

# **LEGACIES, LESSONS & LIFELINES**

*The Past, Present, and Future  
of Theological Education & Christian Formation  
in the Episcopal Church*

**1967-2008**

**By the PEALL History Subgroup**

Edward deBary  
Susanne Watson Epting  
James Kelsey  
Joanna Leiserson  
Sharon Ely Pearson  
Fredrica Harris Thompsett

**October 2008**

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# INTRODUCTION

“One faces the future with one’s past,” or so American author Pearl Buck once wrote. As Christians and as Episcopal educators, we are clear that how we attend to history matters. In order to find out where we are going in theological education and Christian formation, we need to know where we have come from. We know that there are lessons to be learned. We recall the well-worn saying that those who forget history’s lessons are doomed to repeat them.

For those of us concerned about the future of Christian formation and theological education, we ask: what are the lessons to which we must attend? How might we best be informed by the Episcopal Church’s involvements in Christian education and formation? Are there particular lifelines that might sustain us in days ahead, especially if they are well attended to and furthered? What clues might we find about strategic moments, movements, and messages that we may pass on to strengthen our Church’s educational witness and daily practices in days ahead? Are there new directions we should pursue?

These are daunting questions. They underscore the purpose of this short document focusing upon “legacies, lessons and lifelines” in Christian formation and theological education as we have discerned them over the past half-century of the Church’s life. A study of theological education in 1967 – entitled *Ministry for Tomorrow* and known as the Pusey Report -- called for major changes. It focused primarily on educating male clergy in ten seminaries, using a scholarly university model. Since that time, significant changes in church and society have prompted a need to reconsider the state and direction not only of theological education but of Christian formation as well.

Our current focus on history grows out of a mandate from the 2003 General Convention for a task force – which has subsequently been named PEALL, an acronym for Proclaiming Education for All – to undertake a comprehensive review of Christian formation and theological education in order to present recommendations to the 2009 General Convention. This is the first time the Episcopal Church has called for a systematic look at the broadest spectrum of its educational resources and practices. This includes education designed to advance the mission and ministry of members of every age cohort in a wide variety of cultural contexts. Today Christian formation is centered in congregations, diocesan program and schools, theological seminaries, ministry development groups, continuing education centers, and other initiatives.

At the foundation of the desire to attend to this big picture is a growing awareness of the importance of lifelong Christian formation. We are aware of growing financial pressures, a wide diversity of approaches to strengthening the church’s mission, as well as increasing calls for institutional coordination and cooperation. This brief document seeks to provide a historical base for strategic decisions by looking at educational undertakings over the past 50 years. This text is

designed to provide grounding for the vision, strategies and recommendations, which PEALL will present to the wider church in 2009.

The writers of this document represent the diversity of perspectives in theological education and Christian formation in the Episcopal Church. We represent a seminary, ministry development initiatives, and congregational and diocesan education. We are representative of all orders of ministry: lay, bishop,<sup>1</sup> priest and deacon.

Our intent also is to show that understanding the historical context will encourage everyone to move forward in wiser and creative ways as together we learn from past educational legacies, lessons and lifelines. We invite readers to bring their own experiences, past and present, as well as their hopes for the educational mission of the church to their appraisal of this document.

*We will recount to generations to come  
the praiseworthy deeds and the power of the Lord,  
and the wonderful works he has done.  
Psalm 78:4*

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<sup>1</sup> Bishop Jim Kelsey was a member of PEALL and this writing team until his untimely death in June 2007. He was instrumental in bringing the grant proposal to fruition that brought to life the task force, known as PEALL.

# **PART I: LEGACIES**

## **OUR AMERICAN SOCIETY**

### **Chapter 1: A Pluralistic Nation**

The great social changes of the 1950's-1980's grew out of an open, fluid, and diverse society. Americans emerged from the watershed of World War II with a determination to take a strong stance against global Communism, a desire to share the benefits of democracy as widely as possible, and an optimism in a renewal of the American dream. The country shifted from an industrial to a service economy. Economic gains and a boom in births fueled the growth of suburban areas around cities, with all of the promise of suburban life. Yet not all Americans were privileged to participate in this good life – obstacles of race, ethnicity, gender and economics shrunk the American dream to a dream for a privileged minority. Gradually, then, challenges to the status quo began to mount.

The idea of America as a great melting pot has been a foundation of American society since its beginnings — the image of diverse people from all over the globe living the American dream of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. However, although diversity has been in fact a reality, true acceptance of diversity in the form of fair treatment for non-dominant groups, however, has not. These groups have often been invisible, ignored, suppressed, or silenced in public life. Non-dominant cultural groups that could not assimilate were often subject to discrimination.

The Civil Rights Movement in the 1960's, encouraged by legal challenges and victories during the previous decade, ended the silence of racism. Under the leadership of Martin Luther King, Jr. and other prominent civil rights leaders, its insistence on nonviolent protest proved to be an effective means of overcoming resistance and fostering legislative change. The movement also gave visibility to other minority groups, who began to demand a greater role for all minorities in public life, to reflect more accurately the multi-ethnic and multicultural reality of society. African Americans won passage of civil rights and voting rights legislation. A new generation of Native-American leaders organized to defend the rights the government had promised in various treaties with tribal groups. Hispanic Americans, especially those whose families came from Mexico, Central America, Puerto Rico, and Cuba, became more politically active, too. They were elected to local, state, and national offices, and they organized to fight discrimination. César Chávez, for example, led a nationwide consumer boycott of California grapes that forced growers to negotiate with his United Farm Workers union for higher wages and improved working conditions.

The feminist and women's liberation movements of the 1960's opened the way to greater equality and opportunities for women, including more equitable pay,

access to more jobs, and more visibility in the workplace and in the public sphere. Inequalities remain, but in general, equitable rights for women are no longer argued.

Also since the 1960's, Americans have been more eager to work through grassroots efforts for a variety of causes. For example, Americans concerned about the environment organized efforts to reduce air and water pollution. The year 1970 saw the first "Earth Day" celebration and the creation of the Environmental Protection Agency. There has been an increasing sense of empowerment of previously oppressed or suppressed groups as well as a greater attentiveness to the voice of minorities.

## **Chapter 2: Erosion of Traditional Attitudes Toward Authority**

Movements and popular sentiment arising from the Vietnam War, the Watergate presidential scandal, and other national crises led to a gradual shift in attitudes toward authority. This shift can be variously characterized as an erosion of trust in authority, an increasing willingness to challenge or question institutional authority and dogmatism, or a rise in populist movements. As a result, a few innovative business companies have been organized around more populist and inclusive models. These organizations decentralized their hierarchy, favoring more broad-based governance. Within this shifting environment, new leadership models were developed and tried, influenced by changes in some business and organizational theory.

Among the new leadership models, Meg Wheatley's *Leadership and the New Science* (1992) helped business, religious, and educational leaders alike to appreciate the importance of the interdependence of order, diversity and creativity, rather than programs that seek to control educational outcomes. Her work emphasizes the creation of places and processes in which people can actually learn together, drawing upon their various experiences.

Another significant development, especially for the Church, was the emergence of the servant leadership model, developed by Robert Greenleaf in the 1960's and expanded by others. Thirty years later, the work of Peter Senge and others would encourage the church into "paradigm shifts" and "reinventing." Senge's work (especially *The Fifth Discipline*) would become important in reinforcing the idea of learning organizations or learning communities, in which leadership is shared and the gifts and skills of each person are affirmed.

These and other models for more inclusive leadership have challenged the traditional hierarchical practices in theory, if not always in prevalent reality.

## **Chapter 3: Technological Advances Open Up the World**

It is difficult to overestimate the significance of the technological and electronic developments in the past fifty years. Computers have become almost

universally accessible. Other scientific and technological advances have made communication possible almost instantaneously across vast distances. With the development of the Internet, information can be widely shared and quickly disseminated, leading to a shrinking of the unknown world and an expansion of global awareness.

**Globalization shrinks horizons.** Globalization has been defined as “the process of increasing worldwide political, economic, technological and religious interaction, resulting in swiftly shrinking horizons for all participants.”<sup>2</sup> One important consequence of globalization for the Church has been a greater attentiveness to the importance of interfaith and ecumenical relationships.

Frederick Quinn notes that although globalization has been an active historical force even since biblical times, the pervasive influence of modern technological connectors such as television, and their jarring impact on traditional culture, makes globalization a “highly combustible concept,” seen by some as “a threat to the very fabric of society.” However, globalization also presents expanding opportunities for dialogue, encounter, and mission. Life in a shrinking world means that we have also become more aware of the world’s hurts and needs, and are given greater opportunity to address these needs on a worldwide basis.

**New ways of learning.** New technologies have changed the nature of literacy and the opportunities for learning in revolutionary ways. Books, for example, are no longer confined exclusively to the printed page but can be purchased in audio form, as “books on tape,” or even rented online from the local library. Television and computers are used to provide easy access to learning materials. In particular, the vast capacity of computers to store and transmit information has redefined learning, especially for today’s generation of learners, who have emerged from a computer- and automated-learning environment as differently equipped learners from previous generations. These students are educated in modalities unfamiliar to many; for example, the familiar practice of reading for information often is replaced by use of search engines, a practice that makes resources instantly and widely available through thousands or even millions of topical links.

Computers have also changed the means of learning. One-way broadcasting of information is no longer the only way to communicate. “Virtual classrooms” have become common in distance learning, providing an online environment in which students and instructors interact and work collaboratively. Asynchronous learning, in which interaction is delayed over time, allows learners to participate according to their own schedule, in their own homes and offices. Interactive education experiences offer great opportunities for collaborative work and mutual learning that was not possible with older distance learning forms known as “correspondence courses.”

**New ways of connecting.** To someone who complained, “Today’s youth

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<sup>2</sup> Frederick Quinn, “Globalization and the Future of the Anglican Communion,” unpublished article.

have no community to connect them,” one perceptive individual responded, “They talk to each other all the time—look at them communicating by text-messaging, Facebook, MySpace, YouTube, interactive online games.” Young people are intimately connected in community, but differently from their parents’ generation. Particular attention has been paid in recent years to the ways in which classrooms networked for computers and Internet access have contributed to collaborative work in ways never dreamed possible.

The wide use of Internet communication may give the appearance of isolation, when traditional face-to-face connections decline. However, in the transition from traditional to high-tech communication, the idea and nature of community has merely been redefined. Those who use the popular social networking website “MySpace” often boast of having hundreds or even thousands of “friends” with whom they communicate and develop interactive relationships.

Paradoxically, while persons may learn, connect, and interact with many other people over long distances, they may at the same time retain indigenous connections that enable them to make use of their local community as an integral part of their learning and to connect their general learning and experience with the specific needs of their community of origin. Individuals who can take advantage of technologically advanced communication methods can retain their community roots while learning, working, and interacting on a global basis. Adults as well as young people have turned to technology to advance their learning in many areas. Distance learning thus creates diversity in the virtual classroom with the local community as the learning context, so that one need not be divorced from one’s own culture, whether it be racial, ethnic, or economic.

