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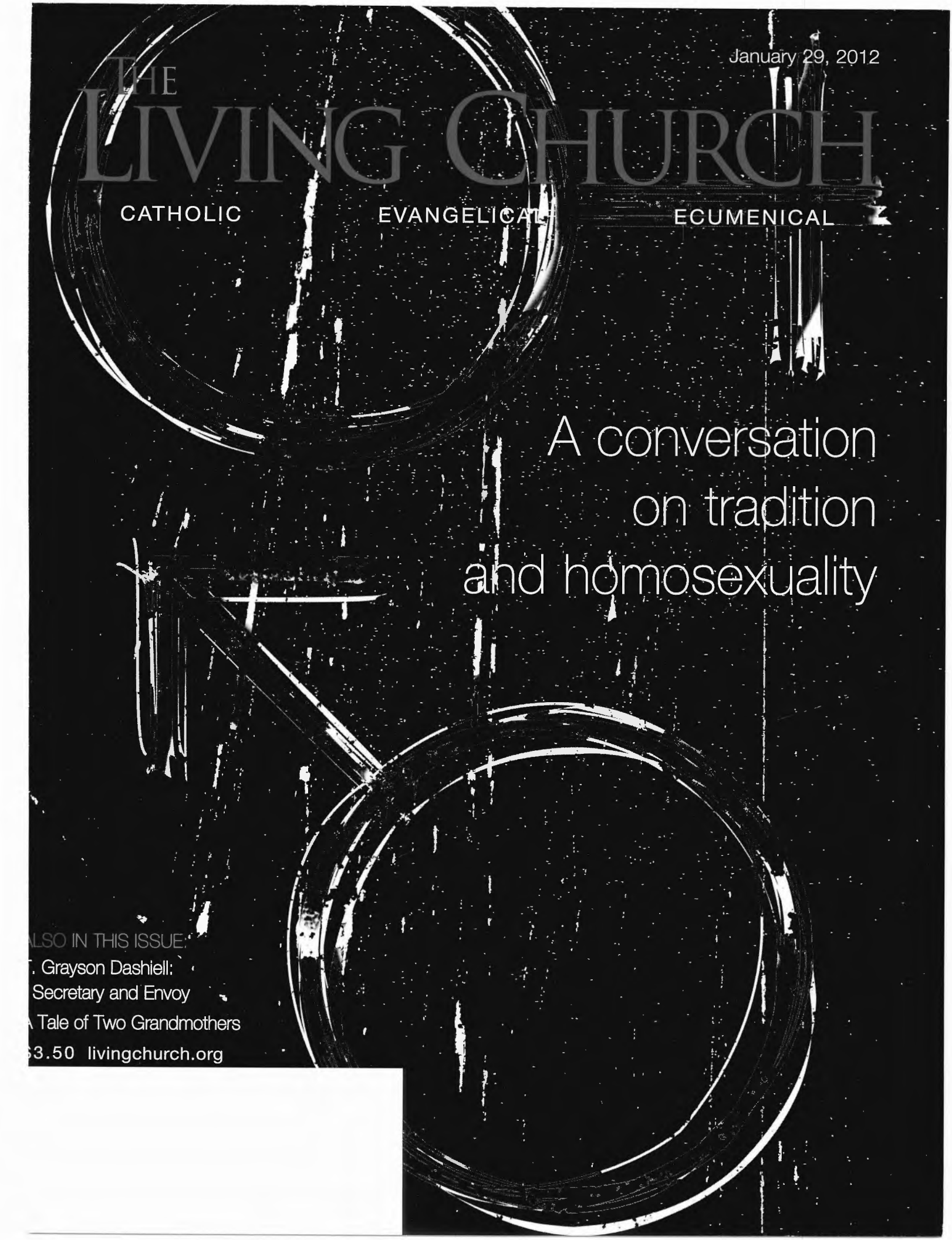

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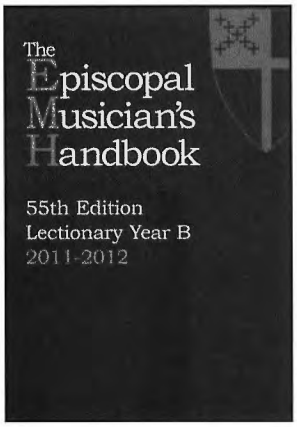

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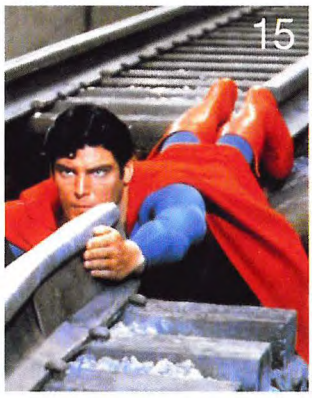
Disagreeing Agreeably

Charitable conversation is a popular but neglected ideal when Christians discuss points of doctrine that divide us. Nearly everyone knows the temptation of stacking the rhetorical deck, flinging ad-hominem arguments, and — instead of listening attentively — waiting to land another punch on the jaw. With this issue we introduce a new department, *Sic et Non*, in which charitable conversation is the norm. And we subject that goal to the acid test: the Episcopal Church's decades-long debate about sexual morality.

ON THE COVER: [See page 19]



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This issue is sponsored by St. George's Episcopal Church, Nashville, Tennessee [page 29].

THE LIVING CHURCH

THIS ISSUE | January 29, 2012

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.

Father Steenson: 'Leave All that Anger Behind'

If the Ordinariate in the United States is a Vatican effort to poach disgruntled Anglicans, Sunday-golfing ex-Anglicans or never-were Anglicans, its newly appointed leader has not received that memo.

In fact, says the Rev. Jeffrey N. Steenson, *Anglican* does not appear in the new body's formal name, the Personal Ordinariate of the Chair of St. Peter, because members will make no pretense of remaining Anglicans. And anyone who wants to enter the Ordinariate because of anger toward Anglicanism rather than a desire for deeper communion with the Roman Catholic Church probably ought to wait.

Steenson, who was bishop of the Episcopal Church's Diocese of the Rio Grande from 2004 to 2007, will be invested as the first Ordinary of the Ordinariate during a Mass at the Co-Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, Houston, Feb. 12.

"It is spiritually so critical that they leave all that anger behind. We want people who are happy with their spiritual lives and are not fighting old battles," Father Steenson told THE LIVING CHURCH.

"I don't think angry people make it into the kingdom of Heaven. I think they have to work it off in Purgatory," he said. "Their souls are in turmoil. They've got to pray their way to a place of peace. Decisions usually turn out to be bad when they are made in anger."

Steenson speaks from experience, as a man who spent years wrestling with ecclesiology before resigning his office in the Episcopal Church's House of Bishops and submitting to a year of basic training to become a Roman Catholic priest.

"It is spiritually arduous to make the walk. But you wake up one morning and you realize, *I'm not angry anymore*," he said. "I've lost weight because I'm not under stress anymore."

The Ordinariate will honor the Anglican patrimony of its founding members, through its use of beloved hymns and the Book of Divine Worship, which combines Rite I of the Book of Common Prayer (1979) with the Roman canon.

On the first Sunday that Steenson celebrated Mass from the new translation, it made him remember the cadences of the Book of Common Prayer (1928).

"I feel like I'm learning to be a polyglot," Steenson said. "I was very excited about the new translation of the Missal. Theologically, it's extraordinarily rich."

After his investiture, he will be known as Monsignor Steenson. Although he will not ordain new priests, he will have seat, voice and vote in the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

"I didn't expect that at all," he said about having a vote in the USCCB. "This came as a total surprise to me."

Steenson expressed a similar wonderment about being asked to lead the Ordinariate. He planned to continue teaching patristics for a few more years at Houston's University of St. Thomas and then possibly to return to the Archdiocese of Santa Fe, whose archbishop, Michael J. Sheehan, helped Steenson work through his questions about joining the Roman Catholic Church.

"No one in their right mind would accept this," he said of his new duties,

Cape Town: Covenant Is Essential

Citing responses to an essay he wrote last year for THE LIVING CHURCH, the Archbishop of Cape Town has reiterated his support for the proposed Anglican Covenant.

The Anglican Church of Southern Africa's provincial synod approved the Covenant in October 2010, but it must ratify the decision when it meets again next year.

The Most Rev. Thabo Makgoba renewed his support in an open response to an Advent letter by the Archbishop of Canterbury.

"It seems to me that the Covenant is entirely necessary, in recalling us to ourselves. Only in this way can we continue to grow in bearing this rich fruit that comes from living the life which is both God's gift and God's calling," the archbishop wrote.

"Conscious of this, I offer these reflections on the Covenant, and its potential — if we are prepared to work wholeheartedly within its framework, trusting God and one another — to help us grow more fully into our calling as faithful Anglicans, faithful Christians, faithful members of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church," he added.

"This is the proper context for our discerning of truth, our pursuit of unity, and our understanding of (and, indeed, our disagreeing over) how they relate. It concerns me greatly, therefore, that, from what I read on line and elsewhere, and from the responses I received to the article I wrote for THE LIVING CHURCH last year, too much of the debate around the Covenant seems to have lost sight of this as our true context. There appears to be a too narrowly blinkered focus on questions not primarily directed towards growing as faithful and obedient members together of the body of Christ, of which he is the one true head, with all that this entails."

Archbishop Makgoba's "Eyeball-to-Eyeball Communion" [June 17] is available online at http://goo.gl/YHzgx.

in which he will continue working full-time for the university but will serve the Ordinariate in his free hours, without salary. "It is the challenge of creating a diocese from scratch, overnight. … When the Holy See asks for something, the answer is 'Yes, sir.'"


Fr. Steenson

He speaks fondly of the Episcopal Church's 26th presiding bishop, with whom he shares a love for general aviation.

"One of the people I'm still very grateful for is Katharine Jefferts Schori. She was absolutely wonderful in helping me through that," he said of his departure from the House of Bishops. "I could not have asked for better pastoral care from my presiding bishop."

The theological differences between them are evident, Steenson said, but "as a human being, as a pastor and as a pilot: *sympatico*."

If his new nationwide vocation places him in further contact with Bishop Jefferts Schori, "I would welcome that," Steenson said. "I would want to be careful not to stick my nose where it was not welcome, but if a hand is ever extended I would certainly respond to it."

Steenson welcomed the response to his appointment by the Rt. Rev. C. Andrew Doyle, Bishop of Texas, whose office is merely ten miles away from the University of St. Thomas.

"I have no anxiety and I hope that the Ordinariate will be a place where some who feel spiritually homeless may find a dwelling place; and a place where others may come to a better understanding of their own Anglican heritage," Bishop Doyle wrote Jan. 3. "I have chosen to follow God in Christ Jesus through the particular and unique church community of the Episcopal Church. I am unabashedly Episcopalian and I love my church.

"We in the Episcopal Diocese of Texas are a people in mission and we are focused on the proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit, such that men and women will be drawn into relationship with him as Savior and follow him as Lord in the specific fellowship of the Episcopal Church; which is part of Christ's universal and catholic church," Doyle added.

"Bishop Doyle's letter was really well-written and I was comfortable with it," Steenson said.

Steenson is thankful for the friendships from his years in the House of Bishops, and many of them continue. "Those relationships will become really important to me now. We know that there's a certain

(Continued on next page)

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(**STEENSON** from previous page)

awkwardness here," he said.

Just as during his years as a bishop in New Mexico, Steenson will rely on bishops for pastoral warnings about troubled priests or congregations heading his way, and he will offer the same guidance to them.

"One of the things I learned early on in my years as a bishop is that you never play the game of Old Maid with other bishops."

Steenson said his students at the university have teased him since his appointment became public knowledge.

"They're merciless about it," Steenson said with a laugh. "They think I should start a pub here called the Broken Crozier," because during Steenson's years in New Mexico his crozier once broke apart.

He used clear duct tape to repair it, he said. "That was a symbol for *something*."

Douglas LeBlanc

Archbishop Orombi Retires Early

Archbishop Henry Luke Orombi of Uganda has announced he will retire in mid-2012, six months before the end of his 10-year term.

