



Church of the Southern Cross Inc.

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Ministry Application Package

This package provides some essential information about the ecclesiology and doctrines of the Church of the Southern Cross.

Please take time to peruse this information and if you need to discuss any matters please contact us directly.

If you wish to pursue a ministry vocation with the Church of the Southern Cross complete the Applicant Profile and Affirmations and Declarations form at the end of this document and send them to the Church Office.

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PREAMBLE

1. We are a Communion not a Denomination

A communion reflects the unanimity and singularity of the Apostolic and Patristic Church, while encompassing both Protestant and catholic traditions as well as embracing a multiplicity of expressions of worship and practice. In contrast to a denomination, a communion expresses the organic unity Jesus Christ originally established in His Body, the Church. Rather than emerging from divisions created by historic differences over doctrine and practice, a communion represents a return to unity based on the recovery of the essential oneness of the ancient, medieval, and contemporary church.

The Communion of Evangelical Episcopal Churches (CEEC) of which the Church of the Southern Cross is a part was created by a convergence of the great historical expressions of faith and practice: the Evangelical, the Charismatic, and the Liturgical/Sacramental traditions. The fundamental principals defining inclusion in the Communion are detailed in the Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral of 1886 and 1888 Resolution II.

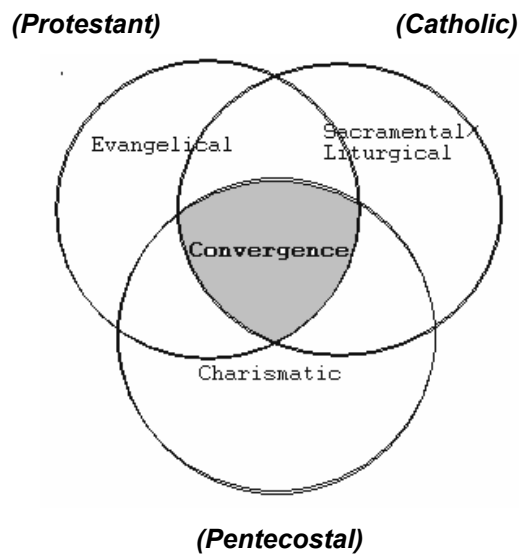
The four basic statements are:

- [1] The Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, as "containing all things necessary for salvation" and as being the rule and ultimate standard of faith.
- [2] The Apostles' Creed, as the Baptismal Symbol; and the Nicene Creed, as the sufficient statement of faith.
- [3] The two Sacraments ordained by Christ Himself - Baptism and the Supper of the Lord - ministered with unfailing use of Christ's words of institution, and the elements ordained by Him.
- [4] The Historic Episcopate, locally adapted in the methods of its administration to the varying needs of the nations and peoples called of God into the Unity of His Church. This definition establishes guidelines for the Church of the Southern Cross and is understood as the essence of the apostolic tradition as we seek to express it in the convergence movement.

2. Church of the Southern Cross Identity Statement

1. The Church of the Southern Cross is a Convergence Church. In his book *The Household of God*, (SCM 1953), church planter and former Bishop of the Church of South India, Lesslie Newbigin, made a profound statement that "the wholeness of the Church is thus not to be sought for simply in a tension between the two elements which we have roughly characterised as Catholic and Protestant" The third element he identified as Pentecostal,

without which the Church is incomplete. The Church of the Southern Cross is committed to Convergence ministry in its community life.



Liturgical/Sacramental

- Theology
- Orthodoxy
- Universality
- Historic Connection
- Liturgical Worship
- Social Action"
- Incarnational understanding of the Church (based on theology history, and sacramental elements of thought)

Evangelical

- Biblical Foundation
- Personal Conversion
- Evangelism & Mission
- Pulpit-centred worship
- Personal Holiness
- Biblical Reformation understanding of the Church (pragmatic and rational)

Charismatic

- Five-fold ministry & government
- Power of the Spirit
- Spiritual gifts
- Spirit-filled worship
- Kingdom
- Spiritual, organic, and functional understanding of the Church (dynamic and informal)

Definition of Convergence in terms of practice:

[1] The **Evangelical** stream includes: a high view of scripture, commitment to evangelistic outreach, necessity of a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, and the practice of discipleship.

[2] The **Charismatic** stream affirms: the gifts and ministries of the Holy Spirit, including the five-fold ministry of the Spirit, in addition, the work of the person of the Holy Spirit is held at the highest level of esteem and pursuit, the fullness of the Spirit is sought because the quest for the reality of the Holy Spirit is fully anticipated and practiced.

[3] The **Sacramental/Liturgical** stream practices the two sacraments and expects weekly participation in Holy Communion - historical practice generally anticipates the Common Cup and sacramental wine as the norm, although some cultural settings may require unique adaptation of these practices; affirms Books of Common Prayer from various nations; observes the liturgical years and four great Holy Days (Christmas, Easter, Ascension, and Pentecost); and affirms the use of vestments.

