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# THE LIVING CHURCH

this week

December 13, 2009



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news

## Archbishop Presses Ecumenical Questions at Conference in Rome

The Archbishop of Canterbury asked Nov. 19 whether the differences between Roman Catholicism and Anglicanism are sufficient to prevent Rome's deeper recognition of Anglican orders.

The Most Rev. Rowan Williams spoke at the Gregorian University at a conference in honor of the late ecumenical leader Johannes Cardinal Willebrands.

The "ecumenical glass is genuinely half-full," the archbishop said. "For many of us who are not Roman Catholics, the question we want to put, in a grateful and fraternal spirit, is whether this unfinished business is as fundamentally church-dividing as our Roman Catholic friends generally assume and maintain."

Archbishop Williams quoted ten times from a newly published book, *Harvesting the Fruits: Basic Aspects of Christian Faith in Ecumenical Dialogue*, by Walter Cardinal Kasper, whom he called "our greatly loved and respected friend."

Citing a sermon that Cardinal Willebrands delivered in Cambridge in 1970, the archbishop described a theory of primacy as a "community of communities" and a "communion of communions." He cited the Anglican Communion's proposed covenant as an example.

"The current proposals for a covenant between Anglican provinces represent an effort to create not a centralized decision-making executive but a 'community of communities' that can manage to sustain a mutually nourishing and mutually critical life, with all consenting to certain protocols of decision-making together," he said.

Archbishop Williams also offered a brief critique of the Vatican's apostolic constitution that will allow sojourning Anglicans to become Roman Catholics while retaining

aspects of their Anglican heritage.

The constitution, he said, "does not build in any formal recognition of existing ministries or units of oversight or methods of independent decision-making, but remains at the level of spiritual and liturgical culture, as we might say. As such, it is an imaginative *pastoral* response to the needs of some; but it does not break any fresh *ecclesiological* ground. It remains to be seen whether the flexibility suggested in the Constitution might ever lead to something less like a 'chaplancy' and more like a church gathered around a bishop."

The archbishop devoted nearly a quarter of his address to women's ordination.

"What we are saying here," the archbishop said, "is that a degree of recognizability of 'the same Catholic thing' has survived: Anglican provinces ordaining women to some or all of the three orders have not become so obviously diverse in their understanding of filial holiness and sacramental transformation that they cannot act together, serve one another and allow some real collaboration."

## Seminary of the Southwest Announces Staff Cuts

The Episcopal Seminary of the Southwest will dismiss 12 staff members by Dec. 8, and will not replace one retiring faculty member.

The Very Rev. Douglas Travis, dean and president of the seminary in Austin, Texas, announced the cuts in an open letter dated Nov. 17.

The seminary's board of trustees decided in a meeting Nov. 13 that "we must cut at least \$1 million from the seminary's annual operating budget," Dean Travis wrote. "This cannot be accomplished without restructuring

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the staff and taking other cost-cutting measures that will affect everyone in the employ of the seminary.”

Five years ago, the dean wrote, the trustees “faced the seminary’s deficit budget with the decision to grow out of the problem rather than cut budget.”

He believes that decision has been vindicated. “For example, in 2009, 60 new students matriculated in all our programs, whereas in 2008 only 27 did so, and last year annual fund gifts reached their highest level in the school’s history. Had the market not fallen so precipitously in 2008, we might have been able to sustain this pace of growth and spending without making any cuts. However, as we all know, last year the market did suffer its greatest loss since the Great Depression.”

Dean Travis expressed his hope that the school may also recover dur-

ing the next five years through a new financial campaign.

“In service of the future to which we remain committed, we are preparing for a major gifts campaign to raise nearly \$14 million to fully fund seven faculty chairs and for additional scholarship endowment. At a 5% spend rate, those gifts will add \$645,000 income to the operating budget.”

### Diocese of Ohio to Gather Blessing Rites

Since General Convention’s adoption of Resolution C056 during the summer, the bishops of Bethlehem, Southeast Florida, and Southern Ohio have authorized some form of blessing for same-sex couples.

The Rt. Rev. Mark Hollingsworth, Bishop of Ohio, responded to the res-

olution by saying his diocese will support the Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music as it gathers liturgies and other resources regarding such rites.

Bishop Hollingsworth announced this response during his address to the diocese’s annual convention on Nov. 13 and 14 in Cleveland. The bishop asked deputies to pray during designated times in response to his address.

“I will appoint a task force to gather such resources from our congregations, clergy and communicants, in order that the Diocese of Ohio might play a constructive and leadership role in the larger Church’s carrying out of this endeavor,” the bishop said about Resolution C056.

“I ask you and your prayer partner each in turn to pray aloud for the Episcopal Church and its leader-

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essay

# Reviving the Quadrilateral

The proposed covenant calls  
forth our best Anglican selves

By Joseph B. Howard

In times of change and conflict it is unsurprising that voices arise to point out the inevitable failure of this or that institution or program. We're all familiar with this phenomenon in the political realm; during George W. Bush's presidency, some who opposed his policies did so with the conviction that he was charting a path of destruction for the nation. A quick survey of talk radio reveals plenty of people who believe the same about President Obama's leadership.

As in secular politics, there are passionate people within the church who allow their strong feelings to lead them into making pronouncements that seem based more on fear or frustration than fact. In the case of the Anglican Communion, the voices crying out that the Anglican experiment is over may be one example. Anglicanism as an institution is certainly under strain, but does that void the entire tradition? The accusation that the Anglican experiment is over should motivate us to reflect upon what that experiment (if it's right to use that term) has been, and what it — what we — have to offer to the broader church catholic.

