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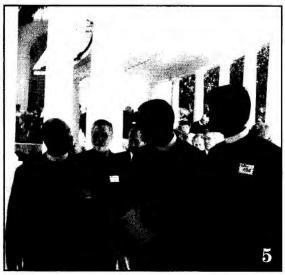
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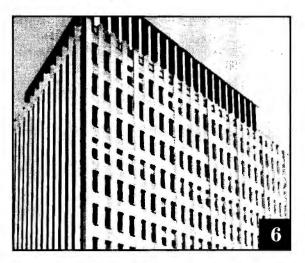
THE LIVING CHURCH magazine is published by the Living Church Foundation, Inc. The historic mission of the Living Church Foundation is to promote and support Catholic Anglicanism within the Episcopal Church.

THIS WEEK



Sylvia Weeks photo

Following the Eucharist, convention delegates walk to the Fellowship Hall at St. James' Church, James Island, S.C., for the Aug. 4 election of the Diocese of South Carolina's 14th bishop. From left: the Rev. Kirtley Yearwood, vicar, Grace Church, Charleston; Thom Pennington, a member of St. John's, John's Island; the Rev. Shay Gaillard, rector, Good Shepherd, West Ashley; and the Rev. Andrew O'Dell, rector, St. Matthew's, Darlington.



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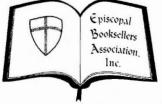
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SUNDAY'S **READINGS**

Left Behind?

'See, I am laying in Zion a foundation stone'

(Isaiah 28:16)

The 13th Sunday After Pentecost (Proper 16C), Aug. 26, 2007

BCP: Isaiah 28:14-22; Psalm 46; Heb. 12:18-19, 22-29; Luke 13:22-30 RCL: Jer. 1:4-10; Psalm 71:1-6 or Isalah 58:9b-14; Psalm 103:1-8; Heb. 12:18-29: Luke 13:10-17

Tim LaHave's and Jerry Jenkins' recent "Left Behind" book series clearly resonated with the psyches of a large number of Christian people. Unfortunately, the chord it struck was with a base form of religious arrogance. It's the sort of spirituality which enables folks to claim, "I'm saved and you're not," and to emblazon bumpers with the warning, "In case of rapture this car will be unmanned." It plays out among Episcopalians today like this: "I'm privy to God's truth and you aren't."

Someone asks Jesus, "Lord, will only a few be saved?" He answers, "Strive to enter through the narrow door; for many, I tell you, will try to enter and will not be able' (Luke 13:23-24). It's easy to find fuel for our egos in the Lord's response. Clearly those "many" who will "not be able" to enter the kingdom are those who don't measure up to our own spiritual standards. We take comfort in believing that it's they who will be "left behind."

Jesus, however, continues by condemning religious arrogance. You will "begin to stand outside and to knock at the door, saying, 'Lord, open to us,' then in reply he will say to you, 'I do

not know where you come from." Moreover, "There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrown out" (13:25, 28). So much for egotistical "blessed assurance."

The prophet Isaiah envisions the eventual building of the kingdom. "See, I am laying in Zion a foundation stone, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation." The Lord, moreover, "will make justice the line, and righteousness the plummet; hail will sweep away the refuge of lies" (28:16-17). It is those, perhaps, whose arrogance is beaten into poverty of spirit who measure up to fitting in the kingdom's walls. And maybe it's those who treat their enemies with respect and dignity who aren't left behind when the kingdom arrives in its fullness.

The Letter to the Hebrews describes being ready for the kingdom like this: "Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us give thanks, by which we offer to God an acceptable worship with reverence and awe; for indeed our God is a consuming fire" (12:28-29).

Look It Up

How does Jesus react to spiritual arrogance in Luke 18:9-14?

Think About It

What are some of the ways in which we personally might be guilty of spiritual arrogance? What can we do to correct those things?

Next Sunday

The 14th Sunday After Pentecost (Proper 17C), Sept. 2, 2007

BCP: Ecclus. 10:(7-11)12-18; Psalm 112; Heb. 13:1-8; Luke 14:1, 7-14

RCL: Jer. 2:4-13; Psalm 81:1, 10-16 or Ecclus. 10:12-18 or Prov. 25:6-7; Psalm 112; Heb. 13:1-8,15-16; Luke 14:1, 7-14

No Surprises, Much Rejoicing in South Carolina

The Very Rev. Mark Lawrence Elected Bishop a Second Time

Under the canopy of ancient moss-covered oaks, historic St. James' Church, James' Island, was the site of the Diocese of South Carolina's Aug. 4 special convention to elect a bishop. Eleven months after electing the Very Rev. Mark J. Lawrence, rector of St. Paul's Church, Bakersfield, Calif., on the first ballot, the diocese again expressed emphatic support for the bishop-elect.

Fr. Lawrence was the choice of more than three-fourths of voting delegates on the first ballot of an election for bishop last September. He received consent from a majority of bishops with jurisdiction, but he failed to receive canonically valid consents from a majority of standing committees and his election was

consents from a majority of standing committees and his election was

July

Sylvia Weeks photo

Convention delegates respond with applause at the official announcement of Fr. Lawrence's election.

ruled null and void in March.

In deciding to nominate Fr. Lawrence for bishop a second time, the South Carolina standing committee stated that "there was an overwhelming consensus" among Episcopalians in the diocese that "the Holy Spirit had spoken in the election of Fr. Lawrence," and that "technicalities had prevented" his receiving the necessary consents on the previous occasion.

The Rev. Haden McCormick, president of the standing committee, nominated Fr. Lawrence.

