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ON THE COVER

"In this still-new century, we are resolved to escort The Living Church to its sesquicentennial and, by God's grace, to a 175th year in 2053" (see "James De Koven, Pray for Us," p. 21).

The Living Church

THIS ISSUE | September 29, 2013

Living Church Partners

We are grateful to the Parish of St. Paul the Apostle, Savannah, Georgia [p. 27], whose generous support helped make this issue possible.

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

Bylaws Wreak Havoc on UTO

The Executive Committee of the Episcopal Church has hired a new staff member to oversee the United Thank Offering (UTO), and the church's Executive Council has not yet acted on proposed changes to bylaws affecting the UTO.

The UTO's ministry continues and misappropriation of funds is not an issue. Nevertheless, a task force charged with reorganizing the UTO has concluded its work in public acrimony. Three of four UTO board members resigned in September to prevent any impression that they supported the proposed bylaw changes.

Barbara Tinder, former president of the UTO board, Robin Sumners, former communications convener, and Georgie White, who was in charge of internal compliance, were three of four UTO board members appointed to a task force by Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori. The fourth UTO task force member, Dena Lee, is not expected to resign. Renee Haney, the board's former secretary, joined the three task-force members in resigning.

Bylaws call for an 11-member board: one for each of the nine regional provinces in the Episcopal Church and two at-large members. UTO is an affiliate of Episcopal Church Women. The UTO board's vice president, Barbara Schafer, assumed the executive office upon Tinder's resignation.

The proposed bylaws, which the Rev. Ann Fontaine made public in a blog post (goo.gl/Kgh0eN), make clear that UTO is subject to General Convention and Executive Council. It eliminates the UTO board position of finance officer and makes all future board actions, grant policies, and decisions subject to approval by the Rt. Rev. Stacy Sauls in his role as the chief operating officer of the Episcopal Church.

The issue is complicated by history and accounting.

Episcopal Church Women (ECW) created the UTO, which is best

(Continued on next page)

Administrator Will Rock Again

New York City fans of punk rock and experimental theater will be led to think deeply about every word in the Lord's Prayer when a seminary administrator fulfills a long-term dream in Spring 2014.

The General Theological Seminary's director of admissions, William C. Webster, will debut *Bold Enough to Say*, a performance described as part concert, part theater, part film. A team of musicians and actors will join him. Episcopal parishes in Brooklyn are expected to host the first performances of a show that Webster hopes will have a long life.

"I hope the piece will go on the road, be performed by other groups of artists in different settings throughout the world," Webster said. "In other words, the work could become evangelism that reaches out both to the rock community and beyond."

Webster, 40, is drawing creatively on his background as a rock & roller with a seminary degree. At 19 he packed up his rhythm guitar, drums, and microphones and moved with his band from rural Pennsylvania to New York City. Soon they were playing CBGB and other New York clubs, first as the glam rock band SourPuss, later as Liquid Bliss. Their tunes struck a chord and led to gigs at colleges up and down the East Coast.

Along the way, Webster earned degrees from Hunter College and Princeton Theological Seminary, but he never lost his love for writing songs or performing live.

Bold Enough to Say grows out of his 12-week spiritual practice of meditation, with each week devoted to a single line in what Webster regards as "the perfect prayer."

"'Our Father' became a meditation on the implications of using gendered language for God," Webster said. "'Who Art in Heaven' explores the concept of universal salvation and the insider/outsider dynamics found in many religious communities."

Two albums will accompany the show. The first, to be released in December, will deliver a collection of the songs in *Bold Enough to Say*.

Webster: To the rock community and beyond.
Andrew Ashley/The General Theological Seminary photo

The second will come out after the initial performances and will give listeners a taste of the live version, much like The Who's rock opera, *Tommy*, did in 1969.

Webster hopes diverse audiences will turn out and be "equally inspired and challenged" by what they see and hear.

"For 16 years (since I was a first-year student at Princeton Seminary), I've carried this vision of uniting my two worlds, the punk/rock scene I come out of and the church community," Webster said. "My dream is to look out at an audience next year and see both groups, integrated and brought together by this show."

G. Jeffrey MacDonald
TLC Correspondent

known at the parish level for its annual Blue Box fundraising drive. ECW and UTO were both developed when women were excluded from ordained and lay leadership in the church. The UTO board makes annual grant requests, but after more than 100 years the surplus, which is held in trust, has become an impressive sum. Total funds under management amount to more than $14 million.

In recent years the IRS has increased scrutiny of 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations, especially those with affiliates. UTO has used the tax-exempt number of the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society (the incorporated name of the Episcopal Church). No one has said there is anything wrong with the current business practices of the UTO board, but they do differ from the business practices of the DFMS.

"Certain obligations [must] be fulfilled by the DFMS rather than the Board because the Board is not a corporation and cannot assume any legal responsibility or liability," Episcopal News Service reported. "That is borne entirely by DFMS, its officers, and its Board, the Executive Council."

UTO could seek its own tax-exempt number, similar to the way the Presiding Bishop's Fund for World Relief became Episcopal Relief and Development, but one former board member said UTO did not want to become separate from the Episcopal Church.

The proposed changes are the culmination of a multi-year process. In 2007 the UTO board agreed to a request from Executive Council not to make further changes to its bylaws until new ones had been approved. The former board member who spoke with TLC said the four resigning members wanted to ensure that the proposed changes would circulate widely before formal approval.

They achieved that goal. The resignations were discussed on several church-focused weblogs beginning after Labor Day weekend. The resignations were confirmed in a document released by the Episcopal Church's Office of Public Affairs on

(Continued on next page)

Bylaws Wreak Havoc

(Continued from previous page)

Sept. 4. Private correspondence was subsequently made public, prompting Bishop Jefferts Schori on Sept. 6 to dispute any intent to divest UTO of its funds. She described the resignations as "the result of grave suspicion and the attribution of inappropriate and unhelpful motives."

