

# OpenTheo

## **The Future of Orthodox Anglicanism (with Gerald McDermott)**

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### **Alastair Roberts**

Gerald McDermott joins me to discuss 'The Future of Orthodox Anglicanism', which he recently edited.

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### **Transcript**

Hello, and welcome back. Today I'm joined by my friend Gerald McDermott, who's the author or the editor of a recent book published by Crossway called The Future of Orthodox Anglicanism. I highly recommend it, and we're going to be discussing it for the next few minutes, thinking about some of the themes and the challenges that face Anglicanism as it heads into the rest of the 21st century.

So first of all, thank you very much for joining me. Well, Alastair, it's my pleasure. I always enjoy talking to you.

And listening. To start off, how would you briefly characterize the current state of worldwide Anglicanism, not just Orthodox Anglicanism? And then within that world, what are some of the distinguishing features that set Orthodox Anglicanism apart? Well, I think the Anglican world is healthier than most think. In the media, we often get a bad rap as way off to the left theologically and hopelessly divided.

And I think Anglicanism is, well, it definitely is fractured, but at the same time it's growing. And you can't say that of, you know, of many other fractured churches. We have 85 million Anglicans in the world.

It's the third largest communion after the Roman Catholic communion and the Eastern Orthodox community on the planet. Our center of gravity is the global South, and 80% of the Anglican communion, because of the global South, is Orthodox on the presenting issue of the day, which is marriage and sexuality. You know, I would say, you know, you're asking what are the distinguishing features of Orthodox Anglicanism? I would say in just a phrase, Catholic substance, small c Catholic, not Roman Catholic, but small c Catholic, meaning universal substance with reformation critique that is principally the reformation critique of a semi-Pelagianism, which was rife in the late medieval period.

And also, you know, some other distinguishing features of Orthodox Anglicanism are the use of ancient liturgy and sacrament with this reformation critique. And particularly in the global South and as, and where Anglicanism is growing day by day, there's a devotion to scripture that is not as prevalent in the global, in Anglicanism in the global North. And so, and we'll talk about this later, I'm sure in, in later questions you might have, but because the center of gravity now of Orthodox Anglicanism is the global South, this Anglicanism today and tomorrow is insisting on different ways of choosing its overall leader, its archbishop and different ways of governing the Anglican communion.

Now, another distinguishing feature that's particularly important today, theologically of Orthodox Anglicanism is that it resists the two great heresies of the church today. Its departure from the doctrine of creation in its embrace of the sexual revolution of the 1960s and 70s and its departure from the doctrine of salvation in its new promotion of universalism. Many in the church, both Catholic and Protestant and Eastern Orthodox, universalism, the idea that everyone universally will be saved.

There is no eternal hell. There is no damnation. God would never preside over any kind of damnation.

And therefore, in a very real sense, Jesus Christ is not the only way to the father. At least the Jesus Christ of the New Testament is not the only way to the father. So, finally, distinguishing features of Orthodox Anglicanism also, we'd have to say aggressive evangelism and mission, which you don't see much in the global North, except in, in parts of the ACNA, the Anglican Church in North America, but particularly in the global South.

There's plenty of mission, plenty of evangelism, and even under persecution, as you see in countries like Nigeria, which is the largest Anglican province in the Anglican community. The sheer size of Anglicanism in Nigeria really puts things in perspective in some of these debates. And the book that you edited contains both global South and global North perspectives on the future of Orthodox Anglicanism.

And it seems to me that there are significant differences between the two. There's a sort of optimism and hope that I hear from the global South that is not to quite the same extent present in the North. So, for instance, Eliot Wabakala, some 500 years after the Protestant Reformation, it is becoming clear that what some have called the Anglican experiment is not ending in failure, but is on the verge of a new and truly global future in which the original vision of the reformers can be realized as never before.

What do you think are some of the differences in evaluation of the prospects that these different vantage points offer? And do you have any thoughts about why? Well, they say in real estate that the three most important things are location, location, location. And I think the two different perspectives, which I would call the optimistic and the pessimistic, are largely, if not entirely, determined by location. The authors in the book, and there's really only two who are pessimistic, are both in the global North.

