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E. George Pearce
Evangelical Lutheran Church of England

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Companions of the Augustana

E. GEORGE PEARCE

How many of us Lutherans have wished at one time or another that our church might be called by another name? As an introductory thought, I should like you to consider the title of this essay, "Companions of the Augustana," as a possible alternative.

The title comes from the 1672 Charter of King Charles II which authorized the foundation of the first Lutheran church in Great Britain. Twice in this document the term is used: *socios Augustana Confessionis* [sic] in the original Latin. *Socios* means companion, partner, sharer, associate. *Augustana Confessionis* refers to the Augsburg Confession or Augustana of 1530, the primary confession of the Lutheran Church that states what we believe and teach.

If we have at times been embarrassed by the name our church bears, it is because of the emphasis which that name seems to place on the person of the man Martin Luther. But his person does not matter; it is his confession that counts. Of all the major communions of Christendom, ours alone is called after the name of a man. Catholic, Protestant, Orthodox, Presbyterian, Baptist, Congregational, Reformed, Methodist are all names which describe a conviction, a confession; they point to what Christians of such persuasions believe. Indeed, the naming of a religious body after a person would seem to be a characteristic of non-Christian religions, for example, Mohammedans, Buddhists, Confucians, or of obscure sects, for example, Darbyites, Irvingites, Millerites, which in fact soon changed their names to Plymouth Brethren, Catholic Apostolic, and Adventist, respectively.

"Companions of the Augustana" puts the emphasis on the right place. It is the faith confessed in the Augustana which binds us as a church together; we are partners and sharers of the teaching of the Augustana. We are Christians because we are followers of Christ, but we are not Lutherans because we are followers of Luther. We honor and respect the reformer as a teacher sent by God, but we are not bound to accept everything Luther wrote and said. What we are committed to, we pastors by our ordination vows and we lay people by our confirmation pledges, are, after the Sacred Scriptures, the Augustana and the other Lutheran Confessions which our church has accepted as "a true statement and exposition" of the Gospel of Jesus Christ revealed to us in the written Scriptures. We are companions of the Augustana.

It is well known that Luther objected strongly when those who shared his faith began to be called after him. "I beg men not to call themselves Lutherans, but Christians. What is Luther? The doctrine is surely not mine. I have not been crucified for you. No, my friends, let us cast out party names and call ourselves Christians,

The author is chairman of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of England. This article substantially reproduces "The Annual Reformation Lecture" for 1969, delivered at Luther-Tyndale, London, to commemorate the founding of the Lutheran Church in Great Britain.

for we hold to Christ's doctrine," Luther wrote in 1522. He saw the sectarian implication of the name. Perhaps not so well known is the fact that the term "Lutheran" was invented not by Luther's friends, but by his enemies. At the debate in Leipzig in 1518 it was the Roman Catholic John Eck who hurled the name as an epithet and invective against Luther's supporters. They objected to the name, but, of course, the more they objected, the more the enemies applied it in contempt. The nickname stuck.

When you think of it, that is how the church got its first name 2,000 years ago. "The disciples were called Christians first in Antioch," we read in Acts 11:26. "Christian" was a sarcastic nickname coined by hecklers to taunt people who believed in Christ.

Although in the world today the overwhelming majority of churches in our tradition call themselves Lutheran, there are a few in Eastern Europe who use the designation "Church of the Augsburg Confession," as in Yugoslavia, Austria, Czechoslovakia, Rumania, and Poland. Is it significant that these small minority churches are all evangelical and confessional? Has the name helped them to survive through centuries of struggle and persecution?

But it is not really our purpose to propose that we change the name of our church. Not that we should shrink back from the very idea, though, for down through the ages the church has changed its name more than once. Fifteen hundred years ago people who believed what we believe were called "Catholic"; four centuries ago we were the first to be called "Protestant." We disavow neither of these, yet both are no longer specific enough to describe that evangelical understanding of the Gospel which is the heart of our faith; both, in fact, are now applied to teachings which contradict the essence of our faith. If the term "Lutheran" becomes a hindrance to our Gospel outreach, either because to the unchurched man it seems to make us followers of Luther, not Christ, or because it is becoming a designation for doctrine which questions or denies what we confess, then perhaps the term has outlived its usefulness. The name Lutheran is not sacrosanct.

