

Report on the Grounds for Future Relations between the Church of Sweden and the Episcopal Church

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Report on the Grounds for Future Relations between the Church of Sweden and the Episcopal Church

1. Introduction

This document is a report which aims to present grounds for closer relations between the Church of Sweden and the Episcopal Church. The proposal is not that a new ecumenical agreement on communion between these two churches be written, such as has been the case between a number of Lutheran and Anglican churches. Both the present churches are party to such agreements. Rather this document intends to show that there are historical and contemporary reasons for claiming that the two churches have in practice lived in fellowship with each other at various times, and therefore can be understood to do so today. This is a fact that we wish to acknowledge and celebrate, as the basis for closer cooperation where suitable in the future.

The document will first describe the historical contacts and various reasons that are the background to this initiative, including a description of the ecumenical antecedents. This will lead on to a theological and ecclesiological rationale for communion between us. This will not be worked out anew but will be based on reasons already accepted by our churches in other ecumenical agreements. Thereafter each church will give a brief self-presentation, sufficient to make members of the other church acquainted with its history, structures, life and current situation. Finally, some ideas will be given for areas in which we think fruitful cooperation could be expected in the future.

2. Historical and Contemporary Reasons for Closer Relations

The first contacts between the Church of Sweden and the Episcopal Church occurred in the colonial period in the 18th century in the areas of Delaware, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania. At that time there was Eucharistic sharing between Episcopal and Swedish congregations, and on occasion Swedish priests served in Episcopal churches without re-ordination (and vice versa), which presupposed recognition of each other as belonging to the Church of Christ. Eventually, as contacts between the Swedish congregations and the home church diminished for a variety of reasons, and priests were no longer sent to America, a number of these congregations were incorporated into the Episcopal Church. In addition to the practical problem of contact, a variety of reasons has been given for this development: assimilation of Swedes to the English language, a mutual more “Catholic” self-understanding, Erastian influences with both churches considered “national”

churches authorized by their home state authorities, although links were “disconnected” after the colonial period, obviously for different reasons in the respective cases.

In the second part of the nineteenth century a second phase of contacts took place, this time due to a desire in the Episcopal Church to gather immigrant communities coming from churches with episcopal traditions in a non-Roman “catholic family”. This was probably due to ecumenical contacts amongst others with the Orthodox tradition (Russo-Greek Committee of 1862) and involvement in the development of the Old Catholic Churches in 1870’s. New waves of Swedish immigration and the formation of Swedish congregations in urban areas called forth various reactions. Bishop Henry Whitehouse of Illinois had a Swedish-speaking congregation in his diocese and received Swedish clergy without re-ordination. He also took part in the consecration of the English church in Sweden. In 1880’s and 1890’s the Episcopal Church established a Swedish mission (as well as German and Italian) and eventually appointed a General Missionary to head the Swedish work which at its height had 27 clergy serving. However, the Augustana Synod opposed any normalization of the relationship between the Episcopal Church and the Church of Sweden. In the 1890’s efforts were instigated by General Convention to investigate the episcopal character of the Church of Sweden, but the committee presented an initial negative report which it later admitted was badly done. So the question of the theological basis for a relation between the Episcopal Church and the Church of Sweden was referred to the general treatment of the issue of churches with the historic episcopate, against the background of the rejection of Anglican orders by the Roman Catholic Church in *Apostolicae curae* 1896, at the Lambeth Conferences in 1888, 1897 and 1908. This eventually resulted in the acceptance of intercommunion between the Church of England and the Church of Sweden in 1922.¹

In the late twentieth century there was a variety of contacts between the churches. Presiding Bishop Edmond Browning visited Uppsala in December 1990 with presiding bishop Herbert Chilstrom of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (ELCA) as part of a trip to mark the importance of the ongoing dialogue between their churches and to learn about the similar ecumenical process in Northern Europe. They took part in a service in the cathedral, at which Browning led the act of confession and Chilstrom preached. Bishop Barbara Harris, the first woman bishop in the Episcopal Church, took part in October 1997 in the consecration of Christina Odenberg, the first woman bishop in Sweden. As a part of courses in sacramental theology (Sacramental Presence in a Changing World) run by the Peter Fjellstedt Foundation in Uppsala, study visits in America were arranged involving both ELCA and Episcopal institutions, and Episcopal theologians taught on these courses as well as on preparatory courses for working in Anglican churches within the Porvoo Communion. This led to representatives of the board of the foundation writing to the archbishop of Uppsala in August 2000 asking that initiatives be taken to enter into fellowship with the Episcopal Church, bearing in mind the recent agreement on communion between it and ELCA and the positive co-operation the foundation had experienced.

Another sphere in which the two churches have met and cooperated is in their respective parishes abroad in Europe. This was especially constructive in Brussels and it was bishop Pierre Whalon of

¹ For the historical information of the first two paragraphs see Lyttkens, Carl Henrik, *The Growth of Swedish-Anglican Intercommunion between 1833 and 1922*, Gleerups förlag, Lund 1970, chapters 2 and 3.

the convocation of Europe, who brought the resolution to the Episcopal convention of 2009 requesting that the possibility of full communion be explored. This led to this current dialogue.

In addition to contacts, cooperation and conversations in history and today one can detect similarities in the ways the two churches have understood and attempted to encounter and respond to the challenges of the contemporary world. They have responded to developments in the relations and roles of men and women in family, society and the church, and therefore amongst other things acknowledge the ministry of women in diaconate, priesthood and episcopate. They attempt to express the Gospel and carry out the mission of the church in changed ideological and sociological circumstances characterized amongst other things by secularization, globalization, multiculturalism and multi-religiosity, although in not altogether identical configurations. They have responded to ethical and socio-ethical questions in a situation of changing values in varying, but at times similar ways, and so both have adopted an accepting attitude towards and concrete measures for same-sex relations. All of this could be reason to develop our fellowship, challenging and supporting each other in our tasks.

Finally, a further reason for acknowledging and developing our fellowship is the ecumenical commitment of both churches. Anglican churches and the Church of Sweden have often in modern times described themselves as “bridge-building churches”, combining traditions which have at times been considered opposites. They have taken an active part in the contemporary ecumenical movement since its beginnings in the early 20th century, both multilaterally through various ecumenical organizations, and bilaterally by maintaining relations with particular churches.

Of special relevance in this respect is the involvement of the Episcopal Church and the Church of Sweden in Anglican – Lutheran relations in other contexts. After the agreement on intercommunion between the Church of England and the Church of Sweden in 1922, mutual participation in bishops’ consecrations followed. From the 1980’s conversations were then carried on in a wider context between the Anglican churches of the British Isles and the Nordic and Baltic Lutheran churches, which eventually led to the Porvoo Agreement on communion in 1992. An episcopal structure was recognized as necessary for this close relationship, and continuous historic succession was seen as an important sign of apostolicity. If, however, other important factors prevailed, a break in succession could be accepted and restored. Since the signing of the agreement many dioceses and parishes have formed links with each other, and clergy from one church have served in another.