Last June 29 marked the end of the Year of St. Paul. At the time I found myself reflecting on the Apostle and his ministry quite a bit. Specifically, as I considered the current conflict in the Anglican Communion, I recalled Paul's words to the Corinthians:

I have become all things to all people, so that I might by any means save some. I do it all for the sake of the gospel, so that I may share in its blessings (1 Cor. 9:19-23).

We don't often hear the phrase "all things to all people" in a virtuous light today. When it is used, it is often presented as a critique or an accusation that someone

is trying too hard to please others. While Paul was speaking specifically of presenting the gospel, Anglicanism has taken upon itself a similar calling in the service of Christian unity, which is a gospel imperative.

There have always been plenty of voices within and outside of Anglicanism that have accused it of an ill-conceived attempt to be all things to all people, and thus of being impure, haphazard, or uncommitted. "Complete the Reformation and do away with the vestiges of papist idolatry," some would say. "Reject the inherently heretical and schismatic nature of Protestantism," others would admonish, "and return to full fidelity to the ancient churches of Rome and Constantinople." Anglicans must *choose*, according to these critics, past and present. In the words of Walter Cardinal Kasper during the runup to last year's Lambeth Conference:

Does [Anglicanism] belong more to the churches of the first millennium — Catholic and Orthodox — or does it belong more to the Protestant churches of the 16th century? At the moment it is somewhere in between, *but it must clarify its identity now* and that will not be possible without certain difficult decisions (*The Catholic Herald* [London], May 6, 2008).

Those who have left the Episcopal Church over theological issues are not immune to such criticism. The presence at the recent inaugural convention of the Anglican Church in North America of megachurch pastor Rick Warren, a Baptist, Metropolitan Jonah of the Orthodox Church in America, and the Rev. Dr. Todd Hunter — formerly of the Vineyard, now of the Anglican Mission in America — all testify to the theological

breadth within the Anglican tradition, and irrespective of whether it holds together, the ACNA shares some degree of this, at least for the moment. It was interesting that in his address to the convention, Metropolitan Jonah called for the ACNA to fully renounce women's ordination and — of all things — to condemn Calvinism as heresy. The constant companion of Anglicans, whatever their stripe, seems to be the assumption by some fellow Christians that Anglicanism is a sort of ecclesiastical Frankenstein's monster that needs to be saved from its own doctrinal incoherence by those of correct and consistent opinions and beliefs.

Such criticisms have their counterpart in the seemingly innocuous notion that Anglicanism is a bridge between Protestants and the ancient churches of the Catholic world. Most of the time people use "bridge church" as a compliment, but at least one underlying assumption is pejorative. The Rt. Rev. William Weinhauer, the late Bishop of Western North Carolina, once told me a remark he had often heard in ecumenical dialogues: "Who wants to live under a bridge?" This phrase neatly captures the problem with "bridge church" — it is an image of transience and rootlessness.

Calls for purification often seem to assume Anglicanism to be a sort of framework or shell into which various doctrines and beliefs can be added or removed at will. Likewise, the metaphor of the bridge risks presenting Anglicanism as a continuum through which people move in one direction or the other until they arrive at their true home. In each case, Anglicanism is presented as an empty husk, lacking essential substance or identity.

And yet, while Anglicans may have refrained from writing confessions or precisely defining certain doctrines (settling on a single understanding of the Atonement or one explanation of the Eucharist), that does not mean the tradition lacks substance. Whether one looks to Jewel's *Apology*, Hooker's *Laws*, or the works of the Caroline Divines, there is clearly an Anglican identity, expressed more clearly in the manner and tenor of interpretation and in the particular sources of authority than through specific doctrines. Binding it all together, and connecting all of us to this tradition most fully, is the worship of The Book of Common Prayer (in its various iterations) down to today.

Changing political circumstances and the very suc-

cess Anglicans have experienced in spreading the Christian faith have resulted in dramatic changes, what the most recent Ridley Cambridge draft of the Anglican covenant referred to positively as "our ongoing refashioning by the Holy Spirit." As the Communion has grown and changed, there have naturally been growing pains that strain the bonds that hold us together. At the same time we are being summoned "into a more fully developed communion life" (§ 2.1.2) and through that

deepening relationship, as well as those we cultivate with our ecumenical partners, into the reunited Church of the future. But if Anglicanism is not to be seen as a "bridge church," what role are Anglicans called to play?

In *The Church Idea*, which served as a precursor to the Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral, William Reed Huntington issued the call for us to "press our reasonable claims to be the reconciler of a divided household, not in a spirit of arrogance (which ill befits those whose best possessions have come to them by inheritance), but with affectionate earnestness and intelligent zeal"

(Huntington, *The Church Idea: An Essay Towards Unity* [New York: E.P. Dutton & Co, 1884], 211). The quadrilateral was conceived as a way to extend the hand of fellowship to other Christian traditions, and to bring unity out of division. It seems appropriate, then, that the proposed Anglican Covenant would begin with many of the elements of the quadrilateral — those dealing with the Holy Scriptures, the creeds, dominical sacraments, and the historic episcopate, for example — as a starting point to begin mending the fractures in our common life.

We are called, as Anglicans, not to be a bridge but rather to be *interpreters* for our brothers and sisters of various traditions to one another. In the comprehensiveness we have traditionally modeled, if not so comfortably



William Reed Huntington, architect of the quadrilateral.

