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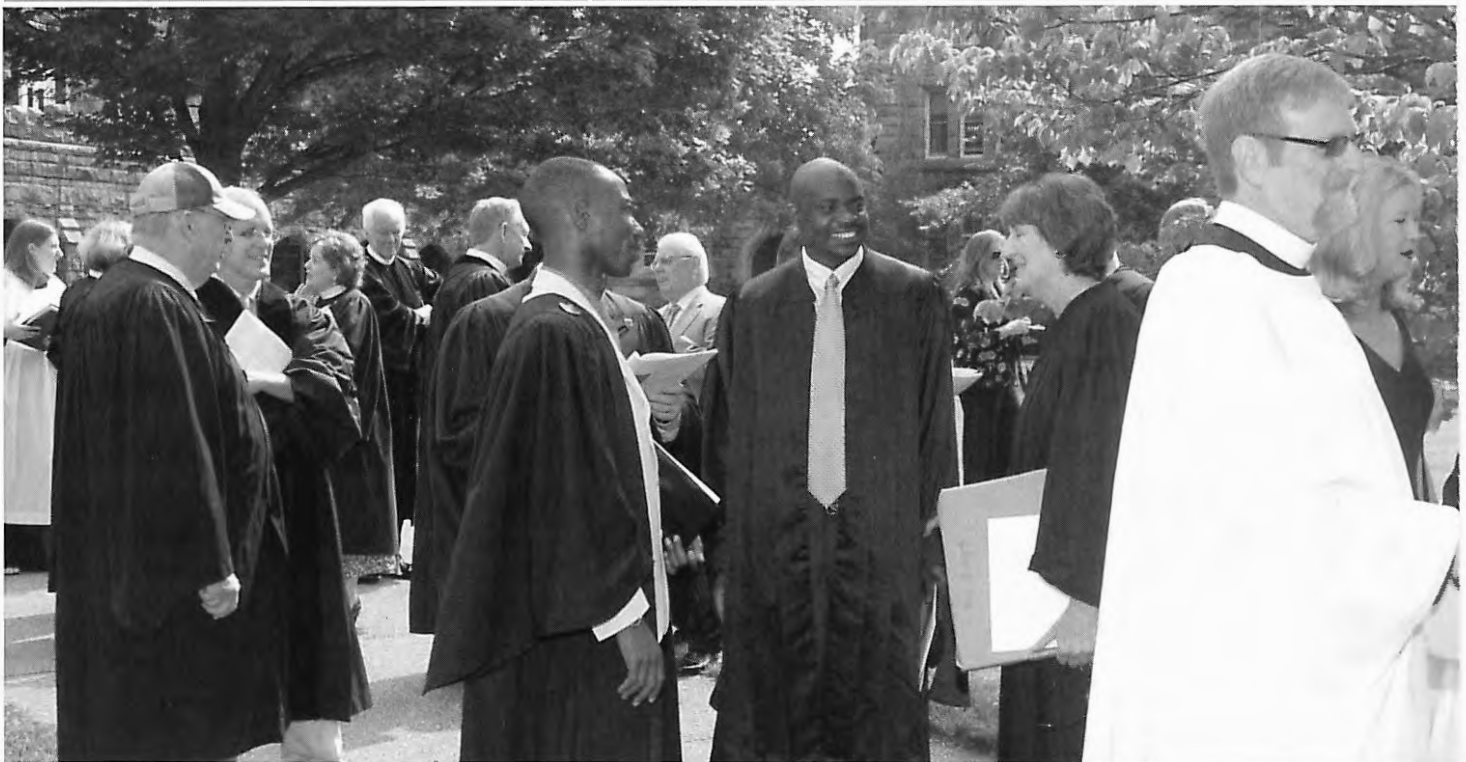
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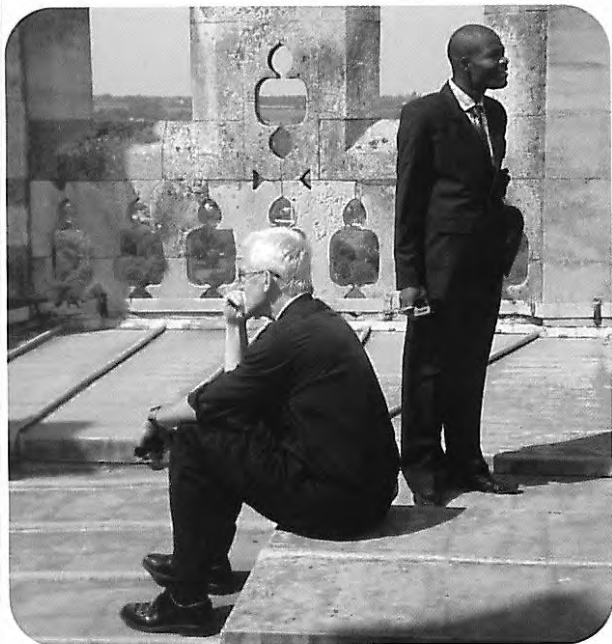
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The International Study Center at Canterbury, located on the cathedral precincts, houses the Canterbury Scholars. Leigh Edwards photo

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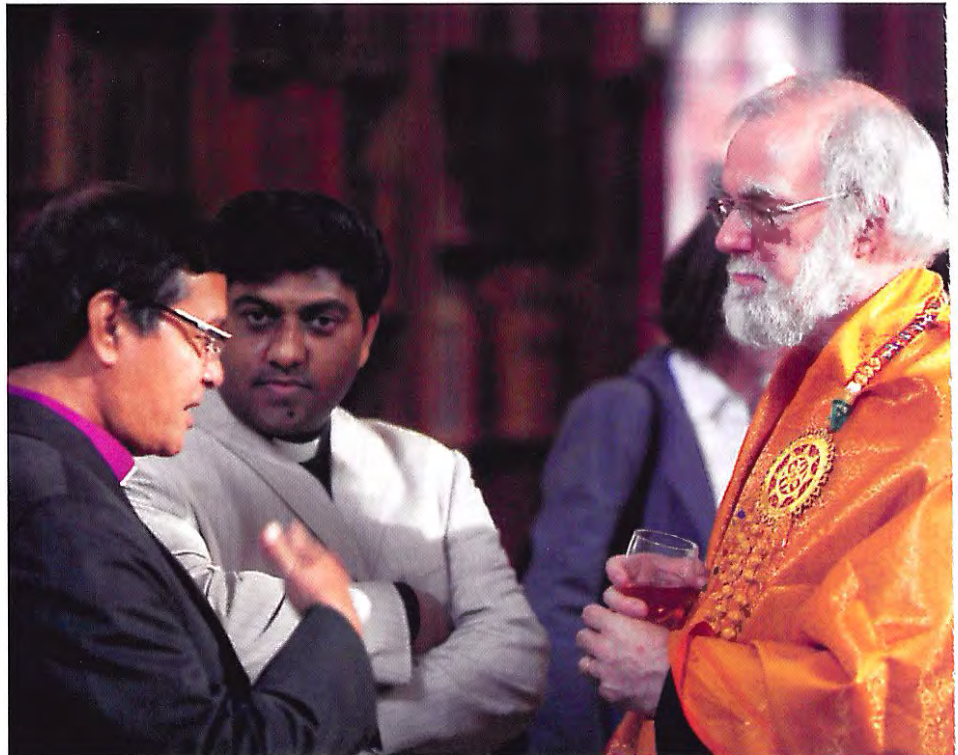
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news



Anglican Archives p

Archbishop Williams at a reception with members of the Anglican Communion's standing committee.

Standing Committee Adjusts to Scrutiny

When the Anglican Communion's standing committee completed five days of closed-door sessions in London, members emerged claiming greater transparency about process and a renewed commitment to mission.

The standing committee heard reports of three new Communion-wide projects: an evangelism and church growth initiative, launch of a new Anglican relief, development and advocacy alliance, and a health insurance pilot project in Tanzania, promoted by the Communion's official health network.

On the first day the committee had to negotiate sensitive issues about its membership, as this was the first meeting under a new constitution. A plan to replace a laywoman from South Africa with a member of the clergy would have been out of order under the old constitution. The Rev. Canon Janet Trisk sat outside the meeting until told the

way was clear for her to take part.

There were questions about the eligibility of the recently consecrated Bishop of Connecticut, the Rt. Rev. Ian T. Douglas, to continue on the committee because he was originally elected as a priest. In both instances critics remain unconvinced that the constitutional requirements were met.

Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori acknowledged that her continued service on the standing committee depends on whether she is re-elected during the next Primates' Meeting in early 2011.

"I don't know if I will be returning to this group or not," she told Episcopal News Service, "but I must say that it has been a privilege to serve the Communion in this way."

Lurking too were questions about the action by the Archbishop of Canterbury to suspend some provinces from representation on international ecumenical bodies. Archbishop

Rowan Williams and the Secretary General, the Rev. Canon Kenneth Kearon, told the committee the archbishop's action was not unilateral. Nor was it punitive in intention, but had been taken following breaking of agreed moratoria. There were indications that more action might be taken over the actions of other provinces.

Reports confirm that debate was intense at times. The committee rejected a motion by Dato' Stanley Isaacs, a lay lawyer from Malaysia, to suspend the Episcopal Church from the Communion.

The next Anglican Consultative Council will debate a recommendation to increase the number of primates on the standing committee to eight, to equal ACC representatives. Some ACC members are wary of increasing the role of the primates.

Skirmishes over details are relatively minor compared to constitutional issues now beginning to emerge.

Ahead of the meeting the Anglican Communion Office announced that the old, unincorporated constitution had been replaced by new ACC articles of association following registration with the U.K. Charity Commission.

This change poses a raft of new questions. Is it right for a key instrument of the Anglican Communion to be enshrined in U.K. law in this way? Are there latent conflicts with the proposed Anglican Covenant, the role of the Lambeth Conference and the Primates' Meeting? Does the new arrangement partly disenfranchise ordinary ACC members?

As he has done before, Archbishop Williams questioned whether the Communion's structures are adequate for the 21st century. He pressed for further review, "so when it comes to looking at the complex questions of the Communion we have a better foundation upon which to build."

Transparency has always been an

issue in the operation of Anglican Communion machinery. Some meetings of the Episcopal Church's bodies, such as Executive Council or the House of Bishops, are open to journalists, although both bodies also declare executive sessions regularly. The standing committee adheres more closely to a British model of closed meetings.

Up to now the communications pattern was to distribute draft minutes to a just a few officials among member churches and to publish completed minutes later. This may have served in the distant past when the instruments of Communion rarely attracted scrutiny. Those days are gone.

