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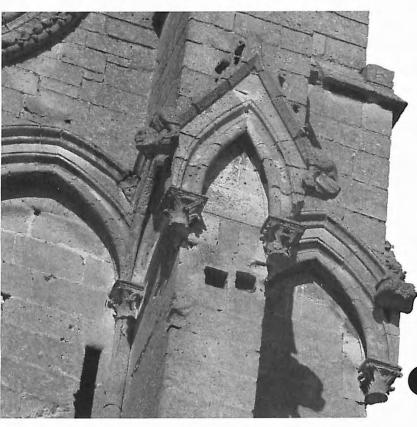


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THE LIVING CHURCH magazine is published by the Living Church Foundation, Inc. The historic mission of the Living Church Foundation is to promote and support Catholic Anglicanism within the Episcopal Church.

Bishop Consecrated in Minnesota

Fourteen bishops participated in the consecration of the Rt. Rev. Brian N. Prior as the ninth Bishop of Minnesota.

The consecration service, which included drumming and dancing by members of the Ojibwe and Dakota nations, occurred Feb. 13 at the Minneapolis Convention Center.

Prior was elected Vice President of the House of Deputies in 2006 and re-elected in 2009. Bonnie Anderson, President of the House of Deputies, has said she will nominate his successor one year before the 77th General Convention, which convenes in 2012.

The new bishop has lived in his native state of Washington throughout his life, other than during his seminary studies. He completed a master of divinity at Church Divinity School of the Pacific in 1987.

More Lawsuits May Emerge in S.C.

Parties to one of the longest-lasting legal disputes involving the Episcopal Church have asked the U.S. Supreme Court to hear the matter on appeal.

The petition for a writ of certiorari asks the Supreme Court to rule in a legal battle involving All Saints, Waccamaw, S.C., which separated from the Diocese of South Carolina after its rector, Charles H. "Chuck" Murphy III, became a founding bishop of the Anglican Mission in the Americas.

The petition involves the consolidated cases of *All Saints Parish*, *Waccamaw v. Protestant Episcopal Church* and *Green v. Campbell*.

The Rt. Rev. Edward L. Salmon, Jr., Bishop of South Carolina from 1990 to 2007, was a party to *All Saints v*.



Janet Manthey photo

Bishop Prior during the recessional at the service of consecration in Minneapolis.

Protestant Episcopal Church. The Rt. Rev. Mark Lawrence, who became Bishop of South Carolina in 2008, has never been a party to the dispute.

Meanwhile, the Diocese of South Carolina's former chancellor, Thomas T. Tisdale, has sent a series of letters to its current chancellor, Wade H. Logan III, regarding four other parishes, some of which have distanced themselves from the Episcopal Church.

In the letters, which he began sending on Jan. 25, Tisdale identified himself as "South Carolina counsel for the Episcopal Church." Bishop Lawrence challenged this description in an open letter to the diocese on Feb. 9.

"He may be an attorney retained by the Chancellor for the Presiding Bishop, but it is hardly accurate in regards to the polity of this Church to claim to be an attorney of The Episcopal Church, as if the parishes, Standing Committee, and Bishop of South Carolina are somehow something other than The Episcopal Church," the bishop wrote.

In the letters, which the diocese has distributed through its website, Tisdale asked the current chancellor for extensive material, including:

A list of all ordinations to the dia-

conate or priesthood by Bishop Lawrence since Oct. 24, 2009, and a copy of the declaration of conformity signed by each ordinand. That date reflects when the diocese, meeting in special convention, voted to amend the declaration of conformity.

- The transcript of the diocese's special convention on Oct. 24, 2009, and copies of resolutions to be considered at the annual convention on March 2-5. Bishop Lawrence, citing his prerogative under diocesan canons, has postponed the convention until March 26.
- Copies of amendments to bylaws by parishes or missions since 2006.
- Minutes of the standing committee since Bishop Salmon concluded his leadership of the diocese.
- Documents regarding the property at St. Andrew's, Mt. Pleasant. The members of St. Andrew's voted in December 2009 to leave the Episcopal Church and join the Anglican Church in North America.
- Documents regarding the property at St. Luke's, Hilton Head. The Rev. Greg Kronz, rector, wrote in the December issue of the parish's newsletter, *St. Luke's Messenger*: "We will be having two parish-wide meetings [this month]: the first

regarding changes in our by-laws, and our deed and title."

- Documents regarding the property at St. John's, Johns Island. The congregation voted on Jan. 17 to remove references to the Episcopal Church from its sign. Another resolution, which said the parish was in a spiritual but not a legal relationship with the diocese, passed on a simple majority. The parish planned another vote on that resolution six weeks later.
- Documents regarding the property at Trinity, Myrtle Beach. The Rev. Rob Sturdy, Trinity's rector, wrote on his weblog, Awakening Grace: "The stated motive behind this action is the claim that we have threatened to leave or have left the Diocese of South Carolina due to the revision of our bylaws. This is of course absurd."

