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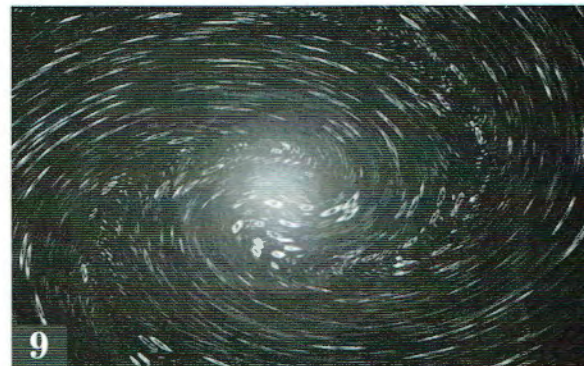
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Portion of a wall painting at the church of Stavropoleos, Bucharest, Romania, depicting the first Council of Nicea.

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## SUNDAY'S READINGS

# God, Man, and Woman

*"It is not good that the man should be alone"*

*(Gen. 2:18)*

**18th Sunday after Pentecost (Proper 22B), Oct. 4, 2009**

**BCP:** Gen. 2:18-24; Psalm 8 or 128; Heb. 2:(1-8)9-18; Mark 10:2-9

**RCL:** Job 1:1; 2:1-10 and Psalm 26; or Gen. 2:18-24 and Psalm 8; Heb. 1:1-4; 2:5-12; Mark 10:2-16

Surely the prototype of the deepest possible human relationship is the vowed lifelong union of a man and a woman. In uncompromising terms, Jesus affirmed this hard teaching: "What God has joined together, let no one separate."

According to Mark's gospel, after hearing this teaching from Jesus, the disciples asked privately for more information. Jesus asserted that anyone who divorces and remarries commits adultery. The parallel version in Matthew has this teaching given publicly, followed by the disciples' exclaiming, "If such is the case of a man with his wife, it is better not to marry" (Matt. 19:10).

Jesus knows how difficult marriage is. He said that permission to divorce was only given by Moses because of people's "hardness of heart." Further, he taught to the disciples, perhaps a bit more gently (again without compromise), "Not everyone can receive this saying, but only those to whom it is given" (Matt. 19:11).

One may well ask: What is this relationship that so many people want, in which so many people fail, and which just about everyone acknowledges is very hard, even when successful?

What is this thing that is the object of so much longing, the crucible of so much suffering, and the home of so much joy? According to the lesson from Genesis, the union of male and female is the earliest institution of God for his beloved people. Through this union they could know and enjoy the love God had for them and the deepest possible experience of human connection.

The man whom God had made "not to be alone" could not find satisfying communion with the animals, but rather in one who was "bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh" — someone like him and likewise made in the image of God, but also one who was mysteriously and eternally different.

This relationship was given in the time before sin. After sin, the gift remained, though under greatly altered circumstances. Vows are now needed for people whose desires are wayward, wills disoriented, and wisdom limited. Marital joy now is matured through trials. Hopes must be tempered by sober, fallen reality. Jesus spoke with uncompromising authority because in a fallen world these are the conditions necessary for true, deep, godly love.

## Look It Up

Compare and contrast Mark 10:2-16 and Matt. 19:1-15.

## Think About It

Considering the track record of the human race, both good and bad, what could the psalmist have in mind when he declares that God has made humans "a little lower than God"?

## Next Sunday

**19th Sunday after Pentecost (Proper 23B), Oct. 11, 2009**

**BCP:** Amos 5:6-7,10-15; Psalm 90 or 90:1-8,12; Heb. 3:1-6; Mark 10:17-27(28-31)

**RCL:** Job 23:1-9,16-17 and Psalm 22:1-15, or Amos 5:6-7,10-15 and Psalm 90:12-17; Heb. 4:12-16; Mark 10:17-31

## D.C. Rector Elected in Georgia

Episcopalians in the Diocese of Georgia decided quickly on Sept. 12 when electing the diocese's tenth bishop. Convening at 9 a.m., a special diocesan convention elected the Rev. Scott A. Benhase within 90 minutes.

Fr. Benhase, rector of St. Alban's Church, Washington, D.C., since 2006, was elected on the second ballot. He also led voting in both the clergy and lay orders on the first ballot. He is 52 and has been a priest for 25 years.



Fr. Benhase

Like other parishes in the Diocese of Washington, St. Alban's provides blessing services for same-sex couples. "While a majority oppose, a significant minority support ordinations, blessings and marriages of gay and lesbian members," said a diocesan

profile prepared in late 2008. "With rare exception, we continue in this diocese to abide with and learn from one another."

When asked in his diocesan profile about divisive issues facing the Anglican Communion, Fr. Benhase suggested that some Episcopalians may be facing what he considers a false dichotomy.

"We have the opportunity to be witnesses to a different way of being Christian: one that takes discipleship in

Jesus seriously, but also one that is open to the new things the Holy Spirit is up to in the world," he said. "My hunch is there are a lot of Georgians who think they have only two choices: adopt the fundamentalist agenda hook, line, and sinker or reject Chris-

GEORGIA				
Ballot	1		2	
	C	L	C	L
Needed to Elect	53		74	
Benhase	42	62	58	76
Gahan	19	42	17	41
Logue	25	25	25	24
Taylor	3	2	1	0
Willoughby	10	6	1	3
Zimmerman	5	9	1	2

tianity as being irrelevant. Wouldn't it be compelling to show them a different way of following Jesus?"