Staff salaries are usually considered administrative expenses for accounting purposes. "Administrative expenses of the UTO and the UTO Board are paid for by the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society (DFMS), the Church's corporate name, from three trust funds established for this purpose and given to DFMS to administer," ENS reported. "None of these funds were ever entrusted to the UTO Board or the committee that preceded it."

Neva Rae Fox, public affairs officer for the Episcopal Church, said "there is new leadership on the board, and the DFMS will continue working with this leadership." She directed further UTO questions to Bishop Sauls, who was unavailable for further comment.

Executive Council expects to discuss the proposed bylaws when it meets October 15-17 in Chicago.

Steve Waring

Under the Tent in Michigan

The Episcopal Church is not famous for tent revivals, but its youngest diocese wants to try new approaches, according to the Rt. Rev. Todd Ousley, Bishop of Eastern Michigan.

St. John's Church in Midland was the host for a diocesan-wide leadership strategy session September 7. The purpose of the meeting was to offer a collaborative platform for building parish enthusiasm and focus on common diocesan mission initiatives.

"I'm not sure who came up with the idea to call it a tent revival, but it

Doves in bright colors hang in the tent at St. John's Church, Midland, Michigan; and a beloved ritual among Episcopalians: conversation circles.

Diocese of Eastern Michigan/Facebook

was visible from the intersection of two busy streets," Bishop Ousley said. "People would have seen something out of the ordinary on that lawn that day. It was lots of fun."

Bishop Ousley said he and other meeting organizers were very pleased with the turnout and results.

"I think we won over many skeptics, especially those who thought there was a predetermined result," he said. "We invited people to share what was on their heart. Some of the results were predictable, but some were quite unexpected."

Bishop Ousley said the diocese was still compiling written submissions for a report to be submitted to diocesan council. Based on comments during the meeting, he sensed strong agreement on priorities to reduce community violence and address systemic causes of hunger within the diocese. He said support for recovery ministries was also strong and perhaps previously under-appreciated.

Diocesan tent revivals will probably become a regular event in Eastern Michigan, and Bishop Ousley

commended the concept to others throughout the church.

"We are always interested in exploring new ways of loosening structure and encouraging people to contribute," he said. "No one has a lock on wisdom or inspiration from the Holy Spirit."

General Convention approved creating the Diocese of Eastern Michigan in 1994. Approval came after a years-long process within the Diocese of Michigan that commended forming the new diocese.

Steve Waring

Stability in the Sacrament

Being ready for disaster in the heartland's Tornado Alley involves having essentials, such as water and batteries, ready to transport at a moment's notice. And because not all needs are material, congregations do well to have supplies of their own packed to ensure that familiar rituals survive, even if their buildings do not.

That's a message shared routinely these days in the Episcopal Diocese of Arkansas, where volunteer Katresia "Kaye" Staggs promotes the concept of Church in a Box. The small kit includes everything a congregation needs to celebrate the Eucharist on a makeshift altar if its building has become unsafe or reduced to rubble.

"If our church is blown away and we have no place to worship, we have the basics," Staggs said. "We don't need any of this to worship. But we have the basics of something that is stable for people."

Devastating tornados of recent years have left enormous needs in their wakes. Local congregations have worked overtime to minister among the suffering in hard-hit places like Moore, Oklahoma, and Joplin, Missouri.

These disasters and others closer to home have made Arkansas congregations more aware, Staggs said, as they increasingly host community response training events and consider putting together a Church in a Box as "an emotional first-aid kit."

Contents can fit in a box as small as 18 inches by 11 by 13. Inside are touchstones of the liturgy: a Bible, service pamphlets for Rite 1 and Rite 2, two white taper candles and lightweight candleholders, one Book of Common Prayer, one corporal, one purificator, one paten, one chalice, one bottle of red table wine, and one packet of Hosts for a priest to bless.

Once the box is packed, it's ready to go — unless those responsible make the mistake of storing it at the church.

"It would be kind of against the whole idea if you kept it at the church and the church got blown away," Staggs said.

A postulant to the diaconate in the Diocese of Arkansas, Staggs knows firsthand about the importance of post-disaster ministry. As a volunteer

(Continued on page 9)

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—The Rt. Rev. John Bauerschmidt,
Bishop of Tennessee

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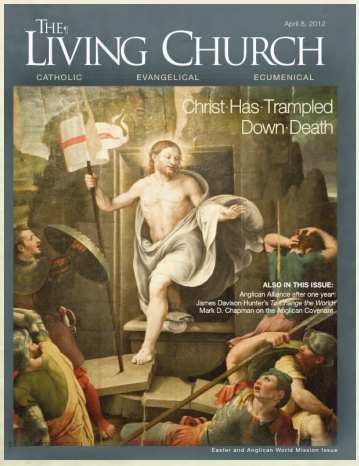

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Church in a Box, ready for natural disasters.

Katresia Staggs/Diocese of Arkansas photo

Stability in the Sacrament

(Continued from page 7)

chaplain with the Arkansas Crisis Response Team, she trains residents how to manage emotions in a crisis and provides what she calls "emotional first aid" to survivors.

Elements of worship can help disaster victims feel grounded, she says, when everything else in their lives is chaotic.

"If you're going through a disaster, anything that can calm you down and bring some normality to your life is a good thing," Staggs said. Church in a Box, she said, helps disrupted lives to "stabilize."

G. Jeffrey MacDonald
TLC Correspondent

Bishops Celebrate Reunion in Illinois

The bishops of Chicago and Quincy wrote a joint letter to their people on the eve of the dioceses' reunion on September 1. The reunion became official once a majority of bishops and standing committees agreed to it.

The Diocese of Chicago has retained its name and what has been the Diocese of Quincy will now be known as the Peoria Deanery. It includes the 125 congregations and chaplaincies and more than 36,000 members of the existing Diocese of Chicago in northern Illinois, and the nine congregations and 755 members of the Diocese of Quincy in west central Illinois.