- [4] Identity and self-understanding defined by the Apostolic context,
- [5] Participation in the sacramental principle, implying weekly observance of Holy Communion through Consecration of the obligations, entering into the Real Presence of Christ in the elements. Entry into the Church through baptism,
- [6] Submission to Episcopal Authority,
- [7] Embracing catholic practice,
- [8] Compliance with Canonical standards,
- [9] Acceptance of basic biblical principles of social action and witness, involving such stands as a pro-life posture, opposition to racism and sexism, and opposition to ordination to Holy Orders or commissioning to any lay leadership within the Church of people who are of a homosexual orientation, whether practising or not, and also those who are supportive of homosexual orientation and heterosexuals engaging in sexual activity outside marriage.

2. The Church of the Southern Cross identifies itself as a Church within the Apostolic tradition (the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church). The Apostolic tradition is inclusive of the patristic era, Eastern Orthodoxy, the Western Church and the Celtic and Anglican spiritual traditions. The lines of Apostolic Succession of the Church of the Southern Cross are derived from all of these traditions and this diversity is reflected within the community life of the Church.

- **The Patristic Era** is the time of the early Church Fathers. The Fathers of the early Church defended the Gospel against misunderstandings and rival doctrines (heresies). They brought together the canon of Scripture as the Bible and wrote extensive commentaries on the biblical text much of which is still preserved. They also recorded the events and history of the early Church, and created the foundations for the Christian Church.
- **Eastern Orthodoxy** or Orthodox Catholic churches are churches originating in the East: Greek, Antiochian, Russian and many others. Orthodox churches are autocephalous, that is in full communion with each other but autonomous.
- **The Western Church** is inclusive of Roman Catholicism and Protestantism. The denominations of the Western Church are generally not in communion with one another but share common theological roots and traditions.
- **The Celtic and Anglican traditions.** For the purposes of the Church of the Southern Cross Anglicanism is defined as English Orthodoxy, developing from the very beginning of the Christian faith in the British Isles and enduring to the present age. Therefore, in our usage, Anglicanism is inclusive of its Celtic origins, Patristic roots, the Medieval Church, the Protestant Reformation, the Wesleyan Evangelical Revival, the Oxford movement, and the modern Charismatic movement. We measure Anglican history not only from Thomas Cranmer forward, but also from the Reformation backward. Anglicanism in the Church of the Southern Cross is not shaped by its connection to the See of Canterbury, but by its relationship to history.

The Elements of our Apostolic tradition are:

- a. The priority and authority of Holy Scripture as the source of our knowledge of God.
- b. The doctrinal guidance of the Catholic Creeds; Apostle's, Nicene, and Athanasian.
- c. The truth that salvation is in the final analysis, the gift of God and by grace alone.
- d. The use of liturgy which is faithful to Scripture and embodies the experience of the church in worship over the centuries.
- e. The historic episcopate or order of Bishops, as a sign of the unity of the one Church of God.
- f. The threefold ministry of Bishop, presbyter (priest), and deacon as that ministry which God has led the Church to adopt since primitive times.
- g. The two Gospel sacraments of Holy Baptism and Holy Communion ordained by Christ for regular use in the Church.
- h. The unity of the ministry of the Word and Sacrament in the Service of Holy Communion.
- i. The need for regular preaching and teaching from the Holy Scriptures.
- j. The recognition that the visible unity of the Church on earth is God's will.
- k. The need for a regularly reviewed Canon Law, to respond to the unfolding needs of the people and the church.
- l. The priesthood of the whole church as a worshipping and praying society.
- m. The recognition of the continuing ministry of the Holy Spirit and the impartation of gifts and ministries in our time.
- n. A commitment to fulfil The Great Commission to winning the world to Jesus Christ into the third millennium.

3. The Communion's approach to liturgy and worship is not based on legislative but normative practice as defined by the Scriptures, canonical common prayer resources, and the historic practice of the Church.

4. We anticipate liturgical practice to be expressed in three broad categories; low or evangelical church, broad church and high church. The practice of a local church is determined by its ministry environment and the needs of the local congregation.

3. Basis for Official Relationship with the Church of the Southern Cross

The following descriptions define the character of the various levels of connection and participation in ministry with the Church of the Southern Cross:

The context for all relationship is Catholicity.

A. Full communion

Includes reciprocity of ministry and full participation in all levels of worship, mission, and practice, and anticipates the following practice and posture:

- [1] Orthodoxy as defined in the five-fold dictum: One Bible, Two Testaments, Three Creeds (Apostles, Nicene, Athanasian), Four Councils, Five Centuries,
- [2] Catholicity arising from the Apostolic and Patristic Era defined by that faith “believed everywhere, always, by everyone”,
- [3] Affirmation of the Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral, which affirms the authority of Scripture,
- [4] Embracing the meaning and participation in Apostolic Succession,
- [5] Pursuit of Convergence practice and ministry,

B. Inter-communion

Involves full acceptance of each Communion's orders of ministry and complete participation in mutual worship services and events, with other specifics defined by agreement:

- [1] Acceptance of catholicity, as stated above in Sections 1 and 2,
- [2] Embracing the Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral
- [3] Common acceptance of Convergence and parallel forms of practice

C. Networking

Does not imply reciprocity of ministers and holy orders but suggests a compatibility of mission and common cause, often involving joint and unified effort:

- [1] Acceptance of Convergence
- [2] Catholic faith
- [3] Common vision

4. Church of the Southern Cross Vision

A. The Church of the Southern Cross is a communion of the one Holy Catholic Church whose identity and self-understanding is rooted in the Apostolic spiritual tradition of being Catholic, Evangelical, Protestant and Reformed. We attempt to maintain and practice the faith as given to us by the Apostles through the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church.

