

## THE HISTORY OF THE ANGLICAN PROVINCE OF AMERICA

### THE BEGINNING:

The Anglican Province of America was born in the religious and cultural turmoil of the late 1960s and the 1970s. That period saw America shaken by the Vietnam War, the resignation of President Richard Nixon, and the Civil Rights Movement. All three helped to polarize the nation, and, as American society drifted apart, so did Episcopalians.

Three ecclesiastical issues directly challenged traditionalists and conservatives. The first centered around Bishop James Pike of California. The speculations of this colorful, brilliant, and ultimately unstable bishop earned the disapproval Bishop of South Florida, who sought to have him tried for heresy for denying the Resurrection and Virgin Birth. The House of Bishops, however, meeting in Wheeling, West Virginia in 1965, refused to proceed against their erring brother.

Secondly, many Episcopalians began to participate openly in the Civil Rights Movement about the time John Hines became Presiding Bishop in 1965. The involvement of Episcopal clergy in that movement is an important chapter yet to be properly told. It was the admirable climax of the so-called Social Gospel of the late nineteenth century. As the Civil Rights Movement became more radicalized, however, some began to question some areas of ECUSA's involvement in it. This controversy came to a head when it was revealed that some of the tithes of the Church were going towards filling the pockets of people who embraced violence as a political tool.

Finally, the dramatic shifts in Roman Catholic liturgies caused many within the ECUSA establishment to embrace a radical transformation of the Book of Common Prayer. Ignoring the vocal concerns of a significant number of the laity, the hierarchy of the Episcopal Church enforced the use of the new liturgies. This gave rise to a strong sense of disenfranchisement among many laypeople. Hence, by the late Sixties, an Episcopalian might find himself worshipping according to a novel liturgy, listening to a sermon denying core doctrines of the Faith, and being asked to support the Black Panthers. Traditionalist Episcopalians seemed to be faced with radical changes on all sides.

## **BIRTH IN MOBILE**

It was in an atmosphere of confused retreat that the American Episcopal Church (AEC) was born in March of 1968. At a two-day meeting it was agreed that a new body was needed in order to preserve traditional Anglicanism. Afterwards, lay delegates from the Mobile meeting established small parishes in Mobile, New Orleans, Birmingham, Cincinnati, and West Palm Beach with embryo groups in Charleston and Huntington Beach. At this time the fledgling AEC numbered no more than a couple hundred.

Despite their suspicious view of bishops, the founders of the AEC recognized that in order to be "episcopal" they had to have bishops. As no bishop at this time had stepped forward to lead the AEC, the National Vestry decided that it would have to get one of its own men consecrated. It was, therefore, a top priority of the founders to find a validly ordained bishop willing to consecrate a bishop for the AEC. Although the Episcopal bishop of Lexington, Kentucky, William Moody, showed great sympathy, in the end he could do nothing. The Bishop of Nassau and the Bahamas offered to ordain anyone who could get to his cathedral. Finally, J.C. Pillai, a native of South India, offered to consecrate the first AEC bishops. James George became the first bishop of the AEC in December 1968.

The difficulties facing our fledgling church were enormous. The all-powerful National Vestry was dominated by an oligarchy of major funders who clashed frequently with Bishop George. The Canons of the church were impossible to justify on Anglican grounds. The source of episcopal orders from a single bishop of unusual background drew attacks from Episcopal clergy. Members of the infant church knew what they opposed but had little vision for the future. Finally, desperately short of clergy, men had to be ordained with little or no training or background. At the start of 1969, the future of the AEC looked bleak.

## **CRISIS AND TRANSFORMATION**

In 1970, Archdeacon Tony Clavier was elected suffragan to Bishop George and consecrated the following day in 1970. At the same time, however, open conflict broke out within the AEC over canonical reforms, which resulted in court battles. Shortly thereafter, the National Vestry disbanded, sending the AEC into a serious financial crisis. Until the summer of 1970, all the clergy were paid from central funds controlled by the National Vestry. These funds were no longer available. Bishop George, now living in Spartanburg, South Carolina proposed that parishes or groups of parishes take on the support of individual clergy. When he was opposed, he suddenly resigned.

Once again the AEC was left with only one bishop and on August 29th, 1970, Bishop Clavier was elected bishop of the Diocese of the Eastern United States and leader of the American Episcopal Church. Refusing the title "Archbishop," he took instead the title, "Primus," as used in the Scottish Episcopal Church by its senior bishop.