## **Chapter 4: Educational Pedagogy Changes**

By 1990, 83.5% of the U.S. population had completed four years of high school as opposed to only 41% in 1960. Within those years, a great deal of polarity has occurred in American education. The teaching of basic thinking skills, such as phonics, made a comeback as the baby boom generation entered their school years. Mandatory bussing to achieve racial integration often led to a disruption in the educational processes, while Congress guaranteed equal educational access to the handicapped in 1975. Major budgets cuts in education occurred in the 1980s, while the use of exit exams were said to improve teaching quality. Distance education, cultural diversity, and school-to-work programs began to flourish during the 1970s.

Conventional educational methodology in the twentieth century placed a strong emphasis on education heavily reliant on teaching facts and conveying a large volume of information, a methodology that fails to model a student’s natural learning process. Educators now recognize the importance of the affective and cognitive state of the learner and respond in an appropriate manner. Presuming that their primary task is to help students enhance their abilities to think independently, many contemporary educators have followed the strong arguments of John Dewey

and Paolo Freire for less centralized and less rigid structures: hands-on practices, multiple ways of knowing and thinking, group interactions, flexible specification of desired outcomes, and astute editing and feedback by teachers. The foundation of teaching focus has shifted from presumptions that are outcome-based to those that are process-oriented and developmental. One important influence on the structure of curricula and design classrooms is Howard Gardner's theory on "multiple intelligences" (1985 & 1993). Gardner advocated the use of the arts, choice, collaboration, and support for diverse learners.

## **Chapter 5: The Church's Role in Society Diminishes**

In the relationship of the church to the larger society, we see two contrasting trends. On the one hand, there is an increasing secularization of American culture. On the other hand, there is a more audible religious voice in public affairs, particularly from the evangelical right. Several major factors have contributed to the changing relationship between church and society.

**A multi-faith nation.** With the increasing diversity and more visible multiplicity of cultures and faiths in the United States, there came a growing acceptance of non-Christian faiths and practices in what had been perceived as a "Christian nation." Many now recognize that American society has ceased long ago to be a homogeneously Christian culture. There has come a more careful separation of church and state than has previously been observed, and a more careful protection of individual and civil liberties from undue religious influence. The various constitutional prohibitions of prayer and religious observances in school, nativity displays on public property, and displays of the Ten Commandments on government property are obvious examples of legal restraints on religious observances in public places.

**The American family changes.** Since the mid-twentieth century, families have become smaller and less stable, more mobile and more influenced by culture than by the religious institution. Increasing mobility and more diversity in the nature and shape of family units has challenged the ideal and somewhat mythic expectation of the family as a stable two-parent unit. In a particular application to the Church, Christian educators have learned that it cannot be assumed that the family unit will teach the faith of the church to future generations. In fact, changes in American family life have often made generations less able to pass on the traditions of faith that sustained them in earlier times.

**Growing biblical illiteracy.** Some cultural observers have noted a "paradox of the Bible" in contemporary America. On the one hand, such programs as *Education for Ministry* (EfM) provide laity with strong, in-depth biblical knowledge. On the other hand, in society we find an increasing biblical illiteracy, perhaps connected to a growing popularity for literal reading of Scripture, a reading that discourages or prohibits biblical analysis. Also, where the Bible was once seen part of one's cultural literacy, many high school, college students, and adults no longer

have the grounding in Scripture that would enable them to understand the nuance of such works as Milton's *Paradise Lost*.

**Priorities change.** Various factors have contributed to the loss of time traditionally devoted to church activities. For example, as parents and children grow more anxious about college admission, there has been greater pressure to participate in more school activities and enrichment activities outside of school. The term "over-programmed" has been used to describe the highly scheduled lives of even young children. Sunday morning has ceased to be time set aside for church, a development begun in the 1970's and 1980's by the repeal of "Blue Laws" and accelerated by the growth of secular interests such as consumer shopping, school and sports team activities during traditional church worship times.

Other factors have made "going to church" a lesser priority, or "one choice among many" in the lives of many people. Other priorities include a proliferation of activities competing for Sunday time, more time spent on television and computers for daily use and entertainment, and greater value placed on consumerism, materialism and the accumulation of wealth than on spiritual seeking. With such competing values, church and religion have for many people lost much of their influence on individual and social life. The influence of religion dwindles, as does church attendance.

As a result of these and other social, political, and cultural factors, the church -- through loss of government, family, and school support -- has become unmoored from the basic social structures that had traditionally allowed it to take for granted its status in society. On the other hand, while church attendance in America has declined in recent decades, polls have indicated that people express a spiritual hunger and say that spirituality is important to them.

## **THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH**

### **Chapter 6: Changing Demographics**

Episcopalians comprise around 2% of the general U.S. population, a percentage that has been relatively constant for many years. Behind this consistent statistic, the past fifty years has seen a number of changing demographics in the Episcopal Church. For example, from 1960 to 2000, the number of communicants decreased from 2,000,000 to 1,850,000 (although in 2000 also, there were 3,000,000 self-identified Episcopalians). In the same time period, the number of parishes increased from 7450 to 7679. Enrollment in Episcopal schools also increased during this time.

In a 2005 study of Episcopal Church growth, statistics show that 55% of congregations have a membership of 200 members or less. 63% of all Episcopal congregations have an average Sunday attendance (ASA) of 100 or less, with a

median average Sunday worship attendance of 74 persons and a median active baptized membership of 174.

In the United States as a whole, so-called whites will soon be a minority ethnic group. On the other hand, as of 2005, 90% of all Episcopal congregations are comprised of at least 60% persons of European descent: non-Hispanic/ whites, or “Anglo” persons. However, the statistical study also points out that the Anglo congregations are the least likely to grow.<sup>3</sup> By the year 2050, there will be more than 90 million people of Hispanic ancestry. In the past, the waves of immigrants coming from Europe were assimilated sooner or later, especially in language. The Hispanic immigration is different, due in part to today’s communication vehicles that allows each to keep speaking their native language. John Naisbitt, author of *Megatrends*, has indicated “fluency in Spanish will soon be necessary to function effectively in this society.”<sup>4</sup>

## **Chapter 7: The Role of Women in Ministry**

**Leadership of lay and ordained women is recognized.** In 1946, the first woman attended General Convention as a deputy. However, it was only in 1970 that laywomen were officially seated at General Convention with voice and vote, following fifty years of challenge and struggle to be heard in the Church.

In 1970, General Convention repealed the deaconess canon and a new canon was instituted. This change allowed for the ordination of both women and men to the diaconate. At that time, former deaconesses became deacons. While a period of some confusion ensued, with some women becoming deacons primarily as a step toward the hoped-for priesthood, other women became deacons as part of renewing the historic order as reflected in the *1979 Book of Common Prayer*.

**Women welcomed to the priesthood.** In 1974, eleven women were ordained irregularly to the priesthood in Philadelphia. Two years later, in 1976, General Convention deputies voted to change church canons to permit the ordination of women to the priesthood and episcopate.

The middle decades of the twentieth century mark a high point for laywomen’s contributions to Christian education, formation and mission. Many of these women were professionally educated at women’s training centers and served as Directors of Christian Education (DREs) in parishes. They brought considerable educational expertise to the parishes where they served.

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<sup>3</sup>C. Kirk Hadaway, “FACTs on Episcopal Church Growth” (published by the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society and Faith Communities Today), a look at dynamics of growth and decline in Episcopal parishes and missions based on a national survey of 4,100 congregations in 2005.

<sup>4</sup> Rodriguez, Isaias A., *Partners in the Spirit: Mutually Encouraged by Each Other’s Faith* (presented June 4-6, 2008 at Province IV Synod, Kanuga Conference Center, North Carolina).

Since the 1970's, women have taken their place in increasing numbers "in the councils of the church" and in seminaries as professionals, deacons, priests, and bishops. Although a few dioceses still refuse to ordain women, the acceptance of women as fully capable of ordained ministry is now generally accepted.

## **Chapter 8: Prayer Book Revisions & Additional Liturgical Materials**

To borrow the title of a book by Leonel Mitchell on *The Book of Common Prayer, praying shapes believing*. To the extent that our faith is shaped by our worship, and particularly by worship as set forth in the Prayer Book, the Episcopal Church has always looked at the Prayer Book with an openness to revising it, in order to bring our *praying* to conform to changes in our *believing*. Changes have come from various directions. For example, scholarly research revealed more accurately the worship practices of the ancient church. Consequently, revisions were made in the Prayer Book to bring current liturgy in conformance with the ancient liturgies. The period of liturgical renewal for the Episcopal Church in the mid-twentieth century coincided with liturgical renewal movements taking place in the wider Church, such as the liturgical changes generated by the Second Vatican Council ("Vatican II").

At least since the 1960's, the Episcopal Church, in conjunction with Associated Parishes, has considered revisions in the church's worship. During the 1970's, many congregations experimented with various trial-use liturgies, showing a willingness to consider alternatives to the 1928 Prayer Book. This period of liturgical renewal and experimentation culminated in the Episcopal Church adopting, though not without some opposition, the *1979 Book of Common Prayer*.

In the Episcopal Church, the center of our faith and the way to encounter the divine is seen as a liturgical center that then informs our theological and doctrinal principles. A 2003 national Episcopal conference on Christian formation, "Will Our Faith Have Children? Christian Formation Generation to Generation", treated liturgy as formation, devoting the daily liturgies to this principle.

There is much in the *1979 Book of Common Prayer* to commend itself to Christian formation for all ages. For example, the Daily Offices offer a potential for probing the theology of daily prayer, lay ministry, use of the psalms, lessons and canticles, and the heritage and history of these daily services. Special services such as those observed during Holy Week are also powerful formational and transformational events. These services enrich the spirituality of all persons, as they tell the great stories of our faith and contain the fullness of our life in Christ. Even children, for example, can perceive and appreciate the pain and longing of the events told at Maundy Thursday services.

**Holy Baptism made a public covenant.** In the 1979 Prayer Book, the Rite of Holy Baptism is "administered within the Eucharist as the chief service on a

Sunday or other feast.” (BCP, 298) Holy Baptism became a public covenantal celebration in the church in most instances. When a person is baptized, the whole congregation then renews their promises to engage in a life of faith as expressed in the Baptismal Covenant. The very act of professing one’s faith is a public affirmation to practice ministry in daily life beyond the church doors.

By grounding Prayer Book worship in Holy Baptism, the Episcopal Church reaffirms the covenantal and public nature of the Christian life – *covenantal* because the sacrament of Holy Baptism is affirmed as initiation “into Christ’s Body the Church,” an indissoluble bond established by God, *public* because it takes place in the presence and with the support of the baptizing community. The implications of this change are still emerging, and still engender opposition from those who favor a more traditional clerical hierarchy. But it is certain that the renewed importance of Holy Baptism is shaping our understanding of education and ministry for our future.