And all the rest of the authors in the book are optimistic about the future of Anglicanism. And I think there's two reasons for that. Number one, the Episcopal Church is declining by the day in numbers.

The Church of England is declining by the day in numbers. But the churches in the global South are growing by the day. So there's the sociological fact of the diminution in numbers in the North and expansion in numbers in the South.

And then the second reason, I think, that you see these radically different perspectives, optimistic versus pessimistic, is the impact of Enlightenment philosophy on Christian theology and church theology in the global North. It had a major impact, the Enlightenment, on Christian and Anglican theology as it was taught, particularly in the 20th century. And that filtered down through the seminaries to the priests, because they were taught in seminaries.

And skepticism toward biblical miracles, skepticism toward traditional doctrines like the Trinity, and even the deity of Christ. And it's no wonder that when you have priests preaching in the pulpit in the global North, who have been so significantly influenced by the Enlightenment, such that they doubt classic Anglican doctrines, that people are going to vote with their feet. Because why go to church to hear skepticism? You can get that on NPR and by reading the New York Times, or maybe the London Times.

Who needs church for that? But in the global South, there's faith everywhere. And conviction that the Bible is the word of God. It's not just the word of man about God.

It is the word of God that comes by revelation from the beautiful, loving, Trinitarian God, revealing himself to us sinners and showing us how we sinners can come back to our loving Father and his Messiah in Jesus by the Holy Spirit. How do you think that relationship between the global North and South, and the sorts of imbalance that exists between the two in institutional and financial and other sort of forms, and simply the numbers of the global South, how do you think that will inform the development of Orthodox Anglicanism in the future? What do you believe will be some of the results of the shift in the center of gravity towards the South? Right. Well, the future of Orthodox Anglicanism is going to be sociologically mostly non-white.

It's, in terms of governance, it will be led by the global South, no longer by England. It will be devoted to scripture far more than in the past, you know, the last century, let's say. It, as I mentioned briefly, it will insist on new governing structures, so led perhaps by an archbishop outside of England.

It will continue to resist the two great heresies against the doctrine of creation, as I just mentioned, the doctrine of salvation. It will be a far more aggressively missionizing and evangelizing than the Church of the Global North has been in the last century. And even in the midst of persecution is going on right now.

I mean, the summer before last, I spent time teaching at this wonderful seminary in Jost, Nigeria. And in the midst of persecution, even driving there on my way from the airport, we were caught right in the middle of a terrorist attack. And that doesn't dim the zeal for evangelism one bit amongst these Nigerian Anglicans.

It's an impressive thing to see. So this is what we'll see, I think, in the future of Orthodox Anglicanism. And just as in the first three centuries of Christianity, this is a major reason why the Church grew explosively.

And that's why Anglicanism is going to continue to grow, I think, because of the courage and the faith of these Anglicans in the Global South. A number of the authors within the book speak about some sort of experience of death and maybe awaiting resurrection, but a moment of transition where we feel the loss of something that has gone before, and also some of the possibilities that are held out in the future. Do you believe that Anglicanism has particular precedents in its own history or beyond the history of Anglicanism to history of the Church more generally and Scripture for this moment in history? And what do you think we stand to lose and to gain at this juncture? Well, Bishop Ray Sutton, who is the Bishop of the Reformed Episcopal Church, part of the ACNA, Anglican Church of North America, has a wonderful little piece in the book in which he says that while there are some, even within his book, who who are saying that Anglicanism is dying, this is simply the latest of several times in the history of Anglicanism where many people thought it was dead, and yet it came back to life even stronger than before.

So he points out, for instance, under Queen Mary, Anglicanism died. She killed the Archbishop of Canterbury. She killed two other bishops and hundreds of clergy and laity.

But then when Queen Mary died, Queen Elizabeth succeeded her, and Anglicanism took on new life with new godly bishops, the reinstatement of the Book of Common Prayer for worship, the approval of the 39 Articles. Anglicanism became even more comprehensive and strengthened in many, many ways under Elizabeth. And then in the 17th century, so that was the 16th century, where the Church of England went through one death, it went through a second death in the 17th century under Cromwell, the Civil War.

