

Anglican-Orthodox Relations

A Dead-End or a Way Forward?

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Relations between the Orthodox Church and the Anglican Communion have been an ongoing phenomenon since the 17th century. However, the 20th century has taken the relations to a new level, resulting in the establishment of the Official Dialogue between the two churches. This century will be known as the Age of Ecumenism, “the age in which Christians of all denominations became aware of the scandal of disunion, and attempted to do something to bring it to an end.”¹ We live in a globalised, digital world and epoch; it is inevitable that this would have affected the relations between the churches on a global level, taking us away from the past, isolated state within which the churches and the people existed. It is crucial to understand why this has happened now, i.e. the dialogue between Eastern and Western Christianity, whether it is a dead-end or a way forward for all of Christianity.

The number of Anglican-Orthodox groups which exist, primarily in the West, and more specifically in Britain, have contributed immensely towards the establishment of the current dialogue. The first group to be founded in Britain was “The Association for the Promotion of the Unity of Christendom”² which was founded in 1857, whilst the Eastern Church Association came into being in 1864. The E.C.A.’s purpose was to

“inform Anglicans of the state and position of the Eastern Christians; to make the doctrines and principles of Anglicanism known in the East; to take advantage ‘of all opportunities which the providence of God shall afford us for intercommunion with the Orthodox Church, and also for friendly intercourse with the other ancient Churches of the East’; to give financial assistance to the Orthodox bishops to assist in their efforts to promote the spiritual welfare of their flocks.”³

The E.C.A.’s importance is evident, since it was the first endeavour within the United Kingdom to find an organisation with a sole purpose the promotion of Anglican-Orthodox Relations. On the whole, discussions before this point were products of individuals, existing

¹ Bonner, Gerald, “Divided Christendom: The Contemporary Background”, *Sobornost*, Series 5: No. 7, Autumn 1968, p. 511.

² Young, Ivan, *The Relations of East and West since the Great Schism*, (London, SPCK, 1935), p. 19.

³ Brandreth, Henry, “Anglican Eastern Associations: A Sketch”, *Sobornost*, No. 31 (New Series), June 1945, p. 10.

on the periphery of the church's interest, in both East and West. Nevertheless, the E.C.A. altered this practice. It persisted that its members were representing a church; consequently giving it an official position within the relations of the two churches. This organisation is currently known as 'The Anglican and Eastern Churches Association' (A.E.C.A.). It eventually amalgamated with 'The Anglican and Eastern Orthodox Churches Union', in 1906, forming finally the existing A.E.C.A, based in London. It is significant to identify its goals; the Association has the following aim:

"To advance the Christian religion, particularly by teaching members of the Anglican and Orthodox Churches about each other, in order to prepare the way for an ultimate union between them, in accordance with our Lord's prayer that 'all may be one'. All its members are urged to work and pray constantly to this end."⁴

The second important society promoting Anglican-Orthodox Relations is the Fellowship of Saint Alban and Saint Sergius. It is an unofficial body; "it numbers among its members some eminent theologians and Church leaders"⁵ and therefore it is considered to be "one of the most important international forums for Orthodox theology."⁶ It does not "conduct any official negotiations; its members are not committed to any particular scheme of reunion. Its purpose is to help Christians to acquire mutual trust and understanding"⁷, and thus prepare the way for the future union between East and West. "The Fellowship shows the one life of the Church overcoming division;"⁸ it is a sign of the future unity, wished by everyone who is involved in the Ecumenical Movement.

Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew stated, during the Archbishop of Canterbury's recent visit to Constantinople (January 2014) that: "These two societies have fostered countless ecumenical friendships; and without such ecumenical friendships, on the direct and personal level, we cannot hope to build a firm foundation for Christian unity."⁹

The Inter-Christian relations between the Orthodox and the Anglicans have been an ongoing reality, since the 17th century, where for the first time the West wished to study the Eastern Church. However, the first years of the relations were a result of individual and personal friendships that existed and that were cultivated on an academic interest between members of the two churches and not so much an initiation from the whole body of either church. Nevertheless, since the seventeenth century the idea had haunted Anglican minds

⁴ A.E.C.A., <http://www.aeca.org.uk/>, accessed 08/01/12, 14.57.

