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A selection of papers presented at the Conference

Daniel Alvunger, MA, Captive to Ceasar - Church Politics in Sweden in the 20th Century	page 2
Björn Fyrlund, Rev Dr, SSB Corporate Salvation or Self-Sufficient Solutions?	page 9
Oloph Bexell, Professor The Oxford Movemnet as Recieved in Sweden	page 17
Henrik Lindeskog, Rev, SST Sacramental Structures or Individual Idiosyncrasies in Parish Ministry	page 29
Dag Sandahl, Rev Dr, SSC. Faith of the Fathers, the Faith for the Future: the Faith Today?	page 35

Daniel Alvunger:

“Captive to Caesar” –

Church Politics in Sweden in the 20th Century, Particularly between the Years 1930-1973

On 21st March 1973, the social-democrat government published its decision that there would be no proposition to change relations between the Church of Sweden and the state. This retreat by the government marked the failure of the long and laborious process of investigations aimed at creating a new relationship between the church and the state in Sweden. In this talk, I will argue that the failure to reach an agreement in 1973 can also be seen as a successful result of social-democrat church policy in the period following the Second World War.

During the 20th century in Sweden, the SAP (Sveriges Socialdemokratiska Arbetareparti, the Swedish Social-Democrat Labour Party) can truly be called “Caesar”. This party was the majority party for most of the 1900s and was in government during the years 1932-1976, 1982-1991 and from 1994 onwards. Thus SAP has had the decisive influence on the shape of the church politics that is still in operation. The period from the early 1930s until the first half of the 1970s was particularly significant. Up until the year 1960, the guidance for church politics laid down in the party programme stipulated that the state-church system should be abolished. SAP was however deeply divided on this matter and this demand was widely criticised. And the social-democrat government did not attempt to carry out the plan. However, the party also had other plans: The democratic national church should become a reality and that required a continued church-state system. During the 1960 Party Congress, it was therefore felt that the demand for abolishing the establishment of the church no longer had a role to play, and so it was replaced by a pragmatic formulation that opened the way to further alternatives.

The foundation for SAP’s church politics was laid during the 1930s. Church politics became marked by the idea of the so-called *folkhemstanken* (the-state-provides-a-home-for-the-people idea) - i.e. by the ideological foundation for the social-democrat welfare-state that emerged after the Second World War. According to the Party Chairman, Per Albin Hansson, the State of Sweden should become “a home for its people and citizens”. By intervention in the various areas of community life, the strong state should ensure “the common good”. Arthur Engberg, who was the Minister of Ecclesiastical Affairs during the years 1932-1939, saw the established state-church as an instrument for the religious activities of the state. In his view, the state-church functioned as the tool for a democratic cultural policy and as protection against Roman-Catholic claims to power as well as against Catholic tendencies within the Church of Sweden itself. During the 1930s, the member of the Swedish parliament, Riksdagen, and also the rector of a parish, Harald Hallén, also put forward his programme for a “folk-church”, a national church available for every person in the country. His intention was that the Church of Sweden should become a “church of the Swedish nation” and he wanted to introduce a democratic order in the church. By the state being in control of the vocational training of ordinands for the priesthood, the preaching of the church should be modernised and based on liberal theology. The breakout of the Second World War did however cause the SAP to postpone its plans for

reform of the church and instead to focus its attention on holding the nation together through those troubled times.

Although these guidelines for church politics were drawn up during the 1930s, it is, in my view, only after the end of the Second World War, and in particular from the mid-1950s, that we can really speak of coherent church politics within the SAP. At the 1944 Party Congress, the SAP declared that the state-church system should be abolished, but in practice, its politics moved in another direction. It is possible to discern two aspects, mutually interwoven, in these practical political moves. On the one hand, we can see how the SAP, through its reforms, created both the conditions for the open and democratic national church, “the folk-church”, and at the same time sought to make it clear that, in relation to the state, the Church of Sweden was essentially an independent and spiritual denomination. On the other hand, the SAP stressed that, as a state-church, the Church of Sweden should submit to the powers of the state. This included an appreciation of the possibilities of controlling the Church of Sweden, and not least those groups within the church who were perceived as a threat to the ideology of the Social Democrat Party. This dimension of control and its links to the overall aim of the party to increase democracy throughout society is most clearly expressed by the member of the governing body of the party, K.J. Olsson, who at the Party Congress in 1944 said:

“The democratic society has a need to control even this aspect of social life, and I imagine that the best way of controlling this aspect is to retain the state-church for the time being and to modernise its, reform it, to make it more democratic, and to make use of it, as far as possible, as an instrument of the democratic society in order to create better conditions and to seek to make the citizens loyal and faithful to the ideology of democracy.”

The reason why the SAP did not make any moves to abolish the state-church system was that from the authority of the powers of the state over the church issued the power to change the Church of Sweden. It was not only a matter of changing the Church of Sweden “from the outside” through parliamentary sanctioned reforms and legislation, but also “from the inside” by ensuring that the decision-making bodies of the church were governed by secular party politics.

The 1949 Church Assembly Ordinance is an example of how the SAP drove the process towards democracy “from the outside”. This reform led to giving the laity the majority in the Church Assembly and also to making the lay executive body of the parish (kyrkofullmäktige) rather than the parochial church council, the basis for indirect elections of members of the Church Assembly. The hope of the government was that this new Church Assembly would gradually widen the space for democratic groupings and would reflect “the real” national church (the folk-church) – a church in which the people ruled – rather than “the priest-church” that had hitherto prevailed.

Just like the concept of “democracy”, that of “religious freedom” was also central to SAP’s church politics. The 1951 Law about Religious Liberty made it possible for the first time to cease to be a member of the Church of Sweden without joining any other denomination. The Church of Sweden had already called for this in the so-called Bishop’s Motion put forward to the 1928 Church Assembly and based of Bishop Einar Billing’s ”religiously motivated idea of the national church” (the folk-church). These wishes had then, and throughout the 1930s, been neglected by the powers of the state. From the point of view of the Church of Sweden, the legislation about religious liberty contained a long-desired mark: the unique nature of the Church of Sweden was hereby defined as a spiritual denomination of faith. The Minister of Justice, Herman Zetterberg, made it clear that there existed an organisational relationship

between the church and the state, but the church was essentially different from all other institutions of the state. The identity and the mission of the church sprang from the faith and teaching of the church (as defined by the confessional documents of the Church of Sweden, i.e. the three ancient creeds and the Augsburg Confession.).

In spite of the definition of the Church of Sweden enshrined in the legislation about religious liberty, the perception that the state was superior to the church was deeply engrained within the SAP. This view prevailed in the debate on the issue of the priests' duty to officiate at weddings, which was treated in connection with the 1951 legislation. The Minister of Justice, Herman Zetterberg, stressed that priests were civil servants. Priests could not, on the basis of their convictions about the faith, refuse to marry divorcees. The regulations of the state were normative for the order of the church. Another example from the same year is the way in which the government acted on the issue of the legislation about salaries for priests. The government made it clear that prevalent praxis had given the parliament, Riksdagen, the right to take decisions on issues that concerned the finances of the church. The Church Assembly had no right to participate in such decisions. In the light of the way in which the government argued, the earlier speech by the Minister of Justice, Herman Zetterberg, about the independence of the church, appeared as a fairly vacuous statement, echoing of emptiness, and the state took an increasingly hardening grip on the church.

From the mid-1950s, the Party closed ranks more and more on church politics aimed at making the "folk-church", the national democratic church, a reality. The purpose was both to clarify the contours of the Church of Sweden as a spiritual denomination of faith, and to preserve the existing church structure while at the same time imposing a more democratic format. The groups influenced by the high church Catholic movements as well as the traditional Lutherans (gammalkyrkliga) within the Church Assembly were perceived as a threat. The influences of these groups had to be marginalised. In order to achieve that, reforms of the Church of Sweden "from the outside" was not enough. A change "from the inside" and "from below" by involvement in elections of lay members to the local church executive bodies were also required.

As the sociologist of religion, Göran Gustafsson, has shown, the participation of the political parties in the elections to the church executive bodies increased continuously during the post-World War II-period. According to Gustafsson, this process of increasing party politics was mainly a hidden process, since the parties made use of united lists and collective lists, and they had agreed the distribution of candidates in advance on the basis of the results of the elections to the secular local authorities. This created a perception that the involvement of the parties in the local church executive bodies was different from their involvement in other political institutions in society, in which the parties were active. Against the background of this process towards the rule of party politics, the significance of the 1949 Church Assembly Ordinance stands out clearly. Since the local church executive bodies appointed the lay members of the Church Assembly, increased influence in the local church executive bodies gave the SAP the opportunity both to fill the Church Assembly by its own candidates and to marginalise the influence of the high church Catholic groups and of the traditional Lutherans.

The basis on which the social democrats sought to transform the Church of Sweden was the so-called "democratic national church"-idea (den demokratiska folkkyrkotanken), a synthesis of a philosophy of the national church that had the people as the subject of the church and which was governed by the democratic principles of the nation as the home for the people (folkhemstanken). The decision taken by the Church of Sweden in 1958 to approve of the ordination of women to the priesthood marked a clear indication that the purpose of the SAP to transform the Church of Sweden had begun to show a tangible result. The 1958 Church

Assembly marked the break-through for the so-called democratic national church-philosophy (demokratiska folkkyrkligheten) also in practice, and the social democrat church politician Arndt Johansson was one of the leading agents of this change. The pressures put on the Church Assembly to approve of the ordination of women to the priesthood were great, both from public opinion and from the government. In a parliamentary speech in 1958, the Minister of Ecclesiastical Affairs, Ragnar Edenman had stressed that the Church of Sweden had a duty to submit to Riksdagen (Parliament). The priesthood of women was primarily about the conditions of qualification of civil servants of the state. Once again it was made obvious that the perception of the Church of Sweden as an institution of the state was strong within the SAP.

Two years earlier, in 1956, the Swedish Riksdag had decided to commission a “comprehensive and unprejudiced investigation ... of the issue about the future form of the relationship between the state and the church”. This church-state investigation began in 1958 and was completed in 1968. During that period, SAP’s discussions of the church-state issue abated, but developments in the field of church politics during the 1950s also led to the perception that the demand for the abolishment of the church-state system appeared increasingly out of date. At the 1960 Party Congress, a new demand was adopted: “The relationship between the church and the state should be regulated in accordance with the principles of democracy and religious liberty. All religious practice should be undertaken as a voluntary activity.” Ragnar Edenman declared that the SAP had now left the “state-church line” championed by Arthur Engberg behind. From now on, the Party followed “the line of religious liberty.” This new demand marked a compromise and suited the contemporary circumstances, including the ongoing state-church investigation. And above all, it made it clear that the SAP had now accepted and stood behind the idea of ensuring that the democratic national church philosophy became a reality.

The purpose the church politics of the SAP, which issued in the process of increasing democracy within the Church of Sweden and the influence of party politics within church administration, was to integrate the Church of Sweden into the political system and the democratic community of values. This purpose did however not imply a strengthening of the state-church system. The organisational links between the church and the state should be changed. The SAP pinned its hopes on the forthcoming proposals of the Church-State Investigation. During the working period of the investigation, the SAP laid down the framework for the democratic national church. The purpose of the reforms enshrined in the 1961 Law about Parochial Government and in the 1963 Law about the Availability of Church Buildings was to strengthen the powers of the laity and to support the forces in favour of democracy within the Church of Sweden. This legislation also marked the intention of the SAP that the idea of the democratic national church should now do away with a lingering ecclesiology within the Church of Sweden which, in their perception, cast suspicion on lay people. Another example of a reform aimed at clarifying the contours of the Church of Sweden as a spiritual denomination of faith, was the regulation in 1963 of religious liberty. From now on, it became possible to leave the Church of Sweden by a written application.

When the Church-State Investigation presented its final report in 1968, the government appointed a Church-State Parliamentary Drafting Committee with the commission to work out a proposal for a decision in principle about the church-state issue on the basis of two out of the four different positions that the Church-State Investigation had considered: The A-position – which implied a largely changed relationship between the church and the state with reforms that would ensure increased independence for the church, and the C-position – which by and large implied independency for the Church of Sweden in relation to the state. All existing church property and revenue from such property would remain with the Church of Sweden but

the church should administer its own membership fee. The government was determined that a decision in principle about a changed relationship should precede any possible legislation about the constitution of the Church of Sweden.

