YR EGLWYS YNG NGHYMRU : THE CHURCH IN WALES

MAINC YR ESGOBION : THE BENCH OF BISHOPS

*AMODAU GORCHWYL : TERMS OF REFERENCE*

**Theological Introduction**

Anglican Churches use the brief phrase “Episcopally led, and synodically governed” to explain their ecclesiology. The truth of this aphorism has been widely critiqued, but no simple formula has yet commanded sufficient respect to replace it. The phrase makes two fundamental ecclesiological points – that Anglican Churches are committed to synodical working at all levels of their lives, and to the essential place of bishops within that framework – “the historic episcopate locally adapted” as the Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral defines it.

The place of bishops in the Church is therefore considered an essential element in the governance of the Church in Wales, and, in common with other episcopally ordered Churches in the apostolic succession (Catholic, Orthodox, Anglican), as part of God’s will for the ordering of the Church, although theological opinions vary as to whether this is of the “esse”, the “bene esse” or the “plene esse”[[1]](#footnote-1).

The essential element of the office and work of a bishop is the “oversight” of the Church, the “episcope”, although the most recent scholarship tends to locate this as a “trans-local” leadership. As such episcopal ministry is the successor to the apostolic ministry – “the care of all the Churches” (2 Cor. 11.28) – now rooted in a locality, but representing the universal to the local and the local to the universal. As the first generation of the apostles died out, so the ministry became rooted rather than peripatetic (cf Didache Chapter 11[[2]](#footnote-2)). As the World Council of Churches Document “Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry” explains it, episcope has three facets – personal, collegial and communal; *personal*, oversight is vested in a person; *collegial*, it is exercised in fellowship with other bishops; *communal*, it is rooted in a particular place or set of communities.

This is not a type of regional management, however. The 1920 Lambeth Conference describes the episcopal ministry as “a ministry acknowledged by every part of the Church as possessing not only the inward call of the Spirit, but also the commission of Christ and the authority of the whole body”.

From the earliest days it became common for the bishops of a region to consult together in “synod” (literally, Greek for “walking together”) to ensure that the fullness of Communion was promoted between the individual local Churches, each led by their own bishop. In other words, the trans-local ministry of the apostles became embedded in the conciliar process. Synods also became essential to maintain the harmony of the life of the Churches, ensuring that bishops shared their ministries, accepted collective responsibility for decisions taken and were accountable to each other.

Anglicanism also respects the whole body of the Church, ordained in three orders and the laity, so that they are given a place in the governance of the Church alongside the bishops. The 1920 Lambeth Conference again: “we greatly desire that the office of a bishop should be everywhere exercised in a representative and constitutional manner”.

In 1920 the Church in Wales had to organise itself post-disestablishment. Its key elements were decided at the Constitutional Convention of 1917. The Archbishop of Canterbury was requested to constitute the four dioceses as a single Province of the Anglican Communion, which he did – the day before disestablishment took effect. In the view of CHH Green (in turn Bishop of Monmouth, Bishop of Bangor and Archbishop of Wales), the bishops agreed to be governed together as a Province and to acknowledge the Governing Body as the supreme legislative body of the Church in Wales. However, they were given a significant place and role in it – the Order of Bishops were to be solely responsible for introducing bills relating to Faith and Order, and were given a veto over any legislation in the Governing Body (not exclusively, but significantly).

**Terms of reference for the Bench of Bishops**

Membership

The Bench of bishops comprises the six diocesan bishops, one of whom serves as archbishop. Any assistant bishops appointed under procedure set out in section 15 of part 3 of Chapter V of the constitution may be invited to attend all Bench meetings. Where they are appointed in the see held by the Archbishop, they may represent the diocese served by the archbishop in any deliberation at Bench meetings.