⁵ Fellowship of St. Alban and St. Sergius Booklet, Fellowship Archives, p. 4.

⁶ Gallaher, Anastassy Brandon, *'Great and Full of Grace': Partial Intercommunion and Sophiology on Sergii Bulgakov*, in William C. Mills (ed.), *Church and World*, (Orthodox Research Institute, Rollinsford, 2013), p. 81.

⁷ Zernov, Nicolas, *The Reintegration of the Church*, (London, SCM Press, 1952), p. 118.

⁸ Thompson, Patrick, "The Prayer of the Fellowship", *Sobornost*, No. 17 (New Series), March, 1939, p. 20.

⁹ Archbishop of Canterbury, <http://www.archbishopofcanterbury.org/articles.php/5227/archbishop-of-canterbury-meets-ecumenical-patriarch-bartholomew>, accessed 30/01/14, 14.24.

from time to time that there should be much less difficulty in bringing closer Anglican Churches back into fellowship and unity with the Eastern and Orthodox Churches, than in attempting a similar objective with the Roman Catholic Church.

The Anglican Communion, since its separation from Rome, demonstrated a sporadic interest in the Orthodox, “who had succeeded in retaining their catholicity without being papalist.”¹⁰ It was important for the Anglicans to verify their existence through an ancient church, which was not Rome, papalist, and this could only be found in the Eastern Christian Church. Anglicans easily observed that the Orthodox Church had “preserved the Creed, the Sacraments, the Hierarchy, and the life of Catholic devotion, in spite of the most protracted dangers and difficulties, without Roman addition and Protestant subtraction.”¹¹ Thus, it was the Church of England that initiated the matter of reunion between the Churches, feeling the need of reinforcing her Catholic and Apostolic traditions through closer communion with Orthodoxy, and of attaining, if possible, a recognition by the Orthodox Church of the validity of Anglican Orders, contested by the Latin Church. Archbishop of York, Michael Ramsey, during an Anglican-Orthodox Conference, on September 1st, 1960, expressed the Anglican sentiments towards the relations with the Orthodox, paraphrasing them as follows:

“Hurray, we are not alone in maintaining on this globe the existence of a non-papal Catholicism...There is another in another part of the globe, and this it is all the more apparent that non-papal Catholicism is a reality and not an English device invented by John Henry Newman...Non-papal Catholicism is something that exists in its own right, doubly attested by the existence of another great Church in Christendom which, like us maintains a continuity with the ancient, undivided Church.”¹²

The Orthodox Church identified a positive factor in the future relations between the two especially within Anglicanism, specifically the Anglo-Catholic movement, since it “is persistently devoted to reestablishment of ancient tradition and thus flows into the stream of Orthodoxy.”¹³

In 1616, Patriarch of Alexandria Cyril Lucaris began contacts with Archbishop Abbot. This first correspondence resulted in a priest, Fr. Metrophanes Critopoulos from Veria, being sent to England in order to study at the University of Oxford, at the invitation of Archbishop George Abbot and King James I. This priest eventually became Patriarch of Alexandria. Inevitably this exchange created the perfect ground for visits from East to West and vice versa. However, the mutual interest was also cultivated due to non-religious factors. An

¹⁰ Zernov, Nicholas, Zernov, Militza, *Fellowship of St. Alban and St. Sergius, A Historical Memoir*, (Oxford, Fellowship of St. Alban and St. Sergius, 1979), p. 1.

¹¹ Moss, C.B., *Our debt to the Eastern Churches*, (London, Published for the Anglican and Eastern Churches Association, 1935), p. 16.

¹² Ramsey, Michael, Archbishop of York, “Holiness, Truth and Unity”, *Sobornost*, Series 4, No. 4, Winter-Spring 1961, p. 161-162.