In its final report published in May 1972 the Church-State Drafting Committee stated that it was not “in accordance with the principle of religious liberty for one denomination of faith to have an essentially different relationship to the state than other denominations had.” The Drafting Committee therefore proposed that the Church of Sweden, as a spiritual denomination of faith, should become independent of the state but expected its “character of an open national church” or remain unchanged. The Drafting Committee was however not entirely agreed. The representative from the Centre Party registered a reservation against the proposal that the ecclesiastical local authorities (the parishes) should lose their status of public and legal entities with the right to collect taxes. That reservation gave the proposal the death knell. During the summer of 1972, the Centre Party as a whole agreed with that reservation. A little later, the Moderate Party also made it known that it would not support the proposals of the Drafting Committee.

The SAP met in Congress to consider the proposals of the Drafting Committee on Church and State in October 1972. During the 1960s, the earlier conflicts within the SAP had more or less disappeared. The Swedish Association of Christian Social Democrats (Sveriges Kristna Socialdemokraters Förbund) known as the Brotherhood Movement (Broderskapsrörelsen) played a key role in that context. That Association had previously been consequent in its insistence that the relationship between the Church of Sweden and the state should remain unchanged, on the grounds of all its practical advantages, but in its *Religious Liberty Programme* published in 1967 this Association made it clear that the Church of Sweden ought to become independent of the state in order to make religious liberty a reality, both for the Church of Sweden and for other denominations of faith. That statement created the pre-conditions for an overall position in principle within the SAP on what form the relationship between the Church of Sweden and the state should take.

The SAP was united in its support for the proposals for a change of relations between the church and the state put forward by the Drafting Committee. “The Caesar” no longer considered the state-church system a necessity, since developments towards a democratic national church had been secured. The Prime Minister, Olof Palme, expressed the view during that Congress that it was now up to the Church of Sweden to reply in a constructive spirit. The major exception during that Congress was the motion submitted by the church politician Arndt Johansson. He took the view that the proposals of the Drafting Committee would destroy the pre-conditions for the democratic national church, which was by then gradually emerging. A separation would only support the high-church Catholic groups. The losers would be the democratic forces within the Church of Sweden, those who cared for “the anonymously religious” among the population.

Arndt Johansson was one of the leading figures in the veritable “church-rebellion” that was aroused against the proposals of the Drafting Committee. That had begun already before the Drafting Committee had published its final proposals. The working group from the college of bishops criticised the working method of the Drafting Committee and its choice of perspective from which it had reached its conclusions. A continued relationship between the Church of Sweden and the state did not have to be in absolute conflict with the principles of religious liberty. The working group proposed instead a continued relationship, but with ecclesiastical reforms. That was also the foundation for the extensive programme of church reforms that had been adopted by the 1968 Church Assembly. The government had however rejected those

proposals on the grounds that they pre-empted a decision in principle. Reactions to the proposals made by the Church-State Investigation from the round of debate across the Church of Sweden turned out to be mainly negative. It was the parishes, and particularly the lay representatives elected by the political parties to the ecclesiastical administrative bodies in the parishes, who protested most vociferously. Major rallies protesting against the proposals of the Drafting Committee were organised in which social democrat church politicians were at the forefront.

The government was facing a tottering parliamentary unity and the prospect of reforms on the basis of mutual understanding and collaboration with the Church of Sweden were non-existent. And there were to be elections in October 1973. As the government did not wish the church-state issue to become drawn into the election campaign, it chose to beat the retreat and therefore let it be known in March 1973, before the round of debate had been completed, that no proposition was forthcoming. The Minister of Church Affairs, Alva Myrdal, who had also chaired the Drafting Committee on Church and State, was disappointed. She did not in any way accuse the government because of this decision but loaded the guilt on the Centre Party and on the Moderates. The government had been surprised by the aggressive, and in her views, not really objective, opposition from ecclesiastical administrators.

The church politics embraced by the SAP certainly contributed to changing the Church of Sweden both “from the outside” and “from the inside” towards a democratic national church. But it did not – as had been expected within the SAP – lead to the abolition of the state-church system. My main point is that the purpose of the SAP, which was to integrate the Church of Sweden into the political system and the democratic community of values through the process of making the Church of Sweden more democratic in structure and by increasing the powers of the political parties on its bodies of government did succeed. And its success was so extensive that the church politicians not only safeguarded the democratic national church, but also managed to secure the future pre-conditions for that philosophy and structure, by keeping an organisational link between the church and the state. But according to the social democrat church politicians, the democratic national church had not yet been completely introduced. In the hour of defeat for the government, the democratic national church, which the SAP had created through its church politics during preceding decades, triumphed. In order to develop this conclusion I will offer a short comment on developments after 1973.

In 1979 a Liberal Party (Folkpartiet) minority government sought to achieve a change to relations between the Church of Sweden and the state. The Church Assembly rejected the proposals but the Minister of Church Affairs, Bertil Hansson appointed the 1979 Church Assembly Committee to investigate possible changes to the Swedish Constitution in order to give the Church of Sweden greater independence. The work of the Church Assembly Committee led to a proposal for an extensive reform of the Church Assembly, which implied that the Church Assembly became completely democratically structured. The 1982 Church Assembly approved the Law about the Church of Sweden and the Law about the Church Assembly, which the Swedish Riksdag had passed earlier the same year. These new laws stipulated that the Riksdag should pass church legislation with the consent of the Church of Sweden. The number of delegates of the Church Assembly was increased to 251 and the bishops lost their ex officio membership of the Church Assembly. Another vital reform was to give the Church of Sweden a Central Governing Body. Initially, the Church of Sweden Central Governing Body became a statutory administrative body subject to the government, but in 1984 the Riksdag took the decision to make that Body subject to the Church Assembly. According to Sören Ekström, former General Secretary of the Church of Sweden, this reform formally strengthened the state-church system but it also gave the Church Assembly a more independent position.

The scholar of ecclesiastical matters, Dag Sandahl, has stressed that it was the philosophy of the democratic national church that permeated the 1982 reform of the Church Assembly. In his view, that philosophy had a decisive impact, particularly on the lay representatives elected to ecclesiastical administrative bodies in the parishes. On the basis of the developments that had resulted in such strong influence for lay people and for party politics, which I have described above, the significance of the church politics furthered by the SAP following the Second World War becomes apparent. The Church of Sweden became an integral part of the political system and was thereby transformed into a democratic national church. In my view, this also explains why the powers of state, the “Caesar,” considered it possible to let go of its grip on the Church of Sweden in 1973 and 1979. There was no reason to uphold the state-church system, once the control of the state over the Church of Sweden and its insight into church affairs had been replaced by democratically structured bodies.

According to Göran Gustafsson, the participation of the political parties in the church elections increased after 1973, largely as a consequence of SAP’s efforts to offer greater clarity in its ideological profile on church issues. However, it was not until 1979 that the SAP adopted a programme of action on church politics. As the scholar of church affairs, Lennart Ahlbäck has shown, the SAP saw its commitment to church politics as a guarantee for the democratic national church. The inclusion of the democratic national church as an aspect of general social welfare was, according to Ahlbäck, fundamental to SAP’s guidelines on church politics during the 1980s and the 1990s. Again, the ideological identification created after the Second World War between the social democrat view of the state as “the home for the people” and the democratic national church is obvious.

It is not surprising that this open and democratic national church was at the centre when the decision to create more independent relations between the Church of Sweden and the state was taken in 1995. The Minister of Church Affairs, Marita Ulvskog, a member of the social democrat government, thought that there were no hindrances whatever standing in the way, but the Church of Sweden would be able continue its work for the people. The democratic national church had been secured. In 1998, a constitutional change was introduced and the Swedish Riksdag adopted framework legislation, including a Law about Denominations of Faith, in which the denomination is seen as a legal entity (juridisk person) and a special Law about the Church of Sweden. The Law about the Church of Sweden lays down that the Church of Sweden is an Evangelical-Lutheran denomination of faith with an episcopal structure, built up by parishes, dioceses and a General Synod. The Church of Sweden is described as an open, democratic national church, providing national covering. From the 1st of January 2000, the Church of Sweden is self-governing and the Church of Sweden General Synod takes decisions on matters concerning the Church of Sweden.

Formally, the Church of Sweden is no longer “captive to Caesar”, but in view of the circumstances governing church politics in the Church of Sweden today, nothing much has changed. The political parties are currently in majority in the Church of Sweden General Synod and there are no suggestions that the three major parties, the SAP, the Centre Party and the Moderates, intend to abolish their involvement in church politics.

Translation Sr Gerd Swensson, Te Deum

Björn Fyrlund:

Corporate Salvation or Self-Sufficient Solutions?

I have been asked to say something about the relationship between the individual and the corporate, and about – I guess – how I look on the option of individual or structural solutions with regard to the possibility of remaining in the Church of England or in the Church of Sweden at present, or in the new difficulties that we can foresee as coming in the near future concerning our faithfulness to Catholic faith and practice.

Personally, I have more questions than answers, and I do not really know how to deal with them in my personal situation. But until I know more, or until better times come, I try to look forward in faith and hope. And doing so, I will share some thoughts with you today on this difficult topic. Maybe it is by our common experience of not knowing that something new can come.

The contrast between “individual” and “collective” gives in my opinion a false notion if applied to the question of how to come to terms with the issue of how to create an alternative for those opposed to women priests and bishops in the ministry of the Church.

In the Lutheran tradition, it is essential to make room for the individual’s choice, and to stress – to put it simply - that the individual conscience, and no ecclesiological structure, is the ultimate judge of what is right and wrong and what is true and false in matters of faith. And I also believe that Roman-Catholic moral theology stresses the individual, and his or her own choice, as the key to all decision-making, although the individual has to be informed and led by both the Church’s teaching / tradition and by what official ministry of the Church teaches. The suggestion that one option for those who oppose the ordination of women to the ministry of the Church, would be to make an individual choice, thereby seeking a new living (if you are a bishop, priest or deacon) or a new church-community (if you are a lay person) is to place too much responsibility on the individual, thus transferring what should be a corporate responsibility at the level of the individual and thus leaving the individual to solve what essentially is a common problem.

If I had to face the question of how I, as an individual, would deal with the fact that I hold on to the old fashion idea that I am only able to pray to God in Spirit and truth by keeping to the words in some medieval hymnal, that could be dealt with by giving me – and my companions – the opportunity to do so on, say, every third Sunday at 8 pm – but not as a part of the official provision of services in that particular church or parish. That would be a plain and clearly individual solution. It would not offend the rights of anyone else. And it would give me – and my fellow-believers peace in mind. It would even give the church authorities some goodwill, since they would have been giving space and room for those odd people to worship in their own ways. And it would give me, as an individual, the opportunity to make a reasonable

choice. Would this arrangement meet my request? Yes, it might, if I say: “Yes, All Right, Let’s go for it”.

However, to ask me to be satisfied by some similar arrangement when it comes to attending Mass in the certain knowledge that Mass will be celebrated according to good Catholic tradition, is quite another matter. To accept such an arrangement would suggest that my request is “odd”, and that my way of celebrating the Eucharist is a peculiar, irregular and unnecessary way of doing it. And besides, such acceptance would suggest that I was criticising the mainstream services, not regarding them to be sufficient for my faith and my spiritual well-being. It would also imply that I was the problem, and that the church would be altogether better off, had I not made this request.

There is also another, maybe more important, factor: It is actually the corporate church body, not just any a few individuals, that has made the decisions to open the ordained ministry of the Church to women. That corporate body of church-government should therefore also take corporate responsibility for all members of the church and not try to transfer that responsibility to individuals and to their consciences. In my opinion, any solution that implies freedom of conscience for the individual brings with it the risk of transferring the responsibility for the choices of the individual from the corporate to the individual.

Already Gunnar Rosendal, the legendary high-church pioneer in the Church of Sweden, took the view that it is not, for example, sufficient to give individual priest the opportunity to refuse to officiate at the remarriage of divorcees, since the church itself should not engage in such activity. (cf. Jakob Trônet, Gunnar Rosendals äktenskapsuppfattning, p. 96 aKF:s Årsbok 2006.)

