

Important Excerpts from Drs. Toon and Tarsitano's book, *Dear Primates*

The following excerpts reduce its length to about half of the original. Chosen have been those parts arguing for a non-geographic ecclesiastical federation and related topics. The ideas of Drs. Toon and Tarsitano would form a basis for the new Anglican Church (ACNA) as well as ministry partnerships like the Federation of Anglican Churches (FACA). The best sections have been highlighted since they tend to build a rationale for the subject matter found in the epilogue and appendices. The entire book can be read at the link below.

http://www.anglicanbooksrevitalized.us/peter_toons_books_online/Issues/DearPrimates.htm



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PREFACE

*A Letter to His Grace, the Archbishop of Canterbury,
and his fellow Primates of the Anglican Communion:*

Dear Archbishops & Presiding Bishops,

With you we believe, teach and confess that Jesus Christ is our Lord and exalted King-Priest, the same yesterday, today and forever. With you we worship the Father Almighty through His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, using the Common Prayer of our Anglican Way.

We are Episcopalians & Anglicans in the United States of America, who have the particular, chosen vocation to keep the tradition of THE COMMON PRAYER – its use and understanding – alive and well. We are the Board of Directors of the Prayer Book Society, which exists to maintain the historic and classic Book of Common Prayer (1662/1789/1928) both as a Formulary of the Anglican Way and as a Prayer Book in daily use today.

We rejoice that in the larger part of the Anglican Communion and in many languages the Book of Common Prayer is in daily use.

Having been founded in 1971, when the Episcopal Church was beginning to implement the first stages of its modern, perilous agenda, we have often stood alone against innovations, while others of a traditional disposition have sought to try to live with the new forms of worship, doctrine and morality, emerging within the E.C.U.S.A. since the 1970s. We believe that our witness has not been in vain.

We have shared with our friends within the E.C.U.S.A. a profound concern that we now seek to share with you. It is this. The Anglican Way cannot exist meaningfully as a jurisdiction of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church unless its classic and historic Formularies are in place – The Book of Common Prayer containing the forms for the godly life, doctrine and worship of Anglicans, the Ordinal containing the Rites for the ordination of the Bishop, Priest and Deacon, and the Articles of Religion, declaring the doctrinal basis of the Anglican Way and its path through the controversies of the sixteenth century.

Regrettably, as you may know, the Episcopal Church in the U.S.A. set aside these Formularies during the 1970s and has showed no signs whatsoever of restoring them to their rightful place. For example, it continues to call what is manifestly its “Book of Alternative Services” or “An Alternative Service Book” of 1979 by the traditional and hallowed name of “The Book of Common Prayer.” Because of this rejection of the Anglican doctrinal, liturgical and ethical heritage, thousands left the church and what we call the Continuing Anglican Churches came into existence and continue to grow slowly.

We have also made the point, which is developed in detail in this book, that what we now call the Anglican Communion had its first draft in this country at the end of the eighteenth century. Without the later name and without the full realization of the importance of what was being done, an Anglican Communion of Churches (called the Protestant Episcopal Church) came into being in the 1790s, composed of the independent churches of the former colonies. Today, although the American part of the Anglican family is not very large, it has a unique history and, further, it lives and ministers in the richest and most powerful country on earth. Therefore, the story of the Anglican Way in America is an educational as well as a cautionary tale!

We rejoice in the possibility of help and guidance coming from you and the Anglican Communion of Churches to assist in the recovery of the fullness and unity of the Anglican Way on American soil. We look forward in eager anticipation in the United States to the restoration of an Anglican/Episcopal jurisdiction firmly based upon the solid and primary foundation of Holy Scripture and the secondary authority of the historic Formularies.

We ask you, before you make any final decisions about whether or not to press (a) for the provision of “Flying Bishops” within the E.C.U.S.A. to minister to traditional parishes or (b) for the creation of an

entirely new Province of the Anglican Communion in North America, carefully to consider the historical evidence, theological considerations and practical concerns that we present to you in the chapters of this book.

We suggest that it may be beneficial to start with the last chapter, which makes a preliminary case for a new province to exist alongside the present Episcopal Church, and then to return and read the book, beginning at chapter one. We believe that you will learn much from these pages about the nature and history of the Anglican Way in America and you will understand why we were convinced we had a duty to share this information and these insights with you.

The book has been written for us by Dr. Peter Toon and Dr. Louis Tarsitano, who also were the authors of the book, *The Way, the Truth and the Life. The Anglican Walk with Jesus Christ* (St. Peter Publications, Canada) which, in collaboration with the Prayer Book Societies of Australia, Canada and England, we sent to you and all bishops of the Anglican Communion at the time of the Lambeth Conference of 1998.

May the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ guide you in your ministries in the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church, and may he give you wisdom in your relations with American Episcopalians and Anglicans.

Yours truly,
The Board of Directors of the Prayer Book Society,

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PART ONE: THE AMERICAN CHURCH

AS THE FIRST DRAFT OF THE ANGLICAN COMMUNION

The turmoil that has consumed the American Church for the past thirty years represents a threat to the unity of the Anglican Communion and an obstacle to the accomplishment of our two vocations from God. Many of the bishops and other leaders of the Episcopal Church in the United States of America (E.C.U.S.A.), have become enchanted by the relative economic and cultural dominance of the United States in the world today. In their minds, the Great Commission to make disciples for Jesus Christ and to preach his Gospel has apparently been replaced by an obligation to impose a flawed and dysfunctional American secular culture upon the peoples of the world.

Put into practice, this error tends to supplant the Anglican Way of mutual submission within the Body of Jesus Christ with a perverted “American Way” of power politics and the least attractive business methods of large industrial corporations. The aggressive character of this error makes it a matter of consequence to the entire Anglican Communion, and not just a “local problem” to be solved by the Americans alone within the confines of the American church. Other national churches, especially in the industrialized West, have proved vulnerable to it. Those who succumb to it, making it the centerpiece of their religion, abandon the ancient calling to sanctify local culture and regional identities in Jesus Christ. Instead, they work to replace them with their own theoretical constructs and ideologies, judging all who do not willingly comply to be mere primitives and atavisms.

The error of those who control the contemporary E.C.U.S.A. and its General Convention is best typified by their styling themselves and the central organization “the national church.” Anyone familiar with the history of the Anglican Way knows, in contrast, that his “national church” is not just a summary of governing structures, but the spiritual communion of all faithful people, clerical and lay, within his particular nation. Those Americans who have tried to correct this error within their national church have been treated less than charitably. Members of the clergy have been dismissed from their livings. Congregations have had their property confiscated through civil lawsuits claiming that all church property belongs to the redefined “national church.” Tens of thousands of Anglican Christians have been driven from membership in E.C.U.S.A., and sent on their way with the hurtful assertion that they have also been removed from the Anglican Communion without any right of appeal or hope of redress.

A basic Christian concern for charity and justice should fix the attention of the Anglican Communion on the plight of loyal Anglicans in America, as it should anywhere in the world where the brethren are in distress. But beyond the basics of Christian brotherhood, the matter of division in the American church over questions of faith and order runs deeper still, reaching to the very definition of what it means to be an Anglican anywhere in the world.

Apart from the national churches of Britain, the Church in the United States is the oldest, self-governing national jurisdiction in the Anglican Communion. The issue here, however, is not “seniority” but the historical fact that the reorganization of the Church in America after the War for Independence from Great Britain (1775-1783) provided the opportunity to clarify the relation between one national church and another in a communion of Anglicans. It was then that the first steps were taken to guarantee that the communion of Anglicans in the world would be built on a shared doctrine, discipline, and worship (expressed through common and interconnected formularies as “the Anglican Way”), rather than on the pattern of the Roman, Byzantine, or British empires. The Anglicans of that time made the conscious decision not to model themselves on any human empire and its understanding of authority. No one man would rule them, nor any permanent council of rulers. Authority would not emanate from any single nation, but all member churches of the Communion would submit to the spiritual Kingdom of God in the manner of the ancient and undivided Church.