Three series of dialogues between TEC and ELCA (and its predecessor bodies) spanning two decades resulted in a *Concordat of Agreement* which in the event was not mutually satisfactory. Further consultation produced the document *Called to Common Mission (CCM)*. CCM was adopted by both churches in 2000 and full communion between them has existed from that time.

The Episcopal Church and the Church of Sweden hosted a Forum on Climate Change in Washington DC in May 2013, which included speakers from both countries, webinars and live streaming and lobbying on Capitol Hill.

There is a concordat between the Church of Sweden and the Philippine Independent Church since 1995. The Church of Sweden has supported various projects and sent teachers to its seminaries.

Since 2005 there has also been a dialogue between the Old Catholic Churches of the Union of Utrecht which resulted in 2013 in a document proposing an agreement on full communion. This proposal will have to be examined by the general synod of the Church of Sweden and the national synods of the member churches of the union. A decision on the part of the Church of Sweden can probably be expected in 2015.

The Episcopal Church has been in full communion with the Iglesia Filipina Independiente (Philippine Independent Church or IFI) since 1961. The Concordat of Full Communion was renewed in 1985 and again in 2006.

In 1934, the Episcopal Church entered full communion with Old Catholic Churches in communion with the See of Utrecht through ratification of the Bonn Agreement of 1931.

The fact that each of our churches thus lives in formal agreements of communion with several other churches with which the other also has fellowship gives the deepening of our relationship an important ecumenical dimension. A question much discussed in ecumenical theology is that of transitivity, i.e. whether an agreement between two churches can be applied to third parties with which one of them has a relationship. The normal answer is that this cannot for good reasons automatically be the case. By manifesting our communion we would overcome the problem of transitivity in relation to several of the above-mentioned churches.

3. Theological and Ecclesiological Bases of Communion

Both the Episcopal Church and the Church of Sweden have entered into agreements on communion with other churches of each other's tradition. Since there are in these previous texts Anglican – Lutheran theological precedents for establishing communion, this current document does not need to explore the theological rationale anew and formulate its own basis but can adopt the conclusions common to these previous processes. The immediate sources for this are of course the Porvoo Common Statement 1992 and the revision of the Concordat of Agreement, Called to Common Mission 2000. The understanding of communion itself behind these agreements can be traced to the explication of the Cold Ash Report of the Anglican – Lutheran Joint Working Group from 1983. The content of the agreement in faith on which both the Porvoo Statement and the Concordat base the possibility of communion originates in the Niagara Report 1987.² Although it focuses on the question of *episcopé* this latter report summarizes the broader theological unity which is a presupposition for attempting to reconcile variations in the understanding of the significance of the historic episcopate in and between the two traditions. Bearing in mind some small variations in the order and formulation of what is variously termed "The truths we share",³

² All three documents have been collected and are easily accessible in *Anglican-Lutheran Agreements. Regional and International Agreements 1972-2002*, LWF Documentation, Geneva 2004.

³ Niagara Report §§ 60-80.

“What we agree in faith”,⁴ “Agreement in the Doctrine of the Faith”,⁵ the theological basis can for present purposes be summarized in the following points:

- We accept the canonical scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the source and authority of the Christian faith.
- We accept the Niceno-Constantinopolitan and the Apostles’ creeds, and the Christological and Trinitarian doctrines of the early church, which have been interpreted and confirmed in our respective confessional documents.
- We wish to proclaim the Gospel of love and redemption in Jesus Christ. We share a common understanding of God’s justification of human beings which accounts and makes them righteous by grace through faith for the merits of Jesus Christ.
- We believe that the church is not created by the intention of individuals to share their faith with each other, but constituted and kept faithful by God’s saving action in word and sacrament, as a sign and instrument of the salvation of humanity, of the kingdom of God and of renewal of creation.
- We believe that baptism is the sacramental act which unites humans with the death and resurrection of Christ, giving new life and entry into the fellowship of the church as the Body of Christ.
- We believe that in the Eucharist the body and blood of Christ are truly present under the forms of bread and wine, and are received in faith for the forgiveness of sins and all other benefits of the salvific act of Christ
- We recognize in each other’s traditions similar orders of worship and sacraments, and that salvation is celebrated and faith is expressed in liturgical worship in the life of the church.
- We believe that all members of the church are called through baptism to share in a variety of ways in the context of their own lives in the mission to spread the Gospel. We understand that the role of the ordained ministry of word and sacrament, which is a gift of God, is to serve the ministry of the whole church.
- We believe that the ministry of pastoral oversight exercised in personal, collegial and communal ways is a witness to and safeguard of the unity and apostolicity of the church. The historic office of bishop is exercised in our churches as a sign of our commitment to this unity and apostolicity.
- We share in the hope of the final consummation which will be the kingdom of God in its fullness. This eschatological dimension in the faith and life of the church challenges us to work in the present for justice, peace and the integrity of creation as pre-formations of the kingdom.

⁴ Porvoo Common Statement § 32.

⁵ Called to Common Mission §§ 4-5.

Based on these theological presuppositions we can acknowledge each other as true churches of Christ in which the Gospel is authentically preached and the sacraments rightly administered,⁶ belonging to the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church⁷ through the ages.

What is meant by the fellowship which is possible on the basis of this fundamental theological agreement? The ecclesiological concept of communion is used in ecumenical theology to connote both the basic understanding of the church as such and the relationships possible between different ecclesial bodies in the configuring of renewed unity after separation. The fellowship between the Episcopal Church and the Church of Sweden which we now wish to acknowledge and celebrate will be seen as a realizing of communion in the sense in which this was defined by the report of the Anglican – Lutheran Joint Working Group from Cold Ash,⁸ which is also referred to in the Concordat of Agreement.⁹

Full communion is understood as a relationship between two distinct churches, in which they are interdependent, but autonomous whilst recognizing the catholicity and apostolicity of the other, and believing the other to hold the essentials of the Christian faith. It does not mean that each body is committed to accepting every feature of the other's tradition. Neither church seeks to remake the other in its own image, but each is open to the gifts of the other as they seek to be faithful to Christ and his mission. This implies certain things:

- Members of the one church can receive the sacraments of the other.
- Bishops of the one church may take part in the consecration of bishops of the other.
- Bishops, priests and deacons of the one church may be invited to minister in congregations of the other.
- There should be organs of consultation and communication, including episcopal collegiality, to express and strengthen the fellowship and enable common witness, life and service.¹⁰

4. Suggestions for Concrete Ways of Cooperating

Anglican and Lutheran churches have now some experience of living and working together in communion. Reflecting on the realities of for example Porvoo and Called to Common Mission, the following points might be considered in creating constructive conditions for concrete practice in our fellowship.

- It has proved important that there should be encounters and relationships at parish and diocesan levels, for instance in the form of twinning, and not just between church leaders. Otherwise there is a risk that communion will remain purely theoretical or symbolic.

⁶ Niagara Report § 71; Porvoo Common Statement § 58 a ii; Called to Common Mission § 27.

⁷ Niagara Report § 80; Porvoo Common Statement § 58 a i; Called to Common Mission § 2.