For over a decade, the Church of England disappeared. Thirteen English bishops, the episcopacy was reduced to 13 English bishops, and most of them fled to Europe. Many folks in England, influenced by Puritanism, became iconoclasts.

That means they went in with axes inside the churches and destroyed these beautiful paintings and images and, you know, statuary that were throughout the churches of England, and it just destroyed them. But then, after the end of the Civil War, the nation of England called the Church of England back. And so each time after this death of the Church of England, there was a resurrection, a resurgence of life that produced greater capacity to become even more unifying as a church.

And Bishop Sutton cites the Catholic author Henry Nowatt, who in his book, *The Wounded Healer*, talks about how out of wounds often come a greater ability to heal. And we're seeing this in global Anglicanism today. We're seeing this new life in the global South, and a new international appeal of the life of Anglican life, because it's not just theology, it's prayer, but it's even more than, it's far more than just prayer.

We are seeing a renewal of the Anglican way of living under God all over the world now, and not just in Europe and America. Holy Beach, in his chapter, discusses a troubling emergence and spread of neo-pagan influences in contemporary Western Anglicanism. And Anglicanism, in many of the contemporary debates on the issues of substance, the presenting issues that you've spoken about, seems to have a problem with effective church discipline and guarding the deposit of faith, which has led to splits where other groups have arisen in order to defend those things that have not been defended in the main institutions that we traditionally associate with communion.

We aren't just dealing in these sorts of situations with the gradual effects of time and change and the developments of history, but we're fighting and often losing a battle. How can we improve on this front? Well, improvement is already here with the rise of GAFCON, that's the Global Anglican Future Conference, which is a renewal movement within Anglicanism. The last worldwide GAFCON conference I attended in the summer of 2018, there were 2,000 Anglicans from all over the world.

Most of the 2,000 were from the Global South. Much more biblical and not afraid to talk

about church discipline, discipline not only, and practicing church discipline, not only of theological heresy, but also of moral failure, of both of which there is plenty. Much more focused on scripture than liberal Anglicanism in the Episcopal Church and the Church of England have been in the last 50 years.

And yet even I saw in my visit to Joss in teaching at that seminary the summer before last, a new hunger for tradition. So these are not simply Biblicalists. They're not simply evangelicals who don't care about tradition and sacraments.

No, they, there's a new hunger amongst them for a tradition and for the sacraments of the church. So I think I'm much more hopeful after I and so many other, and I used to be in the Episcopal Church, were so discouraged by the lack of church discipline, the lack of theological rigor, the gross sloppiness in both theology and church practice that so many of us had seen in the Episcopal Church and in the Church of England. I'm much more optimistic now.

Barbara Gauthier and others present a vision of Anglicanism that is very historically rooted. There's a lot of discussion of the history of Anglicanism and the Church of England as well. It's rootedness in the Fathers, the Scriptures, a liturgical tradition, an ecclesial tradition.

And Gerald Bray also highlights the fact that Anglicanism has been non-sectarian in many respects, has often avoided putting their leaders on a pedestal in the way that you see in other communions. I always find it interesting to see what happens when an Anglican from the UK goes over to the US in a more evangelical context and they get put on a pedestal that they don't get put on in the context of the Church of England. But it hasn't considered itself to be the one true church either.

At its best, it's spoken effectively to all levels of society and had a ministry beyond just a particular social class. And particularly within the UK and other places where it has been an established church, it's embodied an ecclesial common good to an extent that other communities and communions, churches and traditions have not. How can these characteristics of Anglicanism render it most apt for advancing an orthodox Catholicity and ecumenism more generally beyond just the context of the Church of England or the Anglican communion or other Anglican bodies? What are some of the ways in which these characteristics of Anglicanism also risk being diluted in the present day? Well, that's, you're asking a number of complicated questions, but I think the first one is what should we avoid? And I think Barbara suggests that we Anglicans, we orthodox Anglicans need to resist triumphalism.

