is saying is vitally important. What is required is for other people to explore and develop this agenda. Any volunteers?

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The book title will invite many to invest in this collection of reflections on one of the most controversial issues in current Christianity: how does the Church, divided as it is, discern where the Spirit is leading it, and how does it prevent further division in the midst of change? The essays in this volume come from two symposia held at St. George’s House, Windsor Castle, under the auspices of the Centre for the Study of the Christian Church, whose Director, Paul Avis, is also the editor of the volume. They considered the presenting issue of the Episcopal Ministry Act of the General Synod of the Church of England, 1993, which made provision for extended episcopal oversight for those who could not accept the ordination of women to the priesthood. All the contributors support, to various degrees, this Act. With one exception, they are all in positions of leadership in the Church of England.

This context inevitably limits the scope of the very broad topic which is the title of the volume. ‘Seeking the truth of change in the church’ means primarily ‘the Church of England living with itself and others in the aftermath of its own decisions’. Moreover, since there is no one who opposes the Act, or who gives a full-blown defence of the ordination of women (although several of the authors make it clear that they are in favour of it), all the many voices needed as the Church seeks the truth of change are not here. Nevertheless, the contributors take care to universalize much of the thought that has gone into this one church’s situation. All of the authors are ecumenists, and so they bring to the consideration of an internal matter their experience of dialogue in the wider Christian scene, and their study of the Church’s history.

Writing as someone not of the Church of England, I would have found it helpful if the book had begun with the facts of the presenting issue, as Mary Tanner does admirably and thoroughly in the fourth chapter by recounting the story of the ordination of women to the priesthood in England and the subsequent Act of Synod. Instead, the book begins with the perspective of the one non-Anglican, William
Rusch, who briefly and deftly updates his critical work on reception (W. G. Rusch, *Reception: An Ecumenical Opportunity* [Philadelphia: Fortress/Lutheran World Federation], 1988). Rusch’s essay, ‘The Landscape of Reception’, deserves attention in ecumenical circles as providing a quick history of the evolution of the concept of reception. Rusch draws the conclusion that ‘ecumenical reception has been, and will be in the future, possible only on the basis of an effective concept of *differentiated consensus*’, and he raises the question as to whether this insight, which arose from bilateral ecumenical dialogues, can be applied to internal realities of churches. It would seem that most of the rest of the book is an affirmation that that is in fact the best-case scenario when potentially church-dividing issues arise, while begging the question as to what degree of consensus actually exists in the Church of England.

The editor, Paul Avis, has two contributions in addition to the preface. In ‘Reception: Towards an Anglican Understanding’, he posits an Anglican approach to reception that is ‘marked by gradualness, mutuality, active discernment, responsibility, unpredictability and the real possibility of non-reception’ – as contrasted with what he portrays somewhat polemically as a hierarchical, top-down process with Roman Catholicism. He helpfully points out that reception is ‘related both to the demands of apostolic continuity and to the inculturation of the faith’, a theme expanded upon by Bishop John Hind in his article ‘Reception and Communion’.

Hind’s work is an affirmation that a divided church needs checks and balances in the discernment process about the legitimacy of the development of doctrine. ‘These checks and balances include the need to distinguish between, on the one hand, the faith which is necessary for salvation, and on the other, either the formulae through which this faith is expressed or matters which may safely be left to local or individual judgement.’ This is the heart of the matter, indeed. Hind argues that such discernment requires communion and a commitment to a shared life, even when, or perhaps more especially when, there is disagreement.

Robert Hannaford’s article with the far-reaching title ‘Communion and the Kingdom of God’ in fact makes a good sweep through the topics of communion ecclesiology, *koinonia*, sacramentality, and the church as penultimate community living in both promise and fulfilment, while debunking two sets of polarities: visible/invisible church myth and the ontological/mission understanding of communion. The section on *koinonia* makes a good introduction to the recent treatment of the theme. His conclusion, that the Act of Synod ‘is in a small way an action in the service of the ultimate state of humanity’, may be a little grander than is warranted, but his point is clear: the struggle to maintain unity in the midst of disagreement is a noble one, and not a mere political compromise.

Bishops Christopher Hill and Paul Richardson both begin with the development of the doctrine and process of reception, though in treating the modern expressions of it Hill draws more on Anglican sources (the various Eames Commissions and