There is in Sweden a new kind of “mantra” which is frequently referred to by the bishops, and I think this is a good example of what I am trying to say. It is today repeatedly said: “The church is not a communion of people who believe the same doctrine, or ideologies, but “a communion round the table” and “a communion of prayer”. That means that the church establishes itself by common behaviour, by partaking of the same communion around the same table, which of course implies receiving the sacraments together with everyone else, regardless of the gender of the officiating priest, and praying together regardless of who the other person is. This is, I would say, to make good behaviour the prime focus, and obedience to the Gospel a secondary matter. As long as you behave properly and try to look nice and to smile when you are together, then everything is fine and you have proved yourself worthy of having all the routes for your future carrier in the Church of Sweden smoothed before you. What you believe in your heart about what you partake of is your private affair, and if you bother the ecclesiastical authorities with such details, you can be sure that all the doors will be closed for you. Not because anyone actually says that your faith is wrong, but because you are not behaving according to the pattern required. In other words, the Church of Sweden is no longer defined as a communion of believers but as a communion of people acting properly. It does not try to exclude anyone because of his or her beliefs, but it will certainly administer exclusion because of certain – i.e. Catholic – practices, in particular those found among priests.

Therefore the Church of Sweden also allows any criticism of the beliefs and the ideology of the Catholic faith – as long as you adhere loyally to the common code of good behaviour. To illustrate this point, I would draw your attention to a paragraph in a recently published book, written by two priest of the Church of Sweden:

» All the hard questions concerning Eucharistic celebrations have been further complicated by the rites that have been created around the Eucharistic act itself. They imply that the Eucharistic act has been profaned, by dressing it in forms that are essentially the same as those of magic séances, combined with specific movements, marking the moment of transubstantiation, and thus turning the celebration into a seductive mixture of secrecy and public performance. »

(The priests are Stig Ekelund and Tore Littmarck, and the quotation comes from their book *Does the Church have a Future – About the Transformation or the Death of the Church*, Proprius 2003, p. 114f

» De många svåra frågorna kring nattvardsfirandet har ytterligare försvårats genom de riter, som har skapats kring själva nattvardshandlingen. Dessa har inneburit en profanering av nattvarden genom att ge den former, som i allt väsentligt är desamma som vid magiska seanser kombinerade med särskildare örelser, som markerar själva förvandlingsögonblicket, en blandning av hemlighetsmakeri och publik föreställning.»

(Präster Stig Eklund och Tore Littmarck i boken *Har kyrkan en framtid – Om kyrkans förändring eller död*, Proprius 2003, sid. 114f.)

Such statements can be published without any reaction from bishops, since the focus is here on theology and doctrine and not on generally accepted behaviour. To put it in another way: Freedom of faith is permitted, as is appeal to the freedom of conscience, when it comes to matters of faith – i.e. your individual faith, the faith that you might struggle with as an individual – as long as your behaviour as a priest at the altar does not deviate from the commonly accepted rule of behaviour, and as long as you do not demand of others that they comply with what you, the traditionalist priest, consider correct liturgical behaviour in accordance with mainstream Christian tradition and expect others, including the ecclesiastical authorities, to respect or protect your rights, or the rights of your free conscience, to be upheld on these matters.

Last autumn the Church of Sweden decided to allow blessings on same-sex relationships in public services. It was stressed in the debate, and underlined by all the bishops, that freedom of conscience should apply to all those priests who were not willing to perform such blessings. Even so, the public debate that followed only a few weeks later in the media and Letters to the Editor of major daily newspapers, individuals were made the problem, since they had declared that they were not willing to officiate at such services or perform such acts. They were thus publicly accused of not obeying a democratic decision. Added to this was the moral blackmail: “You are clinging to your own individual rights instead of seeking what is best for those who seek to have their love and their way of living blessed by the Church.” Thus, what had originally been intended to be corporate support for the freedom of conscience was thus, in a matter of a few weeks, reduced to public notification of deviating behaviour and consequently pressure was placed on individuals to conform to the new agenda. What is said when decisions are made is one thing, and the question of how long anyone remembers that, or how long anyone may have any such promised support, is quite another matter.

Herein lies the problem: The corporate body of decision-makers cannot be held responsible in the eyes of the press or in the eyes of a modernist parochial church council. But individuals can. And therefore many individual clergy feel unable to cope with the pressures and therefore they give in. And they cannot be blamed. Most of them just couldn't take it anymore.

But the problem is much deeper when it comes to the question of the inclusion of women in the ordained ministry of the church. By making the decision of opening the ministry of the church to women, the institutional church takes a new stand on a question that has a much wider range than that of what is the best way to structure the ministry of the church. The authorities do of course not admit that, but point again to the individual level: “Those of you who can not adapt to the new situation will have some sort of freedom of conscience, but it is you yourself who is the problem; you who cannot adapt to the new situation and the new way of expressing the ministry of the church.” And we, as individuals, are trapped. We cannot accept these new innovations, although we seek to work together with our opponents as far as possible, et cetera.

From an institutional point of view, it looks as if the whole church has decided on a new direction of its faith. However, the institutional church, what should be the corporate church, is not willing to discuss matters of faith. It is much easier to discuss individuals, and to deal with them one by one.

If the corporate church – and here I talk about our national church bodies, and not about the whole Catholic Church – would say: “We have taken a new stand on a question that has many implications for the faith and for how faith should be understood and lived out, and we have therefore decided, as a corporate commitment, that every member of the local church should have the same and equal right to express and to live out his or her faith in every parish, and we will corporately support every effort to offer every member of the church the freedom to be served by the sacraments in a way that is coherent with every believer’s own conscience, that would be a good way of combining the corporate, i.e. the institutional, and the individual perspectives.

As a priest in the Church of Sweden, you are obliged to behave as if you believed, but you do not really have to believe in your heart what you perform in your actual deeds. As an individual, you are not free to choose which expressions your faith must take when it comes to the public worship. But you are free to choose which beliefs to hold on to.

In a corporate sense, you are not free to do anything except that which fits in with the common norm. You are not supposed to contradict what is officially held to be true. What the corporate level offers you is only a framework for what is in the institutional sense “right” behaviour. There is however no support for your right to contradict what is officially held to be the good new creed of the church for modern man.

Why is this so? Could it be because the opposition raises questions about more profound issues than right behaviour? Issues about truth and tradition, about genuine faith and biblical standards?

As long as the corporate, institutional level can dismiss all opposition as merely a matter of individuals not coping with the task of adjusting to the commonly agreed behaviour, the minority can be treated as immature individuals who cling to old-fashioned ideas and codes of behaviour.

But if and when the corporate level would begin to treat those opposing individuals as witnesses of a true and inherited faith, their code of practice and their beliefs might be seen as contributing to a fuller expression of the faith and of the tradition of the Church which is valid even today.

One big obstacle to the possibility of obtaining a structural solution, such as a free province, in Sweden for those opposing the ordination of women, is, I think, that such a province would, in the eyes of the public – and in the eyes of the modernists – be seen as a major break away from accepted corporate behaviour. And that is so not least because anyone who breaks the accepted code of behaviour signals that, in the words of Shakespeare's Hamlet, "there is something rotten in the State of Denmark".

That is the dilemma. If two different codes of behaviour were both to be accepted as genuine expressions of the faith, the modernists would still feel that they were under attack, accused of misinterpreting the faith. The mere existence of a code of behaviour, allowing some people to act as if no women priests existed, would still be an obstacle and a challenge. A challenge so grave, that the corporate church would never have the guts to stand up for the legitimate rights of a group not, for example, to take part in communion when a woman officiates.

But what are the alternatives in the Swedish situation?

- a) The individual solution par excellence, whereby I save myself: Conversion. That would bring with it a new set of questions, which I don't have the time to address here. I just want to say that in my opinion, conversion to often is the result of an aversion towards the church body that you are leaving, and therefore something that creates new wounds, both for the individual and for the body of the church.
- b) I preserve my own beliefs in my own relatively good parish, until death do us part – or until the Lord shows me something else
- c) I and other traditionalist form subgroups for mutual support, spiritual support and support and in every other sense.
- d) I cling on to the idea that it is not I that have changed but the institutional church and thereby the official church has changed my relationship to itself and it is therefore obliged to give me its support.

It is fourth alternative that is my chosen option. And it is not only an option, but the only possible way for me to remain true, both to my belief in what God has given me so far through the Church and to what God will do – and that is still my hope – through the Church as a corporate body, and not only through individuals (although much good also can come from the most unexpected place, i.e. the women who touched Jesus from behind, and who caused Jesus to stop and ask; "Who touched me?"). I mean that God is capable of meeting us with surprise. To open up opportunities that we would never have dreamed of. And that all the small tokens of his grace that I actually experience day by day, must be taken seriously and as signs of hope. And maybe, tomorrow God sends a new fresh spring-time to his Church... Let's at least be open to the possibility.

Just to make an individual choice no longer to participate in church life, or to convert to another Christian tradition, also brings another complication: Such choices do not highlight the reasons behind them and they do not bring them out into the public sphere so that others may react. It is therefore only a defensive strategy. Although it gives me, as an individual, a new freedom and it does open a new way, it does not contribute to the corporate struggle for the faith received. But saving your own skin is not enough. In the Body of Christ, we have corporate responsibility for one another. And we need to ask ourselves what the implication of

the commandment to love our neighbour as ourselves might mean in this perspective. Maybe not all are called to step out in the public arena and write letters to the Editor for publication in the newspapers, but for the sake of others, we should ask ourselves: How can I, as an individual, – and in my own individual choices – help others in their situation? Added to this there is the ecumenical question. If a number of individuals just leave the church, who will be left to be the opposition, with legitimate rights to be spoken to and negotiated with, in order to uphold Catholic faith and practice within that branch of the Church of Christ? There is always the need for the holy rest, however diminished it might be, to hold fast to the faith received, in order that the new life of the Risen Christ may sprout from the stump, which only too often appears to be dead. As Scripture so often reminds us, salvation is usually won, not by the masses, but by the chosen few.

In the Church of Sweden the leading spokespersons say, over and over again: “We do not strike anyone off from membership of the Church. It is individuals who strike themselves off the registers by no longer being willing to participate in church life.” I think it is time for us to contradict this statement by showing them that it is the church that denies us space, and that it is not our own choice. It is because people are challenged, or forced, to do so – that people they leave the church.

So can I not see any positive alternatives, any signs of hope? I think that there might be, and they may be closer than we think – if only we could have the ears of the bishops. They are in fact, and should be forced to be what they are appointed and consecrated to be, bishops - a title that comes from the Latin word “Pontifex”, which literally means “bridge-builder”. The bishops have committed themselves to the task of building bridges between different groups in the church. In Sweden today, the bishops are more than marginalised in their own church. And the interesting thing is that we, who hold the Catholic tradition and stick to Catholic theology, are the ones who can challenge them to be precisely what they should be, because we know that their office is fundamentally necessary for the Church. Other groups in the church consider the bishops as little more than simply presidents, or as no more than the highest officials of church affairs.

In the dioceses of the Church of Sweden, the bishops are no longer even seen as figures of festivity. When the bishops carry out visitations to the congregations, it is nothing more than everyday event. No one cares very much, one way or the other.

Here we could unite with the bishops for a common purpose. If the bishops were challenged to be bishops, it would make it much easier to see what we expect from the Church: Bishops that will provide proper episcopal oversight – episcopate – and not just bishops who deliver what the politicians or the modernists demand. If our bishops were challenged to be proper bishops, they might also soon become aware that the people of God hunger for the Gospel, and suffer from all the attacks on the fundamentals of faith and morals. If corporately, we could challenge the bishops, then I think that they might be able to see that they actually hold the keys to the just structures that are needed so that we may become partners in the common effort to build up the Church for the future.

And here again I can see that the individual and the corporate levels meet. As individuals, we can approach our bishops over and over again and claim our rights, and we can remind them of who we are and of the fact that that we are not dead – yet. Corporately, we need to come

together, to raise our voices and to show that we, the opposition, are not yet extinct. We have not yet disappeared into the shadows of history. Rather, we are a living reality, here and now demanding what Moses before us demanded of Pharaoh: Let my people go, so that we can gather together in worship. (We will meet the same objections: Don't you have enough services here? And we will say, over and over again: No, we must worship as we have learnt from God to worship.)

As the people of God, we have much to learn from all the oppressions described in the Bible that the people of Israel had to go through. Our Lutheran heritage provides us with tools of learning from the Scriptures as if our own lives were described there. Over and over again, the people of God met with difficulties and stood bewildered, as for example on the day when Moses had led them out into the desert and there was only the water of the Red Sea before them and the army of Egypt approaching behind them. Some of the same bewilderment is ours today. What should we do? Who is our leader now? Who holds the key to the future? And the answer is as simple as it ever was and yet so hard to believe when the circumstances are as bad as they are and we cannot see our way ahead or any positive signs that it is still the Lord who holds the key. If and when, He chooses, He can open the way and lead us through the Red Sea that we are facing in whatever way He chooses, even today. But can we wait?