**Holy Eucharist emphasized as normative for Sunday worship.** The 1979 Prayer Book recovered the rite of Holy Eucharist as the central celebration of the Church, to be celebrated every Sunday. Accompanying the move to a weekly Eucharist were other changes in liturgy and practice. Much of the change has been in offering choices – in traditional (Rite I) or contemporary (Rite II) language; in alternative Eucharistic Prayers; in forms of the Prayers of the People; in standing or kneeling for prayer. Other changes reflect this changing theology – for example, the altar is moved away from the wall to allow the celebrant to face the congregation. The theology of the Eucharist as the whole gathered community has revealed the horizontal dimension of worship, the communal aspect that has important implications for Christian formation as social as well as individual development of faith.

The relationship between Baptism and Eucharist has also been brought into focus, especially for children. Theologians in the past several decades have argued that because baptism is, as the Prayer Book states, “full initiation . . . into Christ’s Body the Church,” (BCP 298), all baptized persons are entitled to receive the sacrament of Holy Communion regardless of their confirmation status, thus welcoming the full participation of children. This reverses the tradition that required children to wait until confirmation before receiving communion and returns the church to practices found in early Christianity.

**Recognition of the Diaconate as a full and equal order of ministry.** With specified liturgical duties appropriately filled by deacons, their role as the voice of the world to the Church and as those who represent the servant nature of Christ and of Christ’s church is reinstated. Deacons are to serve as an icon for the servant ministry of all believers in Christ’s Church. Their ministry has significant implications for direction of spiritual formation for all persons, and for the Church’s mission in the world.

**Liturgy reclaimed as “the work of the people.”** The 1979 Prayer Book returns the Church to the ancient understanding of the Greek meaning of *liturgy* as “the work of the people” and of ministry as the duty and privilege of all persons, both lay and ordained. In all services, the distinct roles of ministry working together were restored, as reflected in the licensing of laypersons as preachers, ministers of communion and Eucharistic visitors as well as in the provision for laity as well as clergy to lead the Daily Offices

**Multiculturalism encourages a more expansive voice of welcome.** The publication and use of an African-American hymnal authorized by the Episcopal Church, *Lift Every Voice and Sing* (1993), was a step in offering a different voice from what is offered in the traditional Hymnal 1982. *Wonder, Love and Praise* was published in 1997, providing inclusive language hymnody and additional texts in languages other than English, while *Voices Found* (2003) emphasizes the contribution and diversity of women.

In 1999, Christian education materials began to be published by the Episcopal Church in Spanish, including *The Children’s Charter for the Church* and *Called to Teach and Learn*, which had previously been available in English only. Since then, many other resources are being made available in Spanish, both for children, youth and adults. To reinforce this direction, a resolution from General Convention in 2003 stated that all official documents, publications, and digital publications produced by the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society be issued in Spanish and French no later than 2006, and in other languages used in The Episcopal Church as soon as possible.

**Supplemental liturgical materials are developed.** Alternate liturgies since the revised 1979 Prayer Book, such as *Enriching Our Worship* (1997), have carried further the principle of expansive language by deleting gender attributes of God from the liturgies and incorporating other images, based in involving a fuller use a variety of Biblical and historical materials Christian traditions.

## **Chapter 9: Authority, Leadership, and Ministry**

In recognizing that baptism is full membership into the Body of Christ and that the Baptismal Covenant is central to a faithful Christian life, the Church affirms the baptismal ministry of all persons as the fundamental form of ministry in the Church. This reflects a transformation in the Church from a priestly ecclesiology and hierarchy to an ecclesiology that is centered on the ministry of all the baptized. All are called to mission and ministry, and all play a critical role in the building up of the Body of Christ, including children. This vision of ministry has encouraged the development of local leadership. Local leadership emerges out of a supporting community, resulting in enriched lay and ordained leadership both inside and outside the church’s walls.

**Who has authority?** Anglicanism has traditionally resisted centralized authority in favor of a more diffuse model. In America, moreover, the Episcopal Church was founded on the principles of the American Revolution, leading to a church that is episcopally led and synodically governed. It has a bicameral legislature: the House of Bishops and the House of Deputies. The tendency toward decentralization in the church follows from this diffuse model of authority and governance from the traditional Anglican importance placed on autonomy.

The nature of traditional Anglican “dispersed” authority in general, and the decentralized organization of the Episcopal Church in particular, has contributed to some constraints upon the development of formation and education in the Church. The Church is often reluctant to turn to a “national” church, to the church-wide office in the Episcopal Church Center, for example. Such reluctance leads to a greater reliance on diocesan and parish or congregational support for programs and education. Deep decentralization in the Church has naturally led congregations to embrace locally driven, diocesan-led structures. These bodies, especially in smaller or dioceses or those with financial constraints, often struggle to provide sufficient resources or guidance, and leaders may lack the time or resources to undergo the training needed to keep updated in the important but rapidly evolving work of formation.

**Ministry development supports local roots.** The theology of ministry rooted in baptism that came with the *1979 Book of Common Prayer*, has had a major impact on Christian formation. Because church leadership has become widely dispersed among all baptized rather than dependent exclusively on clergy, the Church’s pedagogy and especially its direction for ministry development has followed, moving toward an educated Church rather than primarily an educated clergy.

The ministry development movement can be traced to at least the early 1960’s, when Boone Porter discovered *Missionary Methods: St. Paul’s or Ours?* by Roland Allen, while visiting George Harris in the Philippines. Porter would bring back Allen’s emphasis on the Pauline missionary method of training, teaching and forming local leadership in community. While this movement has often been associated with the late Bishops Gordon of Alaska and Frensdorff of Nevada, countless other pioneers (including Deacon Phina Borgeson, Bishop Tom Ray of Northern Michigan, the late Lynne Wilson and the late Bishops George Harris and James Kelsey) carried this movement into groups that would grow and adapt educational methods grounded in a theology of ministry rooted in baptism.

Collaborative ministry can be seen in the development and growth of mutual or total ministry. The church’s canons have also changed to reflect the importance of local ministry development. Where previously “Canon 9” permitted the education and formation of aspiring priests and deacons, ordaining them to serve only in their local parishes, the Canon was replaced in 2003. There are no longer “local” priests and deacons, but the option of training and formation in many ways. Seminary is not

something that is required by canon. In addition the canons mandate that the local community play a much greater role in the discernment and affirmation of those aspiring to ordination.

Local ministry development, however, is not for everyone. In the Episcopal Church, local ministry development has greatly aided the work of ministry in dioceses that are both geographically extended and sparsely populated, and that suffer a shortage of ordained priests. Some larger congregations and dioceses have also engaged in local ministry development because it is a theology, rather than a method. However, many dioceses continue with the “one priest, one parish” model of ministry. The church, therefore, experiences a “mixed ecology” in terms of leadership, that is, a new ministry leadership model exists side-by-side with a more traditional model. Whether this is a peaceful and rich co-existence, however, depends on the mutual respect of the varying demands of the local context.

**Leadership of gay and lesbian persons.** As early as 1967 (the same year as the Pusey Report), the Church’s General Convention passed a resolution calling for the study of “Christian attitudes with respect to birth control, contraception, abortion, sterilization, illegitimacy, divorce and re-marriage, marital, pre-marital post-marital and extra-marital behavior; sexual behavior of single adults, and homosexuality.”<sup>5</sup> For the decades since that time, resolutions have consistently and increasingly affirmed the rights of homosexual persons in all areas of life (credit, housing, employment) as well as in ministerial leadership, including ordained ministry. These actions were taken before general acceptance in American society had become prevalent. For these decisions, the Church has received harsh criticism both from certain groups in the society at large, from within itself, and from representatives from other provinces of the Anglican Communion, particularly in the Southern Cone and in Africa. After four decades of study, prayer, resolutions and struggle, the Church continues to affirm the place of gay and lesbian persons in leadership, even if she is not always of one mind. It is important to note that the General Convention also continues to revisit other issues of sexuality and sexual behavior, including those mentioned in the 1967 resolutions.

**Growing up and fitting in.** Youth ministry has grown in recent decades, aided by the presence of the (now former) Ministries with Young People (MYP) Cluster at the Episcopal Church Center. Youth gatherings such as the triennial Episcopal Youth Event (EYE), Provincial Youth Events (PYE) and other youth gatherings on the diocesan, provincial, and national level continue to build relationships among youth and youth commitment to the Church. In 1994, youth gained seat and voice at General Convention. Once thought of only as “the future of the church,” young people are now recognized as having gifts for ministry and leadership in the present.

The Church’s support of campus ministries and chaplains has fluctuated over the years. The Episcopal Society for Ministry in Higher Education was founded in

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<sup>5</sup> From the Archives of the Episcopal Church, *Report of General Convention, 1967*, pp. 492ff.

1968 to “develop campus ministry in the Episcopal Church through advocacy, theological reflection, continuing education and fellowship.” For a time this was an ecumenical effort, such as the National Institute for Campus Ministry, funded by the Lilly Endowment for ten years, beginning in 1973. In 1988, a National Student Gathering was authorized to be held each triennial by General Convention.

**Decrease in financial resources for leadership.** It would be remiss not to mention the implication of budgetary constraints and reallocations over the past fifty years. As funding has shrunk in the Episcopal Church, and especially in the ministries of the Episcopal Church Center, there has been a shrinking of various church-wide offices. Particularly important for education was the closing of the Adult Education Office in 1994. Because of this, there has been less reliance on the rich resources that the Episcopal Church Center has to offer the churches. This has also been the case with most of our seminaries, which draw upon independent means of financial support apart from our church structure.

Indeed the strained financial situation in most Episcopal seminaries has been studied since the late 1970s by the Church’s then existing Board for Theological Education which proposed and passed at the 1981 General Convention a voluntary 1% plan of giving from parishes to seminaries. Although helpful, this strategy was not and has not been widely followed.

**The Church’s response** to the issue of the proper role of all persons in ministry as well as new liturgies reflects the dilemma of the Episcopal Church in living out its theology of ministry while encountering resistance and opposition from a culture that may not yet be ready for such inclusion or liturgical expressions.

The revised Prayer Book incorporated a number of major liturgical changes that both reflected and resulted in theological and ecclesiological shifts in the church, including changing roles for the various orders of ministry. The changes have not been universally accepted within the Episcopal Church. Some objections center on the concern that the nature of the ordained priesthood is threatened or diminished by an empowered laity. Others, brought up by the 1928 Prayer Book, found the transition difficult and hard to understand.

## **Chapter 10: Anglican identity in post-modern America**

The Episcopal Church has not been immune to changes in America and global culture. Even amid the major changes in the Church, attention has been paid to remaining faithful to traditional Anglican identity and temperament as summarized by John Westerhoff in *A People Called Episcopalians*, by David Hein and Gardiner Shattuck in *The Episcopalians*, by James E. Griffiss in *The Anglican Vision*, and other volumes in the New Church’s Teaching Series.

This mindfulness to the Episcopal Church’s heritage of the Anglican ethos has placed parameters on the Episcopal Church’s adaptive response to cultural

shifts. It has also shaped the nature of the changes, especially in liturgy as can be found in the 1979 Prayer Book. While being conscious of the appeal of other churches which have made much more drastic accommodations in worship to contemporary culture, liturgical leaders in the Episcopal Church have sought to hold in tension the need to be relevant to current culture and the need to be faithful to our distinctive Anglican heritage. This mindfulness to both culture and tradition continues to inform decisions and changes in the Episcopal Church.