In addition, the American Church of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries served as a type of "proving ground" for the application of the Anglican Way outside of the environment of the established Church of England. Could the Anglican shoot take root in a country where an established church was prohibited by constitutional law? Could it flourish over vast distances in a republic that encompassed a variety of local climates and cultures greater even than the number of formal states? And how could such a church hold together, finding unity in faith rather than in a pre-existing ethnic homogeneity, especially given a mobile population and a constant influx of immigrants from almost every nation in the world?

These are, in miniature, the same sorts of questions that challenge a world-wide communion, even if they were first faced head-on within a single civil jurisdiction, the United States of America. It is critical to notice here that the answers the American church provided to such questions, at least at first, were utterly consistent with the development of the Anglican Way into the Anglican Communion as we know it today. The Americans, however, did not so much "set the pattern" as demonstrate that the faith and practice of the undivided patristic Church, received through the Ecclesia Anglicana ("the English Church"), remain permanently valid as the means of sanctifying the particular and of preserving what is changeless and eternal, to the glory of Almighty God.

Yes, the local congregation of the faithful might have its own ancillary customs and a cultural identity of its own. The Church in a northern state like Connecticut did not have to be a carbon copy of the Church in a southern state like Virginia. No, the local congregation might not abandon what is necessarily common to the Christian identity of the whole Church or seek to change the faith once delivered to the saints. In their own manners, the Churches in Connecticut and in Virginia would preach the same Gospel, celebrate the same liturgy, and promote the same morality.

In this way, the American Church served as a "first draft" of the Anglican Communion, both in its external relations with other Anglican churches and in its internal life and communion. The tragedy for so many American Anglicans in the year 2000 is that they recognize in conscience that the Episcopal Church, under much of its present leadership, is formally abandoning both its own history and its shared history with the rest of the Anglican Communion, losing those graces that make it "Anglican," and in danger of losing its very Christianity. They harbor, as well, the dreadful but reasonable fear that the disorder that currently rules the Episcopal Church, if left unchallenged and uncorrected, could very well serve in this era as the "first draft" for the dissolution or the trivialization of the Anglican Communion.

For these reasons, Anglicans in America, in every-increasing numbers, have begun to appeal to the greater Anglican Communion for aid and relief. Their cry for a new Anglican province in America has not been in pursuit of innovation or of esoteric theories, but the expression of their heartfelt desire for the faith, the church, the order, and the communion that they once possessed without hindrance or strife.

To understand the moderate nature of their goals, therefore, requires a brief look at the history of the Anglican Way in America.

SOME CRITICAL DETAILS

The Anglican history of North America began with the great navigators and adventurers of Queen Elizabeth's reign. In 1578, a fleet commanded by Martin Frobisher crossed the Atlantic in search of the Northwest Passage, accompanied by its chaplain Master Wolfall, whom Hakluyt describes as desirous of the spiritual welfare of the native peoples of the New World. Whether or not Wolfall was able to fulfill his missionary intentions, we do know that he celebrated the Holy Communion for the officers and gentlemen of the fleet on land, making this the first Prayer Book service conducted on North American soil.

Similarly, in the following year, during his circumnavigation of the world, Sir Francis Drake made landfall at what is now called "Drake's Bay" on the Pacific Coast of the State of California. His chaplain's

administrations there were the first use of the Book of Common Prayer within the present boundaries of the United States.

It is easy to forget just how connected these events were to the English Reformation. While the chaplains used the 1559 Elizabethan edition of the Book of Common Prayer, the complete English liturgy of the reformed English Church had appeared barely thirty years earlier with the first Prayer Book of 1549 and the Ordinal of 1550. Less than fifty years before, the Church of England had declared her liberty as a national church within the one Church of Jesus Christ from the claims of the Bishop of Rome to universal authority. Thus, the chaplains' ministry represented not only the English Church as she had always been in worshipping Almighty God, but also as she had become – praying in English according to a formulary published by the authority of the English Church herself. It is fair to say, then, that America has participated in most of the history of the Ecclesia Anglicana since the Reformation. And the devotion of the average American churchman to the Reformation must never be underestimated, whatever the current fascinations of the clergy.

The desire of the first Anglo-Americans for religious continuity with the reformed church is illustrated by a clause in the charter of Sir Humphrey Gilbert's short-lived colony in Newfoundland, where he landed in 1583, requiring that the laws of the colony should not "be against the true Christian faith or religion now professed in the Church of England." Gilbert's half-brother, Sir Walter Raleigh, took up the same colonial cause in the colony of Roanoke in "Virginia" (now part of North Carolina). There, in 1587, Manteo, a native of that country, and Virginia Dare, the first English child born in the New World, received the sacrament of Baptism according to the Book of Common Prayer. The Prayer Book was the tie that bound native American and colonial together in communion with Jesus Christ and in communion with the home Church so many miles away.

While no permanent settlement in what were to become the United States succeeded until the founding of Jamestown, in Virginia, in 1607, these earlier events both established the basis for the self-understanding of future American Anglicans and also demonstrated the sheer geographical challenge of building a "national church" that would one day have to span a continent.

Consider, then, the distance between those first Prayer Book services, between Drake's Bay on the West Coast and Roanoke on the East, approximately 2600 miles. If we experiment with this distance on a globe, we find that it is a greater distance than separates St. John's, Newfoundland from London, and about the same distance between Paris and Tehran. It is a shorter trip from London to Jerusalem by several hundred miles, as it is from Lagos, Nigeria to Nairobi, Kenya, or from Singapore to Darwin, Australia. The same distance will take one from Cairo to Dar es Salaam, or not quite from Singapore to Nagasaki, or from Bogota to Rio de Janeiro, or even from Recife in Brazil across the ocean again to Lagos in Africa.

This represents only the horizontal or East-West dimension of what became the United States, but even without considering the North-South axis, we can appreciate the variety of cultures and of local nuances that such a distance can contain, and actually does contain, whether in Europe, Asia, Africa, Australia, or America. The size and regional diversity of the United States, more even than the non-establishment clause of the federal Constitution (Amendment I: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion..."), are what caused the Church necessarily to be "in" rather than "of" the United States of America. The American Church was meant to be, in reality, a communion of regional churches rather than a monolithic institution.

CHAPTER TWO

The American Communion from 1789

The Treaty of Paris in 1783 officially ended the American Revolution. Under its terms, Great Britain recognized both the geographic boundaries and the independence of the United States of America. This independence, moreover, was ecclesiastical as well as political in nature. It was no longer possible or proper for the established Church of England, with her oaths of loyalty to the Crown, to oversee the spiritual life of American Anglicans, even if they shared with the members of the Church of England a common religious heritage and tradition. In fact that very heritage stood in the way of such an arrangement.

UNITY WITHOUT UNIFORMITY

In the Reformation of the sixteenth century, the Church of England had asserted her own independence from the Church of Rome and that church's claims of universal ecclesiastical jurisdiction on the basis of nationality. The historic Anglican position was clear. No one national church, however ancient or honorable, has the intrinsic authority to rule the church of any other nation. On the other hand, the authority of each national church has distinct and objective limits.

The Church of England had said as much in her Thirty-nine Articles: "Every particular or national Church hath authority to ordain, change, and abolish, Ceremonies or Rites of the Church ordained only by man's authority, so that all things be done to edifying" (Article XXXIV, "Of the Traditions of the Church"). A national church has self-governance only in those matters under "man's authority."