Change is always a challenge. Change will always occur, for better or worse, for all of us, individually and corporately, in the wider community and in the church. Individuals change and persons grow and mature. Sometimes the individual must struggle with his or her beliefs and values and find him- or herself for a time in opposition to the traditional faith. At such times, the structure can be all there is left to preserve the individual within the Church. But at such times that the church itself struggles with faith and values, individuals can also make the difference, i.e. individuals, who cling to the Catholic faith and practice, to what has been taught and believed everywhere, at all times.

To summarise: To settle for something less than a structural solution would be to accept that individuals will in some way or another, be made the problem and they will be accused of not yet having adapted to the new situation, to the majority rule and so on. Or they will be accused of being too frightened of letting go of the old and not mature enough to take an individual stand and be part of the new experience in a new world, and therefore not yet ready to take part in the necessary reformation of the church of our time.

To cling to the idea that both the individual and the corporate levels are necessary, is to hold fast to both good theology of man (that each individual is a person with a conscience, which must not be oppressed) and to have good ecclesiology (that the Church is there before the individual, and that the Church has to be faithful to its inherited Catholic faith).

The current situation in the Church of Sweden creates, I would say, a dualism between the inward and the outward aspects of our lives, between who you are as a person, including the beliefs and values that you hold – and the person that the circumstances forces you to be: Someone who just has to perform according to what is expected while leaving aside your inner moral values.

In Sweden, we have seen far too many individuals who have been broken by this conflict, who just have not been able to cope with living with this conflict. And I am not saying this in order

to criticise them. I am only stating a sad fact in order to remind us all that none of us for how much longer we will be able to live with this tension before we ourselves also give in.

This dilemma is never publicly acknowledged, at least not by the majority. But we know that this is so, because we feel it, it cuts into our bare bones, it is a fact of our daily experiences.

The most challenging thing today, as an individual who tries to cling to Catholic faith and practice, is to remain a person who without expecting any support from the institutional church must find his or her own way, must find friends and structures, with and within which you can continue to hold fast to the hope – for sure not in vain – that one day it will become clear for all to see that faith and faithfulness, were the things that prevailed.

Oloph Bexell:

The Oxford Movement as Received in Sweden

Well into the 20th century, Sweden was almost a German province. The 16th century Swedish reformers had studied in Germany and particularly in Wittenberg. They had their contacts there and there they received a theology which they brought back home. Much of the devotional literature that was spread during the 17th and 18th centuries was translation from German sources.¹ Compared to the cadre of Swedish students who went to Germany, we know that from the beginning of the 17th century to the early 18th century, only 112 Swedes studied in Oxford.² The so-called Lund High Church Movement (*lundahögkyrkligheten*) in the 19th century was inspired by German Neo-Lutheranism from Kliefoth (1810-1895) and Loehe (1808-1872) and others who contributed to a deeper understanding of what church, worship and parish life is all about.

The church was an institution for the provision of the means of grace, founded by Christ himself. The heavenly and the earthly church were but two aspects of the same reality. Fellowship with the German Lutheran Churches was strong. Until well into the 20th century, Swedish politics in general was strongly orientated towards Germany. The language curriculum in Swedish secondary and high schools had German as the first foreign language.³ The dominance of English only emerged during the post-War period.

Even so, the contacts between Swedish Christianity and the churches in British Isles were far from non-existent. Already in 1726, the Rector of the Swedish Church in London, Jacob Serenius (1700-1776; later Bishop of the Diocese of Strängnäs) had published a book, *Examen harmoniæ religionis ecclesiæ Lutheranae & Anglicanae*, aiming to show that these two confessions were doctrinally very close to one another. It was these two churches who had best kept the inheritance from the Early Church. A few years earlier, the Swedish Secretary of State, Carl Gyllenborg (1679-1746) and the then Bishop of London, John Robinson (1650-1723), who had previously been the Pastor to the English Delegation and the English Ambassador to Stockholm, had collaborated about a proposal to amalgamate the Swedish and the English Churches – “*de unione ecclesiæ svencanæ et anglianæ*”.⁴ The purpose was – as they expressed it – the stronger to “frighten off” the expansive Roman-Catholic Church. Both churches also had common interests in Delaware. The Swedish episcopate of the period of Lutheran Orthodoxy did however take an unsympathetic attitude to such plans.⁵

During the 19th century, the Scottish Free Churches were the major source of inspiration when the Low-Church missionary organisation called Evangeliska Fosterlands-Stiftelsen (EFS) (*the Evangelical National Foundation*) was established. Contacts in both directions were lively and at the initial stage, included not only ideological and spiritual support, but the EFS was also, to a not insignificant degree, financed from Scotland. The cash-flow was so large that they even had their own treasurer in Sweden. The songs of the Evangelical Revivalist Movement, which quickly became very popular, were largely translations from English.⁶ The Evangelical Alliance was responsible for translations into Swedish of a number of Reformed tracts, which were published and spread in enormous print-runs.⁷ The Swedish Neo-Evangelism has thus also had a Reformed and even a Congregationalist influence on Swedish church life. For that reason, Lutherans, who were aware of their confession, were often strongly critical towards

such influences.

I.

At the same time, there were High Church Revivalist Movements in the Church of England. The one that we associate with the 19th century is the Oxford Movement and in particular Tractarianism. These movements had a marked ecclesiology, and the branch-theory was seen as the foundation for understanding empirically separate churches. The historic Christian Church was seen as a tree, and the denominations should be seen as branches of this, the one and only church, provided that they included certain components: apostolic succession, the basic sacraments and at least the creeds, the *symbola* from the Early Church. The Church was a divine institution, founded by Christ himself. The Early Church was an indivisible unit, the foundation and the norm for true historic developments.⁸ The *catholicity* of the church consists of its universality, with regard to time and place, and also of the fact that the faith was universally accepted within the church. The Oxford Movement thus formulated the Anglican theory of *antiquity*, i.e. that the undivided Early Church was the highest forum of Christian faith and order. The paradigm formulated by the 5th century monk, Vincentius of Lerinum, was highlighted, namely that the faith of the church is *quod ubique, quod semper, quod ab omnibus creditum est* (what has been believed and taught by everyone and everywhere) unchanged throughout the ages, although, as time goes by, it gains increasing precision and anchorage within human experience.⁹ For the Oxford theologians, the agreement between the theology of the Early Church and their own spiritual experience was fundamental.¹⁰ It is that period, Newman says, that testifies to “what that faith is, which was once delivered to the saints, the faith that will always remain in the world, and which is the treasure and the life of the church, the condition for membership of the church and normative of its teaching.”¹¹ It is patristic *symbola* that contain the normative doctrinal formulations, which characterise the continuity of the church. The *apostolicity* of the church consists of the organic unity of the contemporary church with the Early Church, handed on through apostolic succession.¹² The church is the institution that provides salvation, and that is why the sacraments and the ordained ministry have an inevitable place, and the liturgy is the manner in which worship is offered. Arthur Philip Perceval (1799-1853), one of Keble’s disciples, who in the 1840s worked on the issue of apostolic succession, was in touch with the Swedish Rector in London on this subject and sought to convince him that the succession in Sweden was unbroken.

For the leading representatives of this Movement – Richard Hurrell Froude (1803-36) and John Henry Newman (1801-1890) – it was important to stress that the church and the Christian faith were not based on the subjective feelings of various individuals, but on the objectivity of the outward ecclesial life, in which God’s action was specifically made manifest. The church was the work of God. Protestantism was certainly right in pointing to the Bible as the source and foundation of the faith, but it was wrong in making the interpretation of the Bible exclusively a matter for the individual. The Scriptures should be interpreted within tradition, within the holy Tradition of the Church. That was a very different attitude from that which, through Schleiermacher, had come to dominate the Protestant and the Swedish understanding of Christianity at that time. It was not a matter of achieving, in one way or another, any kind of Christian emotions, but of training a person’s will and habitual behaviour. Our duties to God

require habitual response, practice, regularity and perseverance.¹³ This practice of the life of the church and of faith is nothing less than seeking to make people used to be freely and joyfully aware of the presence of God in all aspects of life, around the clock and to adapt their lifestyle and behaviour accordingly.

In their pastoral and theological analysis of England in the 1830s, the Fathers of the Oxford Movement and of Tractarianism worried that the Eucharistic life was at a low ebb.¹⁴ The church had become a church of prayer, but not a sacramental church. The Eucharist was rarely celebrated, the liturgical life was poor. Celebration of the sacrament only took place on the major feast days; not at other times. This they found to be in conflict with the ideal of parish life in the Early Church, with the ecclesiology that they had adopted and found to be genuinely the *esse* of the church. The church had been instituted by God and through her teaching, liturgy and sacraments she offered his salvation to the people. As they read *The Book of Common Prayer*, they found inspiration to the revival they wanted to see. They did not even have to move outside the official orders and ordinances of their own church; they only had to apply them with consequence to their own contemporary circumstances. In the service of worship, God's presence in the world was made manifest. So they appealed to the parish priests and encouraged them to celebrate the Eucharist every Sunday. They should however not change the 10 o'clock Service of Matins, but should celebrate the Eucharist in the early morning, even if only one communicant was present. The emerging revival saw increasing numbers of people attending. It was stressed that to practice Christianity means to be a regular communicant. And the mass should be celebrated in the manner of the undivided church. Every Sunday was Easter Sunday, and the Sunday Mass should be characterised by festivity, light and joy and the liturgy should be functional. Not every Sunday should be the same, but the liturgical year should be observed. In 1827, John Keble (1792-1866) published his book *The Christian Year*, which included hymns and poems suitable for the various liturgical seasons. Edward B. Pusey (1800-1882) was also a Professor at Oxford. In a particular way, he drove the Eucharistic revival in the Church of England. In 1853 he preached a sermon about the real presence, and this caused extensive debate and led to a prohibition for him to preach. That made him delve deeper into this matter and he published a 700 pages thick work in two volumes, entitled *The Real Presence of the Body and Blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Doctrine of the English Church* (1857), in which he expounded the theology of the real presence from the period of the apostles and the Early Church until the Council of Chalcedone in 451.

II.

This is one of the tributary inflows to our contemporary Swedish High Church spirituality. Why and how could this be made use of in Sweden? What was it that was seen and discovered?

The pre-history of the Swedish High Church Movement had begun about the same time as the influence from the German Neo-Lutheranism in Bavaria in the middle of the 19th century. There, Wilhelm Loehe in Neuendettelsau is the major name.¹⁵ The Swedish Bishop of Härnösand, Martin Johansson (1837-1908) compared his influence to that of the Swedish Pietist Revivalist priests, Henric Schartau (1757-1825) and Peter Lorens Sellergren (1768-1843) in Southern Sweden, where they had a seminal impact on popular spirituality in extensive areas. In 1845, Loehe published what he called a *Haus-, Schul- und Kirchenbuch*, (House, School and Church Book) intended to provide a correspondence to the Anglican's *Book of*

Common Prayer for German emigrants to the USA. His important book, *Drei Bücher von der Kirche* (Three Books about the Church, 1845) has been translated into Swedish several times. It was intended to encourage an ecclesiological and liturgical renaissance. From the Early Church onwards, the liturgy of the church has been characterised by “holy multiplicity and holy simplicity”. The Eucharist must be at the centre of Lutheran church-focused Christianity, because that is where the divine and the human realities interact. The liturgy has an organic link to the Early Church and it is the natural expression of the Christian congregation. Theodor Kliefoth (1810-1895) at Mecklenburg stood in the same tradition, and in the 1840s he published a number of proposals for orders of services, in which he subscribed to the Neo-Lutheran programme. The Eucharist must become a firm part of the main service and the liturgical year must shape the rhythm of the worship. Every service should express the encounter between the divine and the human; it should be *sacramentum* and *sacrificium*.

The Swedish Bishop of Strängnäs, U.L. Ullman (1837-1930), was inspired by these predecessors. As the great scholar of liturgy at the turn of the last century, he was the one who more than many others channelled the thinking of German Neo-Lutheranism into the Church of Sweden and he made sure that these views had their impact on the orders of services that were adopted at that time. As the Church of Sweden broke away from the legally marked worship of the unified national church – the legal requirement to receive Holy Communion was for example abolished – it returned at the same time to a more clearly marked and historically motivated liturgy of the mass, liberated from the theology of the Enlightenment period.¹⁶

During the 19th century, Swedish worship was marked by the rationalism of the Enlightenment. This was expressed in the 1811 Service Book (*kyrkohandboken*), which in an insensitive and radical manner had broken away from the older liturgical tradition. The main service in the parish was primarily a service of preaching, surrounded by short altar devotions. The Eucharist was at a low point and in many parishes there were towards the end of the century hardly any communicants at all. The reason was the official legal regulations attached to the celebration and reception of Holy Communion coupled with the Neo-Evangelistic criticism of the church. Ecclesiological awareness was very low. For many people, it was the official legal regulation of the church that was at the forefront rather than its divine origin and function as the place for God’s presence and intervention.