An iconic member of the Global South movement and an outspoken critic of trends among many Anglican churches of the West, Orombi, 62, says he wants to use his retirement "to preach the Gospel singleheartedly. This has been my single passion and I want to fulfill the call while I can still do it."

Under his leadership the Church of Uganda has chosen to withdraw from various instruments linking Anglicans internationally. He did not attend the 2008 Lambeth Conference of Bishops and resigned his membership in the Standing Committee of the Anglican Communion, making no secret of his frustration at the failure of these bodies to take a firm stand in the sexuality debate.

In recent months he has been a key player in strengthening links between Africa and some of Anglicanism's Asian provinces, including building up relations with Christian leaders in China. During the last decade Chinese politicians have been conducting a charm offensive directed at African nations, and church leaders on the continent see links with Chinese Christians as an important priority.

Orombi has his critics outside Uganda. As a point of principle he refused funding for humanitarian work from sources in the Episcopal Church. He became a leading player in the GAFCON movement and consecrated the Rev. John Guernsey to exercise oversight of disaffected congregations in the United States, under the flag of the Church of Uganda. In 2009 those parishes joined the Anglican Church of North America.

In the same year he responded to Pope Benedict XVI's creation of a Personal Ordinariate by insisting that GAFCON structures were sufficient to meet the pastoral and spiritual needs of traditionalist Anglicans in Africa.

Under his leadership the Church of Uganda opposed a proposed anti-homosexuality bill. He said his church was "committed at all levels to offer counseling, healing and prayer" and should be "a safe place for individuals who are confused about the sexuality of struggling with sexual brokenness."

Internally his leadership paved the way for reconciliation within conflicted dioceses and strengthened provincial infrastructures, including the long-awaited development of provincial offices in the nation's capital, a serious attempt to address young people leaving the church, a campaign to eliminate child sacrifice, and support for a Decade of Mission.

Orombi was born on Oct. 11, 1949. His father was in polygamous union with two wives. He has made no secret of this and spoken openly

about how such unions cause strife and heartache. He studied for ordination at the Bishop Tucker Theological College at Mukono and pursued further studies at St. John's College Nottingham. Returning to Uganda, he served for seven years as a youth officer in the West Nile region.

John Martin

Bishop Pope Ends Pilgrimage at 82

The Rt. Rev. Clarence C. Pope, second Bishop of Fort Worth, died late Jan. 8 at Our Lady of the Lake Regional Medical Center in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. He was 82.

His death prompted sympathetic notes from the Rt. Rev. Jack L. Iker, Pope's successor in Fort Worth, and the Diocese of Louisiana.

"We are deeply saddened by the death of Bishop Clarence Pope, who faithfully shepherded this diocese during a turbulent decade in the life of the Anglican Communion," Bishop Iker said in announcing Pope's death. "He will be remembered first as a loving pastor who cared deeply for his clergy and their families, and second as a defender of the historic faith and order of the catholic church. We give thanks to God for his courage and perseverance in engaging the conflicts that engulfed his episcopate. On a personal note, I feel the loss of a valued mentor and beloved friend."

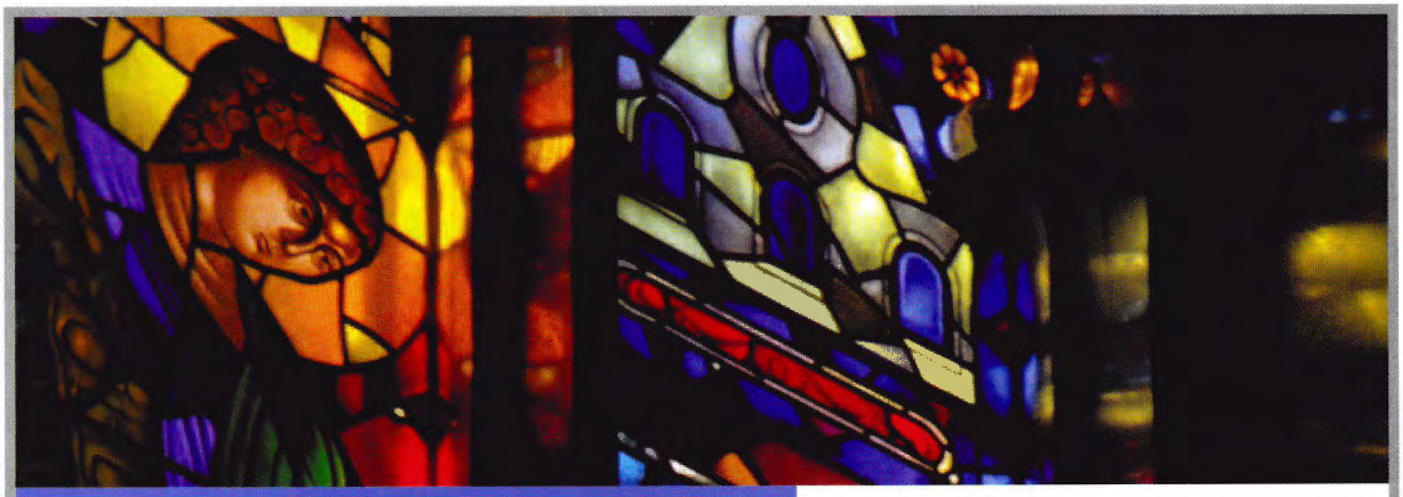
The Rev. Canon E. Mark Stevenson, the Diocese of Louisiana's canon to the ordinary, wrote that the bishop's office learned of Pope's death just before midnight on Jan. 8.

Pope completed his undergraduate education at a Methodist school, Centenary College of Louisiana. He and

(Continued on page 30)

Gail Perna/Diocese of Alabama photo

The Rt. Rev. John McKee Sloan became the 11th Bishop of Alabama on Jan. 7 at the Cathedral Church of the Advent in Birmingham. Sloan has been bishop suffragan since 2008. The Rev. Michael Rich reported that in his consecration sermon the Rt. Rev. Duncan Gray III, Bishop of Mississippi, called Sloan a missionary to Alabama who "went native." He encouraged Sloan to keep telling the story of Christ and his people — "who we are, where we come from, and what we are called to become."



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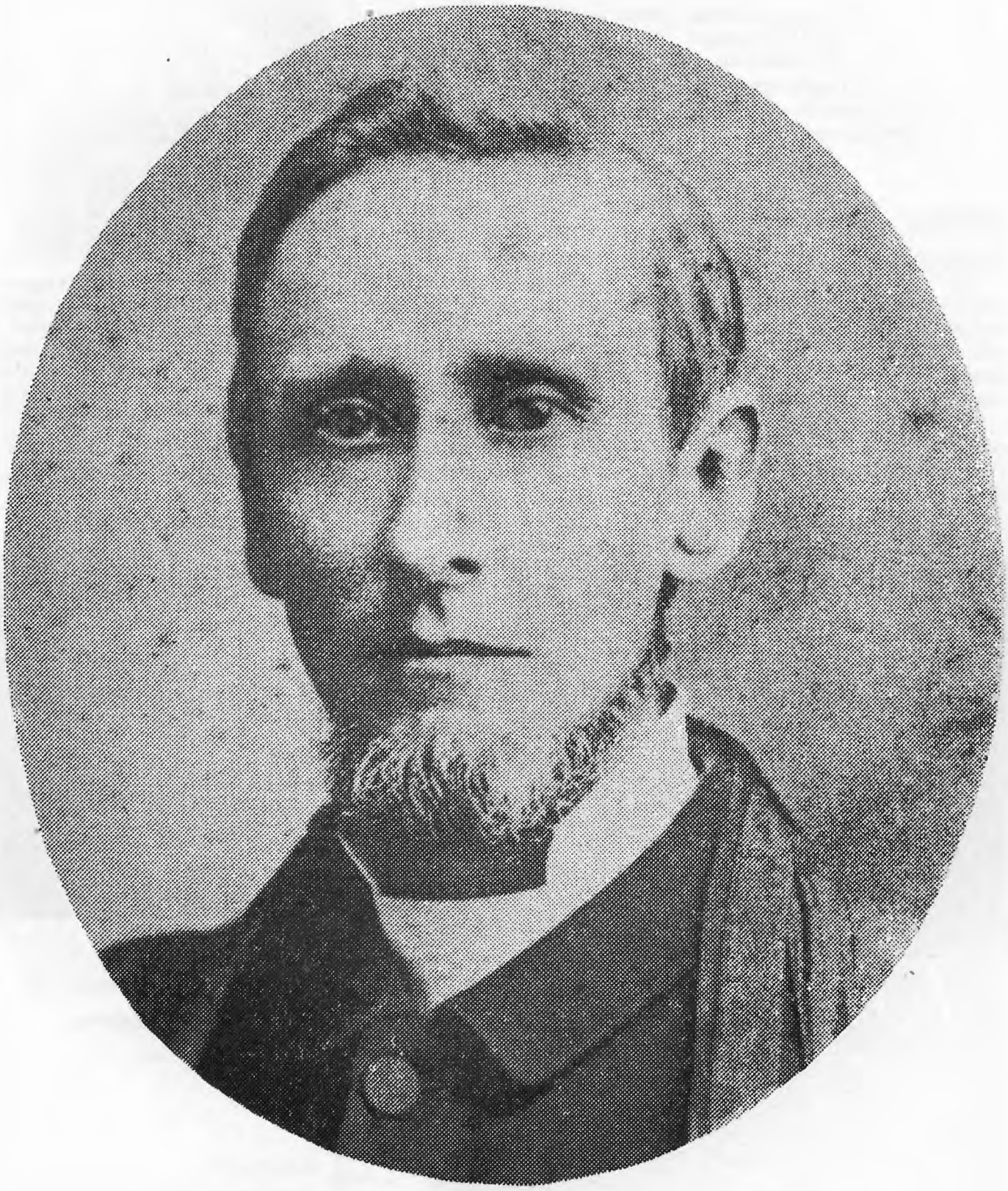

THE REV. THOMAS GRAYSON DASHIELL

Virginia Theological Seminary Archives photo

T. Grayson Dashiell

SECRETARY AND ENVOY

By Worth E. Norman, Jr.

The Rev. T. Grayson Dashiell's election as secretary of the Diocese of Virginia on May 20, 1863, would seem uneventful except for two facts: the diocese was part of the Episcopal Church of the Confederate States of America, and Dashiell served his diocese faithfully for the next 29 years.

Probably no one else in the history of the Virginia diocese served the church in as many critical positions as Dashiell did over his career. Dashiell's long tenure suggests that Virginia Episcopalians recognized his superior ability to take care of details while expressing a faithful churchmanship. Dashiell served as secretary for two bishops: the Rt. Revs. John Johns (1862-76) and Francis McNeese Whittle (1876-1902).

Dashiell's name first appears in the diocesan journal of 1856, which does not mention his parochial assignment. Most likely he was assigned as an assistant minister at St. James's Church in Richmond. In 1866 St. James's formed St. Mark's Church as a mission plant and Dashiell became its first rector. In the parochial reports for 1866 Dashiell reported no church revenues for St. Mark's because it was in formation.

At the 1862 annual convention before he was elected secretary, *council* replaced the name *convention* on a motion by Mr. Dashiell. This name change mirrored a similar change adopted by the initial triennial council of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Confederate States of America. The diocese for almost four years was integral to the temporary national confederate church. The Rt. Rev. William Meade (1841-62) of Virginia was the senior and presiding bishop of the confederate church until his death in 1862.

One of Dashiell's significant documentary contributions was "A Digest of the Proceedings of the Conventions and Councils in the Diocese of Virginia," from 1876 to 1881. Dashiell's introductory pages provide his perspective on the history of the "Church in Virginia." In the first chapters he wrote an impassioned defense of the post-Revolution Episcopal Church against charges that it was part of the colonial Virginia government and exercised extra ecclesiastical or legal and judicial control of its people.

Leaders of other denominations, within decades after the Revolution, went to court and had glebes and properties of Virginia's Episcopal churches confiscated or auctioned off, the justification being that they were "stolen" from the people during colonial days. Dashiell countered those arguments and legal actions with facts widely known and accepted: that the leaders of the American Revolution, including George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, and others, were not enemies of the people. They were all Episcopalians — indeed, *Virginia* Episcopalians.

