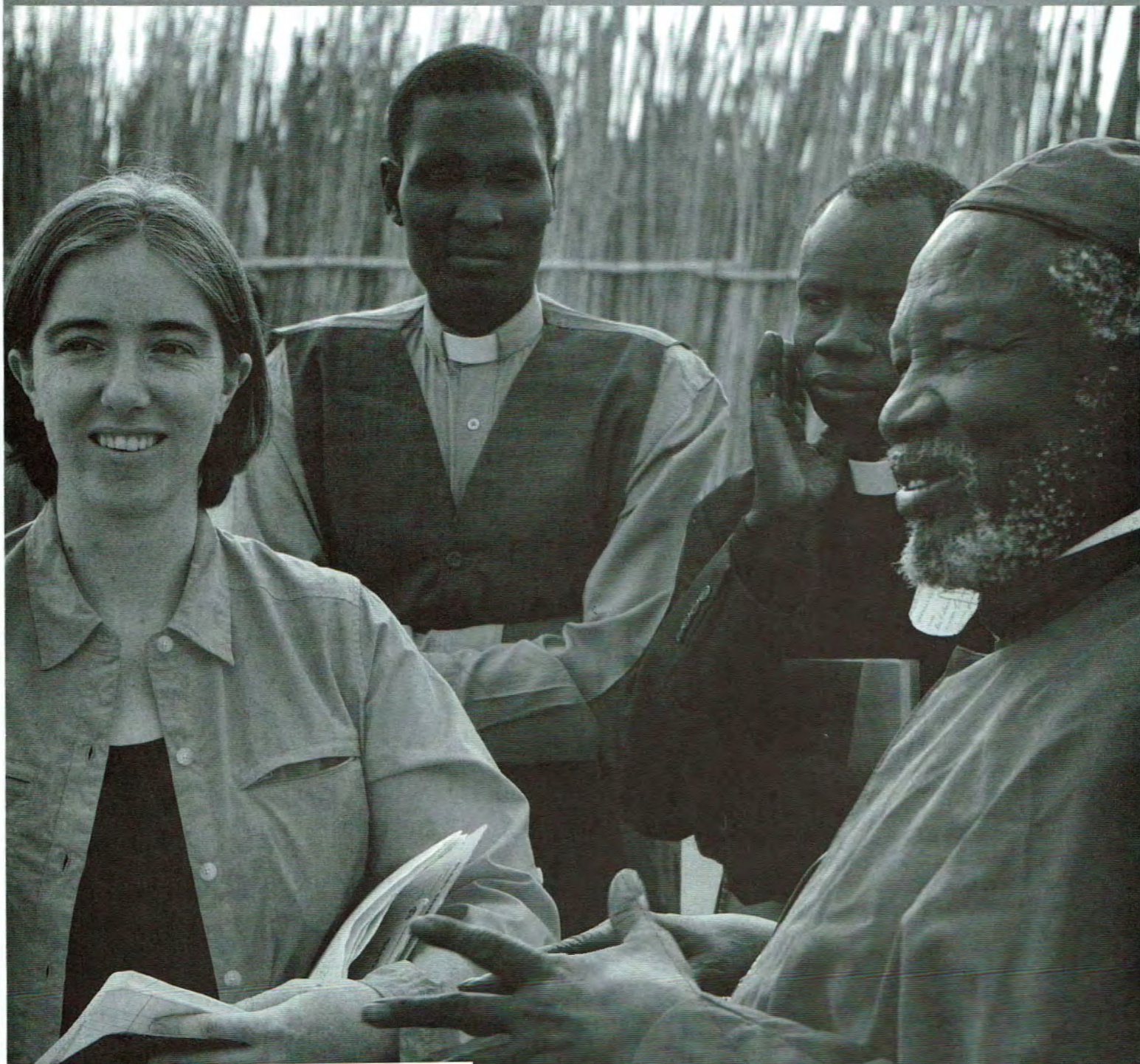


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Editorial and Business offices:

816 E. Juneau Avenue

Milwaukee, WI 53202-2793

Mailing address: P.O. Box 514036

Milwaukee, WI 53203-3436

Fax: 414-276-7483

E-mail: tlc@livingchurch.org

www.livingchurch.org

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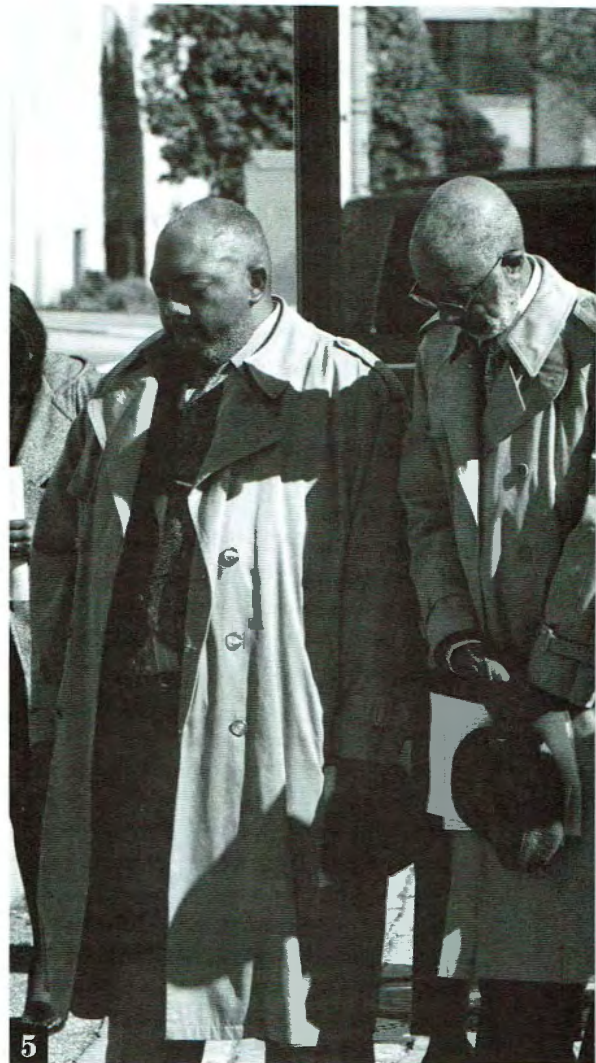
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5 Members of St James' Church, Lafayette Square, Baltimore, pray during a Palm Sunday walk through the city. (Another photo, page 5).

Jacob D. Howard III photo

On the Cover



The Rt. Rev. Nathaniel Garang, Bishop of the Diocese of Bor and former interim archbishop of The Episcopal Church of Sudan, meets with Robin Denney, a missionary from the Diocese of El Camino Real, outside of the church compound in Bor. Ms. Denney is spending two years in Sudan to work on an agricultural development project at the invitation of the Most Rev. Daniel Deng Bul, archbishop.