Other nominees were the Rev. William Patrick Gahan III, Wimberley, Texas; the Rev. Frank Sullivan Logue, Kingsland, Ga.; the Rev. Charles Dean Taylor, Dalton, Ga.; the Rev. William Willoughby III, Savannah, Ga.; and the Rev. Stephen Francis Zimmerman, Boca Raton, Fla.

## Southeast Florida Bishop Authorizes Same-Sex Blessings

Only a few months after General Convention approved Resolution C056, public blessings for same-sex couples have begun emerging in dioceses of the Episcopal Church.

On Aug. 30, E. Denise Simmons, the mayor of Cambridge, Mass., exchanged marital vows with her partner, Mattie Hayes, at St. Bartholomew Church, Cambridge. The Rev. Irene Monroe wrote for the online magazine *Religion Dispatches* about presiding at the service with the Rev. Leslie K. Sterling, the priest in charge of St. Bartholomew's, and Jada D. Simmons, a justice of the peace and the mayor's eldest daughter.

"I was elated to be a part of this liturgical assembly line, helping to make a historic event [happen] within the ecclesial strictures of the church," Ms. Monroe wrote. "Sterling did the invocation, declaration of consent to marry, and blessing of the marriage; Simmons pronounced the marriage, and I did the homily, blessing of rings and vows."

Further south, the Rt. Rev. Leo Frade, Bishop of Southeast Florida, has authorized his clergy to provide pas-

toral blessings — but not to preside over same-sex weddings — within about a month.

Bishop Frade announced his decision to a clergy conference that met on Sept. 9 and 10. Bishop Frade told THE LIVING CHURCH that he has asked the Very Rev. Douglas William McCaleb, dean of Trinity Episcopal Cathedral in Miami, to lead a team that will gather liturgies and write guidelines for blessings of same-sex couples. The blessings will be provided only to couples who have a marriage certificate from any U.S. state that permits same-sex marriage, or from countries such as Canada or Spain that have authorized same-sex couples to marry, the bishop said.

### Civil Unions

Bishop Frade said he had asked a drafting committee of fellow bishops during General Convention whether such blessings might also be extended to civil unions. In his diocese, for instance, many elderly heterosexual couples are married in all but the legal sense because of dire tax conse-

quences. The bishops at General Convention did not make provisions for such couples, he said, and he will respect those limits.

"Our hope is that this won't distract us from the mission of the church," Bishop Frade said. "We are in the fishing business, not in throwing out."

Bishop Frade cast some conservative votes on sexuality when he was Bishop of the Diocese of Honduras from 1984 to 2000.

"In Honduras, my major worry was assuring that they would not kill gays," the bishop said. He cited a meditation he delivered at the 11th meeting of the Anglican Consultative Council in September 1999.

"If gays and lesbians of this world are sinners, then we should be sitting down with them to eat and drink as our Lord did during his time with those that were called sinners," he said then. "I want to make sure that they are able to see the Lord among them—the compassionate Christ that keeps appearing in the gospels in the company of sinners."

Douglas LeBlanc

# South Carolina Parish to Begin Discernment

One of the largest congregations in the Episcopal Church, St. Andrew's Church, Mt. Pleasant, S.C., may by December become one of the largest congregations to renounce its Episcopal ties.

On Oct. 11, St. Andrew's will begin a 40 Days of Discernment program to discuss whether it should sever ties with the Episcopal Church. The congregation will vote on Dec. 9-16, after spending a week in prayer and fasting.

The Rev. Steve Wood, rector of St. Andrew's since 2000, wrote to all members of the parish on Sept. 4 to announce the program.

The letter included the signatures of 36 other congregational leaders, including all current staff and nine senior wardens whose service dates back to 1989.

"Since 2003 I have felt compromised by continued association with

a denomination that I consider to be apostate," Fr. Wood told *THE LIVING CHURCH*.

He said he does not know of any significant group in St. Andrew's that wants to remain affiliated with the Episcopal Church. When he interviewed to become rector, Fr. Wood said, both the search committee and the vestry asked if he was open to separation from the Episcopal Church.

Fr. Wood's predecessor was the Rev. Terrell Glenn, who is now a bishop of the Anglican Church in the Americas and rector of AMiA's mother church, All Saints', Pawleys Island, S.C.

"We're going into this with as open a mind as we can," Fr. Wood said. "There's a little risk in there. You never know what God might say."

On its most recent parochial report, St. Andrew's listed 2,698 bap-



Greg Shore photo

St. Andrew's Church has an average Sunday attendance of more than 1,500.

tized members, 2,520 members in good standing and an average Sunday attendance of 1,515. Fr. Wood says another 500 to 700 people are active givers who will not join the church formally because of its affiliation with the Episcopal Church.

Fr. Wood was one of three nominees when the diocese elected the Rt. Rev. Mark J. Lawrence as its 14th bishop in September 2006. Fr. Wood said he gave advance notice of the program to Bishop Lawrence, and will keep lines of communication open.

Fr. Wood said the founding of the Anglican Church in North America was a significant factor in the church's decision to begin the 40 Days of Discernment program.

"We have a home port we can sail into now," he said.

Fr. Wood praised the 40 Days of Discernment curriculum because sections of it reflect the writing style of the Rev. John Yates, rector of The Falls Church in Virginia.