Roles and Responsibilities

* To be the Provincial Synod of the Church in Wales and as a community of leaders, co-ordinating the ministry of the six dioceses ensuring their unity and communion.
* To be guardians of the faith and order of the Church in Wales; to ensure its fidelity to the faith of the Church in Wales as it has been received[[3]](#footnote-3), and to nurture its communion with the universal Church of Christ, firstly, with the other Churches of the Anglican Communion, and then the wider churches who are ecumenical partners.
* To generate and hold the vision and direction of the Church in Wales in collaboration with the Governing Body, its Standing Committee and the trustees of the Representative Body.
* To listen carefully to a range of voices within and without the Church in Wales and discern what the Spirit is saying to the Church.
* To oversee the mission of the Church in Wales and all matters pertaining to it, exercised particularly through a pattern of portfolios and specialisms.
* To be a prophetic voice in Welsh society.
* To enable licensed ministries, ordained and lay, to flourish in the Church in Wales.
* To set the strategic direction for the St Padarn’s Institute and ensure that mechanisms are in place for its governance and scrutiny of quality and standards
* To ensure the accountability of the bishops to each other and to the Governing Body by developing a culture of mutual consultation and trust, and by upholding the values of the Church in Wales.
* To meet regularly for prayer, Bible study, fellowship, vision building, and to conduct business.

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**Cyflwyniad Diwinyddol**

Mae Eglwysi Anglicanaidd yn defnyddio’r cymal cryno “eu harwain yn esgobol, a’u llywodraethu’n synodegol” i esbonio eu heglwyseg. Mae gwirionedd y wireb hon wedi’i beirniadu’n eang, ond nid oes unrhyw fformiwla syml wedi ennyn digon o barch i’w disodli eto. Mae’r cymal yn gwneud dau bwynt eglwysegol sylfaenol – bod Eglwysi Anglicanaidd wedi ymrwymo i weithio’n synodegol ar bob lefel o’u bywydau, ac i le hanfodol esgobion o fewn y fframwaith hwnnw – “yr esgobaeth hanesyddol a fabwysiadwyd yn lleol” fel mae Datganiad Pedrochrog Chicago-Lambeth yn ei ddiffinio.

Mae lle esgobion yn yr Eglwys felly’n cael ei ystyried yn elfen hanfodol yn nhrefniadau llywodraethu’r Eglwys yng Nghymru, ac, yn gyson ag Eglwysi eraill â threfn esgobol, yn yr olyniaeth apostolaidd (Catholig, Uniongred, Anglicanaidd), fel rhan o ewyllys Dduw ar gyfer trefn yr Eglwys, er bod safbwyntiau diwinyddol yn amrywio ynghylch a yw hyn yn “esse”, “ben essee” neu’n “plene esse”[[4]](#footnote-4).

Elfen allweddol o swydd a gwaith esgob yw “goruchwylio’r” Eglwys, yr “esgobaeth”, er bod yr ysgolheictod diweddaraf yn dueddol o leoli hyn fel arweiniad “traws-leol”. O ganlyniad, gweinidogaeth esgobol yw olynydd y weinidogaeth apostolaidd – “gofal dros yr holl eglwysi” (2 Cor. 11.28) – sydd wedi’i wreiddio mewn ardal yn awr, ond yn cynrychioli’r hollfyd i’r lleol a’r lleol i’r hollfyd. Wrth i’r genhedlaeth gyntaf o apostolion farw, datblygodd y weinidogaeth i fod yn gysylltiedig â mannau penodol yn hytrach na bod yn deithiol (cf Didache Pennod 11[[5]](#footnote-5)). Fel y mae dogfen “Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry” Cyngor Eglwysi’r Byd yn ei esbonio, mae gan esgobaeth dair gwedd – personol, colegol a chymunedol; *personol*, mae goruchwyliaeth yn cael ei breinio mewn person; *colegol*, mae’n cael ei gweithredu mewn cymdeithas ag esgobion eraill; *cymunedol*, mae wedi’i gwreiddio mewn lle penodol neu gasgliad o gymunedau.

Nid ffurf ar reolaeth ranbarthol yw hyn, fodd bynnag. Mae Cynhadledd Lambeth 1920 yn disgrifio’r weinidogaeth esgobol fel gweinidogaeth a gydnabyddir gan bob rhan o’r Eglwys fel un sy’n meddu nid yn unig ar alwad fewnol yr Ysbryd, ond hefyd comisiwn Crist ac awdurdod y corff cyfan.