"We have already taken a significant step toward building our reunited diocese," said the letter from the Rt. Rev. Jeffrey D. Lee, Bishop of Chicago, and the Rt. Rev. John C. Buchanan, provisional bishop of Quincy. "Beginning in early 2014, Bishop Buchanan will become an assisting bishop in the Episcopal Diocese of Chicago. He joins Bishop C. Christopher Epting in this part-time role, and will assist Bishop Lee with visitations and other pastoral responsibilities within the bounds of the former Diocese of Chicago. His work will allow Bishop Lee and Bishop Epting to devote more of their time to work in the new Peoria Deanery."

The first convention of the reunited diocese will meet November 22-23 in Lombard. The Rev. Alberto Cutie, formerly a Roman Catholic priest and now priest-in-charge at Church of the Resurrection in Biscayne Park, Florida, will be the keynote speaker.

Defending Tengatenga

Fourteen scholars and church leaders, including Archbishop Desmond Tutu, have defended the Rt. Rev. James Tengatenga after his abrupt dismissal from the William Jewett Tucker Foundation at Dartmouth College.

Dartmouth announced the bishop's appointment in July, and he soon became the target of activists who objected to his previous remarks about same-sex couples. Tengatenga had resigned as Bishop of Southern Malawi, and was scheduled to begin leading the foundation in early 2014.

"The fact that James Tengatenga did not leave behind a record of press releases or public pronouncements — Western forms of activism — does not mean that he was only recently converted to the cause nor that he has not been a loyal and helpful ally to gay activists," wrote the leaders, including the Rt. Rev. Ian Douglas, Bishop of Connecticut; the Very Rev. Katherine Hancock Ragsdale, president and dean of Episcopal Divinity School; and Dartmouth professor Irene Kacandes, who led the search committee for the deanship.

"Rather, it means that he has been using the methods of the place in which he was trying to make a difference. Unless Africa does not matter to Dartmouth, African human rights defenders should have been recognized as the best judges of Tengatenga's views, past actions, and likely future contributions."

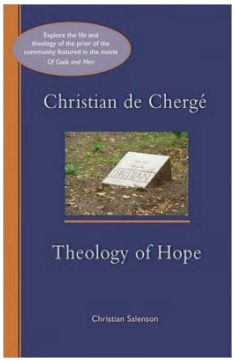
The full letter is available online at livingchurch.org.

BOOKS

A Martyr's Theology

Review by Ephraim Radner

Christian de Chergé was a Trappist monk who, with six of his monastic brothers, was killed in Algeria in 1996. The exact circumstances of their deaths remain disputed. They were abducted by a band of radical Islamists, in the midst of a horrendously violent period of civil-religious strife. Only their severed heads were subsequently recovered. To what degree did the Algerian army play a role in their deaths, and with what assistance from French security advisers, wittingly or unwittingly?



Christian de Chergé

A Theology of Hope

By **Christian Salenson**.

Translated by Nada Conic.

Cistercian Publications.

Pp. 224. $19.95

Whatever the case, the Algerian Trappists of Tibhirine, a monastic outpost that had existed for several decades, had become a focus of remarkable engagement with their Muslim neighbors. Under de Chergé's leadership, the monks had shared manual labor and prayer with them, building up profound connections of trust and affection. De Chergé himself was a devoted scholar of Islam, and, although hardly well-known outside a small circle, made provocative contributions to Roman Catholic thinking about Christian-Muslim relations. The monks' death, in this context, was all the more shocking.

The subsequent publication of de Chergé's "Testament," a short reflection on his likely death permeated by a striking spirit of forgiveness, humility, and hope, and written at the height of the escalating violence preceding his abduction, drew worldwide attention to this remarkable Christian servant. Of de Chergé and his companions, John Paul II said "they are true martyrs!"

Since 1996 de Chergé has emerged as a kind of Bonhoeffer for a new era. Unlike his Lutheran predecessor, his life was not offered valiantly and with an agonizing freedom against political "evil" per se: this was the popular view of Bonhoeffer's witness that marked the tense fears of the later 20th century.

Actual persons are the crucible of evangelical truths and divine guidance, not propositions.

Rather, de Chergé gave his life as a reconciling gift thrown into the midst of the hostility and violence associated with antagonistic diversities. His was a witness made quintessentially within our late modern culture of fragmented "globalized" hopelessness.

De Chergé published little during his life. Since his death significant collections of his homilies and monastic conferences have been published in French, along with anthologies. More volumes are promised. But even in French these are expensive and scarce, and although there have been some fine accounts of the Tibhirine community, notably by John Kiser, there is virtually nothing of his work translated into English.

In 2010, the French movie *Of Gods and Men* movingly brought the final days of the monks' lives to an international audience. Critical interest in the film centered, as our culture now tends to do, on the interreligious aspect of the story. But the movie itself, I would argue, was more focused on the monastic life of Christian community and prayer that supported their local friendships to the point of sacrifice. And it is this, in my opinion, that remains the richest fruit of de Chergé's witness.

Christian Salenson's *Christian de Chergé: A Theology of Hope* (a translation of the 2009 French original) follows in step with the temper of the times, and takes up the Christian-Muslim aspect. Although this approach has its limitations, the volume, in all of its austere precision and accessibility, is of the highest quality, and deserves to be read as a necessary introduction to de Chergé's thought. Salenson himself is a French priest and scholar, now head of a church-sponsored institute that is in part devoted to interreligious studies.

Compiler of a previous volume of prayers culled from de Chergé's writing, here he lays out a synthetic overview of the monk's theological vision, as it is oriented specifically towards interreligious dialogue. One of his key orientations is to interpret de Chergé in the light of the "Spirit of Assisi," a term coined by John Paul II in the wake of his invited gathering of religious leaders in 1986. It was the pope's assertion that the Spirit of Christ was properly at work, within all religions, to draw divided humanity back into its original unity. And under this impulsion, interreligious encounter was an essential part of the Christian mission.