The election of Bishop Clavier as Primus of the AEC marked a turning point in the history of the Diocese. Whereas many of the key figures in the AEC up to this point had been reactionary, not a little racially prejudiced, in poor health, and deficient of vision, Clavier was a young moderate of mixed racial heritage with an extraordinary grasp of Anglican essentials. Except for a brief period between 1976-1980, Bishop Clavier would remain the Primus of the AEC until 1991 and continuously Bishop of the Diocese of the Eastern United States (DEUS) until 1995. During his episcopacy, the AEC and DEUS would grow from a small, mainly Southern church to the second largest traditional Anglican body in the United States.

### **YEARS OF GROWTH AND POVERTY**

One of the first actions of Bishop Clavier's episcopate was to attend the General Convention of the Episcopal Church that met that year in Houston, Texas. This marked the beginning of the AEC's attempts to establish some sort of contact with those traditionalists who remained within the Episcopal Church and the wider Anglican Communion; in effect, it was the end of the isolationist policies of the AEC reactionaries. Informal contacts were made with many traditionalists, that would in time bear fruit. In particular, a strong friendship formed between Clavier and Stanley Atkins, then bishop of Eau Claire.

During this time, a typical AEC parish met in someone's living room, a borrowed church building, or a storefront, and shared either an aging priest or a "worker-priest" with one or more other parishes. No parish contained more than a handful of members, many of whom were elderly. The instability of these "living room chapels" can be seen in the fact that not few eventually died. Poorly paid and over-worked, many priests quit or went to another church in search of a better living. Considering this, it is remarkable that the AEC ever achieved stability.

In 1974, the Episcopal bishop of Kentucky, David B. Reed, suggested that talks begin between representatives of the Episcopal Church and the American Episcopal Church with the intent of exploring a forensic relationship between ECUSA and the AEC. The idea was for the AEC to be admitted to the "Wider Episcopal Fellowship," a group of autonomous jurisdictions that included the Old Catholic and Philippine Independent National Catholic Churches. But events overtook those talks, which did

not resume until after the St. Louis Convention had altered the whole landscape of traditional Anglicanism.

Despite growth and stability between 1971 and 1976, the AEC remained very poor. Parishes relied on worker-priests, and even the bishop's tiny stipend was not always paid on time. The American Episcopal Church consisted of no more than sixteen congregations with a total membership of a few hundred, mainly elderly, lay members.

## MINNEAPOLIS AND ST. LOUIS

In 1976, the ECUSA General Convention in Minneapolis approved the ordination of women to Holy Orders and the first reading of legislation to adopt a new Prayer Book. Traditionalists who opposed these measures, split into different camps and suffered a costly defeat. Some were for the new Prayer Book but against the ordination of women. Some had no problems with the ordination of women, but opposed any revision to the Prayer Book. Many wanted to remain in ECUSA and fight: the others, to form a new jurisdiction.

As plans emerged to summon a Congress of traditionalist Episcopal Churchmen in St. Louis, the AEC was approached by Bishop Chambers, recently retired Episcopal bishop of Springfield, and Canon Albert duBois, the leader of the American Church Union. Both wanted to include delegates from the AEC in the St. Louis Convention, but for various reasons this was denied. As a result, the Continuing Movement, which was to emerge from the Congress of St. Louis, would begin as a divided movement.

Out of that Congress grew the Anglican Catholic Church and later jurisdictions: the Province of Christ the King, the United Episcopal Church, and the Anglican Rite Jurisdiction of America. Despite its failure to be recognized by such groups, the AEC began an era of significant growth that would continue until the formation of the Anglican Church in America in 1991. By the late 70s the AEC had not only tested her wings but had also begun to develop her own identity. It found itself filling the gap between the Episcopal Church and the new Continuing Churches. It tended to be positive in its outlook. Mild liturgical changes were permitted: the monthly reading of the Decalogue was dropped in favor of the Summary of the Law, the laity were permitted to say the Prayer of Humble Access and Thanksgiving with the clergy, and the Prayer for the Church was in places turned into a litany. Women were admitted as delegates to synods and as members of vestries.