No other names were added, the announced period for petition candidates having expired in July with no additional names

submitted. While there was only one name on each ballot, the opportunity was given to vote "yes" or "no." Ballots were also collected in a roll call by orders.

Bishop Salmon announced that in the clerical order, Fr. Lawrence had received 78 yes votes, with two no votes and two abstentions. Among parish churches, Fr. Lawrence received 43 yes votes, with three no votes and one absten-



Joy Hunter photo

Diocesan Chancellor Wade Logan makes sure all is done in proper order, as Bishop Edward Salmon looks on.

tion. Mission churches cast seven yes votes, with one divided vote.

Bishop Salmon declared Fr. Lawrence to be the diocese's bishopelect, delegates sang the Doxology, and were dismissed with a blessing.

(The Rev.) Dow Sanderson

New Jersey Bishop Reveals Parkinson's Diagnosis

In response to concerns that have been raised about his health, the Rt. Rev. George Councell, Bishop of New Jersey, announced Aug. 1 that he has been diagnosed with Parkinson's disease.

Parkinson's disease is a progressive disorder that affects

the nerve cells which control movement and balance. Although the condition occasionally becomes disabling, it



Bishop Councell

usually progresses slowly, and most persons diagnosed enjoy many years of productive life after they receive a diagnosis, Bishop Councell said in a letter to the diocese.

"In my case, the disease is indeed progressing very slowly," he stated. "My symp-

toms are mild; e.g., a tremor in my right hand and some slowness and stiffness in movement. I'm happy to report that medication is helping to control those symptoms. There is every reason to expect that I can continue in this ministry as long as I wish to serve. I have every intention to do just that, by the grace of our God and with the help of your prayers."

Bishop Councell concluded his brief letter with a plea that his condition not "distract us" from the vision and goals that have been developed since he was consecrated in October 2003.

New Organizational Plan for Church Center

A new diocesan services unit designed to offer a comprehensive approach to local mission needs is a highlight of an organizational effectiveness plan to reshape ministries based at the Episcopal Church Center. The plan was initiated by Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori and drafted after five months of consultative work by two task forces.

"The new configuration will raise our level of service to the church," Bishop Jefferts Schori said July 26 while commending the plan's outline to the Church Center's management team. She told the group the plan has "great potential for creativity and capacity building," and will support staff members in doing their "best work."

The new structure, drafted by one of the task forces, the Working Group on Organizational Effectiveness, identified four new "work centers": the Advocacy Center, Evangelism and Congregational Life Center, Mission Leadership Center, and Partnerships Center. The task force was chaired by the Rev. Robert Nelson, of Nevada, who said the drafting process was based on extensive consultation with



current Church Center personnel, some 60 bishops, 23 members of Executive Council, and General Convention deputies.

Fr. Nelson said the new configuration "will be the way we carry out our mission statement that emphasizes our being a service organization to dioceses and congregations and to the whole Church." That mission statement begins by noting that "The purpose of the Episcopal Church Center is to further God's mission, interpreted by the General Convention."

Strengthened management skills, professional development, staff evaluation, and performance incentives are among priorities affirmed by the group, according to Church Center chief operating officer Linda Watt. She added that the reorganization seeks to make optimal use of the budget and assets of the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society and to ensure good stewardship of resources.

Fr. Nelson said a transition plan will be finalized this month and the plan will be presented to Church Center staff in early September.

Episcopal News Service contributed to this report.

Network Bishops Back Virginia Clergy

Five bishops who are members of the Anglican Communion Network have pledged to "remain in relationship and ministry" with 21 priests whom the Rt. Rev. Peter Lee, Bishop of Virginia, declared Aug. 1 to have "abandoned the communion of this church."

The announcement came shortly after the conclusion of the Network's annual council, held July 30-31 in Bedford, Texas [TLC, Aug. 19]. The

statement was issued by bishops Keith Ackerman of Quincy, Peter Beckwith of Springfield, Robert Duncan of Pittsburgh, Jack Iker of Fort Worth, and John David Schofield of San Joaquin.

"Because these Virginia priests are priests in good standing in the provinces of Uganda and Nigeria, respectively, the deposition is, in fact, of no effect," the bishops said. "Each is recognized as a priest in good standing of the Anglican Communion.

Therefore we welcome them to exercise their sacerdotal ministries in our dioceses. Though we continue to work and pray for a charitable disengagement, actions such as [Bishop Lee's] only make our relationships with each other more difficult and divided.

Bishop Lee inhibited the priests in January. A diocesan press release said that by the bishop's action, "the former Episcopal clergy are 'released from the obligations of priest or deacon and ... deprived of the right to exercise the gifts and spiritual authority conferred in ordination."

The diocesan announcement noted that one of the priests inhibited by Bishop Lee, the Rev. Nicholas Lubelfeld, made a "good faith retraction" on June 30 and had his inhibition lifted. Fr. Lubelfeld is now serving as priest associate at Church of Our Redeemer, Aldie, Va.

BRIEFLY ...

The Rt. Rev. Azad Marshall was installed as bishop of the Anglican **Diocese of Iran** during an Aug. 5 service at St. Paul's Church in Tehran. Bishop Marshall, a native of Pakistan, has served as episcopal vicar for the Diocese of Iran since 2005.

The Rt. Rev. Victoria Matthews, Bishop of Edmonton, has announced **she will resign** effective Nov. 30. Bishop Matthews, Canada's first female Anglican bishop, has served as diocesan since 1997 and earlier this summer came in second in balloting for primate of the Anglican Church of Canada.