Salenson divides his short volume into three sections. The first deals with contextual and personal aspects of de Chergé's life and ministry. The second and longest section focuses, through a series of thematic chapters, on aspects of de Chergé's understanding of Islam in relation to the Christian gospel. And the third offers a brief expansion of this vision into wider concerns, like martyrdom, ecclesiology, and prayer. In all of this, Salenson writes with clarity and a teacher's careful guidance. Particularly useful is the way he repeatedly places de Chergé's thinking in the context of magisterial discussion, sometimes also bringing to bear the thought of major Protestant theologians.

Let me focus on only two elements of this overview: the important formative role of some of de Chergé's personal encounters and his understanding of eschatology. Both of these order the "hope" of the book's title.

Salenson rightly underscores the way several specific meetings and persons profoundly shaped de Chergé's self-understanding, including two in particular. In the first, as a seminarian working in Algeria, de Chergé developed a friendship with a Muslim family man, Mohammed, whose intervention saved the young man's life and led to Mohammed's own execution. In another, an unplanned meeting with a Muslim man in the course of several hours of prayer together reoriented his vision. For de Chergé these were not illustrations of a theory but providential encounters of Christ's Spirit aimed at teaching and shaping him, and thus embodiments of the truths God offers in the gospel. They were to be "followed." And this lies at the root of religious "encounter" itself: actual persons are the crucible of evangelical truths and divine guidance, not propositions. Such encounters, because real, offer true and historically revelatory signs of hope.

As Salenson explains it, Christian hope such as de Chergé saw embodied in religious personal encounter was the gift of divine grace at work in the world in a way that must necessarily outstrip human comprehension and manipulation. Influenced by the French Catholic poet Charles Péguy, de Chergé insisted that God's love in Christ Jesus "for the world" is the foundation of any knowledge we might have of anything of value. It also comes "to" us, rather than

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De Chergé's steadfast faith in the ultimacy of God in Christ, rather than a relativizing instinct, led him into an astonishing sacrificial generosity of spirit.

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being elicited by us. In a way that perhaps can be seen as paralleling Barth's insistence on the historical priority of God's life in Christ, de Chergé saw the reconciling act of God, in its *fulfillment*, as preceding Christian-Muslim encounter, and hence "filling it" with its divine fruit of unity even before our efforts. There was no problem for de Chergé in claiming that in such encounters we "recognize" Christ's spirit at work within the other, much as the babe in Elizabeth's womb leapt in the face of her encounter with Mary. The "end" is given its sign within the present encounter of love. A Christian can love a Muslim neighbor without dint because that love is already established in its infinite breadth in a way that must include Christian and Muslim together in Christ somehow.

To be sure, the "somehow" was something de Chergé was explicit in leaving unspecified. Christian hope meant assuming a place for Islam in God's positive economy, not in a way that might supplant the Christian gospel, but nonetheless in a way that the Christian gospel itself demanded be kept veiled, so that only love might be its explicator. Salenson argues, on this basis, that the "martyrdom" that can be attributed to de Chergé and his companions is of a particular kind. That is, although not unrelated to its creedal base, the "witness" pressed in another direction: if de Chergé and his brothers were murdered "for Christ," it was for that love of Christ that drove them simply to be friends with their religious counterparts — amicable and hostile as they were — with no other motive than that such love be lived openly. They were, Salenson says, "martyrs of charity." And in this sense, a world of division is put on notice and invited in by the truth of God in Christ.

Salenson's study engages much more than this, and merits careful study. Still, the book has its limitations, ones that might possibly contribute to distortions regarding de Chergé's own thinking and witness in a public mind that approaches his monastic life with restricted knowledge.

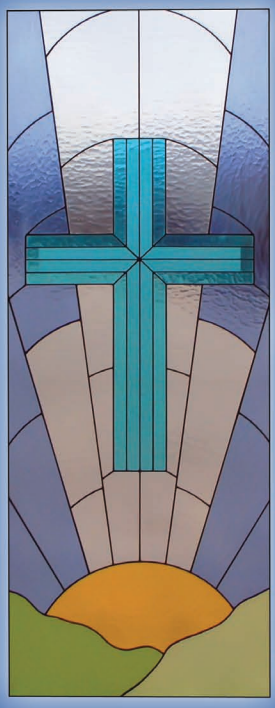
It is possible, for instance, to read Salenson and gain a picture of de Chergé as a radical religious inclusivist. While Salenson tries hard to avoid this, his frequent quotations from Raimon Pannkkar, among others, can give the impression that de Chergé shared with them their often worrying syncretistic tendencies. He did not. While his notion of divine grace was indeed radical, it remained tied to the particularities of Incarnation, Scripture, and Gospel — not to mention Church — in ways that cannot be easily reduced to religious inclusivism. His own reflections on the question of the "status" of non-Christian religions remained deliberately tentative and humble.

Much of this is tied, on the one hand, to his deeply traditional Benedictine milieu and commitments and, on the other, to his well-rooted formation as a priest and loyal servant of the Church. This is something Salenson's focus inevitably misses. De Chergé, for all his willingness to be open to self-critical rethinking regarding the place of Islam in God's economy of salvation, was an orthodox and, in many ways, very conservative Christian. This is important to grasp, and comes out far more clearly in his discussions of Church teaching, Scriptural reflection, and ecclesial expectations given in his homilies and community talks.

Not that these stand in some kind of tension with his interreligious reflections. Just the opposite: they support them because of the sheer power of de Chergé's quite traditional faith in the infinite grace of God in Christ Jesus. Vulnerable openness to others derives from confidence in the absoluteness of the Christian revelation in this case — something that is often misunderstood by those whose commitment to a greater religious tolerance wrongly leads them to relativize and reshape the clear contours of the Christian gospel. Here, in any case, we face something similar to Bonhoeffer: de Chergé's steadfast faith in the ultimacy of God in Christ, rather than a relativizing instinct, led him into an astonishing sacrificial generosity of spirit.

