John Stott to Michael Ramsey, 22 July 1968, LPL, Ramsey Papers vol. 143, fos 27–28.

¹¹¹ Michael Ramsey to John Stott, 15 July 1968, LPL, Ramsey Papers vol. 143, f. 14.

evangelicals within the Church of England during the 1960s. Whether or not their strength was at the cost of evangelical distinctiveness and of absorption into the broad middle way within the Church of England, as David Bebbington has suggested, figures such as Max Warren were highly regarded and influential within the institutional church, and younger men such as Cyril Bowles were able to rise to high office.

The third theme has been to examine the chronology of the process of greater conservative evangelical involvement in the governing structures. By tracing the trajectory of evangelical involvement in the Church Assembly, the various commissions of the archbishops, and on the episcopal bench, it has sought to place greater emphasis on the years before the Keele Congress than on the congress itself and its aftermath. In doing so, the chapter has also sought to interrogate a common conservative evangelical self-image, of a remnant in a hostile church which sought systematically to exclude them, with little alternative than to contend vigorously for truth. Whilst there was doubtless much casual mistrust amongst all the parties in the Church of England, the evidence of the Ramsey Papers cannot be made to support any hypothesis of deliberate or even subconscious exclusion of evangelical voices from the processes of decision-making. If Anglican evangelicals were not successful in halting or overturning policies to which they objected, this was in the main simply because they were a minority in a diverse church.