O’r dyddiau cynharaf daeth yn arferol i esgobion rhanbarth ymgynghori â’i gilydd mewn “synod” (yr ystyr lythrennol yn iaith Groeg yw “cydgerdded”) i sicrhau bod llawnder y Cymundeb yn cael ei hyrwyddo rhwng yr Eglwysi lleol unigol, pob un yn cael ei harwain gan ei hesgob ei hun. Mewn geiriau eraill, daeth gweinidogaeth draws-leol yr apostolion yn rhan annatod o’r broses gynghoraidd. Daeth synodau’n hanfodol hefyd i gynnal bywyd cytûn yn yr

Eglwysi, gan sicrhau bod esgobion yn rhannu eu gweinidogaethau, yn derbyn cyfrifoldeb ar y cyd am benderfyniadau a wnaed ac yn atebol i’w gilydd.

Mae Anglicaniaeth yn parchu corff cyfan yr Eglwys hefyd, wedi’u hordeinio mewn tair urdd a’r lleygwyr, fel eu bod yn cael lle yng ngwaith llywodraethu’r Eglwys ochr yn ochr â’r esgobion. Dywed Cynhadledd Lambeth 1920 eu bod yn awyddus iawn i swydd esgob gael ei chyflawni ym mhobman mewn modd cynrychioladol a chyfansoddiadol.

Ym 1920, roedd yn rhaid i’r Eglwys yng Nghymru drefnu ei hun ar ôl datgysylltu. Penderfynwyd ar ei helfennau allweddol yng Nghonfensiwn Cyfansoddiadol 1917. Gofynnwyd i Archesgob Caergaint greu’r pedair esgobaeth fel un Dalaith o Gymundeb Anglicanaidd, ac fe wnaeth hynny – y diwrnod cyn i’r datgysylltu ddod i rym. Ym marn CHH Green (a fu’n Esgob Mynwy, Esgob Bangor ac Archesgob Cymru yn ei dro), cytunodd yr esgobion i gael eu llywodraethu gyda’i gilydd fel Talaith ac i gydnabod y Corff Llywodraethol fel prif gorff deddfwriaethol yr Eglwys yng Nghymru. Fodd bynnag, cawsant le a rôl sylweddol ynddo – roedd Urdd yr Esgobion i fod yn gwbl gyfrifol am gyflwyno biliau yn ymwneud â Ffydd a Threfn, ac fe gawsant bleidleisiau atal dros unrhyw ddeddfwriaeth yn y Corff Llywodraethol (nid yn gyfan gwbl, ond yn sylweddol).

**Cylch gorchwyl Mainc yr Esgobion**

Aelodaeth

Mae Mainc yr Esgobion yn cynnwys y chwe esgob esgobaethol, un ohonynt yn gwasanaethu fel archesgob. Gall unrhyw esgob cynorthwyol a benodir o dan weithdrefn a nodir yn adran 15 o ran 3 o Bennod V y cyfansoddiad gael gwahoddiad i fynychu holl gyfarfodydd y Fainc. Pan gânt eu penodi yn yr esgobaeth a ddelir gan yr Archesgob, gallant gynrychioli’r esgobaeth a wasanaethir gan yr archesgob mewn unrhyw drafodaeth yng nghyfarfodydd y Fainc.