What has been divinely given, as attested to by the Holy Ghost and embodied by the faith and practice of the undivided Church of Jesus Christ, must always remain beyond of the scope of human authority. As the same Articles affirm, "The Church hath power to decree Rites and Ceremonies, and authority in Controversies of Faith; and yet it is not lawful for the Church to ordain any thing that is contrary to God's Word written, neither may it expound one place in Scripture, that it be repugnant to another" (Article XX, "Of the Authority of the Church").

Article XX also declares the Church to be "a witness and keeper of Holy Writ," and it is on this foundation in Holy Scripture that each national church exercises its duty that "all things be done to edifying." Divine revelation may not be altered or abridged, but each national church must deliver God's changeless Truth to its own people in a manner congruent with their culture and national life, if the people are to be truly edified. The manner of feasting and fasting; the use of art, music, and language; and the expression of reverence, solemnity, and joy will necessarily vary from nation to nation and culture to culture, ever in conformity to Holy Scripture and godly tradition.

Similarly, beyond the basic principles of the common law of the Christian Church, summarized for Anglicans in the Ordinal as a formulary that shapes our common life across national boundaries, the details and arrangements of church polity within the various national churches fall under the category of edification. Democratic or representational structures may be conducive to the welfare of the Church in one nation, but not in another. In any case, "democracy" and "representation" are not ends in themselves, but means to an end – the propagation of the Gospel in a particular culture. Likewise, the manner of electing bishops, the extent of their temporal authority, and whether or not the bishop is to act as the patriarch of the extended Christian family, as well as a chief pastor in the Church, are matters for the godly judgment of the Church in each nation.

It is far too easy, within the confines of our daily lives within our own national churches, to confuse the governing arrangements with which we are most familiar with universal constants. An examination of history, however, will immediately demonstrate that the sanctity of a national church is not determined by its establishment, its non-establishment, or its opposition by the civil government, but by its faithfulness. Before and after the Edict of Milan (A.D. 313), the ancient Church at various times had

all three of these relations to the state. Nevertheless, the Church remained one and the same Body of Christ.

Neither was the greatness of the “great bishops” of the first millennium determined by their adherence to a single, uniform understanding of the administration of Biblical episcopacy. The gifts and character of the men who exercised the episcopate varied according to God’s providence and their vocation to serve the needs of a particular people in a particular place. From the perspective of theoretical analysis, as applied by the medieval scholastics or by our modern management schools, the urban ministry of St. Leo the Great and the itinerant, tribal ministry of his contemporary St. Patrick have little in common. Little, that is, except for their effectiveness as bishops, as pastors and teachers of the Faith, in very different ways under very different circumstances.

Abstract theory fails before the concrete variety of God’s actual work in his Church through history. It is only the imposition of the details of one time and place upon all others, whether the details fit or not. In contrast, our Lord gave his Apostles and his Church a vocation to make disciples of all nations, and not a commandment to make all nations interchangeable on earthly terms. The failure to recognize this difference was a major cause of the Great Schism between East and West, and of the fragmentation of the Western Church in the sixteenth century. Unity, the spiritual communion of one national church with another, was sacrificed on an altar of universal conformity to a single human model of ecclesiastical administration.

A twin set of challenges, then, confronted the Church of England and the as yet unorganized national church of the United States of America from the moment of the signing of the Treaty of Paris in 1783. First, how were the churches of the two nations to maintain their spiritual communion after their civil separation, without recreating the coercive ecclesiastical structures that had led to the English Reformation of the sixteenth century? Communion itself had to be framed in such terms that permitted it to constitute both the connection between the churches and also their means of mutual discipline and conformity to something greater than themselves.

Second, within the United States of America, how were the churches in the several states to relate to one another? Their internal communion would have to parallel that between the Church of England and their own national church. Otherwise, the new American ecclesiastical constitution would have to deny the reality of civil states and regional cultures that understood themselves to be constituents of, but not subservient to, the national government.

The latter scheme was never a real possibility in the United States. A long-standing, general opposition to establishment (made a formal prohibition in 1791, in the First Amendment to the federal Constitution) would never have permitted the church in one region to enforce its will on the church in another by an appeal to an American or a foreign government, whether civil or ecclesiastical. So deep-seated is the American antipathy to ecclesiastical coercion that no Roman Catholic was elected President of the United States until John F. Kennedy in 1960. Crucial to his victory was his public denial that the papacy would have any influence upon his conduct of the presidency.

LIFE WITHOUT AN EARTHLY KING

The central American question in the 1780s, then, was how to organize a common, corporate life without an earthly king or a House of Lords temporal and spiritual. The American founders were on the whole, with a few notable exceptions, conservative men. Their instincts went against the invention of a whole new polity, so they looked to the past for models of what their nation’s civic and religious relations ought to be.

The model they chose for their civil polity was the Roman Republic. No hereditary king or assembly of lords would rule the United States, but temporarily elected executives, senators, and representatives. Religious life would not be governed as an interest or a department of state, but left to the voluntary

obedience of the citizens, guided by their own consciences. These provisions for self-government would be supported by two different, but complementary, means.

The first means was a written constitution, to be administered as an explicit rule of law that restrained both the governors and the governed. The second was the use of historic republican imagery. The Latin motto “e pluribus unum” (“from many, one”) compared the American states to the united tribes that had formed the Roman Republic. The Roman “fasces,” the bundle of rods that represented the binding together of many local authorities to create a national authority, became an American symbol, too. George Washington and his officers from the War of Independence were called “Cincinnati,” after the Roman republican hero Cincinnatus. Just as that ancient citizen soldier had, they had taken up arms in a national emergency, fought a war, and then laid down their swords again to return to their farms and private business.

Those who organized the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America were also influenced by the republicanism at work in the civil order, but it would be a mistake to think of their work as only the creation of a religious republic within a civil one. Certainly, these American Anglicans met in convention to establish a constitution and rule of law for their church (1785), and they believed that those who exercised any authority in the church must themselves be governed by the church’s law. But beginning with the future Bishop White’s pamphlet of 1782, “The Case of the Episcopal Churches in the United States of America Considered,” something more profound was taking place.

What William White (Bishop of Pennsylvania, 1787-1836 and consecrated by bishops of the Church of England) outlined in his pamphlet is usually called the “federal plan” for the organization of the American Church. This plan was summarized and refined as “six fundamental principles” by a convention of Pennsylvania clergy and laity in 1784:

1. That the Episcopal church in these states is and ought to be independent of all foreign Authority, ecclesiastical and civil.
2. That it hath, and ought to have, in common with all other religious Societies, full and exclusive Powers to regulate the concerns of its own communion.
3. That the Doctrines of the Gospel be maintained, as now professed by the church of England; and Uniformity of Worship be continued, as near as may be to the liturgy of said church.
4. That the succession of the ministry be agreeable to the usage which requireth the three orders of bishops, priest, and deacons; that the rights and powers of the same respectively be ascertained; and that they be exercised according to reasonable Laws, to be duly made.
5. That to make canons or laws, there be no other authority than that of a representative body of the clergy and laity conjointly.
6. That no powers be delegated to a general ecclesiastical government, except such as cannot conveniently be exercised by the clergy and vestries in their respective congregations. (Clara O. Loveland, *The Critical Years: The Reconstitution of the Anglican Church in the United States of America: 1780-1789* [Greenwich, Connecticut, Seabury Press, 1956], p.71).

These principles eventually became the basis for the Constitution and Canons of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America, but the Church in another state, Connecticut, offered a plan of its own.