Under the title "Companions of the Augustana" we shall examine three 17th-century documents: first, the Warrant of Charles II of 1669 (originally in English), whose tercentenary we recently commemorated; second, the Charter of Charles II of 1672 (in Latin), from which the title "Companions of the Augustana" is taken; and third, the Church Order of the Lutheran Church of St. Mary Savoy of 1695 (in German). The Warrant is in the Public Record Office in London, the Charter in the Guildhall Library in London, the Church Order also in the Guildhall, though the copy used for this essay is in the writer's own library. The first two are the foundation documents of the Lutheran Church in Britain; the third is the constitution of the second oldest Lutheran congregation in this country.

Why should the Evangelical Lutheran Church of England (ELCE) be interested in these materials? Why should a church, largely Anglo-Saxon in stock, completely English in speech, be concerned with the beginnings 300 years ago of a congregation that was, after all, made up of foreigners? The very fact that we are Lutherans is an obvious reason. The further fact

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that the founders of the ELCE, 70 years ago, were also foreign born is another part of the answer. But the major question this paper seeks to answer is this: Is there any real connection between our church as it exists today and that first Lutheran congregation? As we examine the documents, we shall get an impression of those first Lutherans, their period, their faith, their congregation. We shall realize our clear spiritual descent and a real kinship in confession which ties us with them as partners in the same faith, sharers of the same Gospel, companions of the Augustana.

The Two Foundation Documents

The two documents which gave legal existence to the Lutheran Church in this country are the Warrant of 1669 and the Charter of 1672, both issued on the authority of King Charles II.

Historical Background

If we are to understand the foundation documents, we need to look back at their historical setting. What were the conditions prevailing in Great Britain 300 years ago?

Religious Intolerance

Britain was a country torn by religious intolerance. The crowning of Charles II brought the Commonwealth of Oliver Cromwell to a close. Britain's one experiment of government without a monarch was over. Evidently neither Parliament nor people had any desire for another spell of unsmiling Puritanism under Cromwell's son. In 1660, only 11 years after it had beheaded the father, Parliament placed the crown on the head of the son, Charles II. The established church had felt the cruel hand of the Protector during the 11 years. Anglican clergy were thrown out of their pulpits, and every form of liturgy was banned by law. Cromwell out, Charles in, the tables were turned, the established church called the tune. A series of laws was enacted, two mentioned in the Charter, to crush nonconformity. The 1662 Act of Uniformity, the first mentioned in the Charter, compelled every clergyman, university professor, and schoolmaster to accept the teaching and ritual of the Anglican Book of Common Prayer. The 1664 Conventicle Act made worship at any non-Anglican place of worship punishable by fine. The 1665 Five-Mile Act forbade any nonconformist minister to come within 5 miles of any parish where he had previously served. In 1670 a second, more stringent Conventicle Act was passed, the second referred to in the Charter. In 1673 intolerance reached its climax with the Test Act, which required every public official to kneel and receive Anglican communion before he could take office. Yet, in the face of Parliamentary tyranny, the king in 1669 issued his royal Warrant and in 1672 his royal Charter authorizing the first Lutheran church. In 1673, the year of the Test Act, the new building was dedicated, the king himself being publicly named as a patron in the dedication sermon.