We are not, as you mentioned, which she says, we are not the one true church. We are part of the great Catholic Church of the ages, small c. And we can learn from other churches. We ought to learn from the Lutherans.

We ought to learn from the Roman Catholics. We ought to learn from the Baptists and the Pentecostals. But we also ought not to discard the great riches of the first millennia, that the undivided church that have been bequeathed to us and that we enjoy and we benefit from, liturgy and sacrament principle.

We also have to return to our great worthies, to prayer and work for liturgy, to hook it for theological method and also the substance of theology. His eight books, *The Laws of Enthusiastic Equality*, are to a great degree, unmined treasure for us Anglicans. Rusty Reno, who's the editor of *First Things*, Roman Catholic, he wrote in *First Things*, that's that great journal of religion and public life, read on both sides of the pond.

He wrote recently, a few months ago, that for Orthodox Christians who are seeking a way in these very confusing times to know how the church ought to relate to society and particularly to state, there is no better guide than Richard Hooker. And I agree. So, you know, the ecclesial common good, that's what Hooker emphasizes.

And not just for the church, but also the common good for society. And of course, that was one of the great achievements of his Summa-like volumes called *The Laws of Enthusiastic Equality*, is showing how the church ought to be concerned about the common good of society and not just Christians in the pews. Well, Williams, on the subject of Richard Hooker, used the expression contemplative pragmatism to describe Hooker, and by extension, something of the genius of Anglicanism, an approach that's guided more by wisdom than by ideology.

And the messy and complicated and variegated, and we need to really pay attention to the ground in which we're planted. And so, wise theologians aren't trying to terraform the entire world to fit with their ideological program that applies in the same way in every single place. But they need to be shrewd and prudent and work with the particular soil in which they're planted.

So, they're attentive to the soil of tradition or the soil of history, the soil of the common good of a particular body of people, or the soil of locality, or the soil of peoplehood, or just the soil of the common good of a land. So, I think particularly of the Church of England, where there have been these structures expressed, even in things like the parish system, where there's a commitment of the church to its locality, and church architecture, the way that a building is surrounded by a graveyard that represents its commitment to a particular people, a particular place through history. And things like the fact within the name Church of England, the place is part of that which constitutes the church as what it is.

How can, well, I mean, while we're deeply rooted in particularity, we're also trying to be reflective upon and contemplative of these truths that exceed particularity, that are about these universal transcendent truths of the gospel, the truth of God, natural law, these sorts of things that can speak into all times and places and across all times and

places. And that work of wisdom mediating between those two things, the transcendent truths and the particular situations, do you think that genius of Anglicanism is something that is at risk of weakening or being lost in this moment in time? How and how not? Or do you think there are ways that we can preserve and re-entrench it? Well, as I just mentioned, I think we need to learn from Hooker, who illustrates and shows us how to keep that genius of Anglicanism. And he illustrates it in himself by, I would say, proper classically Christian use of and attention to reason.

Now, reason is a difficult thing that is used and abused in a host of ways. And Hooker has been, I think, grossly misinterpreted on his use of reason. Liberal Anglicans have talked about Hooker's three-legged stool of scripture, tradition, and reason, suggesting that the leg of reason is just as important as scripture and tradition.

That's a gross misunderstanding of Hooker, for whom a reason is always used in our reading and interpreting of scripture, and our reading or learning from tradition and use of tradition. We are reasoning animals, as the Greeks and Thomas Aquinas taught, and Hooker was a student of both. And so you can't, you know, there's no such thing as reason being a separate tool apart from scripture and tradition.

But Hooker also has a great illustration of reason as prudence, that is, receiving faithfully the truths of scripture, mediated by tradition, particularly the Fathers, and then trying to think, as the Spirit leads, of how best to serve the Triune God and worship the Triune God in this particular place at this particular time, which might be different in minor ways from worshiping the Triune God even as Anglicans in a previous century or on a different continent or in a different country with a different people and a different language. And so today, when Anglicanism is more international than ever, this gives Anglicans hope for a proper kind of what I would call divine diversity, not the Enlightenment kind of diversity that looks only at superficial differences, skin color and donas, but the proper kind of divine diversity that we see in the Bible. And I think a perfect example is the Book of Revelation, chapter 7. The great multitude that no one can number consists of people of many languages, of many tribes, and many nations, and many women who are distinct and different.