Trinity Conference Fosters North-South Ties

Forty bishops representing 22 dioceses of The Episcopal Church recently participated with bishops from 29 Anglican dioceses in Africa at a six-day conference in Madrid meant to foster closer links between north and south in the Anglican Communion.

The July 21-26 conference was underwritten by the Parish of Trinity Church, Wall Street, with the Spanish Reformed Episcopal Church serving as local host. Conference organizers invited all bishops with companion Episcopal-African relationships for what a Trinity press release described as a consultation.

"The consultation is offering partners in faith and mission a communal space to further existing partnerships and find commonalities on which to build new relationship s," said the Rev. Canon James G. Callaway, Jr., deputy for faith formation and development at Trinity. "Mission flourishes best through collaboration."

Ten of the 12 Anglican provinces in Africa were represented, according to Diane Reed, manager of promotion and public relations at Trinity. The event was closed to media, and Ms. Reed said she did not have permission to release the names of the participants. However, a Trinity press release noted the archbishops of Central Africa, the Congo, Southern Africa, Burundi, and Brazil were present for a Eucharist July 22 at Madrid's Iglesia Episcopal de España.

During the two-hour service, which was conducted primarily in Spanish with English translations, the Rt. Rev. Carlos Lozan Lopez, Bishop of the Reformed Episcopal Church of Spain, welcomed three new honorary canons: Eliseo Villa and the Rev. Anthony Ball from the international office at Lambeth Palace in London, and the Rev. James H. Cooper, rector of Trinity Wall Street.

"Trinity Church is an active partner in the global south, especially strengthening the Church in Africa by facilitating the ability of its leaders to take control of factors that influence their lives," stated Fr. Cooper in a Trinity press release. "Diocesan partnerships are a vital route to achieving important goals both locally and globally. We look forward this week to challenging conversations, inspired thinking, and renewed commitments to partnership and mission."



Photo courtesy of Greg Tuttle

Music and dancing played a large role at Province 8's youth event (PYE), July 17-22 at Westminster College, Salt Lake City, Utah.

LA Parishes Appeal to State Supreme Court

Three former congregations of the Diocese of Los Angeles that left The Episcopal Church for the Church of Uganda have asked the California Supreme Court to decide whether they or the diocese own their properties.

In an appeal filed on Aug. 6, St. James', Newport Beach; All Saints', Long Beach; and St. David's, North Hollywood, asked the state's Supreme Court to overturn a June 25 ruling by the Fourth Appellate District of the California Court of Appeal that found the Diocese of Los Angeles controlled the parish property [TLC, July 15].

The trial court in Orange County held that under the neutral principle of law, the language of the deed and not church polity controlled ownership of the church real estate. However, the Los Angeles-based appeals court overturned the trial court, arguing "The right of the general church in this case to enforce a trust on the local parish property is clear."

John R. Shiner, chancellor for the diocese and its attorney in the litigation, said the ruling "should dispel any notion that local congregations of a hierarchical church may leave the larger church and take property with them."

The Los Angeles appellate court's decision overturned 30 years of California case law on church property disputes, and conflicts with a decision reached by a second California appeals court in Sacramento. While the California Supreme Court is not required to

hear the case, the conflicting rulings by appellate courts in Los Angeles and Sacramento make intervention likely.

Eric C. Sohlgren, the legal spokesman for the congregations, said the Los Angeles decision "has given big institutional churches a power greater than eminent domain, and thrown this area of law into turmoil and uncertainty. California courts, religious corporations, and church members are now left with a patchwork of conflicting court decisions governing ownership of church property.

"We are asking the Supreme Court to intervene and declare explicitly that California courts are to apply neutral principles of law in resolving church property disputes," he said.

(The Rev.) George Conger

Parable in

By David A. Handy

Feeling footloose and frisky, a feather-brained fellow finagled his father into forking over the family finances.

He fled far off to a foreign land, where he frittered away his fortune, feasting fabulously with faithless friends.

But finally, facing famine, and fleeced by his false friends, he found himself a feed-flinger in a filthy farmyard. Fairly famished, he fain would have filled his frame with foraged food from the fodder fragments left in the filthy farmyard.

"Phooey!," he said, "My father's flunkles fare far fancier!" figured the profligate, frankly facing facts.

So, frustrated by his failure, and filled with foreboding, he forthwith fled to his father. Falling at his father's feet, he foundered forlornly:

"Father, I've failed, and fruitlessly forfeited the family fame and fortune!"

But the forgiving father, forestalling further self-flogging, frantically flagged down the flunkies.

"Go, fetch the finest fatted calf, and fix a fantastic feast!"

But the profligate's fault-finding fraternal foe frowned on the father forgiving the folly of the former folderol. "Fie, father, it's a farce! He's a phony! He's flunked. He's finished. Let the fool fall!"

But his fussing was futile. For the forgiving father fondly favored still fixing the fantastic feast.

"Your filial fidelity is fine," he said.

"But what forbids fervent festivity?

The fugitive is found!

Unfurl the flags, with fanfares flaring.

Let fun and frolic freely flow!

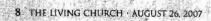
For failure is now forgotten.

Folly has been forsaken.

And forgiveness forms the foundation

for future freedom!"

The Rev. David A. Handy is a priest of the Diocese of Albany. He lives in Richmond, Va.



Welcome Changes at '815'

Having been critical of some of the Presiding Bishop's remarks during the early days of her current ministry, it's time to do an about face and give her credit for some long-overdue reorganization at the Episcopal Church Center. Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori deserves plaudits for changing the focus of much of the emphasis of ministry at the New York headquarters of The Episcopal Church.