In absence of adequate briefings,
(Continued on next page)



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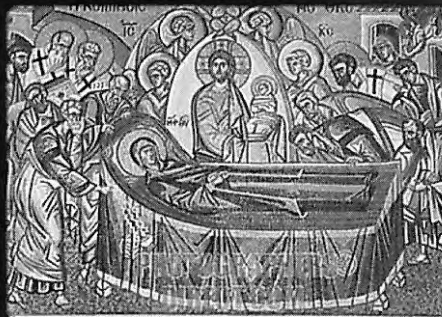
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news

(Continued from previous page)
journalists and bloggers relied on informal sources and often resorted to guesswork. Nor was there any system for rebutting inaccuracies or misinformation.

Appointment of a new director of communication at the Anglican Communion office, Jan Butter, and publication of daily briefings represents a new attitude.

The next meeting of the Anglican Consultative Council will be asked to review issues of structures and their operation in more depth.

The ACC will hold its next meeting at Auckland Cathedral, New Zealand, with the Most Rev. John Paterson, former primate and ACC chairman, taking charge of local arrangements. Dates are yet to be announced.

John Martin, in London

Bishop Praises 'Brave and Faithful' Church

Reports about thefts, rapes and murders in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and of mass attacks that create refugees in the tens of thousands, are not abstractions for the Bishop of Winchester.

The Rt. Rev. Michael Scott-Joynt, Bishop of Winchester since 1995, became the patron of the Congo Church Association more than a decade ago. He has visited the nation five times since becoming the association's patron.

His most recent visit was just after Easter, when he offered Bible meditations for Congolese Anglicans' small House of Bishops. During Bishop Scott-Joynt's visit, a renegade militia attacked the Bishop of Bukavu, the Rt. Rev. Bahati Bali Busane Sylvestre, and his family at home.

"I heard two days ago of attacks and fighting and killings in an area I have visited," Bishop Scott-Joynt told THE LIVING CHURCH in a telephone interview July 21. "I have sat

in homes with bishops and been told, 'You're safe now, but we must leave soon.'"

The bishop said he first became acquainted with Congolese bishops during the Lambeth Conference of 1998.

"I receive enormously from them," he said. The bishop said he has learned "a lot about the New Testament and a lot about living as a Christian" from his Congolese brothers and sisters.

The bishop said he's become especially aware that the suffering in the DRC reflects the story of the Church throughout history.

"It's really our position of quiet peacefulness that, if you look down history, is not the norm," he said.

The Diocese of Winchester's connections to the region date back to the episcopate of Scott-Joynt's predecessor, the Rt. Rev. John Vernon Taylor, who initiated contact with Rwanda, Uganda and Zaire (as Congo was then known) in 1977.

"I think it is fair to say that our relationship with Congo has been particularly strong during my years as bishop," Scott-Joynt said.

He credited a sense of mutuality in the relationship, and said the deanery of Jersey "has committed itself substantially to the relationship."

"They need financial assistance because the country is very poor," the bishop said. The diocese sends support for ministerial training and for rebuilding hospitals and schools.

The bishop also uses his position in the House of Lords as a platform for raising awareness of the DRC's vast needs.

"The British government is a very large donor in terms of aid to the Democratic Republic of Congo," he said.

"The real thing is church to church mutual prayer and encouragement," he said. "They're a brave and faithful church. They are a church which, like others all over

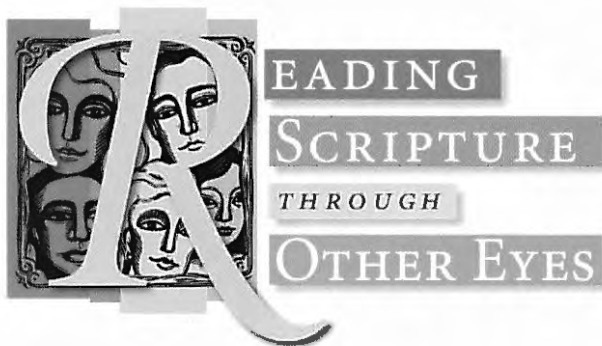
Africa, are determined to remain orthodox on matters of ethics and of doctrine."

Bishop Scott-Joynt said that each visit leaves him with deeply torn feelings as he leaves the strife-torn DRC and returns to his home.

"Each time I come out, I think this

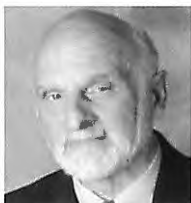
is wonderful, the church has such a vibrant ministry," he said. "I also go out with a heavy sense of how can this place ever be different, with so many mountains to climb to achieve good government and safety for the people."

Douglas LeBlanc



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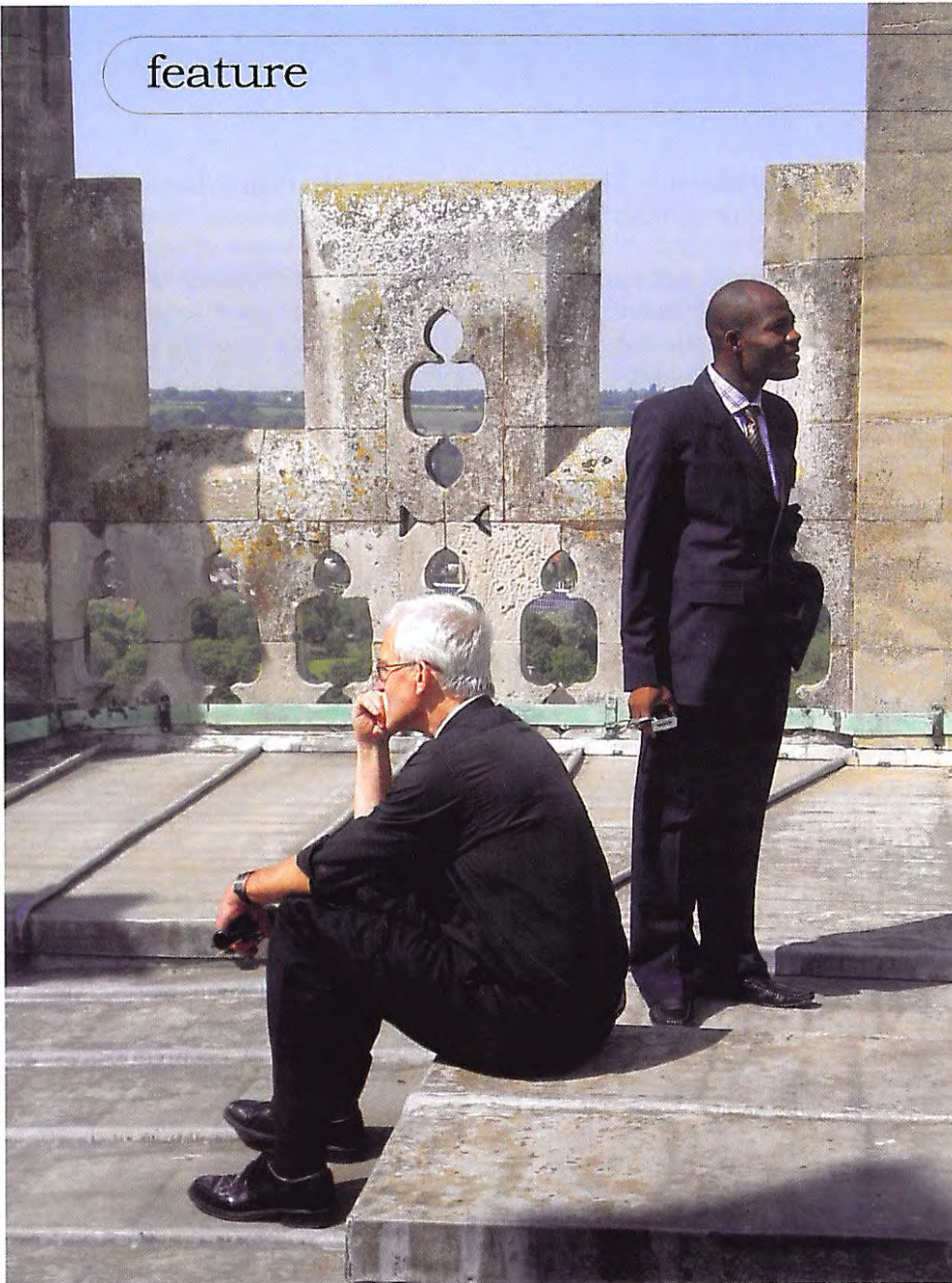
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Priests from England and Nigeria atop Canterbury Cathedral.

Leigh Edwards photos

ars, Class of 2010, at Lambeth Palace, Archbishop Rowan Williams could not but address current fractures in the Anglican Communion, yet his tone was prudently hopeful. In his opening remarks, the archbishop spoke of the final judgment:

At the end of time, when we stand before God's judgment seat, God will ask us, "Where is your brother or sister?" And if we say, "I didn't recognize that person as my brother or sister," God will say to us, "Sorry, I gave them to you as a brother or a sister."

In two sentences the archbishop captured the essence of why we had gathered for two weeks in the precincts of Anglicanism's mother church. We were there to practice recognizing each other as siblings.

Canterbury Cathedral launched the Seminarian's Program, a conference for seminarians and clergy in the early years of ordained ministry, in 2001 and has run the program every year since except for 2008, when the Lambeth Conference met. The program came under the Canterbury Scholars banner by 2005, after Canterbury Cathedral began a similar program for recently consecrated bishops in the Communion. Our 2010

class, 36 recently ordained Anglican priests and ordinands, gathered in this ninth year of the program for learning, fellowship, worship and rest.

Assembling priests and seminarians from around a worldwide communion is not simple. The composition of our group, especially against the reality of Anglican demographics, reflected some of the cultural and practical difficulties within the Anglican Communion. Only five of us were neither Africans nor white. Ten of us were from the United States. Four of us, all from the

'Where Is Your Brother?'

Canterbury Scholars Build Friendships in the Global Communion

By Leigh Edwards

The Archbishop of Canterbury sat down with three dozen Anglican leaders, given but an hour to explore with them the Anglican Communion and his role as the *primus inter pares* among primates. The quiet buzz of whispers, the not-so-subtle cameras and the fixated stares in the room made clear that there was a lot of expectation riding on the encounter. In this meeting with the Canterbury Schol-

United States, were women. About nine intended participants could not travel to Canterbury. A couple of priests from Africa arrived days late, thankful that they had finally cleared visa and travel problems.

The seminars we attended principally focused on mission. The Rev. Canon Edward Condry, head of the program, presented the Anglican Communion's five marks of mission:

- To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom;
- To teach, baptize and nurture new believers;
- To respond to human need by loving service;
- To seek to transform unjust structures of society;
- To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth.