Rolau a Chyfrifoldebau

* I fod yn Synod Taleithiol yr Eglwys yng Nghymru ac fel cymuned o arweinwyr, cydgysylltu gweinidogaeth y chwe esgobaeth gan sicrhau eu hundod a chymundeb.
* I fod yn geidwaid ffydd a threfn yr Eglwys yng Nghymru; i sicrhau ei ffyddlondeb i ffydd yr Eglwys yng Nghymru fel y’i derbyniwyd[[6]](#footnote-6), a meithrin ei chymundeb ag Eglwys Crist yn fyd-eang, yn gyntaf, gydag Eglwysi eraill y Cymundeb Anglicanaidd, yna eglwysi ehangach sy’n bartneriaid eciwmenaidd.
* Creu a chynnal gweledigaeth a chyfeiriad yr Eglwys yng Nghymru mewn cydweithrediad â’r Corff Llywodraethol, ei Phwyllgor Sefydlog ac ymddiriedolwyr Corff y Cynrychiolwyr.
* Gwrando’n ofalus ar amrywiaeth o leisiau o fewn a’r tu allan i’r Eglwys yng Nghymru a dirnad beth mae’r Ysbryd yn ei ddweud wrth yr Eglwys.
* Goruchwylio cenhadaeth yr Eglwys yng Nghymru a’r holl faterion sy’n berthnasol iddi, wedi’u cyflawni’n benodol drwy batrwm o bortffolios ac arbenigeddau.
* Bod yn llais proffwydol yng nghymdeithas Cymru.
* Galluogi gweinidogaethau trwyddedig, ordeiniedig a lleyg, i ffynnu yn yr Eglwys yng Nghymru.
* Pennu cyfeiriad strategol Athrofa Padarn Sant a sicrhau bod mecanweithiau ar waith i lywodraethu’r Athrofa a chraffu ar ansawdd a safonau.
* Sicrhau atebolrwydd esgobion i’w gilydd ac i’r Corff Llywodraethol drwy ddatblygu diwylliant o gydymgynghori a chydymddiriedaeth, a thrwy gynnal gwerthoedd yr Eglwys yng Nghymru.
* Cyfarfod yn rheolaidd i weddïo, astudio’r Beibl, cymdeithas, creu gweledigaeth, a chyflawni busnes.

1. For Roman Catholics and Orthodox, the historic episcopate is of the “esse” of the Church, i.e. the Church can only exist in the form constituted by Christ where there are bishops in the apostolic succession. Protestant theology is less wedded to this doctrine, although episcopacy clearly has a vital place in Anglicanism. Theologians have therefore talked about the place of episcopacy as being of the “bene esse” (for the good functioning of the Church), or more recently, of the “plene esse” (for the fullness of what God intends for the governance of his Church.) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. The Didache (literally “The Teaching”) is a collection of principles for the governance of the early Christian Church variously dated to between the first and second centuries, i.e. the post-apostolic period. It is one of only a few documents that reflect the earliest period of the Church in the years following the composition of the New Testament. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Prefatory Note to Volume I of the Constitution of the Church in Wales [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. I’r Eglwys Gatholig a’r Eglwys Uniongred, mae’r esgobaeth hanesyddol yn “esse” yr Eglwys, h.y. dim ond pan geir esgobion yn yr olyniaeth apostolaidd y gall Eglwys fodoli ar y ffurf a grewyd gan Grist. Mae diwinyddiaeth Brotestanaidd yn llai ynghlwm wrth yr athrawiaeth hon, er ei bod yn amlwg bod gan esgobyddiaeth le allweddol mewn Anglicaniaeth. Mae diwinyddwyr, felly, wedi siarad am le esgobyddiaeth fel “bene esse” (er gweithrediad da yr Eglwys), neu’n fwy diweddar, fel “plene esse” (er cyflawnder yr hyn mae Duw yn ei fwriadu ar gyfer llywodraethu ei Eglwys). [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Y Didache (sef “Y Ddysgeidiaeth” yn llythrennol) yw casgliad o egwyddorion ar gyfer llywodraethu’r Eglwys Gristnogol gynnar, sydd â dyddiadau amrywiol rhwng y ganrif gyntaf a’r ail ganrif, h.y. y cyfnod ôl-apostolaidd. Mae’n un o ychydig ddogfennau sy’n adlewyrchu’r cyfnod cynharaf yn yr Eglwys yn y blynyddoedd yn dilyn ysgrifennu’r Testament Newydd.

   . [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Nodyn Rhagarweiniol i Gyfrol I o Gyfansoddiad yr Eglwys yng Nghymru [↑](#footnote-ref-6)