B. The Church of the Southern Cross envisions a communion whose local church or ministries are fully evangelical, fully charismatic, as well as fully liturgical and sacramental.

C. We believe, as Evangelicals, that the Holy Scriptures are the inspired Word of God, and that they contain all things necessary for salvation and godly living. We are committed to the

faithful reading, studying, teaching, and preaching from the Scriptures; as well as believing that the Holy Scriptures are a wellspring for spiritual maturity. We also embrace the Evangelical distinctiveness that underlines the importance of a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, a holy life, and a commitment to evangelism and mission.

D. We believe, as Charismatics, that we are to be open to the work of the Holy Spirit. That God's people have always been a spiritually gifted people. From the Apostles to the modern church, Christians have been endowed with a power beyond themselves; a power from the Holy Spirit. This means we encourage our local church or ministries to allow and anticipate His presence and working through spiritual gifts in both our worship and daily acts of service, in a personal relationship with Him.

E. The Church of the Southern Cross is in unity with the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic church. This means that at the very centre of our worship we are historically liturgical and sacramental. We also retain the historic creeds, episcopacy and three-fold ministry. We believe, as part of the Apostolic spiritual tradition, that our worship is to be liturgical, which may be informed through such resources as the Book of Common Prayer. It draws its worship practices and liturgy from different points of time - from the ever evolving, rich and comprehensive traditions of catholic faith and practice, to the influences of the Protestant Reformation.

F. The Church of the Southern Cross is Protestant and Reformed in its use of the Holy Bible as its guide, justification by faith, and following the Word and Works of Christ and the Holy Spirit.

G. The Church of the Southern Cross vision is to be a contemporary Church where there is a Convergence of ministry, rooted in the ancient and historical truths of the Church Universal, with contemporary worship, while reaching to the future in relevant ways, meeting the needs of unchurched and churching people. It is a *via media*, accepting both Catholics and Protestants as "one in Christ."

5. Doctrinal Position: Declaration of Principles

A. It is by grace through the creation by God the Father, faith in Christ Jesus by the witness of the Holy Spirit, trusting in the inspiration and supremacy of the Holy Scriptures and with confirming hearts and minds that we affirm the Doctrinal Essentials of the Communion of Evangelical Episcopal Churches (CEEC). The primary role of the Church is the expansion of the Kingdom of God. The people, clergy and Bishops of the Church of the Southern Cross extend open membership and communion to denominations, churches, synods, clergy, para-

church ministries and individuals who accept freely and willingly conformity to these essential principles of the doctrine of the Communion of Evangelical Episcopal Churches.

B. We celebrate and affirm biblical and anointed spiritual ministry throughout the world to everyone. There is only "one faith, one hope, and one baptism, one God, and Father of us all" (Eph. 4: 5-6). Therefore, one head Jesus Christ, and one pure body of Christ, the Church. We share a ministry of faith, unity and reconciliation in a church that recognizes apostolic succession, authority, and shared ministry oversight in local independent churches and clergy, the fullness of Christian worship and spirituality in the convergence of streams in the body of Christ: Evangelical, Spirit-filled, and Liturgical and Sacramental.

C. The Church of the Southern Cross holding to "the faith once delivered unto the saints" declares its belief in the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the Word of God, and the sole rule of faith and practice as interpreted by tradition, reason and experience, in the creeds, commonly called the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed, the Creed of Saint Athanasius, and we affirm the doctrines as substantially set forth in the Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion, the Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral, the Baltimore Declaration, and the Chicago Call: An Appeal to Evangelicals.

D. This Communion recognizes and adheres to the historic episcopacy; not as a divine right, but as a very ancient and desirable form of church polity; adapted to the varying needs of the peoples called of God into the unity of His Church.

E. This Communion, retaining Liturgy which shall not be imperative or repressive of freedom in prayer, accepts The Book of Common Prayer 1662, and other forms of common prayer approved by the Diocesan Bishop. The Communion reserving full liberty to alter, abridge, enlarge, and amend the same, as may seem most conducive to the edification of the people, "provided that the substance of the faith be kept entire".