Phil Darrow photo



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SUNDAY'S READINGS

Fear, Faith, and Good News

'Why are you frightened?... Touch me and see' (Luke 24:38-39)

Third Sunday of Easter (Year B), April 26, 2009

BCP: Acts 4:5-12 or Micah 4:1-5; Psalm 98 or 98:1-5; 1 John 1:1-2:2 or Acts 4:5-12; Luke 24:36b-48

RCL: Acts 3:12-19; Psalm 4; 1 John 3:1-7; Luke 24:36b-48

Is Christ for real? Where do we find him? Sometimes it's easy enough to feel alone in the face of all kinds of problems. Where is God in all the things that happen to us? What real difference does faith make? Is there anything more to our lives than what we see with our eyes?

After the crucifixion of Jesus, the disciples were scared and confused. Everything they thought they believed in seemed to be disproved. They loved Jesus and followed him. He was their hope and their life. And he was gone!

But then he was back. He appeared to his disciples in the midst of their hurt and confusion. They were startled, and he soothed them. It seemed too good to be true. He even ate some food as they watched in amazement. He was not just a ghost or illusion. His presence was real. He was with them again. Their life and love together was not ended.

The disciples saw Jesus' new life

with their own eyes. Their failures were forgiven, their pain relieved, and their opportunities for sharing God's love were beyond anything they could have imagined. As Jesus found them in a time of great suffering and loss, they would proclaim the new life of Christ they had seen and known in their own lives. That was their good news, and their witness.

That's how Jesus finds us. Right in the middle of our hurt and confusion. Right where we need him the most. We shouldn't imagine that we must wait to find Jesus until all the problems in our lives are solved. We don't have to qualify for God's love by making everything right. We don't have to sort out everything difficult or confusing before God will come to us. We can find God present in the midst of the best times and the worst times of our lives. And we can share the good news of faith with others.

Look It Up

See Hymn 182, "Christ is alive! Let Christians sing," a hymn text by Brian A. Wren, especially verse 4: "Not throned above, remotely high, untouched, unmoved by human pains, but daily, in the midst of life, our Savior with the Father reigns."

Think About It

How have you known God's presence in times of pain or confusion? How did faith make a difference for you? Can you share this good news?

Next Sunday

Fourth Sunday of Easter (Year B), May 3, 2009

BCP: Acts 4: (23-31) 32-37 or Ezek. 34:1-10; Psalm 23 or 100; 1 John 3:1-8 or Acts 4:(23-31) 32-37; John 10:11-16

RCL: Acts 4:5-12; Psalm 23; 1 John 3:16-24; John 10:11-18

Bishop Wolf Deposes 'Muslim Priest'

The Rt. Rev. GERALYN WOLF, Bishop of Rhode Island, has deposed a Rhode Island priest who claimed to be both a Christian and a Muslim.

For more than 20 years, Ann Holmes Redding served in other dioceses. Since 2001, she has lived in the Diocese of Olympia, but she remained canonically resident in Rhode Island under Bishop Wolf's pastoral oversight. In 2007, Ms. Redding revealed in an article in *Episcopal Voice*, the Diocese of Olympia's monthly newspaper, that she had made the Muslim profession of faith and that she saw no contradiction in remaining an Episcopal priest.

After conferring with Ms. Redding, Bishop Wolf issued a pastoral direction giving Ms. Redding the opportunity to reflect for one year on the doctrines of the Christian faith, her vocation as a priest, and the conflicts inherent in professing both Christianity and Islam, Bishop Wolf said in a statement issued at the time. The pastoral direction was extended for an additional three months.

Abandonment

In October, after the second expiration of the pastoral direction, the Rhode Island standing committee determined that Ms. Redding's formal admission into another religious body not in communion with The Episcopal Church constituted abandonment as defined by the canons and constitution of the General Convention of The Episcopal Church, and Bishop Wolf inhibited Ms. Redding. The inhibition expired on March 31. In order for the inhibition to be lifted, Ms. Redding needed either to renounce her priestly orders or withdraw from the Muslim faith.

A statement issued by the Diocese of Rhode Island on April 1 said that Bishop Wolf found Ms. Redding "to be a woman of utmost integrity and their conversations over the past two years have been open and respectful. However, Bishop Wolf believes that a priest of the Church cannot be both a Christian and a Muslim."



Jacob D. Howard III photo

The Rev. Allen F. Robinson, rector of St. James' Church at Lafayette Square in Baltimore, and his son, Phillip, lead an interfaith delegation of Baltimore religious leaders in prayer at City Hall on Palm Sunday, as part of a walk and prayer ceremony in support of those who seek peace.

Disciplinary Process in Proposed Covenant

Provinces, not individual dioceses which violate the terms of a proposed Anglican Covenant, will be subject to a disciplinary process overseen by the Joint Standing Committee of the Primates and the Anglican Consultative Council, according to the third draft of the document released on April 8. The proposed covenant is to be discussed next month during the ACC meeting in Jamaica.

Meeting from March 29 to April 2 at Ridley Hall, a theological college in Cambridge, England, the Covenant Design Group (CDG) revised the second "St Andrew's" draft of the proposed covenant, originally envisioned as setting the parameters of Anglicanism. The group reworked the document in light of comments received from more than 20 provinces, the bishops at the 2008 Lambeth Conference, and elsewhere.

Divided into four sections, the document restates traditional creedal beliefs from a high-church perspective, but seeks to mollify both the liberal and conservative wings of the Anglican Communion. Churches are to "teach and act in continuity and consonance with Scripture and the catholic and apostolic faith, order and tradition, as received by the Churches of the Anglican Communion."

The document reaffirms the constitutional and canonical autonomy of individual provinces of the Communion and acknowledges that within the "life

of communion" there is "an ongoing engagement with the diverse expressions of apostolic authority, from synods and episcopal councils to local witness, in a way which continually interprets and articulates the common faith of the church's members.

Those adopting the covenant should agree to "participate in mediated conversations" when disputes arise, and commit to "see such processes through." If unwilling to abide by the covenant's terms, a disciplinary process overseen by the joint standing committee of the Primates and ACC may be introduced, with the potential for suspension from participation in global church councils. However, the ultimate decision of how a church in violation of the covenant is treated rests with individual provinces.

By vesting provinces with ultimate authority in determining the meaning of the covenant, the document effectively concedes that the national churches, not dioceses, are the primary ecclesial units of the Anglican Communion.

Adoption of the covenant is also vested with provinces and not individual dioceses: "Every Church of the Anglican Communion, as recognized in accordance with the Constitution of the Anglican Consultative Council, is invited to adopt this Covenant in its life according to its own constitutional procedures," it states.

(The Rev.) George Conger

Delegates Upbeat at Quincy Reorganizing Synod

The Diocese of Quincy reconstituted The Episcopal Church's governance and ministry in central Illinois during a special reorganizing synod April 4 at St. Paul's Cathedral, Peoria.