"The material has a very Yatesian feel to it," he said. "It's gentle, straightforward and non-accusatory. The material itself will be very appropriate for the people of St. Andrew's."

*Douglas LeBlanc*

## Committee to Study Church Governance

In a letter to General Convention deputies and first alternates, the president of the House of Deputies has announced a new study committee, described cuts in her council of advice, and said she has sent letters to potential members of interim groups.

President Bonnie Anderson said she will soon announce the members of the new House of Deputies Study Committee on Church Governance and Polity, which will "examine and explain the history, theology, political structure and practical realities of the ways in which we believe God calls us to govern the church."

"During this triennium, we must do more with less," she wrote. "We must create ways to continue essential mission initiatives, even without the Church Center offices that once sustained this work. And we must begin to formulate our response to the Anglican Covenant once the final draft becomes available."

She said she will decrease the number of her advisers from 14 to 8, and each will turn to a broader network of advisers. "I believe this is the most cost-effective way for me to remain well-informed and advised," Mrs. Anderson wrote.

## Former Bishop of Seychelles to Assist in East Carolina

The Diocese of East Carolina has invited the Rt. Rev. Santosh K. Marray, former Bishop of Seychelles, to begin assisting the Rt. Rev. Clifton Daniel III in October.

Bishop Marray, who was born in Guyana in the West Indies, has served as a priest in the dioceses of Florida,

Guyana and the Bahamas and Turks and Caicos Islands. He was bishop of the Seychelles from 2005 to 2008, and helped prepare that diocese to elect a long-term bishop.

Bishop Marray was appointed to the Anglican Covenant Design Group by the Archbishop of Canterbury in 2007.

# Backyard Bees Help Support San Francisco Hunger Ministry

*Deacon's beehives model stewardship of creation*

A deacon based at St. John the Evangelist Episcopal Church in San Francisco is fighting two scourges — urban hunger and widespread devastation of bee colonies — by keeping beehives in her backyard.

The Rev. Jacqueline Cherry said her beekeeping began after receiving a simple gesture of holiday cheer — a jar

vegetables and see the wildflowers blooming, we need to take care of the bees.

"I currently have one very active and productive beehive in my backyard," Deacon Cherry said. "I have a second beehive that just got its bees. A friend caught a six-pound swarm in a residential section of San Francisco and brought it over unannounced while we were having dinner. Beekeeping is like deaconing. You never know what's going to happen next."

Deacon Cherry refers to her backyard guests as Julian Bees because sales of the honey they produce will support the Julian Pantry, her congregation's ministry to the hungry in the Mission District neighborhood of San Francisco.



Elizabeth Freeman photo

Deacon Cherry: "creating a network of hives to benefit Julian Pantry seems very diaconal to me."



Left: Beekeeper Philip Gerre demonstrates that, especially when swarming, bees are gentle creatures. Jacqueline Cherry photo

of honey for Christmas from a keeper of approximately 100,000 bees.

"It was raw, pure and natural. Frankly, it was the best honey I had ever tasted — nothing like the processed, pasteurized honey we buy at the grocery store," Deacon Cherry said. "Only after receiving the honey did it occur to me that I could keep bees in my San Francisco backyard, too."

She had already felt concern about dwindling populations of bees.

"I have a backyard vegetable garden and became interested in honeybees after reading about Colony Collapse Disorder," she said. "Entire colonies are disappearing at an alarming rate, not just here in the U.S., but throughout Europe as well. Honeybees are responsible for the pollination of about one-third of the U.S. crop species: almonds, apples, cucumbers, the list goes on and on. In essence, if we want to continue to eat fruits and

"As I was researching urban beekeeping, I read a lot about urban gardening, the Bay Area locavore movement, sustainable agriculture and how the globalization of the food supply affects the environment, our health, our communities and our disconnect with the food we eat," she said. (Locavores favor food grown as close to home as possible.)

"Most of us don't know who produced our food, how it has been processed and how many thousands of miles it has traveled to get to us," she said. "We need to be fed. Not knowing where our food comes from, or how it is grown, is bad for our bodies and, I'd argue, bad for our souls."

"As I was thinking about bees and gardens and food, I remembered what we do on Saturday mornings at St. John's: Julian Pantry gives good food to hungry people. And it all fit together. Honeybees are in trouble, we need bees to grow food, we keep bees,

they make honey, we sell the honey to benefit the Julian Pantry so we can continue to give good food to hungry people."

Deacon Cherry said that one of St. John's parishioners, Lauren Dieterich, also plans to begin keeping Julian Bees. "Lauren will have one hive buzzing this spring, and if all goes well I'd like her to have a second one," Deacon Cherry said.

"I think to some this was just another harebrained idea," she said. "But creating a network of hives to benefit Julian Pantry seems very diaconal to me. Keeping honeybees will do so much more than raise funds for our food pantry ministry. By housing bees, we are also providing education and modeling stewardship of creation."

*Douglas LeBlanc*

## Communion Partner Rectors Endorse Bishops' Statement

Seventy-four priests who are affiliated with Communion Partners have pledged, in a statement, to fulfill non-episcopal requests made by bishops who met with the Archbishop of Canterbury on Sept. 1 [TLC, Sept. 27].

Two members of the group's advisory committee said the group is striving to be an irenic voice as the Episcopal Church discusses the Anglican Communion's proposed covenant. Both agreed that the rectors' statement reinforces their mission, "an important sign of our connectedness in and vision for the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion."