¹³ Bulgakov, Sergius, *The Orthodox Church*, (New York, St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1988), p. 191.

important contribution was the presence of the British Embassy in Constantinople, where the Ecumenical Patriarchate resides. Globalisation and commerce played their role. An imperative phase in the relations was the foundation of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (S.P.C.K.) in 1698, which began and continues doing so till this day, publishing books on Orthodoxy.

Appropriately a fantastic opportunity occurred, with the establishment of the first Greek community and hence the first Greek Orthodox Church in London, especially due to the arrival of Metropolitan of Samos, Joseph Georgerinos,. However, this was not realised only because of the certain priest or the Greek community, which was already based in London for various reasons, including commerce and publishing their work, but this endeavour was assisted by Bishop of London, Dr. Henry Compton, “who was ultimately responsible for enabling a church to be built for the Greeks in Soho,”¹⁴ showing thus the importance of the relations and the contacts between the two Christian Worlds, as will be the case during the 20th century with the establishment of the Orthodox Archdiocese of Thyateira and Great Britain. “The Church was erected in 1677”¹⁵ and was dedicated to the Assumption of the All-holy Mother of God. The costs for the new Orthodox Church were assumed by King Charles II, the Duke of York, the Bishop of London and other bishops and nobles.

During the same century, another great project was achieved, i.e. the establishment of a Greek College for Greek students. Its objectives were principally religious. This was realised with the help of the Bishop of London, “who seemed to be a special patron for the Greeks.”¹⁶ But, due to the irregular provision of Orthodox students from the East and numerous misuses owed to propaganda, the Greek College had a short life (1699-1705). This issue produced a letter, written by the Registrar of the Greek Church in Constantinople claiming that, “the irregular life of certain priests and laymen of the Eastern Church, living in England, was a matter of great concern to the Orthodox Authorities. Wherefore the Church forbids any to go and study at Oxford, be they ever so willing.”¹⁷ Nevertheless, from the above events it is easily identifiable that it was the Anglican Communion and its members who facilitated and helped immensely the Orthodox from the East to establish themselves in the West and specifically in Great Britain, but also to increase the relations between the two traditions.

¹⁴ Young, Ivan, R., *The Relations of East and West since the Great Schism*, (London, S.P.C.K., 1935), p. 12.

¹⁵ Bakalis, Theonas and Savvas David, Vasileiadis (editors), *The Holy Wisdom of God – St. Sophia*, (Athens, Athina A.E., 2012), p. 4.

¹⁶ Emhardt, William, Chaynecey, *Historical Contact of the Eastern Orthodox and the Anglican Churches*, (New York, Department of Missions and Church Extension of the Episcopal Church, 1920), p. 4.

¹⁷ Dowling, Theodore, E. and Edwin W. Fletcher, *Hellenism in England*, (London, Faith Press, 1915), p. 69.

A new chapter opened, when the Non-Jurors¹⁸ wished to turn to the Eastern Orthodox Church and begin relations with them. Despite exchanging four letters (1716 – 1725) the gulf separating the two sides was too great, which resulted in the failure of this attempt.

The last decades of the 18th century, until the first decades of the 19th century, were a period of apathy in the relations between the Anglicans and the Orthodox. This was due to the proselytistic attitude the Anglicans had towards the Orthodox in the East, hence the latter remained cautious towards the West, especially towards the American Episcopalians. Proselytizing was eventually forbidden by the Ecumenical Patriarchate in a letter sent to Hatherly (27 February 1873). However, this whole atmosphere resulted in the increase of polemics against the West, especially towards Anglicanism and Protestantism.