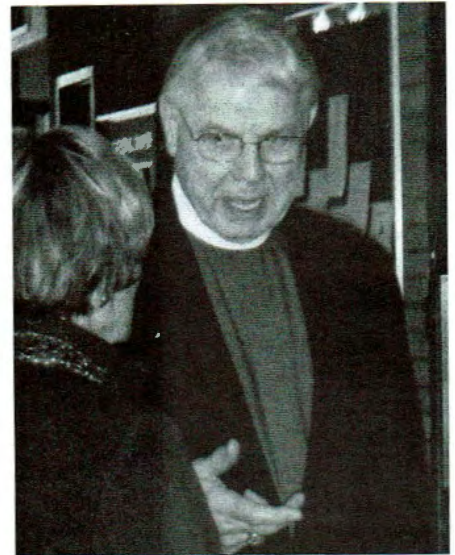
The 54 lay delegates and 14 clergy included representatives from most of the congregations in the diocese prior to the decision last November to withdraw from The Episcopal Church and accept temporary affiliation with the Anglican Church of the Southern Cone.

Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori called the special synod and convened the meeting. She was welcomed with a standing ovation and an expression of thanks from the diocesan steering committee, which helped to organize the reconstitution process. She, along with many of the diocesan clergy and lay delegates, used the words "jubilant" and "joyful" in their public comments to describe the mood of the gathering.

In her homily during Morning

Prayer, the Presiding Bishop drew comparisons between the struggles of Episcopalians in the diocese to the Old Testament lesson from the Book of Exodus and to the life of Martin Luther King, whose feast was observed that day. Bishop Jefferts Schori said that just as the Israelites and African Americans were released from slavery and had to deal with their sense of brokenness, so too Episcopalians in the Diocese of Quincy need to nurture and strengthen one another in God's healing grace.

In the synod's initial actions, the certification of delegates was ratified, and the clergy affirmed their signatures to the oath of conformity to the doctrine, discipline and worship of The Episcopal Church. A chancellor, synod secretary and treasurer were elected and seated. Delegates voted unanimously to give seat and voice to the Bread of Life Anglican Fellowship, an unorganized mission in Peoria, then acclaimed



Karen Ford photo

The Rt. Rev. John C. Buchanan visits with a delegate at the convention in Peoria where he was elected Provisional Bishop of Quincy.

the appointment of the Rt. Rev. John C. Buchanan as provisional bishop, who thereafter presided during the synod.

Members were elected to diocesan committees, and deputies named to represent Quincy at the General Convention. The synod voted unanimously to rescind all actions of the 130th and 131st synods, which had changed the language of the diocese's constitution and canons to remove references to The Episcopal Church, and to restore Article II of the diocesan constitution which was altered in 1992 to delete accession to the constitution and canons of the General Convention of The Episcopal Church.

Delegates received and approved unanimously an interim budget of \$181,545, with a commitment of support from The Episcopal Church of \$109,242. The balance of \$72,303 has been made up by faith pledges from congregations, with some receipts still to be developed as congregations reorganize. Of the total budget, \$2,130 will represent the diocesan contribution to the General Convention program budget, the first financial provision by the diocese in several years.

(The Rev.) John Throop

Staten Island Priest Charged with Theft

The Rev. William Blasingame, who resigned in January after 31 years as rector of St. Paul's Memorial Church, Staten Island, N.Y., stole a total of \$84,537 from the parish over a three-year period, according to police.

Fr. Blasingame surrendered to detectives and was arraigned on April 3. He is scheduled to return to court on May 12.

Most of the money alleged to have been channeled illegally for Fr. Blasingame's personal use came from the rector's discretionary fund and an endowment established to help pay for building maintenance and landscaping care, according to Richard Mingoia, senior warden and treasurer at St. Paul's. It was Mr. Mingoia's suspicions that led to the investigation.

Police say that starting in January



Fr. Blasingame

2005, Fr. Blasingame used the money for purchases that included plastic surgery, botox treatments, club memberships, expensive clothes, and prescription drugs. He is charged with second-degree grand larceny and second-degree criminal possession of stolen property, and could face up to 15 years in prison.

Fr. Blasingame would not let anyone else access the discretionary and endowment accounts, Mr. Mingoia told the *Staten Island Advance*. Mr. Mingoia said his suspicions were aroused when he noticed that Fr. Blasingame had written checks to himself. He allegedly wrote checks to himself from the upkeep account, and used the discretionary fund for personal items.

Fr. Blasingame's lawyer, James Hasson, told the *Advance* the allegations against his client are a "bad mistake," and suggested Mr. Mingoia harbored a personal vendetta. Mr. Mingoia said the church is interested only in restitution.

Photo courtesy of the Staten Island Advance

Michigan Considers How to Sustain Church Mission

When the convention of the Diocese of Michigan approved a budget of \$2.9 million last October, it did so by permitting the use of the corpus of a \$9-million Extended Ministries Fund that normally is not used in order to balance an annual budget. Convention added the proviso that it would reconvene in six months to review the balance sheet on the 2009 revenue and expenses and resume its work toward a sustainable budget.

In the wake of a worsening U.S. economy, and facing forecasts of financial calamity in the auto industry, clergy and lay representatives from the 86 congregations and Bishop Wendell Gibbs were scheduled to meet in that special convention at the Cathedral Church of St. Paul in Detroit on

April 18. The convention had one topic: Sustainable church mission.

The financial markets took a "pound of flesh" out of the Extended Ministries Fund, reducing the value of the corpus from \$9 million to \$6 million. Additionally, at the epicenter of the U.S. economic downturn, the congregations in southeast Michigan mark the current 12-percent state unemployment rate with personal narratives of their fellow parishioners. In Detroit, where the unemployment rate exceeds 20 percent, another imperiled Episcopal church that sustained its neighborhood outreach ministry on a thread snapped. St. Philip's and St. Stephen's on the city's east side voted to close in February [TLC, April 5].

In preparation for the special con-

vention, the diocesan treasurer predicted that the tamped-down support of diocesan ministry — congregation apportionments plus standard dividends from investments — would not exceed \$2 million annually.

"We are in a different financial place than where we were even six short months ago," Bishop Gibbs wrote to the diocese in late March, signaling the necessity to sacrifice mission and ministry opportunities.

On April 2, the bishop made the first sacrifice. He dissolved five positions on the diocesan staff. One in the finance office was unfilled since convention approved the 2009 budget. The four others — canon for Ministry Development and Transition Ministries, canon for Lifelong Learning, director of Stewardship and Planned Giving, and director of Payroll and Benefits — were full-time positions. The reductions become effective at the end of May.

Herb Gunn

AAC Official: Canterbury's Recognition Unlikely

The Anglican Church in North America (ACNA) is unlikely to be recognized by the See of Canterbury, a leader of the American Anglican Council said on April 1.

"We do not believe that Canterbury will recognize us, at least while the current archbishop is still in office," said the Rev. J. Philip Ashley, the AAC's chief operating officer and chaplain, in a brief speech in a suburb of Richmond, Va.