Perhaps more by accident than design, DEUS, the oldest continuing diocese in the United States, emerged with its own moderate ethos that contrasted and still

contrasts strongly with other Anglican bodies. Forced to survive for years with little financial support, the church concentrated much more on evangelism and parish growth than on polemics and anti-Episcopal Church rhetoric. So the AEC directed its energies towards evangelizing. The AEC embraced from the beginning a broad spectrum of Anglican traditions and liturgical practices. An atmosphere of family characterized both parochial and jurisdictional life. Synods became times of mutual fellowship and care rather than opportunities for divisive legislation. While attacks by other continuing leaders became more and more vicious, the AEC earned the respect of many ECUSA leaders and of traditionalists the world over. That ethos and respect remains to this day.

### **YEARS OF PLENTY, 1982-1991**

Two symbolically significant matters occupied the attention of the AEC in 1982. The first was the consecration of St. Peter's Cathedral, Deerfield Beach, Fla. St. Peter's was the first building to be erected and paid for by a local congregation. Apart from its being the seat of the bishop of the Eastern United States, who was also its dean, the building acted as an inspiration to other parishes to embark on similar projects. Nothing like it had been tried among North American traditional Anglican churches, most of which still worshiped in living rooms and storefronts. Its consecration during a diocesan Synod was attended by the bishops and representatives of two newly entered dioceses, the South and the West, along with others considering membership in the AEC.

While the cathedral represented a "mother church", a parish which had grown from a couple of dozen people in 1977 to one of nearly 300 by 1982, and thus symbolized growth and permanence, a second development represented the desire of the AEC to retain its roots in the wider family of Anglican churches. For three years the AEC had been engaging in informal contacts with the Episcopal Church, encouraged by its Presiding Bishop, John Allin. In 1982, however, formal talks, blessed by the House of Bishops of ECUSA, began. Three bishops from each church began to meet regularly. The Primus of the AEC and (Stanley Atkins?), the ECUSA Bishop of Eau Claire, served as joint chairs of this committee. The Canons of ECUSA contained a section that envisioned the recognition of a discrete American religious community under the jurisdiction of the Presiding Bishop.

As the bishops of the AEC had received conditional consecration by three bishops of the Philippine Independent National Catholic Church, the question of Orders was easily assessed and a favorable report given to the ECUSA Presiding Bishop. Work went ahead on what measures might be taken to get the General Convention of ECUSA to recognize what would be, in effect, a parallel jurisdiction. Both churches were faced

with opposition to such a plan from within, but it was hoped that a concrete proposal would emerge before Bishop Allin's term expired in 1985.

In the meantime, the AEC was growing. In the early and mid-80s, a steady stream of people continued to depart the Episcopal Church in reaction to the many changes experienced especially at the parish level. But as more and more AEC parishes managed to find themselves permanent places of worship, an ever-increasing number of unchurched people and those from other denominations began to join. Many of these people were drawn by the reverence and fellowship that typified AEC congregations.

The AEC also grew, in part, at the expense of other "Continuing Churches," which at the time were experiencing the first of what would become almost endemic schism. In 1983 an entire diocese of the Anglican Catholic Church parted company with its founding body and came into union with the AEC. The year before the greater part of another Continuing Church entered into union with the AEC. Almost at once the AEC became a multi-diocesan church. In 1981 another Continuing Church, the Anglican Episcopal Church united with the AEC and brought with it two established dioceses in areas where the AEC had no presence.

What was distinct about the AEC was its determination to become an Anglican Church, welcoming all strands of churchmanship and affording the laity a full part in its doings. Its Constitution and Canons, while simplified, enshrined the doctrine, discipline and worship of ECUSA before 1976. It was also determined that the AEC would do all it could not to define itself as an exilic body, reacting to the changes and events in ECUSA, but rather a church in mission reaching out to all who availed itself of its ministry. This distinction was the cause of a good deal of reaction to it on the part of the rest of the Continuing churches, most of which embraced a more rigid and reactive "party" stance in opposition to the developments in ECUSA.

This is perhaps best exemplified contrasting the policies of the AEC with those of the jurisdictions that emerged from the St. Louis Convention. First, those other jurisdictions held that all post-1977 ECUSA ordinations—even those of men—are null and void. If an ECUSA priest ordained after 1977 were to apply for reception into one of these jurisdictions, he would have to submit to ordination, not re-ordination *sub conditione*.

The AEC, however, took a different view. Every Episcopal priest who applied to join the AEC and who passed by Board of Examining Chaplains was simply received in the same way as clergy from Roman Catholicism or Eastern Orthodoxy. This was a deliberate policy, one for which the AEC bishops were strongly criticized by other Continuing Churches.