London in Ashes

Three hundred years ago the capital city of the kingdom lay in ashes, gutted by the Great Fire of London in 1666, "that most lamentable fire" the Charter calls it. For four days London was an oven. When the fire was finally stopped by blowing up whole streets, 13,200 houses and 87 churches had been destroyed, among them

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the Steelyard and the parish churches of All Hallows the Great in Thames Street and Holy Trinity the Less in Trinity Lane, three buildings of interest to this study. The Steelyard was the trade center and home of the six men to whom the grant of a church site was made by the Charter: Jacob Jacobsen, John Leemknell, Theodore Jacobsen, Peter Splidt, Stratz Ahrens, and Nicholas Heyne (they are named six times in the Charter). All Hallows the Great was the parish church adjoining the Steelyard where many merchants (like the six mentioned) worshiped since there was no Lutheran church. Incidentally, All Hallows was, according to Samuel Pepys, the first church to recognize the restoration of Charles by setting up the king's arms. Holy Trinity the Less was the church whose burned-out site was allocated to the Lutherans. One of the reasons, very likely, why King Charles did not refuse their request was that he needed their worldwide trade to finance the rebuilding of London, now in ashes and ruins before his eyes.

Alliance with Sweden

Three centuries ago England was in an uneasy Triple Alliance. In the troubled and intricate European politics of the time, France, normally Charles' Roman Catholic patron, became the enemy, and the Protestant Dutch, with whom he was at war much of his reign, became the friend. The third partner in the alliance, drawn up in January 1668, was Lutheran Sweden.

Thus, at a time when negotiations for the first Lutheran church were going on, the Lutheran king of Sweden was Charles' ally, "our most dear brother," to quote the Charter. The Swedish "resident" or ambassador in London, upon whom much of the diplomatic preparation for the treaty fell, was Sir John Barckman Leyonbergh, or Lyonbery, as the Charter anglicizes his name. To him must be given the chief credit for winning Charles' approval for the first Lutheran church. From the famous diaries of Pepys and Evelyn it would appear that the envoy was a well-known figure in society and at the royal court. In the Charter the king is described as "very much desiring to gratifie the request of the most esteemed Person John Barckman Lyonbery Knight and Baronett." The "request" was in a letter of Leyonbergh to the king on 12 March 1669 in which, as spokesman for the Steelyard merchants, he asked for a site for a Lutheran church in the city. The king responded, in a preliminary way, 3 months later, 17 June 1669, with the Warrant. It read: "Whereas Sir John Barkman Leyonbergh Knight Resident for the King of Sweden hath made a request unto Us to allot and grant a fit place for a church in Our City of London . . ." and went on, "We are graciously pleased to condescend thereto." Such a successful conclusion, any diplomat knows, does not come about without speaking to the right people beforehand. The Swedish ambassador had prepared the ground by prior consultation with the Lord Mayor and the Court of Aldermen and with the archbishop of Canterbury and the bishop of London, as the Warrant testifies. That Leyonbergh did his job well is attested by the Charter, for when the king later approached the same church and civic authorities for their advice, they "unanimously consented." Letters exist which show that the ambassador also enlisted the Swedish king's support in getting Charles' permission.

Sir John was more than a spokesman and diplomat for the first Lutherans. His was one of the first subscriptions toward the cost of building Trinity Lutheran Church. He opened his home, the Swedish embassy in the Piazza of Covent Garden (destroyed by fire in 1769), as a place of worship for the first Lutheran congregation from December 1668 until December 1673, when the church was completed. No doubt it was he who made the arrangements for the congregation's first pastor, Gerhardt Martens, to come over from the Continent with the Swedish ambassador at the Hague. Leyonbergh used his position in the world for the good of the church in many ways.

Why Did Charles Approve?