⁸ Cold Ash Report §§ 24-27.

⁹ Called to Common Mission §§ 1-2.

¹⁰ See also Joint Declaration in Porvoo Common Statement § 58 b i-x.

- There is a need to clarify the exact meaning of the sharing of resources if any is proposed. Our churches have different presuppositions and methods of organizing church life and its resources.
- There needs to be an awareness of differing formal decision-making structures and processes of discernment for the feasibility of mutual commitments of communion. When the respective churches are discussing or deciding questions of doctrine or ethics, what does consultation, consensus etc mean in the context of communion? It is easy to use such ideas in ecumenical theory but more complicated in concrete ecclesiological practice. Expectations should be realistic.

The following areas for fruitful cooperation in the future can be identified. This is not an exhaustive list, but possibilities which seem to be realistic at the present time:

- In practical work in parishes of the Episcopal Church's Convocation of Europe and the Church of Sweden Abroad in Europe, where they may share similar challenges as ex-patriot congregations. In this context there may also be occasions when one church's members can find a spiritual home in the other, if there is no parish of their own church in the vicinity.
- In tripartite areas of interest as and when they arise in relation to common partners:
 - ELCA
 - IFI
 - Old Catholics
- In issues of common concern in the strategy and programmatic work of the World Council of Churches
- In specific questions which the two churches prioritize, ie. climate change, peace, gender justice etc. Here joint advocacy in international arenas would be constructive, but also mutual learning and support for each church's involvement in such issues in their own context.

5. Self-presentation of the Church of Sweden

5.1. Medieval Origins (9th – 15th century)

The Church in Sweden originated as a part of the medieval western church. The first recorded missionary presence in Sweden was already in the 9th century. More lasting contacts with Christianity developed during the Viking era of the 10th and 11th centuries. On their travels Swedes encountered both the western and eastern traditions of the church. There was an early Orthodox presence in Sweden, but the decisive missionary influences came from the British Isles, France and Northern Germany and so Christianity took a western form.

At first Sweden was under the jurisdiction of the archbishop of Lund, which at the time was part of Denmark. The selection of Uppsala as the seat of the archbishop in 1164 signified a breakthrough for Christianity in Sweden. The church became a strong indigenous institution, closely linked with the crown and the nobility. Counties had their own laws which reflected considerable regional

independence, even to a certain extent in relation to canon law. There was a high degree of lay responsibility in the local parishes.

5.2. Reformation and Uniformity (16th – 18th century)

From the end of the 14th century the Nordic countries were united, but when the union king, Christian II of Denmark, in 1520 had two bishops executed in Stockholm a movement for national liberation, both from the union and from the pope, began. The leader of the insurrection, Gustav Vasa, was crowned king of Sweden in 1523. The new monarch received ideological support for a break with Rome and for the creation of a national Swedish church from theologians, for example the brothers Olavus and Laurentius Petri, who had studied in Germany. The Swedish reformers were cautious: much of the old structure and order was retained, unless perceived as superstition or false belief. Though most of the episcopal sees were vacant, the historic episcopate was transmitted to a new generation of bishops approved by the king. In 1531 Laurentius Petri was appointed as the first archbishop of Uppsala during the Reformation.

The Reformation brought with it new books and practices. In 1530 it was decided that the mass should be celebrated in the vernacular; the New Testament was published in Swedish in 1526 and the whole Bible in 1541; in 1543/44 a Swedish hymnal and lectionary appeared, and a new church ordinance was finally ratified in 1571. A convocation in Uppsala in 1593 finally and formally decreed that the Church of Sweden had severed its ties with Rome and based its faith on the Bible, the three classic creeds, the Augsburg Confession of 1530 and the Ordinance of 1571.

Church practice and spiritual life continued much the same in the local churches which had been built by the parishioners in 12th-15th century. They were not despoiled by iconoclasm. Church buildings remained relatively unchanged as did their liturgical function. In some areas certain medieval practices and popular religiosity continued into the nineteenth century. The diocesan structures were preserved as was the office of bishop.

Although the Swedish reformation was theologically and liturgically moderate, under the impact of Lutheran Orthodoxy in the 17th century the church took on a more distinctive confessional Lutheran character amidst fierce controversy. The monarch was seen as responsible for enforcing the law of God, as Sweden increasingly became a major power through its role in the religious wars in Europe.

The first church law that codified Reformation practice and theology was adopted in 1686, reflecting the consolidation of Lutheran orthodoxy as it had developed after the Thirty Years War. Lutheran doctrine and catechism were used for creating social cohesion amongst the diverse ethnic and linguistic groups around the Baltic Sea. Religious and social uniformity was promoted and foreigners who for some reason lived in Sweden and who did not subscribe to the Augsburg Confession were obliged to worship in private.

5.3. Challenges to Uniformity (19th – 20th century)

In the 18th and 19th centuries a number of pietistic and revivalist movements challenged Lutheran Orthodoxy. The authorities reacted strongly. In 1726 the so-called “Conventicle Edict” was issued, prohibiting worship in private groups. During the 19th century the parish church with its public Sunday service was still regarded as the natural focus of a predominantly rural life. Some revival

movements remained within the church, such as the Swedish Evangelical Mission. Others left and formed their own congregations joining into “free” denominations. This was a result of tensions with the official church leadership, but there were also theological reasons for splitting the church, such as different understandings of the atonement, adult baptism, lay leadership of the Lord’s Supper, and a “pure” communion table. Freedom of religion gradually increased. In 1784 a public Roman Catholic service was allowed in Stockholm for the first time since the Reformation. The Conventicle Edict was repealed in 1858. From 1860 Swedish citizens could leave the Church of Sweden, as long as they became members of another denomination recognized by the state. It was not until 1951 that full freedom of religion was guaranteed for everyone by law.

At the beginning of 20th century, the Church of Sweden seemed to be losing ground, with the increase of free churches and nascent secularization leading to a decrease in church practice in many parts of the country. However, it soon witnessed a profound renewal of the church. It regained self-confidence and developed through the so-called Young Church Movement (*ungkyrkligheten*) and the idea of a “folk church” (*folkkyrkotanken*), which connected to the development in the political context of the idea of the “folk home” (*folkhem*) as the basis of the welfare system in society.

At the same time international dimensions became significant in the church. It became strongly involved in ecumenical and missionary work. At the universities of Uppsala and Lund, exegetical and systematic theology gained international reputation, and Lund became the centre of a renaissance of Luther studies. There was a growing interest in questions of ecclesiology. Liturgical life started to be affected by contacts with high church movements in other countries.

As Sweden remained outside the World War II, the post-war church was materially well off. But it was affected by increasing secularization and decreasing church attendance. Demography changed, urbanization accelerated, agriculture decreased and industry flourished. Separation between church and state had been on the political agenda for decades, and was discussed in the church throughout the later 20th century. There were structural and financial complications, and varying theological and political groupings influenced the process. In the year 2000 the church finally ceased to be a state church, which in fact meant an adjustment of relations between church and state/society rather than a radical separation.