(Continued on next page)

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embraced — and governed by, as Archbishop Michael Ramsey put it, “Scripture, antiquity, and reason” — Anglicans are capable of comprehending (in the sense of embracing internally as well as understanding intellectually and in practice) Christians of diverse theological commitments and sensibilities, from the evangelical to the Catholic. This is why, for example, early Anglican missionary societies reached out to Lutherans from the *Berliner Missionsschule* and — sometimes without re-ordination — sent them out to serve in the Middle East and Africa. Such comprehensiveness has been sought not to avoid conflict — for as any casual student of history can attest, such diversity has only rarely been peaceful — but because we have sought, as the prayer for the commemoration of Richard Hooker puts it, “comprehension for the sake of truth” (*Lesser Feasts and Fasts* [New York: Church Publishing, 2003], 427). This comprehensiveness is one of our claims to catholicity (Michael Ramsey, *The Anglican Spirit* [New York: Seabury Classics, 2004], 13).

We are called to be reconcilers of a divided house, and we can look around us and see many fruits of this vision, whether in our engagement with our brothers and sisters in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the United Methodist Church, or in the newest proposal for full communion between the Episcopal Church and the Moravians. All of these agreements, however complex or imperfect, stem from the great gifts of Anglicanism: theological comprehensiveness within, and a humble ecclesiology when looking outward (a refusal to deny that others are the Church), and an overarching commitment to common prayer. Indeed, I have experienced our tradition in such a reconciling role in my own life as it was Anglicanism that mediated the broader Catholic tradition and presented it to me in a way that I, a young man from a traditionally Baptist family, could understand and embrace.

And yet, the voices that call for a clarification of Anglican identity are not all wrong, and as our brothers and sisters they deserve to be heard. One of the great difficulties we face today is a crisis of identity. Our diversity is in danger of becoming unmoored from the anchors of Scripture, antiquity, and reason, and threatens to permanently fragment the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion. Without the

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binding qualities of a coherent Anglican identity — a shared commitment to the basics of the Christian faith, a common recognition of sources of authority — our comprehensiveness breaks down and becomes factionalism.

Our role as interpreter between varied traditions and spiritualities is lost as we lose the ability to understand one another. When this happens our role as a valuable contributor to the ecumenical movement is called into question because some of our partners no longer see us as faithful to our shared Christian inheritance, and therefore as incapable of speaking to them in an intelligible way.

It is not enough to say that Anglicanism offers a vision of comprehensiveness, for without a clear vision of what it means to be Anglican, and more important, to be Christian, comprehensiveness dissolves into petty disputes, that weakness of which Bishop Stephen Sykes warned when he spoke of “the all-consuming ruthlessness of the campaigners, for whom politics is all” (S.W. Sykes, “Odi et Amo: Loving and hating Anglicanism,” in *One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism*, ed. Marsha L. Dutton and Terrell Grey [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006], 207).

I am hopeful, however, because of our Lord’s promise to be with us in our worship, to be present in the sacrament. I am hopeful because of friends, colleagues and parishioners. And I am hopeful because as a Communion we have the opportunity to maintain the most important elements of our comprehensiveness while clarifying our identity, if we choose to walk the road together.

The Ridley Cambridge draft of the Anglican covenant takes the Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral as a starting point and fleshes some of the thinking out a bit, but it also presents some important things that, if affirmed, can help to once again set Anglicanism on the path of a coherent, credally circumscribed, and scripturally committed comprehensiveness.

The proposed covenant does this not only in what it says, but also in the way it says it. When I read the covenant, I sense an importance not merely in its specific points but also in its process. People rightly crack jokes about process today. We’ve all







been in places where we feel ourselves being processed out of existence. Yet one of the strengths of the covenant is that a group of Anglicans sat down together and hammered it out and have done so by looking to points of common authority and identity. Once it goes to the provinces, this inspires hope that it will make all of us revisit these sources of identity and authority for ourselves if we have not already done so.

The covenant by itself cannot save Anglicanism — I'm not sure it's structured in a way that would allow it to do that — but the process of studying the covenant, responding to it, receiving it, and recommitting ourselves to one another may do so, and it will leave the Anglican Communion stronger. A strengthened Anglican Communion will be confident in itself while actively working for Christian unity through joining with our brothers and sisters in mission and by standing ready to share the understandings born from our comprehensiveness.

Two points in the Ridley Cambridge draft seem especially important in such a task and in light of a call to be reconcilers and interpreters. The first is in § 2.1.5, which affirms that “our common mission is a mission shared with other Churches and traditions” and recognizes that “the ecumenical vocation of Anglicanism to the full visible unity of the Church in accordance with Christ’s prayer that ‘all may be one.’”

The other is § 4.1.5, which states:

It shall be open to other Churches to adopt the Covenant. Adoption of this Covenant does not bring any right of recognition by, or membership of, the Instruments of Communion. Such recognition and membership are dependent on the satisfaction of those conditions set out by each of the Instruments.

Leaving open the possibility that other churches might adopt the covenant is, in my mind, a wonderful gesture that seems born from reflection on the ecumenical vocation of Anglicanism mentioned in section

The covenant by itself cannot save Anglicanism, but the process of studying the covenant, responding to it, receiving it and recommitting ourselves to one another may do so.