This second proposal for reorganization centered around Samuel Seabury (Bishop of Connecticut, 1784-1796 and consecrated by nonjuring bishops in Scotland), and it is usually called “the ecclesiastical plan.” From the date of Bishop Seabury’s consecration (1784), it is obvious that the Church in Connecticut acted to organize itself five years in advance of the rest of the American Church, which did not as a whole agree to a final Constitution and Canons or adopt an American edition of the Book of Common Prayer until the General Convention of 1789.

The explanation for this difference in approaches lies in part in the general understanding that the churches in the several states were in effect “national churches” able to act because they served independent states, albeit within a wider civil union. Just as important, however, was the “ecclesiastical plan” itself, which may be summarized as the argument that: “The first thing necessary is to secure bishops; nothing binding can be enacted by the Church until the Church is present; the Church is not present and cannot be until its chief officers are on the ground; anything which such conventions as this [the Constitutional Convention held in Philadelphia in 1785] may do will be but as the arrangements which children make in households while the father is abroad; when he comes he may set them all aside; the bishop is the source of all authority; in his absence there is no authority” (S. D. McConnell, *History of the American Episcopal Church 1600-1915*, eleventh ed. [Milwaukee: Morehouse, 1934], pp. 240-241).

The difficulties with such an opinion for most of Seabury’s fellow Americans were three-fold. First, the Anglican Church had functioned in North America for centuries without a resident bishop. More to the point, the Church had continued to function since the Declaration of Independence in 1776. To declare the Church either non-existent or powerless, either before or after the Declaration, seemed insupportable based on her continued practical reality. Second, the “ecclesia” of Seabury’s “ecclesiastical plan” was not so much the Church through the ages as the developed polity of the church of the European high Middle Ages and of national settlements following the Reformation. Third, a great number of Seabury’s fellow clergy especially feared that his consecration by the Scottish non-jurors might jeopardize future communion with the Church of England, which was not in communion herself with the non-jurors.

The Anglican churches in the United States were in danger of losing their inter-communion over conflicting visions of the future of the Church and through a possible discontinuity in their episcopal successions. In the event, however, the state churches avoided this fragmentation. They achieved spiritual union at the General Convention of 1789 by what is often described as a compromise between the federal and ecclesiastical plans. Indeed, if that supposed “compromise” were all that the leaders of the Church had achieved, their accomplishment would still have been noteworthy. By the adoption of a common law, and the ratification of a common formulary of doctrine, discipline, and worship (the American edition of the Book of Common Prayer), they gave the reorganized American Church a clear and rational order. Not only did they preserve the historic spiritual authority of bishops (the main concern of the “ecclesiastical plan”), but they also agreed that every member of the Church, including the bishop, would be answerable to every other in a constitutional polity (the main goal of the “federal plan”).

But what happened at that General Convention in Philadelphia goes deeper than a political compromise. The conflicting visions of the future were resolved in a shared vision that united what was best in both. A hint of the uniting vision may be found in this advice from the Connecticut clergy: “A Bishop in Connecticut must, in some degree, be of the primitive style. With patience and a share of primitive zeal, he may rest for support on the Church he serves, as head in her ministrations, unornamented with temporal dignity, and without the props of secular power. An Episcopate of this plain and simple character. . . we hope may pass unenvied, and its sacred functions be performed unobstructed” (Loveland, *op. cit.*, p. 95).

Another element that points to the basis of the achievement of 1789 was the success of the backers of the “federal plan” in admitting the laity into the governing bodies of the reorganized Church as an “estate” or “order” in themselves. The newly adopted ecclesiastical constitution appealed to the polity of the Church in the Roman Empire before the period of Constantine the Great. In fact, the constitution:

...proposed an arrangement which had not been in operation for fifteen centuries, – probably for sixteen. It was a return to the practice of the most primitive period. Those who were under the domination of the ecclesiastical ideas which had been current at least since Constantine’s time, like Bishop Seabury and his fellow-prelates in England, stumbled at it. It was true that kings and princes had for centuries had a potential voice in causes ecclesiastic, but this had not been in their capacity as laymen, but as “ministers ordained by God.” The plan proposed was radically different, and it had no contemporary illustrations. The churches then in existence which were organized after the Independent fashion were based upon the theory which they still maintain, – that there is no genuine distinction between priests and laymen. To their view they are both alike, and equally, “kings and priests unto God.” In the Presbyterian scheme the elders, who at first glance might be taken for laymen, were not so, but were ordained men. For the scheme proposed by the [American] Church, which has as an organizing principle the doctrine of the Ministry, there was no example extant, and it had no imitators for many a year. It is the key to a proper understanding of the Church’s legislation since its adoption (McConnell, op. cit., pp. 243-244).

The two competing views, “ecclesiastical” and “federal,” came together spiritually, and not just politically, on the basis of an appeal to the “primitive” Church. Both parties found themselves searching for much the same thing, albeit in different ways – a Biblical and apostolic church to spread the Gospel in the United States. Just as their civil counterparts looked back to the Roman Republic as a model for the new American republic, the leaders of the American Church found their unity in the model of the primitive Church before Constantine’s or any other later ruler’s establishment of the Church by means of state power.

Without establishment, a church cannot be “of a nation,” but only “in a nation,” as was the case with the Church in the Roman Empire before the fourth century and would be the case in the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States. Just as the ancient Church had to deal with different local cultures and vast territories without the aid of the State (and often with the State’s opposition), the Church “in the United States of America” would have to evangelize without appeal to civil power and without a civil means of coercion. Furthermore, without establishment, the American bishops could not be “lords spiritual” seated with the “lords temporal.” As their most ancient predecessors were, the American bishops would have to be chief pastors and spiritual fathers who exercised authority by and under God, within God-given limits.

The disparate voices at Philadelphia in 1789 came together in agreement upon a national church conceived of as a local exhibit of the spiritual kingdom of Christ, of the same dignity and self-government as any other national church. The new national church would certainly have a human government on earth, but it would be limited to the role of pastoral care-taker, without any claim to being an absolute law-giver or a maker of doctrines inconsistent with the belief of the rest of Christ’s Church in history. This limited authority meant, furthermore, that the American Church was to be a “communion of jurisdictions,” formed by the common assent of its constituent members, beginning at the local congregation. Parishes would unite to form a diocese, and dioceses would unite to form the national church.

So complete was this original dedication to an existence based on spiritual communion that the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America has never been civilly incorporated as a national entity. The Church in America had no national corporation of any sort until the General

Convention in 1835 formed the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America, making every member of the church a member of the society as well. This society was incorporated under the law of the State of New York in 1846 (White and Dykman, *Annotated Constitution and Canons for the Government of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America*, second edition, [Greenwich, Connecticut: Seabury Press, 1954], vol. 1, pp. 177-178).

It should be noted, however, that such a missionary society is entirely consistent with the earlier enunciated fundamental principle of the formation of the American Church, "That no powers be delegated to a general ecclesiastical government, except such as cannot conveniently be exercised by the clergy and vestries in their respective congregations." It was not until the 1960s that the General Convention and the administrative offices under the Presiding Bishop began to claim exclusively for themselves the style "the national church," replacing the older idea that the national church was the spiritual communion of all people and all jurisdictions within the American Church. Additionally, it was in this period that the General Convention began to claim for itself the authority to reopen settled matters of universal Christian doctrine and order and to legislate contrary to the doctrine and practice of the ancient and undivided Church.

From these abrogations of the originally agreed to American principles and order of church government and mutual communion have come today's many controversies within the American Church. This breaking of the bonds among Americans, however, also affects the communion of American Anglicans with the rest of the Anglican Communion, and threatens the unity of the Anglican Communion itself, as we shall see.