In his letter, the bishop stressed that the four parishes have not separated themselves from the diocese. The parishes, he wrote, "have not made these changes with the intention of leaving the Diocese of South Carolina, nor have they left. I have been working with their clergy and lay leaders to find appropriate ways to resolve their struggles with the recent decisions of the General Convention in ways consistent with the Holy Scriptures, our common life and fellowship in Christ, as well as with the canons of the Church and the laws of the State of South Carolina."

The bishop added: "As the Bishop elected by the Convention of this Diocese, duly consented to and consecrated in accordance with historic precedent and polity, I am the only bishop with canonical jurisdiction here. Thus the Standing Committee and I believe this action is an unjust intrusion into the spiritual and jurisdictional affairs of this sovereign diocese of The Episcopal Church. This provocative interference has been pursued without the Presiding Bishop having communi-

cated with me in a manner consistent with the Constitution of The Episcopal Church and the historical polity of this Church."

Douglas LeBlanc

Seven on Slate for Federal Ministries Bishop

The Rev. Robert Certain, 62, rector of St. Peter and St. Paul, Marietta, Ga., has been nominated by petition to join the slate for sixth Bishop Suffragan for Federal Ministries. He is a retired Air Force chaplain.

He joins six other nominees, who were chosen by a search committee.

He presided at former President Gerald Ford's funeral in 2006. He came to the parish in Marietta in April 2007 as an interim rector, and by the following May he accepted a call as rector.

The House of Bishops will elect the bishop during its meeting at Camp Allen, Navasota, Texas, March 19-24.

Bishop Parsley Plans to Retire Next Year

The Rt. Rev. Henry N. Parsley, Jr., Bishop of Alabama since 1999, has announced that he will retire in 2011. He has asked that his successor take office by the fall of that year.

"Fifteen years is a long, full tenure for a diocesan bishop and I believe that my decision to retire in two years is in the fullness of time for the diocese and me," the bishop said.

Parsley was one of seven bishops on the slate in 2006 when the Episcopal Church elected its 24th Presiding Bishop in 2006.

He has served as chairman of the House of Bishops' theology committee since 2000. He was chancellor of the University of the South from 2003 to 2009. He earned a bachelor's degree from Sewanee in 1970, and a master's of divinity from General Theological Seminary in 1973.

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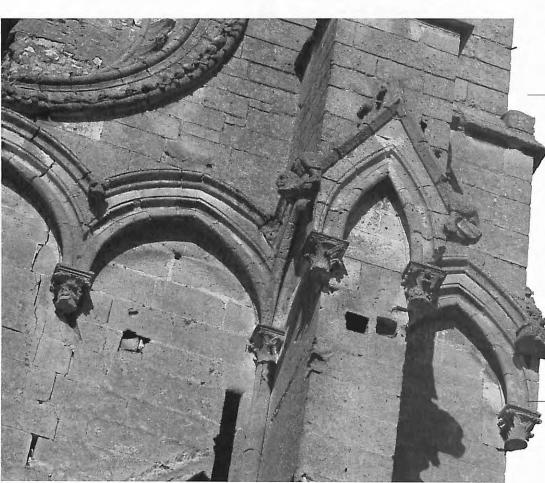
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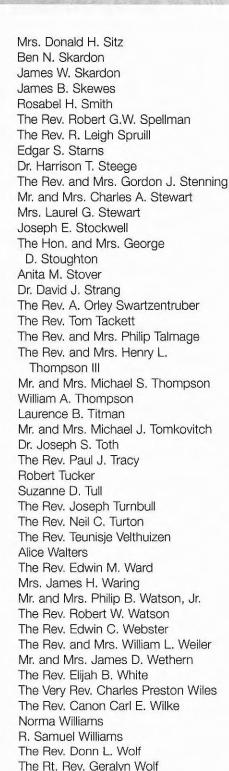
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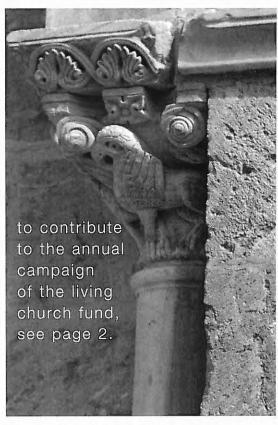
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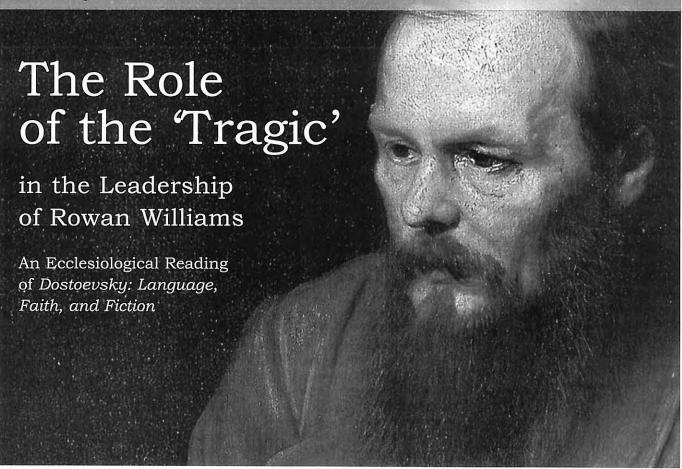
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By N.J.A. Humphrey