6. The Doctrinal Essentials of the CEEC

A. We affirm decision-making based on Scripture, tradition, and Godly wisdom. The Holy Scriptures are self-attesting and the essence of Truth which require our unreserved submission in all areas of our lives. The infallible and trustworthy written Word of God is a complete and unified witness to God's redemptive acts, which culminated in the incarnation of the Living Word, the Lord Jesus Christ. The Holy Bible, uniquely inspired by the Holy Spirit, is the supreme and final authority in matters of faith and life.

B. The Word of God, Incarnate and written, provides the foundation for the following which

doctrines we affirm along with Apostles' and Nicene Creeds:

- [1] We believe in one God, the sovereign Creator, sustainer of all things, infinitely perfect and eternally existing in three Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. To Him be all honour, glory and worship forever!
- [2] Jesus Christ, the Messiah, is the Living Word become flesh through His miraculous conception by the Holy Spirit and His birth of the Virgin Mary. He who is true God became true man. His two natures are united in one person forever. He lived a sinless life and died on a cross, a perfect sacrifice for our sins, according to the Scriptures. On the third day He rose bodily from the dead, ascended into heaven, where, seated at the right hand of the Almighty Majesty on High, He mediates as our High Priest and Head of the Church. Jesus Christ is the exclusive Messiah. The only Way to salvation, the only Truth and the only Life in whom people may put their trust and obtain eternal life.
- [3] The Holy Spirit has come to glorify Christ and to apply the saving work of Christ to the hearts of sinful, repentant people. He convicts us of sin and draws us to the Saviour. Jesus baptizes His disciples in the power of the Holy Spirit and empowers them through multiple infillings to do the supernatural work of ministry in His Name. The Holy Spirit illuminates the Holy Scriptures, instructs the hearts of believers, and corporately and consensually guides us into all truth.
- [4] Being estranged from God and condemned by our fallenness, our salvation is wholly dependent upon the work of God's unmerited favour and graciousness. God credits His righteousness to those who put their faith in Christ alone for their salvation, and thereby justifying them in His holy presence. Only those who are born of the Holy Spirit and receive Jesus Christ, in word and obedient action, as Saviour and Lord, become children of God, members of the Body of Christ and heirs of eternal life.
- [5] The One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church, the true Church, is composed of all persons who, through saving faith in Jesus Christ and the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit, are united together in the Body of Christ. The Church finds her visible, yet imperfect, expression in local churches where the Word of God is preached in its purity and the Sacraments are administered in their integrity, scriptural discipline is practiced, and loving fellowship is maintained to nurture the believers in the life of Christ. For her perfecting, the Church awaits the return of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- [6] Jesus Christ will come again to the earth--suddenly, personally, visibly, and bodily--to judge the living and the dead, and to consummate history and the eternal plan of God. We seek to faithfully serve Christ in the world as His ambassadors as we joyfully anticipate His appearing.
- [7] The Christian's mission is to follow the Messiah's first and principal command, the Great Commandment: "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one." We, individually and corporately, are commanded and therefore choose of our own God-given will, to love the Lord our God with all our heart, and with all our soul, and with all our mind, and

with all our strength. Our mission is to demonstrate that we are Christians by certifying our Holy Spirit inspired and empowered nature, demonstrating Almighty God's gracious love through us, individually and corporately, in word and action, by pursuing the highest and best interests of our neighbours, showing the same concern we have for ourselves.

[8] As we endeavour to meet the standards of God's love, we are to fulfil the Risen Jesus of Nazareth's Great Commission: "Go make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in The Name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you."

[9] Human beings are not God but were created in His likeness and image. The creation serves and is sustained by the Creator. We were created for communion with God and one another in purity and in accordance with the Holy Scriptures. Communion with God and the believers is marked by love, joy, peace, patience, goodness, faithfulness, kindness, gentleness, and self-control. Self-control includes fidelity in heterosexual marriage, abstinence from any homosexual contact, and continence outside the bonds of marriage. Self-control includes moderation in all matters that could jeopardize the health, safety, and legal standing of the individual created in God's image. In matters where human law, custom, or reason conflict, or appear to conflict, with the God's commandments, as revealed in Scripture, the disciples' loyalty to Scripture takes precedence.

[10] We affirm the Author of Life, the stewardship of creation, through environmental preservation, and the protection and validation of the irrevocable and inherent sanctity and dignity of all forms of human life, from conception to the grave. We affirm peaceful resolution and reconciliation of conflicts between persons, groups and nations, where possible.

[11] This Communion recognizes the divine institution of the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, ministered with unflinching use of Christ's words of institution, and the elements ordained by Him.

The Convergence Movement

"Therefore, every teacher of the law who has been instructed about the kingdom of heaven is like the owner of a house who brings out of his storeroom new treasures as well as old." - Mat. 13:52.

