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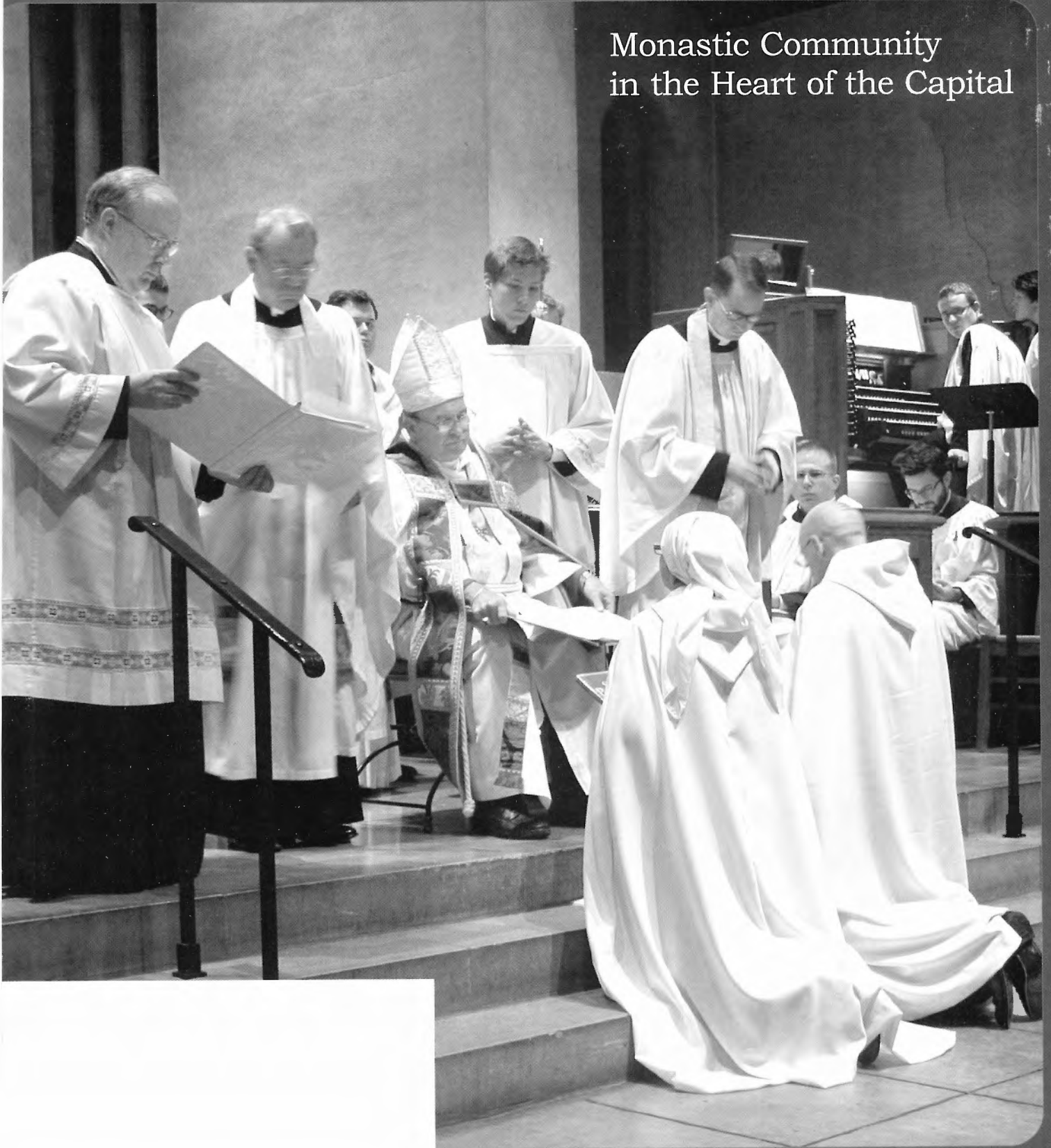
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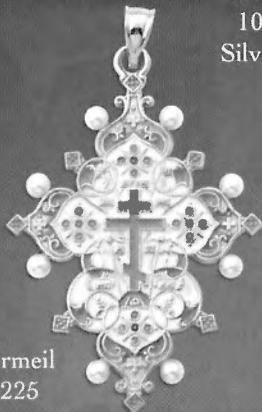
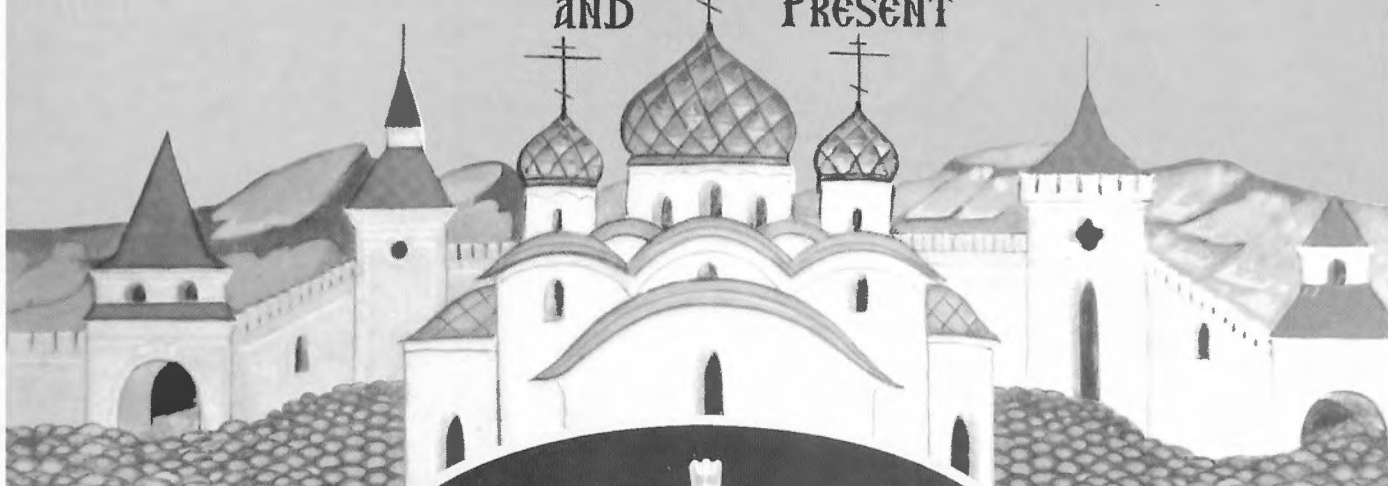
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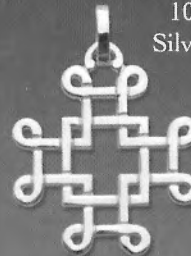