In his presidential address to the Church of England's General Synod in London on Feb. 9, Rowan Williams stated his strongly-held belief that the Church desperately needs "to recover . . . something of the tragic recognition that not all goods are compatible in a fallen world." If this is the case, he said, "our job is not to secure purity but to find ways of deciding such contested issues that do not simply write off the others in the debate as negligible, morally or spiritually unserious or without moral claims." He went on to note: "Something of that 'tragic' awareness is hard to avoid when we look at the decisions that face us in our Church."

Rowan Williams's own awareness of the "tragic" in the life of the Church has been shaped, I believe, through his engagement with the works of that expert of the "tragic" in literature, Fyodor Dostoevsky. In 2007, Rowan Williams was on sabbatical from his duties as Archbishop of Canterbury. While on sabbatical, he wrote Dostoevsky: Language. Faith, and Fiction (Waco, Texas: Baylor University Press, 2007; page numbers following quotations are in parentheses). In the days leading up to the 2008

Lambeth Conference, the appearance of a book about the works of a nineteenth century Russian novelist was viewed by some commentators as an instance of Williams's penchant for diversion from the burdens of ecclesiastical office. Far from having nothing to do with practical matters, however, the book is profoundly relevant both to the one Church and to the Anglican Communion.

It is an extended theological reflection on how one imagines the life of faith within a fallen world (where "not all goods are compatible"), and in a church that does not live up to one's hopes and dreams for it. The very first page of the book indicates as much when Williams writes: "The novels [of Dostoevsky] ask us, in effect, whether we can imagine a human community of language and feeling in which, even if we were incapable of fully realizing it, we knew what was due to each other; whether we could imagine living in the consciousness of a solidity or depth in each other which no amount of failure, suffering, or desolation could eradicate" (1). Practically every page is pregnant with implications for the future of Anglicanism.

On one level, Dostoevsky: Language, Faith, and Fiction is an incisive piece of literary criticism that can be read as just that: one careful scholar's wellresearched thoughts on Dostoevsky, and an important contribution to Russian Studies in general. Nevertheless, I suspect that the context out of which this book has come into being is bound up with the role that Rowan Williams plays as an archbishop in a church in conflict. The questions that Dostoevsky asks intrigue Williams not simply on their own terms but because they are important questions to address within his own context as a church leader. As Williams said in his Presidential Address at General Synod: "I make no apology ... for pleading that we try, through the Covenant, to discover an ecclesial fellowship in which we trust each other to act for our good — an essential feature of anything that might be called a theology of the Body of Christ."

If Williams is being thoroughly Dostoevskian in his approach to the Covenant process, we can expect him to approach ecclesiology in a way that is not easily comprehended by the Western dogmatic and juridical context, whether Catholic or Protestant in its outlook. Williams claims that Dostoevsky is a particular kind of Orthodox novelist (as opposed to merely a "Christian" novelist), in part because of "what he understood by the Church" (13). This understanding, Williams argues, is grounded in "a particularly nineteenth-century Russian Orthodox set of polemical concerns" that "fiercely attack" what the polemicists of Dostoevsky's era (notably

We might say that Williams is a particular kind of Dostoevskian archbishop. Kireevsky and Khomyakov) regarded "as a secularizing move in [Roman] Catholic thinking and practice, one that seeks to resolve religious doubt by appealing not to the free consensus of persons united in the Body of Christ but to a supreme executive authority, the papacy, which, simply by being a supreme executive, becomes a monarchy on the model of other monarchies, and

so sets itself up as a rival *political* power" (13). We might say that Williams is a particular kind of Dostoevskian archbishop because he refuses to use his office as any sort of "supreme executive authority," but instead works within crisis and conflict in a way that aims to encourage free interdependent commitment without political compulsion.