Just as the Episcopal Church faces a question of identity in post-modern America, so too, does it face questions worldwide in Anglican identity in a post-colonial world. However, the Episcopal Church has sought to embrace distinctive Anglican characteristics that have informed the developments in our church. These characteristics that make us what we are, are often referred to as the “Anglican ethos,” as summarized briefly below:

- The importance for Anglicans of authority grounded in the interaction of Scripture, tradition, and reason, following the work of Richard Hooker, with later Anglicans adding “experience” as a fourth authoritative guide.
- A focus on uniformity of worship (given a variety of liturgical options) while allowing for a diversity of ideas and views; and the distinctive Anglican emphasis on right worship rather than right belief, right action rather than right doctrine;
- Anglicanism as an incarnational faith, offering the Church working in the world to serve God’s mission on earth;
- The primacy of worship and liturgy and, growing out of this, the idea of liturgy as formation;
- A deep decentralization that comes from the Anglican tradition of diffuse, dispersed authority, the affirmation of the value of autonomy, and an Anglican resistance to centralized authority; and
- A belief in the value and integrity of individual intellect;
- *The Book of Common Prayer*, the *Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral*, *Via Media*, and a distinctive polity that is Episcopal led and synodically governed; and
- Acknowledgment that provisionality, incompleteness and vulnerability are potential strengths rather than weaknesses of faith.

## PART II: LESSONS AND REALITIES

### Chapter 11: Expanding Cultures & Contexts

As noted in Part I, America has become a pluralistic society. The Episcopal Church has reflected and embraced this in many areas of its life and mission. However, issues of inclusion and welcome continue to present challenges for Christian communal life, as we move from an adult, male and Anglo-American orientation to a pluralistic orientation.

**Diversity of worship.** Some churches with diverse congregations are holding services that reflect the social and ethnic composition of their constituencies, for example, providing services in Spanish or French. Hip Hop Eucharists, U2charists, Taizé services and other contemporary liturgies bring home the theology of welcome by adapting the services to the needs of the people while still retaining the distinctive aspects of worship deemed fundamental to Anglicanism. As the Church continues to struggle with inclusiveness and diversity, it will be challenged to be mindful of teachings that conflict with these principles either implicitly or explicitly, with particular attention to ensuring that the language in liturgy reflects the voices of all people.

**The innovative meets the traditional.** The popular contemporary movement toward innovative worship and church-related activities has presented a challenge to the Episcopal Church's respect for its traditional heritage. How should the church adapt its traditional highly liturgical and sacramental model with today's technological advances and the opportunities these advances afford?

This question is especially relevant for those persons in the 25-31-year age group, who are statistically least likely to be found in church but more likely to express a desire for spirituality. As a group, these young adults often gather to worship but in ways different from the traditional "going to church on Sunday morning." The "emerging church" and the growing popularity of house churches among young adults testify to this change in what it means to belong to a church.

**An inclusive church.** The Episcopal Church has been intentional in inviting all persons to participate in the life of the Church, a result of its interpretation of the Gospel mandate to "love one another" and the ecclesial expression of the Baptismal Covenant. Persons of all ages, ethnicities and sexual orientation are becoming more visible in the church. As the Church itself becomes more inclusive, events and programs are emerging to reflect this diversity and theology of welcome. For example, there is a growing pool of resources for Hispanic ministry, including liturgies, formation programs, and children's resources in Spanish.

The Episcopal Church's Ethnic Congregational Development offices include Asian-American ministries, Black ministries, Hispanic ministries, and Native American ministries. These offices deal with a wide range of issues that seek to

promote greater inclusivity and welcome, and also work to provide congregational development and to promote leadership training. However, Janine Tinsley-Roe, Missioner for Native American Ministries, notes that there has been “a drop in funding support for Native people, a drop in cultural sensitivity for them and their unique issues. Native/Indigenous people have various obstacles in front of them to attain higher levels of education. We need to provide a more compassionate, assisting environment for them to gain access to higher learning components.”<sup>6</sup> Persons of non-European ethnicity often still encounter a Euro-centric culture in the church, including its educational materials. Although anti-racism training has been mandated for church leaders for several years, the Church continues to face issues of white privilege and tacit exclusion within the church.

Many congregations have yet to deal with issues of physical handicap access and other special needs. Families of all shapes and sizes are seeking welcome in a faith community. For example, there is an increase in children with autism spectrum disorders ; we are just recognizing that we need to support their parents rather than isolate them. Gays and lesbians are trying to reconcile the stated welcome of their church with its struggle over gay ordinations and same-gender blessings. All of these issues need to be addressed more attentively in the church.

**The seminaries respond to expanding culture and context.** The student population at our seminaries has also moved from a predominance of a young, male Anglo-American student body to reflect greater gender, ethnic, cultural and age diversity. In some schools more than half of the students are women. Education in most schools includes anti-racism training and many seminary experiences are increasingly attuned to include courses of study attuned to using resources from multiple cultures and contexts. At least 3 seminaries are collaborating on education for Hispanic ministry. Several schools include overseas mission and cultural & immersion experiences and some diocesan bishops encourage seminarians to have another modern language.

However, although the Episcopal Church has moved a great distance in the past fifty years to greater inclusion and welcome for all people, silent voices remain, and some faces are absent or longing to be seen. Understanding that America is no longer a “melting pot,” the Church can be an advocate to embrace the uniqueness of all. The disciplines of Christian formation and theological education will be critical in making these voices heard within the Church and perhaps beyond. This can be accomplished through curricula and programs attentive to varieties of language, stories, assumptions, and methodologies, moving the church culture to a direction that more faithfully reveals God’s beloved community.

**Formation becomes centered in Baptism and Eucharist.** Formation is both centered in Baptism and shaped by the Holy Eucharist. This means that Christian formation has begun to take its structure from the order of the Eucharist. Important themes are the themes of gathering, story, and prayer, sharing and going

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<sup>6</sup> Interview with Janine Tinsley-Roe, July 2007.

out. The nature of the Eucharist as an invitation to all God's children to the table of the Lord becomes the fundamental theology of formation. As formation programs reflect more the central focus of our liturgy, they also better express its theology. The prayerful design of today's formation programs begin to shape the faith of its participants as its connection to the order and theology of Eucharist takes root. Baptism is no longer a one-time-only event. Through the Baptismal Covenant, all present are able to reclaim its meaning in living out one's faith in daily life.

During the late 1980's and early 1990's, the Episcopal Church Center, including *In Dialogue with Scripture* and *Ministry in Daily Life*, developed several publications. Another important document, *Called to Teach and Learn*, was developed out of a General Convention Resolution calling for a curriculum or comprehensive study of education in the church. These highly valued but under-utilized resources signaled changes in understanding Christian education as formation, changes that are still current. Each of these resources sees the 1979 Prayer Book and the Baptismal Covenant together as a fundamental tool from which to teach all ages. In fact, the story of these resources and their use in the Church this points to a trend in how the Church is structured from triennium to triennium and how priorities sometimes change quickly, sometimes leaving valuable programs and resources behind.

Also in the 1990's, a document called *The Children's Charter for the Church* was developed by a grassroots movement of educators who wanted to highlight the recognition of children as full members of the Church. This document was "tested" by sponsoring dioceses and later accepted at General Convention for all churches to adopt. Deceptively simple in appearance, it reflected a deep commitment to include children and youth in the life of the church, recognizing the ministry of, by, and for children. Its aim was to help churches to affirm the practice of integrating the lives of children into the church, and to integrate the church into the lives of the children. This reflected a commitment to Christian formation as a cradle-to-grave enterprise involving both lifelong and daylong learning, which continues today.

**Ministries with youth and young adults.** As we enter the 21<sup>st</sup> century, youth and young adults continue to seek greater visibility and to need programs that address their particular spiritual needs and interests. Youth (ages 12-18) continue to have a high priority within the Church at all levels. While still seen as a ministry of presence involving "games and pizza," it is moving toward a formational model of spiritual practices and reflection in addition to the important social activities. On the local level, there is an increase of mission trips with this age group, as the current youth population tends to be highly altruistic, perhaps in growing up in the wake of September 11<sup>th</sup>.

Campus ministry has seen resurgence, perhaps because of the growing spiritual hunger in this country. According to Douglas Fenton, Staff Officer of Young Adult and Higher Education Ministries, "Young adults have an affinity with the institutional church now that they did not have years ago." However, he notes, "in

order to be sustainable over the long term, the local church need to continue its commitment [to campus ministries] in good spirit. The structure of the [Episcopal] Church Center cannot provide ongoing support to such endeavors; they must be embraced and initiated on the local level.”<sup>7</sup>

Young adult ministry is a fairly new area, beginning with a Young Adult Festival in Minneapolis in 2002. Within a few years, consultations and gatherings for young adults have been represented by up to seventy dioceses, demonstrating the need for this ministry. Church planning structures, however, have not caught up with this need. Often, as dioceses have become aware of the need for young adult ministry and have embraced it, diocesan staff and committees for young adults have simply been absorbed into or merged with youth staff and committees. Although young adults have different developmental needs, social concerns, and life skills from youth, young adult ministry often must share budget and programming with youth ministry rather than receiving its own line item.

Recently, the Church has embraced a program for youth and young adults called PLSE, or The Pastoral Leadership Search Effort, which helps congregations identify and cultivate gifted young people interested in exploring a call to ministry as a possible vocation.

## **Chapter 12: Christian Formation and Theological Education**

Given the far-reaching changes in society and in the Church, it is no surprise that these changes have influenced the theology of Christian formation and theological education. Because “praying shapes believing,” the changes in the Prayer Book have also shaped the faith of the gathered assembly and the learning that accompanies it.

Influential educators such as Paolo Freire, Thomas Groome and Verna Dozier have developed the theologies of Christian formation and theological education that give these areas a critical role in the mission of the Church. Christian formation is no longer relegated to the church basement, virtually and symbolically isolating Sunday School teachers and children, with little or no contact with other areas of the church. Increasingly other areas of ministry are seen as having a strong educational component that congregational leaders support and integrate into these areas. This integration of Christian education with other dimensions of ministry can be seen in the way all ages are often included in worship, outreach and mission on the congregational level, and in the collaboration of different areas of ministry at conferences sponsored by The Episcopal Church, such as: “Hear the Children” in 2004 (world mission and formation); “Wrestling with the Big Questions” in 2006 (ministry development, seminary deans and life long formation); and “Will Our Faith Have Stewards?” in 2007 (stewardship and formation).

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<sup>7</sup> Interview with Douglas Fenton, July 19, 2007.

**Pedagogical theory and practice.** Just as the liturgical changes reflect the Church's return to ancient church practices, so too does Christian formation. The Church has seen a shift from Christian education understood primarily as Sunday School and Bible study to Christian formation as catechesis, the ancient model of formation in which the Church seeks to equip the whole person for his or her life in Christ. This shift can be seen in the growing use of the term "Christian formation" to define the ministry in the Church of teaching spiritual growth and development. For some leaders, "Christian formation" describes more accurately than "Christian education" the traditional sense of Christian spiritual growth and development as a holistic, lifelong, and life-changing transformative journey through the Christian life. It differs from secular school and education that is based on the public school system, which focuses on imparting knowledge in particular, discrete subjects. Within this perspective, education remains a major and critical piece of formation but not its sole component. However, many leaders continue to prefer "Christian education" to uphold the importance of the pedagogical dimension of learning.