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The Living Church is published by the Living Church Foundation. Our historic mission in the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion is to support and promote the Catholic and evangelical faith of the one Church, to the end of visible Christian unity throughout the world.

Western New York Elects R. William Franklin

The Rev. Dr. R. William Franklin, senior associate at St. Mark's Church, Philadelphia, was elected the 11th Bishop of Western New York on Nov. 20, during a special continuation of the diocese's convention at St. Paul's Cathedral, Buffalo, N.Y.

Franklin, 63, was among four

American Academy in Rome. He was ordained a priest in 2005.

Much of his life has been spent in academia. He was dean and president of Berkeley Divinity School at Yale from 1998 to 2002; professor of history and mission at General Theological Seminary in New York,

cal and ministry development in the Episcopal Church, and was designated the Archbishop of Canterbury's consultant at the Lambeth Conference 1998.

Franklin and his wife, Carmela, have two adult children, Corinna and Beatrice.

The service of consecration is scheduled tentatively for April 30 at the University of Buffalo Center for the Arts. The Rt. Rev. J. Michael Garrison, Bishop of Western New York, will resign upon the bishop-elect's consecration.

The other nominees were:

- The Rev. Michael N. Ambler, rector, Grace Church, Bath, Maine.

- The Very Rev. Canon Michael A. Bamberger, rector of Church of the Ascension, Sierra Madre, Calif.

- The Very Rev. Canon Barbara J. Price, rector of St. Peter's Church, Eggertsville, N.Y.

"I have a deep love for this diocese, and I already cherish its clergy and people," Franklin said in a statement following the election. "This is a hopeful moment to be an Episcopalian, and we invite the people of Western New York to join us as partners in faith as we continue our Christian journey in this beautiful part of the world."

Franklin said his first priority as bishop would be the growth of local churches, the *Buffalo News* reported. He added that, in light of current economic conditions, he hopes to see the Episcopal Church help rebuild the region.

The Diocese of Western New York is comprised of 60 congregations and encompasses the seven westernmost counties of New York state.

Western New York														
Ballot	1		2		3		4		5		6		7	
	L	C	L	C	L	C	L	C	L	C	L	C	L	C
Needed to Elect													76	45
Ambler	37	9	22	3	withdrew									
Bamberger	52	17	59	19	67	19	65	19	51	18	29	9	6	1
Franklin	38	33	39	33	46	32	44	30	55	32	68	40	95	46
Price	37	36	42	40	48	44	53	46	53	43	59	42	49	42



Franklin

nominees and was elected on the seventh ballot.

Before moving to Philadelphia in July, he was an associate priest at St. Paul's Within the Walls, Rome, where he also served as associate director of the Anglican Centre in Rome and an academic fellow at the

1993-98; and professor of humanities at St. John's University in Collegeville, Minn., 1975-93.

Franklin earned a bachelor's degree from Northwestern University and master's and doctoral degrees from Harvard University.

He has been a leader in ecumeni-

- The Rev. Lisa S. Hunt, 51, rector, St. Stephen's Church, Houston.

