

# Worldwide Communion: Episcopal and Anglican

Lesson # 23 of 27

Scripture/Memory Verse

[Be] eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace: There is one body and one Spirit just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call; one Lord, one Faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all.

Ephesians 4: 3 – 6

## Lesson Goals & Objectives

### Goal:

- ❖ The students will gain an understanding and appreciation for the fact that we belong to a church that is larger than our own parish: we are part of The Episcopal Church (in America) which is also part of the worldwide Anglican Communion.

### Objectives:

- ❖ The students will become familiar with the meanings of the terms, Episcopal, Anglican, Communion (as referring to the larger church), ethos, standing committee, presiding bishop and general convention.
- ❖ The students will understand the meaning of the “Four Instruments of Unity:” The Archbishop of Canterbury; the Meeting of Primates; the Lambeth Conference of Bishops; and, the Anglican Consultative Council.
- ❖ The students will encounter the various levels of structure and governance in which we live as Episcopalians and Anglicans.
- ❖ The students will learn of and appreciate an outline of our history in the context of Anglicanism.
- ❖ The students will see themselves as part of a worldwide communion of fellowship and mission as Christians together with others from throughout the globe.
- ❖ The students will read and discuss the “Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral” (BCP pages 876 – 877) in order to appreciate the essentials of an Anglican identity.

## Introduction & Teacher Background

This lesson can be as exciting to the students as you are willing to make it. We are part of something global! Our identity includes communion with people from countries all over the world! We have a rich heritage as Christians who share Faith, liturgy, fellowship and mission! Wow!

**1) History** The Church of England was established as the Christian Church in

England, independent of the authority of the Roman Catholic Church by what is referred to as, “The Elizabethan Settlement.” That is, Queen Elizabeth I “settled” the question of Church structure and authority in England and its possessions through two Acts of Parliament in 1559: The “Act of Supremacy” and the “Act of Uniformity,” which established the Church of England as separate from Rome with the Book of Common Prayer as its liturgical and theological identity. (Note: this was not the action of King Henry VIII, but of Queen Elizabeth I, his daughter) The Church of England is also sometimes referred to as “Anglican,” which is simply an adjective that identifies something as having an origin in or connection to England and the English.

By the late 1500s England was beginning to send out explorers to the “New World.” In 1607 and 1620 colonies were established in Virginia and Plymouth; the Virginia settlement included a priest from the Church of England. As England colonized in America, the Caribbean, Africa and Asia, missionaries also went to these colonies not only to minister to the colonists, but also to bring the message of the Gospel to those who had not yet heard it. Christian communities formed in these places which had a distinctive English heritage centered on the great heart of Anglicanism: The Book of Common Prayer.

All clergy of the Church of England were and are required to swear an oath of allegiance to the king or queen of England. (See lesson #22 – the section on Samuel Seabury) After our Revolution, our Church became independent of the Church of England (C of E) just as our country became independent from the English king. The Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America (PECUSA) was born in 1789 with the first “General Convention” of clergy, people and bishops.

**2) Communion** We are called a “Communion” because we consist of 38 nationally based churches who are independent from one another but who also are “in Communion” with one another. This means that we all recognize and share our ministries and sacraments, and we have a responsibility to one another to be committed to our relationships as members of the Anglican Communion. We all also make use of a Book of Common Prayer derived from the first English Book of Common Prayer. This idea of a “Communion of Churches” developed over time. It soon became apparent that some relationship with the “Mother Church” in England would be beneficial to all Anglicans including those who were politically independent from England. PECUSA continued to communicate with the C of E and Churches which were founded by Anglican clergy in other parts of the world. Through the 1800s we sent missionaries to other lands where we co-operated with their own clergy and with missionaries from the English Church. As countries in Africa and Asia which had been English colonies gained their independence, their Anglican Churches sought ways to continue their co-operation and good relationships with one another.

A) The Lambeth Conference As the 19<sup>th</sup> century continued, bishops from these various places began to meet together in the 1860s. In 1888 the first world-wide conference of bishops with an Anglican heritage met at the Lambeth Palace of the Archbishop of Canterbury to create an ongoing structure: they decided to meet together every 10 years as the “Lambeth Conference.”

B) The Archbishop of Canterbury Churches in the Anglican Tradition all share a common heritage from the Church of England and the Book of Common Prayer. Each individual Church has a bishop or archbishop who gives leadership to that church. In England, the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Archbishop of York hold prominence in Church leadership. The Archbishop of Canterbury is called, “*Primus inter pares*” meaning “first among equals.” He does not hold power over the Church in the way that the Pope does for Roman

Catholics, but he does serve as the leader of the C of E and is given respect as the convener of the Lambeth Conference and also of the “Primates Meeting.”

C) Primates Each national Church also has a leading bishop or Archbishop who serves to preside over that Church’s local structure. These leaders are called, “Primates” (PRY-metts). The Archbishop of Canterbury is the Primate of England. In Ireland the Archbishop of Armagh is the Primate of all of Ireland. In the U.S.A. we do not have an archbishop but rather a bishop who is elected every nine years to preside over our House of Bishops and is therefore called the “Presiding Bishop.” Each national Church chooses its own leaders in its own way. Every three years, or more often if needed, all the Primates of each of the Churches meet together at the Primates’ Meeting, convened by the Archbishop of Canterbury.