The 19th century saw a revival of an interest towards the Orthodox Church, which was sparked by the Oxford Movement, having as one of its main objectives Christian reunion. Nevertheless, it was also facilitated due to the Greek Independence that commenced in 1821 against the Ottoman Empire, resulting in the flea of countless Greeks to the West, mainly England. However, the Oxford Movement had a serious longing for the unity of all Christendom; hence it directed its efforts towards Rome and the Eastern Churches. It was a preparation for the modern ecumenical dialogue and movement. The Oxford Movement was, therefore, the “true ecumenical vocation of Anglicanism.”¹⁹ The protagonists of the Movement, such as Newman, stressed the Anglican Communion’s link with the “Primitive Church, Episcopacy and the Apostolic Succession, the external forms and rituals of Worship,”²⁰ looking also forward towards missionary work and monasticism, which was not only an Eastern tradition but also a forgotten Western practice. According to many within the movement, this objective was significant since they believed that the Latin, Greek and Anglican churches comprise branches of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church. Many visits from West to East and vice versa were initiated in order to achieve a better understanding of the other. However, it is apparent that “to this great Movement, so far as human history can measure, the Church of England owes her very existence.”²¹

William Palmer, a Fellow of Magdalen College, Oxford, and deacon of the Church of England, was one of the first to dedicate his life to this cause, by travelling to Russia (1840)

¹⁸ The Non-Jurors were a group of Anglicans who refused to swear the oath of loyalty to King William of Orange. They broke away from the Church of England, breaking communion with them, forming thus a separate faction.

¹⁹ Fairweather, Eugene, R., (ed.), *The Oxford Movement*, (New York, Oxford University Press, 1964), p. 13.

²⁰ Istavridis, V.T., *Orthodoxy & Anglicanism*, (London, S.P.C.K.1966), p. 8.

²¹ Bishop, Frank (ed.), “Editorial, Notes & Comments”, *Journal of the Fellowship of St. Alban and St. Sergius (New Series)*, No. 20, June-July 1933, p. 3.

in order to defend and explain the position of the English Church, whilst publishing various books on both Churches. He is a significant figure within the Ecumenical Movement, “he was probably the first Englishman to come to the Orthodox Church and ask as a simple right and duty to be admitted to Holy Communion,”²² not because he wanted to join the Orthodox Church, as he later wished, but because he was a faithful who belonged to a branch of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church; a view not accepted by the Orthodox, who do not consent to the branch theory. During this period, as is the case even today, despite having an official dialogue and a number of official statements, there were certain misconceptions and ideas, which affected the way monks, priests and the laity thought, in order to justify past events and theological conclusions.

After countless talks and meetings with Orthodox bishops and priests in Russia he wished to join the Orthodox Church and receive communion. This, however, created a problem; the Russian Church did not necessitate that the Anglicans have to be re-baptised, hence there was no impediment in him becoming Orthodox. On the other hand, the Greek Church did have an obstacle. The problem that arose was that, despite his wish, he eventually did not become Orthodox, due to the fact that he could not comprehend how two Churches which existed within the same body, the Orthodox Church, had two very different views on this topic.

A number of reasons contributed towards the failure of these first attempts, such as the reluctance of the Orthodox Church and the Anglican Communion, the highlighting of dogmatic differences, the “excuse”²³ for schism in the introduction of the Filioque in the Creed and the unreadiness by both parties to achieve the important goal of unity; however, the reluctance of Palmer’s successors to take up the task of his methodology and attempt reunion through intercommunion has been one of the key elements contributing towards a slow advancement in this field.

The 20th century saw a massive increase in communications, conferences and visits between representatives of both Churches. This was the case, not only for theological and ecclesiastical reasons, but also and mainly for political purposes, especially from the Orthodox side. The Orthodox states were under major political and social difficulties, being either under Communism, the Ottoman Empire, oppressive governments or Muslim rule. Any help from the West was needed and desired, in order to obtain peace and freedom, in the ecclesiastical and social fields. This was of course a time when the Anglican Church and its hierarchs had political power and could intervene in Foreign Affairs or Government policies. Nevertheless, a theological basis existed in the talks and conferences that took place,

²² Ridley, Katharine, “A Pioneer in Reunion – William Palmer”, *Sobornost*, No18 (New Series), June 1939, p. 9.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

showing therefore an ecclesiastical and doctrinal interest between the two distinct groups; conversely, it is more likely that the theological matters were discussed in order to achieve political and economic gains from the West.