- The Rev. George Young III, 55, rector, St. Peter's Church, Fernandina Beach, Fla.

The diocese will accept nominees by petition until Dec. 3. Nominees will participate in walkabouts Jan. 23-28, 2011, and the election is scheduled for Feb. 12 at St. John's Cathedral in Knoxville.

The next bishop will succeed the Rt. Rev. Charles G. vonRosenberg, Bishop of East Tennessee.

East Tennessee Names Four Nominees

The Diocese of East Tennessee has announced four nominees — ranging from age 41 to 57 — in the search for its fourth bishop.

The diocese's search committee has included the names of those who submitted nominees' names.

The nominees are:

- The Rev. Frank Crumbaugh III, 57, rector of Holy Innocents Church, Beach Haven, N.J.

- The Rev. Frederick DuMontier Devall IV, 41, rector, St. Martin's Church, Metairie, La.

Visit livingchurch.org for daily reports of news about the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion.

Communion Partners Meeting Promotes Mission

Emphasizing Communion life and unity, bishops and rectors of Communion Partners (communionpartners.org) met in Orlando Nov. 15-17 to discuss interprovincial partnering possibilities. The conference drew 90 participants from across the United States and Canada. International guests spoke of mission opportunities open to individuals, parish teams, and diocese-to-diocese partnerships.

Participants from North America said they arrived feeling challenged by a fast-changing mission context and left feeling empowered for worldwide mission endeavors with global partners in Africa and Asia. The conference tone was hopeful about the Anglican Communion's future.

"We have to think differently than a simplistic North/South divide. We must get beyond that approach," said the Rt. Rev. Josiah Idowu-Fearon, Bishop of the Diocese of Kaduna, Nigeria, and former Archbishop of Kaduna Province. "Most Anglicans are committed to evangelization of the world."

Idowu-Fearon speaks more often of an Anglican family than of a Communion. "We have much to learn from our brothers and sisters here in America. We are a baby church," he said in an address that emphasized mutuality and interdependence. "Africans are still working out Christological and ethical issues. Episcopalians have something to offer us."

He issued an invitation: "Just come and be with us. Come because you wish to be gospel friends with us."

Archbishop Peter Carnley, retired archbishop of Australia, greeted the conference on behalf of the Archbishop of Canterbury.

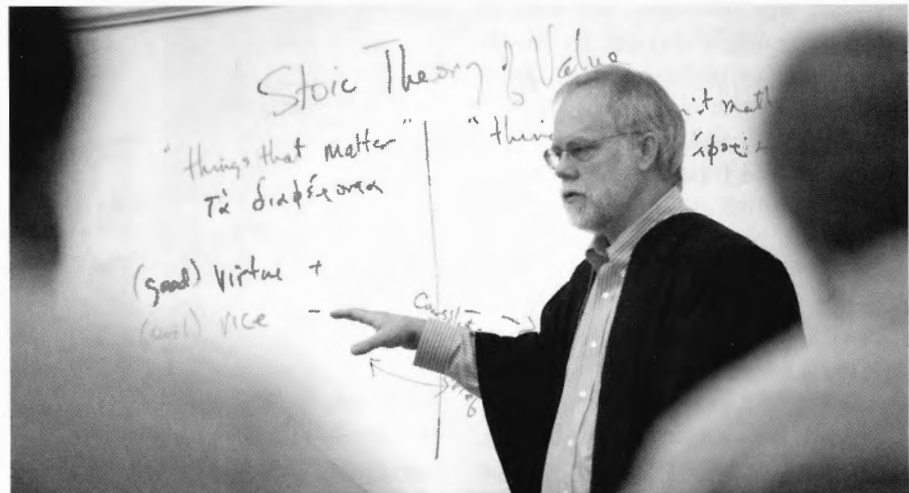
"We're not here to talk issues,"

said the Rev. Chuck Alley, rector of St. Matthew's Church, Richmond, Va., and a member of the group's Rectors Advisory Committee. "We're committed to the mission of our

Lord as members of the Episcopal Church and as full members of the wider Communion."

The focus of Communion Partners

(Continued on page 14)



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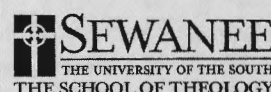
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'Oasis of Hope'

St. Paul's Launches Benedictine Monastic Community in Washington, D.C.

The U.S. capital is the ultimate power city – a magnet for politicians, lobbyists, policy wonks and lawyers: not, perhaps, the sort of place one might expect to find a community of contemplative Benedictines. But on Nov. 21, St. Paul's Parish on K Street, an urban church not far from a host of glass-fronted office buildings and upscale restaurants, clothed two Benedictine novices in habits at its 11:15 a.m. Solemn Mass. The habits were blessed with holy water and incense, and each novice received a copy of the Rule of St. Benedict.

