The discussion of Anglican ecclesiology usually concentrates on particular periods of the Church of England's history. This thesis proceeds from the standpoint of the Anglican Communion. When Anglicans found themselves to be outside the bounds of the English establishment, they were forced to make a response to their new social, political and religious environment. They did this by founding Churches upon the basis of voluntary compacts and organising them under constitutional synods. This thesis argues first that the new challenges led to a changed perspective on received Anglican doctrine and liturgies, episcopal government and the Church's relationship to the State, and secondly, that in the light of this experience Anglicans have transformed the definition of their own communion and the claims made for the whole Anglican theological tradition. It is in this second area that the Lambeth Conferences are important. By reference to the Conferences' discussion of Christian unity and Anglican organization (often utilising previously unexamined records) the thesis examines the debates over Anglican doctrine, authority, organization and mission. Successive expositions of the Lambeth Quadrilateral form one line of investigation together with a recognition of the ambiguous position of the English reformation formularies in the Anglican Communion. Another approach is taken through the developing conviction that Anglicanism consists of a fellowship of "national Churches". With these debates underlying questions of authority, comprehensiveness, conciliarity and ministry are also considered within the framework of gathering Anglican self-consciousness. A number of such elements of theory are finally tested by their capacity to assist Anglicanism in its adaptation to changing theological, ecumenical and social pressures. The study concludes that, in the Lambeth Conference documents, the Anglican Communion is able to present a distinct, though not unique, and by no means final contribution to Anglican and ecumenical theology.