It was in these circumstances that some enterprising Swedish priests in the early 20th century began to travel abroad and especially to England in order to meet the church.

Already in 1908 - 1909 a young priest from Dalecarlia was able, thanks to a university grant procured by Nathan Söderblom, to undertake the trip of his life, a trip that lasted for a whole year. Among other places, Samuel Gabrielsson (1881-1968) visited Canterbury and in the Cathedral he gained knowledge of Anglican worship from the inside. He presented his report in the very interesting book entitled *Kyrkostudier från långfärd och bokvärd* (Church Studies from a Long Trip and from the World of Books, 1910). His travels coincided with the Lambeth Conference, and thus he gained a very wide knowledge of the Anglican tradition. From the High Church priest, Cecil Robert Tyrwhitt (1862-1924) at St Peter’s Church, he received a letter of introduction to the Fr Superior of the Cowley Fathers at Oxford, and from the like-minded Edmund Boggis (1863-1951) at St Mary Magdalene, Barnstaple, North Devon, a letter to Bishop John Wordsworth (1843-1911) of Salisbury, who was very knowledgeable of the Church of Sweden.¹⁷ In Oxford he visited the church of St Barnabas, which seems to have been the most High Church one with – as he puts it in his autobiographical memoirs, “incense, turnings, bows and genuflections endlessly performed” and an “incredible overloading” for his “Swedish-Hellenic sense of the right proportions and the austere style.”¹⁸ And from a High

Church critic he learnt that “the High Church Movement has completely transformed this part of town, which previously had a notoriously bad reputation.”¹⁹ Thanks to the influence of the later Bishop of Oxford, Charles Gore (1853-1932) – I will return to him in a moment - there was a strong social commitment among English High Church priests. The Cowley Fathers, the Society of St John the Evangelist, was a major experience. That community had been founded in 1865 by Newman’s and Pusey’s disciple, Richard Meux Benson (1824-1915), and it was the first religious community in the Church of England after the Reformation. Gabrielsson met him and greeted him as if he was a saint, worthy of great reverence, although he was both blind and deaf at the age of 85.²⁰ Here he learnt about the foundation stones of Tractarianism: the Apostles Creed and the Nicene Creed are the foundation of the Church, together with the succession and the sacraments – for Swedish theologians, the Nicene Creed was at that time only a document belonging to the history of doctrine; liturgically it was not yet used at all – and as a side-line, he had the opportunity to participate in a retreat for priests, which however he did not find very appealing. The Divine Office was a new form of prayer for him, so unfamiliar that in his book, the names of the various offices had to be written in English and not, as later became normal practice in Sweden, in Latin. The various pieces of priestly vestments: alb, amice, stole etc. also had to be explained.

A decade later – in the spring of 1920 – Albert Lysander (1875-1956) from Malmö was travelling in England. He too, visited the Cowley Fathers, and he was considerably more receptive and adapted to the rhythm of the offices and the retreat of four days of silence, although he found this spiritual life too intense for a Swedish priest. “My spiritual digestion could not keep up,” he says.²¹ And neither Gabrielsson nor Lysander was permitted to receive communion with the Cowley Fathers, which caused them great pain – they were of course Lutherans, and intercommunion with the Church of England had not yet been established. That only came about in 1922.²² Lysander also visited the Community of the Resurrection at Mirfield, West Yorkshire, founded already in 1892 by Charles Gore, the author of the theological classic *Lux Mundi* (1889) and of the book on sacramental theology, *The Body of Christ* (1901), which would later be decisive for Gunnar Rosendal’s theology of the Eucharist. Here, as with the Cowley Fathers, he experienced the beauty of the liturgy, with candles and processions and - as he says in his description of it all – “I hardly dare to reveal it,” even incense. At Mirfield he met Paul Bull (1864-1942) and read his book *The Sacramental Principle* (1915). Paul Bull was the leading representative of what in English is usually called sacramental socialism. In his periodical *The Church Socialist*, Bull fought for the cause of the labourers in industrialised England. The English Catholic Movement had a strong social passion from the very beginning, which never took root in the same way in Sweden.

The beauty of the worship appealed to Lysander. In St Paul’s Cathedral he witnessed processions and liturgically functioning church music, sung both by the choir and the congregation. People all around him sung in a manner that made it obvious that they had “a spiritual understanding of the content.”²³ Evensong in High Church All Saints, Margaret Street he found liturgically overloaded, as it was not a Eucharist: “that ‘special something’ was missing on the altar.”²⁴ “Whoever devoutly and humbly believes that God is sacramentally and corporately present on the altar in the monstrance – he may be forgiven if he sings and plays in the high choir before the corporeal face of the Lord. [- - -] Liturgy should serve, not only impress.”²⁵

The visit to England in 1919 by the later Archbishop Yngve Brilioth (1891-1959), on the commission of Nathan Söderblom, for the purpose of preparing for the agreement about intercommunion between our two churches, is worth an exposition of its own. Through Harold Fendick at Pusey House, he received an introduction to Anglo-Catholicism and he decided to

write a scholarly investigation about the Oxford Movement, entitled, *Nyanglikansk renässans* (Neo-Anglican Renaissance, 1921-23), and its translation with a preface by the Lord Bishop of Gloucester, titled *The Anglican Revival. Studies in the Oxford Movement* (1925).²⁶ Brilioth's work and his fundamental book would, in the broad perspective, determine the knowledge and the understanding of the Oxford Movement in Sweden. It is, during four successive visits to Oxford, written in Pusey House 1919-22.

This is what Swedish priests experienced in England in the early 20th century. They met a reformed church of a different kind compared to the Lutheran church that they were used to at home. Samuel Gabrielsson gave one of the earliest presentations to the wider Swedish readership of the 20th century in his book *Kyrkostudier från långfärd och bokvärld* (Church Studies from a Long Trip and from a World of Books, 1910). The status of the Church of Sweden was reminiscent of that of the Church of England, and he therefore wanted to introduce the Oxford Movement – although as “a movement with both good and bad” - as a way ahead for the future. “Maybe something like the Oxford Movement is needed in Sweden in order to lift our church out of its status of humiliation,” he wrote and he pointed out the parallels.

The Swedish priests who travelled to England had met the Anglican religious life at Cowley and at Mirfield. They had experienced retreats and liturgical worship. They had discovered how this kind of binding commitment could strengthen, not only the life of faith, but the life of the church as well. The time was not yet ripe for any thoughts of religious life in the Church of Sweden. However, during the first years of the 1910s, Gabrielsson, together with a few younger priests, took the initiative to a brotherhood which was not intended to be a monastic community, but which was also open to married Lutheran priests. They wanted to work for “a higher appreciation of the church with its costly inheritance from former generations and its extraordinary mission in our own day. A High Church view with respect for the thousand-years old tradition of the church is very compatible with a clearly Evangelical view of the faith.”²⁷ This led to the constitution of the Brotherhood of St Sigfrid (abbreviated SSB) in 1915. The name was chosen in commemoration of a medieval English Bishop who was a missionary in Sweden. The intention was to celebrate liturgical services which, among other things, included Gregorian chant, and once again to begin to use the chasuble at mass – the purposes were modest - and to publish popular writings on ecclesiastical subjects. Thus their views would be extensively spread around. Pictures show priests of the Brotherhood of St Sigfrid with thuribles in their hands. This association was eventually assimilated with the *Societas Sanctæ Birgittæ*, with the same short form, SSB. The choice of the form of a Brotherhood for priests has, in my view, two explanations. Priests were thereby nurtured in a committed way of life which they could hand on to their parishes and – and this is a consequence of the former – they took the view that the renewal of the parishes will come about through the priests. They did not want to form High Church conventicles. The renewal of the church takes place *in* the parish and *through* the parish. It is because of this basic ecclesiological attitude that the Swedish High Church Movement did not have the same popular anchorage, which its correspondence in England did. However, through the priests, the liturgical renewal did eventually begin in a broad sense, that renewal, which has born such rich fruit in the current Service Books and particularly in the general practice of liturgical celebrations.

One of the first members of SSB was the priest Axel Lutteman (1880-1920), who in 1908 was given a government grant of SEK600 (about £40.00) for travel and accommodation in England for six weeks. He was significantly inspired by the Oxford Movement, which he met, through the mediation of the then Bishop of Stepney, at Pusey House in Oxford and at the services of the Pan-Anglican Congress in St Paul's Cathedral in London. The liturgical procession, with

the cross, banners and with bishops in full vestments, boys' choirs, a string orchestra and trumpet blasts became an anticipation of the worship in heaven.²⁸

As protection against the emerging liberal theology, the *Sodalitium Confessionis Apostolicae* (SCA) was formed in 1919. The initiator was Lysander together with a few priests from Scania, including Otto Ehde (1888-1974), later the provost of Bjäre. He had been nurtured in the Swedish Young Church Movement (*ungkyrkligheten*) and had spent the year before his ordination to the priesthood in 1912 as the Youth Secretary in the Swedish Church in London. In England he met the Oxford Movement. Its theology and liturgy inspired him and he wanted to apply that in his life as a priest. He is one of the earliest priests in the Church of Sweden to begin to use the alb and stole in the liturgy, but when he wanted to light candles on the altar – as he had learnt to do in England - he had to pay for them himself, as this was considered a waste of church funds.²⁹ A newly ordained priest from the Diocese of Gothenburg, who received his first missive to London, succeeded Ehde in his post. His name was Simon Lüders (1885-1969), and he later became the Fr. Confessor of *Societas Sanctæ Birgittæ*. However, the influences from the Anglican Oxford Movement are probably clearer in the SCA than in the SSB. With its bridgetine spirituality, SSB had an articulated source of inspiration in the Swedish Middle Ages. For both these groups – and I do not want to compare in any deeper sense – although more clearly expressed in the SCA, it is the apostolic faith that they want to protect, and consequently also the liturgy. The intention was to strengthen priestly identity and to encourage a renewal of the church on the apostolic foundation. It is the Oxford Movement's stress on *antiquity* that is highlighted: the faith of the undivided Early Church and, expressed or implied, the old phrase *quod ubique, quod semper, quod ab omnibus creditum est*. Bible study, sacramental confession, communion. The renewal of the church takes place through the parishes, and the renewal of the parishes comes through the priests. Here too, the inspiration from Anglican religious life is obvious: the members commit themselves “as far as possible” to receive communion once a month, daily, at a specific hour, to say the office of none, even if only by reciting the Lord's Prayer. These Third Order Societies presupposed a committed ways of life among their members, which would prove essential for the whole church at times of particular pressures.

The one who, given the contemporary circumstances, most programmatically assimilated his experiences from a visit to the spiritual environment of the English Oxford Movement was the Stockholm priest Elis Schröderheim (1863-1937). He was there in the summer of 1908 and the spring of 1909, and he wrote two works on his experiences. One of them was entitled – and the subtitle is important - *Engelskt kyrkoliv och svenskt. Iakttagelser, jämförelser och önsknningar* (English Church Life and Swedish. Observations, Comparisons and Wishes, 1910). “The stronger the spiritual life is lived within a church, the more faithfully one cares about that which belongs to the outward appearance of that life,” he says with reference to the worship he has met.³⁰ He pointed to the care of the churches and the way they were beautified, the reverence for the sanctity of the church building, the active participation of the congregation in the liturgy, genuflections and the sign of the cross. He appreciated not only the liturgical vestments of the priests, but also choir robes. He discovered the value of letting churchwardens take the collections, pew by pew while the congregation sang a hymn - something which, at that time, was unknown in Sweden.³¹ And that children were baptised in the parish church and that plenty of water was used at the aspersion, not only the “lightly bedewed” hand of the priest.³² In “High Churches” he had met not only celebrations of the Eucharist every Sunday, but also weekday Masses. He found the freestanding service of corporate confession (*skriftermålet*), which was used in Sweden, un-liturgical. That could be replaced by a formal confession of sins. As he observed the practice of the priests giving themselves communion, he found this

usage, which was forbidden in Sweden, to be a pastoral necessity in order to “increase the reverence and the love of the Eucharist among the people”. “All legalistic attitudes must be done away with!” The priests must receive the sacraments themselves.³³ “The more frequently Holy Communion is celebrated, the more communicants there will be,” he says at a time when the opportunities to receive communion in rural parishes in Sweden numbered maybe two a year. When Schröderheim visited All Saints, Margaret Street there was so much incense that he could hardly see the altar – that, he thought, was overdoing it, but incense was a good biblical symbol, although it might be used in moderate doses.³⁴ Schröderheim’s little pamphlet about church life is one of the earliest High Church programmes, clearly influenced by the ideals of the English Oxford Movement. These ideals he also expounded in his little tract, aimed as mass distribution, entitled *Vår kyrkogång* (When we Go to Church, 1919), in which he explicitly speaks of the sanctity of the church building, its accessibility even on weekdays, about the altar as the holy place where the consecration takes place and thus he explains why it is decorated with “flowers, candles (not electric lights!) and liturgical colours.” He gives an extensive motivation for the place of the sign of the cross in the service. That was justified, since this was not ever used in the Church of Sweden in his days. “In our religion, we need that which speaks to ears, eyes [and] to our immediate senses, not least to our sense of beauty and to our spiritual being.”³⁵ Schröderheim wanted to show how his discoveries in English Catholicism did not have to be imported since they already had their home also in the Church of Sweden.