"It's a hand waving across the seas, signaling that we want to remain faithful to the Anglican Communion," said the Rev. Leigh Spruill, rector of St. George's Church, Nashville.

"Anglicanism is undergoing what is potentially an exciting evolution in its polity," said the Rt. Rev. Anthony Burton, former bishop of Saskatchewan and rector of Church of the Incarnation, Dallas. "It is finding itself led to become a genuinely global church. I

think we need to tend, carefully and together, to what the Spirit is saying to the churches."

The Communion Partner Rectors, who lead parishes with a collective baptized membership of 60,000, list five commitments regarding their response to the Anglican Communion Covenant. The priests say they will:

- Continue to study the covenant and to pray and work for its adoption.

- Endorse the first three sections of the Ridley Cambridge Draft of the Covenant and the Anaheim Statement. Once the covenant is complete, they will "study, endorse and promote it to the General Convention."

- Record their endorsement on the Communion Partners' website.

- Seek to form and engage in "companion domestic mission relationships among dioceses and congregations within the Episcopal Church."

- Seek to build ministry relationships with dioceses and congregations in other provinces of the Anglican Communion.

## Bishop Warner of Nebraska Dies

The Rt. Rev. James D. Warner, Bishop of Nebraska from 1976 to 1990, died Sept. 10. Bishop Warner was 85.

A 1950 graduate of Seabury-Western Theological Seminary, he served congregations in Kansas and Wisconsin prior to his consecration as the eighth bishop of Nebraska in November 1976.

Bishop Warner lived an adventurous life before his ordination as an Episcopal priest, and one of his adventures came full circle through the Anglican Communion.

The *Omaha World-Herald* reports that he lied about his age, at 17, to serve in the U.S. Navy during World War II. Each time he stopped in the South Pacific, he would walk the beach, play one of many harmonicas he had packed for his tour of duty, and leave it with a child.

When he attended the Lambeth Conference in 1988, Bishop Warner met a bishop from the South Pacific and reminisced about his harmonica-playing habit.

"I was one of those children," the other bishop said. "My family has that harmonica in a frame on the wall."

Between the war and his ordination as a priest, the *World-Herald* reported, he was a truck driver, farmer, disc jockey, salesman, sales manager, factory worker, teacher and social worker.

He is survived by his wife, Marcy, of Valley, Neb.; daughters Katherine Capen of Oshkosh, Wis., and Cheryl Warner Mulder of Graeagle, Calif.; sons Stephen of Elroy, Wis., David of Chapel Hill, N.C., Mark of Omaha, and James of Green Bay, Wis.; 26 grandchildren; and 10 great-grandchildren.

### BRIEFLY...

The Rt. Rev. **Marc Andrus**, Bishop of California, announced he was scheduled to undergo prostate-cancer surgery Sept. 28. The bishop disclosed his condition in a brief post on his weblog earlier in the month, noting the cancer was "caught at an early, low-grade stage."

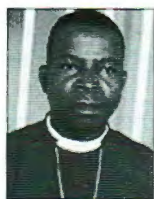
## New Primate Elected in Nigeria

The Most Rev. Nicholas Okoh, Archbishop of Bendel, has been elected to succeed the Most Rev. Peter Akinola as Primate of the Church of Nigeria.

Archbishop Okoh was one of several bishops and archbishops who convened the Global Anglican Future Conference. He is a former lieutenant colonel of the Nigerian army and is chairman of the Nigerian Christian Pilgrims Commission.

"Archbishop Okoh is a godly leader and CANA is delighted that he will be leading the Church of Nigeria," said the Rt. Rev. Martyn Minns, missionary bishop of the Convocation of Anglicans in North America, which Archbishop Akinola helped found.

The Church of Nigeria describes the Province of Bendel as consisting of 12 dioceses, 97 archdeaconries and 437 congregations.



Archbishop Okoh

When the primates of the Anglican Communion gathered in Dar Es Salam, Tanzania, in February 2007, Archbishop Okoh accompanied Archbishop Akinola. At

the time, Archbishop Akinola was protesting the attendance of the primates meeting by the Archbishop of York, which represented the first time that two primates were present from one province.

Archbishop Akinola, 70, will retire in March. He had sought to retire earlier, but his fellow bishops asked him to remain in office until 2010.



# An Initial Request

This is my first column for THE LIVING CHURCH, and I must admit that I am tempted to launch right into some upbuilding theological discourse or other. Perhaps a reflection on the unity of the Church as a gift of grace, notwithstanding our persistent rebellion. Or an exhortation regarding the ecumenical vocation of (catholic) Anglicanism, if we only would have the courage and the humility to grasp it. Or, again, something about the particularly Corinthian pattern of Christian discipleship, beginning with the arc of Paul's first letter to the church at Corinth: that the "word of the cross" is folly or power depending on your perspective (1:18), but that all who would follow the crucified messiah are called to spiritual maturity — to eat, finally, "solid food" (3:2), not least because the "cup of blessing which we bless" and "the bread which we break" are a "participation" (*koinonia*) in Christ (10:16).

A friend wisely suggested, however, that a fitting way to begin would be for me to ask you, our readers, to please share with me and the staff of the Living Church Foundation your stories about THE LIVING CHURCH. First, for you longtime subscribers — say, of 25 years or more, with extra credit for the semi-centenarians: What would be one or two of your fondest memories of the magazine? When we have been at our best, what have we done? And why, rain or shine, have you continued, down the decades, to take and read TLC?