Fr. Ashley spoke at a public library in Henrico County at the invitation of the Richmond Anglican Fellowship. About 70 people attended.

Echoing the sentiments of the Jerusalem Declaration, Fr. Ashley suggested that Canterbury's recognition will be less important than recognition by various provinces in the Global South. He said representatives from Kenya, Rwanda, the Southern Cone (South America), and Uganda are expected to attend a provincial assembly in Texas in June, where the ACNA will vote on a proposed constitution and canons.

Fr. Ashley said he was part of a panel of bishops and lawyers who have drafted canons for the ACNA, which

plans to release the proposed canons within a few weeks. He said the canons will make clear that all property belongs to congregations rather than dioceses; that bishops will be nominated by dioceses on a slate of three and chosen by a College of Bishops; and that all bishops must warn each other when a transferring priest has engaged in misconduct.

He said that some parishes may prevail in property disputes if they owned property before a diocese existed, and if they have no record of agreeing to The Episcopal Church's constitution and canons. Fr. Ashley said departing parishes' chances of prevailing in court cases likely will decrease because of decisions he expects at General Convention this summer.

Fr. Ashley encouraged his audience, which consisted of Episcopalians, former Episcopalians, and members of the Anglican Catholic Church, to consider launching a mission of their own.

"If all of you decided today to form a church in the west side [of Richmond], you have a critical mass in your numbers here."

Douglas LeBlanc

Evangelism Director to Lead Church's Strategic Planning

The Rev. Suzanne Watson will lead the strategic planning and strategic collaboration efforts at the Episcopal Church Center, effective May 4.



Ms. Watson

Linda Watt, chief operations officer at the Episcopal Church Center, announced that Ms. Watson will leave the position of director of evangelism and congregational life, a role she has held since January 2008, to assume her new tasks.

The strategic planning task force was created by Executive Council at its January meeting in Stockton, Calif., to focus on a strategic-planning process and to draft a 10-year strategic vision with planned periodic updates, according to Episcopal News Service.

Sustaining Spirit in the Church of Sudan

Mission team from U.S. visits 12 dioceses in the south

By Emily Cherry

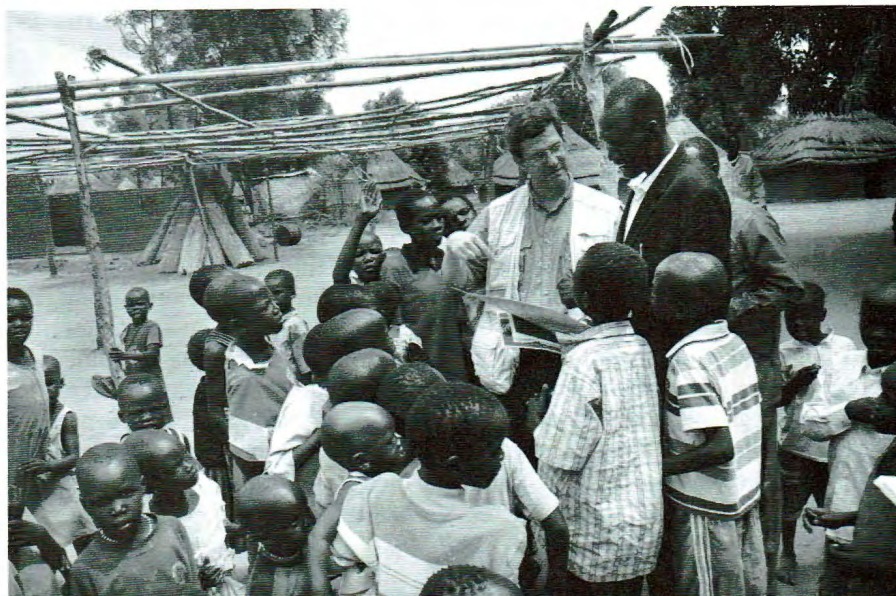
Episcopalians are often surprised to learn that in the city of Geneina, on the western border of the troubled region of Darfur, Sudan, there is an Episcopal church. When African peacekeeping forces entered Darfur to combat the political unrest and acts of genocide that began in 2003, they also built a mosque and a church. The Christian soldiers who built that church donated it to the Episcopal Church of Sudan.

The Rt. Rev. Ismail Gabriel Abudigin, Bishop of El Obeid, is trying to build up Christianity in a part of the world that is 99 percent Muslim. He operates in a diocese that gets little outside support.

Stories like this were encountered by a mission team from the U.S. Episcopal Church in a one-month tour of southern Sudan in February. Buck Blanchard, world mission coordinator for the Diocese of Virginia, Phil Darrow, a member of the Renk Ministry Partnership for St. Michael's Church, Barrington, Ill., and Robin Denney, a missionary from the Diocese of El Camino Real, traveled to Sudan on behalf of the U.S. church, the American Friends of the Episcopal Church of Sudan, and many dioceses that support Sudan. The mission team visited 12 dioceses in the south and raised funds to purchase a vehicle to donate to the Church of Sudan.

Both the Diocese of Virginia and the Diocese of Chicago enjoy longtime relationships with the Most Rev. Daniel Deng Bul, Archbishop of Sudan. Bishops Peter James Lee, Shannon S. Johnston, and David C. Jones, all of Virginia, have made trips to Sudan, and the Rt. Rev. Jeffrey Lee of Chicago plans to visit in 2010. But in several places, this was the first visit by representatives from the U.S. Episcopal Church in anyone's memory.

The Sudan is divided into two parts. The north's population is



Phil Darrow photo

Outside the temporary cathedral of the Diocese of Torit, Buck Blanchard, world mission coordinator for the Diocese of Virginia, learns about the bishops of Sudan from a local priest.

mostly Arab and Muslim. The south is predominantly Christian and African.

"The church is very clearly strong in the south, and there is a lot of sustaining spirit that [the church] provides," Mr. Darrow said. But "it provides mostly spiritual sustaining because there aren't a lot of material resources."

More than 20 years of civil war have demolished the infrastructure of Sudan and displaced thousands of Sudanese from their homes into refugee camps in northern Sudan and bordering countries. Since the Comprehensive Peace Agreement achieved a tenuous peace in 2005, many Sudanese have returned to their homes, trying to rebuild their livelihoods. And since the Episcopal Church is the largest non-governmental organization (NGO) in south Sudan, many of the 3.8 million Episcopalians in Sudan turn to the church for help. "When the government can't provide a service, which is quite often, the people look to the church to provide it," Mr. Blanchard said.

Refugees in southern Sudan face myriad problems. Many find themselves victims of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), a rebel militia fighting the government of Uganda but which often crosses the border to raid villages in Sudan. The town of Ibba is now home to 69 families who were refugees from a January attack by the LRA on the town of Wowo. Families set up camps under mango trees, most without food or the possessions that they had to leave behind when they fled. It was in Ibba that the mission team joined a family in prayer underneath their mango tree home.