III.

We usually say that Dr Gunnar Rosendal (1897-1988), Rector in Osby, province of Scania, is the great pioneer of the High Church Movement in Sweden.³⁶ There were numerous High Church initiatives before him – it is important to point that out, and that is what I have been seeking to do. Even so, he is a pioneer.

I have pointed out above some of the typical features of the spirituality and the renewal programme of the Oxford Movement: *antiquity*, The Early Church as the golden age of the church, the call to a holy life with binding promises in a religious community, the conviction that the institutional form is central for the church as the body of Christ. Aesthetics and ritual, as part of the language of symbolism, was not dangerous in a church that builds its existence on the incarnation.

This is what Rosendal picked up when he speaks about church renewal. Just like the Oxford Fathers, he dug where he was standing. They turned to *The Book of Common Prayer*. That was what they began to apply. Rosendal turned to the right teachers of the Lutheran tradition and found out what they had said, among them the Swedish reformers, Archbishop Laurentius Petri (1499-1572) and his brother Olaus Petri (1493-1552), the German devotional authors who were widely read in Sweden, Johann Arndt (1555-1621), Christian Scriver (1629-1693) and to the Swedish Pietist Church Revival, whose major names, still to this day, are the Chaplain to the King, Anders Nohrborg (1725-1767) and the Provost Henric Schartau and others.³⁷ Rosendal read those as the basis for his programme, and he found there the necessary legitimacy for the Swedish Church. On their inheritance he could build further. And just as the Oxford Fathers, he wanted to see his church in a perspective wider than that of the particular denomination. Catholicity became central. It was not a matter of building up the national church or the Swedish church, but of building up the Church of Christ. The foundation of the liturgy was neither their own, nor even Martin Luther’s, world of ideas. Rather, Mass should be celebrated as it had

been *ubique, semper et ab omnibus*. Its history goes far beyond the Reformation. Here the German Neo-Lutherans and the confessional programme put forward by Loehe/Ullman had paved the way. There was continuity in the life of the church, right back to the Lord Jesus Christ. That could not be cut off. It is a sacramental and Eucharistic renewal of what has already been given that enables the Church of Sweden to live on into the future.

When the Anglican Oxford Movement inspired Swedish priests, they made discoveries that filled them with enthusiasm. But they did not return home to make the Church of Sweden Anglican. From the Oxford Movement they had learnt that the Church of England has a history of treasures that were lying there, waiting to be dug up. They had read their own books, but in England they discovered not only the Church of England, but the Holy Catholic Church, in Swedish with a capital C. And they saw all its riches displayed before them.

That Church existed also in Sweden, and in that Church, they were priests. It was a matter of discovering and highlighting these treasures and to make them visible to the people. The treasures of the Church are the same, both here and there. They did not have to dig up and replant anything, but they could dig where they stood and there they could find the same roots. This holy church became visible through its liturgy, in the form in which it met God the Holy Trinity. It was the Catholicity that was highlighted, the Catholicity professed in the Creeds.

It was these thoughts and ideas that Gunnar Rosendal put into practice at Osby, and he turned them into an extensive and thought-through programme for church renewal. The basic principles of the Oxford Movement are applicable also to Swedish church life and they are possible to realise in a church marked by the inheritance from Luther and Melancthon, and from the German Neo-Lutheranism, which during the 19th century had become general theological property. He highlighted the original constitutional documents of the Church of Sweden itself, the Church Order and the confessional documents and its own right teachers, and he showed how they all stood firmly in the Catholic tradition. He considered Eucharistic renewal to be at the very centre and he acted accordingly. He understood that the programme of renewal had to be theologically well founded. The most obvious example of this is his great book about the Eucharist. Already its extensive title, *Vår Herres Jesu Kristi Lekamens och Blods sakrament* (The Sacrament of the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ: 1938) betrays his inspiration from Pusey's corresponding books, *The Real Presence of the Body and Blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Doctrine of the English Church* and from Charles Gore's *The Body of Christ*.

I will not continue the history any further. I only want to point out that these links between the English and Swedish High Church Movements have continued in modern time. The visit to Sweden in 1950 by Dom Gregory Dix (1901-1952) of the Benedictine Abbey of Nasdom, near Burnham in Buckinghamshire, the author of *The Shape of the liturgy* (1945) was, for example of very great importance. Both students and priests learnt a liturgical attitude and approach from him.

And the so-called Whitby Conferences, Swedish-English theological conferences were arranged from the final years of the 1940s for a couple of decades. Twenty theologians from each church met every other year, every other time in Whitby, and every other time in Sweden, at the Conference Centre of Stjärnholm.

Fr James Fenwick (b. 1918), known as Fr. Hugh, the Novice master of the Franciscan Friary of St Mary at the Cross, Glasshampton in Worcestershire, spent the years 1959-1960 in Sweden. He inspired the renaissance of religious life for men in the Church of Sweden and, as a consequence, the community, which is today the Benedictine Monastery of the Holy Cross, at Östanbäck.³⁸ Through contacts with The Order of the Holy Paraclete and Mother Margaret

Cope (1886-1961) at St Hilda's Priory, Whitby, Yorkshire, religious life for women had been established in Sweden already in 1954.³⁹ In the many Third Order Societies in the Church of Sweden – there are more than those I have mentioned⁴⁰ - Catholic Christian faith and order, as once inspired by the Oxford Movement has been preserved, through the commitment of the members of these Societies, even in a politically pressurised minority situation.

IV.

The Oxford Movement could be received in Sweden because it had shown the priests who travelled to England the *common* treasure of the Church. They discovered the catholicity of the church in a particular way and they wanted to apply that in practice at home, where Neo-Lutheranism and the Lund High Church Movement had prepared the way, and where a liturgical renewal of worship and of the use of vestments had already begun. They could reach beyond their own 16th century history to *quod ubique, quod semper, quod ab omnibus creditum est*. That also applied in the Church of Sweden. The Church of Sweden was not a national but a catholic church. That was the nature of the church, its *esse*, and that had been affirmed by its Lutheran confession. Its form of expression in preaching and liturgy must therefore also be catholic. The early travellers to England gained a fundamentally ecumenical attitude in the best sense of the word, which they brought with them home. The Oxford Movement has thus – as I have shown by these few examples – contributed to the life of the Church of Sweden and to its Service Book tradition. It has not least enabled the catholic priestly spirituality to continue to work in well-prepared formats, and to a high degree to hand on the inheritance the Catholic tradition of faith and worship.

¹ O. Nordstrandh, *Den äldre svenska pietismens litteratur*. [Zusammenfassung: Die Literatur des älteren schwedischen Pietismus.] (Samlingar och studier till Svenska Kyrkans Historia 26.) Stockholm 1951. However, compare B. Hellekant, *Engelsk uppbyggelsehistorik i svensk översättning intill 1700-talets mitt*. [English summary: English Religious Literature in Swedish Translation up to the Middle of the 18th century.] (Samlingar och studier till Svenska Kyrkans Historia 10.) Stockholm 1944.

² C.V. Jacobowsky, »Svenska studenter i Oxford ca 1620-1740» *Personhistorisk tidskrift* 28 (1927), pp. 105-133. *Alumni Oxonienses. The members of the University of Oxford, 1500-1714* [...], ed. by J. Foster, Oxford 1891-92. Cf J. Parkes, *Travel in England in the Seventeenth Century*. Oxford 1925. S. Rydberg, *Svenska studieresor till England under frihetstiden*. [English summary: Swedish Study tours to England 1718-1772.] (Lychnos-bibliotek 12.) Uppsala 1951.

³ I. Bratt, *Engelskundervisningens villkor i Sverige 1850-1905* [English summary: The Teaching and Learning of English in Sweden 1850-1905] (Årsböcker i svensk undervisningshistoria 156.) Stockholm 1984.

⁴ H. Lundström, "Ett förslag från 1700-talets början om närmare förbindelser mellan Englands och Sveriges kyrkor". *Kyrkohistorisk årskrift* 13 (1912), p. 139-150. The purpose is printed in i S.P. Bexell, *Bidrag till Svenska kyrkans historia ur Prästeståndets arkiv* 3. Stockholm 1835, p. 88-90.

⁵ O. Bexell, "Serenius och Ullman – två biskopar med internationell inspiration." *Öppna gränser. Ekumeniskt och europeiskt i Strängnäs stift genom tiderna. En samling uppsatser* ed. by S. Rubenson. (Skrifter utg. av Samfundet Pro Fide et Christianismo 14.) Stockholm 1991.

⁶ S.-Å. Selander, "Den nya sången." *Den anglosachsiska väckelsesångens genombrott i Sverige*. [English summary: »The New Hymn.» The Break-Through of the Anglo-Saxon Revivalist Hymns in Sweden.] (Bibliotheca Theologiae Practicae 28.) Lund 1973.

⁷ T. Ribbner, *De svenska traktatsällskapen 1808-1856. Verksamhet och litteratur*. [English summary: The Swedish

Tract Societies 1808-1856.] (Bibliotheca Theologiae Practicae 3.) Lund 1957.

⁸ W. Palmer, *A Treatise on the Church of Christ*. I. London 1842, p. 34f. C.H.Lyttkens, *The Growth of Swedish-Anglican Intercommunion between 1833 and 1922*. (Bibliotheca Theologiae Practicae 24). Lund 1970, p. 24.

⁹ Y. Brilioth, *The Anglican Revival. Studies in the Oxford Movement*, London 1925, p. 195

¹⁰ Brilioth 1925, pp. 218-219.

¹¹ Newmans tract *Prophetical Office*, p. 277, (reprinted in *Via Media*, 1901, 1, p. 233). Brilioth 1925, p. 198.

¹² Arthur Philip Perceval, *The Churchman's Manual*, 1833. Lyttkens p. 22.

¹³ Brilioth 1925, p. 228-230

¹⁴ Basic about is A. Härdelin, *The Tractarian Understanding of the Eucharist*. (Studia historico-ecclesiastica Upsaliensia 8.) Uppsala 1965.

¹⁵ For information about him, see the most recent work by Erika Geiger, *Wilhelm Löhe (1808-1872) – Leben, Werk, Wirkung*. (Testes et testimonia veritatis 3.) Neuendettelsau 2003.

¹⁶ O. Bexell, *Liturgins teologi hos U.L. Ullman*. (Bibliotheca Theologiae Practicae 42.) [Zusammenfassung: Theologie der Liturgie bei U.L. Ullman.] Stockholm 1987.

¹⁷ His extensive "Hale Lectures" 1910 on *The National Church of Sweden* was printed in 1911 and translated into Swedish in the following year: *Den svenska kyrkan. Föreläsningar*, Stockholm 1912.

¹⁸ Sam Gabrielsson, *Från Falun till Canterbury. Läroår och lärofäder*. Uppsala 1955, p. 333.

¹⁹ a.a., 334.

²⁰ Op. cit., 352.

²¹ A. Lysander, *Kyrkliga resebilder*, Lund 1920, p. 81

²² Lyttkens 1970.

²³ Lysander, op. cit., p. 132

²⁴ Op. cit., p. 135

²⁵ Op. cit., p. 136

²⁶ C.F. Hallencreutz, *Yngve Brilioth. Svensk medeltidsforskare och internationell kyrkoledare*. [English summary: Yngve Brilioth. Swedish Scholar in Medieval History and International Church Leader.] (Studia Missionalia Svecana 85.) Uppsala 2002, pp. 56-59.