Second, for all of you (whose consciences are properly formed!): What words of constructive advice and encouragement can you offer us, and especially me, going forward? What, in your estimation, may be the purpose of THE LIVING CHURCH magazine? And what, perhaps latent potential remains not quite uncovered or developed in its pages, but within our grasp, God helping us?

While you're thinking about that, I would like to acknowledge the legacy of faithful service to this magazine, and to the Church of Christ, of my predecessor, David Kalvelage, who served as executive editor of TLC for the last 19 years. He is too modest a man to long for a public litany of his accomplishments, and it would not be my place to hazard such a thing in any



"The heavens declare the glory of God."

case. Suffice to say: Bless you, David, for your loyal, often self-sacrificing, labor in this corner of the vineyard. You remain in our hearts and in our prayers. (And, on a personal note, thank-you you for your friendship and gracious welcome of me, not least via the open letter published here several weeks ago [TLC, Aug. 9].)

More to follow from me in this space, which I have provisionally named after the opening words of Psalm 19 (in Latin, of course; cf. our own prayer book). Psalm 19 begins with a meditation on the communicativity of creation: "The heavens declare the glory of God," even though they lack "words or language." "Their sound has gone out into all lands, and their message to the ends of the world" — a comprehensive gospel, as it were, aimed at all people, always, everywhere. Once we have grasped this point, the catholicity of the LORD's "law" and "testimony" may seem more readily apparent: "it revives the soul" and "gives light to the eyes," and in this way is an instrument of our "wholeness," that is, our preservation from sin.

"Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O LORD, my strength and my redeemer" (Psalm 19:14).

— Christopher Wells

**Now is the time for parishes and missions to develop an approach to stewardship that relies on a sound theological foundation.**

## Creativity Required

While the Federal Reserve chairman and other economists predicted last month that the recession may be coming to an end, millions of Americans continue to face great hardship. Unemployment stands at nearly 10 percent, and, according to the Labor Department, it would take the creation of some 9.5 million new jobs just to get back to the level of two years ago.

It is in this uncertain, anxious environment that many Episcopal churches are now beginning to launch their annual stewardship appeal campaigns. The drastic cuts to churchwide programs and budgets — unexpected and shocking to many — that were enacted at General Convention in July should serve as a wake-up call to congregations, a catalyst to do more than what they've always done. Now is the time for parishes and missions to think strategically and creatively, asking hard questions about parish growth, programming and funding, and developing an approach to stewardship that relies not on a single catchphrase or Bible verse but on a sound theological foundation.

Undertaking such a holistic approach to stewardship may be challenging and unwelcome for most congregations. Even when an annual stewardship brunch or series of panic-stricken letters have been yielding diminished returns for years, their familiarity makes them the comfortable, easy choice. It takes a bold step in faith to commit to an ongoing, parish-wide assessment of how well the faith community is changing to meet new needs, new demands, a new economy, and new people.

In some dioceses, a stewardship missionary stands prepared and eager to help parishes undertake this process, and we encourage parishes to make use of this valuable local resource. In dioceses that have not been so blessed, we commend organizations like the Episcopal Church Foundation and the Episcopal Network for Stewardship. They offer congregations a wealth of experience, expertise and encouragement in the sometimes difficult but valuable and necessary work that lies ahead. Most Americans have done significant soul-searching in the past year. It is time for the leadership of the faith communities in which they worship to do the same.

## Vibrant Faith

Last week we concluded a six-week series of guest columns by the Rev. Patrick Gahan, rector of St. Stephen's Church, Wimberley, Texas, and a frequent contributor to *THE LIVING CHURCH*. Fr. Gahan began writing these personal reflections earlier this year as discussion starters when mentoring two persons who were newly ordained in the Diocese of Texas. The articles presented some of his deepest beliefs about the ministry and the priesthood. They offered much, not only to new clergy, but to all Christians wanting to live more faithfully. We especially commend last week's column which called readers out of a passive faith into a joyful "dance" with God. We are thankful to Fr. Gahan for these contributions, and pray that many may be spurred on to greater love of God and good deeds through his instruction.

In this week's issue, we are pleased to include the inaugural column from Christopher Wells as the executive director of The Living Church Foundation.

# ANGLICANS AND COUNCILS



*Now is the time to rethink the relation of councils to scripture.*

## READER'S VIEWPOINT By Samuel Keyes

Perhaps it should go without saying that the Anglican Communion has a mixed history with the seven ecumenical councils. Like the Orthodox, Anglicans cannot accept Rome's reduction of "ecumenical council" to mean a general synod called by the pope. Yet I suspect that most Anglicans — including many who call themselves Anglo-Catholics — remain deeply suspicious of claims to "infallibility" about councils, even when, regarding the seven, such a notion is held consistently in both East and West.

This suspicion is unfortunate — or so I hope to show in this brief essay. It is unfortunate first of all because it ignores the grammar implicit in calling something an ecumenical council. A council becomes ecumenical not because, crudely, everybody was *there*, but because it was eventually received as having proper dogmatic authority in the whole world. (Paragraph 68 of the Windsor Report admits as much.) The trouble with this simple definition is, as is probably apparent, the constitution of the *oikoumene*, since the "whole Church" that accepted Chal-

cedon did not include some of the Eastern churches, just as the "whole Church" that accepted Vatican I did not include *any* of the Eastern churches. So much for the perspicuity of the vocabulary.