Our open discussion focused on the last two marks. Some voiced profound skepticism and others voiced hesitant confirmation, neither voice falling predictably along the geographic lines of the group. The marks of mission at first glance may seem to function as a telescope (the first requiring the second and so on); if this is so, the legitimacy of pursuing one mark in its own right becomes more complex. With that said, our classes in the first week did focus on one of the more debated marks, namely, a proper theology of creation care. We began with theory: Can the last mark of mission, though necessarily dependent on the others, "stand alone" in any meaningful sense as a work of Christian mission? That led to a more specific question: Does it count as mission if a Christian, out of commitment to serve others, works to rehabilitate a forest?

Our understandings of mission varied widely according to our differing contexts and formation, even as other, more specific influences dispelled the sense that all disagreements could be drawn along facily discernible lines. In some contexts, the more formal, liturgical church is a welcome relief from a too-careless pattern of worship. In other places, the predominance of nondenominational churches means speaking that "language" in order to connect with, or gain a sense of legitimacy from, other Christians.

Archbishop Josiah Idowu-Fearon of Kaduna, Nigeria, a self-identified evangelical, taught most of our small seminars in the second week. The archbishop is an advocate of interfaith dialogue as an essential part of Christian mission. He spent one session teaching solely on Islam, and another talking about Nigeria's conflicts from his Christian context. For many, Archbishop Idowu-Fearon's words were uncomfortable. Some, for instance, were skeptical of the propriety of befriending Muslims without the primary purpose of converting them.



Top: A view of Canterbury Cathedral from the precinct grounds.

Bottom: Two Scholars during a night out at the Thomas Becket Pub.

Recognizing the discomfort here, Archbishop Idowu-Fearon stressed that the witness of love and friendship does not leave interfaith conversation evangelically impotent. On the contrary, he expressed stern frustration and even discouragement with many Westerners who do not speak about their Christian faith, even as others, including some among our own number, risk their lives for the sake of the gospel. Interfaith dialogue itself need not diminish Christian witness, therefore, unless it is joined to denying or downplaying Christian conviction.

(Continued on page 27)

Three Radiant Essays

THE LIVING CHURCH is pleased to announce the three award-winning entries in its inaugural Student Essays in Christian Wisdom Competition:

First place: “The Will of the Father in St. Anselm’s *Cur deus homo*” by Joseph Lenow, Duke Divinity School.

Second place: “Gratitude in John Calvin’s *Institutes*” by Lane Scruggs, Wycliffe College.

Third place: “Christian Wisdom as Relationship: St. Augustine on Being Rewritten by the Author of Love” by Christina Vance, Trinity School for Ministry.

The first- and third-place essays appear in this issue, and TLC will publish the second-place essay soon. Editors also are considering publication of several other papers that, while not winning awards, offered commendable reflections on important questions.

TLC received 15 entries from students at eight seminaries. For the final ranking of winners, the magazine relied on a panel of four independent judges, chosen before the magazine began receiving entries:

- The Rev. Matthew Gunter, rector, St. Barnabas’ Church, Glen Ellyn, Ill.
- The Rev. Dr. Benjamin John King, assistant professor of church history, The School of Theology, University of the South, Sewanee, Tenn.
- The Very Rev. Dr. Jean McCurdy Meade, rector, Mt. Olivet Church, and priest-in-charge, Grace Church, New Orleans, La.
- The Rev. Dr. Ephraim Radner, professor of historical theology and advanced degree director, Wycliffe College, Toronto, Canada.

When announcing this competition, TLC said the judges would “give special consideration to essays that demonstrate a mastery of one or more of the registers of Christian wisdom, and radiate a love of God and the communion of the Church.” The winners of this competition rose to that challenge with distinction.

Reading the work of these young theologians is a joy. TLC expects to offer a new round of this competition next spring, and invites students to begin thinking now about what topics they would like to address. —*The Editors*

The Will of the Father in St. Anselm’s *Cur deus homo*



Christopher John SSF/Creative Commons

Stained-glass window, Anselm Chapel at Canterbury Cathedral.

By Joseph Lenow

St. Anselm of Canterbury’s *Cur deus homo* has had a storied history of misinterpretation. Among his first interlocutors was Peter Abelard, who wrote of Anselm’s atonement theology: “How cruel and wicked it seems ... that anyone should demand the blood of an innocent person as the price for anything ... still less that God should consider the death of his Son so agreeable that by it he should be reconciled to the whole world!”¹ Though Abelard was one of the first wrongfully to impute what is commonly called a “substitutionary atonement” model to St. Anselm, such a reading has persisted to the present day. It fails to take into account Anselm’s exegesis of Philip-pians 2 in *Cur deus homo* I.8-10, where he claims that God did not command the death of the Son on the cross. This essay will proceed in two sections: first, a close reading of Anselm’s exegesis of Philip-pians 2, and second, a discussion of how this *theologoumenon* is critical to Anselm’s understanding of the salvific efficacy of Christ’s death. I will attend strictly to the logic and import of Anselm’s scriptural analysis, largely eschewing the formal structure of

the *sola ratione* argument in *Cur deus homo*. In sum, I will argue that the uncoerced nature of Christ's death is essential for it to have salvific significance, and that Anselm's exegesis of Philippians 2, situated within his broader theory of atonement, shows a substitution model to be an essential misreading of this theology.

I

Philippians 2:8-9 reads: "Being found in human form, [Christ] humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death — even death on a cross." When taken in a "plain sense" reading, this text seems to pose quite a dilemma to St. Anselm, who wishes to show (for reasons that will become clear later) that Christ's death was not "coerced" by the Father.ⁱⁱ In the following section, I will restrict my discussion specifically to Anselm's exegesis of this passage.

The concerns with which Anselm approaches Philippians 2 are first introduced in *Cur deus homo* I.8. Boso inquires: "what justice is it for the man who was of all the most just to be put to death for a

sinner?" and later: "Even if it was not against the will of Christ, since he consented to the will of the Father, it nevertheless seems that the Father did coerce him, through the instructions he gave him. For it is said that Christ 'humbled himself, becoming obedient even to death, death, moreover, on the cross' (275). Boso mentions several other scriptural verses suggesting the same basic idea, before concluding: "Everywhere it is apparent that Christ endured death under the compulsion of obedience, rather than through the intention of his own free will" (276). Anselm takes the opposite position, arguing against the premise that Christ's death occurred as a result of the Father's command desiring his death.

Anselm claims that a proper reading of the epistle to the Philippians will lead to the conclusion that "the Father did not coerce Christ to face death against his will, or give permission for him to be killed, but Christ himself of his own volition underwent death in order to save mankind" (275). This argument is based upon a distinction between "what

(Continued on next page)



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(Continued from previous page)

Christ did because of the demands of his obedience, and ... the suffering, inflicted upon him because he maintained his obedience, which he underwent even though his obedience did not demand it" (276). Anselm begins his exegesis with the claim that maintaining "truth and righteousness unflinchingly ... is what God demands from every rational creature, and every creature owes this to God as a matter of obedience" (276). In normal human existence, this is a command that remains unfulfilled, as the taint of sin renders human beings unable to live in perfect obedience (this is a point which Anselm makes elsewhere quite extensively, but its full explication lies beyond the scope of this essay). This unfailing attendance to the will of God is Anselm's first conception of obedience, "the demands of his obedience" required of all creatures. Death is understood solely as punishment for the human failure to act in accordance with God's wishes. If, however, one existed who had never sinned (or offended the honor of God), "the man would not die, and neither would this be demanded of him" (277). Under these circumstances, Christ's death cannot be understood as willed by God, as it would be an unjust punishment on an innocent human being. Anselm concludes, therefore: "God ... did not force Christ to die, there being no sin in him. Rather, he underwent death of his own accord, not out of an obedience consisting in the abandonment of his life, but out of an obedience consisting in his upholding of righteousness so bravely and pertinaciously that as a result he incurred death" (277).

The great challenge presented by Philippians 2, then, is to explicate the manner in which Christ could be "obedient to the point of death" without the Father having willed Christ's death. While Anselm provides several treatments of this question, all share an emphasis on Christ's obedience conflicting with the world in such a way that death was an inevitable result, without being commanded or coerced by the Father. On the contrary, Anselm presents Christ's march towards Golgotha as an attending to the *saving* will of the Father. In the union of the incarnate Son with the Father, Christ is made aware that human beings "could not have been saved by any means other than by his death" (281). Since God desires the salvation of the human race, Christ freely chooses to enact this desire, something that

can only be accomplished by his own death. Anselm writes: "by holding steadfastly and of his own free will to a desire which he had received from the Father ... the Son became 'obedient even to death' ... that is to say, learnt the magnitude of the deed which had to be accomplished through obedience" (280). It is critical to realize that the will Christ enacts is not the will of the Father for the death of Jesus, but the will to save sinful human beings; the difference between these two statements will be crucial to establishing the salvific efficacy of Christ's death. God does not desire the death of Christ, yet it is the only action by which humankind can be saved. Embodying a life of perfect obedience, Christ freely chooses to embark upon the way of the cross.

II

We are now in a position to examine the way in which this free choice of Christ to die, as presented in the exegesis of Philippians 2, effects the salvation of sinful human beings. In the course of this argu-

ment, we will see that a substitutionary atonement model is misapplied to Anselm's thought. There is insufficient space here to rehearse the whole of Anselm's understanding of human sin and dishonoring God, so the discussion will be limited to how Christ's death serves to reconcile God and humanity. Suffice it to say that all have offended the honor of God, and are completely unable to remedy the situation, since human beings have nothing to offer an infinite God.

For Anselm, the salvific nature of Christ's death hinges upon an understanding of God's justice. This is also the reason that

God's commanding Christ's death as a propitiation for sins is rejected; "It is evident that, if the man had not sinned, God ought not to demand death from him" (277). Nevertheless, Christ's obedience to the divine will to save causes him to suffer unjustly. This is an important distinction. If God compels the innocent Christ's death, *God* is unjust, while if the innocent Christ dies, Christ only *suffers* unjustly. Justice is not an accidental character of God's being, but is an essential and inviolable part of God's nature. Claiming that the Father commanded Christ's death calls into question God's very nature, while an unjust action perpetrated on Christ could possibly be repaid to maintain God's justice.