The Triple Alliance did not last. Though relations with Sweden remained cordial, war was again declared against the Dutch in 1672. But in God's management of history the Swedish alliance lasted long enough to be helpful toward the establishment of the first Lutheran congregation. This is at least one answer to the obvious question: Why should a king who was Roman Catholic at heart grant by his own prerogative legal recognition to Lutherans at a time when his Parliament was outlawing every other religion outside the established Church of England? There are other reasons. Most important is that alluded to in both the Warrant and the Charter: "such immunities, privileges & fridom . . . as have been granted by Us or Our Royal Predecessors unto ye French and Dutch Congregations in our Sd City," the Warrant says. The Indulgence of Edward VI in 1550 exempted continental refugee Protestants from religious restrictions. Then, again, Charles himself did not favor the intolerant legislation of his Parliament. Twice, in 1662 and 1672, the king issued on his own authority declarations of indulgence, but Parliament would not agree, denying the king had the right to bypass them and fearing his motive was at bottom to free the Roman Catholics. Perhaps his personal Charter to the Lutherans was the one step he could take to show his disagreement. Furthermore, when Parliament would not agree — and most of the time it did not — it refused to vote funds. Charles would not beg, yet with his extravagant tastes, his expensive Dutch wars, his capital city lying in ashes, the king was desperately short of money. He was subsidized much of the time by the king of France, to whom he sold Dunkirk for a song, yet he was still short. For his favors he expected a cash return. It is said that Charles was more lavish with his royal charters than any other sovereign in our history. Perhaps the Charter of 1672 cost the wealthy merchants of the Steelyard a pretty penny.

Such was the historical background of the two documents we shall now consider: the Warrant of 17 June 1669, the king's brief preliminary response in English to the Lutheran application authorizing the attorney and solicitor general to prepare a bill for the royal signature and the Great Seal granting the site; and the much longer and definitive Charter or Letters Patent in official Latin which came 3 years later, 13 September 1672. (There is, by the way, in both of these a nonchalance in writing, for example, erasures that are only half erased, misspelled names, and so on, that is rather delightful to find in official documents.)

What Did the Charter Grant?

What precisely did the Charter grant? First, a site, a site only a few hundred yards from the Steelyard, the site for which Leyonbergh had negotiated with the Lord Mayor and the bishop of London. We "do grant . . . all that our said land soyle or ground scituate lying and being in the parish of the holy Trinity within our City of London in the street commonly called Trinity Lane," the Charter specifies, and adds, "with all its appertenances." [1] That the last phrase included the burial ground is evident from a court case 3 years later, in 1675, in which the parish inhabitants complained that the Lutheran pastor would not allow them to bury their dead in the parish graveyard. The site was granted by the king, but not given. The City of London charged the Lutheran trustees £10 for the land. Second, the Charter granted permission to build. "To found erect and build a Temple or holy house" (note how the word "church" is avoided), the Charter says, but, of course, "at their own costs." Third, the Charter gave the right to congregate freely and to worship according to their own confession: "to use and enjoy the said Temple . . . to meet together, and there to celebrate the interpretation of the holy Gospel, the administration of the Sacraments, and to perform other the rites and ecclesiastical matters of their religion according to the custom received amongst them." Fourth, the Charter allowed the right to place or displace pastors: "full license power and authority to call together, choose, place and appoint fitt and proper person & persons to perform the officers [?] of a minister and Priest . . . and them to displace as often as, and as it shall seem expedient." Fifth, the Charter promised "fridom," the term used in the Warrant, from the interference of church and civil authorities: "We do charge and command the Archbishop of Canterbury, Bishop of London Maior Sheriffes and Aldermen of Our City of London and their Successors . . . that they do from time to time and at all times hereafter permit the said companions of the Augustan confession . . . freely and quietly to have enjoy use and exercise their own properties and ceremonies and the Ecclesiastical discipline proper and peculiar to the Augustan confession." Sixth, the Charter granted immunity and exemption from the rigid laws of uniformity described earlier: "Notwithstanding that they (that is, the Lutherans) do not agree with the rites and ceremonyes received and used in the Church of England." Then it expressly listed five of the acts, two of them passed in the reign of Edward VI, one in that of Queen Elizabeth, and the two to which we have already referred, the Act of Uniformity of 1662 and the Second Conventicle Act of 1670. However, Lutherans living within the boundaries of the parish of Holy Trinity were "by no means exempt from the parish charges by right incumbent upon them," but, the Charter says, these "do not concern the principalls of faith, and the celebracion of divine worship."

To Whom Was the Grant Made?

To whom was the grant made? To the *socios Augustana Confessionis* [sic], the companions of the Augustana.

Now it is true that it was a Swede,

[1] "The Case of the Inhabitants of the Parish of the Holy Trinity, London" (1675), a broadside at the Guildhall Library.