The Rt. Rev. John Bryson Chane, Bishop of Washington, who has strongly endorsed the new community, blessed and received promises of obedience from the novices, Josephine Stelzig and Michael Alsup, at the church's 6 p.m. service of Solemn Evensong and Pontifical Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. They are now called Sr. Lydia Bernardine and Br. Peter Benedict and are members of the Benedictine Companions of St. Paul. Their simple garments are outward symbols of St. Benedict's directive: "Clothed then with faith and the performance of good works, let us set out on this way, with the Gospel for our guide, that we may deserve to see him who has called us to his kingdom."

The novices will be part of the worldwide community of Benedictines who have recited the Church's seven Liturgical Offices daily since St. Benedict of Nursia founded the first Benedictine community in the sixth century. St. Benedict formulated the Benedictine Rule – directions for the formation, governance and administration of a



Sr. Lydia is clothed as a Benedictine.



Laurita Liles photos

monastery — when he was abbot of Monte Cassino.

St. Paul's rector, the Rev. Andrew L. Sloane, spoke to TLC of the community's counter-cultural ethos in providing space for lives of rhythm and silence, "to enable us simply to stop and take a breath and breathe in God." He added, "I'm intrigued by a Benedictine community in the middle of a city."

Sr. Lydia, who has worked in the United States Foreign Service and as a language teacher, said she has been thinking about becoming a nun since childhood. Br. Peter spent 20 years in information technology as a defense contractor. He was a Baptist until age 12 when he became a Roman Catholic (and he moved from a Roman Catholic church to St. Paul's five years ago). He spent many weekends as a teenager living at a Trappist monastery in Georgia. "It's like falling in love," he said of his call to become a monk.

Among those at the service was Anglican author and retreat leader Dr. Esther de Waal, who has written extensively on the monastic tradi-

tion and has been following and encouraging St. Paul's in its efforts to establish a Benedictine community.

"It was imaginative and original on the part of the parish," she told TLC of the new endeavor. "A secular city needs an oasis of hope and a living experience of Christian commitment and discipleship. To have two people committed to the monastic tradition predates all our wretched barriers and divisions and polarization, which so threaten Church and society today." She observed that there is now a worldwide resurgence of lay monasticism, which is not a reaction against something; rather, she said, "it's a recovery of something very deep and essential."

St. Paul's began the process of forming the community in Lent 2009 when Fr. Sloane conducted a forum on the Benedictines. Several parishioners asked, "Why can't we do that here?" The parish then studied the Rule of St. Benedict and the Rule of the Communities of Jerusalem and of Roman Catholic monasteries in

Paris, Montreal and worldwide. A discernment group was formed within the congregation to explore the possibility of forming at St. Paul's a community of those who would live a monastic, contemplative, celibate life similar to the com-



Fr. Sloane (center) with Sr. Lydia and Br. Peter.

munity of St. Gervais in Paris.

A small townhouse behind the church is home for now, but St. Paul's hopes to see the community expand and grow out of the building. While Sr. Lydia and Br. Peter are the first members, several others are considering a call, said St. Paul's vicar, the Rev. Nathan J.A. Humphrey.

In forming the community, St. Paul's said it wanted "to provide an oasis, in the heart of the city; a place of silent prayer and living liturgy." The parish discernment group recognized that all Christians are called to conversion from lives focused on self to lives focused on Jesus and the message of the gospels. While most Christians are called to follow Jesus within the framework of marriage and family, the St. Paul's discernment group concluded that some men and women are called to a radical mode of single life, obedience and stability.

In his homily on Nov. 21, Fr. Sloane said this radical commitment to God alone is rooted in the nature of Jesus' life: "It is so radical that it is in death that we find life."

St. Paul's parish life already reflects something of a monastic

rhythm: daily *Angelus* and morning prayer, evening prayer, Compline chanted on Monday nights, sung Mass on Sundays, confession on Wednesdays, devotions at the Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham, and various parish communal activities.

With the bishop's blessing of its charter, the Benedictine Companions of St. Paul is a monastic community that will remain within the parish but in a contemplative manner.

Its charter shows how the community will be woven into both parish and city. "We live in solidarity with the people of

D.C.; We live in communion with our parish and diocese; Our whole life consists in the totality of our undivided love for God," it states. The community will engage in public prayer, in step with the parish's Anglo-Catholic heritage; silent contemplation; private prayer and reading of the Scriptures; work – the labor of our hands, as our Lord who was a carpenter; hospitality; seeking God alone; and love, "opening our whole being to the love of God with which God first loved us."

All monks are by definition solitary; the term derives from the Greek *monachos*, which comes from *monos* (the corresponding Latin is *solus*). The monastic vocation demands a life in which the major part is given to prayer, both private and public.

As the novices humbly bent their heads this Sunday to receive the garments signifying their new life, Jesus' words: "If you wish to be perfect, go, sell your possessions... follow me" (Mt. 19:21) rang out in a city temporarily stilled from the weekday furor of racing cars, squawking horns, and busied crowds.

