

Bishop Hewett Report From Sweden: May 2005
Contributed by Bp. Paul Hewett
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Our remnant communities of believing, orthodox Anglicans need to forge the most dynamic relationships possible with orthodox and catholic remnant communities in Sweden and Norway, to "strengthen one another's hand in God." The synergy the Holy Spirit can impart to us as we work together will strengthen us to spread the Gospel in our culture of gnosticism and secular materialism. How to spread the Gospel, form apostolates and administer and communicate the riches of the Kingdom in the midst of our historical realities is the great gift we in the Western Church have to offer the East.

Monday, May 16 I visited the Rev. Dr. Folke T. Olofsson, Pastor of the Rasbo Kyrke and Docent at the University in Uppsala. Benjamin Ekman, one of his students, came to visit. He works for the journal, Keryx (www.keryx.nu), emphasizing the consensus of the first millennium. We attended the Sung Mass for Monday in Whitsunweek, and I read the Gospel and gave the Blessing. Outdoors there is some light before 4 am and after 10 pm.

Tuesday, May 17 Fr. Folke and Benjamin Ekman and I had more conversations. We attended a service at a nearby retirement home. The St. Erik's Koinonia in the Mission Province had an evening meeting in Uppsala at which the Mission Province's first bishop, Arne Olsson, presided. The Sisters of the Holy Spirit from the Alsike Kloster were there, as was bishop-elect Fr. Göran Beijer. I talked about our experiences of starting new congregations in the U.S., and then drove with Fr. Göran to his home in Stockholm.

Wednesday, May 18 Driving into Småland it was shocking to see how much of the forests were devastated from January's terrible wind storm. There was time to visit with the Rev. Dr. Kjell Petersson, SSC, and his wife Mariane, at the Ryssby Kyrke in Småland. We had met at the SSC's International Synod in London in April. Fr.

Kjell is one of the growing group of Swedish priests in the Society of the Holy Cross. He introduced to his books, *Kyrkan, Folket och Dopet* (a study of infant baptism in the Swedish Church) and *Åkallan och åminnelse* (Epiklesis and Anamnesis), shedding light on the encounter between Lutheran tradition and ecumenical theology.

Thursday, May 19 Last July at the St. Bridget Pilgrimage in Vadstena I met the Rev. Ola Larsson, and now went to meet him at the Ljungby Kyrke. After a tour we went to the associated parish of Angelstad, where he and his wife Helene and their daughters live. He showed me the Angelstad Kyrke, and Helene drove me to nearby Hinneryd, where some of my mother's family, the Carlsons, lived before emigrating to Providence, Rhode Island, in the early 20th century. We saw the Hinneryd Kyrke and cemetery and surrounding countryside.

Friday, May 20 I had a look at the cathedral town of Växjö a few kilometers to the east, and visited the Cathedral and Museum, and continued east to "Willem Moberg Country." Moberg wrote the series of three books on the emigrants who left this part of Småland in the 1850's to go to Minnesota, basing the story on Karl Oscar Nilsson and Kristina, his wife, their family, and their neighbors. In the mid 1990's Benny Anderson and Björn Ulvaeus from the musical group Abba turned Moberg's triptych into an extraordinary musical called "Kristina från Duvemåla." I drove near, but could not find, Moberg's house, and went past Duvemåla without seeing the turn-off for it, but found Karl Oskar's homestead, Korpamoen, where he and Kristina lived before departing for America. A short distance to the north is a four-corners, the Åkerby Vägskäl, with a commemorative stone and a park, to mark the assembly point for some of the emigrants who headed south from here for the coast. The parish church for these people, the Ljuder Kyrke, where the Nilssons attended, is just to the north of the four-corners. Afterwards the Larssons had supper ready, followed by Fr. Ola playing some Edvard Grieg on the piano.

Saturday, May 21 Six hours driving, with a stop for a hike, got me back to Fr. Göran's, to get ready for Sunday at St. Stephen's.

Sunday, May 22, Trinity Sunday It was an honor to be asked to celebrate the pontifical Sung Mass at St. Stephen's Koinonia, which now meets in a very fine church in Aspudden in Stockholm. Beside Fr. Göran there was another priest, a deacon and over 30 in attendance, with a parish council meeting afterwards. That afternoon Fr. Göran and I headed for Göteborg. En route we stopped in Strängnäs to see the cathedral, and then to the most beautiful place I have ever seen in Sweden: Husaby, alongside Lake Vännern.