Despite the theological interest, it is significant to see why we have this interest and why it has increased especially during and after the two World Wars. It seems that “the Orthodox had good reason to seek rapprochement with the Anglicans.”²⁴ In 1907 Ecumenical Patriarch Joachim III assigned Archimandrite C. Pagonis as his official representative to the Archbishop of Canterbury. This action has been regarded as an indirect recognition of the Anglican Church and the validity of Anglican Orders.

The relations in the beginning, but also during a big part of its history, between the Orthodox and the Anglicans, were directed primarily towards two key centres within the Orthodox World, i.e. Constantinople, where the Ecumenical Patriarch resides, and Moscow. Then again, during this time, a massive and constant emigration of Orthodox populations was taking place, towards Africa, Australia, America and Western Europe, creating thus unprecedented problems and opportunities for the progression of the relations between the Orthodox Church and the Anglican Communion. These issues were of course discussed at the Lambeth Conference of 1908, explaining:

“The Conference is of opinion that it should be the recognised practice of the Churches of our Communion:

1. At all times to baptise the children of members of any Church of the Orthodox Eastern Communion in cases of emergency, provided that there is a clear understanding that baptism should not be again administered to those so baptized;
2. At all times to admit members of any Church of the Orthodox Eastern Communion to communicate in our churches, when they are deprived of the ministrations of a priest of their own Communion, provided that
 - a. They are at that time admissible to communion in their own Churches, and
 - b. Are not under any disqualification so far as our own rules of discipline are concerned.”²⁵

It is evident, through this Resolution, that Anglican terminology is used in order to express Orthodoxy, which is not a Communion, as is the case with Anglicanism, but a Church, despite being found under numerous jurisdictional spheres, expressing various different traditional aspects, such as music, iconography, calendar, it is however united in theology and doctrine. This Lambeth Conference also included a Committee on Reunion and

²⁴ Geffert, Bryn, *Eastern Orthodox and Anglicans, Diplomacy, Theology, and the Politics of Interwar Ecumenism*, (Indiana, University of Notre Dame Press, 2010), p.4.

²⁵ The Lambeth Conference, Resolutions Archive from 1908, Published by the Anglican Communion Office, 2005, Resolution 62.

Intercommunion, showing thus a will by the Anglican Communion for the progression of Ecumenical Relations.

At the end of World War I Britain had control of Orthodox holy places in Palestine. On the other hand, Britain also protected the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Constantinople after the Great War, thus the Orthodox set eyes on Britain as their main hope against the dangers and difficulties they had to go through in the East. What they wanted was money, yearning for the political might that the Archbishop of Canterbury had through his power to intervene in government decisions. On the other hand, the Orthodox Church showed through its talks that it is reluctant in accepting new ideas swiftly, taking into consideration two millennia of theology, practice, tradition, ecclesiology and church life.

A momentous event took place in 1920, whereby, after the invitation of the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Ecumenical Patriarchate sent representatives to the Lambeth Conference of the same year for the first time in its history. This of course was understood as being a major progression in the relations between the two Churches. This started a tradition whereby from this Conference onwards Orthodox representatives were invited to Lambeth, “either to take part in official or unofficial joint theological discussions or simply to be present as observes.”²⁶

After the Great War, which brought West and East (in ecclesiastical terms) closer, we have the establishment in 1922 of the Archdiocese of Thyateira and Great Britain in London, as an Exarchate of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople making it the first Greek Orthodox Archdiocese in the West where Germanos Strenopoulos was appointed as its first Archbishop (1922-1951). This was, of course, achieved with the help and assistance of the Anglican Bishops in Britain, especially the Archbishop of Canterbury. Without the good relations between the Anglican Communion and the Orthodox Church, the first Orthodox Archdiocese in the West could have been established in Berlin or Paris or New York. However, the success of the dialogue and relations between the two brought the Archdiocese to the British capital. Archbishop Germanos “worked hard for nearly 30 years on matters concerning Church Relations”.²⁷ This ongoing cooperation has brought us to the current established and flourishing Archdiocese, which “now embraces 115 churches, communities and monasteries, with new communities in the process of being created to meet the needs of the Faithful.”²⁸

²⁶ Istavridis, 1966, p. 15.