...

THE FORMULARIES AS MEANS TO COMMUNION

The key is the formularies, particularly the Book of Common Prayer, not as an absolute end in themselves, but as a means to communion in a shared faith and order. The Convention of the reorganizing American Church that met in Philadelphia in 1785 took three important actions. The first was to petition the Archbishops and bishops of the Church of England to confer the episcopate upon the men elected to that office by their home state conventions. The second was to draft a constitution for the new church. The third was to prepare a "proposed" Prayer Book only loosely connected to the English Book of Common Prayer, if at all.

The granting of the Americans' petition by the Church of England turned finally upon the Americans' willingness to amend the latter two actions in conformity with Anglican faith and practice. We saw earlier that the Episcopal Church's proposed constitution was, indeed, amended at the General Convention of 1789, to preserve the historic spiritual and sacramental office of the bishop. Likewise, at the Convention of 1789, the "Proposed Book" of 1785 was abandoned in its entirety, with its many departures from the historic Anglican Way (see further chapter VII below).

These were no small matters, since the English bishops responded to the American petition of 1785 by observing:

For while we are anxious to give every proof not only of our brotherly affection, but of our facility in forwarding your wishes, we cannot but be extremely cautious, lest we should be the instruments of establishing an ecclesiastical system which will be called a branch of the Church of England but afterwards may possibly appear to have departed from it essentially either in doctrine or discipline (in *The Ancient Canons*, p. 9).

In response to the English bishops, the American Convention of June 1786 unanimously replied, "While doubts remain of our continuing to hold the same essential articles of faith and discipline with

the Church of England, we acknowledge the propriety of suspending compliance with our request.” The members of Convention went on to declare and promise:

We are unanimous and explicit in our answering your Lordships, that we neither have departed, nor propose to depart from the doctrines of your Church. We have retained the discipline and forms of worship, as far as consistent with our Civil Constitution (both in *The Ancient Canons*, p. 12).

The General Convention of 1789 made good on this promise by the adoption of the first American edition of the Book of Common Prayer, consistent with that of the Church of England. The Preface to that Prayer Book, discussed earlier, adopted the terms of the 1786 declaration to the English bishops as a permanent obligation of the American Church.

As well it should have, since an essential agreement in the doctrine, discipline, and worship as received by, and from, the Church of England became the basis for the worldwide Anglican Communion. Likewise, the adoption of formularies consistent in all spiritual matters with the formularies of the Church of England became the objective standard of expressing this uniting and essential agreement in doctrine, discipline, and worship. Lastly, the English bishops’ withholding of formal communion until both essential agreement and its objective expression were achieved became the Anglican Communion’s chief power, not only in matters of unity, but also in discipline.

From the experience gained in these early “experiments” leading to the communion of the Church of England with the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States, the mature principles of the Anglican Communion have been refined. The Anglican Communion has never commanded or ruled its constituent national churches. Rather, it has maintained faith and order by virtue of a first allegiance to Christ, the doctrine of the Holy Scriptures, and the order of the undivided Church, upon which it has granted or withheld membership and communion.

So successful was the work of the English bishops in the 1780s, that in 1814 both houses of the American General Convention adopted a “declaration of identity,” which read in part:

*The Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America is the same body heretofore known in these states by the name of the Church of England; the change of name, although not of religious principle in doctrine, or in worship, or in discipline, being induced by a characteristic of the Church of England, supposing the independence of the Christian churches, under the different sovereignties, to which respectively, their allegiance in civil concerns belongs. But that when the severance alluded to took place, and ever since, this Church conceives of herself as professing and acting on the principles of the Church of England, is evident from the organization of our Conventions, and from their subsequent proceedings, as recorded in our Journals (in *The Ancient Canons*, p. 14).*

...

Epilogue – The Anglican Way in America

As we have tried to demonstrate in this book, what happens to American Anglicans will have an effect, for good or for ill, on the Anglican Communion. The histories of the Church in America and of the Anglican Communion have been too closely related, and even intertwined, to separate them easily today.

The Episcopal Church in the United States of America is not dead, but we believe (for all the reasons we have examined and discussed) that it is pursuing an ecclesiastical dead end. The Anglican Way and the Communion of Churches that has gathered to follow it are not exercises in the free-association of ideas and theories. They are not meant to be the prisoners of an age or of that age's secular philosophy and politics. Rather, they are something in particular, and something lovable, and something to beseech Almighty God to protect.

The particularity of the Anglican Way is to be found in its essentially “primitive” Faith and discipline. We believe what the Scriptures teach, and what the Apostles and the Fathers preached and taught. We try to do what our Lord Jesus Christ taught his Apostles and disciples to do. So simple and basic a system of Christianity has also, by necessity, a simple structure and a simple set of standards.

We are a Communion of national churches, which are themselves communions of dioceses, formed by the communion of parishes and people in the Lord Jesus Christ. We enforce little upon one another, except to require that the members of this household share in a common doctrine, discipline, and worship. We maintain that commonality by the Holy Scriptures as the primary formulary of our lives, with the aid of the formularies of the undivided Church, from which we derive a set of shared Anglican formularies, such as the Book of Common Prayer and the Ordinal. Our highest sanction, almost our only sanction beyond our provisions for local discipline, is the sad recognition that some person, diocese, province, or national church has gone beyond the generous limits of our communion in Christ.

Some people, both within and without our Communion, might say that such a system is too simple for this complex age. But life is complicated for the people of every age, and the survival of the Anglican Way through so many centuries is a witness to its inherent strength and vitality. To have come so far together is to see that we can go further still, and that we have, by the grace of God, a future together.

It will not solve our current problems to adopt the forms or discipline of some other Christian communion. All we would be doing is adopting someone else's problems, past and present, as well. No, if we are a true household in Jesus Christ, then we must solve our problems within the household that Christ has given us, and according to the forms and formularies he has made our inheritance. We will not save what we are by becoming something else.

And that is the crisis presented to us by the Episcopal Church, whether we live in the United States or not. If we and our Communion should follow the Episcopal Church down its current dead end, we will certainly become something else, and become unrecognizable as Anglican Christians. There is, however, an absolute solution to dead ends. When we have entered one, we need only to reverse our course, to retrace our steps, until we find ourselves on the right way again, in this case the Anglican Way. This we can do, because that Way is so clearly marked. And we can call our brethren back to this Way, without condemnation or abuse, but simply out of fraternal love and the love of Christ in us.

It is in this spirit that the call for a new Anglican province in America has arisen. However much that call may need to be refined and clarified, and however long it takes the chief pastors of our worldwide Communion to transform that call into a reality, this much is certain. No initiative, no call for spiritual assistance has ever taken the Anglican Communion more seriously.

What follows is something of a preliminary outline of what such a new province for America might be, and of how it might come to be. There are, of course, serious questions of episcopal jurisdiction that must be addressed, as the 1998 Lambeth Conference clearly indicated. Nevertheless, we can assert with

a clear conscience that nothing in the following proposal contradicts the Lambeth Conference, or the history of the Anglican Communion, as far as we can see.

We seek only a path out of a dead end and back to the Anglican Way. We look to you, dear Primates, to teach us and to help us find that Way.

PRELIMINARY DEFINITIONS

Let us begin by considering the possibility that the undivided and geographic exercise of the episcopate are not quite the same thing, but represent two different functions (or “governing principles”) of a bishop as a chief pastor in God’s Church.