You know, not the kind of Enlightenment homogeneity that really is boring. No, divine diversity is so different from the diversity that's become a God word in our society, particularly on university campuses. It's a much more interesting and beautiful diversity that is found in different cultures, in different nations, in different ways of worshiping the Triune God, even within Anglicanism.

So, for instance, in this book, we've got this wonderful essay by Munir Anis, the Bishop of Egypt, and talking about how in a Middle Eastern culture, Anglicans have found ways to help the poor that might work only in that particular context of Egypt and might not work the same way, say, in North America or in Africa. Although, of course, this country would



be too close to North Africa. And then he talks about, you know, reaching out in Egypt to Copts as Anglicans, our Anglican treasures of the ecumenical creeds and, you know, a tradition that goes back to the first millennium of the undivided church, gives Bishop Anis and his fellow Egyptian Anglicans ways to talk to and even minister to and learn from the Copts and builds bridges theologically and socially between the Anglicans and the Copts.

And also, remarkably, they've been reaching out in wonderful ways to Muslims in Egypt. And the Anglican heritage, with its differentiated ways of praying, of worshiping God through the book of the Kind and Fair, gives them ways of talking, helps build bridges in this society that is deeply divided between Christians and Muslims. And the Anglicans profess the *via media*, the middle way, are able to provide their own kind of *via media*, this bridge, this middle way between deeply divided groups in Egyptian society.

So I think we do have these treasures that are attentive to the particularities of a particular soil, a particular land, in a particular nation. But how do we prevent those particularities from dividing us? I think the way to prevent it is what you see in the global South amongst Anglicans is focus on scripture, which, as long as we keep scripture as our theological center, our theological source, now understood through the great tradition, in particular the Fathers, which Hooker showed is the Anglican theological method to read the Bible at the feet of the Fathers. As long as we stick with, keep using that theological method, interpreting the Bible through the prism of the Fathers, then that will, I think, prevent us Anglicans from losing the great transcendent truths in the midst of our different ways of living out those truths in our particular cultures.

The book includes a number of voices from outside of Anglicanism. How do you think that Anglicanism is changing *vis-a-vis* the wider body of Christ? What new possibilities exist and what dangers are revealing themselves? Well, you know, Timothy George's got a wonderful little chapter in there, and he's one of the most famous Baptist theologians in the world. We purposely invited Timothy George to write a chapter as a Baptist outside observer, and Rusty Reno, Roman Catholic, as our outside Catholic observer, to answer just this kind of question I was told that you're asking.

And George writes in his chapter that the Anglican prayer book, Book of Common Prayer, and Anglican sacraments, now he doesn't use the word, but I'll use it, through a kind of envy when Baptists come across them. They tend to love what they see and what they hear. And he said that Anglican prayer book and Anglican sacraments have made Baptists more Catholic.

And there's a number of Baptist theologians today who are writing about sacraments, who are writing about the need for creeds, who are writing about the need for liturgy, and actually incorporating liturgy and something like what we would call sacraments in their worship. And Dr. George also points to the 19th century when Baptists and

Anglicans cooperated in England, particularly in social reform and also in missions. So now we Anglicans have learned from Baptist strengths.

They're really strong in evangelism, and they're very strong in Christian education. And we still need to learn from Baptists, I think, in those two areas, evangelism and Christian education. Now, the Roman Catholics, Rusty Reno in his chapter, which I think is a really neat little chapter, talks about Anglican faith and slow conversion.

That is, Anglicans know that we grow into Christ over the course of our whole lives through the ministry of the Church in its word and sacraments. And also, Rusty points out that Anglicans believe, as Roman Catholics believe, and as the Eastern Orthodox believe, in the objectivity of God's work in the world. In other words, God works outside of us and comes to us from positions outside of us.