5.4. Contemporary Situation and Life of the Church

The Swedish constitution obliges the church still to maintain its outreach and serve people in the entire country. For the first time since the Reformation, the church regulates its own life by its own church ordinance, not determined by the state. Despite a large increase of other faiths, dwindling church attendance, and a small but steady defection, some 64% of all Swedish citizens remain members of the Church of Sweden. All church members pay a small percentage of their income as an obligatory church-membership fee collected through the tax system. In surveys about what motivates people to remain members, the most common answers are: diaconal work, international aid, the role of the church in personal and general crisis, the desire to maintain and keep churches open for people to visit, and the more general role of the church in society and culture, not least with its rich musical and choral life.

In the church ordinance promulgated in the year 2000, it is stated that the task of a parish is to celebrate worship, teach the faith, carry out diaconal ministry and conduct mission. These four aspects of the church's life and mission are equally essential and mutually dependent. Each parish is required to have a parish strategy (*församlingsinstruktion*) in which it presents how it intends to work with these four aspects. This strategy must be approved by the diocesan chapter.

Contemporary life and theology in the Church of Sweden have been influenced by a number of movements within the churches at large, for instance liturgical renewal and ecumenism, liberation and feminist theology, and international involvement.

5.4.1. Polity

Today the ordained ministry is described as being threefold in the sense that there is only one ministry but three specific dimensions, episcopal, priestly and diaconal. There is a sequential relationship between priesthood and episcopacy, but priests do not become deacons before being ordained to the priesthood. The diaconate is a ministry in its own right, but it was only fully and formally restored as a permanent, specific order in the new church ordinance of 2000, after a gradual development from the mother-house deaconess system of German pietistic Lutheranism in the 19th century.

The presence and determinative influence of women can be seen at all levels, both lay and ordained. Access for women to the priesthood and the episcopate respectively were not kept separate. When the Church of Sweden General Synod in 1958 took the decision that the priesthood should be open to women, that decision also implied that it was possible to have women bishops, although it was not until 1997 that the first woman was consecrated bishop.

Since 1963 the lay people of a diocese have the right to take part in the election of their bishop, returning to a practice which already existed in medieval times. As a sign of the unity of the church, bishops are consecrated in Uppsala Cathedral by the archbishop, assisted by other bishops.

The Church of Sweden has a synodic structure at all levels, with decision-making assemblies and executive boards. In each diocese there is also a diocesan chapter, with roots in medieval times. Prior to the separation of church and state it was a state institution employing the clergy; now it is a purely ecclesiastical organ of authority. The role of the chapter is to accept candidates for the ordained ministry, admit to and examine them for ordination, vet and declare eligible any priest or deacon who applies for a position in a parish, exercise oversight over how clergy fulfill their ministry and keep their ordination vows, and on how parishes manage their pastoral tasks according to the Church Ordinance. It can censure clergy, and also has to adjudicate on whether there are any doctrinal questions involved in a conflict if a parish wants to dismiss a priest.

5.4.2. Liturgy

Worship in the Church of Sweden has its roots in the liturgical life of the Western medieval church. Since the Reformation, and especially since the period of Lutheran Orthodoxy, the emphasis in the services of worship has often been on the proclamation of the Word. The frequency of Eucharistic worship has varied through the centuries, but until the revival of regular communion in the middle of the 20th century, mass was celebrated only a limited number of times a year. To receive the sacrament was considered an important act that required proper preparation. Celebrating

communion with the sick in their homes has been a regular part of pastoral care. Participation in communion was also part of social control in a uniform society to the end of the 19th century. Today the main Sunday service is usually Eucharistic due to a strong Eucharistic revival as in many other churches since the early 20th century, as a fruit of the international liturgical renewal and the ecumenical movement. The current book of worship was introduced in 1986. It was heavily influenced by the liturgical reform of the Second Vatican Council and a result of liturgical renewal and experimentation in 1970's and early 1980's. The book from 1986 is presently being revised and the new proposed service book is being tested during a trial period. It may be approved by the General Synod in 2017.

A significant feature of worship in the Church of Sweden is hymn singing. It would be most unusual not to sing hymns, regardless of whether it is a Sunday or weekday service, or even just simple devotions. Since the publication of the first officially approved hymnbook in 1695, an official hymnal has been used (at least at the main service) throughout the church. Choir singing is a very prominent part of parish life. There are more than 100 000 people who regularly sing in church choirs.

5.4.3. Missiology

Sweden is considered a secularized country. Although there is a large nominal church membership, the average church attendance is low at ordinary Sunday services. Despite this, large numbers go to church on certain days of the year: First Sunday of Advent, Christmas Midnight Mass and Christmas Morning service, Good Friday and Easter Sunday, as well as on All Saints Day. This creates a pastoral challenge for the ministers and other representatives of the church to present the Gospel in a clear but popular manner in such a context.

Parishes have a variety of catechetical activities. Those that are aimed at children and youth are seen as a form of baptismal catechesis post factum. Each parish is supposed to have a pastoral strategy for following up baptism and taking responsibility for those that have received the sacrament. Some parishes will run Sunday schools, usually by offering children special instruction during the sermon on the theme of the texts for the day. Most parishes have different children's groups meeting during the week, from parent and toddler groups up to pre-school groups. In these there will be some form of "teaching" in addition to play and socializing.

The most explicit and even liturgically marked form for following up baptism is confirmation. The Church of Sweden still confirms a large number of youths at the age of 15 – varying in different parts of the country between 30% - 60% of the age group. All parishes have a pastoral strategy for this and structured confirmation classes usually meet for about 50 hours over a period of one year. The actual method of catechesis can vary a lot, often combining special interests in confirmation groups, i.e. music or sport. The groups must spend some time at a confirmation camp, sometimes in the form of travel abroad. Some parishes and many diocesan institutions offer summer camps during which the preparation for confirmation is carried out intensively for a month. For catechetical programs related to children and young people, most parishes employ specially qualified youth workers. They are trained at special colleges run by the church, or have an equivalent teaching qualification.

The need for adult catechesis is felt in many parishes. Various methods for an adult path to faith are used, for example The Adult Catechumenate, Alpha, Emmaus. There is no generally approved method; it is up to a parish to find the one that suits them and the people they encounter.

5.4.4. Diaconia

The church does not run many diaconal institutions for social and medical services. This as well as running church schools became difficult when the Swedish welfare state was built up. There was little space left for non-governmental actors and they were seen as interfering with what was considered the sole responsibility of society. This has now changed and there is greater scope for other agencies to work in these fields. The Church of Sweden makes its contribution to social welfare primarily through parish diaconal work. Each parish has the responsibility to serve those within its boundaries who are in need. The responsibility for leading and coordinating the diaconal work of a parish usually belongs to permanent deacons. Many parishes have employed deacons. The deacon's role is not to do everything that needs to be done, but to inspire and train others to serve their neighbour and to apply professional social and caring competence in the work of the parish. Diaconal volunteer groups often help with pastoral visiting and other activities for people needing support. Much of such work relates to the elderly and disabled, addicts, refugees and immigrants. The deacon will represent the parish in its relations with social institutions, and is supposed also to give voice to the voiceless in both church and society.