This Scripture summarizes the insight and discovery which has led to a fresh stream of thought and renewal throughout the wider Body of Christ. Described as the Convergence Movement, or "Convergence of the Streams," this emerging movement appears to many, both observers and participants, to be another contemporary evidence of God's continuing activity in history to renew, replenish and unify His people in one heart and purpose in Christ. Arising out of a common desire and hunger to experience the fullness of Christian worship and spirituality, the Convergence Movement (also referred to in the remainder of this article as "CM") seeks to blend or merge the essential elements in the Christian faith represented historically in three major streams of thought and practice: the Charismatic, Evangelical/Reformed and Liturgical/Sacramental. An increasing number of local congregations and leaders from many backgrounds are finding "treasures old and new" in the spiritual heritage of the church universal.

The following graph, developed by the leadership of Hosanna Church of the King located in the Kansas City metropolitan area, illustrates the essential elements and ingredients being drawn upon by the majority of those participating in the movement at this point:

Paradigm of Ministry

Liturgical/ Sacramental	Evangelical	Charismatic
Theology	Biblical Foundation	Five-fold Ministry and Government
Orthodoxy	Personal Conversion	Power of the Spirit
Universality	Evangelism & Mission	Spiritual Gifts
Liturgical Worship	Pulpit-Centred Worship	Charismatic Worship
Social Action	Personal Holiness	Kingdom
Incarnational understanding of the Church (based on theology, history, and sacramental elements of thought)	Biblical and Reformational understanding of the Church (pragmatic and rational)	Spiritual, Organic, and functional understanding of the Church (dynamic and informal)

The blending or converging of these traditions is seen by those involved as the work of God the Holy Spirit imparting a spiritual operation of grace best captured in the vision of Psalm 46:5,6: *"There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the Holy Place where the Most High dwells."* Thus, the "city of God" is seen as the Church, the river as the action and flow of God's Presence through His Church and the many "streams" as expressions of the one river's life that have developed or broken off from the main river through history, all of which are necessary to enrich and make glad the city with the fullness of God's life, power, purpose and Presence. These tributaries now seem to be making their way back toward the main stream. Anglican minister David Watson once remarked that, "This break with Rome (the Reformation), although probably inevitable due to the corruption of the time, unfortunately led to split after split within the Body of Christ, with the result that the mission of the Church is today seriously handicapped by the bewildering plethora of endless denominations ... a torn and divided Christianity is, nevertheless, a scandal for which all Christians need deeply to repent" (David Watson, *I Believe in the Church*). This call to be one under girds the desire of many in CM to see the streams of the Church come together. Wayne Boosahda and Randy Sly of Hosanna Church of the King, one of the key churches in the Kansas City area reflecting the impact of the movement, have expressed the conviction that, "out of the days of the Reformation, we see God's heart now moving in a

kind of 'reverse reformation' or restoration, of His One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church" (catholic, here being used to refer to the wider universal Church of Jesus Christ).

History of Emergence and Growth

The convergence movement seems to have strong antecedents in two major areas of spiritual and worship renewal affecting the Church in this century: the contemporary Charismatic worship renewal and the Liturgical Renewal Movement, both Catholic and mainline Protestant. The Charismatic Renewal, began in the early 60's primarily within mainline denominations. Those in the Renewal saw a blending of Charismatic or Pentecostal elements, such as healing, prophecy and spontaneous worship and praise, with the more traditional elements of mainline (and, eventually, Roman Catholic) liturgical and reformed practices.

What some have called the "Third Wave" or "Signs and Wonders Movement" began about 1978 with the emergence of the ministry of John Wimber and the Vineyard Churches that arose through his influence. James Robison, Jim Hylton, Ray Robinson and other Southern Baptist leaders witnessed a Third Wave explosion in the "Fullness Movement," primarily impacting the SBC. Peter Wagner and others from Fuller Theological Seminary formalized the movement through their writings and acted as a filter and focal point. The Third Wave has been described by some as an epilogue to the Charismatic Renewal, bringing together Charismatic elements of worship, experience and practice with the Evangelical tradition.

The other key influence upon CM has been the Liturgical Renewal Movement, which arose originally out of France in the Roman Catholic Church and the Oxford or Tractarian Movement in the Church of England in the 19th century. The Liturgical Renewal caused a resurgence of interest in recapturing the essence, spirit and shape of ancient Christian worship, as practiced and understood by the early Church of the first eight centuries. Particular focus was given to the apostolic and Ante-Nicene Fathers of the ancient, undivided Church up until about 390 A.D. The discoveries and enrichment of the theology and practice of worship and ministry from that fertile era overflowed into the mainline Protestant churches and began to have major impact upon them, as well, from the 1950's, on.

A common component in the current CM, which came from these earlier movements, is a strong sense of and concern for unity in the whole of Christ's Body, the Church. While not associated with the official Ecumenical Movement of the World Council of Churches, those involved in CM seem broadly gripped by the hunger and desire to learn from traditions of worship and spirituality other than their own and to integrate these discoveries into their own practice and experience in the journey of faith. Indeed, many leaders in the fledgling movement describe their experience as a compelling "journey" or "pilgrimage." Many times, in very unsought-after ways, "sovereign" events, relationships, books or insights gave rise to an understanding of the church that was quite different from their previous perspectives and backgrounds. One case-in-point is Richard Foster, a Quaker by background, whose personal pilgrimage led him to write the classic *Celebration of Discipline*, in which he unfolds an integrated practice of spiritual disciplines drawn from five basic traditions of spirituality in the Church through history. As a result of his developing focus, Foster convened a conference called "Renovare", which gathered in Wichita, KS. in 1988. The conference and intended renewal were direct precursors to the "Convergence of Streams" concept.