Salenson's book should be read as widely as possible, just because it opens English readers to the evangelical shape of such generosity. It is a generosity, however, that requires experimental engagement among us in order to be explored, let alone understood. And that is a calling for which the discipleship of encounter, and not theological argument alone, is the vehicle of grace.

The Rev. Ephraim Radner is professor of historical theology at Wycliffe College, Toronto, and serves on the Living Church Foundation.



BOOKS

Lord, Renew Your Church

Review by Daniel Muth

Throughout her history, the Catholic Church's children have continually recognized her need for reform and renewal. From the time of Moses, through the reforms of Hezekiah and Josiah, and the great reformist movements of the Maccabean era, our Jewish forbears labored to the same end. Our Lord himself, during his earthly ministry, spent no small effort critiquing one of these movements, Pharisaism, with which he was in general sympathy.

The Church, as the movement of reconciled Jews and Gentiles (Eph. 2), Christ's own Bride, consists of men and women — sinners all — who form a pilgrim people journeying through history. The characteristic errors of any age are to be countered by the self-sacrificing witness of Christians of that age. Like the Church herself, this witness will often begin quietly, as a small group or community. If the Christian Church is to be the Church, she must be always on the lookout for such groups and learn from and encourage them. She must also be prepared to critique or reject them if they are in error.

In *Ecclesial Movements and Communities*, Brendan Leahy, professor of systematic theology at the Pontifical University of St. Patrick's College in Maynooth, Ireland, examines the phenomenon of a host of new ecclesial movements and communities that have sprung up in the life of the Roman Catholic Church in the 20th century (most began in Europe but now permeate the globe).

He cites the words of Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger (now Benedict XVI, pope emeritus) using the Franciscans as the clearest exemplar of an ecclesial movement: "[M]ovements generally derive their origin from a charismatic leader and take shape in concrete communities, inspired by the life of their founder; they attempt to live the Gospel anew, in its totality, and recognize the Church without hesitation as the ground of their life without which they could not exist."

He also cites Australian Bishop Julian Porteous's categorizing of movements as:

- those started before the Second Vatican Council (the Legion of Mary and the Schoenstatt Movement)
- those started after the Council (charismatic renewal, the Word of God Community, the Emmanuel Community, the Holy Trinity Community of Indonesia)
- communities founded by clerics (Opus Dei, Legion of Christ, Regnum Christi, Communion and Liberation, and Kkottongnae, founded in Korea)
- communities founded by laymen (Focolare, the Neocatechumenal Way, and the Community of Sant'Egidio)
- communities that have taken the form of religious life (the Jerusalem Community and the Beatitudes Community)

This list offers just a sampling. Leahy notes that the Pontifical Council for the Laity lists 122 new movements, including Cursillo, the Foyers de Charité, L'Arche, and Teams of Our Lady. The book never provides a complete list and does not go into detail on

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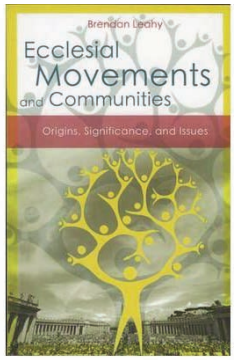
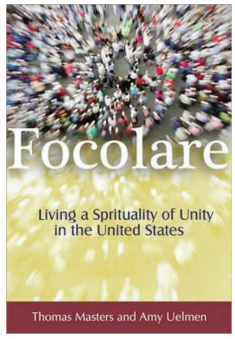


Ecclesial Movements and Communities

Origins, Significance, and Issues

By **Brendan Leahy**. New City Press. Pp. 200. $16.95



Focolare

Living a Spirituality of Unity in the United States

By **Thomas Masters** and **Amy Uelmen**.

New City Press. Pp. 224. $16.95

(Continued from previous page)

the background or development of any of the movements or communities that are its subject.

The focus, rather, is on the place of such movements in the life of the Roman Catholic Church. Most arose in the 20th century, as an empowered understanding of the place of the laity in the Church was coalescing; this development was codified in the ecclesial documents of the Second Vatican Council. The Council's understandings of the Church as Mystery, Communion, and Mission set the parameters for the hierarchy's subsequent guidance and support of existing and developing movements and communities. International meetings of movements were held in 1981, 1987, and particularly on Pentecost 1998 to provide opportunities for development and clarification of their proper relationship to the wider Church, and, especially, their place in the life of the local congregation.

Thomas Masters and Amy Uelmen's *Focolare* (New City Press is Focolare's publishing arm) traces the history and manner of life encouraged by its namesake movement, begun in World War II-ravaged northern Italy by a remarkable woman, Chiara Lubich. She began by meeting with friends in Trent in June of 1944 to pray for unity and an experience of Christ in an ever-deeper way. From such humble beginnings she founded a movement that currently numbers 140,000 core members and more than two million affiliates in 182 countries, acting together as, in John Paul II's words, "Apostles of Dialogue," encouraging unity within Roman Catholicism and such unity as is possible between Christian ecclesial communities, interfaith bodies, and even nonbelievers.

Focolare is in many ways representative of the movements discussed by Leahy. A winsome leader (Lubich) brings to life, via a particular charism (unity in Christ), people from varied walks of life (Focolare communities consist of men and women, young and old, clergy and lay) joined together in a structure flexible enough to allow community involvement in multiple ways ("Focolarini" live in community, married Focolarini share in the community's life but live with their families, and adherents follow the manner of life but without as much regular contact with a Focolare house). Through its community and charism, the movement provides its members with training in the Church's pastoral, apostolic, and evangelizing mission and thereby manifests the catholicity of the faith.