There has traditionally been a strong interest in "foreign missions" in many parishes. The Church of Sweden International Department, which previously was two organizations, Church of Sweden Mission and Church of Sweden Aid, is responsible for developing strategies and coordinating concrete work for international diaconal work and mission in the form of projects either with bilateral partners or through the work of World Council of Churches (WCC), ACT Alliance and Lutheran World Federation (LWF). In the past missionaries were sent out to other countries. The work of these missionaries was often followed with great interest in many parishes. Today the number of missionaries abroad has been significantly reduced, and the emphasis is on supporting partner churches in their missionary task in their own context, through capacity-building and concrete projects, and when necessary by providing personnel for a limited time rather than on a long-term basis.

5.4.5. Ecumenism

Ecumenical engagement is characteristic of the Church of Sweden today, affecting both its self-understanding and its practical life. This challenges and enriches it. For example it cannot take its role as a majority church at home for granted in an uncritical way. Nor can it live its Lutheran tradition within the world church without learning from other ways of being church. Archbishop Nathan Söderblom of Uppsala was an early pioneer of ecumenism. The Stockholm Conference on Life & Work which he convened in 1925 was one of the major steps leading eventually to the creation of the WCC in 1948. He also adopted a pan-Scandinavian and Baltic church policy with the intention of making the Church of Sweden a bridge church gradually reuniting Lutherans, Anglicans and even Catholics, by taking advantage of a recognized episcopal succession. The Church of Sweden has ever since actively taken part in all dimensions of the ecumenical movement organized in the WCC. For example the Faith and Order Conference in 1952 took place in Lund and the WCC

General Assembly in 1968 in Uppsala. It has also been a member of the Conference of European Churches (CEC) since its founding in 1959.

It has developed contacts with Orthodox and Oriental Churches for many years on a bilateral level and within the multilateral context of WCC and CEC. At the local level there is practical cooperation between Church of Sweden parishes and different Orthodox and Oriental immigrant congregations, for instance in the use of the same church building. At the national level the Church of Sweden has for the last 20 years annually invited all the Orthodox and Oriental communities in Sweden to conversations about topics of common interest, without the intention of producing ecumenical documents. At present official dialogues are being conducted with the Serbian Orthodox Church, the Syrian Orthodox Church and the Coptic Church in Sweden. Theologians from the Church of Sweden have been involved in international dialogue between the Orthodox Churches and the LWF.

Informal contacts between the Church of Sweden and the Roman Catholic Church, both at home and internationally, existed prior to the Second Vatican Council, but it was in connection with this council that relationships really began to develop. As with the Orthodox and Oriental Churches there has been at the local level a lot of contact and practical cooperation between parishes, and priests in pastoral situations. This has included the use of church buildings belonging to the Church of Sweden for Roman Catholic masses and other services or activities, if the Catholic parish has not had premises of its own. When the official Lutheran-Catholic dialogue started immediately after the council, Swedish theologians were involved. In the 1970's dialogues started also at the national level between the Church of Sweden and the Roman Catholic diocese of Stockholm. They have produced a series of documents.¹¹ The Church of Sweden ratified the *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification* published by the LWF and the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity in 1999.¹² This statement has also formed the basis of one of the most recent expressions of ecumenical relations between the Church of Sweden and Roman Catholic Church in the Nordic context. In the spring of 2010 a dialogue between the Church of Sweden and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Finland on the one hand and the Roman Catholic Dioceses of Stockholm and Helsinki on the other was concluded with the publication of *Justification in the Life of the Church*.¹³

In 1994 the Church of Sweden entered an agreement on church fellowship, mutually recognizing ministries, with the Methodist Church in Sweden which is episcopal and a part of the global United Methodist Church. The understanding of apostolicity and ministry developed in amongst others the Lima document on Baptism, Eucharist, Ministry (1982) and the Porvoo Agreement is also reflected

¹¹ *Äktenskap och familj i kristen belysning*, Verbum 1975. (Marriage and the Family from a Christian Point of View); *Dop och kyrkotillhörighet*, Verbum 1978 (Baptism and Church Membership); *Biskopsämbetet*, Verbum 1988 (published in English as *The Office of Bishop*, LWF Studies, Geneva 1993); *Kyrkan som sakrament*, Stockholms katolska stift och Svenska kyrkan, 1999 (The Church as Sacrament); *Ekumeniska äktenskap*, Stockholms katolska stift och Svenska kyrkan, 1999 (Ecumenical Marriages).

¹² *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification*, The Lutheran World Federation and the Roman Catholic Church, William B Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, Michigan/Cambridge, UK 2000.

¹³ *Rättfärdiggörelsen i kyrkans liv*, Veritas förlag, Stockholm 2010 (English translation, *Justification in the Life of the Church*, Church of Sweden, Roman Catholic Diocese of Stockholm, Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland, Roman Catholic Diocese of Helsinki, Uppsala, Stockholm, Helsinki 2010).

in an agreement on church fellowship with the Swedish Mission Covenant Church from 2006. The Church of Sweden has also conducted a theological dialogue with the Baptist Union of Sweden between 1998 and 2010, but not reaching the agreement some people had hoped for. Despite greater convergence on sacramental theology and ecclesiology than might have been expected, there were still aspects of the understanding of baptism which could not be reconciled. The Methodist, Mission Covenant and Baptist denominations have now formed a uniting church. It remains to be seen what kind of relationship with this new church will develop in the future, since the existing agreements with two of them cannot simply be transferred. A dialogue is in progress.

6. Self-presentation of the Episcopal Church

The history of the Christian churches in the United States is a story of traditions transplanted. This botanical image is apt for a number of reasons since it not only involves an organic metaphor for the life and ministry of Christian communities, but it also connotes a risk taken. For a plant dealt with thus may either die or thrive. The metaphor also assumes that some kind of transformation will occur: a plant that survives the process, while remaining what it is, will nonetheless be intimately affected by its new ground and surroundings. It is important, however, to keep in mind that traditions do not transplant themselves – people do.

This brief essay is not intended to be a narrative chronicle of The Episcopal Church. Rather, the focus is directed toward the perception of certain continuities and discontinuities manifested in the historical experience of the Episcopal Church with respect to the Anglican *ethos* or *character* as inherited from the Church of England. The Episcopal Church was born as a daughter of the Church of England following the colonial War for Independence. But it also signaled the emergence of Anglican churches independent from the Church of England, especially since the latter half of the 19th century, resulting in what has come to be known generally as the worldwide Anglican Communion. Consideration thus necessarily begins with the gestation period provided by the colonial era during which there was no Episcopal Church, but rather the Church of England in its North American colonies.