As secretary of the annual conventions/councils Dashiell was responsible for the publication of their undertakings. The signs of the times are expressed in the minutes of the annual councils. For example, Bishop John Johns in his address to the 1862 convention mentioned that on May 24, 1861, the Federal troops had taken possession of the City of Alexandria and he and his family had to flee their home. The 1861 diocesan convention was to take place in Alexandria in May but was changed to Richmond because of the unsettled condition of the country. That turned out to be a prescient change.

The 1862 journal also mentions a completed project of the Diocese of Virginia's Domestic Missionary Society: building a home for St. Philip's African Church in Richmond. According to journal records, Bishop Johns had given much aid to this active congregation and had officiated there for four or more months. The charge now would be placed under the Rev. D.F. Sprigg. In the years following, the names of Sprigg, Giles Buckner Cooke, A.W. Waddell, and Dashiell would be attached to a major diocesan effort at promoting education and evangelization of African Americans in Virginia.

Probably no one else in the history of the Virginia diocese served the church in as many critical positions as Dashiell did over his career.

In 1865 Dashiell wrote that the "war between the Northern and Southern sections of the country terminated in April of this year. The lack of transportation facilities, the destruction of all kinds of property and the consequent poverty and confusion throughout Virginia, prevented a meeting of the Council in May." Instead, the Council met

(Continued on next page)

T. Grayson Dashiell SECRETARY AND ENVOY

(Continued from previous page)

at St. Paul's, Richmond, on September 20. Bishop Johns reported that the Domestic Missionary Committee of the Episcopal Church in New York City offered financial assistance to the diocese, but while stating its gratitude, the diocese refused the offer.

This was also the Council that structured the diocese into convocations, and it adopted a paper encouraging the religious instruction of "colored" people. All clergy and laity were called upon to "engage with renewed effort in every available means that would contribute to their well-being." In 1866 the council created the Standing Committee on Colored Congregations, to assist colored members of the church who wanted to form new and separate congregations. Dashiell was elected to this committee and was probably its most active member for many years.

According to the Rev. George Freeman Bragg, Jr., historiographer of the Afro-American Group within the Episcopal Church, there "were more colored communicants, and colored clergy in the State of Virginia, than in any of the other dioceses of the [Episcopal] Church." Bragg wrote that the 1869 council acknowledged the formation of St. Stephen's Church in Petersburg. Dashiell himself noted annually the progress of St. Stephen's to the council and commended the work of its white rector, the Rev. Giles B. Cooke, a former confederate major on Gen. Robert E. Lee's staff.

This was also the Council that structured the diocese into convocations, and it adopted a paper encouraging the religious instruction of "colored" people.

Cooke, Waddell, Dashiell, and the Committee on Colored Congregations worked diligently over the years to assist the development of African American communities within the diocese. At the 1867 council the Committee on Colored Congregations and Dashiell reported that progress, though reasonable and steady, was slow. The size of the diocese was huge. At that time the diocese still consisted of the communicants in the new state of West Virginia. But the highest density of its colored population was in central and southeastern Virginia. Richmond had the most difficult task because the area was "almost wholly preoccupied by other denominations" and postbellum political excitement was higher there than anywhere else, meaning that it was difficult to plant Episcopal churches. Still, one separate black congregation was worshiping in its own building. In Norfolk four white and five black teachers worked several Episcopal day schools with 450 scholars.

Petersburg was an entirely different story. In the summer of 1865 a Sunday school was opened and grew rapidly to 300 students. Another school had to be opened to handle the growth of students — former slaves eager to acquire an education and to learn the gospel. The rolls soon grew to more than 450. The St. Stephen's Church school would eventually become the central location for continuing education of black laity and clergy. By 1870 another phenomenon was taking place in the Southside counties of Virginia.

Race relations turned sour as Congressional Reconstruction in the South met with resistance from whites. Although Virginia escaped official Reconstruction, its effects from throughout the rest of the South were nonetheless present. African American members of white churches, particularly in Mecklenburg, Lunenburg, and Brunswick counties, were more or less thrown out of their congregations.

In Boydton, a group of Methodists found themselves without their old church and were left on their own. A minister from the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church named James R. Howell came to Boydton and helped the displaced worshipers form a new denomination known as the Zion Union Apostolic Church. This historical version is documented by the U.S. Bureau of the Census account of churches in the South (1909). Another historical account, according to theology professor Estrelda Y. Alexander of Regent Seminary in Virginia Beach, identified Howell as an elder of the African Methodist Episcopal Church who moved from the Tidewater area to Boydton. In either case the situation of the displaced congregations was the same.

The Zion Unions spread quickly throughout the Southside of Virginia and the adjoining North Carolina counties. A few miles south of Lawrenceville in Brunswick County a new Zion Union church was built near the farm of Mr. and Mrs. F.E. Buford. Mrs. Buford, also known legendarily as Miss Pattie Buford, had her own Sunday school class on her father's plantation during the period of slavery. Whatever her reasons, Miss Pattie confronted the Zion Unions, saying their worship services were loud.

She also learned of their anti-white theology, mostly by their leader, James R. Howell. She offered to teach Zion Union children and adults; her offer was accepted. A

positive relationship began to develop between Miss Pattie and Howell. In 1875 Miss Pattie opened a hospital to help former slaves, the indigent, and the poor. In order to maintain all of her work projects she appealed to the Episcopal Church for funds, Bibles, and books. She appealed both to Episcopal Church agencies in the North (where the money was) and to the Diocese of Virginia. Miss Pattie's work eventually became well known and Bishop Whittle in Richmond sent an envoy to learn more.

The bishop's envoy, Dashiell, left Richmond in the morning and arrived at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Emmet Buford at 8 p.m. on July 11, 1878, a Thursday. During the subsequent three days several amazing encounters took place in the tiny village of Lawrenceville. Dashiell learned that the Zion Unions had more than 3,000 members, 25 to 30 schools, and approximately 17 ministers. Though initially organized as a church with hatred toward whites, the Zion Union church began changing after 1870. In 1877 Howell, as the Zion Union bishop, placed all of his Sunday schools under the charge of Miss Pattie, meaning the Episcopal Diocese of Virginia. Miss Pattie had broken down the barriers that kept people apart. There was more to come.

By Saturday morning, Dashiell met with Howell and three of his Zion Union ministers for more than an hour. In the afternoon Dashiell accepted a request from, and met with, a Zion Union minister from North Carolina and his nephew. The Rev. Macklin Russell and his nephew, James Solomon Russell, had traveled 45 miles to meet with Bishop Whittle's envoy. James Solomon Russell, 21, wanted to express his desire to enter Holy Orders in the Episcopal Church. At the time James Solomon Russell was secretary to the Annual Conference of the Zion Unions.

Dashiell already knew of Russell's desire but wanted to meet with him personally. Dashiell advised Russell to discuss the matter with Bishop Howell and asked that he and Howell meet with him and Miss Pattie early Sunday morning. Howell gave his consent for Russell to enter Holy Orders and he requested that the Episcopal Diocese of Virginia consider merging with the Zion Unions. That proposed merger never came to fruition, but James Solomon Russell entered a new Episcopal seminary in October of the same year.

Dashiell guided Russell through the process that made him the first student at the Branch Divinity School. The school, a branch of the Virginia Theological Seminary in Alexandria, was created for African American seminarians. Dashiell, in meetings and conversations with Bishop Whittle and the Diocesan Missionary Society, made sure that Russell's education was fully funded by the diocese. Dashiell saw in Russell a bright person who had a wonderful ministry in his future.

In May 1883, the Bishop of Mississippi called a meeting of Southern bishops to be held at Sewanee, Tennessee, in July of that year. No African Americans were invited to or attended the gathering. Several (white) presbyters and laymen were invited and attended. Thirteen (white) bishops attended representing 12 Southern dioceses and the Diocese of Liberia. Bishop Whittle of Virginia had been ill in 1883 and was in Europe "recruiting" his health. He returned to Virginia in the spring unable to attend to his episcopal visitations or to attend the conference in Sewanee. Bishop George Peterkin of West Virginia, who did

(Continued on next page)

THE NEW EVANGELICALS

Expanding the Vision of the Common Good

Marcia Pally

Foreword by John Milbank

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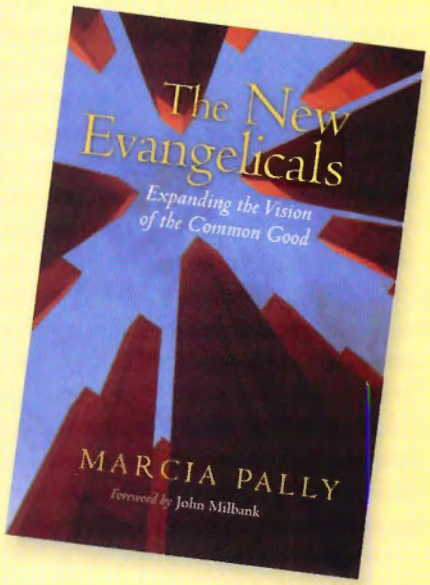

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T. Grayson Dashiell SECRETARY AND ENVOY

(Continued from previous page)

attend the conference, voluntarily took on Whittle's appointments for that summer. Whittle sent Dashiell and the Rev. Pike Powers to the conference to represent the diocese.

The Southern bishops wanted to find a solution to the "negro problem" in their dioceses. They settled on separate black convocations within each diocese named "Canon of Missionary Organizations within Constituted Episcopal Jurisdictions." In other words, they proposed a color line. With the exception of the sole dissent by the Bishop of Alabama, Richard Hooker Wilmer, the bishops passed the resolution. Wilmer, a Virginian and the only Southern bishop elected and consecrated during the Civil War, considered the proposal "class legislation." The resolution was presented to the 1883 General Convention held at Philadelphia in October. It failed in the House of Deputies, so it failed overall.

But it was during the July meeting in Sewanee when a group of colored clergy led by the Rev. Alexander Crummell decided to convene in New York City in September to organize opposition to the Southern bishops' proposal. Dashiell, upon hearing there was to be a meeting in September, proposed resolutions at the Southern bishops' conference offering to meet with and assist the colored clergy, believing that they too were looking for a common solution. Dashiell's proposal passed. It stated, in part, that "the object of this meeting [in New York City] is, like our own, to agree upon some plan whereby the work among the colored people may be more vigorously and intelligently prosecuted under the auspices of the General Convention." Dashiell figured, most likely, that any discussion between the Southern bishops and the black clergy could find a common resolution. But the two groups never met.

George Freeman Bragg, Jr., reflecting on the actions of the Episcopal Church in the years between 1865 and 1900, wrote in 1922 that of all the white churches in the South, the Episcopal Church in Virginia acted nobly and in the best interest of black men in the years immediately following the end of the war. But after a few passing years political circumstances in the South and the mindset of Southern white men changed. Disfranchisement of black men in Southern society was subsequently mirrored in the Episcopal dioceses of the South. Dashiell's resolution at the bishops' conference provides evidence of his attempt to seek amity or cohesion among the different races in the church.

Dashiell is not well known to most Episcopalians today. Researchers who study the journals of the Diocese of Virginia from Civil War days to the two decades before the 20th century certainly know his name and know of his service. In many ways Dashiell was the glue that held Virginia together by his mere presence at meetings, his communications skills, and his managerial acuity. In the 1879 journal of the Virginia Annual Council, Dashiell's name was tagged for the first time with the letters D.D., indicating the bestowal of the honorary Doctor of Divinity degree. Dashiell should be mostly remembered as a faithful churchman, a servant of his church, a preacher of the gospel, rector of a parish church, an envoy, a reconciler of races, an interlocutor, and yes, a secretary. ■

The Rev. Worth E. "Woody" Norman, Jr., is a native of Norfolk, Virginia, and lives in Birmingham, Alabama. McFarland & Company will publish his biography of James Solomon Russell this year.

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BOOKS

Christology, Ecumenism, and Politics

Kathryn Tanner's *Christ the Key* is a work of impressive ambition and grand scope for its relatively modest length. *Christ the Key* articulates a Christ-centered theological vision with a broadly ecumenical focus, appealing to a diverse array of sources with particular attention to the challenges, dangers, and benefits of various contemporary theological approaches.