It is sobering to think that a movement such as Focolare — obedient to traditionalist leadership, uninterested in chic politics, and utterly devoid of narcissism or any desire to set Christ against his Church — has not emerged organically in the Episcopal Church for quite some time. Cursillo and the charismatic movement, both mentioned by Leahy, have taken hold — but they seem the exceptions that prove the rule. Both movements are heavily experiential, subjective, and, particularly when removed from the context of Roman Catholicism, wide open to any sort of leading or teaching, however flawed. Neither is organized sufficiently that it may be held accountable for how its adherents expound the faith once given (or fail to) and hence, not surprisingly, have been limited in what they have to offer the wider Church.

Renewal movements have been a constant in the life of the Christian Church. The vast majority of them have been monastic in one form or another. On the whole, the movements discussed by Leahy, and Focolare as presented by Masters and Uelmen, share much in common with these traditional forms of the Holy Spirit's revivifying of his Church. They accept obedience to godly authority; share a common life in joy and self-sacrifice, open to creation while shunning the counterfeits of the world, the flesh and the devil; and, to one extent or another, maintain chastity as an essential ingredient. Anglicans who wish to recapture the spirit of Christian renewal should look to all three of these characteristics, helpfully presented in these encouraging books.

Daniel Muth, a resident of Leland, North Carolina, serves on the board of the Living Church Foundation.

14th Century Order of the Church

Proper Conciliarism

Review by Mark F.M. Clavier

One of the great "what-if" moments in Church history came in the late Middle Ages when a group of reformers sought to introduce oversight by a regular general council to the Western Church. This Conciliar movement, as it was later called, reached its high water mark at the Council of Constance (1414-18) when a plan for reform was discussed that would have decentralized the Church and limited the monarchical powers of the papacy. The plan actually seemed achievable during the long conference, but in the end the opportunity was missed and the papacy was able to reclaim much of the authority is had lost during the Great Schism. What if the Concilarists had succeeded? Would the schisms of the Reformation have been avoided?

"What if?" is a question that constantly sprang to my mind as I read Paul Valliere's impressive and engaging *Conciliarism: A History of Decision-Making in the Church*. Valliere, professor of religion and McGregor Professor of the Humanities at Butler University, Indianapolis (and an Episcopalian), draws upon a wide array of historical and theological resources to survey the history of Church councils and synods and to make a cogent case for conciliar government. Moreover, he explicitly uses this historical study to offer a wider context to the current controversies within the Anglican Communion and to advocate for proper conciliarism in modern-day Anglicanism. It is, thus, a book that should be read and seriously considered by anyone concerned with the problem of authority within Anglicanism.

After examining in the first three chapters the scriptural and patristic roots for synodical government and its subsequent development and partial eclipse during the Middle Ages, Valliere turns his attention to the English Reformation. A ruefulness seems almost to pervade his consideration of the striking absence of conciliarism among the English Reformers, whom one would think would have found conciliar ideals congenial to their designs. Even Richard Hooker neglected to address the subject meaningfully in his *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*. In fact, it was not until the 19th century that some Anglicans, particularly in Canada and the United States, would begin advocating conciliarism as a way of drawing the disparate elements of worldwide Anglicanism together. Their vision gave rise to the Lambeth Conference. But their ideals were actively resisted by "synodophobes" in Great Britain who either questioned

(Continued on next page)

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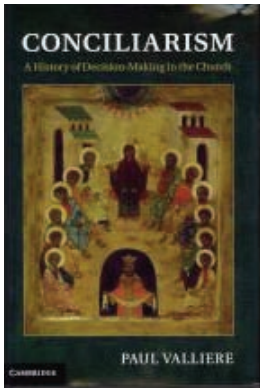
the legality of a worldwide council or feared it would lead to prelacy. Consequently, the Lambeth Conference explicitly eschewed conciliar language, repeatedly refusing to develop any mechanisms that might be construed as transforming it into a council of the whole communion.

Valliere's argument is all the more striking because Anglicans often glory in their embrace of synodical government. He argues, however, that provinces such as the Episcopal Church and the Church of England have actually settled for quasi-synodical language to describe a system that really arose out of the Anglo-American political tradition. Our synods and convention mimic governmental structures rather than Church councils. Valliere points to the rule by majority rather than consensus as key evidence of this. He also believes this failure to embrace conciliarism has led to a system that seeks to replicate the activities of representative government without providing the accountability on which democratic institutions rely (namely, the ballot box). Bishops, for example, can never be voted out of office. Consequently, governing bodies within Anglicanism are incapable of addressing crises because they lack the authority of a proper council or the accountability of responsible government. Moreover, to Valliere's mind the missed opportunity to conceive of the Lambeth Conference as a pan-Anglican council has resulted in a provincialism that stresses self-sufficiency over mutual accountability and unity.



Conciliarism
A History
of Decision-Making
in the Church
By **Paul Valliere**.
Cambridge. Pp. 302. $99

There is a great deal in Valliere's book to challenge almost everyone. He is critical of revisionists for not giving due consideration to the ecclesiological dimension of various decisions and for exaggerating the role of individual conscience: "Conscience is not a council in miniature any more than a council is conscience writ large" (p. 225). He is also critical of traditionalists for separating themselves from the Episcopal Church (rather than "making a prophetic nuisance" of themselves within the church) and for naively appealing to Reformation documents to provide solutions to present-day problems. Nor is he any kinder to the Anglican Covenant, lamenting its choice of the term *covenant* (given its problematic history within Anglicanism) and questioning its practicality. In particular, he criticizes its dependence on new structures within the Anglican Communion (such as the Anglican Consultative Council, Primates' Meetings, and the Joint Standing Committee) that command little respect or trust.