The Presiding Bishop and others seem to have recognized the importance of the local congregation, and have placed an emphasis on

local and diocesan needs rather than those that have existed at the national level. Longtime readers of this magazine will recognize the familiarity of that emphasis, for we have attempted to underscore the fact that the most effective ministries the church has to offer occur in local congregations. Evangelism and stewardship are carried out most successfully in our parish churches, and the important ministries of pastoral care take place in our congregations. In short, most church members are more likely to encounter God in their churches than at a diocesan event or a national gathering.

The new structure at 815 Second Avenue was put together by a task force with the intriguing title "Working Group on Organizational Effectiveness" that formed a plan

initiated by Bishop Jefferts Schori. It has four divisions identified as "work centers." They are Advocacy Center, Evangelism and Congregational Life Center, Mission Leadership Center, and Partnerships Center.

Executives at the church center are using phrases like "mission driven," "servant leadership," "de-centralizes decision making," and "focuses on results" to describe the overhauled plan. And, in another encouraging development, we are told that some of the functions of national headquarters will take place in satellite offices to be placed in locations away from New York City. This also has been a TLC wish, for editorials at various times have urged the movement of all or at least part of the national church's ministries away from New York City. The Church Center's chief operating officer, Linda Watt, said the satel-

lite offices will "guarantee a variety of points of view." Many Episcopalians will be anxious to see that put into action.

Many will want to hear more about the Evangelism and Congregational Life Center. After such strategies as the Decade of Evangelism and the 20/20 Plan have failed to materialize, there is likely to be a natural skepticism about another attempt at evangelism. And, more important, what will be the message The Episcopal Church will want to proclaim?

If the Congregational Life portion of this

center is focused on improving or enhancing congregational life, it will be welcome news. Many of our congregations, especially the smaller ones, have talented people willing to be involved in ministry. but they may need help in carrying that out. Many dioceses aren't equipped to help local churches to the extent they should. If this new emphasis really is serious about providing servant leadership, many congregations will be grateful.

The Mission Leadership Center is another welcome focus. Mission

has received somewhat of a short shrift at the national and diocesan levels in recent years. To restore what was once was a strength of The Episcopal Church would be a terrific accomplishment.

A news release announcing the reorganization mentions that the Partnerships Center will have a diocesan services emphasis. Details were not announced, but they are expected in early September when "815" staffers gather.

Skeptical? Of course you are. I am too. But I'm willing to give the Presiding Bishop and her plan a chance. At this point, what could it hurt? The Episcopal Church needs to restore some confidence and credibility to a disbelieving public. If it can do that, then the time and effort put forth to bring this plan to fruition will not have been spent in vain.

David Kalvelage, executive editor



Did You Know...

There are 23 churches in the Diocese of Connecticut named Christ Church.

Quote of the Week
Humorist Garrison Keillor
on The Episcopal Church,
at Grace Cathedral,
San Francisco, in 2001:
"I love to visit Episcopal
cathedrals. It's like going
to Europe and still being
home in time for lunch."

Failing to confirm his consecration this time would be a major blow to Anglicans everywhere.

Second Time Around

To the surprise of no one, the Very Rev. Mark Lawrence was elected Bishop of South Carolina for the second time when a special election was held Aug. 4 [p. 5]. In order for his consecration to take place, diocesan bishops and standing committees will have to consent within 120 days. Most likely, the Diocese of South Carolina has taken every precaution to ensure that the consents process was followed to the letter, for that is the reason Fr. Lawrence wasn't consecrated months ago. When the diocese did not receive enough properly completed consent forms from standing committees, Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori ruled the process invalid, and the diocese called for a second election.

We are hopeful that finding enough consents for Fr. Lawrence will be a mere formality, for failing to confirm his consecration this time would be a major blow to Anglicans everywhere. When the Diocese of New Hampshire elected a non-celibate homosexual person as its bishop coadjutor in 2003, those who argued for consents to be given stressed that a diocese had a right to consecrate the person who had been validly elected.

The same principle needs to be applied in South Carolina. Fr. Lawrence, who upholds the authority of scripture and the traditional teachings of the church, should receive consents to be consecrated just as New Hampshire did. To deny him would amount to an attack on those who dissent from the current leadership of The Episcopal Church.

Invitations Needed

During the past two decades we have noticed a variety of attempts to help churches grow. There have been strategies with catchy names at the diocesan level, organized programs in parishes and mission congregations, and the ill-fated Decade of Evangelism in the national Episcopal Church. While numerical growth has occurred in some places, the overall picture is not bright. Quality music programs, well-organized Christian education, strong preaching, meaningful youth programs, and successful outreach ministries all may have an impact on whether churches grow. Yet church leaders, and Episcopalians in particular, seem to overlook one time-tested strategy for growth: Ask someone to accompany you to church.

Survey after survey of people who have recently joined congregations have revealed one simple fact. The overwhelming percentage of new church members is a direct result of someone inviting them to church. For whatever reason, this has not been an easy thing for Episcopalians to do. We seem to feel comfortable about recommending movies or restaurants or various pastimes, but we don't recommend our churches with the same enthusiasm. Most of us love our parish churches. Otherwise, we wouldn't be there. Let us be eager to talk about our churches and invite someone to join us.

Mixed Up in Politics

Among the people who have proclaimed their support for Sen. Barack Obama (D.-Ill.) in the presidential campaign is the Rt. Rev. V. Gene Robinson, Bishop of New Hampshire. Curiously, the news was delivered by the Obama campaign, which announced that the senator has the support of the New Hampshire bishop. The Obama campaign called Bishop Robinson "a civil rights leader and a leading voice in the faith community."