According to the preface, this book functions as a sequel to Tanner's *Jesus, Humanity, and the Trinity* (2001), offering a less systematic account but sharing with its predecessor the same emphasis on Christ as the heart of its theological proposal. Above all else, this book is supremely hopeful that its view of Christ-centeredness challenges and overcomes long-standing, deep-seated theological divisions and can serve as the basis for a new approach to political theology.

Though Tanner's project has much to recommend it, *Christ the Key* does not satisfy its own ambitions. Too many of the book's arguments are based upon an *ad hoc* use of sources with insufficient regard for context, and too many of the arguments' points leave crucial details unexplained or unexplored.

Paying particular attention to patristic sources, Tanner specifies a Christ-centered treatment of creation in the image of God intended to examine human nature only after focusing initial attention on God. According to Tanner, refocusing the image of God through primary discussion of Christ reveals that "what is of theological interest about [human nature] is its lack of given definition, malleability through outside influences, unbounded character, and general openness to radical transformation" (p. 1).

Tanner positions the space for radical transformation between a weak and a strong participation in God. Weak participation indicates simply the fact of creaturely existence as a participation in the being of God. Strong participation — "by having the divine image for one's own" (p. 16) — becomes possible through the Incarnation. These two types of participation set the stage for the entire work; Tanner spends the next six chapters addressing the space for radical transformation.

Tanner argues that a Christ-centered theological anthropology solves or avoids many of the contentious issues about grace. Tanner employs the notion of strong participation in God to construe sin as damaging the presence of divine power to human nature, thus reframing debates between Protestants and Catholics. She stresses the fundamental compatibility of a Catholic emphasis on grace perfecting nature with a Protestant stress on the total depravity of nature (p. 67).

Tanner confronts disagreements about a natural desire for God, attempting again to find an underlying harmony between divergent views. "Rather than being generated by our nature per se," she explains, "desire for God results from the presence of God that forms an essential ingredient of our constitution as the prerequisite of human well being" (p. 126). Tanner later qualifies this with the under-explained specification that God's life is "natural to us" and "naturally ours" but is "not ours by nature" (p. 129).

The great merit of these argu-

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Photo by Bill Bradord

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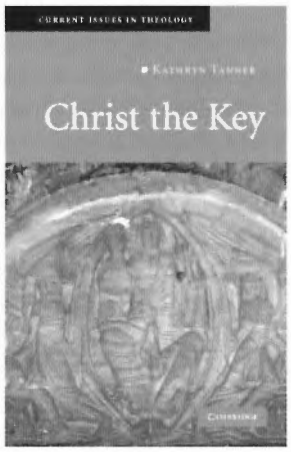
ments rests in their ecumenical aims and in their potential for introducing new frameworks for ecumenical dialogue. The risk in this reframing is that neither dialogue partner will accept the terms as reframed. The more fundamental difficulty in Tanner's treatment of grace (and later of atonement) is that the repeated assertions that Christ changes human nature in the Incarnation fail to offer any sufficient account of the mechanisms explaining such change. Given the absolute centrality of Christ to Tanner's theological project, this explanatory insufficiency potentially undermines the project as a whole.

Tanner's primary strategy appeals to the hypostatic union, according to which human nature is assumed to the hypostasis of the divine Word in the Incarnation. The specification must, of course, be added that the Word assumed an individual human nature, so the theological task remains to explain the mechanisms by which the Word's assumption of an individual human nature radically transforms human nature as a whole or the individual nature of other human beings by making present to it the divine power. Crucial slippage between the individual human nature assumed and humanity in general is evident in the following passage:

> Jesus is not an already existing human being who, in being tied to the Word subsequently, is dragged along, so to speak, by association with the Word into relationships not of his ken. As mere human beings, our access to the life of the trinity through him has that character. The humanity of Jesus, to the contrary, is bound up so tightly to the Word that he is the Word; this is so close a relationship between humanity and the Word as to bring about a relationship of identity between Jesus and the Word. Therefore humanity enters into the life of the trinity in the most complete and transparent fashion in him (pp. 143-144).

The basic problem is most acute in Tanner's account of atonement based upon the Incarnation. Taking into account feminist and womanist concerns, Tanner enumerates several problems with various traditional explanations of atonement. In contrast Tanner proposes the Incarnation as the very mechanism for atonement yet explains this mechanism only as a "kinship" established between Jesus and all humanity (p. 258).



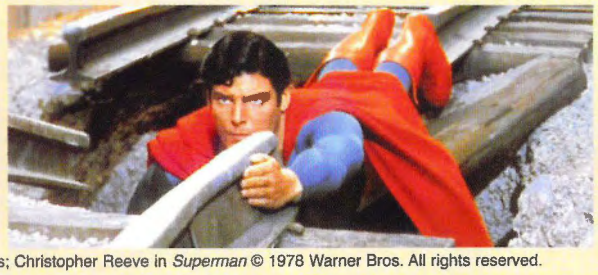
Christ the Key
By **Kathryn Tanner**
Cambridge. Pp. 322. $31

Following the examinations of grace, Tanner broadens the ecumenical focus by addressing fundamental trinitarian disagreements between Eastern and Western Christians. Tanner seeks to appease various concerns by presenting all three trinitarian persons to "play their indispensable roles in the complex movement by which Son and Spirit arise from the Father together" (p. 194). This movement is complex indeed in Tanner's presentation, involving various directions of relationship between the trinitarian persons. Tanner should be commended for grounding her presentation of trinitarian relations in New Testament texts. Nonetheless, the presentation does not articulate adequately the logical underpinnings for distinct persons within God. The more mutual and complexly multidirectional the processions of the persons become, the more difficult it becomes to account for the persons as distinctly constituted in these very processions.

Building upon the assertion that "humanity enters into the life of the trinity" through the Incarnation, Tanner suggests Christology as a better model than the Trinity for political and social theologies. In what is possibly the strongest chapter in *Christ the Key*, Tanner formulates a compelling critique of various attempts to base political theology on the Trinity. This critique also sets the stage for Tanner's investigation of how the Spirit works within the world. Human beings participate in Christ's trinitarian life through the Incarnation, and this participation explains the Spirit's working in and through human beings joined to Christ.

Christ the Key attempts the difficult, if not impossible, task of balancing lofty aims with accessible concision. Though the work leaves key aspects un- or under-explained, it remains valuable in formulating bold proposals to stimulate ecumenical reflection and dialogue. The admittedly uneven use of sources ranging from patristic to contemporary theologians represents an impressive interest in utilizing diverse Christian sources to further Christian unity. While not ultimately successful on all fronts, *Christ the Key* will prove of great interest and utility to a variety of readers. ■

Corey L. Barnes is an assistant professor of religion at Oberlin College in Ohio.



Danny Glover and John Malkovich in *Places in the Heart* © 1984 TriStar Pictures; Christopher Reeve in *Superman* © 1978 Warner Bros. All rights reserved.

Ask the Right Questions

Of Pilgrims and Fire

When God Shows Up at the Movies
By **Roy M. Anker**. Eerdmans. Pp. 258. $17.99

Review by Daniel Muth

The story goes of a young priest starting his first children's sermon. He gathers the kids on the floor in front of the nave and states his intention to initiate a dialogue by asking them some questions.

"Let's start with an easy one: What's small and furry and gray and has a big bushy tail?" The children stare hesitantly at one another and say nothing.

"Okay, what's small and furry and gray and has a big bushy tail and runs up trees?" Their eyes are wider and they look thoroughly confused.

The priest, desperate to maintain some semblance of control, asks slowly: "What's small and furry and gray and runs up trees and stuffs nuts in its mouth like *this*?" he says, puffing both cheeks to near exploding.

Finally one little boy very hesitatingly raises his hand: "I — I know the answer is supposed to be *Jesus*, but it sounds like a squirrel to me."

We know Jesus is the answer. Are we asking the right question? Here we have a book about works by Hollywood filmmakers — some very great, some not so much, some just plain odd — who have but the vaguest of idea of the actual answer, but nevertheless ask the right questions in mainly visceral, compelling ways.

Our guide through this tour of *cinéma religieux* is a professor of English at Calvin College who has taught on movies for many years and has previously written on a similar theme in his fine 2004 book, *Catching Light: Looking for God in the Movies*. Therein he offers in-depth examination of religious themes in 13 films.

Of Pilgrims and Fire expands the number to 20 but expends less space on each, offering instead a movie-viewer's guide to each film, providing brief introductory, pre-screening notes, suggested themes and images to look for during the course of the film, post-screening discussion and questions, and a report on what critics thought of each film. The introductory sections are illuminating without giving away too much. The questions are provocative, and the post-viewing commentaries consistently judicious and enlightening.

In keeping with the theme of the book, both the pre- and post-viewing discussions focus on the religious themes in each film. In many films, such as *Places in the Heart*, *The Mission*, *Tender Mercies*, and *Babette's Feast*, the religious theme is fairly obvious. In other films, such as *Superman*, *E.T.*, and *The Godfather: Part III*, the specifically Christian content is not so clear, or has tended to be obscured by familiarity and commercial success.

Luminous writing is a staple — and perhaps, considering the nature of film itself, as discussed by the author in his excellent introduction, a necessity — of books about film. In this regard, Anker does not disappoint. Even when his assessments are less than persuasive his prose is a delight (I understand what the filmmakers were trying to do with the ending of *American Beauty*, but even Anker's spirited defense could not save it from implausibility). If nothing else, you truly *want* to believe that these films are this good. Most of them, at least the ones I have seen, are.

Readers will be introduced to lesser-known filmmakers, like Krzysztof Kieslowski and Majid Majidi, whom they should certainly get to know; are reminded of the greatness of films they may not have seen in a while: *Crimes and Misdemeanors* really was Woody Allen's best film, and Anker does a marvelous job of explaining just why; and are reintroduced to films with subtle virtues. The book is worth the price for Anker's explication of why Robert Duvall's *The Apostle* is a bona fide masterpiece.

This is a wonderfully readable, well-organized (Anker groups the movies thematically) and insightful explication of how God as answer to the heart's deepest questions shines through a number of films. ■

Daniel Muth is a member of the Living Church Foundation's board of directors who lives in St. Leonard, Maryland.

Pontoon bridge across the James River at Richmond, Va., 1865.

GUEST COLUMN

A Tale of Two Grandmothers

By Boyd Wright

On April 12, 1861, guns that rimmed Charleston Harbor hurled shells upon Fort Sumter, beginning the bitterest brother-against-brother war the United States has endured. During a designated four years of national remembrance we might do well to ponder the feelings of those who, a century and a half ago, had to live through that fratricidal hell.

I look back at my own family and remember my mother's mother, who grew up in New York City at that desperate time. I was 10 when she died, and my clearest picture is of a sweet, calming smile, irresistible to a child climbing onto her lap. She seems always to have dressed in black, and she clutched her prayer book on her way to our Episcopal church. I know my grandmother was devout because my mother often spoke of the faith she had inherited.

I remember my father's mother better because I was 14 when she died. She spent her childhood during the war years in Richmond, Virginia, capital of the Confederacy. After marrying she moved to Augusta, Georgia. Almost every year during spring vacation in the 1930s my father would take our family from New York to his boyhood home for a week's visit with Mamo, as all her grandchildren called her.

Mamo loved us but showed it less than my other grandmother. Long a widow, she too dressed always in black. An old-style Southern belle, she lived in her gently decaying mini-mansion, fronted by white pillars and surrounded by magnolia trees we liked to climb. Mostly she sat in her darkened parlor-library amid Confederate memorabilia, devotional books, crosses, and relics. She cherished her Methodist church and her faith.

Ambulance drill of the 57th New York Infantry, 1864.

Look back with me at the time these grandmothers lived. See the home of my mother's mother, her father a well-to-do merchant in bustling New York City. Worry and grief spared no household during those war years. Family prayers must have implored God to save the Union and the brave men fighting for it.

Now look at the family of my father's mother. Her father, a doctor, treated patients as Richmond changed in four years from the proud capital of a brand-new nation to a city so sick and starved that mobs looted stores and rioted for bread. Here too, amid the hardships, prayers must have mounted, first for the new fresh hope of the Confederacy, then for all the lives lost as the terrible tolls kept climbing.