Leyonbergh, who made the original application, and therefore the Warrant promises the grant of a site to the "said Resident of Sweden." It is furthermore a fact that it was, according to the Charter, "some Germans and other foreigners . . . residing at London for commerce" who "humbly supplicated" the king "to grant them a certain seat and place where they may (at their own proper costs) build a sacred house," and the Charter granted the request. As a side note, the term "German" at that time was applied loosely to inhabitants of Holland, Belgium (the Flemish part), and to all Low German-speaking peoples. Again, the Charter does specify that the worship to take place in the proposed temple should be "according to the custom of their Country" and "approved by the lawes of their Country." The whole accent of both Warrant and Charter is not on country but on confession. The grant was made to Leyonbergh and the Steelyard merchants not primarily because they were Swedes or Germans or other nationals but because they were "companions of the Augustana," to quote the Charter. Five times in the Charter reference is made to the Augustana. For permission to congregate as foreign Protestants and to worship in their own languages, no new charter was needed. That right they already had under the indulgence of Edward VI of 1550. For such services a building was already available: the Church of the Strangers at Austin Friars, only half a mile away, assigned by Edward's charter specifically for that purpose.

To whom was the grant made? To Jacob Jacobsen, John Leemknell, Theodore Jacobsen, Peter Splidt, Stratz Ahrens, and Nicholas Heyne, the six named in the Charter as trustees for a community of people who were of several nations (Splidt a Dane, Leyonbergh a Swede, the Jacobsens German) but of one faith and one confession, companions of the Augustana. The six men are explicitly enjoined by the Charter "at all times hereafter, [to] permit all the Companions of the Augustan confession, of what nation soever professing the same faith and religion and the same sacred rites," to use the church. I stress these words: "of what nation soever professing the same faith." They seem to me to express a key thought of the Charter: anyone, regardless of nationality, had the right to use the church, provided only that he professed the Augsburg Confession.

It is interesting to compare the Charter of 1550 with that of 1672. Though both are similarly worded and both grant freedom of worship to foreign-born residents, Edward's charter of 1550 makes no reference whatever to a particular confession, while the Lutheran charter places emphasis on the Augustana, the specific confession of the Lutheran Church. Interesting also is the fact that the congregations founded by Edward's charter were even in that day known by national names, "the French and Dutch Congregations in Our sd City," as the Warrant calls them, and to this day their successors in London are called that. In contrast, though the appellation "the German church" or "the Swedish church" does occur, as in the opening clauses of the Warrant, the church begun by Charles' charter was called the "Lutheran church" from the beginning, or "the church of the Augsburg Confession," in the list of subscriptions and donations, the constitution, and the legal contracts of the first Lutheran congregation in the 17th century, in the

histories of London like those of Stowe and Maitland in the 18th and 19th centuries, and down to the present day.

Confession, Not Nationality

Confession, not nationality, is what counted. That which makes one a Lutheran is not what passport he carries, but what faith he confesses. The Lutheran Church has not always lived up to this principle so clearly expressed in the Charter. A hundred years later, in the 1770s, the pastor of a German-speaking Lutheran congregation in London tried to introduce English services. He got as far as introducing English hymns. The elders objected and took the pastor to court. Counsel's opinion was sought. The reply: "Language makes no difference, as long as the teachings and usages are Lutheran." Whether the jurist consulted the 1672 Charter, I do not know, but certainly that is the spirit of the foundation document. In the end the verdict went the other way, and it took another 150 years before the Lutheran Church began to witness to Christ in the language that people in the country could understand. If we had lived 300 years ago, could we English-speaking Lutherans have invoked the Charter? We espouse the Lutheran Confessions; we are companions of the Augustana. Could we have claimed the privileges it granted?