Peggy Eastman

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A depiction of Brian Cansfield (1581-1643), a Jesuit priest, at prayer, being seized by English Protestant authorities in Yorkshire.

What Gentle Anglicanism?

By Mark F.M. Clavier

Two organisations in England, Inclusive Church and Modern Church (formerly the Modern Church-people's Union), recently have begun a concerted campaign to convince delegates to General Synod to reject the proposed Anglican Covenant. This, in and of itself, ought not surprise anyone; that representatives of the liberal wing of Anglicanism are opposed to a document that restates the doctrinal position of the Anglican Communion and introduces (in however limited a degree) some measure of interprovincial discipline is no more shocking than evangelicals supporting a campaign for biblical literacy or Anglo-Catholics a wholesome devotion to Our Lady. They are, as it were, playing to script. I mention this not because I believe it necessarily diminishes the strength of their arguments, but simply to point to one reason why they perhaps read Anglican history as they do.

In some ways, one can look at the history of the Church of England — certainly since the emergence of the evangelical movement in the late 18th century — as an almost unremitting debate between those who wish to make some absolute claim about the

nature of Anglicanism. One might call this the “Anglicanism is not” or the “Anglicans have never” debate, which recurs in various forms and in ways that often indicate which party is in the ascendancy and which is in eclipse. The 19th century resounded with the voices of those who shouted “Anglicanism is not Catholic” and “Anglicans have never allowed candlesticks on the Holy Table” at those who replied equally loudly that “Anglicanism is not Protestant” and “Anglicans have never allowed Dissenters to preach in their pulpits.” One may read with some amusement various histories of Anglicanism written by proponents of each side of that debate that anticipate our age of spin by providing their own spin on the development of the Church of England.

One can see the same dynamic at work in the advertisement “Who runs the Church?” composed by members of Inclusive Church and Modern Church. The implicit (and occasionally explicit) vision of the authors is of a church in which “Anglicans have traditionally valued the role of reason and thus expect to learn from other people.” It is a vision of a non-dogmatic church that is forward-looking, devoted to debating matters at a local level, and eager to learn from others. Their cry, if you will, is that “Anglicanism is not dogmatic” and that “Anglicans have never accepted the primacy of Scripture in a Puritanical manner.”

This delightfully gentle vision of Anglicanism suffers from only one flaw: it has very little basis in reality. While liberal Anglicanism has long sought a utopian church that is non-dogmatic about everything but the dogmas of tolerance, non-dogmatism, and social justice, this has never been a position that has laid claim to more than a minority among Anglicans. To the contrary, even the most cursory reading of Anglican history will show that we have a long and notable history of being dogmatic, intolerant, occasionally authoritarian, and gleefully happy to impose a particular interpretation of Scripture on others. I suspect that the Roman Catholics burned at the stake, the Puritans whose ears were lopped off, the Non-Conformists who were fined for not attending their parish church, the evangelicals who were attacked for their “enthusiasm,” the Ritualists who were put on trial or (worse) tarred-and-feathered, or the so-called conservatives and liberals of today who feel threatened by their church would question just how tolerant and non-

dogmatic Anglicanism actually is. In reality, Anglicanism is a bit like those late medieval knights who imagined themselves to be noble and chivalric even as they raided and pillaged defenseless towns and villages. At times we're a little too willing to believe our own smug press.

Inclusive Church and Modern Church could reply that while we Anglicans have been dogmatic and not nearly as tolerant as we like to believe, we have moved dramatically in a new direction during the past 30 years and the proposed Anglican Covenant threatens this progress. Certainly, their argument would be strengthened not by making fanciful claims about a romanticized Anglicanism but by convincing others that the Anglican Covenant would return us to a less tolerant and more dogmatic past. They could even call attention to the darker side of Anglicanism and suggest that the Anglican Covenant is like offering a crate of fine whisky to a recovering alcoholic.

To a degree they do this, but again by universalising their claim — that Anglicanism has never been backward-looking but forward-looking — in a way that is frankly comical. A church that still glories in its medieval architecture and vesture, its 1662 Evensong, whose existence relies at least partly on Tudor privileges, and whose canons until 1969 prevented clergy from going abroad in a doublet is perhaps not the obvious advertisement for forward-thinking churchmanship.

One is left then with a vision of what Inclusive Church and Modern Church wish Anglicanism to be like. In other words, "Who runs the Church?" is really a restatement of the old liberal Anglican manifesto, worded so as to advertise the threat the proposed Anglican Covenant poses to the principles of that vision. Dig down underneath all the romantic language about the nature of Anglicanism and one finds a claim that the Covenant's doctrinal statements and disciplinary measures endanger their vision of Anglicanism. This is why Bishop Gregory Cameron's charge that the statement sounds like it was written by "Little Englanders" has struck such a nerve; the manifesto is fundamentally a cry of fear.