We wonder what the bishop is trying to accomplish by his public support for a candidate. A news release from the Obama campaign said Bishop Robinson is speaking for himself. If that is true, one has to wonder why the announcement came from the Obama campaign. As the only non-celibate homosexual person to become an Episcopal bishop, Bishop Robinson has a celebrity status that both he and the senator apparently find useful. It is an unfortunate mix of religion and politics.



United in Mission

By C. Christopher Epting

There is often a tendency in the ecumenical movement to romanticize the earliest days of the Church's life as some kind of "golden age." We sometimes speak of the "undivided Church" of the first 1,000 years before the Great Schism between the East and West (when what we call today Orthodox and Catholic Christianity broke apart).

So we say things like, "Well, we were one Church for more than 1,000 years, and then the Eastern and Western Churches parted ways, so there were two great expressions of Christianity. Then, nearly 500 years later, the Reformation happened, and Lutherans and Calvinists and Anglicans began to have their separate expressions, and we've been dividing as Christians ever since."

Obviously, there is a certain amount of truth (however

"Your sins are forgiven" —

That's really the main message Christians have for this world.

simplistic) in such observations. But if we want to be honest about the matter, the Church has never been "completely one" or completely in agreement, and you don't have to look much further than the pages of the New Testament to see that.

Less than 30 years after our Lord's death and Resurrection, we have the chief missionary of the Church (St. Paul) writing to the Christians in Galatia and saving this about the chief apostle of the Church (St. Peter): "...when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood self-condemned; for until certain people came from James, he used to eat with the gentiles. But after they came, he drew back and kept himself separate for fear of the circumcision faction. And the other(s) ... joined him in this hypocrisy, so that even Barnabas

The issue here, of course, was whether or not to accept gentiles as Christian converts directly or whether they had to become, in some sense, Jews first. Paul was clear practically from his own conversion that gentiles should be accepted and included. Peter apparently took some time to come to that position and he, as well as other Christians in the Jerusalem church, found themselves in conflict with Paul and his colleagues about this. It got resolved, of course, over time, and it's hard for us today to see what all the fuss was about, but it was a "church-dividing" or at least a "church-challenging" conflict at the time.

It would be wonderful, I suppose, if Christians always got along and always agreed with each other, but we're human beings and we don't have all the answers, and sometimes we come to different conclusions about important issues. Christians have disagreed about church order (how we are organized), about modes of worship, about slavery, about women's place in the Church, about marriage and the family, and about moral and ethical issues ranging from abortion to homosexuality.

Being Christians together does not always mean being of one mind together on any particular issue. What we need to be able to do though, even when we disagree, is to "keep the main thing the main thing."

And what is that main thing? What are we really supposed to be all about as Christian people? The Catechism in the back of our prayer book says that the essential mission of the Church is "to restore all people to unity with God and each other in Christ" (BCP, p. 853). That means, I think, that many people are estranged from God and

> estranged from one another, and our job is to help them end that estrangement — to become one with God and one with one (Continued on next page)

READER'S VIEWPOINT

(Continued from previous page)

another. Indeed, to love God and to love our neighbors as ourselves.

As Christians, we've learned that God is a forgiving God. We've learned that God not only exists, but that God's very nature is love and that there is nothing we could ever do or think which would make God stop loving us, or being willing to forgive us. We call that "the good news," and it is news that many people desperately want and need to hear.

They need to hear from us, as so many in the gospels heard from Jesus, "Your sins are forgiven." That's really the main message Christians have for this world and it's what we promise to proclaim every time we renew our Baptismal Covenant: "Will you proclaim by word and example the Good News of God in Christ?" I will.

"Will you seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving your neighbor as yourself?" I will. "Will you strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being?" I will. That's our mission — the mission of the Church.

I wish I could promise that the Church is a perfect place, that we all just get along, and that you will never find yourself in the middle of a church fight – whether it's in a parish, a diocese, the national church, or a worldwide Communion. But I can't promise you that, because the Church is a human, as well as divine, institution and certainly it is made up of very fallible human beings.

What I can promise is that the mission of the Church is the most important thing you can commit your life to — whether as a young person or an older person, whether clergy or lay, no matter where you spend most of your time on a day-by-day basis. Because everywhere you will find people who need to be reconciled to God or to another person, and your job is to help that happen.

It's the main thing we do as Christians. If we spent more time and energy doing that, and less time and energy "unchurching" one another because we disagree about some things in today's world, we would be carrying out the mission of the Church, and would be a lot more pleasing to our God than we must sometimes be today.

So I encourage everyone to re-commit to that main thing and to pray Massey Shepherd's great Collect for the Mission of the Church:

Keep, O Lord, your household the Church in your steadfast faith and love, that through your grace we may proclaim your truth with boldness, and minister your justice with compassion; for the sake of our Savior Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

The Rt. Rev. C. Christopher Epting is Deputy for Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations for The Episcopal Church.

The Reader's Viewpoint article does not necessarily represent the editorial opinion of THE LIVING CHURCH or its board of directors.



The Very Rev. Gary Hall [TLC, Aug. 5], the dean and president of Seabury-Western Theological Seminary, has skillfully put into words the very reason why The Episcopal Church is losing membership in unprecedented numbers. One and a half million Episcopalians have left the fold since 1966, and our leadership refuses to ask the question, why?

Our desire to be all-inclusive has led us into a trap that eliminates the need for conversion and the importance of holy baptism. For instance, it is quite easy to consecrate

enough gluten-free bread for those who need it for health reasons rather than run into the problem that occurred at the Seabury-Western commencement ceremony. This in no way excludes those who have health challenges.