The Sudanese family blessed their visitors for coming, and for suffering the hardship of travel. "It was wrenching — them blessing us," wrote Mr. Blanchard in a reflection on the trip. "We told them The Episcopal Church in the United States would be praying for them and would try to help. I hope we will."

On top of the fear of violence, starvation also threatens the lives of the

(Continued on page 14)

Items of Interest in the Blue Book

Every three years I undergo a usually painful procedure of reading the Blue Book of General Convention. This publication, which frequently is not blue at all, consists of reports of the committees, commissions, boards and agencies of General Convention and is published prior to the triennial meetings of General Convention.

"Why put yourself through misery like that?" I've been asked. It's simply a matter of being informed about what's going to take place. If I'm going to be there, I reasoned, I'd better know what's going on.

In preparation for the 76th General Convention, July 8-17 in Anaheim, Calif., I have finished reading the Blue Book. It's more than 800 pages, but with some judicious perusal, one is able to maneuver fairly quickly through parts of the book. For the first time, I didn't have a book at all, but instead I read it on line. I don't even know if there is a real Blue Book this year, although I am assuming there is, for there is a reference to a CD that accompanies the volume.

So far, the report on the State of the Church Committee has gotten most of the attention [TLC, April 19], and rightly so. The report offers a bleak look at The Episcopal Church in such important compilations as membership and average Sunday attendance. There is also some important financial data. Some other parts (but not all) of the book also are worth reading, but if you're like most people, you don't have the time to do that. So I've picked out some significant findings from my reading. For example:

- While Indianapolis already has been selected as the site for the 77th convention, in 2012, four cities are under consideration for 2015: Atlanta, Las Vegas, Philadelphia and Salt Lake City.

- The report of the Theology Committee of the House of Bishops includes a report, "Some Observations on Just War," in response to a resolution from the 74th convention. The five-page report includes the profound statement, "If peace is God's desire for the world, it should be ours also."

- Resolution A063 would convene a convocation on mainline mission and evangelism with The Episcopal Church's covenant partners.

- Resolution A073 accepts the document,

"Finding Our Health in the Lord," as the basis for establishing full communion with the North and South provinces of the Moravian Church.

- Resolution A075 would establish a similar agreement with the Presbyterian Church (USA).

- Resolution A078 would institute a Recovery Sunday to be celebrated annually in all congregations.

- Resolution A093 would survey congregations to determine "their music needs and wants."

- Resolution A104 would have convention affirm the importance of cultural diversity and multicultural leadership development at both the national and diocesan level.

- Resolutions A106 and A107 address the "crisis" of educational debt for those preparing for the ordained ministry.

- A series of resolutions would discontinue some national committees and would establish some additional commissions.

- According to the report of the Episcopal Archives Strategy Committee, the Archives should remain in Austin, Texas. It would move from its current site at Episcopal Theological Seminary of the Southwest to a downtown location where it would share space with several owners.

- In the 30-page report of the Task Force II on Disciplinary Policies and Procedures, is found this statement: "It is the judgment of Task Force II that the time is not yet propitious for the inclusion of disciplinary provisions for the laity other than as already provided in the Book of Common Prayer, and no inclusion of laity is contemplated at this time."

Some of the Blue Book is heavy reading. The report of the Commission on Constitutions and Canons, for example. It details canonical amendments that were adopted in 2006 and return this year for a necessary second reading. On the other hand, the biographies of nominees for elections are always interesting.

The Commission on Liturgy and Music, which in the past has made some controversial proposals to General Convention, is not mired in controversy this time, but its report takes up nearly half of the Blue Book. Its findings and recommendations are worthy of another presentation next week.

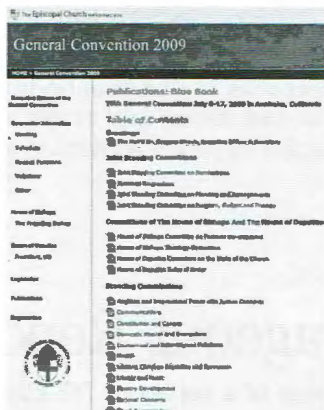
David Kalvelage, executive editor

Did You Know...

St. Andrew's Church, Rogers, Ark., is hoping to start a weekly dream group.

Quote of the Week

The Most Rev. Katharine Jefferts Schori, Presiding Bishop, on whether Jesus is the only way to God: "My job is to proclaim the good news of Jesus, but I cannot deny God is not at work in other ways."



http://www.episcopalchurch.org/gc2009_106480_ENG_HTML.htm

Hospitable, but not Canonical

One of our readers recently was a visitor at a baptism at a different Episcopal church and noticed an announcement in the bulletin that all people are welcome to receive communion, whether or not they are baptized. In recent years, much has been written in our pages about "open communion." The topic seemed forgotten for a time, probably pushed aside by other issues, but apparently this practice continues in many churches. We remind Episcopalians that administering communion to the unbaptized is not permitted by The Episcopal Church. Canon I.17.7 states, "No unbaptized person shall be eligible to receive Holy Communion in this Church."

We would not question the intent of an invitation to communion. We are supposed to practice hospitality, and in all likelihood, parishes that extend an open invitation to communion are simply trying to be hospitable or to become involved in evangelism. But such an invitation also is a repudiation of the General Convention. In 1979, convention addressed this matter with a resolution that listed five conditions for reception of communion by non-Anglicans. The first one states, "They shall have been baptized..."

Admitting people to "open communion," although widely practiced, represents a change in the doctrine of the church and a departure from centuries of Christian tradition. If the church is going to disregard its own canon and admit all people to communion, it ought to rescind its earlier legislation and make it official.

Courageous Report

The findings of a survey of 783 Episcopal churches included in the report of the House of Deputies Committee on the State of the Church have attracted considerable interest [TLC, April 19]. The report, found in the Blue Book published in advance of General Convention, does not reflect well on The Episcopal Church. It cites declining membership, a decrease in average Sunday attendance, conflict in a majority of the congregations that participated in the survey, and financial difficulties in many churches.

The Committee on the State of the Church deserves plaudits for its willingness to include such troubling statistics in its report, especially given the fact that some leaders have insisted in recent years that all is well in The Episcopal Church. While the results of the survey do not make for pleasant reading, they are indications that the church has serious problems. We hope the forthrightness of the committee in providing these numbers will be a wake-up call to the rest of the church, and that the General Convention and other leaders will be serious about addressing the challenges presented by the findings of this report.

"No unbaptized person shall be eligible to receive Holy Communion in this Church."

The Episcopal Church, Canon I.17.7



READER'S VIEWPOINT

New Life, New World

By Donald Judson

Resurrection: Can I take it or leave it? That seems like a rude question, but I believe it reflects the feelings of a number of people. For myself, as I approach my four-score, I find my life has been pretty full, both of years and experiences. I feel no particular need to have more life after death. I may change my attitude when the time is upon me, but when I am drawing my last breath, I think I will say thanks for a long and full life. I don't think I will leave kicking and screaming.