We arrived in Husaby around 9:30 pm in a still bright twilight, with the full moon in the east, to see a thousand year old parish church on a ridge of hill, with lush farmland in the valley off to the south, and the ridge of high hill that borders Lake Vännern to the north. A few feet down the southern ridge is a holy well. Husaby is a kind of Swedish Canterbury in that St. Sigfrid, a missionary from England, baptized King Olaf in the holy well, around the year 1,000. Olaf was Sweden's first Christian king. The church was then built just above the well and Husaby became a springboard for the evangelization of Sweden. From here, and from nearby Skara, the great mission kept moving north. Naming one of the new dioceses in the Mission Province "Husaby" would send the message that our mission is to re-capitulate today the first evangelization of Sweden. It was late when we walked around Skara Cathedral so we put in at a motel and continued to Göteborg the next morning.

Monday, May 23 We attended the Clericus of the Mission Province in Göteborg, chaired by Bp. Arne Olsson, with about 20 of the 30-plus clergy in attendance, some of whom came from Denmark, Latvia and Finland. I spoke on our experience of starting new congregations in the United States. There was business to transact and various addresses were given. I met Bishop-elect Lars Artman and many of the clergy. Later in the afternoon I drove about 50 kilometers north to Lilla Edet to stay

with the Petterssons, Fr. Rolf and Kiki and their family.

Tuesday, May 24 was spent with the Petterssons. The morning Mass was in the Chapel of the Fuxerna Kyrke, with Fr. Mikael Isakson celebrating. It was good to see him again, and the Pastor, Fr. Roland Kristensson and his staff. Fr. Rolf took me to the museum in Lödöse, one of the most important settlements and ports in the Middle Ages. We discussed the problems of parishes like the Fuxerna Kyrke, and St. Paul's, in Göteborg, where he is a curate, when the pastor is due to retire. The system strongly favors replacing orthodox pastors with heterodox ones, or worse.

Wednesday, May 25 I left Lilla Edet early after picking up Dom John, a Benedictine monk from New Mexico, who was headed with me for the Benedictine monastery near Sala, the Östanbäck Kloster, some 5 hours to the northeast. We arrived in time for a late lunch and a tour of the Monastery.

Thursday, May 26, Corpus Christi Fr. Caesarius, the Abbot, asked me to sing the High Mass for the Community, and after the day's adoration of the Blessed Sacrament that day, to preside at Vespers and Solemn Benediction. After supper we had some community time with the other guests, Dom John, and a Benedictine from Holland.

Friday, May 27 I celebrated the morning Mass for the Community, and after our goodbyes, I drove the one and a half hours to Arlanda Airport for the trip home.

Conclusions

The Mission Province is firmly planted, with one bishop and two on the way, a solid core of clergy and laity and one religious order. The Mission Province is strengthened by input from Kenya, Belarus, Finland, Latvia and the United States. Because the Missouri Synod is lending a hand it is time for Anglicans to open up more contact with them in St. Louis, Missouri.

It is the task of the Mission Province to help with the re-evangelization of Sweden and whatever other countries may be associated with it. Selecting names of ancient sees for Mission Province dioceses (such as "Husaby") conveys this message.

It can help to think of the Mission Province as analogous to the DeGaulle Free French after the Nazi take-over of France. The Free French resistance has the task of reporting back to the orthodox faithful still "in the system" the following information: (i) the Lord has a vocation for us. (ii) He has opened up a way and we blaze the trail. (iii) we map the minefields (iv) we build a solid network of koinonias, and (v) we enhance the theological education of men for the ministry.

We may think of the orthodox faithful "in the system" (and the societies and structures they will form to sustain them) as those who help the resistance. There were loyal Frenchmen in the World War II who for various reasons appeared to make some accommodation with the new order, but who gave all possible help to the underground. A shopkeeper might offer his cellar for a Free French printing press. An elderly couple might let their attic be used for a radio transmitter. Those who "end run" the system and those orthodox who stay in it need to keep good communication with one another and see each other as tribes in the wilderness with a common convergence point.

In 1940 in France that common convergence point was the continuation of the Third Republic, resuming its place in the family of free nations after the War. For Christians in Sweden it is the continuation of an authentic catholic and orthodox witness of Lutherans who can find their place in the universal Church and serve as a catalyst to help reveal the essential unity of the Body of Christ. The common convergence point the Holy Spirit is setting for all Bible-believing Christians throughout the world is the consensus of the undivided first millennium. That is the model that can allow us in the Western Church to transcend the

controversies of the 16th century. That is the gift that the Churches of the East can impart to us.

Our remnant communities of believing, orthodox Anglicans need to forge the most dynamic relationships possible with orthodox and catholic remnant communities in Sweden and Norway, to "strengthen one another's hand in God." The synergy the Holy Spirit can impart to us as we work together will strengthen us to spread the Gospel in our culture of gnosticism and secular materialism. How to spread the Gospel, form apostolates and administer and communicate the riches of the Kingdom in the midst of our historical realities is the great gift we in the Western Church have to offer the East. +PCH