²⁷ Quoted in, B.I. Kilström, *Högkyrkligheten i Sverige och Finland under 1900-talet*. Delsbo 1990, p. 33

²⁸ E. Lutteman, *Axel Lutteman – korsfarare och präst*, Stockholm 1933, p. 1:135

²⁹ E. Liedman, *Som präst och människa. Minnesteckningar till prästmötet i Lund 1975*. Lund 1975, p. 101.

³⁰ E. Schröderheim, *Engelskt kyrkoliv och svenskt. Iakttagelser, jämförelser och önskningar* (Svenska kyrkoförbundets skriftserie 1.) Stockholm 1910, p. 6

³¹ Op. cit. p.12.

³² Op. cit. p. 18f.

³³ Op. cit. p. 27.

³⁴ Op. cit. p. 73f.

³⁵ E. Schröderheim, *Vår kyrkogång*, Stockholm 1919, pp. 9-12

³⁶ For information about him, see the more than 500 pages extensive collection, *Gunnar Rosendal – en banbrytare för kyrklig förnyelse* (English Summaries: Gunnar Rosendal. A Pioneer for Church Renewal in Church of Sweden), ed. by V.A. Grönqvist, Artos, Skellefteå, 2003.

³⁷ He published a series of monographic investigations about them and others in a series of books entitled *Rätte lärare* (1931-36)

³⁸ P. Dunstan, *This Poor Sort. A History of the European Province of the Society of St Frances*. London 1997, on the contacts with Sweden, pp. 300-304

³⁹ On the emergence of contemporary religious life in the Church of Sweden, see O. Bexell, »Religious Orders and Congregations. Church of Sweden.» *The Encyclopedia of Christianity*. Volume 4, Eerdmans Publishing Co, Grand Rapids etc. 2005, p. 632-634

⁴⁰ See Kilström 1990.

Translation: Sr Gerd Swensson, Te Deum

Henrik Lindeskog:

Sacramental Structures or Individual Idiosyncrasies in Parish Ministry

What I am about to say, I say as a priest in a rural parish. It will be my reflections on the basis of what others have written and on my own practical work in this parish. I hope that these thoughts may have some relevance even for others, who work in different circumstances.

The Lord is My Shepherd – Be a Shepherd for My Flock

Everyday church life, the parish and the priest is in every place part of a divine reality that is far greater than anyone can really grasp. This is, as stated in *Consecrated Women?* the major missionary motif: *The Son sends out his disciples into the world to continue His work, in the same way as the Father has sent the Son. We claim that the priest, the bishop in particular, has been set apart to carry out the work of Christ, as the Father has sent the Son (2.3.1).* So what the daily life of the church is fundamentally all about is the unfathomable love of the Creator for human beings and his will to reconcile and assemble his people.

In this, God is specific. I think it was through the collection of essays entitled “The Root of the Vine” and through the essay by Harald Riesenfeld, entitled “The Ministry in the New Testament”, that my eyes were really opened to the clear line that runs from Jesus to the apostles and onwards to *episkopoi* or *presbyteroi* in the New Testament. It struck me particularly that the shepherd motif and the charge of the shepherd, among many other motifs, are described in the same way for all the three aspects. God gives a very personal shepherd’s care. It is not spiritual in the sense that the Church and her ministers only send God’s care onwards, as if it was some kind of baton in a runner’s game. No, God lays claim to people so that they may be shepherds in every aspect of their lives, just as Jesus is.

As I put on the alb, the stole and the chasuble in the sacristy on a Sunday morning, it is more than decorations. These clothes testify to a reality. Christ lays claim to me. I stand in the sacramental reality that God in his great love and care has created. And *I give what I cannot give by myself; I am sent to be a messenger of what the other has entrusted on to me*, as the present Pope has written in one of his books (Ratzinger, *Kallad till gemenskap (Called to Communion, p. 91)*). But not as an officer or an administrator, who can keep his personality and his private life apart from his charge, but precisely as a shepherd, just as Jesus was by his entire being.

Images from Business Life or from the Bible

Riesenfeld has also written about the theology of *kefale*, about Christ as the head and about how the bishop/priest represents Christ at the Eucharist. The theme of priesthood and sacrifice as an image of ministry is only mentioned in passing in Riesenfeld’s essay but is expounded much more fully in *Consecrated Women?* Maybe this is a motif that many of us who stand in the Swedish Church-tradition need to work on. Reading *Consecrated Women?* was a good Bible study. The influences that come from Low-Church circles concerning the leadership of the Church and of its parishes here find much-needed counterweight. I quote Fr Geoffrey

Kirk: “*Evangelicals, of course, have often majored on issues of authority in the church: what they delight to call ‘leadership’. Catholics have been wary of such language as dangerously unscriptural...*” (*Consecrated Women?* p. 170). Terminology and vocabulary can become so much taken for granted that we stop reflecting on whether or not it is right to use them. That is only a simple thought arising from one of the many ‘Aha’-experiences that this book affords.

But this Treasure I keep in Earthenware Vessels ... The Priest and Prayer

The Lima document says: *In order to fulfil its mission, the Church needs people who publicly and without disruption are responsible for representing its fundamental dependence on Jesus Christ...* The service of the ordained ministry exists in order that the Church may be able to exercise its mission. The priest should, publicly and unceasingly point to the church’s total dependence on Jesus Christ. The priest is just as empty of his own opportunities as the disciples were at the miracle of the feeding of the five thousand: *Where would we find food for all these?* The task of administering the Word and the sacraments brings, or ought to bring, a prayerful lifestyle. Not only in order to find help to structure the sermon and to concentrate during the service, or to find the strength to deal with the confirmation candidates, but because he needs to commit himself, expose himself to the Lord and to make himself available. He too needs to live as he teaches and to practice submitting himself in obedience to God.

Here the Divine Office is a help. The office, focusing on the words of the Bible, can be salvation for anyone who only too frequently gets stuck in the problems and in the temporary needs that loom so large. The office helps us to lift our eyes from all the tasks that otherwise call for our attention. Saying the psalms and other biblical prayers forces me to pray in ways, which I would never otherwise dare to employ when I speak to God. I am brought into the major context of God’s creation and God’s people throughout the ages.

That is not always easy. And sometimes it is not without resistance. But is it not actually an aspect of the sacramental structure of the Church that at least the priest should pray in that way, together with Jesus and the apostles? The priest prays the Divine Office with words entrusted by God.

When I was a student, I attended a gathering with the bishop of the diocese. A student asked about the life of prayer – what should it look like? The guidance provided for that student was that there must not be anything legalistic about prayer. The bishop somehow seemed to assume that this business about prayer was a burden that would give you a bad conscience, particularly for theologians. Maybe that is the case. But something told me that it is not the right end to start talking the law when you speak about prayer. The life of prayer is not about seeking to merit the grace of God, but about living in that grace. If the order of prayer in my life becomes a matter of legalistic actions in order to please God, I probably do not need to change that order, but I do need to open my eyes to discover God’s grace. The life of prayer does need some sort of order; otherwise other people will order it for us so that we will never find time for our conversation with God. Or should we say that another one begins to order things for us, i.e. the great Divider, *diabolos*. This mix up between order, law and grace seems to be a central problem in Swedish church life.

In the parish where I live and work, there is, if I am not mistaken, people who do not have the

strength to pray because they are tired or sick. There are those who have strong doubts about prayer. There are those who never even think about prayer. A confirmation candidate told me that, when he arrived home, his father asked him with irony in his voice, if he had had some fun in church. He answered, yes; it had been great fun, only to tease his father back. That boy was being taunted by his father because he attended confirmation classes. Who prays for that boy? And who prays for his father?

If it should occur to anyone to pray for them, that surely ought to be the priest. To lead the prayers of the parish is one of the tasks of the priest. When the parish prays, it joins in a prayer that is already being prayed. To pray is an invisible task, and therefore it can easily be neglected. Nobody will ring up the parish office and complain if prayer is forgotten. Nor does prayer give an increased salary in our system of individual salaries. But the ‘temperature’ of the parish will most certainly sink when that sign of loving care, intercession for those who cannot or will not pray or who not even think of prayer, ceases.

Stewards of God’s Mysteries – the Priest and the Word

There is a given prayer, the Divine Office. That is a form of prayer to enter into, a form that carries you. Not only because many other people are praying in the same way, but because it is the Spirit of God who gives the words. This also applies to the words that we should speak. I believe that we must continuously recover our trust in the Spirit of God in the Word and in the sacraments. Maybe ‘recover’ is the wrong word. We must give up our futile attempts to build support-constructions for the Word and let it speak by itself, because it will be obvious if the priest trusts more in his own charisma and in his own advantages than in the Spirit of God in the Word and in the sacraments. Sr Inger of the Sisters of St Francis, a Religious Community in the vicinity of Gothenburg, once reminded me of that: “Think of the words you are allowed to use!”

Think of the liturgy of the mass, where every word hands on something of God’s way of salvation for humanity! Let the words speak, by believing in them and in their power yourself.

A priest speaks urgent words; words that are self-supporting. Of course he should use his entire personality to do that as well as he possibly can. But only the Word should be allowed to shine by its own clarity and strength, and the priest himself should decrease. At a time that is frequently said to be so tired of words, the priest is called to be the person who believes in the intrinsic power of the Word itself.

There is a structure for both the parish and the priest to enter into and to live in: the ministry, the Word, the sacraments and the prayer. Christ is present in his church and his loving care becomes obvious through this sacramental structure. And this structure permeates the church, right out into the smallest rural parish. Christ represented, Christ present in every place where there is people who confess his name and where they gather around the Word and the sacraments.

Individualism Draws Us Out into the Periphery

This structure is like an undercurrent and a creative power in the midst of society and of the church. When I think of my own church and the individualism that prevails, two apparently opposite words occur in my thoughts: Collective individualism. We live in a very individualistic church, which sometimes becomes a mirror reflecting society. That individualism is often collective. It is embraced by many people. Some values are accepted, others are not. My own church boasts of being open-minded, but that only means that her own preferences and dogma are hidden. She wants to break free from what she perceives as dogmatic, but she is not aware

of deeply and closely she is governed by a hidden agenda.

We are priests in a church that takes liberties which does not fall within her mandate: We have been given a book of prayers and we will shortly be given a service book that tones down the biblical denotations for God and that make room for a gender-less language. This coming autumn we will be given a ritual for the public blessing of homosexual couples. A motion submitted to the most recent Church of Sweden General Synod proposed that baptism should no longer be a pre-condition for participation in the Eucharist. That was not accepted, so there is some hope. I do not need to give any further examples, it only leads to depression.

How is it possible to live and work towards a sacramental structure in a church that is individualistic? How can one be a priest in a church that has cut its anchors and turned away from that which has always and in every place been taught? What happens when there is always uncertainty about what comes from the diocese and from the national church: the hymnal, the service book, the book of prayers, advice from the bishops, courses for parish workers, youth camps? What happens when the starting point is scepticism?

The parish instructions are often good, the regulations in the Church of Sweden Church Order concerning the main task of the parish is good, but a new content is often poured substituted and fitted into these good frames. The high mass is still the dominant form of worship in the Church of Sweden, considering the number of attendants in a year. Vestments, processions, lay participation make an impression, but what about reflection on Christ and his church? What is meant by what is being presented? Is faith and action united in one and the same reality?

In the preparatory material behind the proposal for a new Church of Sweden Service Book, which was rejected a couple of year ago (defended as having been produced in haste, and thus it is all the more revealing), I read as follows: *“With regard to the ongoing change of the language which includes relationships of power between women and men, there are at the same time built in resistance, which means that it is impossible to assume that everyone find themselves at exactly the same stage. A revised text in the Service Book must therefore be considered as an impulse and a driving force towards change.”*

That, I think, is the most difficult aspect of this situation, namely that this change happens so gradually and slowly. A bit here and a bit there. It is small, small adjustments that are made, and we say: OK this time. You feel that something is not right, but it is difficult to point out exactly what it is. There are those who want to make changes, and they drive their agenda quite powerfully, but by taking small steps at a time.