This second point deserves further explication. Christ's death is meritorious because it is uncommanded by God, yet is the result of Christ's obedi-



First-place winner
Joseph Lenow

ence to God's will for human beings to be saved. Christ's death is conceived by Anselm as a "gift of himself in an act of the greatest possible self-giving" (331), and "it will not be your judgment that someone who gives such a great gift to God ought to go without recompense" (352). Under the circumstances of a "normal" sinless human being, there are presumably any number of riches which God could grant the one who unjustly suffered death. Christ, however, is the incarnate Son, meaning that "all things which belonged to the Father belonged to him, and he had no debt which he could be excused. What compensation is to be given, therefore, to someone who lacks nothing and to whom nothing can be given or excused?" (352) Since it is impossible that anything could be given to the Son, Christ transfers the merit gained by his death to other human beings with whom he is linked in the Incarnation, so that "the debt that they owe for their sins would, as a result, be excused" (353). In this scheme of gifting the benefits gained by Christ's death, both the divinity and humanity of the God-human are necessary. As God, Christ is unable to receive anything from his death, and Christ's full participation in humanity allows him to cancel the debt of "those for whose salvation, as the logic of truth teaches us, he made himself a man" (353). Under these circumstances, "God rejects no member of the human race who approaches him on this authority" (353), being adopted into the family of Christ through the sacrament of baptism.

Several points follow from this understanding of Christ's atonement. First, the whole system collapses if Christ's death is commanded or coerced by God. Anselm's exegesis of Philippians 2 can now be situated within its proper context: without Christ's death being specifically *not* commanded by God, no merit can be accrued by the God-human which could then be passed on to humanity at large. It is only the nature of Christ's death as an extravagant act of obedience, going far beyond the duty proper to all creatures, that one human being's suffering takes on reconciliatory significance. The fact that death cannot be justly

Notes

ⁱ Peter Abelard, in William C. Placher, *A History of Christian Theology: An Introduction* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1983), p. 145.

ii *Cur deus homo* in *Anselm of Canterbury: The Major Works*, ed. Brian Davies and G.R. Evans, trans. Fairweather (Oxford: OUP, 1998), p. 275. All subsequent references are to this edition and will be noted parenthetically in the text of the essay.

iii Though I would argue that a strict satisfaction atone against and repayment of God's honor, fails to deal sufficiently with statements of Anselm like that on p. 280, where he says that "just as it was not in accordance with human nature that [Christ] had the will to live righteously, correspondingly he could not have had that desire whereby he was willing to die in order to bring about something so exceedingly good, from any source other than from 'the Father of lights.'" Especially when considered in light of *Cur deus homo* I.14's assertion that "It is impossible for God to lose his honor ... For either a sinner of his own accord repays what he owes or God takes it from him against his — the sinner's — will" (287), we must wrestle seriously with the fact that it is the very *Son*, the Logos, that is the incarnate guiding principle of the person Jesus Christ. This is a fact Anselm makes more clear in *On the Incarnation of the Word*, particularly on p. 249. Again, we must remember that while the debt of honor is owed to and unswervingly demanded by God, the will of Christ to save humanity also comes from the Father. This gracious action of God can be traced back all the way to creation. Anselm echoes Athanasius, writing: "it was no secret to God what man was going to do, when he created him, and yet, by his own goodness in creating him, he put himself under an obligation to bring his good beginning to fulfillment" (319). This provides a new conception of God's honor, the necessity to save humanity being recast as "plainly nothing other than the unchangeability of God's honor, which he possesses of himself, and no one apart from himself ... [I]t is a necessity that the goodness of God should bring to completion what it has begun with respect to mankind, because of his unchangeability, although the whole of what he does is grace" (319). Thus, the traditional understanding of God's honor made central in a satisfaction atonement theory is only sufficient when complemented by an understanding of God's honor as the unfailing love and grace with which God approaches humanity as Father and incarnate Son (and less explicitly as Holy Spirit).

demanded by God of a sinless human being creates an instance in which God must repay the person; the fact that the sinless one is also the Divine Son means that no gift can be given and Christ is free to pass along the

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cancellation of the debt owed by humanity to God. Second, this clearly cannot be justified as a model of substitutionary atonement, where a reciprocity between God and human beings results in the incarnate Son bearing the penalty of human sin so that humanity can be reconciled to God. For Anselm, the relationship is clearly one-directional, with Christ giving to humanity the merit accrued through his death. While Christ takes on the Father's desire that human beings be saved from their sin, humanity's debts are not heaped upon Christ, but are cancelled due to his obedience. At most, this can be called a "satisfaction" atonement, in which the infinite slight to God's honor is repaid through the infinite merit accumulated by the death of the sinless Christ.ⁱⁱⁱ

In conclusion, Anselm's exegesis of Philippians 2:8-10 is central to understanding the mechanism of the atonement. The entirety of Christ's reconciling action is predicated upon his death freely overflowing from his desire to be obedient to God's wish for human salvation. If this death is in any way coerced by God, it can no longer be understood as a free action that calls for the reward of merit to Christ, which can then be passed on to human beings as a whole through Christ's participation in human nature. As such, a substitutionary atonement reading of Anselm must be rejected as a fundamental error. While Anselm may provide a crucial step towards later (particularly Protestant) theologies of the atonement, his theology must be understood in its particularity and upon its own merits.

Joseph Lenow is a senior M.Div. student and member of the Anglican Episcopal House of Studies at Duke Divinity School. He hopes to pursue a doctorate in philosophical theology.



Tiffany window of St. Augustine, Lightner Museum, St. Augustine, Fla.

Christian Wisdom as Relationship: St. Augustine on Being Rewritten by the Author of Love

By Christina Vance

Introduction

I was the Christian catechist, but my students behind bars taught me the wisdom of God. For six months, I led a Bible study for maximum-security inmates in Fresno County, California. Many of the women were new Christians with a scant knowledge of Scripture but an unquestioning love of Jesus. As we read stories together, I watched their understanding and love of this Jesus grow. And, to my surprise, my love deepened as well.

I remember a few stories in particular. In one, we were reading the Last Supper account during Lent. We read aloud Peter's brash promise to be faithful and Jesus' response: "Truly I tell you, this very night, before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times" (Matt. 26:34). Caught up completely in the story, a woman in our group gasped loudly. I cannot think of that passage now without acutely remembering the genuine dismay that she expressed and how her shock shocked me. Why was it so raw? Because a man could abandon Jesus. Because all of us could.

My sisters in that jail made the Scriptures come alive for me, even as I made them live for them. I remember the day I asked if they'd heard Jesus' parable of the lost son. Every head in the room shook "no." As I described the Father running to embrace his lost son, I saw hope and longing written on their faces. They seemed to say, with wonder: "Can God really be like this?" And I thought, with gratitude: "Perhaps this is the first day I've really heard this story."

St. Augustine of Hippo wrote of this kind of wisdom of knowing God's character — attained when the Scriptures are etched into the human heart through the revelation of his love.

Mentors: God's Storytellers

Augustine, the great bishop and theologian of the western Church, composed *On the Catechising of the Uninstructed* around A.D. 400. This 27-chapter letter was written to help out Deogratias, a deacon and catechist in Carthage, who was frustrated and bored in his attempts to instruct new converts. As Augustine notes in the letter, the deacon's teaching had become "profitless and distasteful even to yourself, not to speak of the learner" (chapter 1). The letter's contents basically fall into two topics: what a catechist should teach and how a catechist should teach it. But one treasure undergirds every bit of wisdom a Christian teacher possesses: divine, transformative love.

For Augustine, the mentor's account of the biblical narrative should always be geared toward making the catechumen aware of God's love and toward enabling him to fall in love with the Lover of his soul, transforming the catechumen into a lover of God and humankind. We see perhaps the best description of this "end of the commandment" in chapter 3, where Augustine tells Deogratias to keep his gaze fixed on love and to keep "the gaze of the person who we are instructing" guided that way as well. Later in the letter, Augustine describes his focal theme of love in another way, asking "what greater reason is apparent for the advent of the Lord than that God might show his love in us" (chapter 4)? In other words, Deogratias should remember that he is telling a love story; the *greatest* love story.

That doesn't mean Augustine wanted other parts of the story to be ignored. He tells Deogratias that "each person is catechized in the first instance from what is written in the text: 'In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth,' on to the present times of the Church" (chapter 3). The catechist should give a "comprehensive account" of Scripture while simultaneously delighting in "certain of the more wonderful facts" found in the story.

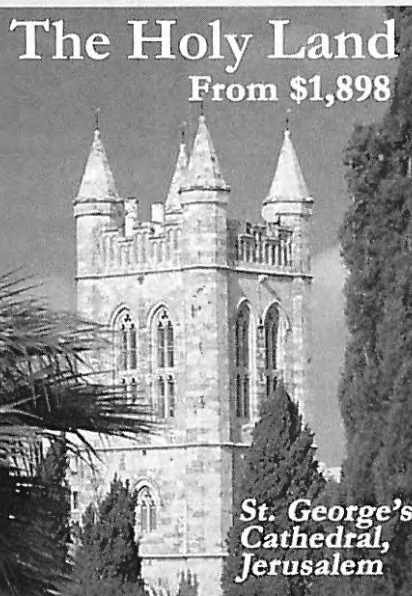
These wonderful facts are keys to avoiding boredom. Augustine warns Deogratias to refrain from droning on and on through all of the Bible because that could exhaust or confuse a catechumen, when the goal is

to stimulate her interest (chapter 3). Instead, Augustine encourages Deogratias to get excited about what he's teaching by suggesting that the catechist "unwrap" the most wonderful parts of the love story. Then, stop. Pause and savor them with the catechumen as things "to be examined and admired." The other facts are to be passed over and woven into the larger narrative.

Falling in love is no simple matter; Augustine acknowledges this. But he trusts the power of love to evoke a response. Augustine points out that even the "criminal and sordid loves" among human beings evoke intense passion (chapter 4), since "the soul which before was torpid is excited so soon as it feels itself to be loved." If human love is so powerful, Augustine argues, how much greater is divine love? He writes that Christ came "that man might learn how much God loves him . . . that he might be kindled to the love of him by whom he was first loved, and might also love his neighbor" (chapter 4). He brings it back to the catechist then, challenging Deogratias to narrate the story of a merciful and humble God in a way to help his hearers believe, hope and love.

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Bethlehem, Jerusalem, Nazareth, Galilee, the River Jordan



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In chapter 10 of the letter, Augustine addresses Deogratias's main concern: that his teaching seemed "poor and spiritless." Augustine tells the deacon that he knows him to be knowledgeable in Scriptures and to be a good speaker. The problem, he writes, is "weariness of mind." Augustine suggests a number of reasons for Deogratias's state, including boredom induced by teaching the same materials over and over again and discouragement at seeing hearers that are "unmoved" by the instruction. Augustine writes that catechists shouldn't be motivated by praise of people, even as mentors who love their disciples want them to "be pleased with the matters which are held forth for their salvation."