The development of an Anglican Covenant is likewise an exercise in articulating what, as Christians

in communion, we "owe to each other." It is an experiment in imagining a community with "solidity" and "depth," one so grounded in communion that "no amount of failure, suffering, or desolation could eradicate" it. This is a tall order indeed, a monumental enterprise in constructive ecclesiology. And in the archbishop's view, in order for such an enterprise to be successful, it must be deeply cognizant of all the ways in which human beings *fail* to render what we "owe to each other."

Out what is it that we owe each other? The answer that Williams gives, lavishly illustrated from Dostoevsky's novels, is that human beings owe it to each other to remain in conversation. Only through conversation is authentic, committed, and meaningful community made possible. Williams writes that Dostoevsky "sees language itself as the indisputable marker of freedom: confronted with what seeks to close down exchange or conflict, we discover we can always say more. This is emphatically and evidently a liberty that depends on otherness" (11). While conversation creates the possibility of community, communion is only possible when people use language responsibly so that they recognize their essential, God-given interdependence. Williams writes that "Dostoevsky in effect argues that this necessity of saying what is recognizable is finally grounded in the order established by a creator: recognition is possible because we are all at the most basic level of our being made to resonate with the interdependent life of a universe that is addressed and sustained by a Word from God. Our problem — if we believe this — is how to live so as to allow that resonance to shape what we say and do" (12).

Williams argues that to be responsible to each other requires a commitment to engage with one another; that engagement is the *modus operandi* of lived responsibility. Indeed, Williams pointedly notes that the Russian word for "engagement" may also be translated as "communion" (133). In his Presidential Address to General Synod, Williams states: "The Covenant specifically encourages and envisages protracted engagement and scrutiny and listening in situations of tension, and that is one of the things that makes it, in my view, worth supporting." The question for both Williams and Dostoevsky is not whether we *ought* to live responsibly, but *how* to live

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responsibly, that is, in a way that is accountable to God and to each other.

This central Dostoevskian theme is found in its most developed form in the sixth book of The Brothers Karamozov, "The Russian Monk," wherein the elder Zosima teaches that we are "responsible for all." Williams defines responsibility as acting and speaking in such a way that "the options of others are clarified, not controlled" (171). This definition of responsibility is central to how Williams is approach-

ing the purpose of the Anglican Covenant. While many Anglicans fear that the Covenant will be abused precisely in order to control the options of one province or another (by, for instance, preventing a province from approving rites for the blessing of same-sex unions if other provinces object), Williams signals that the Covenant should clarify for its parties what the consequences of any action would be, rather than control the action itself.

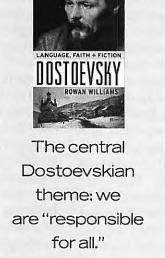
Being responsible for and to each other means "that there is no circumstance in which it is either impossible or useless to seek whatever action or involvement one can that will give space or time to the other for his, her, or its flourishing before God" (169). In this way, the Covenant-as-Williams-sees-it and the novels of Dostoevsky have a similar purpose. As Williams writes of the novels: "The Dostoevskian novel is... an exercise in

resisting the demonic and rescuing language. It does this by insisting on freedom — the freedom of characters within the novel to go on answering each other, even when this wholly upsets and disappoints any hopes we may have for resolutions and good endings.... It enacts the freedom it discusses by creating a narrative space in which various futures are possible for characters and for readers. And in doing so it seeks — in the author's intention — to represent the ways in which the world's creator ... generates dependence without control" (12).

In drawing a parallel between Dostoevsky's novelistic strategy and Williams's strategy for an Anglican Covenant, we encounter the very problem that is most vexing: how is it possible to create a world — in this case, an Anglican Communion — whose members are free and yet dependent upon each other, but whose dependence is not manipulated or controlled, either by the members themselves or by the "author(s)" or "creator(s)" of this world (i.e., those responsible for the drafting and adoption of the Covenant)?

One could claim that Williams, like Dostoevsky, is interested in how religious uncertainty may be represented "as held or healed within a narrative of the interaction of persons" (13). Dostoevsky was interested in writing "a narrative that left unresolved precisely how and why the process should be seen as authoritatively pointing to a mended universe, yet

inviting a commitment to this process on the basis simply of what the narrative has made morally and imaginatively possible" (13-14). What this "process" is remains to be explicated by Williams within an Anglican context. His goal, however, appears to be a Covenant that opens up the possibility of real commitment to each other. In his Presidential Address to General Synod, Williams encouraged Synod "to search for structures that will keep open the ability to learn from each other. Sometimes those structures may embody what seems to some an unwelcome degree of distance: that would be true of



some possible consequences of the Covenant ... What matters, though, is what they would make possible if used creatively over time; we cannot predict what future reconciliations may be helped to happen by imaginative and empathetic policies now." In this endeavor, we can only pray that Williams and his allies are on the right track.