²⁷ Istavridis, V.T., *Το Διορθόδοξον και Διαχριστιανικόν Έργον του Γερμανού Στρηνόπουλου προ της Ανυψώσεως του εις την Μητρόπολην Θυατείρων*, (Istanbul, Πατριαρχικού Τυπογραφείου, 1959), pp. 3-4.

²⁸ Grigorios, Archbishop of Thyateira and Great Britain, “The Archdiocese of Thyateira and Great Britain and Orthodoxy in the British Isles” in *Ημερολόγιο 2012, Αρχιεπισκοπή Θυατείρων και Μεγάλης Βρετανίας*, (London, Archdiocese of Thyateira and Great Britain, 2012), p. 475.

Strenopoulos' work was of great importance, being 'the best man for the job,' remaining always "an optimist in regards to Anglican and Orthodox Re-Union."²⁹ His ecumenical work before and during his time as Archbishop of Thyateira and Great Britain is what formed his relations on a theological and political level, whilst his ideas on union between the churches also contributed towards these aspirations, being "one of the pioneers of the Movement and one of the greater Ecumenists"³⁰. He achieved countless objectives set out not only on a theological and ecclesiastical basis but also on a diplomatic one.

Through this small abstract of the history of the relations between Anglicanism and Orthodoxy, it is apparent that the Ecumenical Movement was unofficially forming its foundation. The relations had an academic character, showing that on the ground there existed a lack of knowledge of the other tradition and ecclesiastical body, a reality which is evident, unfortunately, even today, where relations have been established for decades. Nevertheless, despite the ignorance, there existed a tremendous interest in each other. The fact that serious questions were raised, such as Anglican Orders, the validity of the Sacraments, Intercommunion and many more, show the curiosity and concern that existed in both East and West.

The World Council of Churches³¹ plays a significant role within the Ecumenical Movement. The WCC was inaugurated in Amsterdam (1948), bringing the Ecumenical Movement to a new chapter in its history, taking the relationships and the dialogues between the denominations into an official status. Initiating a novel investigation on the Ecumenical Movement, one can easily identify in it a "biblical renewal, a liturgical renewal and renewed understanding of Christian social responsibility."³² The WCC came at a time when all Christians wished to preserve and reinforce the sense of unity,³³ which had been felt due to World War II, where countless people moved around the European continent. It also came as an answer to previous concerns that the reunion process depended on individuals, lacking "proper organisation"³⁴, gaining at the same time the support and the awareness of other Christian faithful. However, it also came at a time when the Orthodox nations were still

²⁹ Anglican History, http://anglicanhistory.org/orthodoxy/jad_germanos1929.html., accessed 21/09/11, 12.21 pm.

³⁰ Istavridis, 1959, p. 4.

³¹ It is important to state that the WCC was not the first of its kind. In 1846, the World Evangelical Alliance was founded as the Evangelical Alliance. However, the non-Evangelicals and non-Anglicans in general would not agree with many of their practices and beliefs, such as intercommunion.

³² Allchin, A.M., "The Revival of the Religious Life and Christian Unity", *Sobornost*, Series 3, No. 12, Winter 1952, p. 543.

³³ This unity could be felt within the movement of ecumenism, which was seen as "a new and miraculous gift of God" to Christianity. *Student Christian Movement*, Fellowship Archives, 1937.

³⁴ Zernov, Nicolas, *A Memorandum on the Relations Between the Anglicans and the Eastern Orthodox Churches*, Fellowship Archives, 1945.

at war (for instance Greece had a civil war, 1946-49) whilst other Balkan nations were under authoritarian regimes, making the work of the Orthodox Church difficult, if not impossible. Nevertheless, the presence of the Orthodox in a number of great conferences and the WCC, reminded the Western Christians of “the larger perspective”³⁵ of Christianity.