On May 15, 1864, tragedy hit my grandmother's home. Her oldest brother, William, died charging with the rebels at the Battle of New Market in the Shenandoah Valley. A Yankee bullet gravely wounded another brother, Robert, in the same battle.

New, fervent prayers must have come from Mamo's home: prayers for the soul of a brother and for the recovery of another (he survived). And the prayers must have grown more desperate for the great lost cause of their beloved Confederacy, with only months to live.

We know now that some of those Southern prayers were granted and some were not. Meanwhile, up North, my other grandmother and her family found their prayers answered: they prayed for the Union and they won.

It's easy to say God willed the North to win, to rebuild a divided nation, and to guide us on to forgiveness and prosperity. But if so, did the prayers of

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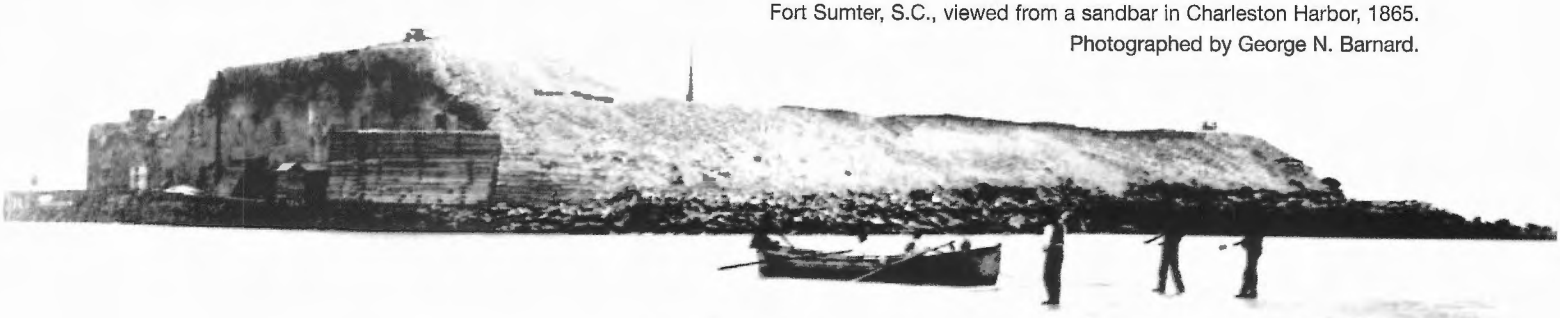
Fort Sumter, S.C., viewed from a sandbar in Charleston Harbor, 1865.
Photographed by George N. Barnard.



Peachtree Street with wagon traffic, Atlanta, Ga. All photos courtesy of the National Archives (www.archives.gov/research/military/civil-war/photos/index.html#places)

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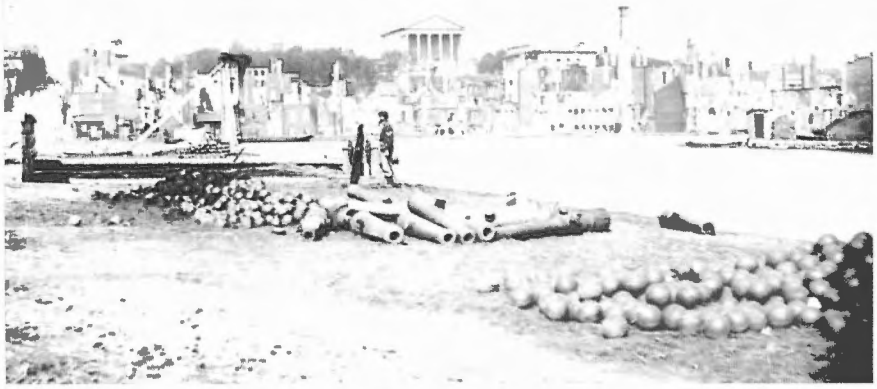
those devout Southerners not count? Make no mistake, they were devout. Read the letters and diaries of Johnny Reb and you find as many references to God as those by Billy Yank. On Richmond's saddest day,



Ruins in front of the Capitol, 1865.

April 2, 1865, when Gen. Robert E. Lee warned the president that the capital city finally must be evacuated, the message found Jefferson Davis at Sunday worship in St. Paul's Episcopal Church.

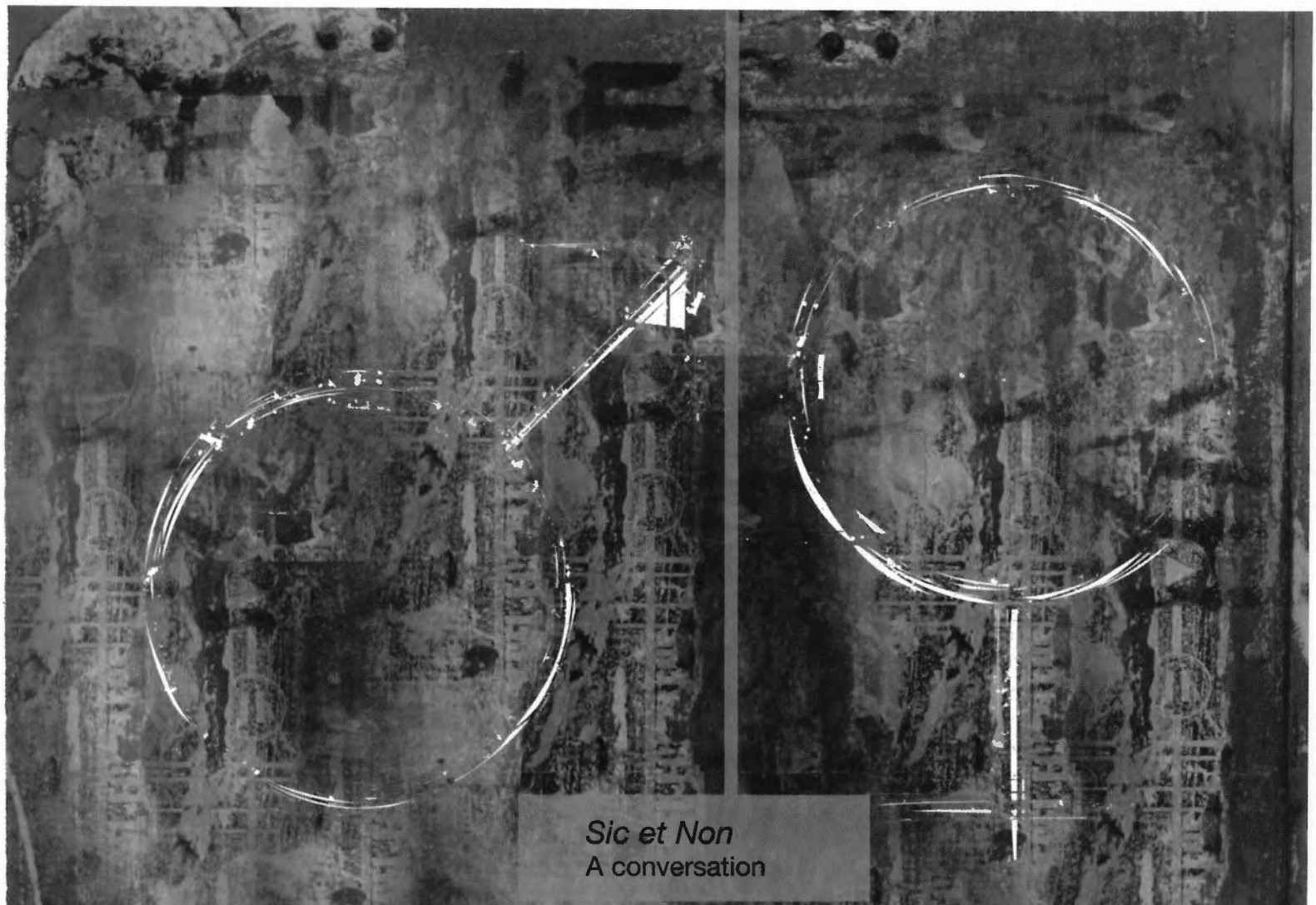
If God granted the prayers of one side and denied the others, did he consider the North right and moral and the South wrong and evil? Abraham Lincoln, for one, refused to believe this. At war's end, six weeks before he died, he declared in his second inaugural address that both North and South had suffered for the sin of slavery: "Both read the same Bible, and pray to the same God; and each invokes His aid against the other. It may seem strange that any men should dare to ask a just God's assistance in wringing their bread from the sweat of other men's faces; but let us judge not that we be not judged. The prayers of both could not be answered; that of neither has been answered fully. The Almighty has His own purposes."

Looking back, I can feel the faith of all who prayed. Is it fanciful for me to believe that my family stands as a microcosm of our nation? I cannot help thinking that somehow, as a symbol of God-given unity, a mystic chord stretches from those war years in the families headed by my great-grandparents in Virginia and New York on down seven generations to my own great-grandchildren (three in Florida, three in Massachusetts).

All those prayers helped build a nation, and the people who prayed, just by virtue of praying, became better people. Lincoln told us to "bind up the nation's wounds." We're still trying, however imperfectly.

Maybe those long-ago prayers from North and South can teach Christians in America and elsewhere to understand that God, in his infinite compassion, knows which prayers to grant and which he must deny. We can thank him for that. And Americans can thank him for the blessings of 150 years of one nation, for ancestors who brought us here, for parents who nourished us, for the young to whom the world belongs, and, above all, for his love. ■

Boyd Wright is a retired journalist who lives in Mendham, New Jersey.



Sic et Non
A conversation

Tradition, Novelty, and the Need for Discernment

By David Newheiser

Under the pressure of social and legal changes that appear to be gathering pace, Christians face a pressing question concerning the status of same-sex partnerships. In August 2010 a federal judge in California ruled that denying marriage to same-sex couples violated their constitutional right to equal protection and due process; in January 2011 Illinois legalized civil unions for same-sex couples; and in June New York passed legislation providing for same-sex marriage. These developments, together with a host of other legal and legislative initiatives, force Christians to face a difficult question: can fidelity to Christian tradition accommodate such an unprecedented development?

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From the beginning, Christians have developed new ways of thinking in order to address disputes not directly resolved in Scripture and tradition.

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Some answer that Christian tradition emphatically condemns homosexuality. In response to the California case, Albert Mohler, Jr., president of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, wrote that "in one brazen act of judicial energy ... thousands of years of human wisdom were discarded." Likewise, a group including the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, the National Association of Evangelicals, and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints criticized the decision by appealing to "the age-old and nearly universal understanding of marriage as a male/female union." This echoes the Vatican's 2003 instruction on same-sex unions, which states that "Sacred Scripture condemns homosexual acts 'as a serious depravity,'" adding that "this same moral judgment ... is unanimously accepted by Catholic Tradition." On this view, Christians are required to maintain continuity with established patterns, but the conclusion rests upon a misunderstanding of the character of Christian tradition.

From the beginning, Christians have developed new ways of thinking in order to address disputes not directly resolved in Scripture and tradition. Although these innovations were hotly contested, those who opposed them failed to appreciate that revolutions in language may allow the past to speak to the present in new ways. The debate over same-sex unions includes a complex web of ethical issues (concerning procreation, child-rearing, and the nature of justice), but we may nonetheless disentangle the crucial thread of history. A glance back at early debates concerning the nature of Jesus Christ suggests that the process of reflection upon the status of same-sex unions cannot be circumvented by appealing to the past: discerning the significance of tradition for a new situation requires careful and creative attention.

The Character of Tradition

The fourth-century debate about the nature of Christ provides an instructive case study in the perils of conservative appeals to tradition. Although the creed that many Christians recite states that God the Father and the Son are "of one substance" (or "of one being" in some translations), the corresponding term in Greek, *homoousion*, was long seen as suspect. Prior to the council of Nicaea in 325, most Christians agreed that the Father and the Son are united in one sense and distinct in another, but there was broad disagreement about how this relationship is best described. Although the New Testament suggests an intimate connection between the Father and the Son, it never specifies the nature of their relation. Because the gospels describe a Jesus who sleeps, weeps, dies, and prays to God, a group of Christians associated with a cleric named Arius could reasonably conclude that the Son is the only-begotten God, a sort of intermediate being between the created world and God the Father. Since this made sense of the biblical material without apparently contradicting it, versions of this view were widely held among early Christians.