Strange to say, but the future of the Anglican Communion may depend on whether the archbishop is able to apply the insights gained from his study of Dostoevsky to our current "tragic" struggles. If the archbishop succeeds in his project, we may one day say that the Anglican Communion owes much of its shape and health not just to Hooker or Ramsey but to Dostoevsky, via the thought and Christian discipleship of Rowan Williams.

N.J.A. Humphrey is the curate of St. Paul's, K Street, in Washington, D.C.



A Cross-Shattered Church

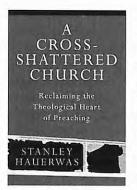
Reclaiming the Theological Heart of Preaching
By **Stanley Hauerwas**. Brazos Press. Pp. 176. \$17.99. ISBN 978-1587432583.

Paul Griffiths once wrote in the journal *Modern Theology* that if Stanley Hauerwas's "example were more widely followed we would have more theology and fewer stultifying prolegomena to theology, and that would be a great good." This new book of sermons reflects that model, that is, it exhibits Stanley Hauerwas's most persistently held contention that we need to get over the epistemic obsessions of modernity and get on with being the Church. *A Cross-Shattered Church* is, by Hauerwas's own description, among his most important works, and this status has less to do with its intellectual rigor or novelty than with its setting — more often than not the parish pulpit.

This is not to say that Hauerwas is a natural preacher or that his sermons all escape the jargon of the academy. I must admit that I wince a little when I hear Wittgenstein mentioned in the pulpit, not because his work is irrelevant but because it seems that the best preachers are those who know how to speak in voices not their own without saying so. But Hauerwas is, after all, Hauerwas, and one should not be surprised to find oneself swimming in his extraordinarily well-read thoughts.

Such thoughts are, even when annoying, consistently helpful, whether for other preachers (who would do well to use some of these ideas) or people in the pews. Hauerwas calls us to see the cross, and in so doing to abandon our death-determined lives and our constant attempts to explain the world. "Seeing" is, in fact, one of the formal divisions of the book, and in these sermons we learn that seeing Jesus properly is not a matter of well-constructed argument but of formation in the community of virtue known as the Church.

If this basic message is Hauerwasian to the core, it is also profoundly Catholic and evangelical. The distinctive voice in these sermons is, perhaps in its accidents, the Texas twang of the bricklayer-turned-academic renowned for his salty diction (largely mellowed here), but its substance stands out as that of a true vir ecclesiasticus, a man of the Church, even if that man lives in the confused landscape of Christian division. Hauerwas is nothing if not Catholic, even as he remains in some sense both Methodist and Anglican. He would be the first to admit that this is a contradictory status which renders his work questionable to many. But Hauerwas rightly assumes that a "Methodist" or "Anglican" theology is not a theology worth having. Either Christian theology is true or it isn't. The task of theology is not to argue that the Creed is intelligible to the world but to show, not least in the life of the people called



"Church," that the world is unintelligible if the Creed is not true.

There is nothing original in such a claim, and that is the point. In a remarkably apophatic way, Hauerwas closes his summary appendix (in itself a good reason to look at this book) with this statement: "That is pretty much it. That is what I think or at least tried to think. I hope it is what the Church

"That is what I think or at least tried to think. I hope it is what the Church thinks."

Stanley Hauerwas

thinks." Such a statement well describes why Paul Griffiths hopes for more theologians like Hauerwas. That hope is not for systematic invention but for an unapologetic witness to the truth of the gospel and an implicit submission to Catholic consensus. It is of little use for a triumphalist to assert that Hauerwas is wrong in this or that point — Hauerwas himself does not treat his opinions as binding but as tentative contributions to theological tradition.

Sermons like those in this volume are, in Hauerwas's words, "one of the most satisfying contexts for doing the work of theology." And that is so not merely because they deal most directly with Scripture but because they deal most directly with the faithful who will not read With the Grain of the Universe or The Peaceable Kingdom or Aquinas or Barth or Yoder or countless other works of the Christian theological tradition. Those works, useful as they are in forming the Church, take second place to the proclamation of the gospel itself — the death and resurrection of Christ being more determinative than anything else that has happened or could happen in this world. Without that proclamation the work of theology has no place, whether in the Church or in the university.

Samuel Keyes Nashotah, Wis.

catholic voices

Editorials

Where's the Theology?

