

f. In the twentieth century the Episcopal church would see considerable growth through the sixties with a strong decline following that. It would include in its numbers some of the outstanding liberal thinkers but would retain a conservative corps as well. In this sense it would exemplify the defining notes given on page 36. A few particular items of interest for this period follow:

(1) 1919 found a new method current for reporting membership. All baptized persons under the episcopal aegis were reported as members rather than the previous system in which the communicants were reported as members.

(2) The new National Council of the Episcopal Church was also put together in 1919 and considerably strengthened the denominational leadership.

(3) The Prayer book was revised in 1928 into a more useful and understandable edition...a move that benefitted the general status of the laity.

(4) After much debate the church accepted the ordination of women for the priesthood and consummated this with the consecration of Barbara Harris to the episcopate in 1989.

(5) In the meantime some smaller segments of more evangelical members moved into denominations. One of these was led by Bishop James Dees in the sixties, and the second was the formation of the Anglican Church of North America in 1977. Due to the pliability of the Episcopal structure, neither of these has amounted to a sizeable schism.

(6) And the conservative forces rallied around conservative clergy in the Pittsburgh area with the formation of the Trinity School for Ministry in the early seventies.

(7) The recent decline in participating membership has been as dramatic as was the earlier growth. Arguments over social policy, homosexual servants in the church, etc., have all hurt in the membership war. The conservative element continues to function but the disagreeing spirits are more obvious and a great deal of factionalism is apparent to even the most novice of observers. We cannot tell how this matter will end, of course, but without a strong binding tradition or a strong interest in the Gospel it is difficult for development by attracting members or by ordering renewal within. For general reading one may try Manross: A HISTORY OF THE AMERICAN EPISCOPAL CHURCH. It does not go beyond 1950.