What solutions does Augustine offer the catechist in his method? He directs Deogratias to Christ's example of self-giving, cruciform love. Augustine concedes that it may be tiresome for a teacher to spend time "dwelling long" on elementary concepts in the faith (chapter 10), but he exhorts Deogratias to think of his students as children, whose parents delight in teaching syllable by syllable. Augustine asks, piercingly: "And how, indeed, should one be ready to be spent for their souls, if he should find it irksome to him to bend himself to their ears?"

Augustine echoes this "remedy" for the catechist's lethargy later in his letter, entreating him to unite in heart with his disciples with the love of a father. If Deogratias really does this, Augustine predicts he'll become excited by God's story by seeing it through a disciple's eyes (chapter 12). In this way, "things become new which were previously old"—an infectious joy for teacher and student, whether in a church classroom or a Fresno County jail cell.

Disciples: Rewritten by God's Love Story

Having read *On the Catechising of the Uninstructed* with a focus on the role of catechist as storyteller, we now turn to the complicated action that is taking place in the hearts and minds of disciples. To do this, I draw on Ellen Charry's two categories of learning in *By the Renewing of Your Minds* and on Paul Griffiths's *Religious Reading*.

The first type of learning found in Augustine's works, according to Charry, is *scientia* or knowledge. Charry defines this as "factual knowledge upon which one makes rational judgments" based on "deeds of

God made known in Scripture" (133). For Augustine, Charry notes, faith in God is an intellectual decision based on factual, historical knowledge.

The second type of learning found in Augustine's works, according to Charry, is *sapientia* or wisdom. Charry describes this as knowledge of God based on actually *knowing* God. *Sapere* in Latin originally meant "to taste or smell things." Charry writes that Augustine wanted Christians "not just to celebrate what God has done for them but also to taste and enjoy God." Thus, "in Augustine's view, *scientia* alone is unable to heal us" (133).

We see *scientia* and *sapientia* at work in *Catechising* in a number of ways. When Augustine instructs Deogratias to give his catechumens a full sense of the biblical narrative (chapter 3), he is interested in their gaining, in part, a *scientia* knowledge. For example, he advises catechumens who have been moved to convert by a dream or miracle to be "directed to the more solid

path and the surer oracles of the Scriptures" (chapter 6) in order to strengthen their understanding of the mercy of God. He also defines faith as a matter "of the mind which believes" (chapter 5).

At the same time, we see that Augustine wants the catechumens to possess more than *scientia* knowledge of God. This is

evident in his *sapientia* language regarding the biblical story — that the catechumens and catechist linger and savor "certain of the more wonderful facts" (chapter 3) present in the text. The purpose of this, again, is for the catechumen to fall in love with God — a *sapientia* that will enable her to be rewritten from the inside out as she grows in grace, by the Holy Spirit.

Another lens through which we can gaze at Augustine's letter is Griffiths's description of how religious people read (40-48). Griffiths describes nonreligious readers as people at a buffet who grab whatever looks good and leave the rest. But religious writers like Anselm of Canterbury describe reading Scripture as savoring a meal. He entreats readers to chew, suck and swallow the words of Christ: "Taste the goodness of your redeemer, burn with love for your savior."

Religious readers also place a greater emphasis on memorizing what they read — in a sense, becoming



Third-place winner Christina Vance

the text — and Griffiths outlines a rich and long-standing tradition for this (48-54). Augustine doesn't dwell on memorization in his catechesis, probably because committing large parts of the bible to memory was normal in his day. He does make the offhanded remark to Deogratias to refrain from reciting the Pentateuch, gospels or other parts of the bible if he had them memorized (chapter 3). Still, we should consider what impact it would have on a person to have large parts of the bible stored in one's memory. Griffiths notes that in Augustine's oral culture, "illiterate" people knew the scriptural allusions the bishop made in sermons and could often complete his half-quotations (48). Augustine wrote to catechumens memorizing the Apostles' Creed: "Let your memory be your codex" (163).

The catechist is, in a sense, a living symbol of God's word. As the catechist reveals more of the biblical narrative, the catechumen may discern the ways in which this great story has rewritten the teller. Although there is only one Incarnation, the storyteller is, nonetheless, a flesh and blood symbol of

what God's love has done in a human being.

Conclusion

What does this reflection reveal about Christian wisdom? It shows that study of the Scriptures teaches us to love God — both objectively, for his mighty acts, and personally, as his cruciform love pierces each of our lives more and more deeply. We are made to embody this love, not just to speak of it. And we cannot embody this love in isolation. Christian wisdom is community wisdom: a deposit of "wonderful facts" given to sustain the Church. Together, we stir one another to return to the Scriptures and to marvel at our God's love. And together, as my sister in the Fresno County Jail taught me, we remind one another to feel the Father's arms around our prodigal shoulders, and to ask with joy-filled wonder: "Can God really be like this?"

The Rev. Christina Vance is a 2010 graduate of Trinity School for Ministry and a transitional deacon in the Episcopal Diocese of Albany. She is working with a fellow Trinity graduate to plant a church in Troy, N.Y.

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Trinity
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*an evangelical seminary in
the Anglican tradition*

By G. Jeffrey MacDonald

Mark Andrew Jones, BSG, brings a calm confidence to his diaconal ministry among stressed-out churchgoers in south Florida, but it's not just because he belongs to the Brotherhood of Saint Gregory, a religious order of the Episcopal Church.

No, he says, his serene priestly manner stems largely from having left his "hectic, workaday" world as a human resources professional for a year to finish his seminary coursework in residence at the School of Theology at the University of the South (or Sewanee).

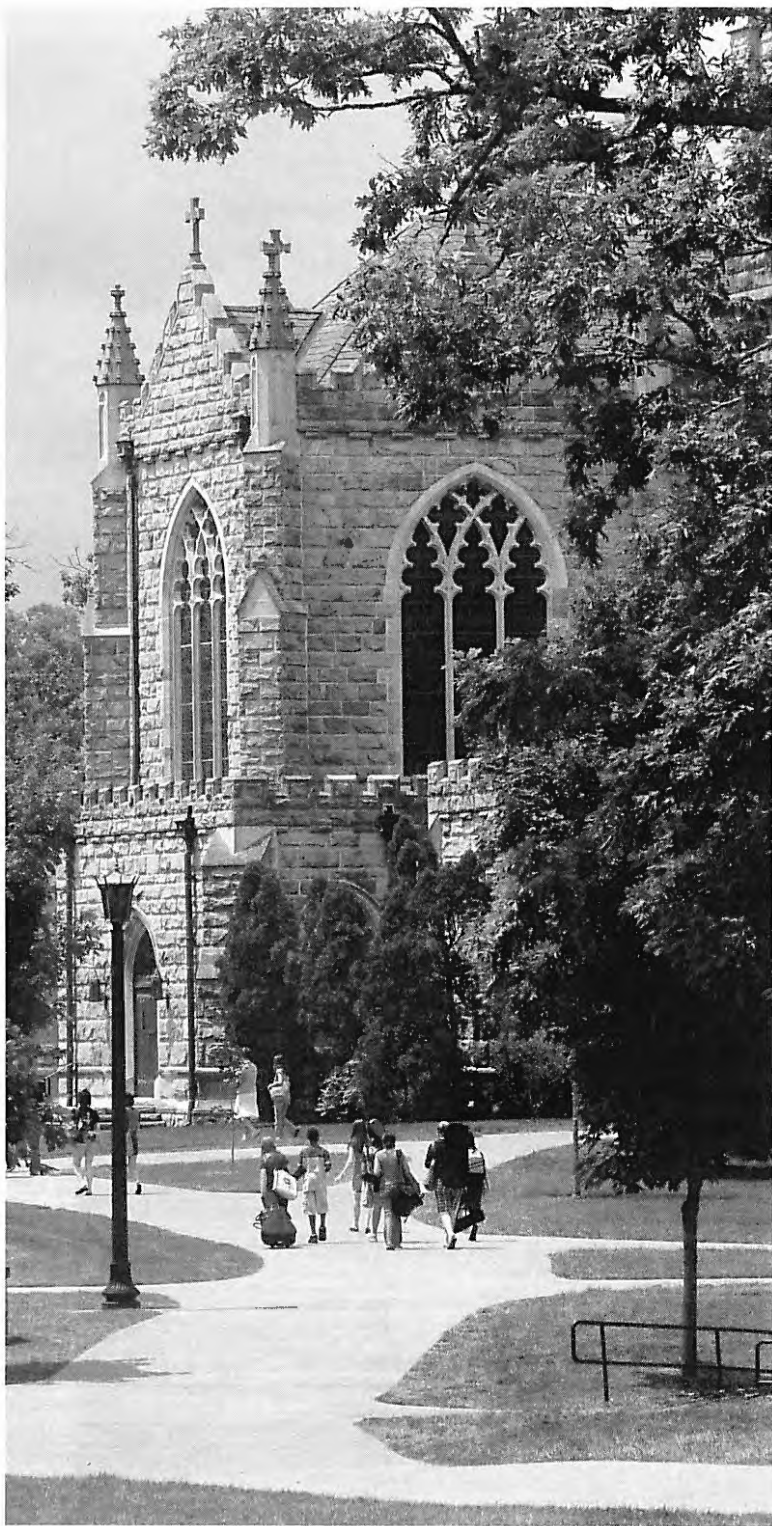
Jones hadn't been eager to study at Sewanee. The move meant leaving his wife and job behind, even as tuition bills kept coming for his second son's college education. But after Jones spent years in commuter classes and online coursework toward a Master of Divinity (M.Div.) degree, his bishop felt he needed some classical formation. He got it at Sewanee, where life in community included silent prayer in chapel with other early risers and Compline with fellow students.

"We were able to lean on each other, to be present for each other, to learn good practices for being present for each other, and stimulate each other's reflection," Jones said. "In a commuting situation, you only have so much time, so if you have an issue about a class, it becomes a very task-oriented conversation. But in a residential setting, particularly in an isolated community like Sewanee, you sit down and talk about that academic issue, but it would often flow into a conversation about spirituality."

As a church leader trained for one or more years in a residential setting, Jones is part of a vanishing breed, according to some observers of American Episcopal seminary education. Financial pressures have claimed programmatic casualties in recent years, including the 2008 closure of Bexley Hall's Rochester, N.Y., campus and the termination of Seabury-Western's residential M.Div. program. Some argue the church needs to embrace new clergy training models that cost less than residential programs.

"It's not like we've been doing it this way since Jesus," said Seabury-Western President Gary Hall as the school prepared to retire its residential M.Div. program. "The way we've done it recently may be the optimal way, but we've got to find other ways to do it."