I know I am by no means alone in this feeling, certainly among the great American middle class. If we do think of an afterlife, it is usually that we (and perhaps with our families) live on and on. We assume the individual comes before society and so our view of the afterlife is individualistic. In such a view, whether I live on or not is a matter that should not concern or affect other people.

We may see the afterlife as something that is of more interest to the oppressed. We have heard about the black slaves who, seeing no hope in this world, would often pray for that "sweet chariot comin' for to carry me home." Among those who have suffered injustice in this world, the afterlife promises vindication, a reward after much pain and suffering. Many of us say this is wishful thinking. People have to have some hope, even if they dream it up themselves. But that is too easy to say for those of us who have not endured such hardship. We have no right to say it. For me, the afterlife as a vindication is just the factor which makes the difference

for me. I don't feel I need it, while the victims of injustice and hardship do need it. If that is the only reason that resurrection is important, then I can justify my not wanting to take part in it.

But my choosing not to be a part of it does not mean that I would deny it to those who do want it and need it. I certainly would not deny an afterlife to those who have died young, or been persecuted. I would not deny it to those who died in the cyclone in Myanmar or those killed trying to vote in Zimbabwe. I would be happy if it were granted to a child who has died from

abuse, or the teenagers who were killed by random shootings. Why should those people be restricted to a life that is short, bitter and painful while I enjoy the fullness of a lifetime in relative comfort? Can God be just if he does not correct that? They should be granted a good afterlife to make up for an earthly life that was painful and all too brief.

That is how resurrection came to be a pre-eminent part of the faith of the Jews: It arose out of tragedy and hardship. They trusted that as part of the covenant, Yahweh would grant them peace and safety in a land of their own. The exile shattered that trust. They faced the possibility that God was not to be trusted, that he was

Is there
any reason
behind
resurrection
other than
vindication
and reward?

There is.

unjust. The priests could not accept the possibility that God was unjust, and they found that the only acceptable conclusion was that if the justice of God could not be found in this world, it must be found in the next.

Let us think again. Is there any reason behind resurrection other than vindication and reward? There is. Paul saw it in the context of the parousia — the

(Continued on next page)

(Continued from previous page)

redemption and transformation of the world. He saw Jesus' resurrection as the beginning of a new world. Even the physical creation was groaning in travail waiting for its rebirth. And Paul saw each Christian as a member of the body of Christ, not as separate individuals. Paul was saying that, if we are to be raised, it will not be by ourselves, but as part of that body.

We are in the body of Christ along with many whose lives have been "nasty, brutish and short." We can opt out of the afterlife only if we are not in that body, but because we are, and we cannot say it does not matter to other people whether we decide to "skip" the resurrection. If we did skip it, it would mean that part of Christ's risen body is missing.

So after all, I have to conclude I do need to be a part of the resurrection, but not because I feel I need more life. That is not what resurrection is about. The most profound and visionary perspective on the afterlife in the New Testament is that of the resurrection as a corporate affair. It is the promise of a new world, it is a re-creation by the Creator, and as part of that, it is new life for his people — all of us — whether or not as individuals we feel we need it.

As a postscript, I must say the Burial Office does not leave us much sense that the afterlife is corporate. It does say "knit together thine elect in one communion and fellowship." But by and large, the dead are spoken of in the first and third person singular, and the renewal of the world is only implied. We would do well to borrow from the liturgy of the Orthodox tradition such language as: "All creation doth celebrate the Resurrection of Christ ... As God Thou didst arise from the grave in glory, and with Thee didst raise the world." □

The Rev. Donald Judson is a retired priest who lives in Wheaton, Ill.

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

How to Respond

An editorial [TLC, March 29] quotes seven statistics troubling The Episcopal Church and asks, "Now what are we going to do about it?" Here's what we in West Tennessee are doing about it:

In the summer of 2008, our bishop appointed a small committee to find out where we were regarding church growth. The statistics we gathered were not received enthusiastically, but then truth frequently hurts. The one that hurt the most is that we had lost more than 1,000 average Sunday attendance (ASA) in 10 years — just above 20 percent. We concluded we could never raise enough



money to hire ordained clergy to do the job because the cost would be higher than what congregations could afford. Here's what we have done and what we will be doing in the months ahead:

First, diocesan convention adopted a resolution to double average Sunday attendance by 2020 and decided to appoint a Commission on Church Growth. That commission is in place and ready to work with each congregation.

Second, we have organized ourselves to visit with the rector/vicar and senior warden in each congregation. There are three goals for these visits: 1. Get the congregation to agree that it wants to increase its ASA to its best year between 1998 and 2006. 2. Have the congregation provide a written plan as to how it will grow. 3. Appoint a contact person to work with our committee.

Third, the commission has developed resources in four areas: music, small groups, outreach and young adults. We have a committee in place for each area comprised of people who have been successful in building something, usually a business. Each congregation will decide which area(s) it wants to pursue.

We will be checking congregations quarterly to see how they are doing and to offer all the assistance we can.

Stay tuned or check our blog at www.2Xby2020.blogspot.com

*Fred K. Beeson
Memphis, Tenn.*

In Communion

David Kalvelage raises interesting points in his column, "In or Out of Communion" [TLC, March 22]. I don't pretend to have the answer(s), but as a recovering attorney who used to dabble in canon law, I offer a few items.

Clergy wishing to disaffiliate with TEC could have resigned "for reasons not affecting moral character..." after which they could have affiliated with the offshore province of their choice. At that point, it seems to me, everyone is still in communion by virtue of being in good standing in a Communion partner church.

That course might or might not have avoided the rash of depositions

because of the intertwined issue of whether a primate in one province may assert authority in the territory of another Anglican Communion member church. For example, may the Southern Cone assert jurisdiction over churches and dioceses in the territory of TEC, and vice versa? I think not. The see of a bishop or primate is geographical, and permission for a bishop to enter the territory of another is required.

Unfortunately, and I speak only about the Diocese of San Joaquin, where I have first-hand knowledge, ("Anglican") clergy were advised to have no contact with TEC, and were told acknowledging the existence of TEC in San Joaquin would somehow weaken the Anglican diocese's posi-

tion in the litigation. As a result, most "Anglican" clergy chose to ignore multiple letters from [provisional] Bishop Lamb offering to accept their resignations in lieu of being deposed, offered in the event that a return to TEC could take place in the future.

I think the depositions ultimately will be found legitimate, and to have put deposed clergy out of communion altogether and not just with TEC. Whether some sort of amnesty and reconciliation or reinstatement will be worked out, I know not. I do hope so, for that would be the Christian thing to do.