What any conception of "ecumenical" takes for granted, then, is that in order to call something ecumenical one must be part of the Church. It is the Church itself, as the Body of Christ, that reveals its wholeness, not some external secular principle. Accordingly, we cannot seek to judge the councils from some neutral ground. That, in Vladimir Lossky's words, "would be to judge Christianity from a non-Christian standpoint: in other words, to refuse in advance to understand anything whatever about the object of study. For objectivity in no wise consists in taking one's stand outside an object but, on the contrary, in considering one's object in itself and by itself" (*The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church* [Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1976], 12).

If Anglicans have, as I see it, a somewhat disjointed view of the councils, it is because Anglican formularies in the 16th century and now try to avoid the subjectivity

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implied in the identification of “the Church” with any particular body. Scripture trumps all. There is, on the face of it, nothing objectionable in that claim — it certainly summarizes the way the ecumenical councils saw their own authority. Thus Article XXI states bluntly that “when [general councils] be gathered together, (forasmuch as they be an assembly of men, whereof all be not governed with the Spirit and Word of God,) they may err, and sometimes have erred, even in things pertaining unto God. Wherefore things ordained by them as necessary to salvation have neither strength nor authority, unless it may be declared that they be taken out of holy Scripture.”

Despite what I imply above about the “infallibility” of certain councils, I do not think that such language is fundamentally opposed to that of the article. The question is what is meant by “general council.” This is not the place to answer that question with decisive historical authority; but in common usage “general council” may or may not be interchangeable with “ecumenical council,” and, of course, there have been many such “general councils” in both East and West which are not known as “ecumenical.” I have no problem — and I think that most Catholics would agree — saying that a general council may err; it is worth noting that, in the language of Article XXI, councils “sometimes have erred,” not “always.” If we follow the classical definition of an ecumenical council, however, it would be absurd to suggest that such a council could have erred, for to say that it is ecumenical in the first place is to say that the whole Church recognizes it as an authoritative interpretation of holy scripture.

(An analagous point, perhaps, in Roman Catholic ecclesiology: Vatican I taught that the *pope* may err, but not in a way that leads the whole Church into error, for this would contradict Christ's promise that the gates of hell will not prevail. Thus, the Church is “infallible” in the sense that she will persevere to the end.)

With this in mind, it may be that the Church of England simply did not recognize *any* truly ecumenical council (perhaps a convinced Protestant would say as much, given my definitions); yet given its insistence on the Nicene Creed and its acceptance of the biblical canon, I find that very unlikely. If I say that the First Council of Nicea is “fallible” I mean that it is not ecumenical, which is *not* to say primarily that I disagree with its conclusions but rather that I do not see myself as being part of the same Church, the same *oikoumene*.

The difficulty I have with Article XXI is not, then, its literal content, but its tone. It implies in its last sentence that the scriptures stand somehow *outside* the Church as an impartial arbiter. It is this implication that has been repeated in some of the modern Protestant movements within the Anglican Communion. See, for example, this point from the constitution of the newly formed Anglican Church in North America (ACNA): “Concerning the seven

councils of the undivided Church, we affirm the teaching of the first four councils and the Christological clarifications of the fifth, sixth and seventh councils, in so far as they are agreeable to the holy scriptures.” And even the creeds are affirmed because they can be “proved by most certain warrants of holy scripture.”

Of course, one must insist, this is *true*; but it is apparently not true *in general*, or else everyone would agree with it. The issue cannot be put simply, as it is tied to the perplexing nest of problems associated with “modernity” itself. But it seems that, while, in these texts, Anglicans reject the ontological stance of Rome — the claim to be

the Catholic Church, or, in post-Vatican II parlance, to be the locus in which the Catholic Church “subsists” — they retain an *epistemological* stance that asserts exactly the same kind of authority. In other words, the claim of scriptural perspicuity (namely, that scripture makes its own interpretation plain and can thereby

mediate human traditions) is, in the face of disagreement about scripture, little more than a claim that one's own interpretation is the authoritative one.

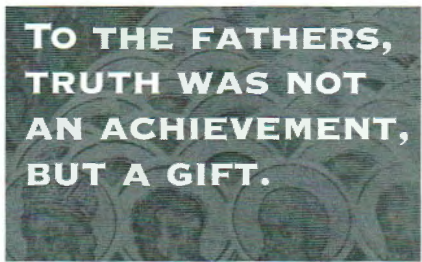
This roundabout, diffident kind of authority is deeply charming, and appealing to those of us who have been formed by a kind of Protestant work ethic epistemology: You'll know that what you believe is true if you work hard enough at it. But such authority is totally foreign to the work of the ecumenical councils of the ancient Church. To the fathers, truth was not an achievement, but a gift — a tradition (literally: handed down). The scriptures were the heart of this gift, but they could not be abstracted from the giving.

Where does all this leave us as Anglicans? Our problem, as has been made painfully clear in the current crisis, is that we do not really know who we are. It will not do to defer to scripture as if scripture stands outside the catholic and ecumenical tradition, for this attitude easily suggests, however unintentionally, that we read the scriptures alone, and that we alone mediate their interpretation.