Despite well-known challenges and calls for an overhaul, residential education is quietly thriving — albeit sometimes in new forms — in pockets across North America. Wycliffe College in Toronto, where most of the 80 M.Div. students live on or near campus, has been growing its student body and operating in the



The University of the South in summer.

Seminaries Rethink Their Residential PROGRAMS

black for most of the past decade. Virginia Theological Seminary (VTS) in Alexandria, Va., confers about 50 M.Div. degrees per year to graduates who have, in most cases, incurred no new personal debt during seminary. Trinity School for Ministry in Ambridge, Pa., has watched its residential M.Div. program grow by more than 30 percent since the late 1990s to about 40 students per class today.

Residential programs are succeeding despite financial challenges as schools everywhere are making do with less. The 11 seminaries affiliated with the Episcopal Church deliver the most expensive form of theological education in the world, according to Barbara Wheeler, director of the Center for the Study of Theological Education (CSTE) at Auburn Seminary. Prospective students consequently face a stark proposition. With \$49,000 in debt, the average graduate earns just \$45,500 in parish ministry and spends more than 25 percent of a monthly salary on loan service, according to the Society for the Increase of the Ministry (SIM), a Hartford-based benefactor for Episcopal postulants.

Against this sobering backdrop, residential education is nonetheless flowering in specific settings as administrators make the most of their schools' advantages as well as cultural trends. From one locale to the next, the formula for success is as unique as a family recipe, though each seems to be nourishing a church hungry for well-formed leaders.

"Residential theological education is expensive," Wheeler said, "but so are all the other forms."

Where residential education is doing well, schools are taking advantage of a demographic shift. The estimated median age of students enrolled in M.Div. programs across the country has been falling steadily since 1999, from 34 to 32, according to a CSTE analysis of data from the Association of Theological Schools. Younger students are less encumbered by responsibilities than those who are middle aged, Wheeler said, and more inclined to want a residential community experience. Hence schools with solid residential programs are poised for resurgence. Trinity, for instance, is predicting its residential M.Div. program — which draws evangelically oriented students to a relatively low-cost region of the country — will grow further in the next few years.

Schools with strong residential programs are also claiming a tradition that is no longer taken for granted. For centuries, educators note, formation of leaders has commonly involved some measure of withdrawal from



Jo McCarty photo

Elise Feyerherm, assistant professor of church history and Christian spirituality, with Bexley Hall students.

ordinary life in order to shape clergy in holiness, set apart for special service. This theological concept, which helped give rise in 19th-century America to many of today's semi-cloistered schools, warrants reinforcement in these times when laxity and scandal among clerics are all too common, according to Thomas Moore, SIM's executive director.

"Clergy do need to see themselves as set apart," Moore said. "All these [sexual abuse] issues with clergy today have been devastating because, gosh, these are people set apart — called by God — and they're showing their clay feet all too easily. ... It's good for the clergy in some ways [during their training] to see the requirement of being set apart."

In the quest to sustain residential education, money can make a big difference. VTS watches over a \$250 million endowment, which makes it one of America's wealthiest seminaries. These invested assets enable administrators to give out \$12.5 million per year in



Commencement at Virginia Theological Seminary.

aid without diminishing principal. Thus the school's nest egg keeps residential education affordable for students.

Other schools lack that scale of resources, but they find other ways to keep residential education feasible. Sewanee's School of Theology endowment, for instance, allows the school to distribute \$1.3 million in

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financial aid, about 10 percent of what VTS awards. But the school also receives strong support from the 28 Episcopal dioceses that own and govern Sewanee, according to Dean William Stafford.

Despite a grim economy, annual giving from these dioceses has increased in four of the past five years, and the fifth year showed no decline, Stafford said. A culture of support from regional churches, along with a relatively low cost of living as compared to New York or the Bay Area, allows the school to make its numbers even in tough times.

“We are being supported by the church around us,” Stafford said. “In parts of the country where the decline in church membership has been more rapid than it has been here [in the South], that brings extra pressures to bear, I have no doubt. And no seminary can support itself from those kinds of revenues.”

Another factor makes a difference, at Sewanee as elsewhere: institutional synergies. The School of Theology’s status as part of Sewanee means the school can depend on what Stafford calls “a financially strong university” with rigorous fiscal discipline. By similar token, Berkeley Divinity School at Yale allows for sharing of some administrative and academic resources with Yale Divinity School. In a related twist on the same concept, Episcopal Divinity School in Cambridge, Mass., recently took steps to sell buildings and share some facilities as well as administrative functions with nearby Lesley University. The goal is to sustain residential education while slashing the overhead expenses that endangered it.

Some elements of successful residential education are less replicable than others. Wycliffe, for instance, keeps enrollments high in part by offering a subsidized education for Canadians, who pay just \$2,000 in yearly tuition, versus \$8,000 for Wycliffe’s students from the United States. Such a government-funded system would of course be unconstitutional in the United States, but other Wycliffe initiatives could make sense in any country. For instance, offering more courses online and expanding enrollments in new master’s degree programs help generate revenue and in turn sustain the school’s flagship, three-year residential education, according to Wycliffe Principal George Sumner.

Wheeler agrees that online courses can expand a school’s reach and boost its income, but she adds a caveat. Online courses demand staff time to administer and faculty time to teach, which means they’re not a shortcut to easy money for any school.

“It’s an illusion that online education is quick and



Wycliffe College in Toronto and General Theological Seminary in New York.

easy,” Wheeler said. “It’s an illusion that extension centers or satellite [campuses] are money makers. Any form of quality theological education is going to be very expensive.”

As residential education is tested by financial pressures, some tuition-driven schools may need to follow Seabury–Western’s lead and abandon the model in order to serve a smaller niche, according to Tim Sedgwick, associate dean of academic affairs at VTS. He expects Episcopal seminaries may come to complement one another more effectively by developing special foci. One school might work with the newly ordained, for instance, while another might train leaders for particular types of specialized ministry.

Meanwhile, residential education continues to evolve. Schools increasingly offer intensive residential experiences, such as two or three weeks on campus, which are then supplemented as students take online classes and support each other via the Internet. Sedgwick sees theological education moving from one “gold standard” (a three-year, in-residence model) to a landscape that offers “several different gold standards” as additional forms of residential education are perfected over time.

Along the way, however, schools are working hard to make sure new formats don’t come at the expense of the classical, three-year residential model. General Theological Seminary in New York City, for example, has been so financially imperiled that it needed to sell four apartment units and restructure its debt. But the school would sooner revamp its Manhattan real estate holdings than give up on residential education.

“We are committed to the mission of this institution. It’s just the business model that needs to be rethought and reconfigured,” said William C. Webster, General’s director of admissions. “And part of that reconfiguration is the intention and commitment to not abandon that residential model, but rather to sort of build around that core component.”

G. Jeffrey MacDonald (www.gjeffreymacdonald.com) reports on religion for a variety of national news outlets and is author of Thieves in the Temple: The Christian Church and the Selling of the American Soul (Basic Books, 2010).

From the Pulpit of Saint James School, Volume 2 (2002-2009)

Further Thoughts of a Priest
Headmaster

By **D. Stuart Dunnan**. Watson Publishing.
Pp. xii + 210. \$25. ISBN 978-0-88135-250-4.

Almost 20 years ago, Fr. Stuart Dunnan became the young headmaster of St. James School in western Maryland, with the mission to revive this venerable but then struggling boarding school. Today, as both this book and the school's website bear witness, he seems to be achieving the nearly impossible combination of a solidly traditional Church — even high-church — school and a vibrant approach to forming enthusiastic young leaders for a 21st-century world.

The sermons and other pieces (not all delivered at St. James's) in this volume testify both to Fr. Dunnan's vision and to his methods.

One "chapel talk" to the Roxbury Latin School in Boston manages both to expound the events of Holy Week to those who have never heard this before and to challenge the professing Christians to live up to their faith. A baccalaureate address challenges the favorite idolatries of the young — the football victory, the new car, the first-choice college acceptance, the boyfriend or girlfriend — with a call for self-giving and for learning really to love others. Others deal more specifically with school issues, focusing on Saint James's mission to form community, to prepare students for college, and to raise up leaders.

Regardless of context, however, all of them show clearly the headmaster's faith in God and his love for the Church and for his students. Because he loves them, he wants them to respond to God's love for them. He constantly challenges his hearers to be willing to change, to take responsibility, to put others first, and generally to grow up. When dealing with conflict or con-

troversy, whether in a school situation or in the wider Church, he proposes ways to respect both sides, without abandoning his own convictions; surely this reconciling voice needs to be heard today.

Fr. Dunnan's pieces read well, and doubtless would "listen" even better. This book will be a valuable

resource for Christian teachers and for anyone working with the young. The combination of solid commitment to traditional values, along with sensitivity and openness to the rising generation, could go a long way to revive Christian formation.

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The Fullness of TRUTH

By Tony Clavier

Stories or “myths” are both powerful and necessary. They are capable of defining cultures as well as transforming human beings, and, like everything else under heaven and earth, can work for good or ill. King Alfred burned the cakes and was scolded by a peasant woman; so a myth emerged of benevolent monarchy and freedom-loving subjects. The myths and sagas of a Germanic past worked on Hitler’s fevered brain to inspire tyranny and an abject populace.

Almost from the beginning of the Church’s life, a division emerged between those for whom *the Story* is enough and those who seek to discover new truths in an emerging narrative. At one level both meet in common agreement. Jesus assured his disciples that he would always be present *and* that the Holy Spirit would lead the Church into all truth.

For the next 400 years the Church sought to translate and explain the cardinal teachings of Jesus in language accessible to non-Jews, to Greeks and Romans, and other peoples and cultures within the empire. Doctrine *developed*. This development did not suggest some hidden teaching bursting forth at the bidding of the Spirit, however. Development perhaps is better understood as translation and explanation, taking into account the culture, language, and nuances of communication of various people in various places at various times. It is a process which has engaged and continues to engage women and men of rare intellect.

There was a time when our Anglican ancestors dug deeply into the writings of the early Christians and the decrees of the general councils of the undivided Church and insisted that, next to Holy Scripture itself, or as an explanation of Scripture, the teachings found in the fathers, the creeds and the councils were foundational and “necessary unto salvation.”

Yet there have always been those for whom this is not enough. The thought implied by a fundamentalist reading of Jesus’ promises about his disciples being led into all truth, one which ignores how the Church has interpreted such texts, opens up the vision that mere mortals may be given hidden knowledge. So the story emerges of a persecuted underground Church, led into the proverbial wilderness by powerful “orthodox” lead-

ers, and yet holding on to a deeper knowledge, given to those who journey into light around a spiritual labyrinth. It is not strictly accurate to term this Gnosticism, for the Gnostics predated Christianity. Yet Gnosticism has about it themes attractive to those for whom orthodoxy is not enough.