The objective of the WCC “is not to build a global ‘super-church’, nor to standardise styles of worship,”³⁶ as is believed by the ‘enemies’ of Ecumenism, but more accurately it aims to deepen the fellowship and the relationship of the Christian churches in order to identify the true manifestation of what we all claim in the Creed, i.e. ‘one, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church’. The churches that took part in this new organisation “were animated by a sincere desire to serve the cause of Christian unity and to resolve their fellowship with Christians of other confessions”³⁷.

Currently the Anglican Communion is in an Official Dialogue status with the Orthodox Church, where three Agreed Statements have been produced (Moscow, Dublin and Cyprus). The Moscow Agreed Statement was the first of its kind, opening a new chapter in the official relations and dialogue between the two ecclesiastical groups. It was an important example, of how hierarchs and ecclesiastical representatives were able to come together, despite deriving from varied backgrounds, and talk together frankly, in an atmosphere of trust and mutual understanding. Many topics were discussed, including the knowledge of God, the inspiration and authority of Holy Scripture, Scripture and Tradition, the authority of the councils, the filioque clause, the Church as the Eucharistic community and the invocation of the Holy Spirit in the Eucharist. Moreover, during the Moscow meeting the topic of women priests was also discussed, concluding in the passing of a resolution by the Orthodox members, explaining:

“The Orthodox members of the Commission wish to state that if the Anglican Churches proceed to the ordination of women to the priesthood and the episcopate, this will create a very serious obstacle to the development of our relations in the future. Although the Anglican members are divided among themselves on the theological principle involved, they recognize the strength of Orthodox convictions on this matter and undertake to make this known to their Churches”³⁸.

³⁵ Dunelm, Michael, ‘Message from the President’, *Sobornost*, Series 3, No. 18, Winter 1955-56., p. 274.

³⁶ World Council of Churches, <http://www.oikoumene.org/en/whoarewe/background.html?print=1%2522onfocus%253D%2522blurLink%28thi>, accessed 26/02/2013, 16:11.

³⁷ Zernov, Nicolas, “Enterprise and Encounters – The First Assembly of the World Council of Churches”, *Sobornost*, Series 3, No.4, Winter 1948, p. 145.

³⁸ Ware, Kallistos, Colin, Davey (eds), *Anglican Orthodox Dialogue, The Moscow Agreed Statement*, (London, SPCK, 1977), p.38.

This later became a reality within the Anglican Communion. Nevertheless, the Official Dialogue continued and continues to this day, showing the conviction both sides have in respect to the continuation of the dialogue.

The Commission met again in 1980, resuming its work in Llandaff. This new period is known as the “second spring.”³⁹ The Dublin Agreed Statement (1984) is the product of eight years of discussions, echoing the prominence in regards to spirituality and prayer. It is, moreover, a friendship that has been “costly and demanding;”⁴⁰ maintaining its key objective, i.e. the unity of the Church. Here various issues were analysed, including The Mystery of the Church, Faith in the Trinity, Prayer and Holiness, Worship and Tradition.

The third phase of the dialogue was initiated in 1989. During that year, the commission was reorganised as the International Commission for Anglican – Orthodox Theological Dialogue (ICAOTD). This third phase reached its conclusion with the Agreed Statement, which was completed at the Holy Royal and Stavropegic Monastery of Kykkos (Cyprus), where the last chapter of this statement was accomplished (2006). The commission was assigned to deliberate “the doctrine of the Church in the light of the doctrine of the Trinity, and to examine the doctrine of the ordination ministry of the Church.”⁴¹ Specific consideration was given to the issues of ordination to the presbyterate and episcopate. Ecclesiology and Trinitarian theology and doctrine were also dominant concerns within the discussions. Agreements were reached; however, the question of the ordination of women remained unsettled.

Currently, the Official Dialogue is entering a new phase, preparing the Fourth Official Statement on Anthropology and the understanding of the human person, proposed by the Orthodox co-chairman of the Anglican-Orthodox Theological Dialogue since 2008 Metropolitan Kallistos. This is an interesting topic, which could explain many of the differences between the two traditions, on issues such as women priests.