Instead, let us follow the vision of Lambeth 1920, at which the bishops urged “every branch of the Anglican Communion” to “prepare its members for taking their part in the universal fellowship of the reunited Church, by setting before them the loyalty which they owe to the universal Church, and the charity and understanding which are required of the members of so inclusive a society” (Resolution 15). □

*Samuel Keyes is a candidate for holy orders in the Diocese of Fort Worth and a recent graduate of Duke Divinity School. He is currently completing an Anglican certificate at Nashotah House.*

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



## Delightful Reminder

I found the article by the Rev. Canon Timothy Dombek delightful and a reminder of our own experience [TLC, Sept. 13]. When my wife and I returned to church some years back, our joy-giving Down Syndrome son, Jeff, went with us. Unfortunately we had a negative experience at the local Roman Catholic church, where he was not accepted. Jeff is very low functioning and they could not cope. It was particularly hurtful to me, having been a cradle Roman Catholic. I had significant doctrinal problems that would have not kept me away, but rejecting my son was too much.

In seeking another home, we tried the local Episcopal Church. I cannot adequately explain the difference. Not only was Jeff accepted, but we got grief when he was not with us. The community made every effort to see that he was a part of the congregation. This included helping with his care and making sure that there was food available that met his dietary needs.

My wife and I liked it so much that we stayed. Marilyn is now the church organist, and I am the rector.

*(The Rev.) Vincent J. Carroll  
Trinity Church  
Richlands, Va.*

## The Gospel's Challenge

The editorial in the Sept. 6 issue lamenting the decline in vocations for today's religious communities is, of course, not news to members of these communities or to their associates and friends. While we appreciate TLC's interest and your expression of support, many of us may find your descriptions of what religious orders have to offer and proposed remedies of our decline in numbers a little thin.

We hear a great deal today about the importance of baptism. But perhaps it is not always remembered that baptism is only a beginning of discipleship, with an ongoing call to renunciation and to complete dedication to

God. Monks and nuns are trying to live out this beginning in a particular way. Their way of living out the gospel counsels offers both teaching and intercession, and can serve as a model for the whole Church. This will make sense, though, only where the full challenge of the gospel is being preached in the parishes.

I pray that TLC readers will indeed ponder your conclusion: "The church and its religious communities need to do something to stop their decline." Vocations come from within the wider Church. But where is the support from the wider Church? For example, a woman expresses an interest in a community, perhaps because she has seen a religious in habit or has read a popular book. She visits a community, thinking this life may suit her tastes. Then she discovers this is not tailored to her comfort zone; as you put it, the community's rule of life may

be difficult to follow. There's work involved, and schedules, and not necessarily getting one's own way. So, like the rich young man, she goes away sorrowful, having great possessions.

My question is, has she heard from her priest or her bishop or her teachers a serious call to discipleship? How often has she heard, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me"? How often does she hear of the joy of sacrifice, the glory of the kingdom of God, that he who loses his life for Christ's sake will gain it?

Where the full gospel is preached, some will turn away, but some will hear and follow. Our models are the Desert Fathers, St. Benedict, St. Francis and many others in the communion of saints. Those who have ears let them hear, and may all Church members pay attention to what they are

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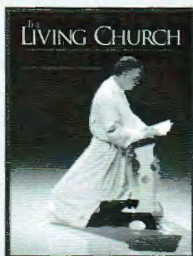
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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

(Continued from previous page)

commissioned to preach: an invitation to a full life through the cross of Jesus Christ.

*Mother Miriam, C.S.M.  
St. Mary's Convent  
Greenwich, N.Y.*

The editorial "Declining Communities" contained the statement, "The church and its communities need to do something to stop the decline." Very true, but women who are interested in religious communities come from the pews where they listen to sermons. And over and over, whenever "vocation" is preached, it is almost always in reference to the priesthood of women and rarely toward the religious life.

*Sister Elaine of All Saints  
St. Anna's  
Philadelphia, Pa.*

### Mixed Experience

Inspired by Fr. Ford's interesting article on India [TLC, Sept. 6], I would like to comment on my experiences regarding the Church of North India (CNI). I traveled there in 1997 specifically to see how much British influence was left after 50 years of independence.

St. Thomas', Mumbai, was one of two low points, church-wise, of my

relatively thriving Roman Catholic cathedral there instead. High points were St. Paul's, Pune, where Sunday Mass was well attended and unmistakably Anglican, and Kolkata, where St. Paul's Cathedral continued to offer daily Holy Communion as advertised.

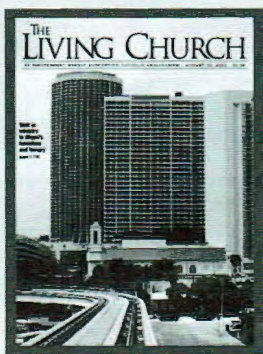
It is my understanding that the CNI has not followed through on having all its priests ordained (or re-ordained) by bishops in apostolic succession. Could a TLC reader enlighten me on this?

*Wallace Spaulding  
Arlington, Va.*

### Clear Priorities

When my wife and I visited the cathedral in Cologne, Germany, a few years ago, we saw that the surrounding area had been laid waste by World War II allied air strikes. This helped make the ancient structure stand out majestically, as indeed it must have in late medieval times. Like earlier visitors, we too felt like awe-struck pilgrims at the power and presence of God, and like them we were thrilled to have made the journey.