Perhaps two movements came together in the 1960s which popularized revived Gnosticism in the West. The first was the charismatic movement — in many ways a salutary reminder that the third person of the Trinity had been institutionalized and confined to mechanic liturgical functions, as in confirmation and ordination. On the other hand the Holy Spirit seemed to offer an alternative authority, one which might empower individuals and even synods in a new and exciting manner. One may scarcely have any form of meeting at any level nowadays without the expectation of the Spirit’s guidance. The majority votes: the Spirit has spoken.

The other theme which erupted in the ’60s was anti-authoritarianism. This did not appeal solely to some anarchist streak in human nature. Rather it suggested popular authority, exercised by those who lacked power; an assault on “the powers that be.” In the Church that new authority was the Holy Spirit and the Spirit’s vehicles: pressure groups, lobbies, conventions, and finally synods broadcast by internet.

Certainly a complacent authority often complicit in corrupt prejudice — as the Episcopal Church was in racism and classism — is fair target for Christians, called to be the conscience of society and not its handmaiden. Yet revolutions are heady things. It is immensely exciting to overthrow the Establishment. Taught now by a series of bloody revolutions over 200 years, however, we should be wary of unintended consequences, of the emergence of new elites more tyrannical than those deposed, of new orthodoxies more repressive than those abandoned, and of the loss of treasures which illuminated society.

Most revolutions respond to genuine societal evil. They need a story which not only appeals to righteousness in the name of freedom, a liberation story, but also a story which empowers the new regime.

Many Episcopalians now tell a story of a persecuted underground church, driven into the wilderness by

male authoritarian proponents of orthodoxy who are stuck in blind conservatism and reaction. To justify the new way, a necessary leap backward must be taken in order to leap forward. Centuries of Christian history are to be ignored as times when God slept, in order to find that golden time when Christians were at liberty to explore new truth on their journey of faith, guided by the Spirit.

Pre-Constantinian times may be portrayed as a period when various opinions vied for attention before the Church allied itself to imperial might and cast out freethinkers. If such a period won't work well enough, the Celtic Church, or a version of it sans harsh discipline, seems delightful, particularly if references to earlier pre-Christian traditions may be illuminated. Celtic wisdom was suppressed, the story goes, to empower Catholic conformity. The freedom of the pre-conciliar Church and the mysticism of Celtic devotion provide stories to empower a contemporary ecclesial revolutionary movement, Spirit-led, with a mission to the whole world.

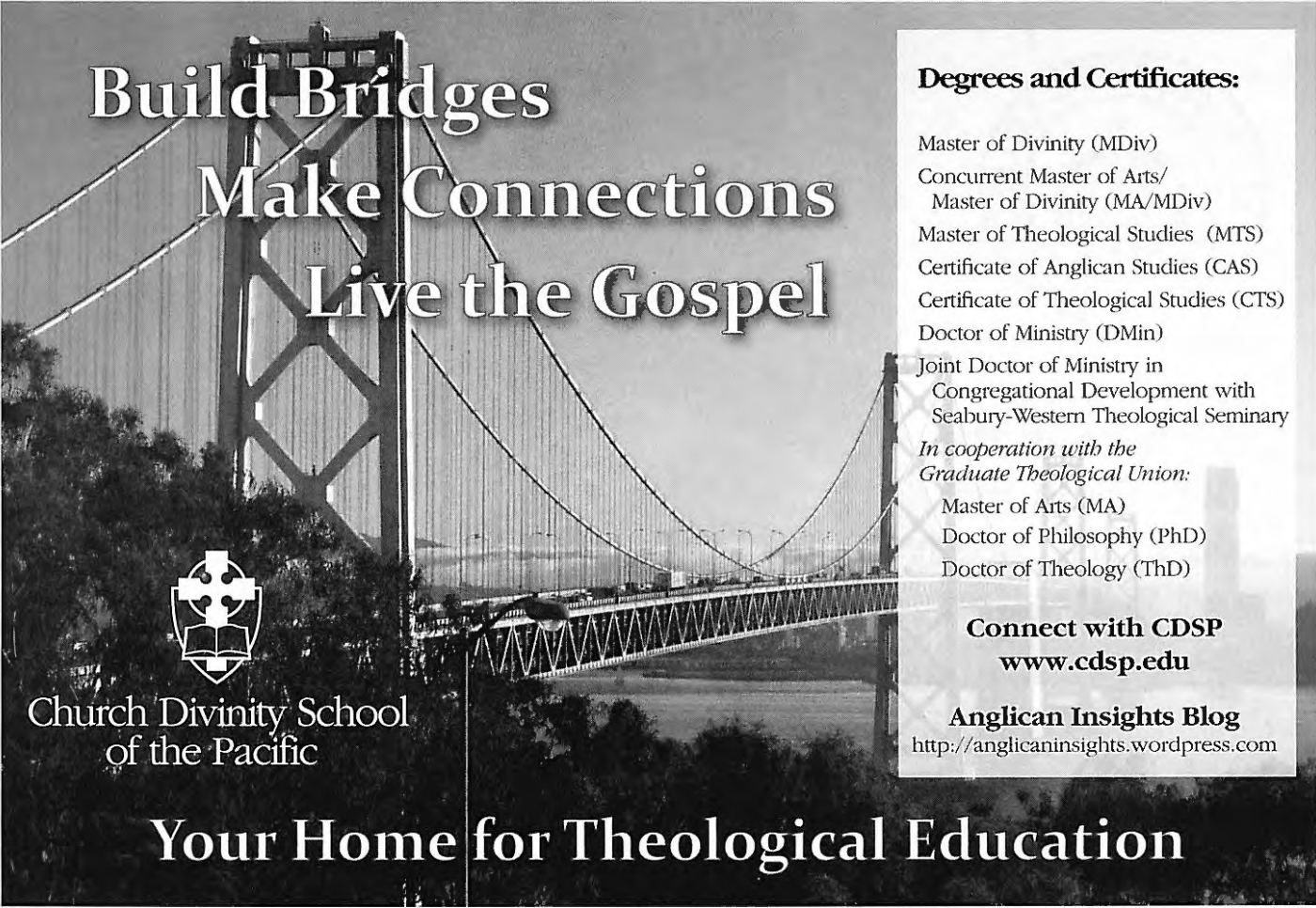
Surely there is enough truth in the message to make it winsome. When empowered, the institutional Church has employed devilish and atrocious means to silence its purported enemies. Women, African and Native

Americans and other minorities have been downtrodden not simply by the state but by a complicit Church. Orthodoxy can and does become sterile when its task of forever illuminating the gospel in a language understood by contemporary people becomes instead the preservation of a historical depository of dusty tomes and rigid rubrics unchanging and unchanged.

The task of orthodox teachers, pastors and individuals is however to teach the truth winsomely. Jesus is God's final revelation, the eternal light shining in darkness, the Word made flesh. God didn't sleep for centuries. Every age since the Coming has been an age of the Spirit. The treasures of those ages are not dead weight. They reveal much to be proclaimed today in spirituality, liturgy, morality, and doctrine.

It emerges that the Church is forever in reformation, as the faith is guarded, unity attempted, the gospel proclaimed, God worshiped, the poor championed and error exposed — both the error of the Church when it conforms to culture and secular power, and the error of those who justify novelty by an appeal to hidden wisdom newly revealed.

The Rev. Tony Clavier (afmclavier.wordpress.com) is rector of St. Paul's Church, La Porte, Ind.



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A Font of Self-righteousness

Jane Alison Shaw, the new dean of Grace Cathedral, San Francisco [TLC, July 18], adds to her outrageous caricature of the traditional Judeo-Christian teaching regarding sexuality by joining our Presiding Bishop in the latter's oft repeated claim that God's word to Jesus at his baptism applies to each of us, not on the grounds of our redemption in Christ, but on the grounds of our birth as made in God's image.

Baptism is, therefore, "less ... a sacrament of conversion than ... accepting a love that God extends to every human being." It is not what God has done in Christ that enables his approval of us but simply that "all human beings are made in the image and likeness of God

and are *therefore* (italics provided) God's beloved."

Aside from removing from salvation Jesus' sacrifice, passion, cross, and resurrection, this teaching depends on what St. Augustine called the "cruel" teaching of Pelagianism in order to fulfill God's intention for us. If this teaching were true, that the word spoken to Jesus at his baptism is also spoken to us, why should we be grateful? By the image of God in each of us we are pleasing to God and because of our nature we deserve God's love. It is as if the cross on our altar is replaced with a baptismal font full of the waters of self-righteousness.

I can think of no better antidote

than William Bright's hymn:

Look Father, look on his
anointed face/and only look
on us as found in him;/look
not on our misusings of thy
grace,/our prayer so languid,
and our faith so dim:/for lo!
Between our sins and their
reward/we set the passion of
Thy Son our Lord.

(The Rt. Rev.) C. FitzSimons Allison
Bishop of South Carolina (ret.)

Methodism in Great Britain

I was rather amused to read the report about the Archbishop of Canterbury's address to this year's



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Faith Seeking Understanding

British Methodist Conference, which described "England's United Methodists" [TLC, July 25]. Unlike in the United States, the word *united* does not appear in our church's title. The United Methodist Church in Britain ended when in 1932 it joined with the Wesleyan Methodist Church and The Primitive Methodist Church to form The Methodist Church of Great Britain, which it has been ever since.

Also, it is important to realize it is the Methodist Church of *Great Britain*, as I'm sure that my fellow Methodists in Wales and Scotland who attended this year's annual Conference in Portsmouth would be surprised to discover that Archbishop Rowan was not speaking to them!

*(The Rev.) Roger Stubbings
Chorley, England*

Healing Touch's Longevity

In Benjamin Guyer's excellent article on the Restoration and Anglican identity [TLC, July 11], he states that the Royal Touch for healing "was used by every successive Eng-



Queen Anne

lish monarch until the late 17th century." Its use actually continued into the early 18th century, Queen Anne (1702-14) being the last to use it. Samuel Johnson, mentioned earlier in the article, was touched by her when he was very young.

The kings of France also practiced the Royal Touch down to the Revolution. In each country, the ability to heal was considered to have been inherited from a saintly ancestor and not an automatic aspect of kingship.

*(The Rev.) Lawrence N. Crumb
Eugene, Ore.*

Real Forgiveness

In "Trust the Communion's Mind" [TLC, April 11], the Rev. Peter Carrell of New Zealand concluded: "When Peter erred, he was not ejected from the apostolic band. And no one accused Jesus of giving him a wet bus ticket." What does this last phrase mean?

