

Study Booklet
for the
Anglican Provincial Structure for Europe
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Lord, I am not yet ready for you to have your way with me, but I am willing to be made willing. Amen.

St. Theresa of Avila

A short course of study to accompany the booklet introducing the Churches of the Anglican Communion in Continental Europe

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Anglican Provincial Structure for Europe

In response to the work already begun and to the Trinity Sunday 1997 letter from the College of Anglican Bishops in Continental Europe, the bishops assembled at the 1998 Lambeth Conference unanimously adopted the following resolution:

Resolution V.6:

Anglican Provincial Structure for Continental Europe

This conference, noting with appreciation the progress made so far by the parallel Anglican jurisdictions in Continental Europe working both with each other and with the Churches in Communion in the area, resolves to encourage:

- a. *continued exploration towards appropriate provincial structures for Anglican Continental Europe in partnership with other Churches in the service of the common mission of the Church; and*
- b. *the Church of England and the Episcopal Church of the United States of America to consider the provision of appropriate funding for such a province.*

This short course is entitled apse which stands for *Anglican Provincial Structure for Europe*.

As well as being a convenient acronym, this reminds us of the image of the Church reflected in early Christian architecture. As a perfect hemisphere, the apse behind the altar signified the Church united around the table of the Lord's Word and the Lord's Body. The seats provided in the apse for the presbyters gathered around their bishop and his deacons were a symbol of the shared nature of all Christian ministry. The congregation facing the apse completed the circle of God's people gathered around the altar in worship.

Introduction

At a Consultation held in Madrid in February 1998, the bishops, clergy and lay delegates of the synods (conventions) of the four Anglican-Episcopal jurisdictions in Continental Europe explored ways of working more closely together to achieve shared goals and a unified mission. Coming from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds, they listened to each other's hopes and concerns, worshipped together, and renewed their commitment to move toward a possible province of Continental Europe within the Anglican Communion.

In May 1999 a second consultation was held in Oporto, Portugal, to discuss further the way ahead. In the interim, the Lambeth Conference had been held, providing strong support for the search for an appropriate provincial structure. The twelve delegates were joined by representatives of the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church USA and the Anglican Consultative Council, as well as bishops representing the International Bishops' Conference of the Old Catholic Churches of the Union of Utrecht and the Scandinavian and Baltic Lutheran Churches of the Porvoo Agreement.

In the belief that the four jurisdictions can grow together only through the willing and active participation of their members in this undertaking, a booklet has been prepared to introduce the Churches of the Anglican Communion in Continental Europe to each other. Available in English, Portuguese and Spanish, the booklet has been distributed to all the Anglican congregations in Continental Europe. To accompany it, this study-guide has also been prepared in the hope that it will be used in each of the congregations over a period of four sessions.

The course of study described here is meant to introduce the participants to some of the issues raised at the Madrid Consultation. We hope that wherever congregations belonging to two of the jurisdictions are geographically close to each other, the course will be studied jointly (even if this means making sure that someone is present who can translate). Your help is needed in identifying the next questions and concerns to be addressed. We invite you to make careful note of your group's thoughts and questions and to forward them to your bishop. We also urge you to pray (individually and in your study-group) the prayers which are printed on the back of this booklet.

Session 1

Mission

1. As people of Christian faith, what is our mission? – as individuals? – as a Church?

St Matthew's Gospel (28:18–20) closes with Jesus' final words commissioning all disciples to baptize and teach. Paul picks up the commission in Romans (10:11–15). Peter talks about the importance of prayer and worship, of fellowship and teaching (Acts 2:41-47). Bear these passages in mind as you explore answers to the following questions.

- What do these passages mean for our Church in Europe today?
 - How can we most effectively spread the gospel and gather for worship in the cities, towns and countryside of Europe today?
2. In carrying out its mission, to its parishioners and to others, the life of the church involves
 - Worship, liturgy, music
 - Preaching and teaching the word of God

- Episcopal pastoral care and other spiritual support
 - Sharing our practices of mission and ministry
 - Education and training - for the whole community of God
- requires:
- Vocational discernment, the call to serve addressed to those who are lay as well as those who are ordained, and the appointment of clergy
- and must include:
- Financing: a source of funds, clergy stipends, pensions
 - Canon law, church government, parish regulations.
- Is there anything you would add to this list?
 - How does your church carry out these roles and meet these needs?
 - How does each of these areas further the broad mission of the church?
 - How can you share these aspects of the Church's life with the people around you?

Session 2

Unity

We know that there are four Anglican jurisdictions in continental Europe and that they came to be here for historically different reasons. They have existed side by side for over a century, so why have the Bishops of the Lambeth Conference felt a need to overcome the anomaly of overlapping jurisdictions and to encourage us to seek an appropriate provincial structure in Continental Europe?

Perhaps a study of Jesus' "High-Priestly" Prayer in St. John's Gospel, chapter 17, can help us to understand. Read the chapter carefully.

