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The little doll in Valerie Rigby's hand, consisting of about \$2 worth of material and stuffing, gave an education to more than 150 children.

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Above: Valerie Rigby with the "Princess Diana" Beanie Baby that was raffled.

Right: Valerie in Haiti, seeing first hand where the money from the raffle was used.

THE LIVING CHURCH

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MANUSCRIPTS AND PHOTOGRAPHS: THE LIVING CHURCH cannot assume responsibility for the return of photos or manuscripts.

THE LIVING CHURCH is published every week, dated Sunday, by the Living Church Foundation, Inc., at 816 E. Juneau Ave., Milwaukee, WI 53202. Periodicals postage paid at Milwaukee, WI

SUBSCRIPTION RATES: \$39.50 for one year; \$54.00 for 18 months; \$70.72 for two years. Foreign postage an additional \$15.00 per year.
POSTMASTER: Send address changes to THE LIVING CHURCH, P.O. Box 514036, Milwaukee, WI 53203-3436.

THE LIVING CHURCH (ISSN 0024-5240) is published by THE LIVING CHURCH FOUNDATION, INC., a non-profit organization serving the Church. All gifts to the Foundation are tax-deductible.

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Number 7

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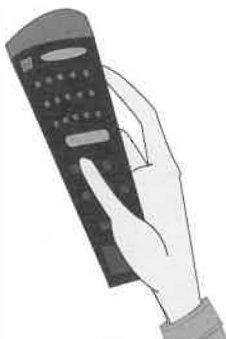
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Illustration by Amy Marciniak

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SUNDAY'S READINGS

Restored Through Faith

'Now I know' (2 Kings 5:15)

The Sixth Sunday After the Epiphany

2 Kings 5:1-15ab; Psalm 42 or 42:1-7; 1 Cor. 9:24-27; Mark 1:40-45

In the lessons for today, there are various levels of faith in the different persons who appear. The leprosy of Naaman and the events involved in its cure sift through their motivations. Some fall, and some rise.

The first person to show faith is the young Israelite girl. Her faith is the most pure and sure. Although a captive in a foreign land, probably removed from her family, she has not lost faith in her God and the efficacy of his prophet, nor has she become bitter toward her captors: "If only my lord were with the prophet who is in Samaria! He would cure him of his leprosy."

Naaman is hopeful enough, or perhaps desperate enough, to make the attempt. His king grants him permission to do so. However, Naaman and the king of Aram both assume that he is to seek out the king of Israel rather than the prophet. Perhaps this is

proper protocol, or perhaps they are unable to function much outside political channels. The king of Israel assumes that the request is a provocation rather than a genuine request — and he might even be right.

The prophet Elisha, however, urges the king of Israel to a position of faith and invites Naaman to come to him. Naaman does so, but is infuriated when Elisha speaks to him only through a messenger and tells him simply to wash in the Jordan. Naaman likely thinks he is being mocked — perhaps what he might expect while he is visiting a country his own nation has conquered. In spite of his hope for healing, he is still thinking politically. Naaman's servants, however, probably less politically motivated or concerned, urge him to comply, and "his flesh was restored." As a result, he immediately comes to faith.

Look It Up

What happened to Gehazi, the servant of Elisha, after Naaman was cleaned, and why? (See 2 Kings 5:19-27.)

Think About It

Why was the significance of Naaman's healing entirely lost on Gehazi? Are there times when cynicism or worldliness prevents us from receiving a blessing God wishes to bestow?

Next Sunday

The Seventh Sunday After the Epiphany

Is. 43:18-25; Psalm 32 or 32:1-8; 2 Cor. 1:18-22; Mark 2:1-12



The Very Rev. Alan Jones
Dean of Grace Cathedral, S.F.

Lenten study video



The Rt. Rev. William E. Swing
Bishop of the Diocese of California

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HERE I STAND: My Struggle for a Christianity of Integrity, Love and Equality

By John Shelby Spong. HarperSanFrancisco. Pp. 448. \$25

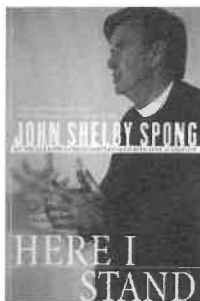
Although the Bishop of Newark's lengthy biography concentrates on his public life, John Shelby Spong's early years with an alcoholic father are recalled without flinching: "His behavior, or the constant fear of it, was like a dark cloud that was always part of our lives." Bishop Spong is also candid about the wrenching decisions he later faced in trying to care for his mentally-ill first wife.

The successes of his parish ministry before he went to Newark came from strong, creative leadership, popular adult forums and civil rights activism. He tells of one moving occasion when he convinced his conservative predecessor at St. Paul's in Richmond — who had been weakened by a stroke — to hold Spong's arm and march in a tribute to the slain Martin Luther King.

The second half of the book gives

the bishop's own view of controversial activities that reverberated throughout the Episcopal Church, ranging from his revisionist writings to his support of women's and gay rights. Little is said, though, about disputes over church closings.

Bishop Spong endlessly recounts his literary popularity, which is seen as proof of his theological positions. "I have authored more books than any other bishop of our church. These books have sold more copies than all other books by all other bishops in that House combined." He is also proud of his thousands of media interviews, including "three appearances



on a popular late-night television program called 'Politically Incorrect'."

He found other personal rewards for weathering the storms of criticism. Returning to Richmond for his wife's funeral, he noticed a lot of young participants in the service whom he didn't recognize. One of them later said to him, "Bishop, you don't know us, but we know you. All of the acolytes and choir members here today are members of Integrity. We would do anything for you because you have done so much for us."

Yet, as the book reaches the late '90s, the conflicts seem to take their toll. Both conservative and liberal bishops are criticized in caustic terms. Bishop Spong writes unforgivingly of

(Continued on page 16)



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Budget Ready for Vote at General Convention

Members of the Executive Council, which met at a New Orleans hotel Jan. 17-20 [TLC, Feb. 6], received the planned agenda for General Convention, which will be held in Denver, Colo., this summer.