Scholarship has traditionally divided the history of the United States into three general phases: the colonial, the national, and the modern. Similarly, the history of the Episcopal Church can be divided into periods as follows: the colonial, 1607-1789; the national, 1789-1928; and the modern, 1928-the present. Such a periodization provides the horizontal members of a grid or screen with which to sift historical data in order to elicit meaningful and comprehensible patterns of the Episcopal Church's ecclesial life and mission. The vertical members of the grid or screen for interpretation are provided by a set analytical approach in each of the chronological periods and using standard ecclesiological categories of any church's life and mission. Thus, in each of the periods of the American Anglican experience the Episcopal Church's polity, liturgy, doctrine and operative missiology will be considered with special attention in each of these interrelated areas to (1) status/growth under a particular heading, (2) issues principally exercising the church in that era, and (3) endeavors or issues at a particular time that attracted the energies of Episcopalians.

6.1. The Episcopal Church and the Anglican Ethos

How can the Anglican ethos of which the Episcopal Church is both an heir and a participant be described? There is no easily identified critical principle such as "by grace and faith alone" of the

Lutheran tradition; we have consciously rejected in our history the rigorously interpreted “by the rule of Scripture alone” of the Reformed tradition; and most certainly we do not have the assurance of the principle laid down at the Council of Trent: “saving always in all things the authority of the Apostolic See.” Yet Anglicans are, of course, indebted to Richard Hooker (1554-1600) in his *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* for identifying the methodological interplay of Scripture, reason, and tradition as a characteristic. Beyond that Bishop Lancelot Andrewes (1555-1626) may be credited with the articulation of a slogan for Anglicanism: “one canon, two testaments, three creeds, four councils, and five centuries.” When method and slogan are combined with safeguards against antiquarianism, on the one hand, and biblicism, on the other hand, then three essential elements may be abstracted for application in any description of Anglican character: (1) an appeal to Christian antiquity for the norms of polity, liturgy, and doctrine; (2) a theological method which functions by maintaining a dynamic tension among Scripture, reason, and tradition; and (3) a curious attitudinal blend that exhibits at once a passion for national ecclesiastical comprehension and an equal but countervailing willingness to indulge the divisive interplay of party spirit within a Church claiming to be both reformed and catholic.

In the very era of Hooker and Andrewes, the English began the colonization of North America. When King James VI & I issued the Great Patent of Virginia in 1606, no one possessed the foresight to see that a new nation would ultimately emerge as a test of whether or to what degree the still developing Anglican ethos was inextricably tied to the English nation and the Royal Supremacy in the Church. But consideration now turns to that testing in the colonial, national, and modern periods as previously designated.

6.2. The Colonial Period (1607 - 1789)

This era witnessed the gradual establishment of thirteen colonies eventually belonging to Great Britain and ultimately separating from it to form a nation composed of United States. Various immigrant populations were to comprise the blend of these Atlantic seaboard colonies, and though there was a diversity of religious background and practice imported from Europe, the language and civil institutions of England were to prevail.

In such a milieu, spanning nearly two centuries, the experience of the Church of England was to be quite mixed. In the early Jamestown settlement, the presence of the Church of England was little more than a chaplaincy to merchant adventurers. But gradually throughout the 17th century the Church of England became the legally established Christian body of a number of middle and southern colonies. Within the Puritan stronghold of New England, however, the Church made little headway.

From 1700 to the American Revolution the Church of England achieved significant growth in the colonies, especially through the English Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts. This growth was compromised during and after the Revolution (1) by the fact that many Church of England adherents were Loyalists; (2) by the flight of many clergy and laity to eastern Canada, England and the West Indies; and (3) by the legal attempts of other Christian groups to dis-endow and destroy the remains of the Church of England wherever it had been officially planted. That the Episcopal Church arose like a proverbial phoenix from the ashes of the colonial Church of England between 1783 (Peace of Paris) and 1789 (year of the Episcopal Church’s constitution and first Book

of Common Prayer) is not rhetorical overstatement.

6.2.1. Polity

Three anomalies with respect to Anglican ethos appear in the polity of the colonial Church of England in America. First, if governance by bishops is essential to Anglican ethos, why was not a colonial episcopate established? In brief, New England provided active opposition to such a scheme, while the growth of parish governance through the vestry system in mid-Atlantic and southern colonies left Anglicans there (inclined to low church views about the necessity of bishops in any case) content that general oversight should remain with the faraway Bishop of London. Yet while clerical and lay models of governance remained an occasional issue where the Church of England was established, ironically during the 18th century in New England where the Church of England had the status of a free church, a decidedly “high” ecclesiological view came into prominence. Thus the second anomaly was formed. Yet in any case, without an indigenous episcopate, clergy either had to come from England to live in America or candidates had to hazard the long and dangerous sea voyage to and from England for ordination. The third anomaly, finally, consists in the fact that the project for an American episcopate was effected in 1784, one year after Great Britain recognized the independence of its former colonies where episcopacy was no longer tied to the state or civil government in any way.

6.2.2. Liturgy

Throughout the colonial era American Anglicans used the 1662 BCP. As in England, the normal pattern of Sunday worship consisted of Morning Prayer, Great Litany, and the Order for Holy Communion through the sermon and offertory. Rarely was the service concluded with the celebration and reception of the Holy Communion. Church music in the period was largely limited to the singing of metrical psalms. Instruments and organs were rare, though by the late 18th century some hymns were featured in colonial Anglican worship. Finally, with the dignified style of a set liturgy, Anglicans (with a few exceptions) tended to resist the exhibition of such religious enthusiasm as appeared first with the Great Awakening, peaking in the early 1740s, but only the first instance of a recurring theme in American religious experience.

6.2.3. Doctrine

In this period doctrine was reflected by the 1662 BCP and the XXXIX Articles of Religion. Anglican preaching generally participated in that late 17th- and 18th-century practice of steering between a religion solely of the head or of the heart. Preaching, therefore, tended to represent the moralism of the age, *i.e.* condemnation of vice and encouragement of virtue. In regard to the doctrine of salvation, therefore, Anglicans rejected the enthusiasm attendant upon conversion experiences.

6.2.4. Missiology

Anglican endeavors for the spread of Christianity among white colonists, African-American slaves, and Native Americans was chiefly undertaken through the auspices of English voluntary missionary societies. The Bishop of London’s Commissary for the American colonies, Thomas Bray, and others Englishmen with a passion for the spread of the Gospel in English overseas territories founded the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge (SPCK, 1699) and the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (SPG, 1701). That these missionary societies met with some success, although focusing primarily on white colonists, is attested by the fact that there were sufficient

numbers of Anglican clergy and laity between 1783 and 1789 to form the Episcopal Church.

6.3. The National Period (1789 - 1928)

The long colonial period of gestation largely determined the Episcopal Church's similarities to and differences from its parent Church of England. The outlines of continuing issues within the Episcopal Church had also been set: (1) the conflict between high and low church emphases – though this would be modified in the national period as a result of theological and liturgical influences growing out of the Oxford Movement (1833-1845) within the Church of England; (2) the inherited characteristic of a desire for national comprehension among Christians which would result in ecumenical overtures and various plans of union with other church bodies – especially in the 20th century; and (3) a continued expenditure of theological energy on ecclesiological issues centered around liturgical concerns and matters pertaining to the validity of ordained ministries.