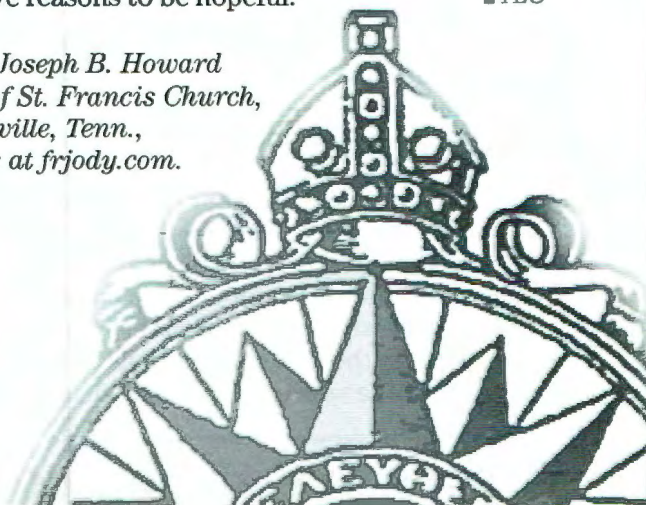
two. This provision has inspired resistance in some quarters of the Episcopal Church, for fear that it might play into the perceived schemes of some of our departed brothers and sisters to replace the Episcopal Church as the officially recognized Anglican body in the United States. While I understand the origins of such concerns, I wonder if they are the fruit of a conflict mentality that is unhelpful and could lead to an even longer period of being internally focused. The key portion of the provision for those who have these concerns would seem to be that any body’s acceptance as part of the Communion would come only with the approval of all the Instruments of Communion, not simply one or two.

In the end, the inclusion of this provision within the covenant prevents it from being a document purely internal to the Communion as it is, and instead turns a

portion of it outward in a gesture of invitation and welcome. In this sense, it seems to be both consistent with and an expansion of the original spirit of the quadri-lateral as a means of ecumenical engagement. It only seems appropriate, at such a contentious time in the life of our Communion, that we look outward — if only in such a small way — even as we seek to heal the divisions within. By looking outward and refusing to become mired in our own conflict, as well as by returning to the

sources of Anglican Identity in such a time of division, we can find a way to come through this uncertain time and be stronger for it. If we can do this, if we can embrace our heritage and if we are able to say, with St. Paul, that we “do it all for the sake of the gospel,” then we all have reasons to be hopeful. ■TLC

*The Rev. Joseph B. Howard is vicar of St. Francis Church, Goodlettsville, Tenn., and blogs at frjody.com.*



## After a 20-Minute Chat, Ecumenism Rolls On

By John L. Allen, Jr.

Like a plane taking a circuitous route to avoid turbulence, perhaps the best way to approach last Saturday's meeting between Pope Benedict XVI and the Archbishop of Canterbury is indirectly, with an observation about modern journalism. To wit: It's striking how much the language of news copy these days has come to sound like a sales pitch.

Headlines and TV teasers routinely use terms such as "stunning" and "dramatic" to describe virtually everything that happens, playing roughly the same role as commercial taglines about "a revolutionary breakthrough in vacuum cleaner technology." The idea isn't to relate facts, but to move merchandise.

That's worth bearing in mind apropos of the 20-minute encounter between Pope Benedict XVI and Archbishop Rowan Williams on Nov. 21, which drew wide media interest in the wake of new tensions between these communions. Those tensions, of course, were set loose by the pope's decision to create new structures in which Anglicans can become Roman Catholics while preserving much of their spiritual patrimony.

Words such as "crisis" and "rift" have figured prominently in coverage of the meeting between the archbishop and pope, despite attempts on both sides to describe it as routine. For the record, Archbishop Williams was in Rome to celebrate the centenary of Johannes Cardinal Willebrands; he didn't come primarily to meet the pope.

Obscured amid the hyperbole are two points needed to locate the Nov. 21 meeting in its proper context:

The sociological footprint of the Vatican's bid is likely to be minimal, given that most traditionalist Anglicans have said, in effect, "thanks, but no thanks." The numbers actually inclined to take up the invitation, therefore, can perhaps be best expressed with the Italian euphemism *quattro gatti e un cane*: "four cats and a dog."

The future of ecumenical relations is arguably less likely to be worked out in G8-style summits between popes and archbishops of Canterbury than on the ground in other parts of the world, perhaps especially in Africa — which is increasingly the center of the Anglican Communion, as well as the zone where Roman Catholicism is experienc-



*Osservatore Romano* photo  
Pope Benedict greets Archbishop Williams at the Vatican Nov. 21.

ing its most rapid growth.

By way of background, the Vatican announced its plan to create special structures for former Anglicans, called personal ordinariates, in mid-October. A document laying out the legal blueprint for these structures, titled *Coetibus Anglicanorum* ("On Groups of Anglicans"), was then released in early November. An ordinariate is a non-geographic diocese, in which Anglican

clergy and faithful can pray and practice largely as they did before — including, most controversially, married priests.

Now that the door is open, the question becomes whether anybody will actually walk through it.

On that score, a reminder is in order: There's a certain kind of story on the religion beat which kicks up clouds of dust because of its symbolic resonance, but only later does anyone ask whether it's likely to change anything in the real world. An example from recent experience is Pope Benedict's decision in 2007 to authorize wider celebration of the old Latin Mass. Anguished debate ensued about its meaning for the broader direction of the Church, but two years later the number of people routinely celebrating Mass according to the older rite is so small as to be essentially invisible.

Most indications are that, at least in the short run, *Coetibus Anglicanorum* may well fall into the same category of symbolically charged but sociologically trivial religion news.

Estimates vary of how many Anglicans might change communions, but even the most wildly optimistic guesses level off at a few thousand, virtually all of them in England. In the United States, Bishop Kevin Farrell of Dallas, Texas, which has long been an epicenter of the country's Anglo-Catholic movement, recently said that the numbers are likely to be so small he's not even sure an ordinariate is needed. Speaking on behalf of the Fellowship of Confessing Anglicans, which is concentrated in the Global South, Archbishop Peter Akinola of Nigeria recently asserted that "this is not the time to abandon the Anglican Communion."