Although the question at stake had not been answered before this point, the bishops who gathered at the Council of Nicaea concluded that the gospel narrative implies that the Son is of the same substance with the Father, *homoousion to patri*. This had the virtue of allowing the Son full divinity, and it excluded the implication that Christ was a mere creature, but it brought a host of problems as well. For one thing, whereas *substance* tended at the time to denote physical matter, Christians on both sides of this debate agreed that God is immaterial. More seriously, one of the most prominent early theologians to affirm that the Father and Son were of one substance was the heretic Sabellius, who used the term *homoousion* to deny any real difference between them. Because the word never appears in Christian Scripture, the Arians rejected it as a dangerous innovation, but in this they failed to appreciate the prospect of a revolutionary advance in Christian theology.

The pro-Nicene stalwart Athanasius inveighed against the Arians: "What sort of faith have they who stand neither to word nor writing, but alter and change every thing according to the times?" But in fact the Arians came to be seen as heretics precisely because they refused unforeseen developments. It was Athanasius who, 35 years after Nicaea, stipulated a new meaning for the disputed term *homoousion*, one that allowed Christians to articulate with

new clarity the unity-in-distinction of the Father and the Son. He wrote that the Nicene affirmation that the Son is "of one substance" with the Father indicates that they are inseparably one in their shared (immaterial) essence while truly distinct in their individual existence. Because the Arians insisted on maintaining the formulae with which they were familiar, they refused the advantages of this new way of thinking. On this occasion, the conservative repetition of the past was left behind in favor of a momentous revolution in language.

The Invention of Homosexuality

Like the ancient debate about the Nicene *homoousion*, the modern conflict over homosexuality responds to a question that finds no direct answer in Christian tradition. The term *homosexualität* entered German in 1868 and made its way into English 24 years later; before this point, no equivalent category existed. Although *homosexuality* is often conflated with a range of terms that preceded it, they are by no means equivalent: *sodomia* (an 11th-century coinage of Peter Damian) typically described any male sexual activity without a procreative aim, including most varieties of intercourse between a husband and wife. Nor is it clear that the Old Testament material to which "sodomy" refers has anything to do with sex; although some Patristic authors associated the story of Sodom with what we would call sexual sin, the prophet Ezekiel interprets the Sodomite sin as arrogant maltreatment of the poor. The Apostle Paul is often taken to condemn all same-sex intimacy, but one of the terms he uses in this context, *malakoi*, refers in fact to effeminacy, while the other, *arsenokoitai*, is ambiguous because Paul invented it. Each of these terms is different, and

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each of them is different from the modern coinage *homosexuality*.

The word *homosexuality* first appears in Christian Scripture in the 1946 Revised Standard Version; because the authors of Scripture did not have an equivalent concept available, they could not have used it themselves. For this reason, *homosexuality* cannot be read into Peter Damian's *sodomia* and Paul's *arsenokoitai*; painstaking work is required to relate these terms to the modern situation. That is not to say that Paul and Peter Damian have nothing to contribute to modern debates, but the linguistic gap between their past and our present entails that their relevance here is necessarily indirect. Although many assume that the condemnation of homosexuality has an ancient lineage, it has existed for barely a century. As with the Nicene *homoousion*, the Church is faced with a new, unresolved situation.

Until the 19th century, no one could have considered affirming homosexual partnerships, but it was likewise impossible for anyone to condemn them, for the concept of "homosexual partnership" would have been as incomprehensible as "online dating." (After all, both *online* and *dating* are modern inventions.) The relevant question for faithful Christians is thus not whether Paul would have affirmed homosexual marriage: on the basis of the conceptual apparatus he had available, he would have been able to grasp neither the concept *homosexual* nor the Nicene affirmation that the Son is "of one substance" with the Father. Even if, as is likely, he would have been alarmed on both counts, this does not settle the issue, for the force of Paul's teaching may point toward developments that he would not have expected. Just as Athanasius argued that the teaching of Scripture recommends ways of speaking that the authors of Scripture would not have recognized, it may be that fidelity to tradition requires new ways of thinking about the status of same-sex unions.

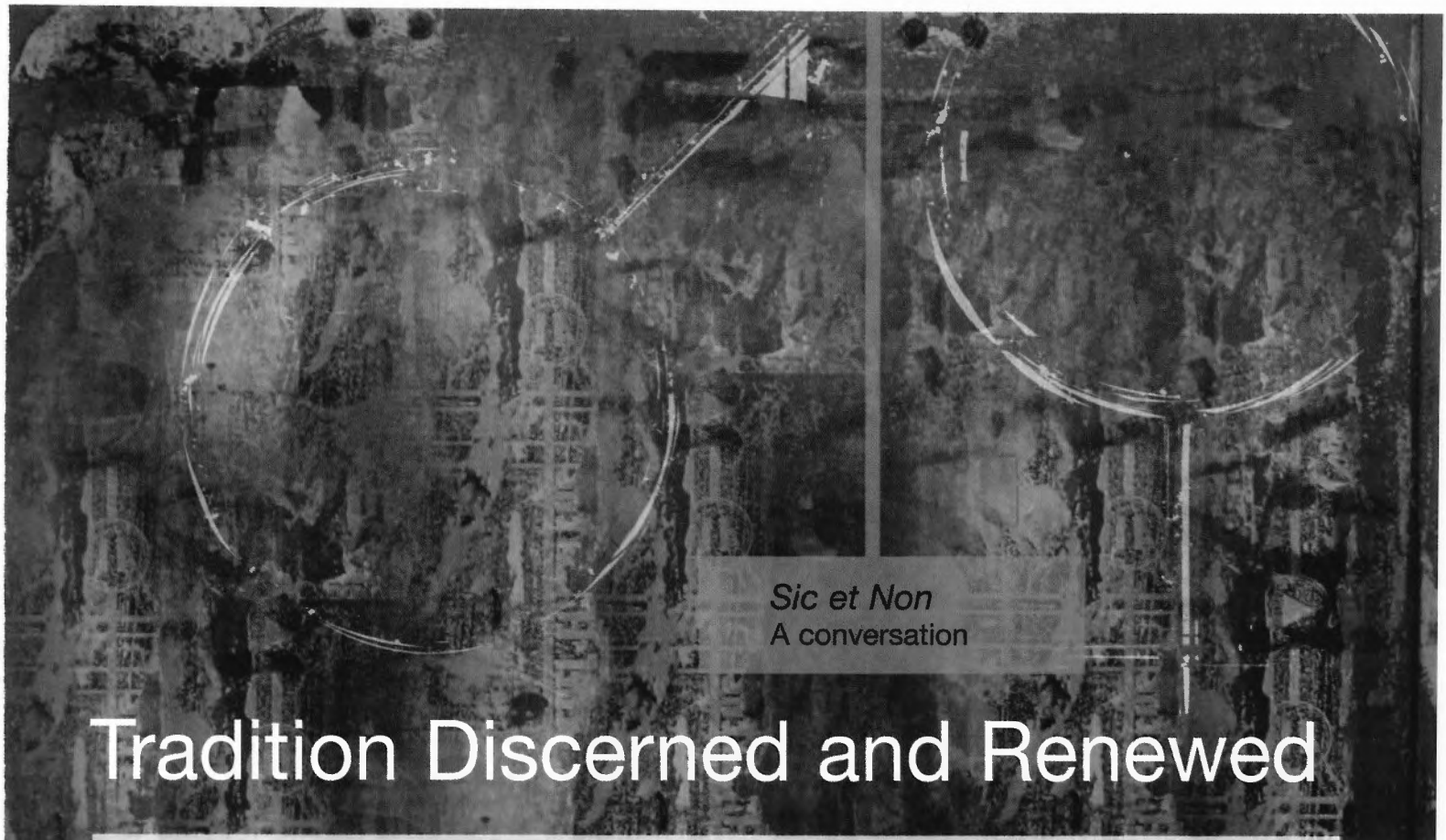
The Demands of Discernment

This historical survey suggests that the question concerning same-sex unions is complicated in ways that some polemicists neglect. Against the spurious assertion that the question is settled by "thousands of years of human wisdom," allowing gay and lesbian couples to wed does not overturn the consensus of history concerning same-sex marriage, for the question at stake is genuinely new. While this recognition does not itself determine how Christians should respond to the prospect of same-sex marriage, it does mean that appeals to "the age-old and nearly universal understanding of marriage as a male/female union" are strictly irrelevant. The prevalence of past practices is itself no argument: any conclusion ought to follow careful reflection, for fidelity requires creative engagement with a tradition that rarely speaks to contemporary questions with an unambiguous voice.

The debate over the status of same-sex unions calls Christians to reflect upon the theology of marriage, the character of families, and the demands of justice, and it requires attention on the level of human lives. Insofar as terms like *homosexual*, *lesbian*, and *gay* were invented at particular times, they represent an active attempt to structure and understand human existence. Since they are not natural constants, they are fungible in principle and may be misleading. After all, much as the meaning of the Nicene *homoousion* was only clarified after decades of debate, the term *homosexuality* is likewise contested. Just as some assume that the New Testament contains a theology that only emerged after Nicaea, there is a risk that the categories we apply to same-sex relationships may obscure the character of actual lives. For this reason, we must be wary of comforting abstractions and instead attempt to appreciate the particularity of the voices that surround us, past and present.

The responsibility of Christians is to discern the significance of our tradition for a landscape that is continually changing. It would be reassuring to assume that tradition provides ready-made answers that may simply be applied to same-sex unions in their modern form, but the novelty of the modern situation precludes careless confidence. While some suggest that Christians must repeat established patterns, fidelity to tradition sometimes calls for new ways of thinking. Whereas obscuring the particularity of the past flattens the authority of tradition by reducing it to the scope of prevailing presumptions, admitting the need for unprecedented development respects the importance of our forebears by acknowledging their distance from us. There is no way to circumvent the strenuous process of interpretation and reinterpretation, for fidelity requires careful discernment. The past may continue to enliven and surprise precisely because its lessons for the present are indirect and ambiguous, requiring of us ever-greater attention. ■

David Newheiser is a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Chicago Divinity School. His work aims to illuminate the character of hope, love, and theological discourse by attending to affinities between classic Christian texts and recent continental philosophy.



Sic et Non
A conversation

Tradition Discerned and Renewed

By Zachary Guiliano

A fundamental characteristic of most contemporary explorations of the Christian past or present is their emphasis on the concept of evolution or development. At least since John Henry Newman, historians have noted changes in theological terminology or emphasis, though they account for the change in different ways. Sometimes development is attributed to continuing reflection within the Church. Other times a slightly different scheme is proposed: change is based upon shifting conditions which surround the Christian Church in its pilgrimage through history. Regardless, whether internal or external shifts are cited, contemporary accounts tend to agree on one thing: Christianity changes.

David Newheiser's essay is no exception to this rule. Newheiser argues that the Christian tradition is marked by changing terminology and thinking *precisely*, it seems, to the degree that the Church is faithful to her own character and to the Lord who has called her, in the midst of a changing world. Newheiser, interestingly, turns to

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the fourth century to bolster his argument regarding the development of doctrine, a move with many precedents. I cannot say that I agree with Newheiser's conclusions, but my disagreement is not with his emphasis on development and change per se, nor with his choice of a historical case study in the fourth century. I too think it is fairly clear that certain Church teachings have been the subject of some development over time. Where we disagree, I suspect, is on the character and extent of particular developments, both in Christian theology and in its larger cultural milieu, as well on the nature of tradition itself.

Traditional Changes in the Fourth Century

But let us consider more closely Newheiser's primary example: the fourth-century Trinitarian debates. Although Newheiser notes several important features of the century, he misses the mark in his historical sketch. Newheiser is correct in noting the suspect nature of a term many of us blithely recite week-by-week in the English version of the Nicene Creed: *homoousios*. In the fourth century, there were many critiques of *homoousios*: it was connected with the third-century heretics Sabellius and Paul of Samosata, its language of "substance" sounded overly material to many, and it did not originate in Scripture, to name only a few criticisms. Newheiser also ably summarizes points regarding the Arian position. But his portrayal of the Arians as simply "conservative" and the pro-Nicenes as major innovators (and, implicitly, I suspect we are to conclude, as our liberal forefathers) oversimplifies matters.