The new understanding of formation as involving lifelong and daylong learning is a shift away from the Enlightenment and nineteenth century models of education and away from what John Westerhoff called the "schooling model" and what educator Paolo Freire called "banking education," where knowledge is "deposited" by experts into a passive class of students. In the "formation model," there is a greater emphasis on sharing knowledge and experience, and there is a renewed interest in narrative, both biblical narratives and the personal narratives. Theologians such as Stanley Hauerwas and Walter Brueggemann have noted that Christians are a people of narrative, rooted in the Bible as the narrative of God working in history to redeem God's people. Thomas Groome's model of education praxis—the convergence of "God's story, my story, our story"—was embraced as a way to build community and to transmit the faith to future generations.

The recent developments in educational theory have brought a deeper understanding of how people learn, leading to a shift from traditional didactic teaching practices to more experiential learning based on small group discussions and sharing, a multiplicity of learning styles, and a renewed focus on narrative and stories.

**Local integrated learning.** Part of making available the integrated, or holistic, dimension of learning is the Church's responsibility to help realize the ministry of all baptized persons. The fulfillment of each individual's call to ministry is always a critical piece for education, to enable all persons to take their place as full participants of the church to promote and further the reign of God on the earth. This can only be done when programs are available in every congregation, for all ages and cultures and needs of the people. Integrated learning must also be supported at all levels of the church – local, diocesan, and church-wide – with the goal of doing together what has traditionally been done apart from one another.

**Lifelong learning for both lay and ordained persons.** Continuing education for clergy, and lifelong education for all, can be difficult to obtain. For example, deacons as non-stipendiary clergy are generally not given an allowance for continuing education. In addition, since they often are committed to regular jobs in the world, they are not able to uproot or take time off in order to attend classes. Since the Episcopal Church has expressed a commitment to encourage or require continuing education for clergy, it will be important to help make this possible by providing education that is accessible geographically, financially, and without time constraints.

The principle of lifelong learning for all persons also carries implications for higher education, particularly with respect to work and ministry in the church. The Master of Divinity degree is now one of several paths for credentialing church leadership. This is particularly important as the Church continues to develop its programs for mutual or total ministry and to ordain persons for local leadership. The coming years will both challenge and afford the opportunity to look at other means of valid credentialing for ministry of both lay and ordained persons.

At the 2003 General Convention, a resolution was passed (Resolution A121) which urged each diocese to develop a plan to provide for the continuing education of all clergy and lay professionals in its jurisdiction. The resolution also approved a pilot program for the development of a diocesan continuing education policy and program, sponsored by the Office for Ministry Development. Dioceses without continuing education policies or programs were urged to participate in this pilot program. This is but one of many resolutions that demonstrate the high priority given to continuing education in Church ministry.

**Formation in all areas is grounded in context.** The importance of the local context and community has been recognized for the development of a mature and rooted faith. Learning is best done in the context of one's own community and experiences. Freire's pedagogical use of base communities as a critical part of the cycle of formation, along with theological reflection and action, has been instrumental in providing for the Church as a model for incorporating theology and praxis within the context of one's own community. The question is now being asked, "How can we best be Christian in our own environment?" *EfM*, administered through the University of the South's School of Theology, has influenced literally thousands of church members as they learn to think theologically while studying didactic material in their local communities, addressing the multiple answers to that important question.

This concept of formation grounded in context is replacing the notion implicit in many Christian formation programs and teaching, that there is an absolute body of knowledge that applies in all situations and contexts, which must be learned in order to have an adequate understanding of the Christian faith. Simply translating materials or packaging them differently do not address the needs of the local community.

Contextual and liberation theologies are becoming significant in grounding theological education and preparation for ministry, including seminaries. Broader and more varied class offerings reflect the realization that if theological education is to sufficiently equip its students for fruitful servant leadership in the Church, it must encompass a wide range and a deep understanding of a variety of life settings and issues. Faith formation has become an in-depth model incorporating the essential areas of church life: education, liturgy, community, proclamation, and compassionate Christian service in the world.

In local ministry development, the context is the local community of faith itself, the church out of which individuals are both called and trained for ministry locally. From Alaska to Nevada, from Northern Michigan to Iowa, from Wyoming to East Tennessee and West Virginia, many in the church have formed diocesan-led programs that move the church from a consumer-provider model of Ministry to a model of shared leadership. Often ministry teams enter education and formation programs together in the local community. Often the daily lives and ministries of many parishioners are strengthened through programs like the aforementioned *EfM*, while other programs like *LifeCycles* and diocesan schools serve the needs of those engaged in specialized ministries, both lay and ordained.

## **Chapter 13: Leadership and Ministry Development**

In order to engage the work of the church in mission, rooted in the context of the local community and in the experiences of the people, we need to take seriously the vital role of collaboration in teaching and promoting the spiritual growth of the people of God, both as an effective methodology for learning and as a model for ministry in the church and the world. Part of the challenge in encouraging collaborative work in education is to make available to congregations understandable and comprehensive pedagogies that can be used to promote mission-driven ministry. It will also be necessary to educate the educators about the changes to the traditional modes of Christian education, toward forming the contextual, missional, collaborative mode.

**Episcopal seminaries respond to changing demographics.** The past half-century has seen dramatic demographic and economic shifts in seminary populations. In addition to the gender and racial/ethnic diversity already noted, more persons are seeking ordained ministry as a second call, leading to a more diverse, more experienced student body requiring learning opportunities that speak to their wider horizons. Donn Morgan, President and Dean of the Church Divinity School of the Pacific (CDSP), has recently chronicled major changes in theological education, including a changing notion of “residency.”<sup>8</sup> More students commute to seminary, a change from the exclusively residential population that has been the model, and increasing numbers of students are part-time or enrolled in special programs,

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<sup>8</sup> Donn Morgan, “As Through A Glass Darkly: Defining Theological Education in the Twenty-First Century” *Anglican Theological Review* (90, Spring, 2008, 255-265).

certificates and degrees other than a three-year M.Div. While in general there has been a decline in the number of seminary students, the change in the composition of students offers hopeful signs for the growth and enrichment of seminaries. However, “only about half of new Episcopal clergy learn their theology in one of the eleven Episcopal seminaries.”<sup>9</sup>

In most seminaries, as already noted, the curriculum has expanded to respond to demographic and societal changes. In addition, a major pedagogical shift has occurred in most Episcopal seminaries. Unlike the 1960’s, the current emphasis in both coursework and field education is on the integration of theory and practice. Today, many seminary graduates from prior generations would not recognize either the pedagogical depth or the practical range of contemporary seminary curricula. For example, there has been greater emphasis on relationships, team ministry, sharing of power, and increasing awareness of the need to address oppression.

**Valuing theological education for clergy and laity alike.** With the emphasis on ministry rooted in baptism, Church leadership has become widely dispersed among all baptized rather than depending exclusively on clergy as educators. Local formation and local leadership increasingly characterize Christian formation. In turn the call for ministry developers (both lay and ordained) has nudged local programs and seminaries together to collaborate on the development of new leadership, relational and teaching skills.

**Local ministry formation gains importance.** Since the 1960s, the local ministry movement has grown and adapted educational methods grounded in a theology of ministry rooted in baptism. Sindicators, Synagogy, and Leadership Academy for New Directions (LAND) were some of those groups involved in local ministry development. To this day, the diocesan partnership known as Living Stones (to which at least 25% of American dioceses have belonged) meets annually to share case studies and diocesan strategies in ministry development. Again the importance of these local efforts includes the need for professional and vocational ministry developers. As of this writing, four seminaries (EDS, CDSP, Bexley and SWTS) are engaged in partnerships with local dioceses, with EDS coordinating this initiative. In addition, a number of dioceses that belong to Living Stones have developed what is known as the Ministry Developers Collaborative, a group committed to working with seminaries, interns and others to develop both the skills and the knowledge helpful to this calling.

**Renewal of the diaconate.** It is important to note that, at the time of the Pusey Report, the diaconate, as it is now constituted, did not exist. The renewal of the diaconate has been critical in reaffirming the nature of Christian formation as focused not on itself, “education for knowledge alone,” but on ministry in the world and particularly for the sake of leading all persons to the knowledge and love of God, especially in the work of mission for the poor, the weak, and the helpless. Christian

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<sup>9</sup> William R. MacKaye, “The Cost of Preserving the Mission: Episcopal Seminaries Grapple with New Realities,” *In Trust Magazine* (Summer, 2008), p. 11.

education, so often tending to teach merely how to “know *about* God,” has in recent years reclaimed its mission to guide people to “know God,” to learn to encounter God especially in the faces and needs of others. In this shift, the nature and purpose of the diaconate and of diaconal ministry, as interpreter of the world to the church, and servant of the church to the world, has been recognized and upheld. The missional focus of theological education embodies the ministry of servanthood that is the crux of the diaconate and the work of all baptized Christians. That the most recent renewal of this historic ordered occurred with the renewed emphasis of baptism as a call to ministry for all Christians, has also made a difference in how deacons see themselves as developers of diaconal ministry, for the whole church, rather than the primary “doers” of diaconal ministry on the Church’s behalf.

## **Chapter 14: The Development of Educational Resources**

**Congregational educational programs grow from local initiatives to church-wide use.** In embracing this holistic approach to formation, new models of education for children, youth and adults have been developed by individuals and congregations. Many of these new models were once shared with the wider church at local conferences, such as Chaos to Creativity sponsored by the Diocese of Indianapolis, and EDFEST, a Province One annual conference. It was at such local events that the Church first leaned about and experienced *Godly Play*, *Journey to Adulthood (J2A)*, and *EfM*. Annual conferences such as these are not held as frequently as in the past, lessening the opportunity for many to hear about the latest in program development. However, thanks largely to the use of Internet communications, websites and blogs, these materials and practices are shared.

*Godly Play* (developed by Jerome Berryman in 1990) follows the pedagogy of Sophia Cavalliti and Maria Montessori. A formational model for children ages 3-12, it respects the child as already having a relationship with God and provides a sacred space for learning the biblical story and liturgical language. Children are given the freedom to “wonder” about God and reflect on the sacred story in their own responsive way. David Crean and Amanda Hughes created *J2A* at St. Philip’s Episcopal Church in Durham, North Carolina in 1993. For youth ages 12-18, it lifts the importance of ministry to youth as one that is formational, bringing the traditional Sunday School class and Youth Group together as a means for teens to explore self, spirituality, society and sexuality in the context of faith, through experiential study, liturgy, pilgrimage and service. As recently as 2008, *Confirm not Conform* (CnC) has been brought to the wider church as a Confirmation program developed at St. John’s Episcopal Church in Oakland, California and piloted in congregations in many other dioceses. Such local program initiatives have grown to have national and international implications. For example, *Godly Play* is now embraced in the United Kingdom, Germany, Finland, Spain, Canada and Australia.