Only one joint session of the convention will meet and that session will be limited to an address by the Most Rev. Frank T. Griswold, Presiding Bishop, and the presentation of the triennial budget.

Executive Council passed the proposed budget of more than \$136 million with an amendment, written to provide funding for provincial net-

working and support, said committee member Toni McGauley, of East Tennessee, under the contingency line for mission funding. Funding also was provided for church archives by making reductions to the management information service and human resources budgets.

The council adopted a resolution, after some discussion, approving "a one-time, fair share contribution of \$300,000 from the 2000 budget for the financial recovery and renewal of the National Council of Churches" [TLC, Dec. 12].

A resolution was put forward by the

Congregations in Ministry standing committee requesting the continued monitoring of the dioceses of Fort Worth and Quincy for their compliance with fully implementing the canons bringing women "into the full life and ministry of the church." Progress in implementing the canons in the Diocese of San Joaquin as stated in its response to the committee was noted, said a committee member, the Rev. Sue Reid of Indianapolis. The resolution also legislates reports of the monitoring be received and presented to the Executive Council and the House of Bishops prior to their respective meetings in the fall of 2002.

Among a series of resolutions presented by the International and National Concerns Committee was a mission statement on behalf of refugees and immigrants. The 10-page draft statement affirms the Episcopal Church's "commitment to those suffering from persecuting and forced migration." The resolution also called for funds generated by repayment of refugee loans be directed to Episcopal Migration Ministries, rather than into the general fund.

The mission statement was passed but the funding resolution failed by a narrow margin, said the Rev. Reynolds Cheney of West Tennessee, chair of the committee.

Three proposals have been received to accommodate electronic voting at General Convention. A decision had not yet been made.

Bishop Griswold reported that Fred Kummer of the Adam's Mark Hotels [TLC, Feb. 6] had contacted him, requesting to speak to the Executive Council. Bishop Griswold said he told Mr. Kummer that he declined the request, saying it would not be helpful at that time and that the council had a full agenda.

Bishop Griswold said Mr. Kummer asked to visit with him. The Presiding Bishop said he always welcomes conversation, so an appointment will be scheduled, but that he made Mr. Kummer no promises.

Judi Amey

Evergreen Conference to End

The oldest church music conference in the Episcopal Church will end its 93-year tradition with the 2000 session. Founded by the Rev. Canon Winfred Douglas, the Evergreen Music Conference began meeting at the Evergreen



Part of the complex of buildings once used for the Evergreen Conference.

Conference Center, a rustic campus now within the small town of Evergreen, Colo. Six years ago, the music conference moved to Iron Horse Resort at Winter Park.

Over decades, many of the brightest lights in Anglican music have been part of the Evergreen faculty: Leo Sowerby, Alec Wyton, Ray Glover, Marion J. Hatchett, Richard Proulx, Gerre and

Judith Hancock, Peter Hallock, Carol Doran, Marilyn Keiser.

Russell Schultz, organist and choir director at the Seminary of the Southwest in Austin, Texas, and dean of the conference from 1981 through 1987, responded, "It's tragic!" when told of the ending of the conference. "It's a huge piece of the history of the Episcopal Church."

Conference coordinator John Repulski said Evergreen's endowment was nearly gone. He noted the meeting had always lost money. Fees would have to have been in the neighborhood of \$1,000 to break even, and after the original buildings were no longer available, costs increased. The board of directors, he said, seemed uninterested in finding additional funding.

Originally the conference ran for two weeks. "It was rather more primitive, with a gravel path down the mountain," log buildings, and a barn or shed for group sessions. "It's never been big — under 50 people. That's part of its charm," he said.

"There is a great folk tradition surrounding Evergreen, almost a mystique," Mr. Schultz said. "It was used as a 'trial ground' for the 1940 hymnal, and somewhat for the 1982. It's much beloved."

Patricia Nakamura

Rally Enlivens Louisiana for Mission

Blessed with a gloriously sunny day, 1,063 Louisiana Episcopalians, young and old, arrived by car, shuttle, taxi and bus to celebrate "One



Ann Ball photo

More than 1,000 people participated in the rally.

Church, One Mission" at the first-ever diocesan rally Jan. 15 at St. Martin's School, Metairie.

"It was a huge success," said rally organizer the Rev. Canon Ronald Clingenpeel. "Now it is time to take the messages we heard, the lessons we learned, the fellowship we encountered, and the power of God, back into our congregations and get moving on our vision for this diocese."

The participants heard two presentations from guest speaker the Rt. Rev. Michael Marshall, adviser on

evangelism to the Archbishop of Canterbury, words of welcome and a sermon from the Rt. Rev. Charles Jenkins, Bishop of Louisiana, and greetings from the Most Rev. Frank Griswold, Presiding Bishop, who did his nationally broadcast teleconference from St. Martin's School chapel in the afternoon [TLC, Feb. 6].

The rally-goers gathered en masse for a mid-day Holy Eucharist enlivened with special music created by Albinas Prizgintas, organist-choir-master of Trinity Church, New Orleans. A choir and musicians began the rally with spirited music that drew the crowd together.

Volunteer workers were easy to spot dressed in bright purple T-shirts decorated with the diocese's new vision logo. More than 100 young people took part in the rally.

Dozens of forums highlighted the program. Topics included: spirituality, community life, our vision, evangelism, stewardship, worship, and education. One outdoor forum featured a portable labyrinth sponsored by Trinity, New Orleans.

Many of the rally-goers chose to take part in Bishop Griswold's teleconference [TLC, Feb. 6].

Ann Ball

BRIEFLY

Saying he has changed his ecumenical outlook, the Most Rev. **George Carey**, Archbishop of Canterbury, has become a patron of the Ecumenical Society of the Blessed Virgin Mary (ESBVM). In his response to the society's invitation, Archbishop Carey said, "The ESBVM has had an important place in the ecumenical landscape for many years and has made a significant con-

tribution to the unity of God's church. I am very pleased to be associated with this important work."

In the aftermath of the Jan. 25 snow and ice storm, the **Diocese of North Carolina** postponed its annual convention. This decision delays the election of the diocese's next bishop. The convention was rescheduled for Feb. 9-11 at the Pinehurst Hotel.