*(The Rev.) Bob Woods
Kernville, Calif.*

Apart from the serious Christological questions, does The Episcopal Church need to consecrate another bishop whose views would be confusing to people in both the church and the wider community? We live in a culture dangerously divided between secular atheism and rigid fundamentalism. Many people are spiritually desperate, looking here, yonder, and everywhere for religious roots. So often the profound Christian mysticism of the ages is considered outdated or inadequate, that true faith can be found any place but in the church catholic. Is more confusion the best we can offer?

Our Anglican heritage with its

Judgment Day." The refrain continued: "No, it won't be old Buddha that's sitting on the throne. And it won't be old Mohammed who's calling us home. And it won't be Hare Krishna that plays that trumpet tune. And we're going to see the Son, not Reverend Moon."

I wonder if either Fr. Farrell or bishop-elect Thew Forrester are familiar with it, because it parallels Peter's words about Jesus: "Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12)

*Rob Kirschner
Lakeville, Mass.*

The priest and Trappist monk Thomas Merton died Dec. 10, 1968, in Bangkok, where he had gone to attend a conference on Zen Buddhism monasticism, to which he had long found himself driven. He had planned to go on to Dharamsala to meet and pray with the exiled Dalai Lama, and with Buddhist monks at Darjeeling. The next stops on his itinerary would be Buddhist and Roman Catholic communities in Burma, Nepal and Japan.

Merton saw no conflict between his ties to Buddhist spirituality and his Christian priesthood, nor has anyone ever suggested as much. Is this not the same spiritual journey the Rev. Kevin Thew Forrester, bishop-elect of Northern Michigan, is on? Is there anything wrong with that path? Is anyone other than THE LIVING CHURCH suggesting a problem with it?

*(The Rev.) James B. Craven III
St. Luke's Church
Durham, N.C.*

The Real Owners

I would like to correct Richard A. Eckert's letter [TLC, March 29], which indicates "that bishops owned Episcopal property." Rather, in most situations, all parish property is owned by the diocese in which the church is located. This is part of the legal structure of The Episcopal Church. Perhaps Mr. Eckert misunderstood the priest who was commenting on the lawsuits against departing churches.

*(The Rev.) Ralph Anderson, Jr., deacon
Shrewsbury, Mass.*



How can nirvana be reconciled with a faith that professes God incarnate?

Many Questions

The canonical issues surrounding the strange election of the Rev. Kevin Thew Forrester [TLC, Feb. 22] pose many questions, but most disturbing is his lay ordination as a Zen Buddhist.

With all due respect to Buddhism, attempting to merge it with Christianity is dualistic and will lead to serious symbolic distortion. How can nirvana be reconciled with a faith that professes God incarnate?

The great Christian mystic of the last century, Thomas Merton, of whom I'm a devotee, had much respect for Buddhism. He was overjoyed to meet the Dalai Lama on two occasions shortly before his accidental death, but he did not abandon Roman Catholic Christianity. True ecumenism is not well served by amalgamating faiths, but in dialogue from firm commitment to received traditions.

reformed catholic theology, understood through objective study of scriptures, celebration of accumulated rich tradition and incorporation of revealed reason through studied discernment has much to offer, but we need to be clear that we are still deeply committed to the life, ministry, and death of Jesus Christ.

*(The Rev.) James Lupton
Belhaven, N.C.*

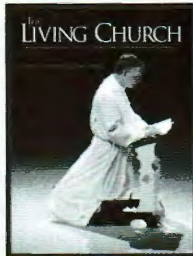
In reading the Rev. John Farrell's letter regarding bishop-elect Kevin Thew Forrester, it reminded me of the song, "Oh, Buddha," by the gospel group, The Imperials, in the 1970s. It went like this: "Well, oh Buddha was a man and I'm sure that he meant well. But I pray for his disciples, lest they wind up in Hell. And I'm sure that old Mohammed thought he knew the way, but it won't be Hare Krishna we stand before on the

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Diocese of Virginia photo

Former Archbishop of Canterbury George Carey (right) and Bishop Suffragan David C. Jones of Virginia (center) with Bishop Hilary Luete of the Diocese of Yei, and others.

SUDAN

(Continued from page 8)

southern Sudanese. In the area of Magwe in the Diocese of Torit, many suffer from what is known as the "food gap." Torit is on the southern border of Sudan, where many displaced people arrive. Refugees are entitled to receive three months worth of food from the United Nations' feeding program. During those months, many start to settle and plant their own crops. But after the food from the United Nations runs out, many are left in that gap between provided sustenance and when their own crops will start to grow. The result, for some, is starvation.

The Rt. Rev. Bernard Balmoi is the Bishop of Torit, a diocese about the size of West Virginia. Bishop Bernard has no cathedral, no office and no vehicle. And with no companion relationship with an American diocese, he has no one to turn to for help or resources. Missioner Robin Denney hopes to provide some of these needed resources, thanks to her background in agriculture.

"In Sudan there is tremendous vision that agriculture will be the base of their new economy, that agriculture will be what development is built on," said Ms. Denney, who is working on a two-year agriculture project in Sudan at the invitation of the archbishop. "It is so exciting to work with people who are this committed and interested in trying new things. Because Sudan has been at war for the last half century ... they have missed out on development, and lost a lot of the agriculture traditions and seed stores."

Rebuilding an agriculture system is part of the solution for reviving a devastated infrastructure. "It's very difficult to fully grasp the impact of being at war for 20 years," noted Bishop Jones, suffragan of Virginia, who

joined the mission team in the Diocese of Yei as guest of the archbishop to attend the first in-country retreat of the Sudanese House of Bishops as a guest of the archbishop.

Communication, sharing and listening played large roles throughout the retreat. Bishop Jones met the Rt. Rev. John Zawo, Bishop of Ezo, who was forced to flee his town and hide in the bush when the LRA attacked on the day after Christmas, killing more than 400. As recently as March, Ezo has suffered continued LRA attacks, and the number of internally displaced people in the southwestern portion of Sudan is growing rapidly because of these attacks. But amidst the worries of violence, Bishop John must attend to other priorities.

The remarkable faith amidst difficult circumstances is an attribute that many visitors to Sudan seem to encounter. "The bishops and priests of the Episcopal Church of Sudan challenge and grow my faith through their example of relying on God and prayer without ceasing," Ms. Denney said. They conduct these prayers in the face of great adversity.

In the north, Omar al-Bashir, the president of Sudan, who has been indicted by the International Criminal Court for crimes against humanity and war crimes in Darfur, recently expelled 13 humanitarian aid organizations from Sudan. In the south, more than 700 people were killed recently in tribal conflict over cattle. And on April 2, the electoral commission of Sudan announced that the elections originally called for in the Comprehensive Peace Agreement to take place in 2009 have now been pushed back a year. Progress is slow, but the people are ready for change. □

Emily Cherry is the communications officer for the Diocese of Virginia.

Deaths

The Rev. **James A. Gusweller**, longtime director of the Episcopal Mission Society in the Diocese of New York, died Jan. 18 at his home in Equinunk, PA. He was 85.