TLC's Aug. 30 cover may be symbolic. As with organ pipes that dwarf church altars these days, Miami's Trinity Cathedral is pictorially overcome by "gentrified" hotels, condominiums,



As with organ pipes that dwarf church altars these days, Miami's Trinity Cathedral is pictorially overcome by buildings rising four times higher than the seemingly little church of God below.

trip because the church there advertised daily Holy Communion but apparently hadn't had it for years. The other one was in Darjeeling, where the uncertainty of having a priest shortly before the church's main Sunday service caused me to attend the

and office buildings rising four times higher than the seemingly little church of God below. It is no longer necessary to ask about current-day priorities. Are these challenging times or what?

*Alan O. Dann  
Marlboro, Vt.*

# PEOPLE & PLACES

## Appointments

The Rev. **Kate Atkinson** is rector of St. Paul's, 21 Centre St., Concord, NH 03301.

The Rev. **Lyn Briggs** is rector of Resurrection, PO Box 698, Centerville, UT 84014.

The Rev. **Candis Burgess** is priest at St. Paul's, PO Box 836, Salisbury, NC 28145.

The Rev. **Ron Drummond** is rector of St. Stephen's, 7452 Precinct Line Rd., Hurst, TX 76054 (Southern Cone)

## Ordinations

### Deacons

**North Carolina** — **Timothy Backus**, assistant, Christ Church, 18 W Wright St., Pensacola, FL 32501; **Robert Black**, assistant, St. John's, 1525 H St. NW, Washington, DC 20005; **Eugene L. Humphreys**, St. Andrew's, 3601 Central Ave., Charlotte, NC 28205; **Harrel Brown Johnson**, St. Andrew's, 301 S Circle Dr., Rocky Mount, NC 27804; **Howell C. Sasser**, 106 Twin Brook Ct., Carmel, NY 10512; **Sarah W. Woodard**, St. Titus', 400 Moline St., Durham, NC 27707.

**Pittsburgh (Southern Cone)** — **Christine Curley**, **Andrew DeFusco**, **Deborah Leighton**, **Mike McGhee**, **Pamela Meeks**, **Jeffrey Smead**, **Ann Tefft**.

## Retirements

The Rev. **Steven M. Giovangelo**, as rector of All Saints', Indianapolis, IN.

The Rev. **John Roof**, as rector of St. Augustine's, Danville, IN.

## Deaths

The Rev. **Damaso Manuel Chavez**, 93, a leader of parishes in Cuba and Southeast Florida, died July 9 in Miami Springs, FL.

Born in 1917 in Los Arabos, Metanzas, Cuba, he graduated from Cardenas University and Bexley Hall Seminary. After ordination, he returned to Cuba and served numerous parishes, built the San Juan Evangelista School in Camaguey, and concluded his ministry there as vicar general and dean of Santisima Trinidad Cathedral, Havana. After moving to the United States, Fr. Chavez transferred to the Diocese of Southeast Florida and served as associate at St. Simon's, Miami, from 1980 until his retirement in 1986. In retirement, he assisted at La Divina Providencia, Hialeah, and later joined All Angels', Miami Springs. He is survived by his wife of 54 years, Aurelia; a son, Angel; a daughter, Dania Valdes; and three grandchildren.

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**The Rev. Canon James H. Cooper, D. Min., r**  
 Sun H Eu 8, 10. Mon-Sat Prayer Service 12:30  
 Open Sun 7-4; Mon-Sat 10-8

[www.livingchurch.org](http://www.livingchurch.org)

## WELLSBORO, PA

**ST. PAUL'S** (570) 724-4771  
 Website: [www.stpaulswellsboro.org](http://www.stpaulswellsboro.org)  
**The Rev. Canon Gregory P. Hinton**  
 Sat Eu 7, Sun Eu 8, 10; Wed H Eu 12

## CHARLESTON, SC

**CHURCH OF THE HOLY COMMUNION** (843) 722-2024  
 218 Ashley Ave.  
 Website: [www.holycomm.org](http://www.holycomm.org)  
**The Rev. Dow Sanderson, r; the Rev. Dan Clarke, c; the Rev. Patrick Allen, assoc**  
 Sun Mass 8 (Low) 10:30 (Solemn High)

**GRACE CHURCH** 98 Wentworth Street (843) 723-4575  
 Website: [www.gracechurchcharleston.org](http://www.gracechurchcharleston.org)  
**The Rev. Canon J. Michael A. Wright, r; the Rev. Calhoun Perkins, v; the Rev. Alastair Votaw, assoc; the Rev. Paul Gilbert, assoc; Dr. Scott Bennett, organist & choir-master; Jodi Bennett, children's choirs; Julie Walters, children's ministries; Mac Brown, youth & young adults**  
 Sun H Eu 8 (Said), 9 (Sung), 10:10 (Christian Formation), 11 (Choral); Wed H Eu & LOH 5:30; Mon-Fri MP 8:45

## MILWAUKEE, WI

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

## ANGLICAN

## LAS VEGAS, NV

**ST. GEORGE'S ANGLICAN** (702) 395-4576  
 7676 West Gilmore [www.stgeorgeanglican.org](http://www.stgeorgeanglican.org)  
**The Rev. Gordon Hines, r**  
 Sun Mass 8 (Low), 10:30 (Sung, w/ 1928 BCP)  
 Wed EP 5:45, Mass 6

## 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](mailto: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; E&B, Evensong and Benediction; 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; Sér, 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.