Bishop Browning Joins in Support of Sexuality Council's Statement

The Rt. Rev. Edmond L. Browning, retired Presiding Bishop, was among active and retired bishops, other clergy, seminary professors and lay people who have endorsed a statement promoting, among other things, "full inclusion of women and sexual minorities in congregational life, including their ordination and the blessing of same-sex unions."

The Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States (SIECUS) authored the statement, titled "Religious Declaration on Sexual Morality, Justice, and Healing." It "outlines a new paradigm for sexual morality that does not discriminate on the basis of age, marital status or sexual orientation."

The statement also calls for, among other programs:

- "Theological reflection that integrates the wisdom of excluded, often silenced peoples, and insights about sexuality from medicine, social science, the arts and humanities;"
- "Lifelong, age-appropriate sexuality education in schools, seminaries and community settings;"
- "A faith-based commitment to sexual and reproductive rights, including access to voluntary contraception, abortion, and HIV/STD prevention and treatment;" and
- "Religious leadership in movements to end sexual and social injustice."

Most of the endorsements came from United Church of Christ and Unitarian Universalists and the reformed and reconstructionist branches of Judaism.

Others who supported the statement: Bishops Charles Bennison, Jr., Pennsylvania; Frederick Borsch, Los Angeles; Otis Charles, Utah, retired; Steven Charleston, dean, Episcopal Divinity School; John P. Croneberger, Newark; Harold Hopkins, Office of Pastoral Development, retired; Edward L. Lee, Jr., Western Michigan; and Orris G. Walker, Jr., Long Island.

A Child Will Lead Us



Valerie Rigby sees the difference she has made when visiting the school building in Haiti.

From a 12-year-old's heart has come the seed of love that has grown into a flower of sacrificial love that will have its effect on the lives of at least 150 children in another land.

By Greg C. Frazier

In the Broadway musical *Cats*, there is a line in my favorite song, "Memory," that says, "Burned out ends of empty days, the cold, stale smell of morning." This time of the year, I find myself responding in much the same way to the gray skies, the cold, crisp air and the burning sensation in my ears as the wind blows its sting. I long for spring when seeds begin to turn into seedlings, and I watch in awe as these achieve their full beauty as brilliant portraits of the love of God.

From such tiny beginnings come the most beautiful representations of God's regard for us. He splashes color over the countryside as a panorama of beauty replaces the colors of death.

Another great and tremendous beauty sprang forth from the grayness here at St. Paul's-by-the-Sea Church in Jacksonville Beach, Fla. From a 12-year-old's heart has come the seed of love that has grown into a flower of sacrificial love that will have its effect on the lives of at least 150 children in another land.

Valerie Rigby had received a Princess Diana Beanie Baby, among the most valuable of these plush little dolls. Valerie knew of the ministry of Food for the Poor, an ecumenical relief organization where I worked for several years. She had heard that only \$500 could educate 25 children for a year, providing them with a renovated building, school supplies, uniforms, three meals a day and a fourth to take home to share with their families, all the books and a teacher. Valerie and her parents, Celia and Doug, thought it would be a great idea to raffle the doll by selling tickets for \$2 each. They set a goal of \$500, and went to work designing and printing the tickets and getting the youth group involved as sponsor of the event.

It got off to a great start, and then interest seemed to wane, to the point that we were afraid that we were not going to meet the goal. This was going to be another letdown for the youth group.

But God had other plans for this little seed of love. It was watered and fertilized and nurtured, and the youth group raised \$530. The day of the raf-



“Even though it is not our loved ones who are hungry and poor, we need to remember that as we like to think we are the children of God, they are, too. It is our responsibility to God as Christians, to help those in need.”

— Valerie Rigby

fle came, the winning ticket was chosen, and we all felt wonderful about what had happened. Then, as we were patting ourselves on the back for a job well done, a parishioner came to me and told me that his family wanted to match that amount. The next day, another parishioner gave me yet another matching check for \$530. In addition to all of this, another donor from outside the parish had offered to match any gift that came in through Christmas. So this little doll, mixed with a 12-year-old's love, nurtured by her godly parents, fertilized by two other parish families, and harvested by yet another anonymous donor, turned about \$2 worth of material and stuffing into \$3,180.

But the story isn't over. The money isn't significant itself, but it is the love and commitment that the money and the doll represent. It's the love that was so contagious that it was caught by enough people to cause a miracle to happen.

We will never know the extent of that miracle. The country of Haiti is in shambles. Its people have suffered drought, famine, homelessness and deprivation. They have suffered through dictators who have plundered the natural resources of the country and presidents with good hearts who haven't been able to do a thing. Just maybe one of the children will be educated by St. Paul's by-the-Sea will grow up and be the person behind a change that could be even more miraculous.

But the story continued. Thanks to Valerie's brave and faithful parents and a supportive parish family, she was able to fulfill her dream of traveling to Haiti to see first hand where the money was being used. She returned to us changed. On Youth Sunday, she preached the sermon. Here is some of what she said:

“When children are fortunate enough to be chosen to receive an education, they are also provided with a uniform. This is considered such a privilege and blessing that the very weak and poor parents carry their young children to school in their arms so that they don't soil or destroy their uniforms by walking through the mud.

“Imagine waking up some morning very sore

because you slept on a very hard, bumpy, wet surface. You caught a terrible cold because last night it rained. Your roof, made of thin twigs, was not absorbent enough and water seeped through. Your sore throat hurts, but you have no medicine. Today, the number one thing on your mind is where and if you will get enough or any food at all. You walk over to the corner of your shack where you usually keep your clothes and the pile is muddy and wet. You are disturbed by your mom trying to keep the cries down of your starving sisters. By 10 a.m., when you finally get to school, you have traveled along busy roads and followed smelly donkeys. After you get your meal of the day you wonder if your sister and mom will even be alive when you get home, or if tonight will be another rainy night. This is normal Haitian lifestyle. It's not even thinkable to us.

“I was never so proud to be an American who lives in a beautiful city with a family, with friends and endless opportunities. I believe that as a church we can make a difference. Together we can pray and work on helping the needy. Even though it is not our loved ones who are hungry and poor, we need to remember that as we like to think we are the children of God, they are, too. It is our responsibility to God as Christians, to help those in need.”