6.3.1. Polity

The Episcopal Church was founded along the lines of the English parliamentary model, with a “general convention” of deputies and bishops from territorial dioceses, corresponding at first to the boundaries of the individual states. A triennial meeting of a General Convention was established for the governance of the Church. The first of these, held in 1789 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, authorized an American Book of Common Prayer and adopted a constitution and a canon law for the church. This body is composed of two houses: a house of deputies composed of equal numbers of lay and clerical representatives elected by the synods or “conventions” of the dioceses; and a house of bishops holding jurisdiction over the church in states and regions, later known as dioceses. Binding legislation has to be enacted concurrently by both houses. In this there was a departure from prior Anglican polity reflected in the constitutional inclusion of the laity (albeit only males at this time) in Church government on the national as well as the diocesan level. Even so, the heritage of having once been an established church both sparked and compromised mission.

During this period the issues faced by the church were similar to those faced by the United States generally, *e.g.* westward expansion, growth in burgeoning industrial centers, outreach among Native Americans, the assimilation of immigrant populations into American life, and the issue of slavery and the viability of the Union. The rupture of the 1861-65 Civil War found Episcopalians on opposite sides of its moral and political questions. Yet after the conflict the Church was again one in organization as was not the case with many other churches.

By the close of the 19th century a vocation to wider unity was discovered and given a platform for future Anglican ecumenism in the Chicago (1886) - Lambeth (1888) Quadrilateral. The four points of the Quadrilateral envisioned unity around acceptance of the Scriptures, the Sacraments of Baptism & Eucharist, the Apostles and Nicene Creeds, and the Historic Episcopate, locally adapted. Even so, slow but steady rather than substantial growth in the numbers of Episcopalians occurred during this period largely due to the fact that the Episcopal Church was seen by other Christians as an emerging *de facto* national church with the concomitant power and prestige of the nation's elite.

6.3.2. Liturgy

The new American church required a revised liturgy, though as stated in the 1789 “Preface” to the Book of Common Prayer there was no intention “to depart from the Church of England in any essential point of doctrine, discipline, or worship; or further than local circumstances require” (p. 11, 1979 Book of Common Prayer) However, these required the inclusion of the Episcopal Church of Scotland’s Order for Holy Communion rather than that of the English 1662 BCP – a result of a Concordat with that church in return for the consecration in 1784 of Samuel Seabury for Connecticut, the Episcopal Church’s initial bishop and the first bishop outside of the British empire. The first hymnal in a subsequent series of expanding versions was also authorized. Though the 1789 book was slightly revised only once (1892) in the national period, liturgical enrichments in ceremony through influences growing out of the Oxford and Cambridge-Camden Movements in England marked the later decades of the 19th century. These led to sharp controversies within the Episcopal Church, but by the 20th century liturgical vesture (or at least stoles) in seasonal colors, candles on the altar (as opposed to “communion table”), vested choirs, and splendid organs became the norm. When the Hymnal 1940 appeared it featured “service music” for the first time (*e.g.*, settings for *Kyrie*, *Gloria*, *Credo*, *Sanctus*, and *Agnus Dei*).

If liturgy is taken in both its senses – service as well as worship – then the latter part of the period was marked by the Episcopal Church’s engagement in the so-called Social Gospel of the American Progressive Era. The rise of the “Broad Church” party coincides with this emphasis. Leaders made the connections between values celebrated in liturgy and the need to demonstrate those values in life as urbanization, industrialization, and poor or oppressive working conditions became prevalent. But sometimes they found Episcopal clergy unwilling to cooperate closely with other denominations in this work. This represents a continuing tension between a church comprehensively “catholic and reformed” and yet sometimes indulging sectarian attitudes.

6.3.3. Doctrine

In a revised form, the Articles of Religion were only adopted by the Episcopal Church in 1801 and they never had the same doctrinal authority as in the Church of England. Also, there were certain unresolved doctrinal conflicts within the American Anglican heritage as it was developing in this era. A dispute, for instance, over the issue of baptismal regeneration focused in tensions associated with the then dominant evangelical Protestantism of American Christianity, led by 1873 to the schism of a small *Reformed Episcopal Church*. The difficulty accounts to some degree for the muted influence and participation of the Episcopal Church in the tenor of American Protestant life and endeavors in this period and beyond (*e.g.*, awakenings or revivals, whether in the small town context, or later in the urban settings, or finally those of the mass-media type represented by contemporary televangelists). By 1895 Fundamentalism had appeared, especially in disputes over the interpretation of Scripture, but it did not affect the Episcopal Church as much as other traditions. Internally, ecclesiological differences over the growth of sacramental realism tended to characterize the Episcopal Church’s doctrinal engagement in this period. Beyond this, the original and traditional Anglican desire for an educated ministry bore fruit in the establishment of all but two of today’s ten accredited Episcopal seminaries by the end of the 19th century.

6.3.4. Missiology

In the first decades of the 19th century The Episcopal Church was more concerned with institutional

survival than missionary outreach. Spurred on by the initiative of American Protestant missionary societies and the encouragement of the English Church Missionary Society, the Episcopal Church's General Convention in 1821 formed the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States (DFMS). The new DFMS, however, failed to garner the imagination of Episcopalians. Informed by a more catholic ecclesiology, the General Convention reorganized the DFMS in 1835 with significant innovations such as: (1) understanding the whole church to be *the* missionary society; (2) holding all Episcopalians to be missionaries, not by virtue of voluntary subscription, but as a direct implication of their baptism; and (3) setting forth the principle that the first missionary into any mission field should be the bishop – a new advent of the missionary episcopate. While these catholic ideals informed a new missionary outreach the real work of the DFMS was fostered by and supported by the volunteerism of the women of the church through the Women's Auxiliary to the Board of Missions of the DFMS. With the support of the women, the Episcopal Church pushed forward with quality schools, good hospitals, and well-ordered worship in its missions on the western frontier of the United States and overseas in China, Japan and Liberia.

6.4. The Modern Period (1928 - Present)

Within alternating moods of despair and social experimentation characterizing western civilization in the 20th century, the Christian churches have all been pressed to reflect on their position in a pluralistic world and the shape of their mission to it. With the demise of Constantinian Christendom, three areas of endeavor (related to polity, liturgy, and doctrine) have been the focus for ecclesial concern: ecumenical *rapprochement*, liturgical *renewal*, and theological *restatement*. If American Christians have been more optimistic than their European counterparts with respect to this process, it is in large measure due to the fact that people and institutions of the United States have been slower to perceive that all the spiritual and social givens of the previous age had been shattered by the cataclysm of two World Wars and their aftereffects. Within the American setting and with respect to the tensions of its Anglican ethos, the Episcopal Church represents no exception to the quality of this process. Yet by the mid-1960s the Episcopal Church had a membership of 3.6 million, then 2.8 million by 1976 and today 1.8 million, reflecting the general growth of secularity in America and a few small schisms over controversies noted below.