Similarly, the conservative jurisdictions within the Continuing Movement insisted on re-confirming those Episcopalians confirmed after 1977—even those confirmed by male bishops. On the other hand, the AEC clergy normally sought to get a letter of transfer from their former ECUSA parish (which, as an aside, is often refused) and simply listed them on the books. Again, this is a practice for which the AEC was criticized.

This principle of inclusiveness was grounded in the AEC's self-understanding as a lifeboat for those who no longer felt welcomed in the Episcopal Church rather than as a "Catholic" alternative and jurisdiction to ECUSA. The AEC was, at its best, more within the mainstream of classical Anglicanism in declaring what it believed and practiced, and why, without addressing the Catholicity of other jurisdictions. It is almost needless to say that these policies and the AEC's talks with ECUSA drove a wedge between itself and the other Continuing bodies.

While facing external pressures, internally the AEC was entering a protracted period of stability and prosperity. In Orlando, a start-up church headed by Suffragan Bishop Walter Grundorf grew and would eventually become the largest traditional Anglican parish in America with its own building bought and paid for by parishioners. An ECUSA parish in Brooklyn entered into union, and managed to keep its property. Its rector, a Belizean Afro-Caribbean named Raymond Hanlan, had been elected as a second suffragan for the Eastern diocese in 1980. By the end of the decade Hispanic missions emerged in New Jersey. By 1990 the Eastern diocese had over 3000 communicants in over thirty parishes.

A number of ECUSA priests were received into the AEC during these years, the most notable of which was the Rev. Dr. Carroll Simcox, former editor of the Living Church and a noted author. Later the Rev. Canon Robert Miller, formerly Canon to the Ordinary of the Diocese of Chicago was received and joined the staff of St. Alban's Church in Orlando. Their former ECUSA bishops deposed all ECUSA priests received into the AEC.

A training institute, like such bodies as the East Anglian Ministerial Training Course, was founded in Orlando and a more consistent and thorough means devised for training men for the ministry put into place. By the end of the decade ordinands were also being trained in Episcopal seminaries such as Nashotah House, or in the seminaries of other denominations.

Finally, the AEC was growing both in its internal cohesion and fellowship and also in the concrete development of parishes with buildings and full-time paid clergy. It had no shortage of ordinands. Synods had become occasions for a remarkable degree of

unity and enjoyment. Parishes gave to the support of the dioceses and the “national” AEC with remarkable generosity. While bishops remained parish priests, the proportion of their stipends paid for by the dioceses increased and paid assistants supplemented their pastoral roles as parish priests. There were now over eighty parishes in the AEC in three dioceses from coast to coast.

### **PROMISE AND DISILLUSION, 1991-1995**

The first signs of future change were seen in 1984 and 1985 when the Bishop of London, Graham Leonard, visited the USA and called together representatives of Continuing bodies in two conferences. Bishop Leonard placed a great deal of pressure on leaders of these bodies to make common cause.

At the same time, Presiding Bishop John Allin of ECUSA reached retirement age. The talks between ECUSA and the AEC had reached a crucial stage, bedeviled by opposition in ECUSA and some irresponsible activities on the part of one AEC Ordinary who sought to use the talks to draw Episcopalians out of their parishes. Despite the support of Archbishop Runcie and the urgings of Bishop Allin to his successor, Edmund Browning, only one more meeting of the ECUSA-AEC commission took place in 1987. While the talks were never officially suspended, no further dialogue took place during Browning’s tenure as Presiding Bishop.

The collapse of that initiative left the AEC isolated. But, in 1987 the Metropolitan of the Anglican Catholic Church approached the AEC Primus with a view to beginning talks towards the merger of both bodies. Metropolitan Louis Falk did not enjoy the support of a number of his bishops and other prominent clerical and lay leaders. The sticking points were on the validity of AEC orders, and on the perceived “comprehension” expressed in the AEC Constitution and Canons and practiced by congregations of various strands of churchmanship. From the AEC’s standpoint the rigid party spirit within the Anglican Catholic Church and its declared position of opposing the “Elizabethan Settlement,” a catch phrase for what was perceived by the ACC to be doctrinal and liturgical laxity caused great concern.

Since by now, any possibility of a relationship with ECUSA was remote, the union of extra-mural Anglican bodies seemed the only way forward for the AEC. It had been made clear that Canterbury would only extend some form of recognition to American extra-mural Anglicans if ECUSA gave its permission. By 1987, those in authority in ECUSA were no longer concerned with the plethora of small Continuing jurisdictions. ECUSA seemed secure, and, having recovered from the intramural conflict of the 1970s, no longer fretted over its own internal divisions.