And there you have it. The pain and suffering of the world as seen through the eyes of a 12-year-old. At the end of the sermon, there were few dry eyes as we were invited to view the world through the eyes of Jesus.

Scripture tells us that a little child will lead us. We have been given an example of stewardship of the highest order, the stewardship of the heart that is willing to risk in order to make the world a better place. We have been given an example, once again by our young people.

So lead us, children. Remind us of our priorities. Show us again the path of simple, sacrificial love. □

The Rev. Greg C. Frazier is vicar of St. Paul's by-the-Sea Church, Jacksonville Beach, Fla.

Mystery Worshipers Tell It Like It Is

Be forewarned. Your parish may be visited by an anonymous mystery worshiper who intends to take lots of notes about what goes on there and will publish the findings on the Internet for all to read. If your soloist goes flat or if you ignore visitors at coffee hour, or if the pews are uncomfortable, you can be sure that will be mentioned.

Information on the visits may be found on the website belonging to Ship of Fools, a London-based online "magazine" launched nearly two years ago. It's entertaining, irreverent, informational and thought provoking. Its mystery worshipers reminded me of a similar venture of perhaps 12-15 years ago when some persons from Pittsburgh were visiting churches and rating them almost like a restaurant reviewer.

Here's how it works. A member of Ship of Fools' "team" visits a church unannounced, makes sure a standard list of questions is answered, and the only clue that someone's been at the church is when a mystery worshiper calling card is found in the offering plate. Though based in London, churches from all over the world are visited, including a surprising number of Episcopal churches.

Among the questions: How full was the building? Did anyone welcome you personally? Did anything distract you? On a scale of 1-10, how good was the preacher? What happened when you hung around after the service looking lost? How would you feel (on a scale of 1-10) about making this church your "regular"?

Here's a sampling of some of the Episcopal churches visited by mystery worshipers:

Trinity Church, Asheville, N.C.: The Rev. Bill Whisenhunt, rector, received a 10 on the preaching scale, but the "congregation seems very much a closed corporation."

Grace Church, Pittsburgh: A "spooky-looking stone Gothic box" with friendly people and "a subdeacon whose Pittsburgh accent defeated me entirely during the epistle."

St. Paul's Cathedral, San Diego: Received a 10, but the sermon the day of the visit lasted 29 minutes. The visitor was impressed by receiving a complimentary ceramic coffee mug.

St. Mark's, Durango, Colo.: "Visitors were required to stand and introduce themselves. I thought only Baptists did that."

St. Stephen's, Olean, N.Y.: The sanctus bell "sounded remarkably like a telephone," yet the parish received an 8.

Trinity by-the-Sea, Kihei, Maui, Hawaii: Worshiping outdoors, which was a positive experience, the only distraction was "a few small flies which kept landing on my arms."

All Saints', Peterborough, N.H.: The visitor marveled at the "beauty of the building," but noted the town "was recently voted the 'snootiest in New Hampshire' by a local magazine."

St. Stephen's, Longmont, Colo.: "The building without its cross could easily pass for a public elementary school."

You get the idea. Whatever takes place during the visit is fair game for these folks, and they're sure to make note of it. Visits to cathedrals in Washington and New York are noted, as are trips to Orthodox, Roman Catholic and protestant congregations.

I didn't read them all, but of the ones I spent time with, my favorite was St. Bartholomew's Church, Brighton, England. The mystery worshiper wrote that the building is like "sitting in the turbine hall of a disused power station," and said the worship there "made the medieval popes look lower than a

snake's nether region's."

While not calling the parish unfriendly, the anonymous one noted, "I've been here four times in the last five years and have never once spoken to a priest." Finally, there was mention of "some wonderful old loonies gushing from a huge pulpit."

It's all in good fun, especially if we don't take it too seriously. Try it for yourselves:

<http://www.ship-of-fools.com/mystery/index.html>.

David Kalvelage, executive editor

Did You Know...
The Anglican Church of Korea has three dioceses.

Quote of the Week

Daniel Cozens, British evangelist, on church attendance statistics, claiming they are "like a bikini; they show you an awful lot but hide the vital parts."



Taken from the 'Ship of Fools' website homepage, January 25, 2000.

If your soloist goes flat or if you ignore visitors at coffee hour, or if the pews are uncomfortable, you can be sure that will be mentioned.

Farewell to Evergreen

Church musicians learned with sadness recently that the well-loved Evergreen Music Conference [p. 6] would cease to exist. The glistening Rockies, wildflower walking trails, afternoon *sforzando* storms followed by *dolce* double rainbows, brought mountain mystique to the days of choral conducting and composition workshops, organ recitals on “the mighty Kimball,” becoming the choir for a service at St. John’s Cathedral, Denver, and sight-reading of new music, often with the composer conducting and modifying in mid-phrase.

The list of Evergreen faculty over the years is a roster of past and present stars of church music. Attendance was small by design, and organists, choir leaders, choristers from across the country had access to the experts and time to form lasting friendships. The conference will be mourned, in 2001 and beyond. Creating glorious music at Evergreen, in all its 93 years, was truly “a mountain-top experience.”

Forum for Many Opinions

From time to time it is helpful, both for us and our readers, to offer an explanation about the opinions which appear in this publication. Like most magazines, THE LIVING CHURCH offers various presentations which are of a subjective nature and represent the opinions of the authors. Those are clearly identified in order that they are not confused as being news articles or other objective matter.

You are reading one of the sections of the magazine in which opinions are presented. The editorial page reflects the opinion of the Living Church Foundation, the publisher of this magazine. In general, these unsigned editorials are written by the executive editor, although from time to time another editor on the staff may contribute.

A popular, though sometimes misunderstood, part of this magazine is the Viewpoint article. The Viewpoint reflects the point of view of the author and may not necessarily be the same opinion as the board of directors of the Living Church Foundation or of the leaders of the Episcopal Church. Viewpoint articles are a valuable way for us to learn what other Episcopalians are thinking, and may offer to us a perspective on a particular issue we hadn’t considered.