For the dean to imply that the Episcopal faith is truly Anglican is absurd. We have charted a path toward ex-communicating ourselves from the Anglican Communion, and we have in fact strayed

For the dean to imply that the Episcopal faith is truly Anglican is absurd.

from the apostolic traditions. For instance, there are a number of Episcopal churches that eliminate the Nicene Creed from their liturgy altogether for reasons that are unfathomable.

Finally, the dean's notion that we have to connect with the "people of culture in ways that will call them into a life of wholeness and faith" is totally backwards. The challenge of the Church is to influence culture to conform to biblical imperatives rather than allowing the culture to influence morality and our liturgical practice. Indeed, when we acknowledge ourselves as sinners in need of a Savior, the next step is to seek to be baptized or to renew our baptismal covenant, and then God directs us into a spiritual journey that leads us into wholeness and a lively faith.

(The Rev.) H. David Wilson Franklin, Tenn.

I was intrigued by the Viewpoint article, "Welcome at the Table," by the dean of Seabury-Western Theological Seminary. I am convinced it is the result of 40 or 50 years of seminaries seeing themselves as "ecclesiastical peculiars" that has left The Episcopal Church with many clergy who are not particularly faithful but are highly "peculiar" indeed.

Dean Hall's statement that "I see no evidence of a spreading monoculture (in The Episcopal Church) that brooks no dissent" leads me to believe he has been napping in the library, failing to notice the actions of the Presiding Bishop that pursue lawsuits against those who do dissent. He also seems to have overlooked the growing numbers of dioceses which have no chance of electing bishops who share their own views on the ordination of women or the authority of scripture, because their views are not seen as acceptable by the leadership of The

Episcopal Church. These dioceses have no alternative but to leave The Episcopal Church.

I encourage Dean Hall to wake up and look at the leadership seminaries like his have given us.

> Glenn Polhemus Miles, Texas



In response to the Reader's Viewpoint article by the Very Rev. Gary Hall, I have three questions for the good dean:

- 1. By what authority did he articulate the non-canonical provision on communion and baptism presently in effect in the seminary chapel?
- 2. In light of the vote at the last General Convention reasserting the canonical practice on communion and baptism, how does he arrive at the puzzling conclusion that The Episcopal Church is on the verge of some other "emerging theology?"
- 3. How in the world was he able to pen this sentence with a straight face: "What I do see is a dazzling variety of faith communities living into the gospel in multiple contexts"?

(The Rev.) Dennis V. Bosley Sweetwater, Texas

We have spent centuries defending the Edwardine Ordinal, which seemed to some (not a few) to deny the Mass and the priesthood.

As conversations with other denominations having apostolic succession were taking place, we started ordain-

ing women. Now there was (and still is) a real monkey wrench.

And now, while the heads of those of us in the pews are still spinning, Dean Hall (and others) bring in glutenfree bread which the dean must know is controversial in terms of whether it constitutes valid matter for the sacrament (Rome has already condemned it as invalid), and no, being Anglican does not mean that we can ignore without a thought what the rest of the Church Catholic says.

Yes, in terms of doing his own thing and sowing confusion, the dean is indeed being Anglican. He may like to stretch the envelope, but at some point the envelope does break.

> David M. O'Rourke Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Doctrine Is Fundamental

There are some other statistics that Fr. Howard did not mention [TLC, July 29]. The most glaring omission is that in our supposedly vibrant, growing Episcopal Church (TEC), the membership has shrunk to virtually the same as it was in 1947.

More troubling is his assertion that "doctrine is secondary." As we saw in the trial of Bishop Righter, the bishops who sat in judgment could not reach agreement on what constitutes doctrine in TEC. From my vantage point, doctrine in TEC is much like what Robert Bellah described in his book, Habits of the Heart as sheilaism. Bellah quotes Sheila about her religious beliefs and practices: "I believe in God. I'm not a religious fanatic. I can't remember the last time I went to church. My faith has carried me a long way. It's Sheilaism. Just my own little voice."

Doctrine is not secondary. On the contrary, it is fundamental. As Jaraslov Pelikan asserted in Volume I of his five-volume work on *The Christian Tradition*, "Doctrine is what is believed, taught, and confessed." In TEC's attempt to be inclusive, we seem to have forgotten that our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is not "our own little voice." As we are reminded in the Letter of Jude, our faith "was

once delivered to the saints," a faith that we are called to contend for earnestly because there will always be those among us who are wolves in sheep's clothing, who will pervert and lead us astray from the graces which are found only in Christ Jesus.

(The Rev.) Jonathan T. Ford, Sr. Estes Park, Colo.

Prayers Answered

With utter amazement I read Bishop Grein's letter [TLC, Aug. 5], explaining his experience while visiting a parish on vacation. He found the parishioners to be overly friendly, people introducing themselves upon his arrival, and being greeted at the exchange of the Peace by 30 or more.

It did surprise and delight me to think God's frozen people could be so outgoing and welcoming. What shocked me was Bishop Grein's response. As he wrote, they didn't know who he was as he wasn't "in clerical garb." This leads me to believe they were genuinely friendly folks, not overly impressed by a purple shirt, and take seriously our Lord's instruction to extend hospitality to strangers. If this "represents the style of our church at present," my prayers have been answered.

I am the wife of a retired priest and have enjoyed being the coordinator for our newcomer committee at the parish where we worship. I love sitting in the pew with my fellow Christians. Some I know well and some I meet only once as they visit our parish, perhaps on vacation. I can "encounter God in silence" almost anywhere. I also cherish encountering God as I extend myself to my fellow Christians and they do so to me.

Lorrie LaBranche Renton, Wash.