There are at least four reasons why even Anglicans who side with Rome on the culture wars may nevertheless not be prepared to swim the Tiber:

Many of the Anglicans most inclined to jump ship have already done so. In the United States, for example, Anglicans have been able to come into Rome while preserving their traditions since at least 1980, under a deal approved by Pope John Paul II called the Pastoral Provision. There are now seven parishes and a hundred priests operating in the States under that arrangement.

Other traditionalist Anglicans who might have been open to Rome's offer a few years ago have since moved on to create rival Anglican structures, and that's where their energy is focused now.

The traditional wing of Anglicanism tends to be heavily evangelical, and hence least likely on principle to see Rome as a live option.

In most of the Global South, traditionalist Anglicans aren't a disaffected minority but the overwhelming majority, so they don't feel an incentive to seek new ecclesiastical pastures. Southern leaders such as Akinola aren't looking to leave the Anglican Communion; they're looking to take it over.

Given that there are 1.1 billion Roman Catholics in the world and 77 million Anglicans, movement of a few thousand in one direction or the other does not a revolution make. In fact, since Roman Catholicism is by far the larger group, the number of disaffected Catholics who decide to become Anglicans almost certainly remain substantially larger than the number of Anglicans moving to Rome.

(As a footnote, the lack of any public outcry when Anglicans welcome Roman Catholic defectors is the sort of thing that feeds the paranoia of apologists constantly trawling for evidence of anti-Catholic bias. For instance, the Episcopal Church in the States recently embraced a charismatic Latino priest named Fr. Alberto Cutié, who had been caught making out with his girlfriend on a beach in Miami. In most commentary, Episcopalians were hailed as "welcoming" and "tolerant." When Rome reaches out to Anglicans, meanwhile, it's lambasted as "anti-ecumenical" and "heavy-handed.")

The bottom line is that five years from now, all the ink that's been spilled over Rome's "bold gambit" in recent weeks may well seem disproportionate.

So if *Coetibus Anglicanorum* isn't the ecumenical future, what is? One could do well to look south, especially to Africa.

Today, Africa is home to almost 40 million Anglicans, more than half the global total. Given the stark difference in birth rates between the Global North and the South, the African share of the Anglican population is certain to grow. Meanwhile, the Roman Catholic population of sub-Saharan Africa exploded from 1.9 million in 1900 to 139 million

in 2000, a growth rate of almost 7,000 percent. As a result, Africa will play a steadily more important role in setting the tone for the Church in the 21st century.

In Africa, Anglicans and Roman Catholics aren't divided over matters such as homosexuality or women priests and bishops, since both churches share a deeply conservative outlook. Instead, the major challenge facing both churches in many African societies come either from Islam or the rise of Christian Pentecostalism, or both. In religion as in politics and war, there's nothing like a common enemy to bring people together.

At the moment, Kenya offers a clear example, where Roman Catholic and Anglican leaders are standing shoulder-to-shoulder to oppose recognition of the so-called Kadhi Courts, meaning tribunals based on Islamic law, in the country's new constitution.

In addition, Christian leaders in Africa often aren't as invested in what has long been the defining aim of the ecumenical movement in Europe — full, visible, structural reunion. Instead, their ecumenism is often of a more practical stamp, focused on what the separate churches can do together in the social, political, and cultural sphere. In that sense, the template for the ecumenical future may not be the new personal ordinariates decreed by Rome, but rather something like the "Christian Association of Nigeria," a self-defense league formed in the late 1970s to defend Christians when Islamic militia began spreading around the countryside. It's become an important player in Nigerian politics, with wings for both women and youth.

To be sure, none of this means that encounters between popes and archbishops of Canterbury have become irrelevant. Both figures exercise vast influence over their respective churches, and anyway, these encounters are good theatre. (For instance, Benedict gave Williams a gold pectoral cross, as John Paul typically did for visiting Anglican clergy. Is this a samizdat way of acknowledging validity to Anglican ordinations? Let the games begin.)

Nor should the foregoing suggest that *Coetibus Anglicanorum* is an ecumenical non-event. Perception often creates reality, and clearly lots of people perceive this to be significant.

All the same, it's also important to think beyond the hype in assessing the state of ecumenical ties. There really are forces at work reshaping that relationship, but newspaper headlines and high-profile summits can be a poor roadmap for finding them.

*John L. Allen Jr. is the senior correspondent of the National Catholic Reporter and author of The Future Church (Doubleday, 2009).*

Editorial

## Of Loyalty Oaths

Alert readers of *THE LIVING CHURCH* will have noticed a strange remark in the news pages of our Nov. 15 issue. It occurred in a report in which Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori explained her decision to treat two letters from the Rt. Rev. Keith Ackerman as a renunciation of his ministry as a bishop.

The Presiding Bishop compared Bishop Ackerman's case to that of the Rt. Rev. Mark MacDonald, Bishop of Alaska, resigned, who now serves as the Anglican Church of Canada's first Indigenous Bishop. Here's the sentence:

As Bishop MacDonald's work in Canada becomes permanent, she wrote, "his loyalty will have to be to the Anglican Church of Canada, rather than the Episcopal Church, and a recognition of his renunciation of orders in this church will be necessary."

This language of loyalty is what one would expect about members of the military, the foreign-service corps, or spies. It shows no understanding of bishops serving the one holy catholic and apostolic Church, in which they have their being, no matter where they happen to live and move (including any related episcopal ministry).