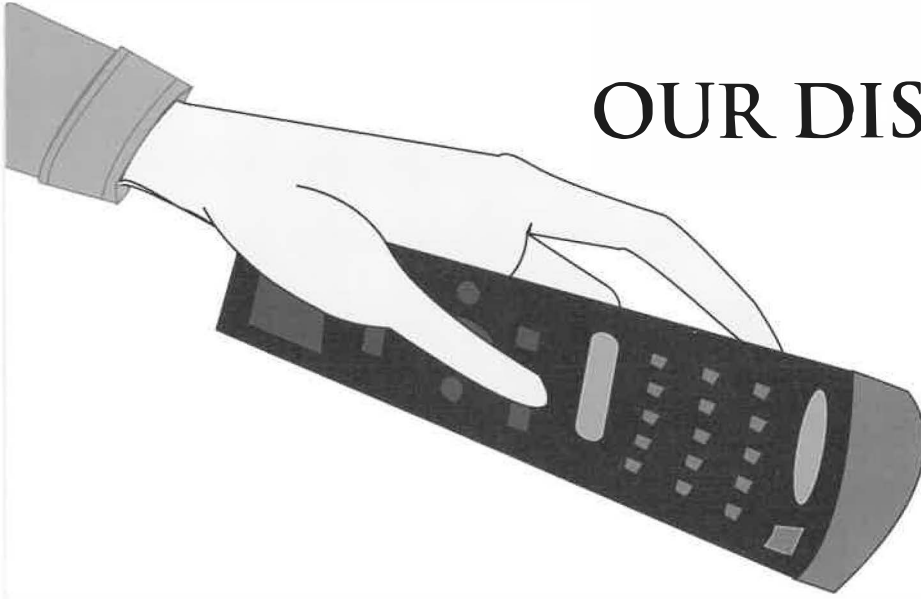
Opinions also are reflected in the letters to the editor. These brief presentations reflect a wide variety of positions and often lead to discussions which can be immensely helpful. Finally, opinions also are presented in the column, usually written by the executive editor, but sometimes by another staff member or a writer from elsewhere.

We are convinced that one of the greatest benefits THE LIVING CHURCH offers to members of the Episcopal Church is a forum for various opinions, beliefs and ideas to be presented. The dialogue created by such presentations can be of immense help in building a stronger church.



Calamity was narrowly averted when the verger switched the monster for the monstrosity.

OUR DISTRACTED AGE



There's no need to stay constantly busy.

No need to attend every meeting.

No need to be constantly "in touch" or always available.

It's impossible anyway.

By Brad McIntyre

John Henry Newman was fond of saying, "Life is for action." This is true, up to a point, for I think even Newman would agree that not all actions are created equal. It's important for us to remember this in an era when doing has replaced depth and busyness has replaced essence.

Even the church has been seduced into action for action's sake and reflects the random busyness of our distracted age. When a priest tells me, "I'm so busy I hardly have time for prayer," I start wondering. What actions are so vital to the church that they supplant prayer?

I hear the complaint of a seminary intern I

John Henry Newman was fond of saying, "Life is for action." I think even Newman would agree that not all actions are created equal.

know, who says, "I spend 75 percent of my time in staff meetings! I feel like I never get to do any real ministry." Ah, yes — meetings masquerading as ministry. And how many of these mandatory meetings are grounded in prayer and actually advance in concrete ways the cause of the gospel? Nevertheless, we keep scheduling meetings, filling up our appointment calendars, deluding ourselves that we are doing the Lord's work.



Wordsworth said that a poem is emotion recollected in tranquility. By "tranquility" he meant, I think, contemplation — emotion recollected in moments of contemplation. A poem, like a good prayer, requires some depth. It requires time for reflection in order to recollect the essence of an experience, particularly the emotional aspects. If religion is about anything, it is about essence, yet how can essence grab us if we're always running around lost in busyness?

In one of his essays, Saul Bellow writes, "The concern of tale-tellers and novelists is with the human essences neglected and forgotten by a distracted world." I would add that it is also the concern of preachers, or should be.

Bellow describes distraction as a "dispersion of themes" which agitates and confuses us. Recently I heard an ad on the radio for a TV satellite dish that offers 200 cable channels. That is a dispersion of themes! Imagine surfing with your remote across the surface of 200 television channels and not feeling a bit agitated or confused. How easy to lose sight of "human essences." My guess is that people who watch a lot of TV don't write many poems — or prayers.

Last year a 14-year-old girl told me she smokes "because I get so stressed out, like wow, like I can't take it, you know?" Fourteen years old, stressed out, and smoking.

I keep telling my 17-year-old daughter to rest more, get to bed earlier, slow down. She's a senior in high school and starts her day at 6 a.m. and doesn't stop until 11 p.m. Why? Certainly there's action here. Plenty of it. But I see her looking and sounding weary,

and she is too young to look and sound weary.

One of my favorite jokes shows a business man in his office, talking on the phone while looking down at his appointment calendar. He says, "No, Wednesday won't work. No, Thursday's out. How 'bout never? Will never work for you?" Funny, but sadly true.

And what about me? I find myself driving around at times listening to stupid talk radio shows, filling up the silence with noise. Why?

When I preach, I am aware that I speak to a distracted, stressed-out congregation. Like me, they have learned to be present and absent at the same time. I suppose it's a survival mechanism. The noise keeps coming at us day after day, and sermons can be just one more "noisy gong." We instinctively protect ourselves by changing channels, mentally. One reason I became an Episcopalian a few years back is that I'm tired of the wordiness of protestant worship and hungered for a more symbolic, visual spirituality. My soul needed relief from talking heads (though many talking heads can be found in Episcopal circles).

Listening is an art that requires a quiet mind — and it is becoming a lost art. But can spiritual growth occur without it? What use are actions when severed from deep listening? Of what value is intense busyness without contemplation? I think Saul Bellow is right when he says that people take alcohol and drugs "to get relief from the horrors of ceaseless intensity."