Residential Qualification

Probably not, unless we happened to live within the boundaries, that is, within the walls of the City of London. There is a residential qualification about which the Warrant is quite specific: the grant of the site is authorized to "followers of the Lutheran Confession and their successors residing in Our said City of London." The Charter, though not so directly, implies that the proposed church was to be for "strangers and foreigners residing at London," not the sprawling metropolis of today, of course, but the walled-in square mile City of London as distinct from Westminster outside the wall and to the west of Temple Bar. Just 20 years later this very point caused a row at Trinity, Britain's first Lutheran congregation. The question was: If one lived outside the City, did he have the right to speak and vote? There were difficulties, and the congregation split. Pastor Burckhardt, who lived a century later, described the situation: "At the time of Pastor Ezard, who was apparently a rather vehement and quarrelsome person, the members who lived on the other side of Temple Bar separated themselves in 1692 because they were allowed no voice in church affairs or in voting." The dissidents withdrew and founded the Lutheran Church of St. Mary Savoy, of which Pastor Burckhardt became the minister a century later.

National Qualification?

There is a second difficulty. The Charter has this statement: "In such meetings [that is, of the companions of Augustana] our Subjects & Leige people born within our Kingdomes or Dominions, and also initiated with us into the profession of the name of Christ, according to the rites of the said Church of England [should] be by no means accounted privileged or admitted." At first reading this may seem a restriction which debarred all British subjects from membership in the first Lutheran congregation. But look again at the words. Who ought not to be admitted?

"Our Subjects & Leige people born within our Kingdomes or Dominions," that is, native-born British subjects, "and also initiated into the profession of the name of Christ according to the rites of the Church of England," that is, baptized into the Church of England. The statement says no more than that native-born British subjects baptized into the Church of England were not to be admitted.

This is a restriction, but a surprisingly mild one when seen in its historical context. Parliament, you will remember, was bent upon legislation which would force every man to become an Anglican. Jeremy White drew up a list of 60,000 who were fined or imprisoned because they dissented. One by one new laws were passed to make the uniformity rigid, to stop any gaps in the legislation. By saying yes to the application of the Steelyard merchants, the Charter made a breach in that wall. It allowed a church which did not, as the Charter expressly says, agree with the teaching and rites of the established church. Yet this exception was not to be abused and made into a loophole by which disaffected Anglicans could evade the law. A restriction had to be placed into the Charter to stop any potential loopholes for misuse, but not to restrict the sphere and growth of the congregation which the Charter founded and for which it was intended.

British Members

If the motivation for the limitation in the Charter had been to confine the congregation to foreign-born and foreign-speaking people, one would expect an explicit prohibition of the English language in the public services. In Edward's Charter of 1550 there is an implication that foreigners would go on using "their present speech," but in Charles' there is no reference whatever to language. Certainly, there is nothing in the Lutheran charter to give reasons for the next 250 years of silence as far as preaching in the English language is concerned.

Nor did the Charter really exclude from membership all British subjects. From rolls in the Public Record Office it is possible to show that of the six Lutheran founders named in the Charter, at least five were British subjects at the time they made their application: one of them, Danish-born Peter Splidt, by denisation, that is, by the prerogative of the king; the other four, Jacob and Theodore Jacobsen, Stratz Ahrens, and John Leemknell, by naturalization, that is, by acts of Parliament. And when on 19 November 1680 Mr. and Mrs. Peter Splidt had their child, Christian, baptized at the Lutheran church in Trinity Lane, that son became a Lutheran, though a British subject and native born. Even in the first generation of the Lutheran Church there must have been many members who were British, the fathers by naturalization, the children by birth.

In 1689, after the accession of William and Mary, the Act of Toleration granted liberty of worship to all except the Roman Catholics and the Unitarians. It freed also the Lutheran Church from every legal restriction and left its future entirely up to Lutherans themselves.

The Church Order of St. Mary Savoy

A church for the companions of the Augustana was what the Warrant of 1669 and the Charter of 1672 envisaged. Was this realized? Was the Augustana the center for the first generation of Lutherans in

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England? Was this confession adhered to and expressed in the life and practice of the church founded by the Charter?