The Rt. Rev. Pierre Whalon, Bishop in Charge of the Convocation of American Churches in Europe, has no vote in whether the Diocese of Los Angeles will consecrate the Rev. Mary D. Glasspool as a bishop suffragan, but he has found his voice. Bishop Whalon has given the Episcopal Church a gift of remarkable candor and conscience.

In one of his regular columns for Anglicans Online (tinyurl.com/Whalon214), the bishop writes: "While I do believe that a case for the full inclusion of gay and lesbian people that rests on faithful arguments from Scripture, theological anthropology, etc., can be made, the fact is that this church has not officially done so."

It perhaps belabors the obvious to note that the bishop soon became the object of criticism, both from his left and his right.

Some said the theological work was done several years ago, citing such examples as a 16-page document by Claiming the Blessing (2002), but also the more substantial *To Set Our Hope on Christ* (2005), the Rev. Tobias Haller's book *Reasonable and Holy* (2009), and *God's Call and Our Response* by the Chicago Consultation (2010).

We will confess some biases of our own. We do not share Bishop Whalon's sense that Scripture "hardly touches upon" same-sex intimacy, or that "the Holy Trinity had had enough of the 'don't ask-don't tell' policy that was de facto on the church-wide level up until 2003."

Among the Church's many problems related to sexual morality, hypocrisy is the easiest target for its cravenness. Our understanding does not suggest that the Godhead solves such problems by blurring the lines of marriage.

Still, the bishop's central point stands: Serious theological work ought to precede such a thorough redefinition of God's intention for sexuality (and all the more when it touches upon what Catholic Christians consider one of the seven sacraments of the Church). If only activist groups, seminary professors, or individual bishops have done such theology to date, this may be a sign of an idea whose time has not arrived, if it ever will.

Some of our sisters and brothers use "lex orandi, lex credendi" as an imperative for doing theology by circumstance. One subjective understanding of justice, at one existential moment, prompts congregations or bishops or dioceses to take what they consider prophetic

actions, and they assure the rest of the Church that the requisite theology or enlightenment will emerge later, perhaps bubbling up from our collective experience of their pastoral wisdom.

But as Bishop Whalon writes: "It is patently unjust to everyone, including partnered gay and lesbian people, to keep on ordaining them and blessing their unions without providing a theological rationale for changing the church's teaching."

The Episcopal Church has been locked in these unjust ways for so long that changing its habits may be more painful than the cognitive dissonance the habits create. We think the Episcopal Church is up to the task, however. If the theological heavy lifting is complete; if the Spirit is leading us into deeper truth; if Episcopalians believe that a new revelation trumps the revelation of Scripture, then let this church speak with clarity and conviction through its General Convention. Anything less is playing with the lives of all Episcopalians.

Gifts Appreciated

As always, we are pleased and humbled to publish in this issue the names of all those who have contributed in the last year to the Living Church Fund. Your gifts enable us to continue to produce *The Living Church* week in and week out; without them we quite simply could not do what we do. Thank you and bless you!

We remain focused on providing the highest quality independent news coverage, both online and in print, while expanding the depth of commentary in our pages through sustained reflection from leaders of our church. The new "Catholic Voices" section of the magazine provides a wider canvas still for teaching about important, timely matters in the Anglican Communion. And we are excited to introduce soon some much-needed improvements to our website, as we strive to offer the distinctive ministry of TLC to all our readers, in every corner of the globe.

As we plan toward our future, we depend upon your continued generosity. Please consider in the coming year supporting TLC with gifts to both our Annual Fund and our Endowment Fund, to ensure the continuity and flourishing of The Living Church for generations to come.

We thank God every time we remember you, constantly praying with joy for all of you, because of our sharing in the gospel (see Phil 1:3-5).

Civil Rights

In response to the editorial "Think, and Act, Globally" [TLC, Dec. 27], what those of us on the catholic left to middle are talking about are basic rules of justice and human compassion. For most of us in the Episcopal Church the heart of the issue with transgender gay and lesbian people is not about life style but about basic civil rights.

We have made a stand and a choice to be with and for and among our brothers and sisters who are gay and lesbian and transsexual, because we know them, we love them, and we have a need for their gifts in the church and the world. And we want to model to the young that are coming along that the church is a place of safety and nurture for their full spiritual and psycho/social development.

No one admires and respects the worldwide diversity and reach of the Anglican Communion more than I. We bring to each other great riches of spirit and insight into the diversity of cultures. It is important to see the world through each other's eyes. And yet I don't think it is any less culturally imperialistic for one Anglican diocese or a group of them to dictate to the Church in the U.S. what it ought to do any more than the Church in the U.S. should try to impose its will on other provinces and jurisdictions. There's enough room at the banquet for all of us.

> (The Rev.) Bob Stuhlmann Christ Church Stratford, Conn.