Just as there can be only one Father in heaven, one father in a human family, and one husband of one wife, the bishop ordinary must be the one and only chief pastor of his diocese, which must function as both a loving household and an orderly jurisdiction within the One Church of Jesus Christ. No one may properly intervene in the jurisdiction of such a chief pastor, if he abides in the received doctrine, discipline, and worship of the Church. Even in the extreme case of a bishop ordinary who departs from the doctrine, discipline, and worship of the Church (whether in his episcopal duty or in his personal behavior), it is in accordance with the historic discipline of the Church that only other chief pastors may intervene for the welfare of his soul and of the souls under his care. This is the principle of the undivided episcopate.

In order for the undivided episcopate (and the ecclesiastical communion that serves as its basis) to have meaning, there must be explicit boundaries established by the mutual consent of the Church for each chief pastor’s spiritual jurisdiction. These boundaries have traditionally been expressed in geographical terms, beginning with the city in which the bishop has his seat, and including all other places, parishes, and institutions under his care. This is the geographic principle of the episcopate, and it dates back to New Testament references to the Church “in such and such a place” (e.g., Corinth, Ephesus, or Galatia).

While the first principle (the “undivided” episcopate) has been and should remain immutable, the second (the “geographic” episcopate) has in practice undergone a variety of reformulations. Most commonly, such an adjustment has been made in the direction of describing a bishop’s jurisdiction as over “such and such a people, in such and such a place.” In this case, the bishop ordinary remains the sole chief pastor of his jurisdiction (maintaining the principle of an undivided episcopate), and his jurisdiction is, indeed, described in geographic terms, but also in the human terms of the particular people that he serves.

Is it possible, then, for the jurisdiction of one bishop to overlap that of another, in terms of geography, without violating the principle of an undivided episcopate? Those who would argue on the basis of abstract principle will say “no,” but the concrete experience of the Church’s ministry through history will answer otherwise.

A CONSIDERATION OF HISTORY

The legalization of Christianity by the Roman Empire provided the Church with an already existing set of geographical boundaries based on the civil divisions of the Empire itself. It was in this period that the bishop’s cure began to be called a “diocese” (in the Roman system, “a region under a governor”), rather than a “parish” (a “paroikia,” “a way-station for pilgrims”). Furthermore, the Empire provided the Church with a civil means of enforcing geographic jurisdiction in the most literal sense: one region, one bishop. Such a system made eminently good sense in an undivided Church under a single temporal government that was able, in the person of the Emperor, to call the bishops of the Church into General Council.

The demise of the Roman Empire, first in the West and later in the East, necessarily caused a change in the ordering and description of episcopal jurisdiction. Where there had been a unified civil

government there was now a more or less constant conflict of tribes, warlords, and migrating peoples striving for dominance over very much smaller pieces of territory (for a recounting of this complex history, see Richard Fletcher, *The Barbarian Conversion: From Paganism to Christianity* [New York: Holt, 1997]). Inevitably, the cure of souls among these struggling peoples and their disputed territories would overlap.

The matter was complicated still further by the Great Schism of 1054. In essence, the leaders of both the Church in the West and of the Church in the East claimed a mutually exclusive universal spiritual jurisdiction over the entire world. From this point forward, in actual practice, the jurisdiction of bishops has overlapped geographically on the basis of disputed civil jurisdiction; demographics (the peoples and cultures served); and communion (the Eastern and Western Communion at first, later Roman, Anglican, Lutheran, etc.).

The formation of nation states and national churches may seem to have simplified the geographic boundaries of episcopal jurisdiction in large measure, but that simplification is not as great as it may appear. The nation states were formed by one people (or associated set of peoples) conquering all others within a territory. The ruling houses, after consolidating their civil control to establish the nation states, also used their temporal power to establish the boundaries of the ecclesiastical jurisdictions of the newly defined realm, often replacing the bishops of the defeated peoples with bishops of their own connection. William the Conqueror, for example, brought with him a mainly Norman episcopate.

Such stability as the relation of nation states and their national churches may have provided did not prove enduring. Without slighting the serious theological issues at stake in the Reformation of the 16th century, one may also observe that it was the conflicting claims of geographic episcopal jurisdiction, under the stress of national aspirations and international claims of universal authority, that led to the visible fracture of the Western Church.

A great deal of bloody struggle and outright warfare accompanied the fragmentation of the Western Church in the throes of the Protestant Reformation and the Roman Counter-Reformation. It should come as no surprise, then, that mindful of this terrible example, the writers of new civil constitutions began to disentangle episcopal jurisdiction from temporal power. The 18th century Constitution of the United States, for example, explicitly denies the civil government the authority to establish any ecclesiastical jurisdiction. Since that time, moreover, both in older nations with established churches and in nations newly organized, it has become a mark of civilization and morality to emancipate the conscience of believers from civil control. Whatever the civil rights the various ecclesiastical jurisdictions may retain in these countries, they do not possess the ability to call upon the civil power to enforce their will upon their people.

AMERICA: A CASE IN PARTICULAR

The United States of America is often called “a nation of immigrants.” With the exception of the descendants of the indigenous peoples present at the time of European colonization, every American must trace his ancestry to another continent. The immigrants, moreover, brought with them their cultures, languages, religions, and their ecclesiastical backgrounds.

The various waves of immigrants to America have both adopted a general American culture and changed that culture by their own contributions to it. They have also, quite often, retained a cultural identity of their own, within the wider American culture. Now, more than at any other time in American history, the preservation of a distinct and particular cultural identity, within a larger whole, is considered by Americans to be an essential element of their full humanity. This is a belief that they hold in common with most of the peoples of the world, as everywhere people search for their roots and most basic cultural identities. Paradoxically, this search for legitimate diversity may prove the key to a greater unity among mankind, if such identities are conceived (and nurtured) as complementary parts of a greater reality.

It is in this context that the episcopate has always been exercised in America. The Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States (the full original name of the E.C.U.S.A.) was conceived in 1789 as a spiritual communion of Anglicans in jurisdictions serving a varied and vast territory with a number of valid local cultures and expressions. Furthermore, the jurisdiction of every Episcopal bishop has always overlapped that of his Roman Catholic counterpart, and usually that of at least one Orthodox bishop. Each bishop remains the sole chief pastor in his jurisdiction, and his jurisdiction is described geographically, but not exclusively.

If we take the example of the Orthodox churches in America, we will find, not a single geographical jurisdiction, but a variety of overlapping cures of souls. The Standing Conference of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in America (SCOBA) is made up of representatives from Greek, Albanian, Carpatho-Russian, Ukrainian, Antiochian, Serbian, Romanian, Bulgarian, and Russian (Orthodox Church in America) episcopal jurisdictions. These jurisdictions serve primarily those who share a common historic and cultural identity, wherever they are to be found, but full communion is maintained among them, and their members may transfer from one jurisdiction to another.

Similarly, the Roman Catholic Church in America, besides its bishops, dioceses, and parishes of the Western (Latin) Rite, comprehends overlapping episcopal jurisdictions that serve Melkites, Ukrainians, Lithuanians, Romanians, Maronites, Chaldeans, Ruthenians, and Syrians. These jurisdictions, too, are in full, active communion with one another, and are considered valid jurisdictions within the wider Roman Communion.

This information about the Roman and Orthodox Communion, by the way, as is true of the Anglican information given below, is not confidential or secret. It is derived from Web Sites published by the various bodies, and available to anyone with a computer and modem.

It may be suggested by some that Anglicans do not operate in this fashion, but that is not the case. The E.C.U.S.A. has established a special episcopal jurisdiction called Navajoland, to serve a particular group of native people. In addition, there are some twenty congregations of the Church of South India at work in the United States and Canada, under the oversight of the Moderator of that Church domiciled in India. The Church of South India, of course, is a constituent member of the Anglican Communion, just as the E.C.U.S.A. is, but both serve side by side in the United States, without a breach of communion or a violation of the unified episcopate. The same is true of the C.S.I. and the Anglican Church in Canada.