Now, one shouldn't fault Inclusive Church and Modern Church for expressing that fear. It is no worse than similar entreaties by evangelicals during the ascendancy of Tractarianism, or by traditionalists during the heady days of the liturgical movement, or by conservative Anglo-Catholics following the adoption of the measure providing for women's ordination. Like these other parties, liberal Anglicans recognize that the pro-

posed development may check the promotion of their vision of Anglicanism. If this is indeed the case, then one can easily understand and even sympathize with their rhetoric, however unrealistic some of their claims may be. Anglicanism seems to have a habit of trying to kill off its former manifestations as it frolics with seeming aimlessness through the theological trends and fashions of each age. To put this more positively, perhaps Anglicanism periodically checks those who have appeared most dominant and most likely to stamp their own likeness on the face of Anglicanism.

Fortunately for liberal Anglicanism, human beings (including Anglicans) have an almost infinite ability to adapt. No doubt, should the Covenant be adopted and should it turn out to be the shibboleth Inclusive Church and Modern Church fear, liberals will adapt to the new environment just as much as evangelicals and Anglo-Catholics have in the past. As with both of those parties, this imagined period of adjustment may see some depart for other churches perceived to be more tolerant of their own theology. But I suspect that the majority will learn to work within the new Anglican world and help us all continue our now venerable history of squabbling about the nature of Anglicanism. For in the end that squabble — often expressed with shocking intolerance and with little charity — is one constant on which Anglicans can seemingly rely.

The Rev. Mark F.M. Clavier is a priest in the Church of England, a visiting lecturer in Anglicanism at Cranmer Hall, Durham, and a Ph.D. student at Durham University.

The Anglican Covenant Is the Only Way Forward

By Graham Kings

"Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold" is a celebrated line in W.B. Yeats's poem "The Second Coming" (1920). How that relates to the Church of England and the tensions in the wider Anglican Communion, 90 years later, we shall witness this week. On Nov. 24, General Synod will be debating The Anglican Communion Covenant.

This covenant of unity seeks to hold the Communion together organically in the face of increasing frag-

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mentation. The choice in this debate is to opt into intensifying our worldwide relationships in affection and commitment or to allow splits to develop further and irrevocably. Do we consider each other and belong together or do we do our own thing and hang apart?

The Covenant has been portrayed, and betrayed, by its detractors as a dangerous, monolithic innovation of regulatory control, which will stifle freedom and diversity. But forced assimilation is not on the table, and it is false witness to dress it up as such. Gregory Cameron (secretary to the group who produced the Covenant) and Andrew Goddard (Anglican ethicist) have demonstrated that the distractors have seriously misconstrued the text and its intention.

The model of the Covenant is drawn from family ties and kinship and bounded by mutually agreed norms of behavior which benefit everyone. It is not a document of doctrinal specifications, like the conservative Jerusalem Declaration, drawn up mostly by those who boycotted the Lambeth Conference. Nor is it a contract, as feared by its liberal critics. It is truly a covenant.

In his address to the Lambeth Conference 2008, the Chief Rabbi, Jonathan Sacks, was pithily penetrative and perceptive in drawing out contrasts:

A contract is a *transaction*. A covenant is a *relationship*. Or to put it slightly differently: a contract is about interests. A covenant is about identity. It is about you and me coming together to form an “us.” That is why contracts *benefit*, but covenants *transform*.

The four sections of the Covenant cover the themes of belief, mission, Church and relational consequences. They provide for a delicate balance of communion with autonomy and accountability. It seems to me that the “unbounded” is soon the “empty” and we do not want the life of the body to drip out, dissipate and disappear.

Perhaps a step back to the late 1960s and early 1970s will provide some perspective on this debate. Some liberal and catholic Anglicans in the Church of England were questioning the need for clergy to assent to the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion and some evangelical Anglicans wished to retain this subscription. The resulting new text in 1975, the Declaration of



Assent, provided an elegant middle way forward.

The Covenant mentions this in its first section, and one way of viewing the Covenant is as the internationalising of this key text of breadth, unity and concord. It is made by deacons, priests and bishops when they are ordained and on each occasion when they take up a new appointment.

An extended preface precedes the brief declaration, which then states:

I, A B, do so affirm, and accordingly declare my belief in the faith which is revealed in the Holy Scriptures and set forth in the catholic creeds and to which the historic formularies of the Church of England bear witness; and in public prayer and administration of the sacraments, I will only use the form of service which are authorized or allowed by Canon.