Prayers for the Church

I left the Episcopal Church for a church that was a founding member of the ACNA because I felt that TEC leaders were making pariahs of those of us who believe in the supremacy of holy Scripture and/or are politically conservative. Many of my Episcopal brothers and sisters

who are members of prayer groups and home groups with other Anglicans share my concerns, and we all pray regularly that some level of Christian love and gentility may return to the way too many church leaders deal with those who do not share their agendas.

Socation

I and many of my brothers and sisters will continue to pray for all our brothers and sisters in Christ's entire Church, asking the Lord to give us discernment to know and follow his will and to lift up each other and his Church. I hope all of us will hold up (Continued on page 17)

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The Day of Salvation

"Unless you repent, you will all likewise perish" (Luke 13:3).

BCP: Exod. 3:1-15; Psalm 103 or 103:1-11; 1 Cor. 10:1-13; Luke 13:1-9 RCL: Exod. 3:1-15; Psalm 63:1-8; 1 Cor. 10:1-13; Luke 13:1-9 en the world asked Jesus what he made of two philosopher

"Where were you when the world stopped turning on that September day?" asked country singer Alan Jackson. How did you respond? His song details all kinds of ways that people faced the fear and uncertainty of that time: "Did you shout out in anger ... weep for the children ... did you dust off your Bible ... or go out and buy you a gun?" Perhaps most pointedly he asks, "did you look up to heaven for some kind of answer, and look at yourself to what really matters?"

Tragedies on the scale of those terrorist attacks or the recent earthquakes in Haiti stir us in powerful ways. They open deep fears, break our hearts and force us to ponder "what really matters."

In this Sunday's gospel, the crowds

tragedies from the headlines of his day. Galilean pilgrims killed by Pilate as they offered sacrifice in Jerusalem; a tower that collapsed, killing 18 bystanders. Is there logic behind such things? Was God punishing them for sins worse than ours? It's not so simple, Jesus tells them.

It's not so simple, Jesus tells them. He doesn't deny the reality of judgment or the fact that sins deserve to be punished. But these people weren't any worse than the rest of us. You must repent, he tells them, so you don't also perish. Their fates should remind you that life is fragile, that none of us knows how long we have. The day of salvation is now. Don't put off doing God's will.

It was an odd answer — almost to another kind of question. I am a

philosopher enough to wish that Jesus hadn't passed up the chance to close this age-old argument once and for all. But maybe Jesus knew that when we can explain evil, we can also distance ourselves from it. If the Galileans deserved their fates, then it is no concern of ours. His real warning, like St. Paul's in today's epistle, is against presumption, assuming that we are in the right. "Let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall," St. Paul warned his "once saved, always saved" enthusiasts. The Israelites too were blessed with God's grace, but they fell in the wilderness. You have been spared. Let God's patience not be in vain. Do "what really matters" now, because there may not be another tomorrow.

Look It Up

Read I Peter 4:12-19. Does this text's understanding of God's place in suffering conflict with Jesus' teaching here?

Think About It

The crowd might have asked Jesus about the Galilean pilgrims because they were His own countrymen. How do his words here explain His own purpose in Jerusalem?

Next Sunday Fourth Sunday in Lent (Year C), March 14, 2010

BCP: Joshua (4:19-24); 5:9-12; Psalm 34 or 34:1-8; 2 Cor. 5:17-21; Luke 15:11-32 RCL: Joshua 5:9-12; Psalm 32; 2 Cor. 5:16-21; Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32

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letters to the editor

(Continued from page 15)

each other in prayer and seek first of all to serve the Lord, and not spend so many material and spiritual resources on warfare against those who don't share our agendas.

> Richard A. Eckert Del Mar, Calif.

Independent Spirit

The Rev. Kenneth S. Thom states that "National independence and *koinonia* are beside the point" [TLC, Jan. 24].

It appears that the spirit of 1776 has shaped our consciousness as an American church to the point where we tend to make decisions without regard to the position of the larger Church.

In other words, our decisions tend to be guided by the spirit of national independence rather than by the spirit of *koinonia*. That is precisely the issue.

We cherish democracy, and as earthly governments go, our country is an inspiration to many around the globe. However, it is worth remembering that Jesus taught us to pray, "Thy kingdom come," not "Thy democracy come."

In a democracy, the will of the people is paramount. As Christians, however, we have here no continuing city. Our citizenship is in heaven, where the will of God is paramount, not the will of the people.