Basically unheralded or openly recognized until about 1985, many in the movement have discovered others on the "journey" from various church backgrounds who had similar or identical experiences and insights. One by one congregations and leaders have found one another, underlining the sense that God is doing something on a grass roots level similar to an underground river about to break to the surface.

Key contemporary pioneers shaping the awareness and thought of the movement are men like Dr. Robert Webber, author and professor of Theology at Wheaton College; Dr. Robert Stamps, former chaplain of Oral Roberts University; Peter Gillquist, former leader with

Campus Crusade for Christ and now an Eastern Orthodox priest and evangelist; Thomas Howard from St. John's Seminary; Thomas Oden, theologian and author from Drew University, Howard Snyder, theologian, author and Christian educator, Stan White, former Assembly of God pastor, now an Episcopalian priest; and others, such as the late David DuPlessis, Pentecostal minister and key instigator of the Charismatic ecumenical dialogue between Roman Catholics and Pentecostals; current Archbishop of Canterbury, George Carey; the United Methodist liturgical Order of St. Luke and Peter Hocken, Roman Catholic theologian.

These individuals range in background from Fundamentalists and Evangelicals to Anglican/Episcopalian and mainline Protestants; and Classical Pentecostals and independent Charismatics to Roman Catholics and Eastern Orthodox. Although not all those named are involved directly in the CM, all have helped shape and influence the vision and thought and developing practice of those who are.

Robert Webber has written a number of key books on the history and practice of Christian worship, such as *Worship Old and New*, *Worship Is A Verb* and *Signs of Wonder - The Phenomenon of Convergence in the Modern Liturgical and Charismatic Churches*, all of which have been highly influential on those involved in the movement. His book, *Evangelicals on the Canterbury Trail*, describing a trend of Evangelical Christians moving toward liturgical churches and the reasons why, was one of the first discoveries for many who are now clearly operating in a convergence perspective.

Greater public awareness of the new movement came through Stan White, a young fourth generation Assembly of God pastor from Valdosta, Georgia, who caused a major stir when he took his entire independent Charismatic congregation into the Episcopal Church. The story was written up in *Christianity Today* in September of 1990 entitled "Why the Bishops Went to Valdosta" and *Charisma Magazine*, the major voice for the Charismatic movement, followed in April of 1991 with a similar article on White's remarkable journey toward a church that was fully Charismatic, fully Evangelical, and fully Liturgical and Sacramental.

Peter Giliquist, a former Campus Crusade for Christ leader in the 60's, left the campus movement with a number of other fellow leaders, searching for the real New Testament Church. Giliquist's book, *Becoming Orthodox - A journey to The Ancient Christian Faith*, chronicled their fascinating journey of over 15 years of seeking, studying, and researching the early church. Their discoveries led them into full reception and inclusion by the Antiochian Orthodox Church. Two thousand Evangelical/Charismatic believers from various backgrounds who made up the membership of the fifteen congregations they had founded were also received into the Antiochian branch of the Orthodox Church.

As news of these events and key materials began to circulate, others on the "journey," as many began to identify it, caught wind and took heart that God was indeed at work. Various leaders and participants were, in fact, increasingly relieved to discover they were not the only ones thinking this way or being compelled by this vision. In a quite unexpected way God seemed to be confirming His call and initiation towards a vision of unity in the Body of Christ in conformity with the spirit of Jesus' prayer in John 17 and His statement in John 10:16, "I have many other sheep that are not of this fold; I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one Shepherd". It seemed to be a unity that would not only leap boundaries, but one that would lead to an enlargement and enrichment of the faith, vision, worship and practice of the fullness of Christ in the fullness of His Church.

Common Elements of Convergence Churches

Those who are being drawn by the Lord into this convergence of streams are characterized by several common elements. While these are not exhaustive or in any order of importance, they seem to form the basis for the focus and direction of the Convergence Movement.

1. A restored commitment to the sacraments, especially The Lord's Table.

Those from the Evangelical and Charismatic streams of the church have not really emphasized the sacramental dimension of the church. In fact, for some churches, Holy Baptism and Holy Communion have been seen more as ordinances than sacraments - commands by the Lord that must be undertaken by the church, but for no other purpose than that of obedience.

From a more sacramental view, these two expressions of church life are seen as holy and sacred to the Lord, a symbol with true spiritual meaning used as a point of contact between man and God. The Lord's presence and power is released in these acts as the worshiper encounters Him through the elements.