Confusing Name

Thanks for the on-target editorial, "Document from Rome" [TLC, Aug. 5], that the teaching statement from the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith says nothing new or different

(Continued on next page)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

(Continued from previous page) from the basic ecclesiological principle affirmed in Vatican II and afterwards; namely that the Church of Christ subsists — that is, is found concretely in its fullness with all the revealed truths, sacramental life, and ministry of governance intended by our

Lord for his Church — in the Catholic Church alone.

Eastern Orthodox officials ordinarily make the same claim for the Orthodox Communion of Churches.

But the document in no way calls into question anyone's sincere convictions to the contrary, their integrity, personal holiness, or the efficacy of clergy's spiritual ministry, although some will undoubtedly understand it that way.

The phrase "Roman Catholic Church," incidentally, is a confusing one. Though used as a sociological and



Though used as a sociological and legal designation, for those in communion with the Bishop and Church of Rome there is only one Catholic Church, which comprises particular churches of various Rites.

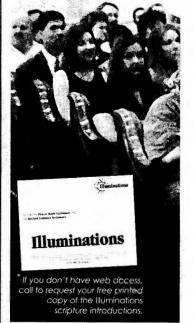
legal designation, for those in communion with the Bishop and Church of Rome there is only one Catholic Church, which comprises particular churches of various Rites — Maronite, Melkite, Ukranian, Syro-Malabar, etc. and, of course, the Roman Rite, currently the largest numerically. These particular churches, fully Catholic, ordinarily dislike being called "Roman" Catholic because they do not follow the Roman Rite. They don't want to be confused with what Anglicans in the past (Lambeth, 1920) have called "the Great Latin Church of the West."

For those, Latin or Eastern, in full communion with the Church and Bishop of Rome, that "Church of Rome" is uniquely important, but it is not by itself the Catholic Church, although being in full communion with this particular Church (of Rome) is necessary to be fully the Church of Christ.

A bit technical, yes, but necessary for clarity and mutual understanding.

(The Rt. Rev. Msgr.) Daniel S. Hamilton, P.E. Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church Lindenhurst, N.Y.

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The Rev. **Marquita Hutchens** is assistant at St. Paul's, 161 E Ravine Rd., Kingsport, TN 37660.

Ordinations

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Central Pennsylvania — Kimberly Brooks, St. Paul's, 248 Seneca St., Harrisburg, PA 17110; Alex Dyakiw; Clifford Johnston, Good Shepherd, PO Box 23, Hawk Run, PA 16840; Jack Hoffer; William Lawbaugh, St. Paul's, PO Box 206, Lock Haven, PA 17745; James Zmyslo, St. Andrew's, 208 W Foster Ave., State College, PA 16801-4822.

Deaths

The Rev. Canon **Loren S. Foot**, 87, who served his entire ordained ministry in the Diocese of Montana, died June 2 at Evergreen Health Center, Polson, MT.

Canon Foot was born in Choteau, MT, and educated at the University of Montana and Virginia Theological Seminary. He was an air traffic controller in the Pacific arena during World War II, and in civilian life he continued as an air traffic controller for 32 years. In 1976, he was ordained deacon and the following year priest. Canon Foot was vicar of St. Michael and All Angels', Eureka, and St. Matthew's, Columbia, MT, 1976-78; vicar of St. Andrew's, Polson, 1980-84, then rector there, 1985-86. He assisted at St. Peter's Cathedral, Helena, 1987-90. Surviving are his wife, Erys; two daughters, Sharon Payne and Corey York; a son, Michael; eight grandchildren; four great-grandchildren; and a sister, Marian Miller.

The Rev. Alton Kent Bignall, deacon in the Diocese of Northern Michigan, died June 9. He was a resident of Eben Junction, MI.

Deacon Bignall was a native of Marquette. MI. During the Korean War he served in the Navy. Following service he graduated from Northern Michigan University and later taught in the Howard City and Morley-Stanwood (MI) school systems. Later he returned to Marquette, where he worked as an electrician. He was ordained in 2000 and served at St. James the Less Church, Harvey. Deacon Bignall is survived by his wife, Sharon; a daughter, Shelley Spedowski, of Big Rapids, MI; two sons, Brett, of Naples, FL, and Brandon, of Cross Lanes, WV; 13 grandchildren and three greatgrandchildren; a sister, Joan Nelson, of Oxnard, CA; and two brothers, Rex, of Desert Hot Springs, CA, and Glenn, of Manistique, MI.

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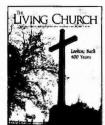
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HALF-TIME RECTOR: St. Christopher's Church, Northport, MI. Small, engaged congregation seeks priest to conduct year-round worship services and to assist with pastoral care and parish growth. St. Christopher's is located in northern Michigan's spectacularly beautiful Leclanau Peninsula, 35 miles from Traverse City. The parish serves an educated, friendly group of retired persons, vacationers and summer visitors. For further information contact Edson Sheppard, EdsonShep@aol.com or (231) 256.7501.

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FULL-TIME ASSOCIATE RECTOR-YOUNG ADULTS AND FAMILIES: St. James Episcopal Church and School, Alexandria, LA. seeks a vibrant clergy person whose primary responsibility will revolve around ministry to and with the younger families and adults in the parish. Additionally, the successful candidate will take the lead in developing and implementing an alternative service of worship to add to the church's weekly worship schedule. Moreover, she or he will seek to help young families and adults grow into a mature faith life in Christ through program development and other opportunities for spiritual development.

The candidate will have good homiletic skills with three to five years of ordained ministry experience. Further, this person will work collegially with the rector and other staff members taking a full share of worship and pastoral responsibilities of this 411-member congregation.