Despite vocal and often acrimonious opposition from bishops and others in the ACC, a plan for organic union with the AEC emerged in 1990. It envisioned a two Province body, divided into dioceses. The Metropolitan of one of the Provinces of the new Church was to be its Primate, with limited authority outside his Province. A draft Constitution and Canons emerged based largely on earlier ECUSA models, amended to create a two Province church not unlike the system in place in England and Ireland.

The question of the validity of Orders was to be resolved by the conditional consecration of all the bishops of the uniting church by Anglican bishops. Most of the dioceses to be incorporated in the emerging church were to remain intact as territorial dioceses. Before the conditional consecrations the bishops of participating dioceses were to re-submit to election by their synods. In time, a uniting Synod was scheduled to be held in Deerfield Beach, Florida in early October 1991. Great enthusiasm accompanied these steps and members of other continuing jurisdictions expressed interest in entering into this union.

A few months before the Deerfield Beach Congress, some bishops of the Anglican Catholic Church opposed to union brought charges against their Metropolitan. A few weeks before the Congress, Metropolitan Falk was deposed. Nevertheless his own diocese, the ACC diocese of the Northeast, along with several disparate congregations of the ACC expressed their loyalty to Bishop Falk and their desire to enter into union with the AEC.

It was decided to go ahead with the unity Congress despite the defection of a majority of ACC bishops and dioceses, which went ahead and elected a successor to Bishop Falk. Over three hundred people assembled in Deerfield Beach. The bishops of the AEC and the ACC who were to unite were affirmed as bishops of the six dioceses that would form the uniting "Anglican Church in America." They received conditional consecration at the hands of Robert Mercer, retired Bishop of Matabeleland in the Province of Central Africa, Robert Mize, Bishop in Residence in the ECUSA diocese of San Joachim and formerly Bishop of Namibia in the Province of Southern Africa, and Charles Boynton, retired suffragan bishop of the ECUSA diocese of New York and previously missionary Bishop of Puerto Rico. The rite used was that contained in the 1928 Book of Common Prayer.

Bishop Falk, formerly of the ACC was elected Metropolitan of the Western Province and Bishop Clavier was elected Metropolitan of the Eastern Province. Both retained their diocesan sees and became full-time bishops without parochial responsibility.

The uniting church contained over 130 congregations nation wide. It became part of the "Traditional Anglican Communion" with member "Continuing Churches" in

Canada, Australia, Ireland, India and Pakistan, replacing the ACC. Archbishop Falk retained his leadership of this worldwide body.

The creation of a uniting church, however, and its success were two very different things. The AEC component in the new body retained its strength in the old Diocese of the Eastern United States. In other areas, parishes from the ACC and the AEC and other bodies attempted to reach accord. Hitherto the AEC enjoyed a remarkable degree of cohesion, and a spirit that continued to look to Anglicanism, both in the past and in the present, for its identity. Many former ACC people remained uneasy about this spirit and preferred to see themselves as heirs of the Tractarian movement, unsullied by reformed Anglicanism. Relationships between the bishops of the united church were yet to develop into the kind of warm and peaceful unity experienced before the merger. The AEC had enjoyed two decades of internal unity, while those who left the ACC were used to conflict and a more political approach to church governance.

The relationship between the two Metropolitans mirrored these differences. While the first General Synod of the united church, held in Kansas City in 1993 went well, conflicts over diocesan boundaries and whether bishops might appeal to extracanonical powers complicated matters. One diocesan bishop participated in the consecration for a church not in communion without seeking permission from the House of Bishops, and another retired bishop followed suit. An Episcopal parish in Illinois sought union with the new church and was received into the diocese of a bishop in the West despite the fact that it was in the territorial jurisdiction of a bishop of a diocese in the Eastern Province. The House of Bishops failed to reach common accord on the problems faced by the uniting church.

During this time, the informal friendship that had existed between the AEC and the Reformed Episcopal Church led to formal talks, although many within the ACA attempted to undermine them. Metropolitan Clavier's meeting with the Reformed Episcopal Church House of Bishops at the beginning of January 1995, although approved by the House of Bishops, encouraged a concerted effort by some to discredit and ultimately remove him from his position.

In reality, the united church was far from being united. Members of the ACA were beginning to discover that while there was doctrinal unity, ideologically the two parties were poles apart. A crisis point was reached, after a four-year build-up, in 1995 when the Archbishop Clavier submitted his resignation to the House of Bishops for personal reasons. The resignation and the elements that caused this action sent shock waves through the church.