Instead, Valliere advocates for a pan-Anglican council composed of bishops, clergy, and laity that could be convened whenever a crisis affects the Communion as a whole. This, he argues, would not be a standing body that would threaten to centralize authority within the Communion but instead would mirror the councils of the early Church that were convened to address particular issues. Such councils, he adds, should also embrace consensual forms of decision-making, such as the one advocated by Nicholas of Cusa in the 15th century or the one currently employed within the World Council of Churches.

While many may not be convinced by Valliere's solution (or, at least, its practicality), his argument does point to a trajectory *within* the wider Church and particularly Anglicanism that would be fulfilled by an embrace of conciliarism. His advocacy of consensus rather than bare majority rule is also quite attractive, not least because of its deep biblical and historical roots. For that reason, it is a shame his book did not appear ten years ago when there may have been more of an appetite (not to mention necessary mutual trust) to consider whether Anglicanism, in its long advocacy of the perceived norms of the patristic period, might not embrace conciliarism as a *via media* between the papacy and Protestant confessionalism. But just as an opportunity was missed after the Council of Constance in the 15th century, so too, one suspects, has an opportunity been missed in 21st-century Anglicanism. If nothing else, *Conciliarism: A History of Decision-Making in the Church* should make any Anglican who laments our current international mess stop and ask, "What if?"

The Rev. Mark F.M. Clavier is dean of residential training at St. Michael's College, Llandaff, and teaches theology at Cardiff University.

Bowen Theory Exegeted

Review by Leander Harding

Bowen Family Systems Theory has been a part of teaching about leadership and conflict management in seminaries for many years. The application of this material to congregational life was pioneered by the late Rabbi Edwin Friedman, who was a fixture at the "baby bishops school" of the Episcopal Church.

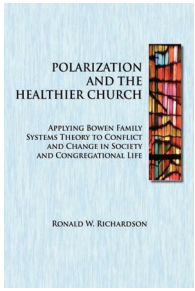
Many of the terms of this theory ("don't triangulate," "non-anxious presence") have passed into the *patois* of the church. I have taught this material as part of the pastoral leadership course at Trinity School for Ministry. I believe Bowen Family System Theory is an extremely useful perspective for church leaders. Unfortunately the material is often heard in a superficial way as a technique to control others rather than as a challenge to leaders toward self-management and self-development.

Of all the concepts in this theory, one has been heard and understood in church circles in a particularly unfortunate and destructive way. This has to do with the way a leader thinks of and handles resistance to change. The theory predicts that all leaders will encounter resistance and that part of the skill of leadership is the ability to stay the course in the face of resistance. Ed Friedman famously used the metaphor of "the right stuff" test pilot Chuck Yeager to explain this phenomenon. Yeager was trying to break the sound barrier. Most pilots began to back off as they encountered the terrific turbulence near the speed of sound. Yeager had a physicist friend who predicted it was smooth beyond the barrier. Yeager accelerated just as most pilots were throttling down and thus achieved the record.

This has become the dominant image of leadership for a whole generation of leaders in the Episcopal Church. The image emphasizes the ability to take a stand and persist, which are characteristics leaders need. Family Systems Theory stresses the role of principled leadership but it also stresses strongly the significance of staying connected to the group by the disciplined cultivation of one-on-one relationships. There is a difference between principled leadership that is well-connected and relationship-poor leaders who push their own agendas at the expense of the organization.

Resistance does come with the territory of leadership and interpreting it is a leadership skill. In one of my classes I had an Air Force Academy graduate and former flight instructor. After listening to my remarks about the danger of mishearing the Yeager metaphor, she said, "You have to know whether the turbulence you are experiencing is normal resistance or whether it means the wings are falling off the aircraft."

Ronald Richardson is one of the most dependable interpreters of Bowen Theory for church leaders. In this book he reflects on his own long pastoral ministry and how he has navigated church polarization using the insights of Bowen Theory. The book tells the story of how Richardson successfully mediated racial polarization in the local high school, led a Baptist and a Presbyterian church in a successful merger, and managed to keep a pastoral counseling center from polarizing about the use of Bowen Theory.



Polarization and the Healthier Church

Applying Bowen Family Systems Theory to Conflict and Change in Society and Congregational Life

By **Ronald W. Richardson**. CreateSpace. Pp. 161. $14.99

The book is especially helpful because of Richardson's unrelenting focus on how he functions in polarized and anxious environments in a way that reduces tensions and increases mutual understanding. He is constantly figuring out how to stay connected, curious, and true to his principles without attacking, defending, or diagnosing others. In the end it sounds suspiciously like humble Christian service.

A mishearing of the Bowen Theory approach to leadership has contributed to increased polarization in our church. This book is an antidote.

The Rev. Leander Harding is rector of St. Luke's Church in Catskill, New York.

St. Francis, by Francisco de Zurbaran (c.1645), Musée des Beaux-Arts, Lyon, France

WikiPaintings

Francis Beyond Lore

Francis of Assisi
A New Biography
By **Augustine Thompson**, OP.
Cornell University Press.
Pp. x + 299. $29.95

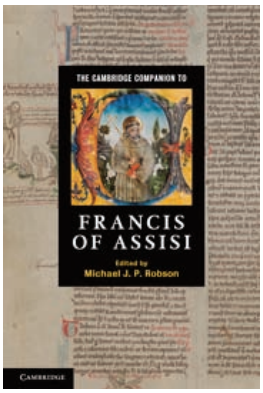
Review by Peter Eaton

Along with Saint Nicholas, Francis of Assisi is the best-known of all saints in the Western Church. And yet, for all his popularity both among faithful Christians as well as those who do not describe themselves as religious but who see him as a symbol of environmental stewardship, the Francis of history bears little resemblance to the Francis of later myth and spirituality. These two books help us enormously in gaining a clearer picture of this elusive yet compelling figure.

Francis was a difficult, complex person — a particular and unique spiritual personality, alien to so many sensibilities, both among his contemporaries and in every subsequent generation. He was a trying patient when sick, and deeply ambivalent about his authority and his place in the community he had founded.