It is one thing to depose bishops who have shown they no longer wish to be associated with the Episcopal Church. It is another and more dubious thing to refer to personal letters as renunciations of ministry when their authors explicitly say they have made no such renunciations. It is still another and more bizarre thing to assert that a bishop must renounce orders in the Episcopal Church after being invited to ministry within another Anglican province.

What sort of ad-hoc ecclesiology is this? Just as important, which bishop might be its next victim?

## Misreading History

By Ephraim Radner

*The Washington Post's* On Faith weblog recently published "A Christian Case for Same-Sex Marriage," a column by Bishop John Chane of the Episcopal Diocese of Washington. The occasion for the piece is a debate about a law that would legalize same-sex marriage in the District of Columbia. But Bishop Chane's main goal, as he tells us, is to "offer a short history of changing

Christian understandings of the institution of marriage" that will counter traditional Christian arguments against same-sex partnerships.

Journalists, he worries, think that traditionalists speak for the church and for the Christian tradition. They speak for neither, according to the bishop. Given the high profile of the *Post*, and Bishop Chane's standing as a bishop of a prominent (if recently beleaguered) Christian body, one should probably take his remarks seriously. Alas, as a short history his remarks cannot be taken seriously at all, but amount to a tissue of popular myths, used to promote a tired and unfounded historical perspective whose application now has a track record of political intolerance.

Bishop Chane first argues that traditionalists are inconsistent — maybe even hypocritical? — because Jesus was against divorce and traditionalists are not "demanding that the city council make divorce illegal." Of course, Jesus did *not* proclaim all divorce wrong (cf. Matt. 9:9). More important, by begging his own question here — just what *is* the status of divorce, then? — Bishop Chane undercuts his case: the state's accommodation of divorce has indeed encouraged and even created turmoil in social relations. If anything the failures of church and wider culture in this area are actually a good argument for *restraint* on further social confusion.

Second, Bishop Chane says that traditionalists are inconsistent in their defense of the centrality of heterosexual marriage because, after all, Paul thought marriage inferior to the celibate life. But, of course, the apostle Paul's teaching does not claim that marriage is an inferior state, but rather that it is often an impractical one in comparison with celibacy. Bishop Chane's disingenuous assumption that traditionalists ought to apply Paul's teaching to all of human life was certainly *not* shared by other writers in the New Testament (or by Jesus), and such an attitude made only partial inroads into the Church's practical life some centuries later. Most Christians, including Christian priests even in the Middle Ages, understood Paul's teaching within a larger theological reading of the Scriptures that included a created sexual difference, the blessing of procreation, and the social responsibilities of church and state to nurture families. Within this reading, celibacy is a great gift, and an evangelical vocation for some, and it remains so.

Third, Bishop Chane claims that "the church did not bless marriages until the third century, or define marriage as a sacrament until 1215." While technically accurate in a way, the statement is wholly misleading: the "sacramental" nature of marriage, in a large sense, was already defined theologically (though not canonically) in the early 5th century by none other than Augustine, building on longstanding traditions, and the Church was deeply engaged in the formation, blessing, and ordering of married life long before this, regardless of whether standard liturgies had been formulated and en-



forced. The canonical standing of marriage is a red herring.

Fourth, Bishop Chane accuses traditional Christian marriage in the past of being bound to a patriarchal culture, one that defined women and children as a man's possessions to be used and exploited. It was an understanding of marriage, he writes, that placed no value on mutual love, but solely on procreation. Only in the 19th and 20th centuries did Christians discover the affectionate and spiritual dimensions of marriage.

Bishop Chane's odd denigration of the material and economic world as theologically insignificant here is astonishing, as is his whole-cloth reduction of family life before recent Western modernity to patriarchally controlled property. Bishop Chane's claim is in fact historically false on a technical basis, given the range of economic and legal orderings of property within the Middle Ages (many of which placed legal possession in the hands of women), especially among the vast majority of the population living in agrarian contexts. It is also supremely ignorant of the actual dynamics of family life in such contexts of poverty, where common and mutual support is actually presupposed, necessary, and relied upon.

Social historians like Martine Segalan have provided sophisticated analyses that have uncovered the differentiated egalitarian and mutual support among married couples that underlay rural existence in Europe over the centuries. The place of procreation in such contexts was indeed central, but for that reason hardly disposable with today's new (and limited) economic conditions. The falling away of procreative marriage as an interpretive standard is actually very recent in the West and has taken place mainly in contexts not simply of economic security but of economic luxury. And this last has acted, it seems, as a set of blinders placed upon the eyes of many against both historical and contemporary global realities, where the profound struggles for the fruitful existence of family and children has been marginalized among the values of the privileged.

In any case, most historians have for some time normally placed the "invention" of marital affection as a primary value in the 16th and 17th centuries in Europe, and credited Anglican Puritans with promoting this new notion. More than this, however, it is clear that mutual affection and comfort were already well understood and widely lifted up in the Middle Ages and before, as any reading about lived marriages over these centuries makes clear.

Bishop Chane's logic, in making all his (largely unfounded) points, is that "our evolving understanding of

what marriage is leads, of necessity, to a re-examination of who it is for." That is, we now believe marriage is about mutual love, but we didn't before; we now believe it has spiritual, not just economic, potential, but we didn't before; and therefore, if we can change in this direction, we can apply these insights to same-sex partnerships. Bishop Chane's rhetoric of "continual change" masks his argument's many weaknesses: the purported changes never really took place as described, and never moved logically or closely in the direction of same-sex marriage. His argument and conclusion are false.