For our answer we turn to the Church Order of St. Mary Savoy in London. Saint Mary Savoy, the second oldest Lutheran congregation in the United Kingdom, was made up of people who walked out of Trinity or Hamburg, the first congregation, because, living outside the city, they had no say in congregational affairs. In 1694 they formed their own congregation in the Old Savoy Palace on the Thames and in 1695 drew up their own Church Order or constitution. The Church Ordinance of the original congregation is available,[2] but it is a formal and businesslike set of ordinances which tell us little about life and practice in the congregation. The Church Order of St. Mary Savoy is, in contrast, a rich and vital description of how a congregation of companions of the Augustana can make their confession penetrate and guide every area of their preaching and practice.

Confessional Emphasis

The Church Order makes it clear that the Lutheran Confessions determine what is to be preached in the congregation. All six confessional documents are acknowledged in the article on doctrinal basis, and the Augustana and the Small Catechism are cited again in succeeding sections. The pastors are bidden to "regulate and arrange all their sermons and teaching according to the divine Word" and to teach and preach the Confessions "fully and thoroughly, nothing contrary to them, whether secretly or publicly, also not to introduce or use any new terminology contrary to the Confessions." They are further enjoined to "prepare their sermons in such a way that they teach God's Word purely and clearly, distinguish the true doctrine from the false, impress the right way upon the people so that they may know how to be on their guard against false teaching and teachers and remain with the one pure truth." Secret meetings "that are arranged without the explicit knowledge and approval of the pastors and elders," the Church Order judges as "contrary to the Augsburg Confession" and therefore forbidden.

Lay Responsibility

The priesthood of all believers stands out clearly in the Church Order. It is the responsibility of the elders to ensure that "the Word of God is preached clearly and purely to the Christians of our congregation by devout teachers and preachers." The elders should be consulted by the pastor in doctrinal issues. When he becomes abusive in his preaching against false teachers, then, the Church Order states, "the elders shall speak to the pastor about this in a Christian and brotherly manner that he should avoid this sort of thing so that no offence may be given." Pastors and elders are to work together in cases of church discipline. On Sundays, before the sermon, a layman is to read one or two chapters of the Bible to the congregation. It is the elders' responsibility to see that the bread and wine are at hand for Holy Communion, and to see to it that the pastor's sermon does not exceed the time limit — two hours in the Sunday morning service, one hour in the afternoon.

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[2] MS. 8358 in the Guildhall Library in London.

Admission to Holy Communion

The Church Order of St. Mary Savoy also breathes a hallowed reverence for Holy Communion. "None shall be admitted to the Lord's Supper but those who have been instructed and, after previous confession of sins, have received private or public absolution," it states in almost the same words as the Augustana.[3] "Those who have never been to the Lord's Table or who are not sufficiently instructed in the Christian teaching and faith" should attend the meeting the pastor holds every Saturday from 12 to 3 "to be instructed by him from the Catechism in the chief points of Christian teaching." Members intending to take Communion are expected "to announce themselves beforehand" and to attend the confessional or preparatory service where "they shall be carefully reminded of the strict and righteous judgment of God upon those who come to the Lord's Table unworthily." Those who have not announced themselves beforehand should give their names to the sidesman, and when the pastor later examines the list of such people and sees one or the other "who is on the wrong path," as the Church Order puts it, "he must immediately, the same day, speak to him privately."

There is an interesting custom here, too. According to the Church Order, every Communion service is to end after the benediction with an earnest appeal by the pastor "exhorting the communicant to charity towards the church and the poor."

Attitude Towards Visitors

There are two other circumstances alluded to in the St. Mary Savoy Church Order which are of particular interest to ELCE Lutherans. "If there should come to us individual adult persons . . . who seek Baptism from us and with us, they shall first be taught and instructed in our Catechism and, depending upon their age, make their confession of faith before the congregation." And the second: although, generally speaking, sponsors at Baptism should be Lutheran, the Church Order says, others who wish "to be witnesses in the Baptism of children, the pastor, in the hope of winning them, should not turn such persons away too quickly. Of course, if such are open blasphemers of our Christian faith or ridicule and despise the teaching of our Holy Baptism, then they cannot be allowed to take part. But, otherwise, in cases where there is a desire to be instructed and taught, the pastor shall in a Christian way teach and admonish sincere and simple hearts according to the right teaching of Holy Baptism . . . so that our church when attended and visited by relations from other religions might be built and increased."