Fr. Gusweller was born in Brooklyn and educated at Carleton College and the General Theological Seminary. He served in the Army during World War II, and was wounded in the Battle of Leyte. He was awarded the Purple Heart and the Bronze Star. In 1950, he was ordained deacon and priest in the Diocese of New Jersey. He was curate at Holy Trinity Church, Collingwood, NJ, 1950-51; rector of St. Mary's, Keyport, and vicar of Our Savior, Madison Township, NJ, 1951-56; and rector of St. Matthew and St. Timothy, New York City, 1956-73. The book, *Shepherd of the Streets*, written by John Ehle in 1960, chronicled Fr. Gusweller's ministry at St. Matthew and St. Timothy. He was director of the Episcopal Mission Society from 1973 until 1989, when he retired and moved to Tuckerton, NJ. He moved to Pennsylvania in 1991. Fr. Gusweller is survived by his wife, Helen; four sons, Ray, Ernesto, Stephen and Michael; eight grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

The Rev. **Richmond N. Hutchins**, priest of the Diocese of Central New York, died Feb. 3 at his home in Brattleboro, VT. He was 87.

A native of Neddick, ME, he was a graduate of Harvard University, University of Northern Colorado, and Church Divinity School of the Pacific. He served with the Army during World War II. He was ordained deacon and priest in 1953, then was assistant at Trinity Church, Greeley, CO, 1953-55, and priest-in-charge of four congregations in Central New York, 1955-61. He was an Air Force chaplain for a time, then was rector of St. John's, Clayton, NY, 1968-85. He also was supervisor of the North Country Mission District. In 1985, Fr. Hutchins retired to Ovid, NY, and served as vicar of Grace Church, Willowdale. He and his wife moved to Vermont in 2000 to be nearer their children. Fr. Hutchins was priest associate at St. Michael's, Brattleboro, until a recent illness. He was active on various committees in Central New York, including being chairman of the task force on human sexuality, the department of finance and the department of missions. Surviving are his wife, Dorothy; a son, Mark, of Brattleboro; a daughter, Susan Heimer, of Putney, VT; and a daughter, Margaret, of Portsmouth, NH; five grandchildren; and a sister, Janet Hilton, of Cape Neddick, ME.

The Rev. **Lonnie Calvin Luttrell**, 79, deacon of the Diocese of Idaho, died Jan. 17 at a nursing home in Mountain Home,

ID, of natural causes.

Deacon Luttrell was a native of Borger, TX. He worked as a draftsman and an oil rigger before joining the Air Force in 1950. He served in the military for 20 years as a helicopter pilot and retired as a major. While in the Air Force, he graduated from San Francisco State College. He was ordained in 1990 and served at St. James' Church, Mountain Home, and as a chaplain at a medical center, a rehabilitation hospital, and a retirement center. Deacon Luttrell is survived by his wife, Lois; two sons, Dan and Michael; three grandsons and one great-grandchild.

The Rev. **Leslie R. Miles**, 83, priest and physician, died Jan. 11 at a nursing and rehabilitation center in Lonaconing, MD.

Dr. Miles was born in Huntington, WV. Following service in the Army during World War II, he graduated from West Virginia University, and received his M.D. from the University of Maryland. He practiced medicine in Capon Bridge, WV, 1953-54, and in Lonaconing, 1955-80. He served on the staffs of various hospitals and medical facilities during that time. In 1972, he was ordained to the diaconate and the priesthood, and became vicar of St. Peter's Church, Lonaconing, a position he held for the next 30 years. He retired from both St. Peter's and his medical practice in 2003. Dr. Miles is survived by a son, Bruce, of Pittsboro, NC; a daughter, Donna Glessner, of Cumberland, MD; seven grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

The Rev. **William R. Pickels**, 78, of Abingdon, VA, died Feb. 6 at his home.

A native of Pittsburgh, he served with the military in the Korean War. Fr. Pickels was a graduate of Florida Southern College and the School of Theology of the University of the South. He was ordained deacon in 1962 and priest in 1963. He was curate at St. Martin's, Pompano Beach, FL, 1962-66; vicar of Ascension, Miami, FL, and St. Cyprian's, Homestead, FL, 1966-70. Since then, he was involved in supply ministry, particularly at St. Paul's, Saltville, VA. He is survived by his wife, Mary Ann; three daughters, Mary Bruce, of Roanoke, VA, Joan Mitchell, of Conover, NC, and Catherine Moretz, of Abingdon; a son, Mark, of Abingdon; and three grandchildren.

Correction

The ordinations to the priesthood of **Madelyn Betz**, **Grace Burson**, **Miranda Hassett** and **Barbara Talcott** should have been listed in the Diocese of New Hampshire, not the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia [TLC, March 22].

Next week...
Spring Book Issue

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 Sun H Eu 8 (Said), 9 (Sung), 10:10 (Christian Formation), 11 (Choral); Wed H Eu & LOH 5:30; Mon-Fri MP 8:45

DALLAS, TX

CHURCH OF THE HOLY CROSS 4052 Herschel Ave.
 The Rev. Will Brown, r
 Best little choir in Texas!
 Sun Mass 8:30 & 10:30 (Sung)
 Call (214) 528-3855 for daily masses.

MILWAUKEE, WI

ALL SAINTS' CATHEDRAL (414) 271-7719
 818 E. Juneau Ave. www.ascathedral.org
 Sun Masses 8, 10 (Sung). Daily Mass, MP & EP as posted

LUTHERAN

BORON, CA

RESURRECTION Sr. Citizens Ctr. 20 Mule Team Rd.
 Sun Eu 8

MOJAVE, CA

HOPE CHURCH K and Inyo Streets (909) 989-3317
 The Rev. William R. Hampton, STS
 Sun Eu 10

To place a church directory listing,
 contact Amber Muma at
amber@livingchurch.org

CHURCH DIRECTORY KEY

Light face type denotes AM, bold face PM; add, address; anno, announced; A-C, Ante-Communion; appt., appointment; B, Benediction; C, Confessions; Cho, Choral; Ch S, Church School; CP, Contemplative/Centering Prayer; c, curate; d, deacon, d.r.e., director of religious education; EP, Evening Prayer; Eu, Eucharist; Ev, Evensong; ex, except; 1S, 1st Sunday; hol, holiday; HC, Holy Communion; HD, Holy Days; HS, Healing Service; HU, Holy Unction; Instr, Instructions; Int, Intercessions; LOH, Laying On of Hands; Lit, Litany; Mat, Matins; MP, Morning Prayer; P, Penance; r, rector; r-em, rector emeritus; Ser, Sermon; Sol, Solemn; SD, Spiritual Direction; Sta, Stations; V, Vespers; v, vicar; YA, Young Adult; YPF, Young People's Fellowship. A/C, air-conditioned; H/A, handicapped accessible.