THE LOGIC OF A NEW AMERICAN PROVINCE

The churches of the Church of South India in North America and Canada explain their existence by the following statement published on their Web Site, quoted here verbatim:

The purpose of C.S.I. churches in North America is to practice traditional worship in our native style and to educate our younger generation to grow in the C.S.I. culture. Moreover, it's a fellowship of the native people living apart with the same tradition, to strengthen their friendship and faith in Jesus Christ.

Since we have the backgrounds of Anglican, Methodist, Congregational, Presbyterian and Episcopal, why can't we go to one of these churches? The answer is mentioned above, Community relation and cultural practice. I did not mean that we shouldn't go to any churches other than C.S.I., the importance I emphasize on native Fellowship. I know people drove 60 to 80 miles to attend the C.S.I. church to have communion with the same people. Our purpose in North America and Canada is not to make more churches in the same area, but to have C.S.I. traditional worship and fellowship together.

In the present American environment, no desire could be more basic, more innocent, or more laudable – to maintain the practice of the faith once delivered in the manner that Providence has delivered it to a particular people and culture, according to the accustomed formularies, in communion

with the rest of the Church. Nothing in this ministry of the Church of South India violates the principle of a united episcopate, since there is no intention to harm or usurp the legitimate jurisdiction of the Episcopal Church, or to break communion with it. By serving along side the jurisdictions of the Episcopal Church, the C.S.I. congregations and their Moderator serve the greater unity of the Anglican Communion, by an act of inclusion, rather than exclusion.

The goals of those who seek a new Anglican province in America are remarkably similar and equally innocent. Their intention is not the destruction of the Episcopal Church, its exclusion from the Anglican Communion, or its replacement with a new entity, but the inclusion of those Anglicans who are not presently being served in the E.C.U.S.A. by reason of their religious and cultural identity.

Just as the differences among some of the cultural groups served in America by the Roman and Orthodox communions may not seem telling or definitive to an outsider, the same is the true of the differences between the present ECUSA and those whose ethos and identity is constituted by the classic formularies, rites, morality, and faith of the Anglican Way. A non-Christian might even deem it unnecessary to have a basic Western and a basic Eastern rite for the Holy Communion, but every effort in history to suppress one in the favor of the other has led to strife and disunity.

Those in America who hold to a different ethos and ecclesiastical culture from that of the present E.C.U.S.A. are in essence displaced persons. They have become, so to speak, “foreigners” in their own land. They worry, not only about themselves, but also about the future of their children, whom they do not wish to raise in a religious culture different from their own. Some of these people remain grudgingly within the E.C.U.S.A., while praying for a more congenial environment to practice their religion. Others have left in frustration to attend a congregation of some other Christian tradition, at least as a temporary home. A third group has joined the “Continuing Churches,” jurisdictions that seek to maintain the traditional Anglican Way outside of the formal Anglican Communion (to which Lambeth 1998 graciously turned its attention). A final group, most tragically of all, has simply ceased to attend church anywhere.

Taken together, these people represent an, as yet, unexploited opportunity for ministry, mission, and outreach. Their own potential mission to others like themselves and to those who do not know Christ is frustrated by their lack of recognition by their brethren in the worldwide Anglican Communion. A new province in America that would accommodate them as an identifiable group within the Anglican family would not only grant them relief, but also grant a measure of peace to an ECUSA that simply has no place or natural affinity for them.

A WAY AHEAD

The example of our brethren in the Church of South India and in the Church of North India may offer us a potential course of action consistent with the history and order of the Anglican Communion. These churches did not begin as full members of the Anglican Communion, but as missions of ecclesiastical and cultural unity. The same would be true of a new Anglican province in America. The goals to be pursued would be the internal unity of the new province and its eventual full membership in the Anglican Communion.

During what amounts to a probationary period, with the assistance and guidance of the bishops of other provinces, the new province would have to demonstrate the order, unity, discipline, and charity necessary to become a full member of the Anglican Communion. Such a new province could profitably begin its fellowship as the first American province did, as a communion of jurisdictions in a large and diverse nation.

There would be, and could be, no coercion for any person to join the new province, although its formation might include opportunities for works such as those of the Church in South India in the United States to maintain their own identity while sharing a wider fellowship with the Anglicans around them.

In the same way, the cultural identity of Anglicans from other provinces of the Anglican Communion living in America could also be preserved and shared in a wider national communion.

The establishment of a new province in America would not violate the principle of an undivided episcopate, since the jurisdiction of the bishops of the E.C.U.S.A. would not be in dispute. Neither would there be more than one chief pastor of each subordinate jurisdiction of the new province. The geographical basis of the episcopate would also be maintained on precisely the basis that the episcopate has always functioned in an American context, and as it is functioning already.

The relation of the new province and the E.C.U.S.A. would be consistent with the terms of the Eames Commission: the maintenance of the highest degree of communion possible. The new province would not repel the communicants of E.C.U.S.A. from the Holy Communion, and the transfer of ministers would be accomplished on the basis of the bishops' informed acceptance of letters dimissory (as is already the case between E.C.U.S.A. dioceses).

Since the E.C.U.S.A. has already accepted in principle a relation of inter-communion and transferability of ministers with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (to be approved by General Convention in 2000), the E.C.U.S.A. bishops have already agreed to share geographical oversight with their Lutheran counterparts. They should not hesitate to do so with their fellow Anglicans.

Lastly, a new province would provide an opportunity for the future union (or reunion) of Anglicans in America, within a single household. By not selecting winners and losers in what amounts to a cultural and religious dispute, the Anglican Communion will open the way for these matters to be resolved within the Communion, rather than outside of it. As we plan the future of our Communion in the next millennium, we must be very careful to institutionalize unity rather than disunity, charity rather than rancor, success rather than failure, to the glory of Almighty God.

APPENDIX I

A Call for a "Continental Congress" of American Anglicans

[Note: What follows is a discussion paper circulated among Anglicans in the United States, beginning in March, 1999. It may help to explain for non-American readers that the title "Continental Congress" is an analogy to the meetings of the representatives of the American colonies (later States) before, during, and after the Revolution, until the present federal Constitution was adopted. While the Congress eventually became the functional government of the revolutionary United States, it did not begin as such.

At first, the Congress was, as much as anything else, a general committee to discuss colonial grievances and to petition their redress. Behind it lay numerous local committees in the States, looking for answers to their problems and considering whether or not the American colonies should (or could) become a nation of their own.

The point of the analogy, then, is that a new American province of the Anglican Communion is a potential, but not as yet actual, entity. Realistically speaking, any number of issues remain to be resolved, many of which are listed in the Call, given below in its entirety.

It seemed better to the authors, therefore, to use a term out of American history (a congress), rather than a technical term from ecclesiastical polity, such as a "synod." A call for a synod might imply the existence of a province already formed, rather than the beginning of a process leading to the formation of a province.]

"Come, let us reason together," saith the Lord.

Having read reports of the joint efforts of various groups, societies and organizations at their roundtable in Atlanta on March 8, it occurs to us on historical grounds that there is an important next step that needs to be taken to ensure the success and recognition of the proposed new province. To build upon what has already been accomplished, a kind of "Continental Congress" of American Anglicans is urgently needed.

While the effort to establish a new Anglican province in the United States had to begin with small groups, now is the time to involve larger groups of the faithful and to engage with them in answering in advance some of the reasonable questions that the Primates of other Anglican jurisdictions will surely need to ask. For example, "For whom do you speak," "What is your basic polity," "What are your formularies, and are they consonant with the Anglican Way?"