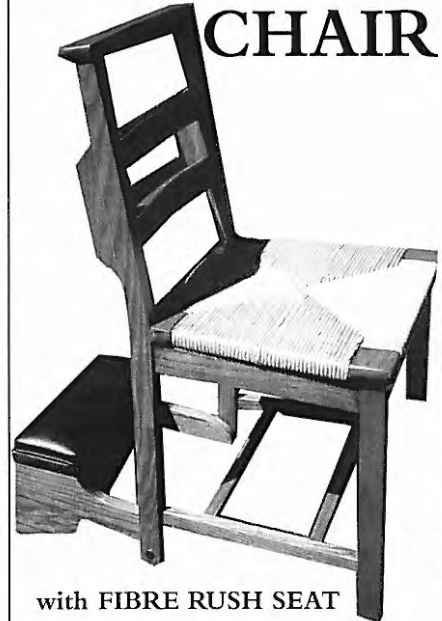
*Edward W. Clary
St. Mary's, Ga.*

Fr. Carrell responds:

On reflection, I realize I may have gotten the phrase wrong: it probably should be "a wet parking ticket." Either way, the idea is that a serious offense (whether against law or organizational rules) is responded to in a very weak, insipid, ineffectual manner.

As I understand the Church's reading of Jesus' response to Peter's denial, no one thinks Jesus is responding in a weak, insipid or ineffectual manner. The denial is confronted, Peter is clear he has failed his Master, but the Master offers a way forward for his forgiven disciple.

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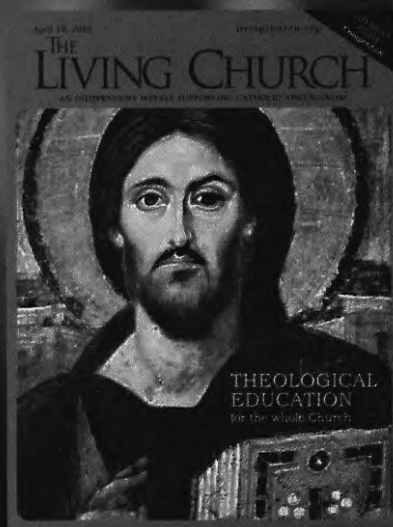
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(Continued from page 9)

At this point an English seminarian raised his hand and observed that frustration here can cut two ways, since in England many cite what they see as angry, aggressive proselytism as a reason to spurn Christianity. The discussion that followed elucidated some of the skepticisms we had about different ideas of evangelism and mission. Some of us were frustrated that “proclaiming the gospel” often looks more like anxious polemic than gracious love. On the other hand, that talking about our Christian convictions could be thought unimportant is itself discouraging.

In moments like these we can see why God gives us one another as brothers and sisters: we need each other.

In Canterbury we encountered some of the key questions facing the Anglican Communion today. How much, and what kind of, diversity can we faithfully manage? And, at what point do we become unrecognizable

to one another? Invoking our shared roots in The Book of Common Prayer is easy, but the plethora of translations, and editions expressing different theologies, reveals it as too easy. The very possibility of a common Christian language thus becomes a question mark.

On the last day of the conference we were asked to approach a large piece of paper and write a one-word description of the Anglican Communion. Some suggested “challenging” or “scrappy,” but most had something to do with hope. To be sure, we left Canterbury more aware of the differences between us. At the same time, we began friendships with one another—amid shared food, stories, laughter, and above all prayer—that require honesty about where we disagree; friendships therefore based not on the absence of pain but on shared virtues of faith, hope and love: seeing one another as brother and sister in Christ.

Throughout our two-week stay at Canterbury Cathedral, each morning began with the Office and a short Eucharist in the crypt. The Eucharist obligates us as Christians to recognize in one another the body of Christ, inaugurated by baptism. In the Eucharist, therefore, we know Jesus as the basis for our relationship as brothers and sisters; just as we come thereby to know and share most deeply in the passion of God’s love for the world. In this perspective, we may confidently say with St. Paul that our call is not to articulate a purportedly human unity, parlayed in “plausible words of wisdom” (1 Cor. 2:4). Rather, in learning to offer love and mercy to one another *from, through* and *to* Christ (Rom. 11:36), we *will* be formed in the visible unity that is friendship with the Triune God.

Leigh Edwards, a theology student at Duke Divinity School, is a Junior Fellow at THE LIVING CHURCH.



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Jeremiah 46
etc. shall know whose
... as they ...
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The Infinitude of God

“Let us ... lay aside every weight” (Heb. 12:1).

BCP: Jer. 23:23-29; Psalm 82; Heb. 12:1-7(8-10)11-14; Luke 12:49-56

RCL: Isaiah 5:1-7; Psalm 80:1-2, 8-18; or Jer. 23:23-29; Psalm 82; Heb. 11:29-12:2; Luke 12:49-56

The lesson from Isaiah provides a detailed image of an ordinary vineyard, established with the plain toil of digging, clearing, planting and protecting. Yet at the end the image is suddenly identified with an entire nation, and God is shown as the one who has power even to command clouds to withhold rain. A similar image is presented in the matching Psalm 80, yet in expansive, world-size descriptions that include God's enthronement upon the cherubim, mountains covered with shade, and branches that cover an entire land.

Jeremiah's prophecy begins with the reminder that God is a God “far off” as well as “near by” — that is, One not to be taken too simply or for granted. Jeremiah reminds his hearers that God “fills heaven and earth.” God's authoritative

word is to be trusted as “wheat” in contrast to the “straw” of the falsehoods of those who speak without regard for God's might. Psalm 82, coupled with this lesson, begins by placing God “in the midst of the gods” for the sake of “holding judgment,” and concludes by proclaiming that “all the nations belong to [God].” This is no merely localized and simple deity.

In the gospel lesson, Jesus likewise uses plain and common images such as clouds and wind, the “appearance of earth and sky” that are thoroughly familiar to his hearers, to remind them that mighty things are immediately at hand yet unrecognized by them. He is the One who has come to “bring fire to the earth” and longs to do so, whose supremacy shall even bring about the sundering of

the closest of family bonds when some realize that they must make a choice about Jesus — a choice that involves the highest stakes that one can imagine.

The lesson from the Letter to Hebrews sets forth in the deepest and clearest terms what the other lessons only describe: there is a long list of the faithful whose devotion to God set them completely apart from merely “this worldly” concerns. The fidelity of these persons brought them both spectacular deliverance (“the people passed through the Red Sea”) and acute persecution through suffering and rejection. These are they “of whom the world was not worthy.” These provide for today's faithful a “great cloud of witnesses” who encourage us to “run with patience the race that is set before us.”

Look It Up

Reflect on that enigmatic passage in today's Psalm (82:6), “You are gods, children of the Most High.” What could it mean, especially in the context of today's lessons?

Think About It

Have you ever had a sudden realization that something of dramatic importance to your life with God is right in front of you? —and may have been in front of you for a long time but unrecognized? If so, what kept you from recognizing it, and what caused you to recognize it at last?

Next Sunday The Thirteenth Sunday After Pentecost (Proper 16C), August 22, 2010

BCP: Jer. 23:23-29; Psalm 82; Heb. 12:1-7(8-10)11-14; Luke 12:49-56

RCL: Isaiah 5:1-7; Psalm 80:1-2, 8-18; or Jer. 23:23-29; Psalm 82; Heb. 11:29-12:2; Luke 12:49-56

THE LIVING CHURCH

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Editorial and Business offices:

816 E. Juneau Avenue, Milwaukee, WI 53202-2793

Mailing address: P.O. Box 514036, Milwaukee, WI 53203-3436

Phone: 414-276-5420

Fax: 414-276-7483

E-mail: tlo@livingchurch.org

www.livingchurch.org

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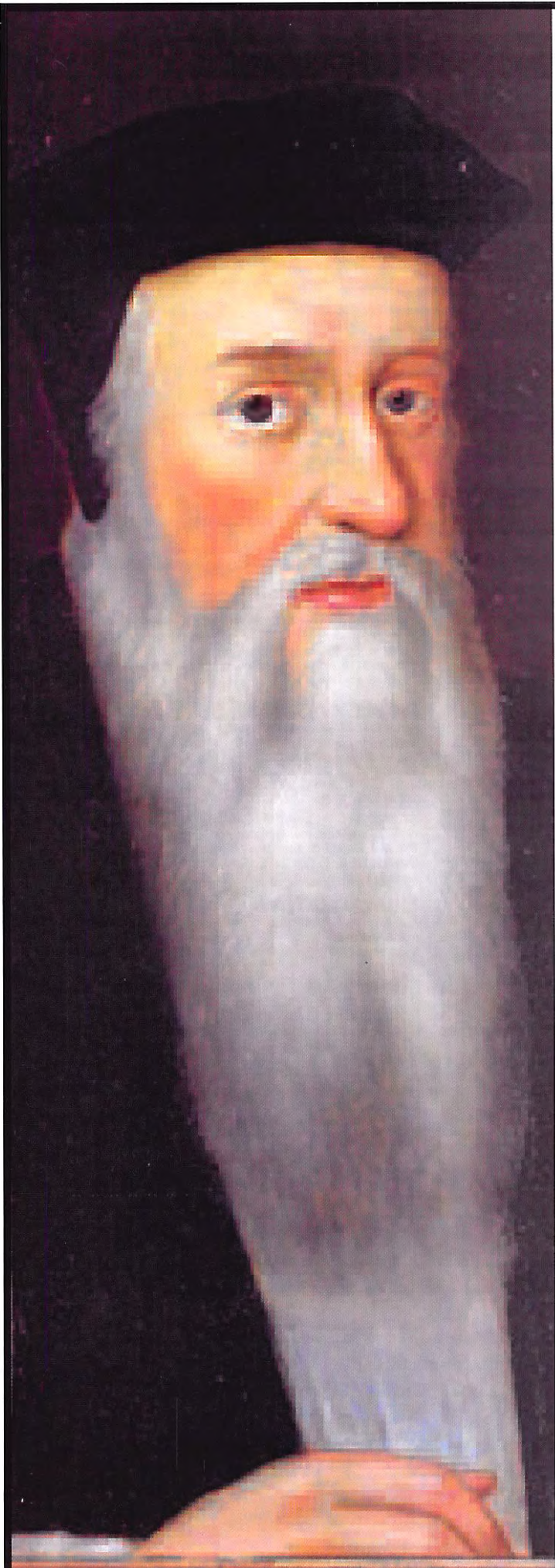
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