

Literature Review

The more I have researched the “Continuing Church,” the more I have realized that this thesis is charting largely unmarked territory. First-hand information on the movement is available in relatively great abundance from the various denominations themselves, but is often of uneven quality, and truly scholarly material is rare. In some cases, churches have put all their pamphlets, brochures, etc., onto their World Wide Web sites, but have not provided references such as author’s name and date of publication. Sadly, too, the electronic nature of the “Web” means that data found there is ephemeral; what is here today may be gone tomorrow, without a clue as to where to trace it.

The relative emphasis given herein to certain denominations, such as the Anglican Orthodox Church, is due not merely to their importance to traditionalist Anglicanism, but because their diocesan offices have cooperated fully with my research. Newsletters, books from their denominational presses, brochures—all these they provided promptly and cheerfully. Some of the other traditionalist groups, however, never responded to my correspondence, even after a second attempt. It is unclear whether this was because they feared editorial bias, or simply that they lack regular secretarial assistance.

Another major primary source is the pages of *The Christian Challenge*, a monthly periodical published since 1962 and devoted to chronicling Anglicanism around the world. Although it covers news both inside and outside the official Anglican Communion, the magazine’s editorial stance is very sympathetic to the traditionalists (a former editor, the late Louis E. Traylor, eventually became a clergyman in a “Continuing Church” denomination). Despite strong editorial opinions, the news articles represent broad coverage of the Continuum, rather than the doings of only one or two traditionalist denominations. It also has printed (or reprinted) some of the movement’s most important documents. Probably the most important of these is the “Affirmation of St. Louis” from the 1977 Congress of Concerned Churchmen, the manifesto which brought the main part of the “Continuing Church” movement into being. Although one may find the text of the “Affirmation” on the World Wide Web, the identity of the publisher is unclear.

For the sections on the *episcopi vagantes*, two works are indispensable. The first is H.R.T. Brandreth’s book *Episcopi Vagantes and the Anglican Church*. Brandreth, a priest in the Church of England whose work in the mid-20th century, was apparently the first to cover the topic at any great length. His studies focus mostly on the European *vagantes*, but do

spend some time on their American cousins as well. Brandreth's bibliography is extensive, including many pamphlets and books by these churches and their bishops. He also performs the useful service of providing consecration lists, showing the major lines of succession. Footnotes to these lists offer brief biographies of the lesser lights, who are not covered as thoroughly in the main text. The second indispensable work is Roman Catholic layman Peter F. Anson's *Bishops at Large*, which expands upon Brandreth's book. Published in the 1960s, within a decade of Brandreth's revised edition, this book clarifies many facts to which Brandreth merely alluded. Although both authors are willing to grant that individual *vagantes* may be men of holy life and good intentions, by and large they find them to be a somewhat disreputable lot.

Regarding parallels to the 20th century Continuing Church movement, Allen Guelzo's book *For the Union of Evangelical Christendom* presents the fascinating and often surprising story of the Reformed Episcopal Church, founded in 1873 by dissident Protestant Episcopal Bishop George David Cummins of Kentucky. The REC, formed as a "Low Church," Evangelical reaction to the Anglo-Catholicism of the Oxford Movement, forms an interesting counterpoint to the Continuing Church because of the REC founders' views on episcopacy. Many of the 20th century dissenters left the Episcopal Church over the question of women's ordination; as Anglo-Catholics, they held that it was sacramentally impossible for a woman to be either a priest or a bishop, and therefore the tactual line of "apostolic succession" would be broken if a woman bishop performed consecrations. Cummins' group, however, held episcopacy to be only a desirable form of government, sanctioned by use and antiquity. Considering that the Episcopal Church has in the twenty years opened up dialogues with the REC, a group it previously branded as schismatic, may provide an interesting forecast for the Continuing Church.

Newspapers and news magazines have corroborated many facts found in other sources; they also show how the outside world has viewed the "Continuum" over the years. *The New York Times* employed at least one special correspondent within the movement to report on the Congress of St. Louis, as well as on the 1978 Denver consecrations which officially founded the Anglican Church in North America. *Time*, *Newsweek*, and *U.S. News & World Report*, also reported on these events. More specifically religious periodicals, such as *Christian Century* and *Christianity Today*, provided some of the most complete coverage of the movement.

For the general history of the Episcopal Church, Robert Prichard's 1991 *A History of the Episcopal Church* offered an excellent introduction. Clara Loveland's *The Critical Years: The Reconstruction of the Anglican Church in the United States of America: 1780-1789* (1956), gave a look into

the consecration of Samuel Seabury as the first Episcopal Church bishop of Connecticut, an event which bears on the Denver and later consecrations of the Continuum. E. Clowes Chorley's *Men and Movements in the American Episcopal Church* is a classic exposition of the "High," "Broad," and "Low" parties in the Episcopal Church, parties which have contributed much to the making of the Continuing Church.

Don S. Armentrout's article "Episcopal Splinter Groups: Schisms in the Episcopal Church, 1963-1985" is one of the few scholarly studies of the Continuing Church; what makes it more interesting is that it was done by a scholar within the Episcopal Church itself, rather than by a "Continuing Anglican" scholar.

Several works on the history of the Scottish Episcopal Church also proved useful in finding parallels to the Continuing Church's story. Frederick Goldie's *A Short History of the Episcopal Church in Scotland: From the Restoration to the Present Time* and Marion Lochhead's *Episcopal Scotland in the 19th Century* are both helpful.

Methodist history provided another parallel to the story of the Continuing Church. One of the most useful works consulted was Frederick A. Norwood's 1974 *The Story of American Methodism: History of the United Methodists and Their Relations*. Also very useful was Wade Crawford Barclay's 1949 work *Early American Methodism, 1769-1844*. Especially useful, in relation to the question of "apostolic succession" and ecumenical relations, are works on the conversations between the Church of England and Britain's Methodist Church.

Several books stand out for ecclesiology. Representing the "High Church" Anglican view is *The Apostolic Ministry: Essays on the History and Doctrine of Episcopacy* (1946), edited by Kenneth E. Kirk. For the Evangelical side, there is Tim Bradshaw's *The Olive Branch: An Evangelical Anglican Doctrine of the Church* (1992). John Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion* was another basic resource; although Anglicans have never formally accepted Calvinism as official doctrine, many Anglicans over the years have gleaned from Geneva's field. Additionally, Calvin had first-hand knowledge of the disputes between Catholics and Protestants—and the issues have not changed that much. James G. McCarthy's *The Gospel According to Rome* (1995), and Loraine Boettner's *Roman Catholicism* (1962) provide overviews of Catholic doctrine, with discussion of ecclesiology, while William Webster's *Peter and the Rock* (1996) deals specifically with the question of papal primacy, based on the Lord's words to Simon Peter. Alexander Balmain Bruce's *The Training of the Twelve* offered a solid, Reformed view of Jesus' own teachings on ministry.

In terms of general reference, the various editions of Mead and Hill's *Handbook of Denominations in the United States* and of the *Yearbook of*

Badertscher, *The Measure of a Bishop*

American and Canadian Churches proved indispensable as well. Their capsule descriptions of the various Old Catholic denominations, as well as some of the Continuing Church denominations, were valuable in corroborating data provided by the churches themselves.