St. James Episcopal Church, located in central Louisiana, continues to offer ministry to the greater Alexandria area as it has since 1844.

Please send your resume and CDO profile to Parish Administrator at parishadmin49@bellsouth.net, or call St. James Episcopal Church at (318) 445-9845. For more information, visit www.saintjamesonline.org.

FULL-TIME INTERIM RECTOR: Christ Episcopal Church, Bowling Green, KY, seeks trained interim priest for 12-18 months. For more information contact Jim Dale at (270) 782-8585. E-mail inquiries and resumes to jim@bgdepo.com or info@cecbg.com. Website: www.cecbg.com.

POSITIONS OFFERED

SKILLED RECTOR: We are a welcoming community where all are: Invited to worship...Challenged to grow in Christ...Inspired to serve, and...Together with the Holy Spirit, empowered to reflect God's love into the world. Whether you're looking or not, this may be your calling: skilled and gifted full-time ministry for a corporate-sized parish. Check out our profile on our website at www.stmaa.com. Click on the "New Rector Search" tab for more information.

FULL-TIME RECTOR: Christ Episcopal Church, Covington, LA. We are a vibrant, energetic, established, and welcoming mid-sized church seeking a like-minded and spirited rector. Our parish includes a bustling day school (Pre-K-8th grade) and Christwood Retirement Community. Position available immediately. Salary competitive. Inquiries should be submitted to: The Canon to the Ordinary, Diocese of Louisiana, PO Box 5026, Baton Rouge, LA 70821-5026.

FULL-TIME RECTOR: St. Gabriel's Episcopal Church, Marion, MA. Calling an energetic priest to our program parish in the seaside village of Marion! Please bring with you your gifts for attracting young families, nururing youth and children, providing liturgical leadership, delivering inspirational sermons, and overseeing the parish administration. If you are a spiritual leader who will be an active presence in our community through outreach and ecumenical involvement, please send your resume and CDO profile to: stgabrielsepiscopal/everizon.net/stgabrielsepiscopal/

PART-TIME RECTOR St. James' Episcopal Church, Livingston, AL



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Contact: Mr. Hiram Patrenos P.O. Box 446, Livingston, AL 35470 patrenoj@bellsouth.net

or

The Rev. William King, Diocese of Alabama 521 North 20th St., Birmingham, AL 35203 bking@dioala.org

For more information about St. James', contact: www.rlosch.com.

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POSITIONS OFFERED

FULL-TIME DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR: Chapel of the Cross, Chapel Hill, NC. Search reopened! This individual will provide vision and direction for a multiyear successful capital campaign to replace education and service buildings. He/she will develop and direct all aspects of major gift and planned giving programs, assist with communication efforts for all aspects of the campaign and stewardship issues, provide leadership, and supervise campaign staff and volunteers. The ideal candidate is a college graduate possessing well-developed interpersonal skills, specifically, the ability to build and cultivate relationships with potential donors. In addition, well-developed organizational and communication skills are crucial. Successful campaign experience and an understanding of, and commitment to, the mission of the parish is essential. Send resumes by email to: MAHandy@thechapelofthecross.org, or mail to: Chapel of The Cross Church, 304 E. Franklin St., Chapel Hill, NC 27514, Attn: L. Logan.

FULL-TIME RECTOR: St. Christopher's-by-the-Sea, Key Biscayne, FL, is looking for a rector to help us continue revitalizing our church, work with the vestry and lay groups to take us further on our present course and build on our strengths, generating new ideas to enliven St. Christopher's growth.

Our next rector would enjoy the challenge of developing a youth program and spearheading the revitalization of a Sunday School program. He/she will also help us grow spiritually by providing training for lay ministers and by being involved in a variety of services and pastoral counseling, Our rector should feel comfortable working in a setting which includes a Montessori school, since he/she will be Headmaster. Given the changing demographics of our community and our Montessori enrollment, we may consider renewing the Hispanic ministry; the vestry believes Spanish fluency (as a second language) is an advantage.

The rector should have exceptional educational achievement, skill as a preacher (six to ten years experience working in the church in an active capacity - professional, business and life experiences will also be considered), previous parochial experience, and a high degree of social affability and awareness.

As parish executive, the rector will manage church staff and coordinate the different church commissions, and also manage church finances and growth in accordance with the church's goals and aspirations.

Our rector will also serve as a communications and interpretation link between the parish and the larger Church.

A beautiful rectory is provided in the compensation package, with extra benefits.

St Christopher's-by-the-Sea is a unique church in a unique community. We are a small, loving congregation. We look forward to meeting you as you navigate the path to

St. Christopher's. Complete application details and history at: www.stchriskb.org or email: Rrojas@stchriskb.org.

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FULL-TIME RECTOR

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ST. AUGUSTINE, FL.

(904) 824-2876 Website: www.trinityepiscopalparish.org The Rev. David J. Weidner, r, the Rev. Brian Smith, asst Sun 7:45 & 10 Wed H Eu & Healing 10

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623 E. Ocean Blvd. ST. MARY'S (772) 287-3244 Website: www.stmarvs-stuart.org The Rev. Thomas T. Pittenger, r; the Rev. David Fran-

coeur, assoc r; the Rev. Jonathan Coffey, the Rev. Canon Richard Hardman, the Rev. Peggy Sheldon, assisting; Dr. Allen Rosenberg, organist & choir dir Sun Eu 7:30, 9, 9 (contemporary), 11, 5. Tues H Eu 12:10; Thurs H Fu 10, Sat 5

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Service 6

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