And what about "sound bite" spirituality? Don't we have enough daily devotionals by now? How many more *Chicken Soup for the Soul* books can we digest before we resemble Chicken Soup Christians? We need more meat than a story for the day with our hand on the door knob. Perhaps a spiritual quick fix is better than none at all, but it's kind of like spraying mist on flowers when they need a good soaking. Soon prayer becomes one sound bite in a sea of sound bites, one more "theme" dispersed among a million others. Taking a minute for God is nice, but how much genuine listening can occur in a minute?

As a priest, I find funerals to be ideal times for deep listening. Nothing gets a person's attention like death and sorrow. There's nothing wrong with a happy heart, but a broken heart is more likely to pause and bend an ear toward what is essential. Loss and grief are about the only means of grace God has left for a distracted age.

It might be the fear of stillness, the awful silence of our own loneliness, which disposes us toward manic movements. Are we strangers to ourselves? To sit, to close our eyes, to shut out all distractions, to breathe slowly and deeply, to listen to pray ... does it seem unproductive?

Nothing to show for it? Apparently Jesus did a lot of that kind of stuff and it worked for him. In fact, we are told he had compassion for the crowds because they were distracted and harrassed. I imagine he feels the same toward us.

We don't need a retreat master to tell us what to do. In one of his short stories, Mark Twain said, "Plain question and plain answer make the shortest road out of most perplexities." Plain question: What shall we do about the noise? Plain answer: Turn it down or off or leave the room. There's no need to stay constantly busy. No need to attend every meeting. No need to be always informed about world events or fast-breaking news. No need to read everything or buy everything or please everyone.

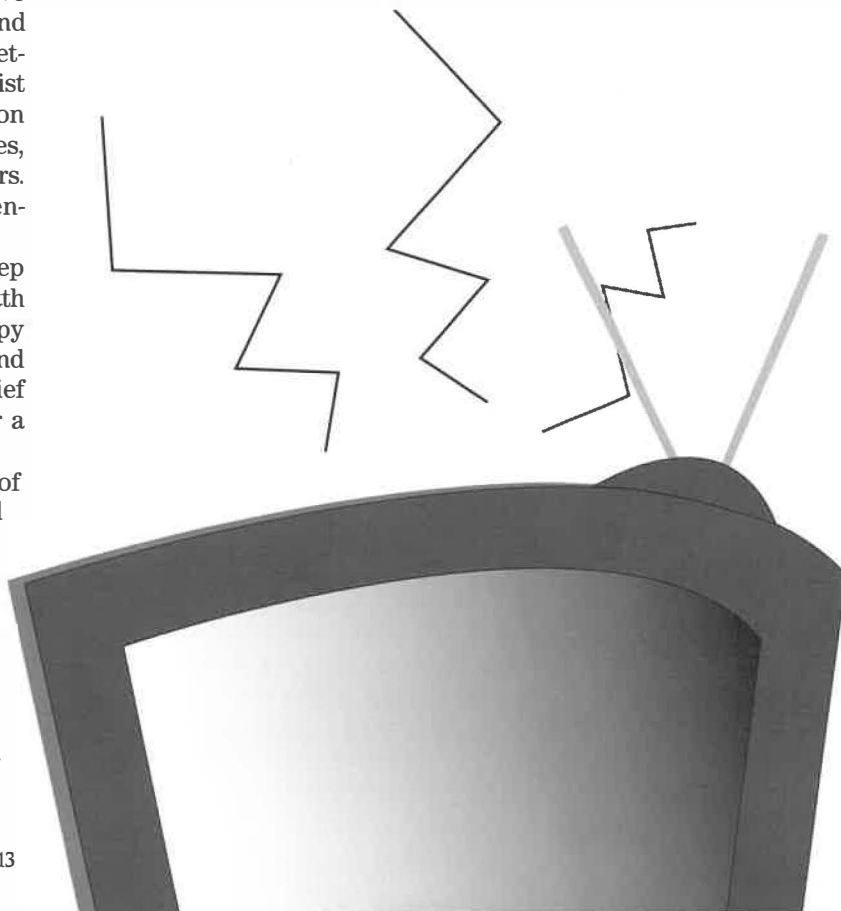
Probably no need for a personal web page or 200 cable channels or a faster modem or even a car phone. No need to be constantly "in touch" or always available. It's impossible anyway.

Rainer Rilke wrote a poem which says in part: "I am circling around God, around the ancient tower, / and I have been circling for a thousand years, / and I still don't know if I am a falcon, or a storm, / or a great song."

How will we ever know who we are and what our purpose is unless we keep circling around God, daily, fiercely, and desperate to know? We are poems recollected in moments of deep listening, made for holy action. □

The Rev. Brad McIntyre is vicar of Church of the Holy Apostles, Oneida, Wis.

Listening is an art that requires a quiet mind — and it is becoming a lost art.



"[There is] a far more meaningful way to organize and pursue mission than around age."

More Than Age

We are always glad when anyone speaks out against the ageism that flows from and contributes to the greying of the Episcopal Church, and for this reason we applaud "My Journey to Postulancy," by the Rev. Bennett G. Jones II [TLC, Jan. 23]. As he points out, it is scandalous that clergy who are entering midlife with years of priesthood behind them can still find themselves condescended to by older colleagues.

This presentation, however, evidences some misconceptions which we feel need clearing up. There is, as far as we know, no group of "self-described young clergy" in the Episcopal Church. Gathering the neXt Generation (GTNG), the network which sponsored the conference Fr. Jones mentions, neither defines its

members as "young" nor limits participation in our ministry to people "under 35." GTNG, a fellowship focused on both community building across ideological lines and service to the wider church, encompasses clergy born 1961-1981, the broadest range commonly used to define Generation X. Some of us are now 28, some 38, but we will still be Xers when we are 78. We are organized generationally because we believe that to be a far more meaningful way to organize and pursue our mission than around age. The difficulty the church has had in noticing this fact, and the frequency with which church people dismiss our self-presentation in favor of the label "young," seems to us a perfect indicator of the very problems that need to be addressed.

If there is a move afoot to organize "young" clergy per se, we would support it, but many of us in GTNG would consider ourselves already too old to participate.