So preaching that's outside of us, sacraments that are outside of us, the Church that is fundamentally outside of us. Now, I mention that because of the excesses of some kinds of evangelicalism, where it's all about what's going on inside of me. And I measure my faith in God based on my feelings that are inside of me.

And that can lead to a solipsism, that can lead into a narcissism, that can lead to, both of which can lead to despair. Because if you're anything like me, on many days, I don't feel like a very good person. I don't feel any faith within me.

I need the preaching of the Church outside of me. I need the sacraments of the Church outside of me, through which God comes to me, so I can put my trust in what God has done outside of me, through His Son, by the Spirit, and through the Church, through which He continues the incarnation. And that's a beautiful Anglican concept.

It's not unique to us. We've gotten that from the Church of the First Amendment. That God came and incarnated in Christ, and He continues the incarnation through the ministry of the Church.

So, now, Rusty Reno says that Anglicans help Catholics, Roman Catholics, by the Anglican attention to apostolic authority. In other words, biblical authority, by the apostles who gave us the New Testament. What Rusty, I think, is suggesting or implying there is that Catholics need to pay more attention to the Bible.

And Anglicans, at least Orthodox Anglicans, unlike liberal Anglicans, can help point the way. Now, I would say, and I suggest this in my conclusion at the end of the book, that with Anglicanism, and I guess I'm being kind of unashamedly evangelistic here, that Anglicans actually provide new possibilities for a lot of Roman Catholics today who are really discouraged because, in my opinion, Pope Francis is a Catholic. And they are looking for a church that truly is Orthodox, that also has sacraments and liturgy, and teaches the creeds.

And also, I think, that Orthodox Anglicanism provides new possibilities for Baptists and for Pentecostals and other kinds of evangelicals who are looking more for the objective, not just the subjective that I just was describing, and who are looking for more connection to the historic ancient church. Because so many evangelicals are just focused on the church of the here and now. Unlike the great theological and church founders of evangelicalism, John Wesley and John Andrews in the 18th century, who put far more emphasis on sacraments and the objective historic church than, than, not, maybe not most, but many evangelicals today.

Now, you asked about dangers, Alistair, and I would say the dangers that face Anglicans, and particularly those who have come out of evangelicalism, is an evangelical minimalism, where the gospel is reduced. So an evangelical reductionism, where the gospel is reduced to the minimum. So just believing that Jesus died for my sins and having warm fuzzies in my heart for Jesus, and taking the attitude, if not explicitly, at least implicitly, that doctrine is not important, and church affiliation is not important.

All that matters is what's going on in my feelings, my warm fuzzies for Jesus, my, as it's called, personal relationship with Jesus. Now, look, don't get me wrong, I believe in personal relationship with Jesus. That is in many ways the heart of faith.

But when personal relationship with Jesus is divorced from the historic church, is divorced from the historic creeds and the historic doctrines of the church, then the great danger is liberal Protestantism, because that's historic origin of liberal Protestantism. It started with evangelicals who wanted to, who downplayed doctrine. Their famous slogan was, doctrine divides, but experience unites.

So let's just focus on our experience of Jesus, our warm fuzzies with Jesus, and let's forget about doctrine, especially those harsh ones about blood atonement, or hell. That's, you know, there's too much controversy about those things. Let's just avoid controversy and focus on our experience.

That's the heart of liberal Protestantism, and that's the danger of parts of Anglicanism that are focused entirely on the evangelical experience, and evangelical, recent evangelicalism, not the evangelicalism of John Wesley and John Kennedy, but the evangelicalism of the late 20th century that just focuses on personal experience. And the other danger, I'd say, Alistair, is antinomianism, and we see it all over. And antinomianism, a lot of your listeners who tend to be much better educated, I think, theologically, you know, anti is against, and nomos is law.

So against the law, that is the idea that as long as I have my warm fuzzies with Jesus, it doesn't really matter how I behave, or if I've sinned in this area or that area. You know, after all, if I'm focused on my behavior, that's legalism, and that's not understanding the gospel. The gospel is all about grace, a free gift, and I don't have to worry about how I live.

That's a false way of thinking. That's not a gospel way of thinking. Well, you know, scripture talks an awful lot about how we live, how we live out the gospel.