In the prayer, Jesus prayed for Himself (vv 1-8), for His disciples (vv 9-19), and for all future Christian believers (vv 20-26).

- What did Jesus mean when He prayed that all Christians might be one?
 - Do you think He envisaged one single all-inclusive entity or various branches of the Church in full communion with each other? Which would be nearer to the kind of unity which Jesus has with the Father?
 - What is the purpose of the unity for which Jesus prayed? Would a single Anglican "Province in Continental Europe" help in achieving this purpose? In what ways?
 - What are some of the implications for change in structure and practice in order to be "at one"?
- in our own jurisdiction?
 - in our own locality?

Session 3

Hopes and fears

1. In his beautiful Christmas hymn Phillips Brooks wrote that on the night of Jesus' birth the town of Bethlehem was the meeting place of "the hopes and fears of all the years". It seems a timeless truth and paradox that on the edge of new birth or dramatic change "hopes and fears" exist side by side.

Scripture is full of stories of hope and fear, yet the human tendency is often to talk more about "fear" than "hope". Even in the Bible there is a disparity. "Hope" is mentioned 187

times and "fear" 655 times! Look at Psalm 55:1–8; Matthew 14:23–27; Mark 5:30–34; Philippians 2:10–15. Can you find some other examples from scripture?

2. As our churches discuss the prospect of a single Anglican province, share your hopes and fears. Begin by thinking about the questions below. Make individual lists and then bring the hopes and fears together for all to see and reflect upon.
 - What do we hope to gain if we all join together as a province?
 - What do we fear to lose if we join together as an Anglican province?
 - – Are there cultural traditions we fear to lose?
 - – Are there liturgical traditions that will be jeopardized?
 - – Are there "property issues" such as ownership of buildings and endowments for us?

Session 4

Gifts and graces

1. Holy Scripture is full of references to gifts. God's gifts to us, our gifts to God, and sometimes our withholding of gifts from God or each other. Sometimes these gifts are material such as gold, oil, incense and money. Sometimes the gifts are living offerings for sacrifice such as doves, lambs, ... and indeed Jesus Himself. Often the gifts mentioned in the Bible are also symbols with deeper spiritual meaning. Especially after the Day of Pentecost, there is the outpouring of gifts from the Spirit for the building of the Church and the empowering of God's people.

Begin this fourth and final session with a study of some of the many references to "gifts" mentioned in Holy Scripture. Read the following passages and discuss their nature and purpose in relation to God's plan. Cain's and Abel's gifts (Genesis 4:1–7); the gifts of the Magi (Luke 21:1–4); Jesus' teaching on gifts (Matthew 5:23, Luke 21:1–4); Paul's teaching on spiritual gifts (Romans 12:3–8, 1 Corinthians 12, Ephesians 4:11–13).

2. In the last part of this session discuss the various gifts that each of the four Anglican traditions could bring into a new Anglican province.
 - Are there gifts of culture, tradition and liturgy which we freely bring?
 - Are there going to be some "strings attached" to some of our gifts before they are shared?
 - Are there things we have but may be reluctant to share?
 - How do we balance the "value" of material gifts versus spiritual gifts?

Write a concluding prayer which creates a metaphorical image of an altar piled high with these gifts ...

Prayers

For the mission of the Church:

Lord Jesus Christ, you stretched out your arms of love on the hard wood of the Cross that everyone might come within the reach of your saving embrace: so clothe us in your Spirit that, reaching forth our hands in love, we may bring those who do not know you to the knowledge and love of you, for the honor of your Name. Amen.

(United States)

For unity of faith:

God, shepherd of your people, you call men and women from all countries and peoples to follow your Son. We ask you to destroy the walls that separate us from each other, and make us be one in your love, that you may be known among the peoples: the Father of us all, with the Son, in the Holy Spirit, now and for ever. Amen.

(Old Catholics – Germany)

For the guidance of the Holy Spirit:

O Eternal God, enlighten with your Holy Spirit the hearts of your people, teaching us what we have to do and assisting us in the doing of it; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

(Portugal)

For love, truth and unity:

O Holy Spirit, Whom the Son has sent from the Father, descend upon us, teach us all truth, and unite us with love unspeakable with Them from Whom You come. Amen.

(Spain – Mozarabic Liturgy)

For perseverance:

O Lord God, when you give to your servants to endeavour any great matter, grant us also to know that it is not the beginning but the continuing of the same unto the end, until it be thoroughly finished, which yields the true glory; through him who, for the finishing of your work, laid down his life, our Redeemer, Jesus Christ. Amen.

(England)

For protection:

We give thanks to you, heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ your dear Son, that you have protected us through the night from all danger and harm. We ask you to preserve and keep us, this day also, from all sin and evil, that in all our thoughts, words, and deeds we may serve and please you. Into your hands we commend our bodies and souls and all that is ours. Let your holy angels have charge of us, that the wicked one have no power over us. Amen. (Luther)