2. An increased appetite to know more about the early church.

For many Christians, a vacuum has existed between the pages of the New Testament and the contemporary church. This has left a disconnected Body with no heritage. Like a boat adrift, the church can no longer explain who she is, where she came from, or why she exists. A recent shift in perspective has sent her searching for her roots, in order to find a common connection to the greater whole in God's Kingdom.

Studying the early church has given many an opportunity to see New Testament church principles being applied by those who were discipled by the Twelve, and their subsequent followers. These writings provide a window into an earlier time, explaining how the early church approached faith and practice, how they worshipped, and how they gave leadership to a growing movement. The bloodline of the Body of Christ can be traced through succeeding generations - seeing both the successes and failure in faith.

3. A love and embrace for the whole church, and a desire to see the church as one.

The various expressions of Christianity have remained very distinct for many years through sectarianism and denominational separatism. Convergence churches are looking beyond these artificial barriers to encourage, appreciate, and learn more about the uniqueness found in the various bodies of faith. Jesus' prayer in John 17 was for the church to become one... one as the Body of Christ, not through compromise of doctrine and dogma, but unity under the person of Jesus Christ - unity among our diversity. This sense of oneness does not require any church to dismiss their unique expression as Christ's Body, but calls them to appreciate and embrace the variety and beauty of the Body of Christ worldwide and throughout history.

Convergence churches seem to appreciate the investment that the various streams of the Church provide. The call of CM churches is "be one," move together in portraying a people united under Christ to reach a hurting world.

4. The blending in the practices of all three streams is evident, yet each church approaches convergence from different bases of emphasis.

A church does not necessarily have to change its identity when it becomes a part of a convergence movement. Most convergence churches have a dominant base -- one particular expression of the church that regulates the others. They can still look very Episcopalian, Orthodox, Baptist, Nazarene, independent Charismatic, etc. while expressing additional elements of worship and ministry from other streams.

With each church having a primary base, three different types of convergence churches seem to be most common today: blended churches, inclusion churches, and network churches. Blended churches have maintained their original identity, denominational connection and distinctives theologically. From this base they then are adding elements from the other two streams in their worship and ministry practices. While most common among Liturgical/Sacramental churches, blended churches are found in Evangelical and Charismatic streams as well.

Inclusion churches are those that have gone through a metamorphosis in becoming involved in the convergence. Primarily from Charismatic or Evangelical backgrounds, these churches have found themselves so closely identifying with another stream of the Church that they have re-aligned themselves and many have even become a part of Liturgical/Sacramental denominations. Church of the King, Valdosta, GA whom we mentioned earlier in the article, is probably the best known inclusion church in recent years.

Networked churches are independent churches that have become a part of the CM and have left their former associations but have chosen to remain independent. Their connections are based on strong relationships with other like-minded churches. Most of those who are networked churches have come out of the Charismatic stream.

5. An interest in integrating more structure with spontaneity in worship.

As God's Spirit continues to move powerfully in the world, new wineskins (or structure) are required to contain the power and potential of His new wine. While most Christian futurists expected these new wineskins to be composed of more open and spontaneous churches with a de-emphasized structure, the spirit of independence present, especially in Western Churches, underlines the impression that this would be like pouring wine into a fish net.

God's holy fire is now being kindled in furnaces of faith where structures such as liturgical forms are allowing power to be imparted in churches without the fear of moving into error. Liturgies are being reintroduced into the church in order to bring a balance in worship among all the elements Scripture reveals as necessary for worshipping God in spirit and truth. The word "liturgy" literally means the "work of the people." Through the implementation of liturgical elements, worship becomes the work of the body in praise, repentance, the hearing of the Word, and the celebration of Christ's death and resurrection. Within these forms room can always be found for spontaneous moves of the Spirit. The historic creeds of the church - the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed, etc. - are once again giving the Body of Christ the foundational roots of orthodoxy. The Book of Common Prayer and other liturgical resources are also being blended with spontaneous praise and worship in convergence churches. The Lord's Table is being celebrated with a greater understanding of the sacredness of the event, and churches are following the Christian year and church calendar more consistently as a means of taking their people on an annual journey of faith. All of these expressions give local fellowships a greater sense of connection with the church worldwide and the church through history.

6. A greater involvement of sign and symbol in worship through banners, crosses, Christian art and clerical vestments.

The contemporary church has begun to reclaim the arts as a sign of the creativity of God. In this move, the use of sign and symbol serves as a representative of a greater truth. While banners and pageantry have found a new place in the church, other symbols are showing up as well, as contact points for bringing together two realities: the outward sign or symbol and the inward or spiritual reality. Crosses and candles now adorn processions in some churches that for years had felt that art and symbolism would be a signature of the death of vital faith.

Some pastors are now wearing clerical collars and vestments in various services, worship settings and celebrations of the church. The collar serves as a sign of spiritual reality in being yoked with Christ, identifying with and speaking to the church as a whole, prophetically saying, "Be one!"