D) Anglican Consultative Council In order to facilitate communication and cooperation among the national Churches the Anglican Consultative Council was formed. The A.C.C. is composed of one bishop, one clergy person and one lay person from each member Church who meet every two years. The A.C.C. recently formed a “Standing Committee” to implement decisions of the entire Council and to carry on its work between meetings.

E) Instruments of Unity These four entities together are called **The Four Instruments of Unity** for the Anglican Communion: 1) The Archbishop of Canterbury 2) The Primates’ Meeting 3) The Lambeth Conference 4) The Anglican Consultative Council.

The heart and soul of the Anglican Communion remains the Book of Common Prayer in all its local forms.

**3) The Episcopal Church** The word, “Episcopal” means, “having bishops.” The churches of the Anglican Communion all elect and ordain bishops to lead each diocese. Our Church here in America consists of 111 dioceses. A diocese is a geographical area similar to, but usually smaller than, a state. For example, there are six dioceses in the State of New York. Each diocese has a Standing Committee of elected clergy and lay people. Each diocese also has a diocesan bishop and may have more bishops called, “suffragans” or “assistant” bishops. All active bishops are members of the “House of Bishops” which meets twice a year in various locations. Each diocese also elects up to four clergy persons and up to four lay persons to be its “Deputies” to the House of Deputies. The House of Deputies meets every three years together with the House of Bishops in the “General Convention.” The General Convention has the power to make decisions of policy and practice for our entire Church. In 2006 the General Convention met in Columbus, Ohio and decided to change the official name of our Church from “The Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America” to simply, “**The Episcopal Church.**” The reason given is that The Episcopal Church also includes members parishes in Latin America and Europe as well as here in the U.S.A.

**4) The Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral** In 1886 the House of Bishops of PECUSA met in Chicago and adopted a summary of items which are considered to be the essential marks of our Anglican identity. This list was “tweaked” slightly by the meeting of the Lambeth Conference of 1888. The list of articles of faith and identity they adopted is called the “Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral” which is accepted by all Anglicans as summarizing who we are.

In summary, the Four Items of the Quadrilateral are:

1) The Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are revealed by God and are the standard of our Faith; 2) The Apostles and Nicene Creeds are the sufficient statement of Faith; 3) The use of the Sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion; 4) The Historic Episcopate for

administration. For a complete statement and explanation of the Quadrilateral, see pages 877 and 878 of the BCP.

## Materials

- ❖ A large road map of your own state
- ❖ Bibles and/or printed verses of Scripture
- ❖ Large sheets of newsprint paper & pens
- ❖ Copies of the BCP

## Opening Prayer (5 min.)

O God of unchangeable power and eternal light: Look favorably on your whole Church, that wonderful and sacred mystery; by the effectual working of your providence, carry out in tranquillity the plan of salvation; let the whole world see and know that things which were cast down are being

raised up, and things which had grown old are being made new, and that all things are being brought to their perfection by him through whom all things were made, your Son Jesus Christ our Lord; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

(BCP page 528)

*Also give the students some time to offer their own prayers of petition and thanksgiving as well.*

## Introductory Activity (5-10 Min.)

Obtain a good sized road map of New York (or your local state). Put it out on a table and let the students gather around it. Help them to locate their own town. Show them the lines and colors marking out individual townships and/or counties. All these are part of our State. Our State is also part of the United States as a whole.

**Discuss:** Each political entity is part of a larger entity: town – county – state – country.

What is the name of your parish? In a similar way to counties, states and the nation, our parish is part of our Diocese (e.g. Albany). Our Diocese is part of The Episcopal Church. The Episcopal Church is part of the Worldwide Anglican Communion. Today we are going to talk about what all this means.

## Lesson (20-25 min.)

**Read to the class:** At the Last Supper, Jesus prayed for His Church: “Holy Father, keep them in Your Name... that they may be one, even as we are one,” (John 17: 11b) and later in the same chapter: “...that they all may be one, even as you, Father, are in Me and I in You” (verse 21).

A) **Discuss:** What do you think this means? (*Give them some time to bring out ideas about this*). It was and is Jesus’ intention and desire that all the members of His Body, the Church, should be in complete union with one another. We are all part of the Body of Christ together with all faithful Christians throughout the world. We are part of something much bigger than ourselves – something actually cosmic! The word used to describe this oneness of all faithful believers is: “catholic” which simply means, “universal.” The Church throughout the world is

essentially catholic; this term does not only refer to members of the Roman Catholic Church but to the Church Universal. It grieves the heart of God that the particular church entities around the world are not all in full and complete unity with one another as they were in the first centuries of Christianity. We should pray for the day when this unity will once again be fully restored.

However, from the other side of this situation, there are no “Lone Ranger” Christians. We are only a part of the whole. We all need each other in order to live out our lives as Christians. We need Community.