There have been changes, to be sure, in attitudes toward marriage and sexual expression over the centuries within the Church. But these have almost always taken place within much broader and deeper continuities: God's creative purpose in procreative life among human families; the sacramental — that is divinely permanent and expressive — character of human marriage between men and women; the virtues and spiritual gifts embedded in the material struggle of procreative families; the symbolic efficacy of such struggle and attendant gifts in being joined to the work and image of Christ Jesus in his final work of reconciliation.

Finally, it is important to point out that the errors in this picture are not merely the mistakes of the misinformed. They serve a political purpose within Bishop Chane's church whose malice cannot be overlooked. Bishop Chane writes that "the proposed legislation would not force any congregation to change its religious teachings or bless any couple."

Perhaps. But Bishop Chane's own church sees the matter very differently in many instances when it comes to ecclesiastical authority. Episcopal dioceses and Anglican dioceses elsewhere in North America now routinely refuse to ordain candidates who oppose church blessings of same-sex marriage. Bishop Chane's own former diocesan communications officer routinely called for the removal from church councils of Anglicans opposed to same-sex blessings. "For if they do this when the wood is green, what will happen when it is dry?" (Luke 23:21): Chane's assurances of "freedom" in the civil sphere ring hollow given his own stunning lack of support for theological and pastoral equality in the Episcopal Church.

I believe that civil society does have an interest, outside of particular religious claims, in the character and shape of family life and thus in the ordering of public sexual expression. Such an interest is bound up with the very point regarding divorce that Bishop Chane initially uses in support of his claims, i.e. the social disintegration of two-parent families as a political goal, a development that has in fact gone far beyond the limited diversity and dysfunction of anything in previous ages. If this is the case he has to make, he is arguing against history itself.

*The Rev. Dr. Ephraim Radner is professor of historical theology at Wycliffe College, Toronto.*

Jeremiah 46:1-6  
You shall know whose  
arm is there.  
"I will" says  
the Lord.

## Great Joy Through Ordinary Life

"Truth shall spring up from the earth" (Psalm 85:11a).

BCP: Zephaniah 3:14-20; Psalm 85 or 85:7-13 or Isaiah 12:2-6; Philippians 4:4-7(8-9); Luke 3:7-18

RCL: Zephaniah 3:14-20; Isaiah 12:2-6; Philippians 4:4-7; Luke 3:7-18

The lessons for today are rich with imagery of overwhelming and extraordinary things. The lesson from Zephaniah speaks of "singing aloud," "shouting," and "exulting" with all one's heart. The reader is impressed with affirmations of God's immediate and irresistible presence and incalculable power. All "disaster" is removed from the faithful, oppressors are "dealt with," fortunes are restored. The Lord himself rejoices over his people and sings as he acts.

These images are large and loud. The responses to this prophecy continue and extend the theme. The reading from Isaiah is a canticle that concludes, "great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel." Psalm 85, among a list of joyous declarations, says that "truth shall spring up from the earth" — an unusual and thrilling illustration. The

epistle begins with a firm command to rejoice which is immediately repeated. The middle of the lesson gives the all-encompassing command, "Do not worry about anything," which could sound over-simplistic if it were not so embracing. The lesson ends with a promise of peace more potent than an ocean wave.

Thus far we are knocked off our feet with exultant blessings. But when we turn to the gospel we are struck with two surprises. First, after the jubilation of the beginning lessons the gospel begins with John the Baptist's words, "You brood of vipers!" They are addressed to those who are coming to him for baptism, i.e. the penitent, not the questioners, accusers, and opponents, as one might expect. This head-spinning reversal of theme quickly grounds us in the reality that the joy

expressed without reserve in the first lessons comes because sins have been forgiven, not written off. The good news of deliverance must begin with genuine repentance, and repentance begins with an acknowledgement of sin. "Truth shall spring up from the earth," indeed. Only when one is made mindful of one's sins is one able fully to receive forgiveness and value it.

The second surprise comes when the hearers ask John what they ought to do now that they accept their sinfulness; his answer is a surprise, for it is soft and easy: he directs all to be generous toward the needy, and commands honesty in their work for tax collectors and soldiers. Suddenly the road to the exultant life is shown to be practicing basic virtue in ordinary things. Could it really be that easy? Or is it easy?

### Next Sunday **The Fourth Sunday of Advent (Cycle C), Dec. 20, 2009**

BCP: Micah 5:2-4; Psalm 80 or 80:1-7; Hebrews 10:5-10; Luke 1:39-49(50-56)

RCL: Micah 5:2-5a; Luke 1:47-55 or Psalm 80:1-7; Hebrews 10:5-10; Luke 1:39-45(46-55)

#### Think About It

How does John's talk of "vipers" and "unquenchable fire" in today's gospel fit the description that he is proclaiming "good news"?

#### Look It Up

How do you habitually treat others on a daily basis? Are you generous? Are you chaste? Are you patient? Are you merciful? Do you respect, even love, those with whom you disagree?

### THE LIVING CHURCH

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(OHIO, from page 5)

ship, for our commitment and witness to the Anglican Communion, and for fidelity to our vocation to serve and be served by all of God's beloved," the bishop said.

In other business, delegates to the convention:

• Volunteered, in a program called "Be the Hands of Christ," in ministries that address homelessness, hunger and waterway pollution.

• Acknowledged the end of ministries at St. Andrew's, Canfield; Grace, Galion; and Trinity, Bryan, and declared those parishes extinct.