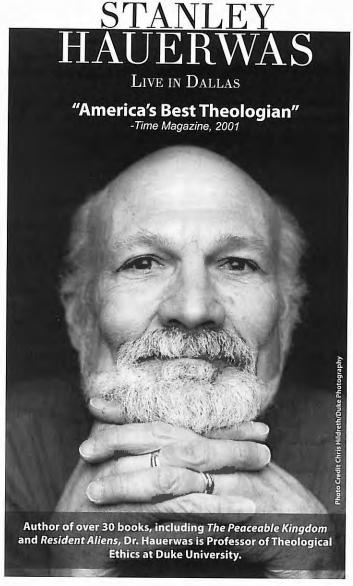
As to what the will of God is, that is a discernment process (at least for Episcopalians and other Anglicans) that needs to be addressed by the Anglican Communion as a whole, not by some portion of it alone, and it will take time.

Laura C. Rico Los Banos, Calif.

Speaking Clearly

The Episcopal Church has been in real decline for quite some time, as Neal Michell states in his article.

(Continued on next page)



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letters to the editor people & places

(Continued from previous page)

"Royally in Denial" [TLC, Jan. 24]. I am in total agreement with his conclusion: "We too need a forward movement."

A few months ago, I asked a priest friend of mine, "Why is it that our priests never say anything important in their sermons?" He responded, "When a priest looks out into the congregation, he sees 40 or 50 people and concludes that they each have different views on what he might say and he'd better not say anything important or it might upset a number of his congregation." I told my friend, "Keep that up for two generations and you will have no church." He more or less agreed with me.

Isn't it time for our Church leaders to decide on what is truly important for a Christian to know and to do, and to tell us clearly and in a unified manner what those things are?

Sheridan C. Biggs Quaker Street, N.Y.

Helping Haiti

Bishop-Elect Ian T. Douglas [TLC, Feb. 7] calls for trust in God's victory over "the clutches of death" in Haiti. We need to go beyond trusting in God to commit ourselves to join God's work to restore Haiti. That means seeing that our nation commits itself to long-term involvement with the people of Haiti. That means seeking to learn how to help Haiti rebuild itself as Haiti rather than to build an Americanized, corporation-run Haiti. And that calls Christians to take the lead in securing the kind of ongoing support and rebuilding the Haitians need.

(The Rev.) A. Wayne Schwab Plattsburgh, N.Y.

Beautiful Issue

Congratulations on the Feb. 7 issue on church architecture. It is a beautiful edition and I know a sample of what is to come.

(The Rev.) Donald Stivers Santa Barbara, Calif.

Appointments

The Rev. **John M. Allen** is priest-incharge of St. John's, 114 20th Ave., SE, Olympia, WA 98501.

The Rev. **David T. Andrews, Jr.**, is rector of Sts. Andrew and Matthew, 719 N Shipley St., Wilmington, DE 19801-1711.

The Rev. Canon **Leigh Hall** is canon for youth and young adult ministries for the Diocese of Georgia, 611 E Bay St., Savannah, GA 31401-1296.

The Rev. Dr. **Cythia Briggs Kittredge** is dean of community life at the Seminary of the Southwest, PO Box 2247, Austin, TX 78768.

Deaths

The Rev. Canon **James R. "Knox" Brumby III**, 88, a priest of the Diocese of Florida, died Jan. 16 in Tallahassee.

Born in Marietta, GA, he attended the University of Florida prior to enlisting in the Army Air Corp and served with the Air Transport Command in North Africa during World War II. He flew briefly for Eastern Airlines before earning bachelor's and master's of divinity degrees at the University of the South. Ordained a deacon in 1951 and priest in 1952, he served youth and churches in Brooksville, Inverness, West Palm Beach, Daytona Beach and Ft. Lauderdale. He also served as canon missioner and led many diocesan departments and boards. He founded a retirement home in Daytona Beach, five missions, and aided in the founding of 16 others. In retirement he served churches in Chattahoochee, Carrabelle, and Crawfordville, FL. He is survived by his wife, Vesta; a sister, Sabine Korosy of Clearwater, FL; his children, Lyn Allen of Martin, GA, Dana Staab of Tallahassee, Christine Kelly of Havana, FL, Liana McGill of Reno, NV, Erik Staab of New York, NY, and Jenny Sparks of Reno, NV; eight grandchildren and 12 great-grandchildren.

Other deaths as reported by the Church Pension Fund:

Manuel Olmo	71	Bayamon, PR
Gregorio G. Pangwi	95	Benguet, PH
Walter S.H. Parker	87	Gold Beach, OR
Lorin Paull, Jr.	82	San Jose, CA
William C. Pinter, Jr.	71 St. Simons Islad, GA	
Robert H. Pursel	67	Bloomsburg, PA
Joseph W. Reed, Jr.	79	Chicago, IL
Charles F. Sloan, Jr.	64	Lonaconing, MD
Conrad W. Smith	90	St. Thomas, VI

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