Conclusions

In doing research for this article I have been aware of the temptation to read back into the beginnings of Lutheranism 300 years ago the conceptions and yearnings of today and of the particular Lutheran Church of which I am a servant. To look upon the two documents of King Charles as a charter for the ELCE today would be, I fear, to bend the facts of history very considerably. Charles could not possibly have had a church like the ELCE in mind

[3] Augsburg Confession XXV, 1: "not administering the sacrament to those who have not previously been examined and absolved." *The Book of Concord*, ed. Theodore G. Tappert (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959), p. 61.

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when he issued his Warrant in 1669 and his Charter in 1672. That was an entirely different world in many, many ways. The challenge of unchurched masses of Britons, the whole thrust of ELCE mission policy and effort, simply did not exist.

Yet the seed was there, the desire to reach out into the community with the Gospel. You can see it in the Church Order of St. Mary Savoy in the eagerness to reach the occasional visitor or non-Lutheran relatives and friends who wished to act as sponsors at Baptism. You can see it, 20 years later, in the records of the first congregation, Trinity or Hamburg Lutheran Church. The records of 1718 [4] show baptisms of children with English names who were from streets surrounding the church.

If in "community outreach" we can sense a brotherhood with the early Lutherans, then certainly it is clear that what they believed and the way they practiced it in their congregation is substantially the doctrine and practice of the ELCE today. The faith is the same; the confession is the same. That is what makes us with them companions of the Augustana.

The founders of the first Lutheran congregation in Britain were Germans, Scandinavians, and, perhaps, Balts. The members of our ELCE congregations are overwhelmingly British-born, mostly Anglo-Saxon in stock. But whether we look at the confessional requirements of the Charter of 1672 or at the way they were carried out and manifested in the Church Order of 1695, ELCE Lutherans can celebrate with joy and thanksgiving the tercentenary of the first Lutherans in England because, by our common faith and confession, we are with them companions of the Augustana.

If we look at the whole Lutheran picture in Great Britain today, what an example the first Lutheran congregation, founded 300 years ago, holds out to us: one church where the deciding factor for admission was not nationality or language, but the right confession. From the past we have the ideal for our future. Lutherans in Britain today speak in 10 different languages in their worship. But that need not divide us. This is not the time to ask why a church 300 years old — 100 years older than Methodism — has played so negligible a part in British life, but certainly a part of the answer lies in the fact that most of the Lutheran churches still speak in tongues unknown to people of this country. Language is important also for the present. The Lutheran principle is the Pentecostal principle: the Gospel to every man in his own tongue. As long as we have people in Lutheran congregations who understand the Gospel best in Polish or Latvian or Estonian or Swedish or German, their pastors will need to go on preaching in those languages. But when English becomes the natural language of the children, should not the same Pentecostal principle apply? The point is, however, that different languages need not, and do not, divide; different doctrines do.

Look again at the congregation whose birth certificates we have been examining: many nations, yet one church; many languages, yet one confession. If, as the Charter requires, we have "the same faith," we are one church. Nothing else will make us one church. For some years now seven of our Lutheran churches in Britain have been

[4] MS. 8356 in the Guildhall Library.

striving, one pastor and one layman from each church, to manifest "the same faith and religion." The Spirit of God has rested on our efforts, but we have not yet reached unity. We are not one church. But the very tercentenary celebrations observed in our churches give us a new vigor by reminding us that what we desire today once was — 300 years ago. Shall we not then go backward in order to go forward, back to the founding Charter which points out the one essential for our common future, "the same faith," and back to the Church Order which embodies the classic theology and practice of that same faith? Shall we do this, not so much as "Lutherans," a name which, more and more, means many different things, but as "companions of the Augustana"?

London, England