In the same way, there has been a proliferation of adult education programs as intentional and holistic lifelong learning experiences, having started from local initiatives. Already mentioned is *EfM*, now part of the School of Theology at the

University of the South, in Sewanee, Tennessee. This program is built on the recognition that adults desire to have a deeper theological education in their own context while exploring ministry as a baptized Christian in daily life. Since its inception in 1975, over 70,000 persons have participated in the program and more than 22,000 have completed all four years of it. It continues to grow with the use of technology, offering on-line courses for those who live at a distance or whose life and work prohibit gathering in a physical location with others on a weekly basis. Other adult formation programs that embrace learning as formational include *Disciples of Christ in Community (DOCC)* which began at Trinity Church in New Orleans, Louisiana in 1975, and *LifeCycles* (2001) which began with a small coalition of dioceses, including Wyoming, Northern Michigan and Nevada. The growing use of theological reflection methods is an example that adult educational opportunities are incorporating deeper and more creative ways to encourage lifelong spiritual growth.

**The model of the diaconate in formation.** A deacon, as one who is called to serve, is a symbol in the Church of the servant nature of Christ and of Christ's church. This is often the most clearly understood aspect of a call to the diaconate and the importance of Christ like service in the lives of all Christians; a spotlight for the people of God on those dimensions that constitute the Christian life. A deacon is Christ's representative in the world of what we the Church are – bearers of hope and bringers of succor to people in need.

Often what is not so clearly understood is the deacon's role to "interpret to the Church the needs, concerns, and hopes of the world." In recent years much has been learned about the importance of formation that clearly prepares deacons for this role and enables them to prepare others. After four decades of this most recent renewal of the diaconate, it is becoming clear that there are specific skill sets and tools that are helpful in that interpretive role: advocacy; the ability to facilitate dialogue; service learning; special attention to the Prophetic tradition, for example. While deacons are called to serve the poor and the marginalized, their ministry often moves beyond mere palliative treatment of the poor to the hard questions of power and wealth, systems and institutions that maintain and reinforce the status quo, and the role of the Church as the prophetic voice that speaks against social injustice.

Because the diaconate has its roots and its center in local formation, it can offer the whole Church a working model for other local initiatives in preparing others for ministry both lay and ordained. To date, there are at least 74 dioceses with active deacon formation programs and others that are being established. There are some 3,000 deacons in The Episcopal Church. Through a very productive partnership between the Office for Ministry Development and the North American Association for the Diaconate (NAAD), regional conferences have been held with a specific eye toward learning about continuing education for deacons, what is available and what is needed. In turn, those learnings have been shared with leaders of formation programs and an initiative is underway to catalog and make available "best practices" and guidelines for local adaptation.

Finally, nowhere can the influence of the most recent revision of the Book of Common Prayer be seen more clearly than in the ordination service for deacons. Re-established as a full and equal order, one of the unintended consequences has been to encourage the church to see the interaction of all orders, both their distinctiveness and the richness that comes in effective partnerships between them.

**Seminary formation and theological education.** In seminaries, learning has often lived in the tension between theory and practice, between academic learning and practical education. For preparation for ministry, this tension offers an urgent challenge for teaching. An over-emphasis on theory can result in graduates unprepared for the nuts and bolts of ministry. On the other hand, an over-emphasis on practical learning can result in a theologically thin ministry. In order properly to equip persons for effective and theologically sound ministry in the world, both theory and praxis need to be addressed and taught well. In recent decades, the Episcopal seminaries and schools have been equipped not only to teach both theory and practice of Christian theology and ministry but to integrate these areas more fully. Methods and opportunities in fieldwork for students continue to expand, and recent partnerships between some dioceses and seminaries have become a way to enable relevant learning for people locally, as well as for those who plan to enter their communities post-seminary. Examples of programs available to adult learners through seminary program centers include: The Center for Anglican Learning and Leadership (CALL) at CDSP; The Center for Discipleship and Ministry Development at Trinity Episcopal School for Ministry; Institute for Christian Formation and Leadership at Virginia Theological Seminary (VTS); and The Center for Christian Spirituality at General Seminary (GTS).

In reflecting on changes in theological education over the past 40 years, it is important to name the present and continuing strengths of the Episcopal seminaries to academic excellence and spiritual formation. These include: distinguished faculty whose members contribute to the formation in the wider church as teachers and learners in many venues, researchers and authors, and as regular contributors to various aspects of diocesan and global life. The Episcopal Church has long valued with good effect its seminaries, their faculty and libraries, as centers of learning. Any present assessment of theological education must reflect and embrace both continuity and change.

Some seminaries have enhanced the accessibility and flexibility of their curriculum to welcome those who cannot be residential students. At the Episcopal Divinity School (EDS), two-week intensive courses are offered in January and June, which are open to a wide variety of adult learners, both lay and ordained. EDS also offers online courses with interactive media resources, including formation and support from partnering local diocesan leaders. Similarly, CDSP offers online courses in the CALL program and short intensive courses, for those who can attend brief but not extended classes. The Episcopal Theological Seminary of the

Southwest (ETSS) will also go online, re-launching its online courses in 2008 as “The Online School for Spirituality and Mission.”

Seminaries increasingly offer curricula and programs that take into account the diversity of constituencies that they are called to teach and to serve. Courses abound that focus on the ministry development, cultural implications for ministry, ethnic ministry, children and youth needs, ecumenical and interfaith relationships and awareness. In addition, changing pedagogies and teaching methodologies reflect changing theologies. Liberation theology and contextual theology not only are taught in theology courses but also influence or provide the background theological basis for ministry preparation. Courses and resources like these would be of great help for congregational ministry.

These changes that most seminaries hold in common should not keep us from appreciating the uniqueness of each seminary and the educational complexity of its objectives, as well as the variables over which each theological school has little control.

**Formation in Episcopal schools.** More than 165,000 young people and their families are currently being served by nearly 1,040 Episcopal schools, at least 630 of which are exclusively early childhood programs. Since 1982, more than 200 new Episcopal schools have been started, and many existing schools have expanded to add new grade levels. Currently, more than forty school start-up initiatives are underway, in both urban and rural settings.

A recent strategic plan for Episcopal schools identified five goals: integrating core values of Episcopal identity, promoting leadership, fostering inclusivity and justice locally and globally, developing web and print resources on leadership and governance, and seeking resources for expanding programs. Episcopal schools seek to attract and cultivate future leaders for our schools through relationships with the larger Church and seminaries. They are continually expanding programs and resources to support and help leaders integrate their ongoing professional and spiritual development.

**Formation in Episcopal camps and conference centers.** For many young people, a formative experience of Christian community takes place each summer at diocesan summer camps. Conference Centers also host numerous events for supporting the spiritual growth and life of Episcopalians as well as many from outside our denomination. Both of these resources are largely untapped as centers for Christian formation and education by the wider church.

## **Chapter 15: Building Upon Relationships**

**Strengthening networks.** The Episcopal Church has, in general, not matched its great diversity and richness of resources with the ability to share them within the Church. Current networks, while making great strides in filling a vacuum, have been inadequate to support the work of Christian education and to help its

leaders provide the best programming available to them. As pedagogy shifts from broadcast modes to interactive modes, communication and networks within Christian formation and theological education disciplines need to be strengthened. In addition, collaboration needs to be improved between the major areas of Christian formation (congregational educational programming) and theological education (seminary training and education).

One consequence of this lack of effective networks is that Christian education leaders have developed identical parallel programs and replicated the same trainings, wasting both talent and resources. The need is critical for a commonly networked system with a common commitment to mission, a system that improves access to resources for all congregations. Currently there is a proliferation of resources and local networks, but these are not yet equally distributed nor equally accessible or available or even known about.

**Interdependence and cooperation grow among leaders.** Common work in the Church can be characterized by collaboration, cooperation, or coordination. This entails convening leaders in ministry together so they have a church wide perspective of their work. Ministry then does not become parochial and synergies that are not otherwise obvious can be uncovered. Things can be done better collaboratively than done on one's own, but it takes human and financial resources. As lay and ordained persons grow more comfortable as partners in ministry, relationships have been seen as critical to formation as the building up of the Body of Christ. The shift to holistic and experiential learning has resulted in increasing importance of conversation, dialogue, and mutual learning among participants of the Christian formation process.

By collaborating together, PEALL participants have formed some urgently needed networks while also promoting better collaboration and connections with those networks already existing. For example, a network comprising of diocesan educators began as a result of PEALL's explorative work. Such connections need to be intentionally and carefully maintained in order to avoid reverting to a situation in which individual parishes and dioceses have parallel needs but lack the means to help one another. Currently there is no overall structure to provide communication and cohesion for such networks.

Christian formation and theological education are increasingly cooperative in nature. From the Episcopal Church Center work to the ministries in dioceses and congregations, there is a move from independent work to a spirit of collaboration that empowers its leaders and improves the whole enterprise. An example is the "Theological Education for All" project (begun in 2003) that developed a web portal ([www.teforall.org](http://www.teforall.org)) that provides resources and links from all levels of formation ministries in the Episcopal Church and beyond. The Episcopal Council of Seminary Deans and other seminary leaders have also committed themselves to and begun working collaboratively in four arenas. With some overlapping membership among seminaries: four seminaries will focus on programs in ministry development that will

include clergy and laity; four seminaries are at work on providing theological education through distance and integrated learning media; four will look to shape global educational resources especially in Africa. In these and other respects, these schools are beginning to move beyond moments of communication and occasional coordination to create changing resources collaboratively.

With the growing use of consultative ministry development networks such as Living Stones, the local communities are being trained to develop their own leadership for ministry. The theology of this kind of ministry is solidly supported by the ordination rites in the 1979 Prayer Book, which sees discernment of ordained ministry as emerging from the individual's own community rather than as a solo decision.

In the Episcopal Church Center the former Office for Ministry Development (OMD) has collaborated with nearly all ministry development networks. Church-wide conferences increasingly involve several offices working together with other educational networks to offer programs of wide-ranging and far-reaching implications for ministry and learning. PEALL was itself a collaboration between two program units at the Church Center. In joining together for this survey of Christian formation and theological education, the Office for Ministry Development and the Ministries with Young People Cluster (Offices of Children & Christian Education, Youth, and Young Adults & Higher Education) brought numerous networks, professionals and orders together, resulting in a process which enriched groups and individuals who often have not worked together.

For Christian formation leaders on the local level, organizations have sprung up to support one another with the sharing of ideas, resources and collegiality in ministry. The National Association of Episcopal Christian Education Directors (NAECED) formed in 1997 now has over 400 members that are lay and ordained, volunteer and paid staff, from churches, dioceses and seminaries. The National Organization of Episcopal Resource Centers (NOERC) collaborates with the Church Center on church-wide events as well as ecumenical endeavors.

## **Chapter 16: Moving Toward an Expansive Church**

**Multicultural and multi-ethnic ministry.** As noted elsewhere, in the United States as a whole, so-called whites will soon be a minority ethnic group. We can no longer be oblivious to the Hispanic presence among us and remain passive in not responding to the mission opportunities given to us at this moment in time. This mission field and ministry opportunity is a blessing from God. Even in the face of this growing trend, persons of non-European ethnicity often still encounter a Euro-centric culture in the church, including its educational materials. Although anti-racism training has been mandated for church leaders for several years, the Church continues to face issues of white privilege and tacit exclusion within the church.