In Consecrated Women? it says: *The God of revelation, the God of human experience, claims sexual language about himself, and that sexual language is overwhelmingly male. To seek to evacuate such language of any meaning is to turn the God of the Bible, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob into a pale shadow of himself, and to substitute the I AM the ‘Supreme Being’ ... an idea rather than a person. (3.4.2)*

That is exactly what is happening in my own church and in its theology of ministry, and also in its liturgical texts and its preaching. And when we are driven out from what has been held in common, from what has been the teaching and the order of the Church and away from the God of the Bible, parishes and priests are driven to individualism. Only what is subjective becomes

true. And that is easily received by the broad populace. We find ourselves in a hopelessly weak position, at least if we only look to our own human opportunities.

Inwards, Towards the Centre Again

What is my task in this context? How can I move inwards, towards the centre, at time marked by fragmentation? How can I be a shepherd for the parish, which, like myself, is deeply involved in the society in which it lives? Is there a risk of becoming less and less clear-sighted when you say, “OK, this time”?

It is useful to return to the second chapter of the Book of the Acts of the Apostles and to read about the church that faithfully participated in the teaching of the apostles, mutual help and care, the breaking of the bread and the prayers. That is a summary of the Christian life and it says something of what the building of parish life is all about. There is clarity there, which is refreshing and we do well to strive towards that. And it is a cause for soul-examination to consider the seriousness and the joy in their fellowship around Christ to which this the original church testifies. There are of course no other ways to achieve lively congregations. That always begins in the liturgy and in the diaconal ministry in which Christ himself is present. It begins with those people, however few in numbers, who have been touched by the Word and who strive towards the centre. Could we turn the perspective around and consider ourselves as new settlers rather than as the last survivors in a secularised world? It is still, as long as we can say “today”, a Day of Salvation.

Could it perhaps be that the search for alternatives and for sacramental structures outside the fragmented official institution is an instinctive search? To search for the truth about the nature of the church and of its ministry, and to have the courage to follow the insights found, is of course a journey that cannot be travelled without pain and resistance, first within ourselves, and then from outside. Pain within ourselves, because being a shepherd is about toil, and resistance from outside because we stand, like St Paul in an arena in which it is quite possible to question our entire mission. Why should anyone be paid for that – for searching the Scriptures, for praying and for worshipping? This is an instinctive search, which defies every resistance.

Alternative communities, such as prayer groups, alternative texts to those of the Service Book, alternative training- and in-service training courses – all this is not some minor priestly entertainments on the side, but ways to take the consequences of the nature of the church and the ministry. The dissonance that arises between the official and the un-official becomes increasingly greater as time moves on it seems, but then clarity will also emerge. Clarity which I believe arises from humility in the face of what God has revealed of himself. The questions that accumulate are however: How great can the dissonance between the official and the in-official be allowed to become? Is there a pain-threshold? How should loyalty towards one's own church be expressed in the current circumstances? Should one nevertheless adjust as far as possible in order to be allowed to continue to work in peace and quiet? But does that still mean to be a shepherd and to watch over the flock out of love, or is it rather out of sheer covetousness? Would we, by such adjustments, win peace and quiet but lose something far more essential?

Some final thoughts and encouragements: Use the waste-paper basket! At the time of individualism, the supply of suggested solutions to the crisis of the church and of society multiplies. There are many things that would draw us out into the periphery, to the outlying

areas where we mostly run around and become short of breath. Use the gift of discernment (one of the most important ones) and ask yourself: what furthers prayer, diaconal ministry and the liturgy? What brings us closer to the Lord and to his word? And throw away everything else!

Believe in the intrinsic power of that which is true, good, right and worthy of love. Speak about that. Encourage others to meditate on the Word of God by doing that yourself. Be ready to suffer (1 Peter 4:7 ff) and pray with confidence as Daniel did when he was hard pressed. After all, God has the ability to open the way ahead, even in the roughest and most difficult of terrains!

Translation: Sr Gerd Swensson, Te Deum

Dag Sandahl:

The Faith of the Fathers, the Faith for the Future: the Faith Today?

Introduction

Sometimes it is important to understand how Sweden and the Church of Sweden have been influenced by major ideologies from the European Continent and also to see how totalitarian thoughts and patterns of action have sometimes without further reflection become part of the modern social construction. In my introduction, I will highlight some such links in order to seek understand the retreat of the Church of Sweden, further and further away from the people.

The Faith of the Fathers

The faith of the fathers was doctrinally aware. We need to stress yet again that the creeds also mark boundaries against what Christians do not actually believe. The Christological controversies are typical examples of this. Is there a patristic awareness in the Anglican Communion compared to Lutheranism and is it Newman who makes the difference? If that is the case, we can see a weakness in Lutheranism – easily explained in the perspective of the controversies of that period, but nevertheless...

What, then, is the strength of Lutheranism? Fundamentally, it is its critical Catholicism and its Augustinian spirituality, which to a large extent consists of Pauline theology. However, if we describe things like that, much theological work remains to be done, maybe as a project entitled “consider your call”.

The faith of the fathers lived in a farming environment. There the Church of Sweden was present, and so was its catholicity. She is Catholic, even if her priests are no longer educated to be aware of that which everyone nevertheless professed as something taken for granted. That church stood together with the people. Evidence that chaplains and vicars in rural areas knew the farmers and the labourers on the land rather than the landed aristocracy we can find not least in notes made in church registers (illustrated by an example from the parish of Lekaryd in the Diocese of Växjö).

Influences from France and the Enlightenment

It was this awareness that was broken to pieces in 1789 and by the following politics of extermination in France during the 1790s. This ideology of revolution arrived in Sweden as both information and as – royal power! (The ancestor of the present Swedish Royal family was the French Count Carl-Johan Bernadotte, who was appointed Crown Prince 1810 and crowned King in 1818).

Those who were divisive were those fellow-Christians who refused to take the oath to the people.[1] And they had to watch fellow-Christians kiss the new powers, not only a Talleyrand, or a Fouché, but many others as well. “The Republic desires to contain within itself only free men, it is determined to exterminate all others, and it recognises as its own children only those who wish to live, fight and die for its sake.”[2] This last point is important for understanding the basic foundation of values, which de facto applies in Sweden:

The Swedish education system has been reformed from the year 1946 onwards, and its normative foundation of values was determined by the Swedish parliament in 1994. This is something quite unique.

Norms appropriate to the times develop in accordance with the foundation of values.

The foundation of values embraced by the Swedish school system consists of democratic values: the inviolability of human life, the freedom and integrity of the individual, the equal value of all human beings, equality between men and women and solidarity with the weak and the vulnerable.

That is the faith of the fathers - in principle the faith and ethos of the period of the Enlightenment, and whoever dares to question this foundation of values and its practical consequences – such as abortions, women priests, the blessing of same-sex partnerships – is in fact not an acceptable member of the Church of Sweden today, just as such a person was not recognised as a child of the Republic of France in the 1790s.

There is a high degree of consequence between France in the 1790s and Swedish society at large and the Church of Sweden in particular of our own time. A similar consequence emerges and becomes very clear when we consider the religious policy formulated by the Nazis for the area of Warthegau.

Influences from the Nazi-Germany - a *Very Modern Society*

For the area of Warthegau, which was part of occupied Poland, a Nazi church political programme of thirteen points was written in the summer of 1940. [1]

Jørgen Glenthøj has argued that these points actually summarises the attitude of the modern state towards the Christian faith.

1. There are no longer any real churches. From the point of view of the State, there are only religious church-like associations which constitute formal associations.
2. The leadership of these associations is not fulfilled by ministers but by official functionaries of the respective associations.
3. It follows from the above that there are no longer any laws or regulations.
4. There are no longer any connections with other groups outside the respective administrative area (Gau) nor any jurisdictional, financial or other bonds to the national church.
5. Only those who have come of age can become members, following their written application. Nobody is born into an ecclesiastical association. People can only apply for membership when they have reached the age of majority. There are no longer any national or territorial churches. Anyone moving to Warthegau from Germany /Altland/ must make a new written application for membership.
6. All confessional groups or organisations (youth groups) have ceased to exist and have been forbidden.
7. Germans and Polish people can no longer belong to or worship in the same church (the principle of nationality). For the National Socialism, this principle was evoked for the first

time.

8. Teaching of confirmation candidates must no take place in schools.

9. Besides specific grants for these associations, no other financial contributions are permitted.

10. Besides buildings for worship, these associations cannot own any property such as buildings, houses, lands or cemeteries.

11. All charitable trusts and monastic institutions have been dissolved since they do not correspond to German life-style nor to German population politics.

12. These associations are not permitted to engage in social relief work. This task is only and exclusively appropriate for the NSV, Nationalsozialistische Volkswohlfart.

13. Only priests from Warthegau can be employed by these associations. They must not earn their living primarily as priests, but must also have some secular profession.

In Summary:

The privatisation of the church is obvious. From now on, the church must only carry out certain religious tasks for a marginalised group of people. Diaconal ministry is made impossible. The church has no public place. Under point 2 above, the ministry has been abolished and replaced by the service of official functionaries.

This break-up during the 1960s is real and the Churches in Europe have some sense of what is happening but cannot grasp the situation.[3] And from now on, things move very fast indeed.

The transmission of knowledge – the intellectual tradition and of culture - has been broken.

The link to the high mass is weak (the churches are desperately trying to find more consumer-friendly services).

The consumer pattern is basic in a culture within which consumerism is the basic attitude. we can see, as a consequent pattern, the lack of buyer faithfulness – and that applies to the churches as well.

The exits from membership of the Church of Sweden are logical and the prognosis points to a successively decreasing membership. The Church of Sweden has, at the same time, built up a structure, which make the church deeply dependent on an even flow of income; there are many employed members of staff, many church buildings and many decision-makers at all levels.

In seven years time, the financial situation will become precarious – is that a competent guess? Then we can take comfort: We were right in our criticism. But we nevertheless shot below the target in our criticism of the national church.

The naivety – priests do not see, do not have the instruments, nor do the bishops.

And what we see follows the psychological pattern of people suffering a crisis. Test it on the priests as well:

1. Exaggerated dependence. The responsibility rests with someone else.

2. Flight. Away from reality, narrow down the perspective to the small events of your own circumstances.

3. Fight. It is the others in the group who are the enemies – and that creates the need for enemies among fellow-Christians. We all know what this is about.

The final question must of course be:

Who can actually see the position and judge the situation?

Who will give the visions?

¹ See also Edwin Bannon, *Refractory Men, Fanatical Women. Fidelity to Conscience during the French Revolution*. Gracewing, Leominster 1992

² Fouché quoted from Stefan Zweig, *Fouché*. Skoglunds Bokförlag, Stockholm, 1948, p 44

Obvious in Callum G. Brown, *The Death of Christian Britain. Understanding Secularization 1800-2000*. Routledge, London 2001

[1] Paul Gürtler, *Nationalsozialismus und Evangelische Kirchen im Warthegau. Arbeiten zur Geschichte des Kirchenkampfes*, Band 2. Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Göttingen 1958 s 200-201, commentary pp. 47-51.

The Faith for the Future

To chew over

1. We need to formulate alternatives – but not in order to remain on the margin in spite of marginalisation. Our mission is still the church in which we have been ordained, not our own personal interests.
2. The priests are both the problems and the opportunities – and without a revival among priests, there will be no revival at all in the church.
3. The care of our inner spiritual life concerns priests and parishes. The church is built in people and it is built from the inside, by the Word and the Sacraments that are given to us from the outside.
4. The public arena is our arena because that is where the Church belongs and thus church criticism always concerns the contemporary period and society. In what is happening in the church, we can see our contemporary world reflected.
5. Spiritual renewal is about individual Christians, about parishes and about dioceses that collaborate in order to be built up by the celebration of Mass, prayer and meditation, pastoral care, teaching and mutual love and care. This is a matter of identity. Who am I (the individual, the parish, the diocese) and where do I belong in order to be able to carry out something that is a call from God?
6. The intellectual challenge is an invitation to be theologically educated

– not to make theology into an ideology for what actually exists, but to work theologically in order to become what I am, what God wants me to be.

7. The ecclesiastical ideological movements all have contributions to make to the community and it is a matter of skill, whether their one.-sidedness should be perceived as strength or as weakness.
8. Corporately, we have the majestic task (midwifery) in relation to our fellow-Christians and to ecclesiastical ideological movements: to liberate them so they can grow and flourish.
9. Together we, the despised minority – the Samaritans - have the task to take care of the ill-treated and abused church and to bring her to the house where she can be cured, where her wounds can be cared for and we have to pay the price for her recovery.
10. The responsibility to speak out is both our own personal responsibility and our responsibility for the community (Ps 32:3-4). Here we have something neglected to confess – have we not?

Translation: Sr Gerd Swensson, Te Deum