(The Rev.) J. Scott Barker

(The Rev.) Clayton Crawley

(The Rev.) Beth Maynard

(The Rev.) Tom Sramek, Jr.

Gathering the neXt Generation

Core Team

Investigate the Call

I regret that Fr. Ruef's "Not So Great Expectations" [TLC, Jan. 2] reveals what happens in a seminary when either bishops or administration do not adequately investigate the nature of a call to ministry. In my diocese I was able to serve on the commission on ministry for several years before retirement. The quality of members initially surprised me. Here were men and women, lay and ordained, who had studied to understand the nature of their mission, who often had more years of college than I (10 in my case), and who were able to bring invaluable gifts and skills to the process of discernment. I am proud to have served with them.

In teaching at the college level, I began to assist my students in evaluating their goals and experiences. Sometimes that meant dealing with the question of whether or not they were headed in the right direction. Virginia Seminary gave me and my classmates opportunities to test our vocation, and some did not choose to complete the course. I would hope all seminary professors and administration would seriously consider the ways in which seminarians could be assisted in determining their call to whatever ministry God has for them.

Please: fewer articles by bitter souls and more articles by writers who have something to help the church in its mission.

(The Rev.) Richard H. Merrill
Palm Springs, Calif.

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I am writing in response to the Rev. John S. Ruef's Viewpoint article. While I agree with him that the process for selecting those to be ordained is flawed, I am disturbed by his comments. If the intellectually gifted who are Christians need to make their points by attacking and belittling those with whom they disagree, how do they differ from secular intellectuals? If Fr. Ruef is the model for what we are looking for in ordination aspirants, then love, grace and tolerance are going to be replaced by scorn seasoned with sarcasm as the preferred character traits. As flawed as the current selection process may be, it does do better than that.

*(The Rev.) John P. Bingham
The Samaritan Counseling Center
Sacramento, Calif.*

He Truly Loved Life

The obituary for Bishop Harte [TLC, Jan. 16] captured many highlights of his ministry. However, I believe the story missed one very important hallmark of his life, the value he placed on all life, including the unborn.

Before Roe v. Wade became law, Bishop Harte sensed the momentum seeking to legalize abortion. As early as 1966 he began calling upon the Episcopal Church to proclaim the sanctity of life. In 1971, he organized a committee to study the issue of abortion and began chapters of Episcopalians for Life. Officially incorporating

in 1983, Episcopalians for Life was renamed the National Organization of Episcopalians for Life (NOEL), and he became one of the founding supporters.

As president emeritus of NOEL, the bishop continued to support and encourage this ministry. As recently as August 1999, he wrote me a letter

admonishing NOEL to stand firm against assisted suicide, saying, "it is another assault on the dignity of man who is created in God's image."

He was a saint in our time who truly loved life.

*(The Rev.) Geoffrey W. Chapman
President, NOEL
Sewickley, Pa.*

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By Travis Du Priest

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BOOKS

(Continued from page 5)

"the ultimate weakness of most liber-
als. They can't walk the walk nearly as
easily as they can talk the talk..." But
if he sees his final primary audience as
consisting of "believers in exile" out-
side the church, then is it surprising
that he doesn't please bishops and
others inside the church?

"Only time will tell if he really saw
the death of the Church visibly at the
[1998] Lambeth Conference..." and
whether "the Church of my dreams
and visions, the Church I had glimpsed
periodically, the Church I loved, was
being drowned in a sea of dated theo-
logical irrelevancy undergirded by bib-
lical ignorance." Only time will tell
whether the eighth Bishop of Newark
was part of the problem, or part of the
solution.

(The Rev.) Douglas Ousley
New York N.Y.

PEOPLE & PLACES

Appointments

The Rev. **David Lucey** is assistant at St. Matthew's, PO Box 293, Bedford, NY 10506.

The Rev. **Jean Mather** is rector of Christ Church and St. Michael's, 29 W Tulpehocken St., Philadelphia, PA 19144.

The Rev. **Fletcher Montgomery** is rector of St. John's, 2827 Wheat St., Columbia, SC 29205.

The Rev. **Leilani Nelson** is associate at St. Paul's, 415 Camino Real, Burlingame, CA 94010.

Ordinations

Deacons

Fort Worth – Scott Peter Albergate
Pittsburgh – Lisa B. Hamilton, Daniel Klooster, Joseph Martin

Western North Carolina – Melanie Christopher, Messiah, Murphy; **Alexander Hanks**, Redeemer, Asheville; **Alan Hetzel**, Incarnation, Highlands; **Michael Jenkins**, St. Mary's, Morganton; **Pat Jones**, St. Alban's, Hickory; **Shirley Long**, Holy Communion, Glendale Springs; **Muriel Moore**, Holy Cross, Valle Crucis; **Geri Nelson**, Holy Family, Mills River.

Priests

Easton – Sheila Nelson-McJilton
New Jersey – Susan Sica
Pittsburgh – Brian L. Vander Wel

Resignations

The Rev. **Sallie Bailey**, as associate at Calvary, Columbia, MO.

The Rev. **Richard Bormes**, as canon to the ordinary, Diocese of Missouri.

The Rev. **Jay Cook**, as assistant at St. Mary's, Manchester, CT.

The Rev. **Walter LaBatt**, as rector of St. Paul's, St. Louis, MO.

The Rev. **Pam Webb**, as rector of Christ Church, Smithfield, VA.

Retirements

The Rev. **Richard Knudsen**, as rector of St. James', St. Clair, and St. John's, Sullivan, MO.

The Rev. **Richard Cornish Martin**, as interim at Church of the Advent, Boston, MA; add. 1020 Henderson St., Columbia, SC 29201. He is serving as interim at St. Mark's, Charleston, SC.

The Rev. Canon **John C. Powers**, as general secretary of colleges and universities of the Anglican Communion and executive vice president of the Association of Episcopal Colleges.

The Rev. **John R. Stieper**, SSC, as rector of St. Columba's, Hanover Park, IL.

Change of Address

The Rev. **Alexander Breckinridge**, 2721 Creeks Edge Pkwy., Austin, TX 78733.