Embracing our multicultural aspect of our church can help us reflect on issues related to poverty, spirituality, religion and culture in general.

**Mission and Christian formation.** How is God calling us as Christians to engage the world? How does Christian formation relate to our sense of mission?

Mission is integral to Christian formation, and Christian formation and education are integral to mission. Only by engaging the world with compassion, helping people to become the full human beings God created them to be, can we be truly formed, whole persons as God created us to be. Thus, Christian compassionate service is a natural outgrowth of faithful discipleship, and formation helps to provide the spiritual foundation that makes the commitment to mission in the world a lasting rather than a fleeting commitment. Formation also helps to connect the concept of mission to the need for transformation, by challenging the common unexamined assumption that we either pray or act, we either are spiritual or we do mission.

In another sense, the pedagogy of Christian formation and education offers a way to understand the mission of the Church in a broader and more comprehensive way. The premises of Christian formation – holistic integration of learning, the importance of context, the need for interdependence and cooperation, and the value of relationships and dialogue – all inform how we conduct the Church’s mission. Mission then involves sharing stories as well as building hospitals, social transformation as well as personal service.

Formation is also important in discerning one’s call to serve. A person or a congregation may be called to incarnate mission in one’s own context, serving at the local level. Others will feel called to share their gifts in service within the larger diocese, country, or world, or to engage in ecumenical or interfaith dialogue to promote mutual understanding or common mission. In addition, any mission grounded in the liturgical context of the Prayer Book will be a transformative experience. The work of the Church in the world will always be enriched when seen in the context of worship and discernment as its guiding principles.

**Being Christian in a multi-faith world.** Finally, how can we best be Christians in a multi-faith world? What is the role of Christian formation in interfaith dialogue?

According to Harvard’s Pluralism Project (2008) roughly 17 million people, over 6 percent of the population, practice diverse religious traditions within the U.S., and that does not consider the diversity within Christianity itself. As our country becomes more religiously and culturally complex, increasingly interfaith initiatives are significant for the kind of engagement we describe as “pluralism.” An obvious role of Christian education is to provide opportunities to learn about other faith traditions, including Christian non-Anglican traditions, with an eye to better

understanding and appreciation. With more appreciative insights into other traditions, Christians can engage in more fruitful dialogue with others in the service of common fellowship and common mission.

However, we can fully honor other faiths only when we can affirm and honor our own. We cannot engage in productive conversation with persons of other faith traditions if we do not know who we are and how our own faith tradition forms us. So an important part of being Christian in a multi-faith society is to understand one's faith enough to be able to live in the world honoring that faith while honoring and affirming others' faith. Christian formation and theological education courses are essential to instilling that deep understanding and knowledge to help Christians to navigate in a vastly diverse religious culture with integrity for one's own faith and appreciation for the faith of others.

**Using technology.** New models of organization and communication will improve access to educational resources. Various technological media offer new possibilities for mutual learning and listening, sharing stories, and the valuing diverse experiences.

It will be a major challenge for the Church to take advantage of the new and not-so-new technologies now available, including interactive technological means of communication such as Blackboard, which enables its participants to engage in long-distance discussion and to share ideas on common concerns. Another innovative use of technology is found in the creation of the E-ministry Network, which offers an online and teleconferencing church-wide center for ministry training, information and connection.

In seminaries, and in diocesan or congregational relationships with seminaries, online and distance learning needs to be encouraged, promoted, and recognized as valid both as part of the ordination process and as a way to deepen and enrich the faith of lay members. These means are still relatively untapped as valuable resources for learning and ministry. Online and distance learning is especially relevant today, to respond to a variety of situations, for example: calls to ordained ministry as a second call in an individual's later years; persons who want to receive seminary education but are hindered or prevented from attending by lack of mobility; and the need for continuing education for all clergy, both deacons and priests, and to promote an educated laity.

## **Chapter 17: Structures for Supporting Christian Formation**

**Educational resources proliferate.** Christian formation today is rooted in the local setting. As leadership has become shared and more widely dispersed, guidance for the development of new resources has been less centralized. The past has shown that when church-wide structures have had changes of leadership, restructuring or budget cuts, local initiatives fill the gap.

The decentralized organization of the Episcopal Church carries some advantages for Christian education. Christian education has enjoyed a broader horizon of learning, and it has been able to engage more possibilities for programming that can be adapted to local needs. The local dioceses and communities have benefited from being able to discern their own needs rather than having programs imposed upon them regardless of their fit and relevance. As a result, there has been a proliferation of grassroots programs that have displayed local creativity and initiative. The center of educational planning and support in the Episcopal Church is the congregation. The dioceses are also instrumental in supporting congregations and providing resources or links to resources. As a result, educational materials are more accessible--largely due to the internet-- but only by those who are aware of the networks and structures that make them available. A disadvantage is that this can lead to a lack of cohesion and coordinated guidance.

Recognizing this wide variety of needs and possibilities, the Church has affirmed the need of “otherness” in ministry, education, and community. The Church supports and celebrates diversity as central not only to its common mission but also of its integral parts, including education and formation.

Besides the traditional educational programs available to congregations, most dioceses in the Episcopal Church offer training in a variety of areas: anti-racism training, safe church training (sexual misconduct/child abuse prevention and sexual harassment prevention), and lay ministry training, for example. While many of these training programs are mandated by General Convention, the training programs are often locally developed or outsourced. For example, the misconduct & abuse prevention training program *Safeguarding God’s Children* was developed through the Church Pension Fund. The Episcopal Church Center also has a staff officer who offers training and supports provincial networks for anti-racism training.

**The Diocese as a first resource.** The practice in the Church of turning to a “national” church body for all its resources no longer exists. Decentralization in the Church has naturally led congregations to embrace locally driven, diocesan-led structures. These bodies, especially in smaller or dioceses or those with financial constraints, may be stretched to provide sufficient resources or guidance, and leaders may lack the time or resources to undergo the training needed to keep updated in the important but rapidly evolving work of formation. Of the 110 dioceses, only thirty have paid staff persons who oversee education and formation training that supports local parish education, either through a Diocesan Christian Educator or Diocesan Resource Center. Just as a one priest, one parish model does not work for all dioceses, many either cannot afford or have developed alternatives to paid Christian educators. Having a network helps develop new resources within the local context, no matter the size. For both small and large dioceses, networking has helped in the sharing of resources to suit the variety of needs in the church.

The lack of compulsory educational programs, which enables congregations and communities to develop or adapt programs to their own context, also means that

there is no uniformity of learning in the Church. This lack of cohesiveness, while not in itself harmful, may lead to a fragmented educational discipline without adequate theological roots or common understanding of mission or learning. Multiple programming opportunities have resulted in multiple accountabilities and strategies, which, while flexible and adaptable, are very difficult to coordinate and lead to a loss of collaboration. In addition, resources and programs suffer from limited availability and accessibility, especially in small churches which, as noted earlier, comprise approximately two-thirds of Episcopal parishes.

**Utilizing the resources and richness of Episcopal seminaries and schools.** Episcopal seminaries and schools provide an invaluable resource for the Episcopal Church that is under-utilized and underestimated. In these places of learning, message, method, and media interconnect to create a space for deep learning and an effective avenue for evangelism and mission. In addition, seminary standards are shifting and now include criteria for integration, contextualization, formation, and performance. Finally, class offerings have become broader and more varied to better prepare students for effective student leadership in the Church and world.

**General Convention.** For the past 30 years, there have been countless resolutions related to the importance of Christian formation and theological education at all levels of the Episcopal Church. At the same time, funding has not necessarily been associated with such resolutions. The staff at the Church Center is given the imperative to carry out the ethos of every resolution with decreasing funds and staff support. In 1968 there was a staff of over 35 in the Christian Education department. Today there is one staff person for children (along with adult education), one for youth, one for young adults (along with campus ministries) and a dispersed model for adult formation through another mission center.

The Office for Ministry Development has also seen dramatic changes in the recent organization of the Church Center. It remains to be seen whether separating the Office into three geographic locations, and whether delineating ordained ministry, lay ministry and theological education into separate offices will enhance the work of General Convention and of active networks. The Ministries with Young People Cluster has also been dispersed, with Ministry with Young Adults separated to a different Mission Center (Leadership) and children, youth, adults, and seniors now divided further within the Congregational Life Mission Center. Through the MYP, all ages were grouped together, offering the ability for collaboration, cooperation and seamless movement from one age stage to the next.

Despite these constraints, there is great energy and enthusiasm, largely due to support and participation from local constituencies, such as the Provincial networks, diaconal programs, ministry developers and seminary deans. The importance of communication and networking allows for the best use of all the resources the variety of formation networks, constituencies and providers have to offer.

## Chapter 18: Funding

**Learning from the past.** History has shown that during financially difficult times, those areas (on the local, diocesan and church-wide levels) most impacted are those with oversight of Christian formation and education, including most of our seminaries. Budgets are reduced and staff positions eliminated. Although leadership on each of these levels has recognized the importance of formation in the life and mission of the church, it is not lived out in budget allocations and distribution over time. This may mean that the Church, both at the church-wide and at the diocesan and congregational levels, will need to learn how to make the best use of resources with fewer funds to supply the resources. Educational priorities will need to be clearly thought out and articulated.

This has also led to the growth of independent organizations that advocate for formation and its importance, such as NAECED and NAAD. Often the mandates given at General Convention change dramatically from triennium to triennium so that funding for important projects is not always sustained. This study itself will be an interesting test of how we follow long-term projects. While the Executive Council of The Episcopal Church allocated nearly \$250,000 for this long-term study, the offices that previously sustained this work and carried continuity from one group to another have been dramatically reorganized.

**Facing financial realities in Episcopal seminaries.** It is not surprising that the increasingly high costs of residential theological education, losses in endowment performance, declining numbers of full-time residential students in some seminaries, reaching limits to cost-cutting without affecting mission, in addition to other complicating factors, have led to major changes in mission and location for three seminaries: Bexley Hall, EDS and Seabury-Western Theological Seminary (SWTS). A recent comparative fiscal assessment of Episcopal seminaries, published in a magazine for seminary trustees, elaborates on the challenges and responses facing these three and to other seminaries. Even the seminary with the most prosperous endowment is considering a capital campaign. Donn Morgan concludes that “radical transformation” of theological education has begun and will continue in years ahead. Episcopal and other theological schools are seeking to “find with new models, new methods and new mandates.”<sup>12</sup>

**Addressing student debt.** An alarming increase in seminarian debt, coupled with traditionally low starting salaries for priests, continues to be a great obstacle to the push for well-educated, committed clergy. Some sending churches and dioceses financially support the seminarians they send. However, the amounts vary widely and rarely match the financial needs of the students. Without a central funding source, no coherent plan exists to financially help those who respond to God’s call to ordained ministry.

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<sup>12</sup> Morgan, p. 264 and MacKaye, p. 14.