First, the terminology used by Arius, though with some analogue to previous writers, represents a genuine development of previous thought regarding subordination and distinction in the relationship of the Father and the Son. His terminology was no mere aping of Christian traditionalisms. Second, it became clear in the latter half of the fourth-century debates that the Church was not facing a choice between fidelity to traditional formulations or acceptance of the new. Instead, the Church faced a multitude of theological parties, each claiming fidelity to tradition and emphasizing *certain* aspects of the biblical witness, all the while developing new terminology to explain that witness, particularly those passages in tension with their idiosyncratic emphases. Whether pro-Nicene, *homoian*, *heterousian*, or of no theological party, everyone claimed to be speaking for the tradition and for the Scriptures.

The fight, in short, was over the *meaning* of the Bible and the development of terminology faithful to it, and the debate progressed to the point that the simple repetition or citation of any previously traditional formulae or of Scripture was no longer enough to prove one's fidelity. It was thus not primarily nor exclusively a debate of preserving tradition or discarding it. Further, each side simultaneously accused the other of innovating too much, of being too influenced by surrounding philosophies and culture, and of importing improper "bodily" understandings into Scripture's description of God.

In the midst of this acrimonious din, however, the decision at the Council of Constantinople (381) to reaffirm and, indeed, to strengthen the statements of the "holy fathers" at Nicea (325) was ultimately a judgment against a Neo-Arian position which believed new terminology like *homoousios* or *agen(n)etos* ("unbegotten") always denoted new objects and concepts, a curious analogue to parts of Newheiser's argument regarding *homosexuality*. This particular evolution, represented by Aetius and Eunomius, was the rejected development, even as Nicea was the promoted and henceforth honored development. Newheiser's appeal to the fourth century fails, then, not because the period witnessed no doctrinal change but because it witnessed a great proliferation of attempted changes, while *only one* was deemed faithful. Only one development was thought to preserve the authority and witness of Scripture and tradition in a complete way, even with admittedly new words.

The Challenge of Homosexuality

After his rather innovative treatment of the fourth century, we might expect Newheiser to advance a bold new thesis regarding our contemporary debates. He offers little, however, that should be unfamiliar. *Homosexuality* is a term of modern coinage, we are told. It supposedly does not correspond to Pauline terminology (*malakoi*, *arsenokoitai*) nor to medieval condemnations of *sodomia*. Paul's "conceptual apparatus," we are also to believe, would be incapable of grasping the concept *homosexual*. The story of Sodom is not about sexual sin but inhospitality (meanwhile, Genesis 1-2 and Romans 1:18-32, perhaps the most important and the clearest passages to consider, are simply omitted).

In each case, we encounter methods long-repeated — formulations now traditional and often assumed in progressive/liberal circles. I will not issue rejoinders to

these points, as others have done so more ably and at greater length, as I will detail later. Besides, detailed discussion of such matters is hardly the main point of his essay.

The point regarding the essential "newness" of *homosexuality* is what seems truly to carry the burden of Newheiser's argument, rather than the usual attempt at a broad-brush dismissal of objections. He would not otherwise attempt a comparison with the fourth century, nor would he argue that innovation may sometimes represent fidelity.

Yet here is the key issue: Newheiser also appears fairly uncertain regarding what really constitutes the newness of homosexuality. On one hand, he argues that, at its origin, it had a particularly new meaning, so definite and historically conditioned that it was "impossible" before the 19th century "for anyone to condemn" or approve of it. On the other hand, Newheiser seems to argue that the meaning of *homosexuality* is not fixed or certain, but is actually indeterminate at the moment. We do not even know what we are all arguing about yet, it seems. We must appreciate "particularity" and give "attention on the level of human lives." The term is "fungible" and "represent[s] an active attempt to structure and understand human existence." It is "contested"; we may only clarify its meaning and relationship to tradition "after decades of debate."

These are two fairly different approaches to historical changes. The former asserts that new terminology necessarily implies new concepts; the latter argues for a certain indeterminacy and potential equivocality in human language, such that certain terms can be exchanged for others. The former must argue that *homosexuality* is new; for the latter, it is an open question which may be decided either way. I found myself wishing Newheiser would settle on a consistent position regarding this question, as it is a matter of some importance.

For the question is not whether one can find various terminology for same-sex intimacy over the course of 20 centuries with some altered connotations accompanying those terms in different cultures or, indeed with some varying explanations of the origins of same-sex desire. That argument is long over; one can find them. Instead, the dispute at hand is whether there is any remaining consistency in the application of these various terms and what the substance of the consistency might be.

Current Christian debates are rather narrowly construed and do not concern varying ideas about the origins or possible accompanying characteristics of same-sex desire, despite how they play a role in some discussions of it. What some of us keep trying to say is that there is an underlying consistency in the way that Scripture and tradition have spoken clearly and critically to the ethical status of sexual activity between two men or two women by roundly condemning it. The differences uncovered regarding various terminology have been studied thoroughly, and they have not been proved significant. Thus, the only thing "new" about homosexuality or same-sex unions in our period is the formation of an articulate and persistent position arguing for the *approval* of what was formerly condemned. Hence, we see a now-typical appeal in liberal Christian circles to the movement of the Spirit as the ground of authority.

Contemporary Developments

It is here, however, that we must stop and consider precisely what is going on in our modern debates. All too often, we describe ourselves as conservatives or liberals, progressives or

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traditionalists. I have used these terms myself. But these self-designations mask something which is becoming increasingly evident: both those in favor of same-sex unions *and* those opposed are engaged in a great deal of theological construction and innovation of some kind.

The innovations being introduced by those of a more progressive mood are obvious to see. Put bluntly, the Church has condemned same-sex unions in the past, but contemporary "liberals" approve of them, for varying reasons. Conservatives, however, have "innovated" as well, though in a different manner than liberals. To be sure, conservatives have not manufactured their settled disapproval of same-sex unions; it is reflected in earlier ages. However, they have broadened the explanation of their objection in many ways, and advanced more constructive proposals. The past generation has witnessed the production of a new literature on human sexuality and marriage from a generally conservative position which far eclipses previous theological reflection on the topic. Earlier ages certainly spoke about it. But they never had to work so hard, frankly, to convince anyone of the disapproval of the Scriptures and the Christian tradition regarding same-sex unions nor of their approval of traditional marriage.

Not so in our own time. Hence one finds pages upon pages written by "conservatives" on this topic, largely exploring the relevance of creation theology and embodiment in fresh ways. On my shelf is *Flame of Yahweh: Sexuality in the Old Testament* (Hendrickson, 2007), a heavily footnoted, 844-page work which considers far more than the traditional passages of debate, focusing instead on reading the entirety of the Old Testament and recent scholarly literature in light of Genesis 1-2. The recent papers on human sexuality submitted to the Episcopal Church's House of Bishops exhibit similar shifts. In the Roman Catholic Church, so often characterized as perpetuating traditionalism, there is an acknowledgment that conservative positions have shifted, grown, or gained new sophistication. John Paul II's "theology of the body" was recently described as a genuine theological development, not at odds with previous ethical statements, but certainly of a different character and using a different set of terms. It, too, focuses on the creation of humanity as male and female and on the nature of embodiment. Works of this nature and extent simply did not exist until recently, and we have the contemporary debates on sexuality to thank for much innovative and useful research. But it has remained in such continuity with the past that we might describe this innovation appropriately as the discernment and renewal of tradition, as much as anything else.

This is where I see the analogue with the fourth century, though in a way perhaps different from Newheiser. As then, we face the multiplication of theological parties within the Church regarding a divisive issue. Each at least attempts to speak the grammar of the Christian faith. Each continues to work on developing more and more justifications and explanations of its position. Each innovates. In the end, only one will likely be deemed faithful to tradition. Only one will be seen to have innovated *within* the bounds of tradition, to have renewed it, and to have unfolded the true meaning of Scripture.

The only complication at this point is how we discern that moment of decision, given the divisions of Christianity. How shall we know when the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church has made up its mind? Moreover, what if, as many conservatives allege, the Church already has a mind on this matter? Regardless of how we answer these questions, it seems clear that a more or less settled position of the Anglican Communion (as one family of churches "belonging to" that one Church) has emerged, even as a rather different view prevails in the Episcopal Church, to which many conservatives still faithfully cling. For them, as for others, Article 21 of the Thirty-Nine Articles stands as a precious and salutary reminder that councils "may err, and sometimes have erred, even in things pertaining unto God"; hence all the more, surely, in things pertaining to human sexuality. And so we should all hope and pray that the Spirit will speak again to the councils of our church. It is all any generation may hope for. ■

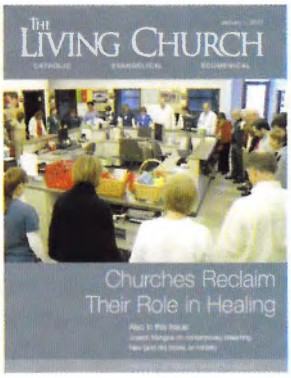
In the end, only one will likely be deemed faithful to tradition.

Zachary Guiliano is an M.Div. candidate in the history of Christianity at Harvard Divinity School and the Kellogg Fellow at the Episcopal Chaplaincy at Harvard. He has recently completed his thesis, "The Exegesis of Bede: Figures in History and the Shape of the Self," and is the editor, with Charles Stang, of the forthcoming anthology The Open Body: Essays in Anglican Ecclesiology *(New York: Peter Lang, 2012). He intends to begin doctoral studies in early medieval exegesis at the University of Oxford next year.*

A Holy Place

As a volunteer chaplain at Siloam Family Health Center, I applaud Lauren Anderson's "Churches Reclaim Their Role in Healing" [TLC, Jan. 1]. Siloam is certainly one of the most amazing ministries to refugees and the uninsured imaginable. Every staff member and volunteer is a committed Christian, and all have an involvement in their respective churches that is quite significant.

When entering the facility, one cannot help but be impressed with both the ambiance and the decor — it is truly a holy place. All staff members go about their ministry in a professional manner, and yet they have time for an occasional chat, and they are encouraged to ask their patients if they would like a chaplain to pray for them.



Truly, this is a model ministry, and I am delighted that your article emphasized the future need for such clinics, because the poor and the destitute will always be with us.

(The Rev.) H. David Wilson
Franklin, Tennessee

Prayer C, Updated

Lawrence Crumb's article on the biblical phrase "God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob" used in Eucharistic Prayer C ["Star Trek, or Couples' Club?," Jan. 1] reminded me that Prayer C's author, Howard Galley, subsequently wrote an alternate "dynamic equivalence" translation of this passage: "God of our holy and righteous ancestors; redeemer and Mother of Israel; God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."

There is some humor to the fact that Galley's elegant revision was written while leaning on his washing machine doing the laundry!

(The Rev.) Nigel J. Taber-Hamilton
St. Augustine's in-the-woods
Whidbey Island, Washington

March to Jerusalem

Thank you for publishing "Un-silent Nights in Bethlehem" [TLC, Jan. 1]. The Palestinian-Israeli conflict is the central problem facing the world today and deserves more attention from the Church (see the Churches for Middle East Peace website at www.cmep.org).

It's astonishing to notice how many Episcopalians are unaware that Christians who live in the Holy Land are Palestinians, and that Christians and Muslims suffer together under Israel's occupation. A number of the Episcopal Church's leaders have called for justice in the region, but the folks in our pews seldom seem to hear about it. There's a disconnect in communications someplace.

The Global March to Jerusalem is scheduled for March (globalmarchtojerusalem.org). There's a specific attitude, expressed by former Presiding Bishop Edmond L. Browning, that Christians could take on the march if only we were motivated: "As we Christians make our rightful claim to Jerusalem, we acknowledge that Muslims and Jews also have rightful claims to Jerusalem from their perspectives. It is useless to quarrel about sovereignty in the Holy City."