The Rev. **John C. Cochran**, 4007 Brandy-chase Way, Apt. 269, Cincinnati, OH 45245.

The Rev. **Harry James Rains, Jr.**, 1185 Benjamin Pl., El Cajon, CA 92020.

The Rev. **Kathryn M. Schillreff**, 7070 Immokalee Rd., Naples, FL 34119.

The Rev. **Donald Whalen**, 1950 SW Palm City Rd. 13-301, Stuart, FL 34994-4369.

Receptions

Missouri – The Rev. John Fleming from the Roman Catholic Church

Correction

Because of an editor's error, the ordination announcement for the Rev. **Marc Burnette** was incorrect. Fr. Burnette was ordained priest in the Diocese of Alabama.

Because of an editor's error, an incorrect address was printed for the appointment of the Rev. **M. Randall Melton**. Fr. Melton is rector of St. Michael and All Angels, 53720 N Ironwood Rd., South Bend, IN 46635-1532.

Deaths

The Rev. **Matthew Anthony Curry**, retired priest of the Diocese of San Diego, died Dec. 23 following a

long illness. He was 90.

Fr. Curry was born in Rome, Italy. He was a graduate of Nashotah House and was ordained deacon in 1937 and priest in 1938. He served as curate at Trinity, Pine Bluff, AR, 1938; as rector of St. Stephen's, Blytheville, AR, 1938-40; as curate of Incarnation, New York, NY, 1940-42, at which time he entered the U.S. Navy Chaplain Corps. He retired from the Navy as a commander in 1969. Fr. Curry is survived by his wife, Evelyn Mae Chamberlain Curry.

Sister **Mary Electa, CSM**, (Marian Electa Davis) died at St. Mary's Convent, Peekskill, NY, Jan. 15. She was 92.

Sr. Mary Electa was trained at the Church Training School, Philadelphia, PA, and served as a missionary in the Philippines, including a period of internment during World War II. She entered the Community of St. Mary after the war ended and was professed in 1959.

Next week...

A Medical Missionary

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GRACE CHURCH, Paris, TN, is seeking a dynamic and enthusiastic priest to shepherd a loving, faithful and traditional parish. Grace Church is located in the heart of the Land Between The Lakes recreation and wildlife area of West Tennessee. We have just completed a full restoration of our beautiful and historic facilities and are looking forward to growing in the orthodox Anglican faith with our new rector. Our rectory, salary and benefit package is competitive. Please contact: **Dr. Bradley Almquist, Sr. Warden, Grace Church, P.O. Box 447, Paris, TN 38242-0447.**

THE PEOPLE OF ST. JOHN'S CHURCH in Halifax, VA, are ready to answer the call of the Lord to be sent into his harvest, but they need someone to direct and guide them. Do you feel called to minister with a congregation who are accustomed to hear the Word preached and the Sacraments regularly administered? Would you seek ways to bring together the seniors, the young and the in-betweens to work together in the harvest? They are ready to be led into the church of the new millennium. Do you feel called to guide them in the way? For further information, please contact: **Jim Davis, P.O. Box 486, Halifax, VA 24558. (804) 476-1577. FAX (804) 575-1202.**

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DYNAMIC AND ENERGETIC 100-year-old parish seeks curate to help enlarge the kingdom of God through our common witness and to teach the truth of Christ. Our primary interest is youth. See our website at www.stlukes-dsm.org or contact: **The Rev. Robert Elfvin, St. Luke's Episcopal Church, 3424 Forest Ave., Des Moines, IA 50311.**

GALLOWAY MEMORIAL EPISCOPAL CHURCH, Elkin, NC, is seeking an energetic, Christ-centered individual for our first full-time priest. Our diocese has awarded us a 3-year grant for clergy development. We are a dynamic, growing congregation desiring to deepen our faith through worship, Christian education and service to our community. We are committed to joyfully supporting a vicar who will provide spiritual guidance, embrace involvement with our children, and assist us in outreach and community service. Located in the foothills of the Blue Ridge mountains, Elkin is a great place to live with excellent schools, recreation and medical facilities. If interested, please send resume and CDO profile to: **Jane Motsinger, Clerk of the Search Committee, 440 Fax Welborn Rd., State Road, NC 28676; e-mail mojadaha@surry.net**

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THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD, Dallas, is seeking an assistant to the rector. Candidates should be ordained Episcopal priests with two or more years experience. The major emphasis of this position is youth ministry, Christian education program support and shared preaching and pastoral duties. Good Shepherd is a corporate sized parish located in North Dallas. There is a parish day school of approximately 600 students adjoining the parish. Interested candidates should send their resume, CDO profile and references to: **The Rev. Jay Hobbs, Church of the Good Shepherd, 11122 Midway Rd., Dallas, TX 75229.**

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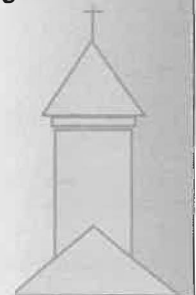
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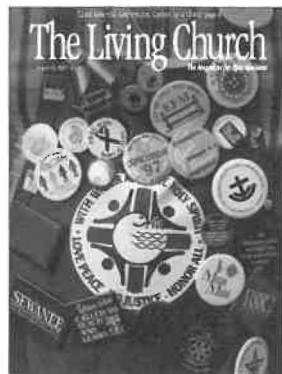
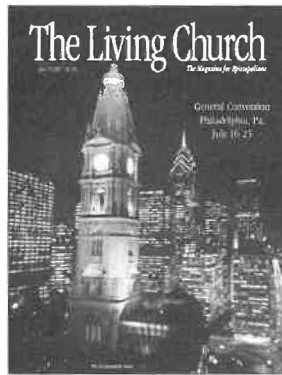
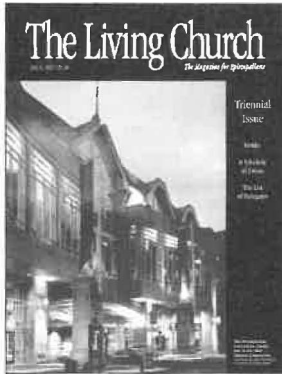
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