For many students at Episcopal seminaries, educational debt has become unmanageable. Burdened with heavy debt from undergraduate studies and unable to find adequate funding sources, aspirants for ordained ministry often accumulate additional debt during their three years in seminary. Adding to the problem is the fact that the Episcopal Church is the only major denomination in the United States without a central funding source to support seminarians in their education and training. The recent dramatic increase in seminarian debt comes in part because of higher education costs and partly because recent Episcopal seminarians are younger than their predecessors of the past 30 years. This heavy debt load can limit the ministry choices of new clergy, which, in turn, will affect the future of the Episcopal Church.<sup>13</sup>

Debt incurred for continuing education by deacons, who are non-stipendiary clergy, also needs to be addressed if the Church is to continue supporting higher education, supplemental training, and other educational opportunities for deacons.

**Preparing for the future.** Limited funding with increasing costs is also a major issue for our churches, dioceses and seminaries today. One of the challenges will be to find less traditional ways to support theological education while being less dependent on funding for standard curricula and programs. Another will be for congregations to learn how to collaborate with one another in creating or supporting education and resources rather than working in isolation on the same projects. Churches will also be challenged to review potential programs carefully and intentionally in order to find the best programs for their community and thus be able to use their funds mindfully and without waste.

These challenges can become opportunities for growth and enrichment. When reductions in staff and financial resources at the Episcopal Church Center make it difficult for the church-wide office to fully support the educational mission and ministry of local communities, the congregations and dioceses often find an abundance of commitment and initiative to provide creative programs for their own needs. Such local initiative also offers the opportunity to create networks through which such creative work can be shared with others. At the same time, some find this kind of work a fulfillment of their baptismal ministry as they become empowered to guide their congregation in thinking more deeply about the kind of formation that will work best for them.

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<sup>13</sup> From the website of “Funding Future Leaders: A National Endowment for Episcopal Seminaries, [www.fundingfutureleaders.org](http://www.fundingfutureleaders.org).

## SECTION III. LIFELINES

This section pays attention to actual and potential sources of health in the church's diverse educational milieu. Our desire in this brief historical narrative is to be alert to healthy trends and practices in order to inform healthy future decision-making. We wish to affirm and highlight core values and practices on which to refresh and renew our mission and ministry. We know that we are blessed with an abundance of educational resources that are, however, set within a culture of individuality and contextual diversity. If we wish, to paraphrase John 10:10, to have a more abundant formational and educational life in years ahead, we will do well to pay attention to sources of vitality and creativity that are already present among us.

### **1. Build upon local resourcefulness:**

Educational formation in all of its many arenas – congregations and theological schools alike -- is strongest where it is locally trusted and valued. This model of building educational growth from the bottom up is not simplistic. It depends upon many factors such as the involvement of key local leaders, the congregation as a primary school for ministry, strong interpersonal relationships, contextual and cultural appropriateness, common goals, a proven history of meeting local needs, and the innovation and creativity of local educators. Whatever the structure, being locally authentic is a central lifeline for furthering educational resourcefulness.

Possible examples include diocesan schools and other local programs, ministry development programs for shared leadership, parochially tailored Christian formation curricula, and a seminary whose graduates are particularly valued in a given diocese or region.

### **2. Seek further networking, communication, cooperation and increasing collaboration:**

In an environment in which decentralization and appreciation for local resourcefulness are valued, social networks become increasingly important. Fortunately, as this paper documents, we have a multifaceted infrastructure to support lifelong Christian formation. We have documented a strong, albeit vulnerable, network of educational institutions, diocesan and parochial educators that can only benefit from a collaborative effort to form and equip Episcopalians for mission ministry within all orders. The need for greater communication and economics of scale, both human and financial, is also underscored.

There are several instances in the past decade where we have observed smarter networking skills, enhanced use of technology, and new pathways for collaboration. These include the network of parishes and dioceses who since 2000 have adopted *The Children's Charter for the Church*, the growth of Living Stones consultation of dioceses and educational communities in ministry development;

gatherings of Diocesan Christian Education Directors from across the country; Province IX's curriculum writers' group; and the Council of (Seminary) Deans strategic initiatives in the areas of distance learning, ministry development, Hispanic-Latino ministry preparation, and Anglican Communion interaction. Yet these examples are only a fraction of what might be possible if there were a shared vision and strategy for lifelong formation across the church.

### **3. Employ relational educational models that trust the learner's ability to learn:**

Christian formation in every age cohort from cradle to grave has increasingly moved to relational models that build upon the learner's experience, the value of telling one's story as well as recalling and reflecting upon Biblical stories, nurture and support in local congregations and communities, and hands on experience in mission activities. Some familiar models increasingly in use are *Catechesis of the Good Shepherd*, *Godly Play*, *J2A* and *EfM*. Several of these innovative programs were first developed in congregations. Overall we are learning that formation encompasses learning, action and reflection, that formation is ongoing, and that it is both formal and informal.

### **4. Value formation and education as integral for all populations in church life:**

There is increasing awareness that, in addition to the traditional value of a learned clergy, the vision of a broadly educated church is a foundational aspect of baptismal commitments. Sociologists of religion point to the importance of three congregational centers where today's educational needs are greatest: children of all ages, young singles and young families, and an increasing population of adults who are 50 and older. Living in a post-Christian society, retention of members across the lifespan is as significant as evangelism.

In seminaries women, older students with families, and students pursuing a second career are among those replacing the single, white male predominance of the 1960s. Schools and seminaries are also educating more students pursuing vocations as lay leaders. In large measure the church now rhetorically affirms the educational formation of laity as well as clergy in all orders.

### **5. Attend to a growing necessity for diverse multicultural and multi-lingual resources:**

The ethnic, cultural, and linguistic diversity of the wider society is expanding. As the Episcopal Church seeks to develop its witness and mission, the need for diverse formational and leadership resources is greater than ever. "Who gets to be educated?" is a priority question that needs to be addressed as more diverse populations are seeking appropriate educational resources.

## **6. Affirm innovative Christian formation with all ages, including children, youth and young adults:**

*A Charter for Life-Long Christian Formation* has been proposed that will call upon the Episcopal Church to advocate and engage in life-long Christian formation through leadership, resources and support formation for all ages and at all levels of the church. A recent survey of diocesan youth coordinators points to a number of innovative programs, yet there is no overall imperative or vision for broadening this work. In 2006 a new Standing Commission on Life-Long Christian Education and Formation was chartered. This ongoing Commission promises to attend to the formation of emerging generations of young leaders as well as lifting up the importance of education for all.

## **7. Building on partnerships among seminaries and with dioceses:**

Various partnerships are emerging between seminaries and dioceses. For example, several dioceses and seminaries have now teamed up to join the Living Stones network, a sign of their intent to plan together for ministry development. EDS with its emphasis on baptismal ministry in EDSConnect has over the past 6 years had working partnerships with the Dioceses of Wyoming, Vermont, and Northern Michigan, among others. Though not a panacea for financial pressures, specific partnering collaborations are one way that theological education and formation in mission can move forward.

## **8. Attend to leadership skills for changing times:**

For children in Episcopal and other schools, emerging generations of young leaders, older students attending diocesan schools, programs, or seminaries, it is clear that formation is developmental and that it involves leadership in building community. Skills in adapting to change along with others are a part of Christian living. Individual leaders, parishes, educational institutions, diocesan staff and others will find themselves balancing continuity, challenges and change for years to come. This reality shapes a lifeline that reinforces the need to build upon leadership skills that can lead to wider cooperation. Whether community development, leadership development, mission development or other strategies are drawn upon, creativity, innovation, and a willingness to teach and learn collaboratively will be essential.

## **9. Recognize that more than one strategy will be required to address the complex picture of formational desires and requests:**

Although we might wish for a single answer or solution to enhance and strengthen the educational fabric of the Episcopal Church, we are faced with

complex and interlocking issues set within a highly decentralized environment. No one program or mandated plan, especially from the church's top down hierarchy, will "fit all." Nor will a simple plan have a likelihood of success given a bottom-up ethos of congregations and others who are sensitive to local contexts. We have found that legislative mandates from General Conventions have poor implementation record. Moreover, the church's educational institutions and structures are porous. They are diversely owned and managed. Some are locally empowered, others corporately directed. Simply recognizing such difficulties from the start will increase the possibility for shaping an abundant vision with multivalent strategies.

## **PART IV: CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS**

PEALL came into being because the Church has recognized the opportunities and challenges facing the Episcopal Church in the twenty-first century, and the need for a vision and strategies for Christian formation and theological education that are adequate to meet them. In the past 30 years there has been an abundance of activity and creativity locally based as well as innovation and initiative through many networks. Meanwhile, there has been institutional resistance for the allocation of resources (time, talent and treasure) and a lack of a clearly articulated vision and support for life-long Christian formation at the judicatory levels.

We are blessed with a strong, albeit vulnerable, network of education and formation leaders at all levels of our Church. The world around us has rapidly changed, and the Church has kept up with many of these changes, while also lagging behind in numerous ways. The challenges that we face are also opportunities for growth and enrichment.

Below are questions for the future. How might they inform our next steps in building upon the legacies we have been given and lessons we have learned? What questions might you add?

1. What would our Church look like if formation and education were central to the identity and integrity of The Episcopal Church?
2. How can our Christian formation resources and programs be used to share with one another the diversity of our rich multi-cultural, multi-ethnic, and multi-generational Church?
3. What common goals and changes in educational vision is the Episcopal Church willing to support in future decades?
4. How can the whole Church learn from the many adapted and adaptable local programs and formation options used in preparing deacons and priests?
5. In view of the multiplicity of local programs and creative options in Christian formation and theological education, how can our triennial cycles of policy recommendations and budget allocations support fluid work that is less national and more local?
6. How can dioceses better support the local education and formation of all the baptized?
7. How might Episcopal seminaries and other educational institutions shape their resources to serve with greater effectiveness the church's diverse communities, contexts and expectations for vital leadership?

8. Given the abundance of available educational resources, how can church-wide communication, networking and cooperation be better facilitated among and across educators in seminaries, dioceses and congregations?

# PART V: APPENDIX

## Glossary of Acronyms Used

### **Seminaries:**

CDSP – Church Divinity School of the Pacific  
EDS – Episcopal Divinity School  
ETSSW – Episcopal Theological Seminary of the Southwest  
GTS – General Theological Seminary  
SWTS – Seabury-Western Theological Seminary  
VTS – Virginia Theological Seminary

### **Organizations & Networks:**

NAAD – North American Association of the Diaconate  
NAECED – National Association for Episcopal Christian Education Directors  
NOERC – National Organization of Episcopal Resource Centers  
PEALL – Proclaiming Education for All (task force)

### **Programs & Resources:**

CALL – Center for Anglican Learning and Leadership  
CnC – Confirm not Conform  
DOCC – Disciples of Christ in Community  
EfM – Education for Ministry  
EYE – Episcopal Youth Event  
J2A – Journey to Adulthood  
LAND – Leadership Academy for New Directions  
PLSE – Pastoral Leadership Search Effort  
PYE – Provincial Youth Event

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