Taking the above facts in consideration, how do we answer the question posed in the title? Are the relations a dead end or a way forward? In Britain we can all see the results of the Anglican-Orthodox relations; due to the relations of the two peoples the Ecumenical Patriarchate established the first Orthodox Archdiocese in the West in London and not in any other metropolis. The fact that there are more than 150 Orthodox communities in the U.K. is significant and an evident result of these dialogues and relations. Only five, out of 115 Greek

³⁹ Hill, Henry and Methodios, Archbishop of Thyateira and Great Britain (eds.), *Anglican-Orthodox Dialogue, The Dublin Agreed Statement 1984*, (London, SPCK, 1985), p.5.

⁴⁰ *Ibid*, p. v.

⁴¹ Wybrew, Hugh, Constantine Scouteris, James, M, Rosenthal, Ian, Harvey, Terrie, Robinson (eds.), *The Church of the Triune God*, (London, The Anglican Communion Office, 2006), p. 11.

Orthodox Churches, have been built by the Orthodox. Most Orthodox Communities have bought their Church buildings from the Anglicans, showing that cooperation exists on all levels. Co-inhabitancy is also evident. For example, St. Dunstan in the West, Fleet Street, London, is an Anglican church, which also hosts the Romanian Orthodox community, thus showing that collaboration is key in furthering good relations.

Another significant consequence of the relations is the fact that many Anglican churches have at least one icon, an important change which has been increasing over the last 80 years. Icons are not a new reality for the West, introduced by the Orthodox Church. They are a revival of the ancient tradition of iconography in the West, as is evident in many Cathedrals in England, such as St. Albans and Winchester Cathedral.

Many question the dialogue and the relations, due to their slow pace in taking and applying decisions. However, the results of the Ecumenical Movement will not be evident immediately. Whoever is involved in the Ecumenical Movement can understand what Fr. George Florovski claimed, that “the highest and most promising ‘ecumenical virtue’ is patience;”⁴² patience is imperative for all sides in order to take small steps and achieve our goals, salvation and unity between mankind and God. A good example is given from the Greek world; the Greeks are known for smashing plates when celebrating. Christianity could be considered to be a plate. It is easy to smash this plate in many pieces. It happens in an instance. However, putting these pieces back together is a long process, which needs patience and understanding. And again, some cracks will be evident. Therefore, we should all take small and careful steps in order to progress towards the main objective of the relations, i.e. to receive Holy Communion from a Common Cup.

The Anglican-Orthodox dialogue should and can continue. There are a number of difficult points; however, we should endure in a dialogue status. The wisdom of the people involved in the relations (on an official and unofficial level) has shown that, even when obstacles occurred, the dialogue continued. Archbishop Justin Welby, during his visit to Constantinople (January 2014) claimed that: “There is much that unites us and as we continue to strengthen the bonds of friendship our understanding of each other’s traditions will grow”.⁴³ Are the relations, therefore, a dead end or a way forward? The answer we can give is that they are a way forward. This is evident through the examples and the history expressed above. However, we need patience, understanding; all of us need to pray for Christian unity.

⁴² Ware, Timothy, *The Orthodox Church*, (London, Penguin Books, 1997), p. 307.

⁴³ Archbishop of Canterbury, <http://www.archbishopofcanterbury.org/articles.php/5227/archbishop-of-canterbury-meets-ecumenical-patriarch-bartholomew>, accessed 30/01/14, 14.24.

The Ecumenical Movement is a mystery for those who do not comprehend the fact that “repentance is the driving force behind it.”⁴⁴ Therefore, we need to try and achieve what the Orthodox proclaim in the Divine Liturgy: “For the peace of the whole world, for the welfare of God’s holy Churches, and for the union of all, let us pray to the Lord.”

⁴⁴ Allchin, A.M., “The Revival of the Religious Life and Christian Unity”, *Sobornost*, Series 3: No.12, Winter 1952, p. 542.