The second half of all of Paul's epistles are concerned with the living out of the gospel, in our horizontal behavior and relationships with other people. The first half of all of Paul's epistles are more about doctrine, about how God and Christ has come to save us. And so this attitude, it doesn't matter how I live, really is rejecting, you could say, half the New Testament, half of Paul's epistles, and also large sections of the gospel, like the Sermon on the Mount and Matthew 25, where the sheep and the works, the New Testament teaches, salvation by grace through faith, but judgment by works.

So there's also the danger of this antinomianism that comes from gospel minimalism, that reduces the gospel to simply believing in my head that Jesus died for my sins. And in isolation of the truth, the great truth of justification, from the other great doctrines of sanctification and glorification, when the gospel is simply reduced to justification and teaching about sanctification or holiness is regarded as a violation of the gospel. Those are real problems and real dangers that Anglicans are not immune to, particularly those who have come out of minimalist evangelicalism that I just described.

The book is an incredibly stimulating conversation. I really highly recommend it. What areas of convergence or divergence, consensus and discovery did you think characterized the conversation? Do you think that there were particular issues and areas that arose through the conversation that you felt were areas of common concern? And what encouragement and hope did you draw from the larger project? Well, I'll try to be more brief in my answer.

Convergence, every author in the book in this conversation, and this did start with a conference at Beeson Divinity School back in 2018. So it truly was an oral conversation, both during the talks and responsive to the talks and the endless conversation going on in the Beeson Chapel and at restaurants, cafeterias and hotels. So there was convergence of all of us on the presenting Orthodox issue of our day, which is marriage, etc.

There was divergence, as we've already mentioned and you mentioned, Alistair, between those who are pessimistic about the aim of the future and those who are optimistic about the aim of the future. Now, the vast majority of us at the conference in the book are optimists, are optimistic about the aim of the future. Now, there was an emerging consensus, not unanimity, but large-scale consensus on what many of the authors in the book called reformed Catholicism.

So profiting from the teaching of the reformers in the 16th century, but grounded in the great Catholic life, not just teachings, not just doctrines, but sacramental life, church life, like the undivided church of the First Catholic. Concern, you know, it's never mentioned in the book, but some critics and some reviews and others have mentioned to me that

the book doesn't deal with a difficult issue, and that is ministry, women's ordination. Maybe it's a weakness of the book, I don't know.

But that is a concern for Anglicans on both sides of the question. Can we agree on this? If we can't, how do we disagree? What happens with the future of Anglicanism, Orthodox Anglicanism, if we continue to disagree on women's ordination? Encouragement and hope. I'd say great encouragement and hope.

Anglicanism is being recognized now, in the 21st century, as non-colonialist. I mean, there were many charges in the 20th century, particularly because it was so England-focused, that this was a colonialist religion. Well, now that the vast majority of Anglicans are in the Global South, and that leaders from the Global South are emerging, as we see right here in this book, some wonderful essays by leaders in the Global South, that worldwide Anglicanism can no longer be truthfully said to be a colonialist movement, if it ever was.

And, you know, maybe it was. And that also, I think, we can say now, and this provides hope for the future, that Orthodox Anglicanism gives us a via media, a middle way between Roman Catholicism on the right, and say, various kinds of Puritanism on the left. That it is a beautiful Christian life, that is already showing strength to the persecution, particularly in the Global South.

And that shows a way forward that highlights the beauty of God in ways that other Christian churches don't. And beauty is what the 21st century, I think, particularly resonates with. We've heard much in the last 10 years about the nuns, N-O-N-E-S, those who tell posters that they have no religion.

But we found also, through sociological survey, that they are drawn to beauty. And when we talk about the beauty of God, through Anglican worship, many of these nuns are being drawn to Anglican churches. Thank you very much for joining me.

It's been a delight to discuss this book, and also the subject of the future of Orthodox Anglicanism, with which many of us have a deep concern. The book in question is *The Future of Orthodox Anglicanism*. It's available from Crossway's website, and also from other places where you can get books online.

I'll leave links below in the show notes. God bless, and thank you very much for listening.