(The Rev.) Roy Hayes
San Diego

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Out of His Being

A friend placed a copy of John Macquarrie's *Principles of Christian Theology* on the table and said, "He talks a lot about the *beingness* of God." Brief pause. "But I don't think we have to talk that way." "Not only do we not have to talk that way," I responded, "we shouldn't." That proclamation will not, however, restrain me from mentioning the *beingness* of Jesus, demonstrated in a miraculous mending of a lost mind.

First, however, let us approach the lesson from Deuteronomy in which Moses promises the people that the Lord will raise up a prophet like himself. The purpose, as Moses explains, is to give the people a cooled off and less intense blast of divine fire. For the people said: "If I hear the voice of the Lord my God any more, or ever again see this great fire on mount Horeb, I will die." The successor of Moses, expressed in the singular, may suggest a larger whole, the succession of the prophetic office itself. Still, the thought of one final successor hung on in the consciousness of the Jews right up to the time of Jesus' ministry.

In John's gospel, for instance, following the feeding of the 5,000, we hear: "The people therefore, after they saw the sign he accomplished, *were saying*, 'This is the *true prophet* who is coming into the world'" (6:14). The imperfect tense, of course, signals past continuous action. They were saying again and again. Following a homily given by Jesus, *the people were saying* "This is the prophet." "This is the Christ" (7:40). There was, evidently, some considerable buzz around the idea that Jesus was precisely what the Jews had waited for: the final prophet. Other messianic terms were used as well, especially *Lord* and *King*.

While the lesson from St. Mark says nothing about Jesus being the prophet, it says a great deal about what was expected from the prophet/messiah. In contrasting Jesus' authority with that of the scribes, who had little or none, Mark is not so much insulting the scribes as pointing out the general religious condition of the people. The glory, power, and authority of God's presence had waned — indeed, was never said to occupy the second temple. They were in the condition of those who wait for the arrival of what they once had, but have no longer, or have only as a persistent ache.

Jesus arrives and teaches as one having authority (*exousian*). The Greek word connotes *ability* and *strength*. On closer examination we see the preposition *ex* which means *out of*, and the stem *Ousia* which means *property*, *possession*, *substance*. The last word, *substance*, still used in the Prayer Book in precisely this way, indicates totality of being. Out of the fullness of his being, out of the very person he is, Jesus teaches and heals.

To drive home the point that Jesus is not teaching how to improve the good person you already are, he presents himself to "one having an unclean spirit," which, in the symbolic world of the story, represents the sad soul reading this meditation. It is one thing to be sick, another to be truly trapped. Jesus will not have it. From the deep cavern of his divine *being* he speaks with all the authority of Genesis 1. Silence! Come out of him! This is the prophet with power. The doctor has come.

Look It Up

Read Mark 1:24. Yes, he has come to *destroy* demonic powers.

Think About It

When the children of Israel first saw manna they said "What is this?" After Jesus healed the man with an unclean spirit, they said "What is this?" There are more things in heaven and earth....

Catching and Repairing

Religious studies, however compelling and intriguing to a few, is not the subject of Christian preaching. The preacher is not a "disinterested" academician, though he is, to be sure, often found among books. He preaches under a divine necessity: the One True God.

This necessity is something broad and deep, reaching backward and into the mystery of creation itself: "He counts the number of the stars and calls them all by their names. Great is our Lord and mighty in power; there is no limit to his wisdom" (Ps. 147:4,5). Encouraging the Babylonian exiles, Isaiah must speak without attenuation or weakness or doubt. So he insists that their God is greater than the present political regime. "It is he who sits above the circle of the earth, and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers" (Isa. 40:22).

As for the rulers of the present age: "Scarcely are they planted, scarcely sown, scarcely has their stem taken root in the earth, when he blows upon them, and they wither, and the tempest carries them off like stubble" (Isa. 40:24). Again, with confidence and vigor Isaiah says the God who called into being every particle of creation will be faithful in delivering those who wait upon him: "He does not faint or grow weary.... He gives power to the faint, and strengthens the powerless" (28,29). Isaiah is preaching a liberation they have not yet seen. He is, therefore, preaching hope.

St. Paul speaks of the necessity of his preaching, such that he exercises a demanding adaptive skill still essential to Christian priesthood and all Christian witness. "I have become all things to all people, that I might by all means save some" (1 Cor. 9:22). He stretches every fiber of his being in reaching out to a diverse humanity, and though doing this work at great personal cost, he accepts that he will reach *some*, not all. Urgent though the message is, he is humble and accepts failure.

What precisely is the urgent message? Consider the following compendium: A glorious creation and beautiful humanity held in being from moment to moment by the will of God has, nonetheless, buried within it a seed of destruction. God would not leave us languishing, and in the fullness of time sent his Son to save us. He has lifted us up, through the death and resurrection of his Son, to a new supernatural life and has filled us with his holy and life-giving Spirit.

St. Mark shows this in action. Employing his favorite adverb, *immediately*, and making ample use of the narrative present as well as present participles, Jesus seems to be always in quick and rapid motion. Immediately leaving the synagogue they tell him about the mother-in-law of Simon, who is suffering from a fever. Jesus heals her, and then, in the evening, as a crowd gathers about the door, each suffering from a rather modern-sounding ailment (languishing), they are healed by Jesus. Jesus retreats briefly, then Simon and the others find him, and Jesus agrees to move on: "Let us go elsewhere to other cities that I may preach there; this in fact is why I have arrived" (Mk. 1:38). Strikingly, Jesus does not mention healing, but rather teaching, for the healings are a parabolic demonstration of the kingdom he announces. God is restoring all things. The preacher may be lighthearted, he may show a wide and happy smile, but let the preacher be *serious*. Speak of life and death.

Look It Up

Read Isa. 40:31. Although we have our nagging ailments, let us plan to walk, run, and fly.

Think About It

Before the fever left her, Jesus held her hand.

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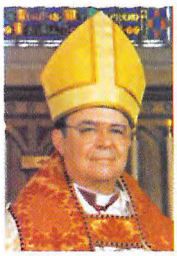
(**POPE** continued from page 7)

Edmond L. Browning were classmates at St. Luke's School of Theology, University of the South.

He was the first curate and school chaplain at Trinity, Baton Rouge, serving from 1954 until 1956, and priest-in-charge and later rector at St. George's, Bossier City, from 1956 to 1962.


Bishop Pope

He became the second rector of St. Luke's, Baton Rouge, in 1962. He was elected on the first ballot in November 1984 as bishop coadjutor of Fort Worth.

Pope was among the founders and first president of the Episcopal Synod of America, known today as Forward in Faith in North America.

The bishop is survived by Martha Haley Pope, M.D., his wife of 54 years; daughter, Juliet Haley Pope; son, Clarence Cullam Pope III; sisters, Mary Helen Pope White and Patricia Pope Laenger; and four grandchildren, Virginia Pope Guidry and Raegan Elizabeth Pope, Quinton Montgomery Pope, and Clarence Cullam Pope, IV.

Nashotah House Theological Seminary will accept memorial contributions to its scholarship fund.

In late 1994 Pope announced his plans to resign as bishop and become a Roman Catholic. The transition proved difficult for him.

"I could not shake the image of my consecration," he told Gustav Niebuhr of *The New York Times* in August 1995. "I thought I could lay it aside. I couldn't." Presiding Bishop Browning welcomed Pope back to the church, after inviting him to return.

Pope said in 2007 that he would return to Roman Catholicism. By 2010, however, he became a parishioner at St. Patrick's Episcopal Church, Zachary.

He was buried Jan. 12 from St. Luke's, where the parish hall is named in his honor.

PEOPLE & PLACES

Deaths

The Rev. **Richard Gibbs Younge**, a leader in the Episcopal Church's response to HIV/AIDS, died Dec. 13 at home in Seattle. He was 86.

Born in Brooklyn, he was a graduate of Cornell and Columbia universities and General Seminary. He completed a Ph.D. in church history from Church Divinity School of the Pacific. He was ordained deacon in 1959 and priest in 1960. He was president of the National Episcopal AIDS Commission, a member of General Convention's Commission on HIV/AIDS, and a board member of the Episcopal Society for Ministry in Higher Education. In Seattle he was a member of Brother to Brother, an HIV/AIDS outreach and education project, and a member for two terms of the King County HIV/AIDS Planning Council, which allocated funds for prevention, education and care services in the county. Father Younge was curate, St. George's, Brooklyn, 1959-61; rector, St. Augustine's, Oakland, CA, and campus chaplain, San Jose State University, 1961-66; member of the Division of Volunteer Ministers for the Diocese of California, 1962-66, and for the Diocese of El Camino Real, 1966-73; priest-in-charge, St. Cyprian's, San Francisco, 1971-75; assistant, St. Elizabeth's, South San Francisco, 1977-80; assistant, Episcopal Church in Almaden, San Jose, 1978-80; priest-in-charge, St. Columba's, Des Moines, IA, 1982-83; priest-in-charge, St. David's, Seattle, 1984-85; member of the Department of Christian Service and the AIDS Task Force, Diocese of Western Louisiana, 1987-90; vicar, St. Luke's, Grambling, LA, and campus chaplain, Grambling State University, 1987-90; priest-in-charge, Puyallup, WA, 1991. Fr. Younge is survived by his wife, Edith Adele Trice; sons Richard Younge of White Plains, NY, and David Younge of Highland Park, NJ; daughters Karen Younge of Seattle and Diane Wilson of Campo, CA; nine grandchildren; and one great-grandson. Father Younge's bishop, the Rt. Rev. Gregory Rickel, called him "A true leader and prophet, and a gentleman."

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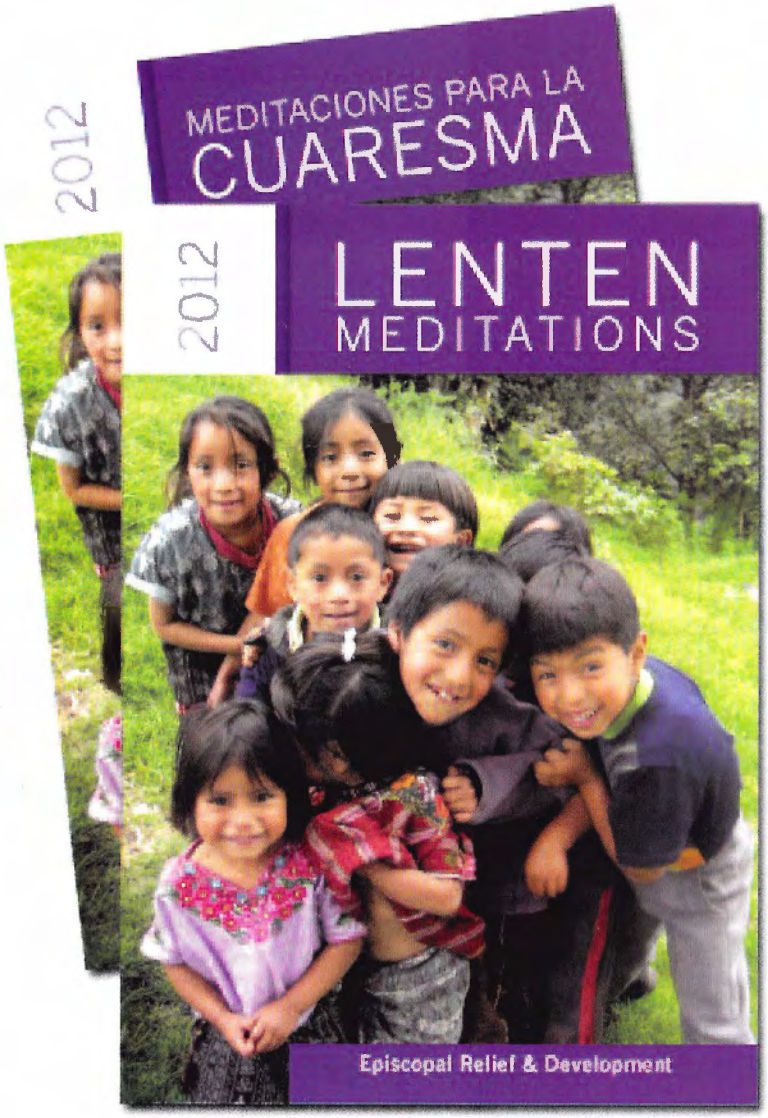

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