The “historic formularies” refer to the Thirty-nine Articles, the Book of Common Prayer and the Ordinal. Colin Podmore, a scholarly central administrative secretary of the Church of England, in chapter four of his book *Aspects of Anglican Identity* (2005), sets out in detail the emergence of the text of the Declaration of Assent and its Preface. Although Ian Ramsey, the Bishop of Durham, chaired the Doctrine Commission and John Austin Baker came up with the shape and first draft of the long preface and short declaration, Podmore notes: “The dignified, poetic and theologically sensitive final text of the Preface was not the work of academic theologians, however, but of two back bench Synod members — combining a parish priest’s theological vision with a solicitor’s skill at drafting.”

Lay people and priests, as well as bishops, are crucial in crises and in the vote on the Covenant. The progress of the Covenant does indeed move at a glacial pace, but the debate this week forms a focal point in the stretching of our Anglican imagination. The Communion does not need conservative or liberal incitements to isolation but encouragement to interdependence. Where there is a will, there is a middle way.

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The Rt. Rev. Graham Kings is Bishop of Sherborne.

A Lector's Guide & Commentary to the Revised Common Lectionary: Year A

By **J. Ted Blakley**. St. Mark's. Pp. 450. \$20. ISBN 978-0-9618-1129-7.

All Scriptures were written for our learning, the apostle Paul admonished. This admonishment inspired Thomas Cranmer to compose one of the most beautiful collects in the Prayer Book on the subject of Scripture. Recently we prayed this collect in our worship and were reminded that the right reception of the Scriptures is “to hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them.”

A Lector's Guide and Commentary is intended to let the Bible speak more clearly and deeply in the fellowship of the worshipping congregation. J. Ted Blakley's passionate concern is that the public reading of Scripture be revered as “a central and vital ministry of the Church.” It is his firm conviction that the lector or lay reader who has a fundamental understanding of a scriptural text will be able to communicate that understanding in the reading of the text.

Toward this end, the *Guide* provides a commentary for each lectionary reading in Year A (with the exception of feast days). The commentary aims to place the reading within its literary, historical and cultural contexts, and to highlight distinctive motifs or themes, as well as to cite related biblical narratives. For each lesson, the commentary is substantial, informative, and the result of careful scholarship.

The readings are also accompanied by suggestions for lectors. This unit of the *Guide* offers advice and practical instruction on reading the text with special attention to its more striking rhetorical features. For example, the lector is directed in the second lesson for Advent 1 from Romans 13:11-14 to read the initial verses “in an animated fashion with a slightly increased tempo and an elevated voice” to capture the excitement of Paul for his listeners to wake up from sleep in anticipation of the dawning day of salvation. The gospel reading for the same Sunday from Matthew 24:36-44 should be read “with a hint of mystery and intrigue” in keeping with the message of vigilance Jesus sets forth.

Reading is an event of interpretation, as

Blakely emphasizes. Still, many average lay readers may find the suggestions for lectors rather daunting. For instance, the instruction for readers to concentrate on the structure of Hebrew poetry and to replicate that structure in delivery can be less inspiring than intimidating, and leave the most well-intentioned reader feeling

inadequate to the task. In addition, not many lay readers are able to give the preparation the *Guide* would encourage, such as rehearsing before others ahead of time during the week or occasionally taping one's performance.

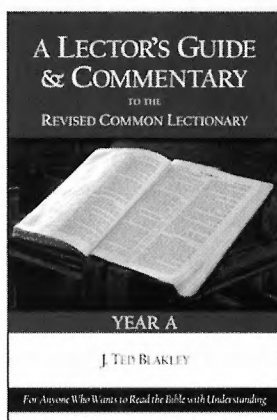
What many lay readers are likely to find particularly useful is a pronunciation guide included for each lectionary reading, as well as a comprehensive pronunciation glossary at the end of the

book. There is also a user-friendly scriptural index of all the readings in the year.

This is a rich, valuable resource for the worshipping community. The independent reader may not benefit from it as much as those who are able to gather together for mutual guidance in a regular lector's forum or in Bible study, under a gifted teacher. Used in the broadest and most nourishing way, this is a resource that offers a parish or a congregation a bold, adventurous journey of biblical discovery and the promise of new avenues for discipleship.

For over 35 years St. Mark's Press, a unique and remarkable parish-based ministry of Good Shepherd Episcopal Church in Wichita, Kansas, has published lectionaries and varied liturgical materials. This devoted labor, now under the executive directorship of Dr. Blakley, a gifted biblical scholar, deserves to be commended for advancing biblical literacy and supporting all in the household of faith — that, in Cranmer's prayer, “by patience and comfort of thy holy Word, we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which thou hast given us in our Savior Jesus Christ.”

(The Rev. Dr.) Charles R. Henery
Delafield, Wisconsin



Are You the One Who Is to Come?

RCL: Isa. 35:1-10; Psalm 146 or 146:4-9; James 5:7-10; Matt. 11: 2-11

In his imprisonment, John the Baptist asks, "Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?" Thus he joins his doubting and troubled heart to all those who have and will ever say, "How long, O Lord?" Triumphant and determined he stood upon the bank of the Jordan crying and admonishing. Now he languishes in doubt and darkness. The answer Jesus gives is cryptic, a testimony of healings which, nonetheless, leave John in captivity.