7. A continuing commitment to personal salvation, Biblical teaching, and to the work and ministry of the Holy Spirit.

Some who watch this "new direction" from the Evangelical or Charismatic sidelines are still sceptical. They are concerned that convergence churches are abandoning their heritage, and that the value of Biblical infallibility and personal conversion will be lost or compromised in the pursuit of the liturgical/sacramental side of the church. Often, this

concern arises out of negative prior personal experiences with certain expressions of the church or an inaccurate stereotype. Those watching from the liturgical / sacramental sidelines are usually as concerned about their churches embracing more conservative or fundamental expressions of faith and practice.

This movement is definitely not the abandonment of a stream but a convergence. The work of God is inclusive not exclusive, bringing forth from each tributary those things which He has authenticated. Such issues as evangelism, missions, and the work of ministry by the power of the Spirit remain intact in this journey. His power continues to be released in marvellous ways in people's lives, bringing about conversion, healing, release from bondages, and life change.

The Church's rich and vital Biblical heritage in the power and primacy of the Word has been more completely under girded as churches give more time in worship to the corporate reading of the Bible. This fulfils Paul's admonition to Timothy to "devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching, and teaching." Ironically, on Sunday mornings more Scripture is usually read in a traditional liturgical service than most Evangelical or Charismatic gatherings.

Conclusion

The future of the church will be greatly impacted by the convergence movement. The walls between groups and denominations are already becoming veils which can be torn open, giving those from other branches greater opportunity to experience another's faith and practice.

As the convergence movement grows, mainline denominations will find their numbers reinforced and their churches refreshed. The influx of people, with various levels of contact in these churches, will bring new vitality for the ancient faith that is vibrant and strong. Their intense devotion for ancient forms will be contagious, caught by those who have lost their enthusiasm.

Formal and informal educational tracks in the various streams can become much broader in scope, addressing issues that may be found in other sections of the church, such as sacramental theology and practices, rites of initiation, the work of the Holy Spirit, etc.

The Convergence Movement will also open up greater opportunities for shared facilities and ministry since the architecture and layout of churches will be conducive to the more common worship elements of the different churches. Approaches to ministry will also become more similar, allowing a greater variety of churches to work together for evangelism, discipleship, social action, and Body life.

The final verses of the Old Testament close with a promise that the spirit of Elijah will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children and the hearts of the children to their fathers. While these verses have been used in recent times to characterize the need to return to family values, the hope also exists that a new spirit in the church will turn the hearts of this generation of believers back toward the apostolic fathers and others who formed and fashioned vital faith in the centuries following Christ's ascension. They had envisioned and worked for a Christianity that was orthodox and durable, generation upon generation, operating in strict adherence to the revelation of Christ for His church. The church of the twenty first century is now eagerly looking back to these fathers of faith and discovering new life in the forms and structures God built in their midst.

Member and/or Clergy Profile

(Please complete those areas that apply to you)

Title _____ Full Name _____

Your date of birth _____ Position _____

Address _____

State _____ Post Code _____

Home phone _____ Home fax _____

Email address _____

Mobile phone _____

Spouse's name _____

Children's names and ages (list information for children on back of sheet.)

Current Church Details:

Church or ministry name _____

Diocese _____

City _____ State _____ Post Code _____

Minister's name _____

Church phone _____

Church email address _____

Signature _____ Date _____

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Affirmations and Declarations

Affirmation of Doctrinal Essentials

It is by grace through faith in Christ Jesus, by the witness of the Holy Spirit, trusting in the inspiration and supremacy of the Holy Scriptures and with a confirming heart and mind that I affirm the Doctrinal Essentials of The Communion of Evangelical Episcopal Churches. By my signature, as a faithful communicant, accountable parish leader and/or minister, I will endeavour with God's help, to live and teach in concord with the spirit and intention of the Doctrinal Essentials. I understand that I will reaffirm this vow annually.

Signature _____

Commitment to Purity

Before God, I pledge my commitment to a historical, traditional view of purity, as understood in the Historical Christian Church since the earliest of times. I reject the move of recent times where portions of Christendom have embraced and accepted lifestyles such as homosexuality, promiscuity, fornication, adultery, and incestuous relationships as Biblically acceptable or tolerable. I embrace the heterosexual view of marriage and sexual relationships as God designed and God ordained. I commit myself to purity of life and purity of expression in my sexuality; through fidelity in marriage, and abstinence in singleness.

Signature _____

Affirmation and Blessing from a Spouse

By the signing of this document I am giving my blessing, support, and affirmation, to my husband/wife (applicant's name) _____, in their decision to pursue their calling to lay ministry/ordination in the Communion of Evangelical Episcopal Churches of Australia.

Signature _____

Declaration

I do solemnly declare that I do believe the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God, and to contain all things necessary to salvation and to be the inspired Word of God. I do believe the teachings and doctrine of the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church as they come to us from the Ancient Historical Faith. I do solemnly purpose to conform to the doctrine, discipline, and worship of Christ's Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church.

Signature _____

I have read and I understand and agree to abide by the Constitution of the Church of the Southern Cross and the Canons of the CEEC.

Signature _____ Date _____