• Adopted a budget of \$3,447,554, a decrease of \$189,056, or 5.2 percent, from this year's budget.

## Oregon Elects Bishop on Second Ballot

The Episcopal Diocese of Oregon's annual convention took only two ballots to elect a new bishop on Nov. 20.



Fr. Hanley

The Rev. Dr. Michael Joseph Hanley, rector of St. Christopher's Episcopal Church, Roseville, Minn., will be the tenth Bishop of Oregon, pending

consents by a majority of bishops and standing committees.

The other two nominees were the Rev. Dr. Andrew Jeffrey MacBeth, rector of Calvary Church, Memphis, Tenn.; and the Rev. Canon Britt Elaine Olson, canon to the ordinary, Episcopal Diocese of Northern California.

Fr. Hanley, a native of Tulsa, Okla., is a 1981 graduate of Seabury-Western Theological Seminary. He completed a doctor of ministry in congregational development, also at Seabury-Western, in 2005. His thesis title was "Oh, It's You Again: Episcopal Visitation as Congregational Development."

## OREGON

Ballot	1		2	
	C	L	C	L
Needed to Elect			67	100
MacBeth	31	58	14	36
Olson	32	41	14	16
Hanley	69	99	104	146

## people & places

### Appointments

The Rev. **Steven C. Rice** is priest at St. Timothy's, 2575 Parkway Dr., Winston-Salem, NC 27103.

The Rev. **John Rohrs** is rector of St. Andrew's, 1004 Graydon Ave., Norfolk, VA 23507.

The Rev. **Anjel Scarborough** is assistant at St. Mark's, 18313 Lappans Rd., Boonsboro, MD 21713.

The Rev. **Himie Budu Shannon** is rector of St. Andrew's, 2171 E 49th St., Cleveland, OH 44103.

The Rev. **Bradford Smith** is rector of St. Paul's, P.O. Box 293, Monroe, NC 28111.

The Rev. **Karl Stevens** is priest-in-charge at St. Paul's, 100 E High St., Mt. Vernon, OH 43050.

The Rev. **David Umphlett** is rector of St. Mary's, 108 W Fariss St., High Point, NC 27262.

The Rev. **Paul Walker** is rector of St. Paul's, P.O. Box 314, Montrose, PA 18801.

The Rev. **Mike Wallens** is chaplain at St. Stephen's School, 6500 St. Stephen's Dr., Austin, TX 78746.

### Ordinations

#### Deacons

**Texas** - **Matt Boulter**, St. Richard's, 1420 E Palm Valley Blvd., Round Rock, TX 78664.

#### Priests

**Bethlehem** - **Timothy Albright, John Hartman, James Moyer, Christina Nord, Wayne Sherrer.**

### Resignations

The Rev. **Erin S. Helnsley**, as priest at St. John's, Roanoke, VA.

The Rev. **James Isaacs**, as rector of St. Andrew's, Mayo, MD.

The Rev. **Andie Wigodsky**, as chaplain at St. Mary's School, Raleigh, NC; add: 1023 Graydon Ave., Norfolk, VA 23507.

### Retirements

The Rev. **Ed Mullins** as rector, Christ Church Cranbrook, Bloomfield Hills, MI.

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**FULL-TIME ASSOCIATE RECTOR:** *St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, Collierville, TN (Diocese of West Tennessee),* seeks a full-time associate rector for pastoral care, outreach and small group ministry. We are a traditional worship community, ASA 240, committed to pray-work-study as we grow in discipleship. Currently half of our annual budget is spent on outreach ministries. We focus on healing and spiritual growth in holiness as well as outreach. Ideal candidates are committed to Jesus, orthodox in their theology, and desire to serve both inside and outside the church. Interested candidates are welcome to e-mail the Rector at [jeff@standrewscollerville.org](mailto:jeff@standrewscollerville.org) or visit our website at [www.standrewscollerville.org](http://www.standrewscollerville.org).

**FULL-TIME RECTOR:** *St. John's Episcopal Church, Johnstown, NY.* Medium-sized parish located in upstate New York, foothills of the Adirondacks, is seeking rector who possesses a sense of the beauty and majesty of traditional liturgy. We require an energetic individual, committed to pastoral care and passionate about Christian education for youth and adults. We seek a leader to help us grow in numbers and stabilize pledge income. Preferred candidate should have prior experience as a full-time rector. Competitive compensation and benefits package offered. Send request for parish profile and resume to: Search Committee, P. O. Box 280, Johnstown, NY 12095 or email: [hollycny@nycap.rr.com](mailto:hollycny@nycap.rr.com).

**PART-TIME RECTOR:** *Ascension Church, Amherst, VA.* Ascension Church seeks a part-time rector to provide leadership and guidance. We are willing to be quite flexible about the work schedule. We seek candidates who can be available for Sunday worship on a regular schedule, and the occasional wedding, baptism or funeral. The position is available immediately. We are looking for someone who has good communication skills and can provide parish leadership and community outreach. Ascension Church is a small but active and generous parish that includes a deacon and three lay assistants with several community outreach programs. Please send resume to the search committee by addressing it to: Edgar Kinnier, P.O. Box 766, Amherst, VA 24521, (434) 946-9064 or [eokhokie@earthlink.net](mailto:eokhokie@earthlink.net).

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Open Sun 7-4; Mon-Sat 10-6

## 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)

## 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  
7678 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)**

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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; 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; Sta, Stations; V, Vespers; v, vicar; YPF, Young People's Fellowship. A/C, air-conditioned; H/A, handicapped accessible.