6.4.1. Polity

The Episcopal Church's General Conventions from 1907-19 transformed the church's polity by making the office of Presiding Bishop elective rather than honorary by seniority. Also provided was a structure of extra-diocesan "provinces" to provide for regional cooperation, an executive council, and the creation of a national ecclesial bureaucracy for administration of the church's foreign and domestic mission between the triennial legislative meetings. After 1943 the Presiding Bishop upon election resigned his see to become the Episcopal Church's primate. Since that time this office has evolved into what is by custom and canon almost an archiepiscopal stature. By the last decades of the 20th century the title honorifically changed from "Right Reverend" to "Most Reverend" and very limited metropolitanical rights were accorded to the Presiding Bishop – both things which had been specifically excluded from the English inheritance at the Episcopal Church's constitutional inception.

The 20th century witnessed many ecumenical initiatives by the Episcopal Church along the range of

traditions. Most fruitful of these, of course, has been the growth of full communion between the Episcopal Church and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). These initiatives and the Lutheran development from 1978-2000 were in large part made possible on the basis of the Episcopal Church's 1978 *Detroit Report – A Communion of Communion*s. This work of the Episcopal Church's ecumenical theologians provided a more organic and flexible reading of the *Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral* than had previously been the case. This development has helped Anglicans and Lutherans to move through long-standing "sticking points" of polity even where liturgical and doctrinal accord has long been recognized between the traditions.

The Episcopal Church has been since 1931 in full communion with the Old Catholic Churches of the Union of Utrecht; since 1961 with the Philippine Independent Church (Iglesia Filipina Independiente); and since 1979 with the Mar Thoma Church. In 2010 the Moravian Church – Northern and Southern Provinces entered into full communion with the Episcopal Church.

6.4.2. Liturgy

In 1928 the Episcopal Church authorized a new Book of Common Prayer after a process begun before WW I. Though significant, it was the last liturgy consistent with the Constantinian Christendom that the war had rendered moot. The same General Convention created a Standing Liturgical Commission to begin a new revision, leading to an extended process resulting in the 1979 Book of Common Prayer and, concomitantly, the Hymnal 1982. This latter reflected the now characteristic importance of music in worship, but is also a testament to the quality and competence of the Episcopal Church's church musicians and organists whose contributions to worship are widely appreciated. Both the revised BCP and hymnal together reflected a renewed appropriation of the centrality of Baptism as formational in a secular world and the weekly celebration of the Holy Eucharist as essential to nourishment of the faithful through word-and-sacrament. It was also recognized that archaic language was increasingly inadequate to such worship as would effectively inspire ecclesial life and ministry. Such changes, of course, have taken longer time for reception and pastoral implementation and they have not been without controversy. The proof, however, of an incarnate spirituality remains to be seen, that is, whether continuing liturgical renewal is capable of fostering authentic life and enhancing the release of renewed energies for mission in the 21st century.

6.4.3. Doctrine

In the modern period the Episcopal Church's doctrinal standards have not changed beyond the original exceptions. It is apparent, nevertheless, that there are two doctrinal conversations that need to take place both within the Episcopal Church and throughout the Anglican Communion. One of these concerns hermeneutics, the principles for interpreting Scripture in ecclesial life and mission. The second involves ecclesiology or the theology of the church. To some degree these conversations are already taking place as differing assumptions about hermeneutics and ecclesiology have come to light in controversy across many areas: liturgical revision, the ordination of women, and socio-economic issues about race, sexuality, environment, political power, inter-faith dialogue, and poverty. These two interrelated conversations need, however, to become explicit before there can be any hope of mutual accord in the resolution of controversy or a

common mind and action with regard to multi-faceted social issues and faithfulness to the Gospel.

6.4.4. Missiology

At the turn of the 20th century The Episcopal Church increasingly saw itself as the de facto “national church” whose mission it was to spread the riches of American democracy and the richness of Anglican tradition at home and around the world. In 1919, the General Convention merged the work of the church’s separate boards of education, social service, and missionary outreach under unified National Council. This National Council overseen by an elected Presiding Bishop and supported by a national funding scheme helped to advance a “national church ideal” for the Episcopal Church. The operative missiological metaphor of the “national church” was that of corporation dispensing goods and services in the United States and new American territories around the world following the Spanish-American War.

The corporation of the national church ideal lasted for almost a half a century. In the closing decades of the 20th century, civil rights struggles, urban unrest, and the emergence of post-colonial nations around the world seriously undermined the ideal. A resulting decline in financial resources led to the slashing of missionary numbers and a wholesale decrease in national church programs. The metaphor of corporation for church structure was replaced with that of a regulatory agency, as numbers of committees, commissions, agencies and boards of the Episcopal Church more than doubled between 1982 and 2012. Significant steps were taken, however, to include previously marginalized groups, specifically people of color, women, and gay and lesbian people, in positions of power in the church, including the priesthood. At the same time several of the previous overseas missionary districts of the Episcopal Church such as in the Philippines, Mexico, and Central America became autonomous churches (“provinces”) of the Anglican Communion in their own right. Today the Episcopal Church is present in 17 countries, with eleven dioceses outside the United States, and the European Convocation. The creation of new provinces of the Anglican Communion is still ongoing, part of the tradition of the missionary society founded in 1821.

6.5. Current Challenges and Changes

Despite the drop in numbers, the ministry of the Episcopal Church remains vibrant wherever it is present. Social ministries of all kinds continue to be developed, from traditional work like medical care and aid to families, to addressing the emerging realities of America and other countries. The Episcopal Church’s ministries with immigrants and refugees have grown significantly. From the border with Mexico to the center of Rome, Italy, with Iraqi refugees in France and Sudanese refugees in the American heartland, Episcopalians are more than ever involved in this worldwide 21st-century phenomenon. Initiatives to address gun violence in the United States, human trafficking across borders, and racial reconciliation have burgeoned in recent years. One interesting development has been the church’s increasing willingness to accept responsibility for the significant role that Episcopalians played in the American slave trade.

New models for church planting are being tried. The Diocese of Honduras, for example, has more than quadrupled in the past twenty years. As with the Fresh Expressions movement in the Church of England, new forms of congregations are appearing in the United States as well. Episcopalians

are very present in social media, and various networks of affinities are increasingly taking advantage of them.

Therefore it is not surprising that by the end of the twentieth century, there has been a growing dissatisfaction with much of the inherited structures of the general church. The General Convention of 2012 called for sweeping reforms of the church's structures, governance, and administration. With proposals offered by a blue ribbon committee known as the Task-force for Reimagining the Episcopal Church (TREC), the General Convention of 2015 will consider radical changes to the church's organizational life and ministry, and elect a new Presiding Bishop to help take these changes forward. The Episcopal Church's polity, liturgy, doctrine, and missiology will continue to respond to the realities of the 21st century, just as it has in its previous periods. A Church grounded in and faithful to the incarnation of God in Jesus Christ, and trusting in the leading of the Holy Spirit, can and will adapt and change in order to more faithfully participate in God's mission of restoration and reconciliation.

This report was prepared by the Reverend Dr. Christopher Meakin, the Very Reverend Dr. William H. Petersen, the Right Reverend Dr. Ian T. Douglas, and the Right Reverend Pierre W. Whalon with the assistance of the Reverend Margaret Rose and Mr. Richard Mammana.