B) Our community begins on the local level, with our parish. However, our parishes are also members of a kind of “Community of communities” – The Episcopal Church – which is also a member of a “Community of Churches” – the Anglican Communion.

**Discuss:** Take a look at the word, “comm-unity” (“com” means, “together”)

- What does this word actually mean?
- What are some “communities” that you belong to?
- How is our parish a community?

C) Our parish is part of a geographical area called a diocese. Our diocese of Albany stretches from the border with Canada in the north through Columbia and Green counties in the south, touching the border with Pennsylvania in the southwest and from the borders of New York with Massachusetts and Vermont to the St. Lawrence River near Watertown. (If possible, show them a map of our diocese)

- ❖ Who among us has been to diocesan convention or to a diocesan youth rally?
- ❖ What are some of the ways in which our parishes work together in a kind of larger community? (Some examples might be: Beaver Cross; mission trips; events at the Cathedral; events at the Spiritual Life Center – try to think of others as well).

Every diocese has one or more bishops. Only one bishop is actually in charge of a diocese

- ❖ Who is the bishop in charge of our diocese?
- ❖ Who are the other bishops in our diocese? What do they do? (Help out with some bishop’s functions)
- ❖ Are you aware that our diocese is also part of an entire “national” Church?
- ❖ What is the name of our Church? What do you know about The Episcopal Church?

D) **Teacher:** Take some time at this point to make use of the material in “Introduction and Background” section 3 to explain to the students about the structures and functioning of TEC. After presenting this material, ask:

- ❖ How did The Episcopal Church get started?

E) We are called “Episcopalians” because our church is led by bishops, and the word “episcopal” refers to bishops. However, we are also called, “Anglicans.” The word, “Anglican” refers to something that is involved with England and the English.

- ❖ Does anyone know about the connection between The Episcopal Church and England?

**Teacher:** Also refer to “Introduction and Background” section 1 to explain:

- 1) The origin of the Church of England,
- 2) The coming of Anglicanism to the Americas
- 3) The founding of the Episcopal Church after our Revolutionary War.

F) Our Church, the Church of England, the Anglican Church of Canada, The Church of Ireland, the Anglican Church of Nigeria and many others all belong to the “Worldwide Anglican Communion.” The word, “Communion” is similar to “community.”

❖ What does it mean to be, “In Communion” with one another? A “Communion” is a unified community of Churches.

**Teacher:** make use of “Introduction and Background” section 2 to describe and explain the structure and nature of the Anglican Communion.

There are between 77 and 80 million Anglicans worldwide. This makes us the third largest Christian entity in the world: after 1) the Roman Catholic Church and 2) The Eastern Orthodox Churches. There are 38 distinct Anglican Churches around the world, including places like, the Bahamas – Bolivia, Chile, Argentina and Peru (called, the “Southern Cone), Singapore, Hong Kong, India, Uganda, Rwanda, Egypt and Sudan. We are part of a global community, all of whom identify themselves with the Anglican way of being Christian. We can go on mission in every continent and meet other Anglicans there.

## Reflection (10-15 min.)

**Teacher:** Hang 4 or 5 large sheets of newsprint paper on the wall, or mount them on an easel.

**Discuss:** If there are people all over the world are “Anglican Christians,” what does it mean to be “Anglican?” What characteristics set us apart? Let the students “brainstorm” out loud, and write their answers on the newsprint sheets.

Then, refer to “Introduction and Background” section 4, and the BCP, pages 877 – 878 to describe and explain the four marks of Anglicanism in the Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral. Write two of each of the four articles on each of two sheets of paper, leaving spaces in between:

- |  |                             |
|--|-----------------------------|
| 1) Holy Scriptures: Old and New Testaments | 2) Apostles & Nicene Creeds |
| 3) Sacraments of Baptism & Eucharist       | 4) Historic Episcopate      |

Discuss each, writing the students’ comments below each of the four headings

End by asking

❖ How might we, as Anglican Christians, experience and express our Anglican identity?

→How about thinking about going on a mission trip?!

## Take-home Activity (5 min.)

Choose one of the member Churches of the Anglican Communion (most are mentioned above). If you can, “google” the names of all the Churches, and choose one. Do a little research on the internet (you can find several “Anglican Communion” websites. Jot down 5 or 6 interesting facts about this Anglican Church (exclude The Episcopal Church (USA – that’s too easy). Be prepared to share some of this information at our next class.

## Closing Prayer (5 min.)

Gracious Father, we pray for thy holy Catholic Church. Fill it with all truth, in all truth with all peace. Where it is corrupt, purify it; where it is in error, correct it; where in any thing it is amiss, reform it. Where it is right, strengthen it; where it is in want, provide for it; where it is divided, reunite it; for the sake of Jesus Christ thy Son our Savior. *Amen.* (BCP page 816)

*Also allow the students some time to offer their own prayers of petition and thanksgiving.*

## Scripture References

- ❖ Gospel of John, chapter 17
- ❖ Ephesians 4: 1 – 7

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