"Tell John," Jesus says, "what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, the poor have good news preached to them." Can we imagine John's pain in recalling that Jesus has, in this reply, omitted something he said on the occasion of his first homily in Nazareth? Jesus declared "release to the captives" on that occasion, but on this, he beckons John to consider only the astounding healing of others.

The Advent (arrival) of Christ into

our lives is mysterious. "In the world," Jesus says, "you have tribulation. But be of good cheer. I have overcome it." John's tribulation and his tragic end bear a special witness to faith in duress. In the face of this bitter sorrow, St. James calls us to patience. "The farmer waits for the precious crop from the earth." "As an example of suffering and patience, beloved, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord." We all, in some measure, are waiting for Christ, for his healing and his liberating power. We wait, and we wait, and we cry. And while we do not always receive the comfort we want, we patiently insist that the Incarnate One is invested in our bodies and soul, showing his strength even in our infirmity.

Christ is hidden and yet true to his promise to be with us until the close of the age. I insist that Christ comes mysteriously, but I do not say this as a veiled evasion, as if, in truth, he does not come at all. Yes, God comes at times in perfect clarity. Thus, accord-

ing to St. Bernard of Clairvaux, Advent is something clear and something hidden. For clarity, he looks to Christ's arrival in the flesh: "seen in the earth, he conversed with human beings."

At the close of history, he comes again, and "all flesh shall see the salvation of our God." But *in hoc medio* (in this middle), where we are each living our lives, tending to obligations, caring for children, worried about war, beset with anxieties, and, fortunately, blessed with moments of goodness and lightness and joy, Jesus Christ comes. But, says Bernard, "occultus est" (he is hidden). Still, Bernard says, the "elect see him (Christ) in themselves" (Sermon 5 in *Adventu Domini*, 1-3).

This is our Advent promise: he abides in us and we in him. And just as we may point to moments of liberation and healing, astounding, immediate, and miraculous, we will find over the course of a mature Christian life that God's action and arrival is often hidden, and it is not impeded by our weakness or sorrow.

Look It Up

Read James 5:7. Recall that the word patience is related to *patior*, to suffer. Is it not a suffering to wait for God?

Think About It

Some of the deepest questions, not to mention books and treatises, have come from the experience of imprisonment. Sorrow and doubt are not a waste.

Next Sunday The Fourth Sunday of Advent (Year A), Dec. 19, 2010

RCL: Isa. 7:10-17; Psalm 24 or 24:1-7; Rom. 1:1-7; Matt. 1:18-25

THE LIVING CHURCH

Volume 241 Number 24

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An early-morning fire destroyed nearly all of St. Matthew's Church in Houma, La., sparing only the steps, a wall and part of the steeple. The cause of the fire is under investigation. The Diocese of Louisiana has sent vestments, prayer books and hymnals to the parish. The church was built of cypress wood in 1896 and was on the National Register of Historic Places. The parish plans to rebuild.

Episcopal News Service photo

Bishop Cederholm to Retire in 2011

The Rt. Rev. Roy F. "Bud" Cederholm, Jr., Bishop Suffragan of Massachusetts since 2001, has announced that he will retire in a year, after celebrating 40 years of ordained ministry.

"Two years ago my wife, Ruth Ann, and I prayerfully decided that I would retire after my 67th birthday," the bishop wrote to members of the diocese. "And so the time has come for me to write and announce my retirement effective a year from now in early November 2011.

"While there are several reasons why I think this timing is right, the main reason is so that Ruth Ann and I can enjoy quality time together in retirement."

Bishop Cederholm wrote that he

has accepted an invitation from the Bishop of Massachusetts, the Rt. Rev. M. Thomas Shaw, SSJE, to provide part-time assistance on clergy deployment and congregations in transition. That work will begin in February 2012.

"Even as we are sad at the prospect of no longer having our brother Bud as a full-time colleague starting next November, we feel joy for him because we know he has made a good decision for himself, his family and his continuing ministry," said a statement from Shaw and Cederholm's sister suffragan, the Rt. Rev. Gayle E. Harris. "As Bud has said to others on similar occasions: You never retire from ministry, you just report more directly to God."

Communion Partners Meeting Promotes Mission

(Continued from page 5)

gatherings is missional rather than organizational. Communion Partners has a board but has stayed away from structures that might deter its missional and relational purposes.

"Globalization and the Asian financial crash has opened many doors for unprecedented ministry partnerships in southeast Asia," said

the Very Rev. Canon Kuan Kim Seng, of Singapore.

The dean of the Anglican Church in Thailand, the Very Rev. Yee Ching Wah, described how doors are wide open for English-speaking Anglicans who wish to evangelize through working in schools and prisons.

(The Rev.) Geoff Gwynne,
in Orlando

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FALL 2010

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