In February of that year Clavier's resignation was received and accepted by the House of Bishops of the uniting Anglican Church in America. When that bishop's diocese sought to elect a successor, the Primate, Archbishop Falk intervened, outside his Province and with no canonical footing. The members of the diocesan synod of the East were informed that they would lose membership in the Anglican Church in America if they met in synod, as the canons provided, to elect a successor. Within the next few weeks six members of the ACA House of Bishops resigned. Attempts to negotiate the problem failed. The Synod of the Diocese of the Eastern United States met and elected as its bishop the senior suffragan, Walter Grundorf, who had served a bishop in that diocese since 1976.

During the next few weeks a series of events eventuated in the breakup of the union. Under the leadership of Bishop Grundorf, the old Diocese of the Eastern United States and a rump of the Diocese of the West (numbering about 1,300 members) separated from the ACA and formed the Anglican Province of America. Perhaps the collapse at this most significant attempt to create unity among the Continuing Churches was doomed from the start. Instead of being a real union of the two largest traditional Anglican bodies, it was born in internal conflict among one of the two significant partners in the enterprise and without a serious understanding of the traditions and experience of either body. Certainly the lack of personal accord between the leaders played its part. Certainly time had not elapsed affording a growth into real unity between participating entities.

#### **A RETURN TO PROSPERITY & NEW HORIZONS, 1995 - 2004**

It is significant that after the 1995 breakup of the union, the departing diocese and parishes swiftly returned to the ethos and temperament of the AEC. Most significant of all was the ability of the old AEC, now termed, in the alphabet soup of the Continuum, as the APA (Anglican Province of American) to re-capture its more irenic tone and internal fellowship. After no more than a year of some distress, it began to grow again. Most of its ordinands were being trained at Nashotah House, Duke Divinity School or other seminaries. More and more clergy were full-time. Church buildings continued to be erected. Summer camps for youth began to be organized.

Nor was the APA content to retreat into a ghetto. Very serious talks with the Reformed Episcopal Church after 1995 led inevitably to formal intercommunion and a plan to merge both bodies after a ten-year period of dialogue. A significant theological justification for this unity, grounded in classical Anglican divinity was published. The APA swiftly recovered its membership and the Diocese of the Eastern United States now has more members than in 1995. As of 2004, the APA numbers over 4,000 members, with missions forming in new locations. As of 2003, the average

congregation strength was about seventy-five, cared for by an increasing number of young, seminary-educated clergy.

Even in the face of the Episcopal Church's continued "liberal" trends, formal talks have revived between the APA/REC and ECUSA and were officially endorsed by the 2003 ECUSA General Convention. While it remains to be seen how the controversial measures adopted by ECUSA in 2003 will affect these talks, the willingness of the APA and the REC to explore ways to live "beyond schism" signal a return to that desire and policy that seemed to perish at the end of Presiding Bishop John Allin's primacy. Bishops of the REC and the APA now enjoy unofficial collegial relationships with the leaders of the network of Episcopal dioceses and parishes opposed to the 2003 General Convention's policies. Seeking to be honest and yet open to initiatives from ECUSA and at the same time responding to and initiating fellowship with Network bishops is a complicated task at best. Nevertheless the APA, as heir to the AEC, continues to be determined to live into its heritage as a thoroughly Anglican church in mission. It attracts people from non-Anglican bodies and the unchurched. It now faces the challenge of assimilating a new influx of Episcopalians.

Inevitably, the APA has drawn further away from those Continuing bodies founded after the 1976 General Convention of ECUSA. No formal relations exist with any of the major Continuing bodies. After 1995, the APA has become almost completely reoriented ecumenically towards the REC, ECUSA, and traditionalist organizations within the Anglican Communion. While the break-up of the uniting church established in 1991 undoubtedly deepened the division among traditional Anglicans, in reality it merely demonstrated something unique about the APA. It was founded before the ordination of women was legislated, during those hectic years at the end of the 1960s. While it has addressed the subsequent hot-button events in ECUSA and sought to minister to those who left ECUSA at those times of turmoil, as the oldest of the modern Continuing bodies and the only one which expresses in its formularies and ethos a reverence for Anglican tradition in its comprehensive reality, it has now lived into a second generation whose identity is not ex-Episcopalian. As such the APA offers to people now in conflict a way forward founded in over thirty-five years of existence.