Further, we must recognize that, in terms of American history, efforts at reform or re-constitution that have been perceived (rightly or wrongly) as clandestine or elitist have usually failed, at least in terms of enlisting the main population to participate in them.

The one revolution that genuinely succeeded in America was our War for Independence. The Continental Congress was not democratic, but it was representative. It had a public face and publicly available and definable goals. It had the good sense not to act as if the defined goals of independence were already achieved, so that they were a complete government with a permanently fixed form already in place. And they appealed, not to a utopian future, but to the concrete reality of the past: to the rights of Englishmen and the justice of the common law.

The foreign powers that eventually recognized the United States (as Holland did, when it first saluted the American flag) did so, not for the sake of an idea or a mere future plan, but because they had begun to show the legitimate life of a real nation.

The formularies are our past and common law. They need to be in the front of the entire effort for the sake of its legitimacy. Discussing them in public, demonstrating their reasonableness, takes an important weapon away from our opposition. Public meeting and open discussion deprives the opposition of its advantage as a known public quantity.

If done properly, the public appeal of a public congress of faithful Anglicans should develop social momentum, not only among Episcopalians, but also among the general populace. If the E.C.U.S.A. cannot be shamed into yielding up property claims to the cooperating faithful, it can at least be revealed as an authoritarian (if not totalitarian) and materialistic entity, which revelation will only confirm the justice of forming a new province and its legitimacy in comparison to the grasping E.C.U.S.A.

Further the foreign bishops and jurisdictions, whose fellowship we will need as much as their recognition, will be able to make our common case for action to the rest of the Anglican Communion with the assurance that anyone can know and understand what the Americans are about.

For the sake of discussion, the "Continental Congress" of Anglicans should invite representatives of organizations, present dioceses, continuing jurisdictions, and so forth. This congress should be a public event to discuss why a province is needed and what it should be (not yet "will be") like. We can't tell who the "players" are, until there is such a meeting; and we can't know what the "game" is, until some rules are agreed on.

The announced agenda of debatable issues should be something like:

- 1) The need for a province
- 2) The spiritual goals of such a province: a) The recovery of the Holy Scripture as the final authority in doctrine, discipline, and worship; and b) The historic Anglican Way as a means of accomplishing this
- 3) The constitutional authority of the province, to be objectified in the following formularies, subject to the Scriptures: a) The 1662/1928 Book of Common Prayer as the primary liturgy and interpreter of all other allowed liturgies [e.g., the American E.C.U.S.A. Prayer Book of 1979 & the ASB of England 1980]; b) The 39 Articles of Religion; c) The Ordinal (as in 1662/1928); d) The American canon law as of the last competent commentary (1952; 1954 ed. White and Dykman)
- 4) Proposed amendments to 3 (d), regarding such issues as the ordination of women, marital discipline, etc., with these beginning suggestions: a) a moratorium on the further ordinations of women, and the protection of those who do not accept their orders, with the stipulation that in further discussion it is the propriety of ordaining women which is the proposal that must be positively proved to be consistent with Scripture and the practice of the Church; b) That existing ecclesiastical judgments of marital nullity be left undisturbed, but that as of a target date such as January 1, 2000 (or even 2001) no clerical marriage after a civil divorce decree or ordination of divorced and remarried candidates will be permitted, saving only the case of those who have submitted to a validly constituted marriage tribunal, with a finding that on the basis of objective impediments that pre-existed the attempted marriage no true spiritual union occurred.

However long it takes to hammer out something like this the Primates should not be asked to recognize or assist the proposed province until such work is accomplished. And the representatives of the province should be prepared to receive the Primates' godly counsel about any other matters that must be dealt with in order to maintain the integrity of the Anglican Way and of the Anglican Communion.

With the help of God, such a next step into making our common cause public and known, should bear good fruit for the cause of faithful Anglicans here and abroad.

We offer this proposal in the fear of God and to His glory not in the name of any organization or church but simply and initially in our names as presbyters in the church of God as desiring unity in the Anglican Way, the Rev'd Dr. Louis Tarsitano and the Rev'd Dr. Peter Toon.

Dated the 9th Day of March in the year of our Lord, 1999.

APPENDIX II

The Virginia Report and Unity

There was much discussion of The Virginia Report at the Lambeth 98 Conference in Canterbury, where it was received. It was then printed as the first item in The Official Report of the Lambeth Conference, 1998 and it was the basis for further discussion at the meeting of the Anglican Consultative Council in Dundee, Scotland, in September 1999.

In essence what this Report calls for is a strengthening and closer collaboration of the “instruments of unity” of the Anglican Communion – the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Lambeth Conference, the Anglican Consultative Council and the Primates’ Meeting.

It is commonly held that the secretariat of the Anglican Consultative Council in London is more representative of the liberal-minded leadership of the diminishing churches of the North/West than of the conservative and growing churches of the South. So there is a widespread natural desire to offset this by (a) increasing the membership of the A.C.C. by the addition of Primates from the South and also by (b) giving greater authority to regular meetings of the Primates. (At the Dundee meeting the A.C.C. voted to keep to its present size and not be enlarged by the addition of Primates, and we wait to see whether the Primates when they meet in Portugal in March 2000 will in fact seek to increase their authority within the Communion.)

We are sympathetic towards moves to make the central voice of the Anglican Communion truly to speak for the whole and not merely for the liberals of the North/West. Further, we recognize that some people think that a sound, solid and representative central government (by the integration and enlargement of the present instruments of unity) will advance the true nature of the Anglican Communion by making it more efficient and effective in an age of rapid communication. And we understand that especially those of a conservative theological position see such a move as ensuring that the voice of the Communion will truly express their convictions, for they are, after all, the majority.

However, we do not think that creating a central administration (as, for example, the E.C.U.S.A. has created since the 1950's and called “the National Church”) will truly help the cause of the genuine Anglican Way – which is not the Roman Way or the Orthodox Way or the way of an international company but the uniquely Anglican Way (see Part One above).

The true nature of the Anglican Communion lies in its being a Communion of independent provinces or national churches which are all committed to the same authority and built on the same foundation – the Scriptures of the Blessed, Holy Trinity, the ancient canons & creeds, the historic Formularies of the Anglican Way – and which all share a common origin in the Ecclesia Anglicana. The Communion is first with the Father through the Son and with the Spirit and secondly with one another in the fellowship of the Gospel of the same Father concerning the same Son in the koinonia of the same Spirit. Its genius lies in not having a strong central government but rather in living out on the international scene the reality of its God-given koinonia via the instruments of unity, which are always open to positive adjustment to meet changing conditions and pressures, especially where this involves the relief of the suffering of people in one or another part of the Anglican Family.

Such a commitment to koinonia means in practice that what has been inherited from the Early Church as the Faith is not open to change – e.g., the authority of the Canon of the Holy Scriptures, the dogma of the Holy Trinity, the dogma of the Person of Christ, the threefold Ministry of the bishop, the presbyter and the deacon, and the Lord's Day as the weekly feast of the Resurrection. Further, it means that when a particular province desires to innovate by making a major change in received Anglican doctrine, discipline and worship that it holds off doing so until the matter has been thoroughly discussed with and in the instruments of unity. This duty carries with it the possibility that when a province goes against what the rest of the Anglican family deems to be the known will of God then the negative force of Communion, that is impaired or broken Communion, takes effect as a discipline of love. (Such action has apparently taken place in late 1999 over the question of homosexual partnerships being recognized by the church as lawful unions.)

We believe that Anglicans ought to work for closer unity through the exercise of the unique features of the Anglican Communion, not by borrowing models from other Churches or from multi-national corporations.