There is no uninterpreted Francis, and the task of the historian is to examine very carefully the abundance of evidence that survives. It is a much more difficult task than it may seem, for even the earlier date of some documents does not guarantee their reliability. All those who have written about Francis have had an agenda, including his first biographer. And much that has been written about Francis, or with Francis as a major theme, is of questionable usefulness if what one is interested in is a true portrait of the saint in all his fullness.

Augustine Thompson's new biography is a model of all that is best in a work of this kind. It is compellingly and lucidly written, accessible both to the interested layperson as well as the scholar. This is the first critical biography of Francis by an English-speaking scholar; the other two biographies that can be described as critical are by an Italian and Frenchman. The book is divided into two parts: the biography and an exami-



The Cambridge Companion to Francis of Assisi
Edited by **Michael J.P. Robson**.
Cambridge University Press.
Pp. xvii + 305. $29.99

nation of the sources. In a biography of this intricacy, this is the best way of organizing the work.

Thompson's biography is now the place to begin for anyone who wants to understand Francis, his life, and the subsequent development of devotion to him, and it is not soon to be bettered.

Michael Robson has given us a helpful collection of essays, divided into two sections. The first section concerns Francis, his writings, his relationship to Clare, and the emergence of the movement. There is even a chapter on "Francis and creation," which traces Franciscan reflection on the subject as far as Angela of Foligno. The second section collects essays that range through many aspects of the Franciscan heritage in the Church. Anglicans will welcome especially "The ecumenical appeal of Francis" by Petà Dunstan, a leading scholar of Anglican religious life.

As always, truth is much more interesting than fiction, even "holy fiction." Thompson and Robson have provided us with the sort of attention to Francis that is likelier both to illumine this remarkable historical figure and to enable us to live into a more genuine Franciscan spirituality.

Francis cared about the Eucharist, the Daily Office, and poverty much more than he had anything to do with animals or nature. Francis was, contrary to the popular picture of him, a very ecclesial person in both his commitments and in his preoccupations. What might a clearer picture of Francis give us? We can at last, thanks to these books, ask the question with some confidence that we may find some reliable answers.

The Very Rev. Peter Eaton is dean of St. John's Cathedral, Denver, and a member of the Episcopal Church's Standing Commission on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations.

OCTOBER 4: FRANCIS OF ASSISI, FRIAR

Fact-based Honor for Francis and Clare

Review by Aaron Canty

The ability to separate historical facts of Saints Francis and Clare from the hagiographical aura that surrounded them even while they still lived has been very difficult. In the past century, many scholars have attempted to make such a distinction. Scholars such as Paul Sabatier and Kajetan Esser, and more recently Leonhard Lehmann, Carlo Paolazzi, and Jean François Godet-Calogeras have examined the history and textual tradition of their writings and legacy.

The culmination of this research was, for the Anglophone world, the three-volume series Francis of Assisi: Early Documents (1999, 2000, 2001), along with an index (2002) and a companion volume, *Clare of Assisi: Early Documents* (2006), published by New City Press. This series translated all of the writings of Francis of Assisi and many of the documents that accompanied the founding of the Order of Friars Minor and the early history of the Franciscans after his death.

A new synthesis of all the research behind those translations and research completed since then has been published recently by Franciscan Institute Publications. These volumes, in the new Studies in Early Franciscan Sources series, separate the Francis of history from the Poverello of hagiography through meticulous manuscript research and studies of the reception history of texts from the early Franciscan community. They also establish the authentic writings of his closest follower, Clare, from spurious ones attributed to her for centuries.

In *The Writings of Francis of Assisi: Letters and Prayers* the opening essay by Luigi Pellegrini is a marvelous synthesis of the reception history of the manuscripts and printed editions containing Francis's writings. This study includes a detailed discussion of the earliest manuscript collection of early Franciscan documents, Assisi codex 338, and the transmission of Francis's writings in early modern printed editions and vernacular translations. Godet-Calogeras has examined the two pieces of parchment that contain the remaining texts written by Francis himself. These *chartulae*, one in Assisi and one in Spoleto, preserve *The Praises of God*, *A Blessing for Brother Leo*, and *A Letter to Brother Leo*. Michael W. Blastic and Michael Cusato have studied the historical contexts of these letters, including their emphases on reverence for the Eucharist, the Muslim influence be-

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hind the written names and words of the Lord, and the importance of penance and obedience within the Church and within the fraternity of the Friars Minor.

Francis composed a number of various kinds of Latin and vernacular prayers, salutations, and exhortations. Some of the more famous of these texts include the *Prayer before the Crucifix*, the *Canticle of the Creatures*, *Praises for All the Hours*, and the *Salutation to the Blessed Virgin Mary*. Jay M. Hammond, Laurent Gallant, Jean-François Godet-Calogeras, and Michael W. Blastic have written essays on these texts. One of the arguments advanced about some of them is that these prayers are more sophisticated structurally than they first appear and present a rich, sacramental view of the world in which God communicates his goodness through the created universe and through his incarnate Son.

The most substantial portion of *The Writings of Francis of Assisi: Rules, Testament and Admonitions* is a series of essays by William J. Short examining in detail Francis's rules, including the *Rule of 1221* (the *Earlier Rule* or the *Regula non bullata*) and the *Rule of 1223* (the *Later Rule* or the *Regula bullata*). Although these essays avoid straying into controversies on whether the *Rule of 1223* compromised the seemingly more radical ideals of the *Rule of 1221*, which did not receive papal approval, they do allude to debates among scholars in recent secondary literature. J.A. Wayne Hellman's essay sorts out questions surrounding Francis's *Testament*, that is his last will, testament, and exhortation to his brothers from other "testaments" that Francis wrote for other people, including Clare. Blastic and Hammond analyze Francis's *Admonitions*, exhortations given orally and later written down by secretaries and whose final redactor remains unknown.

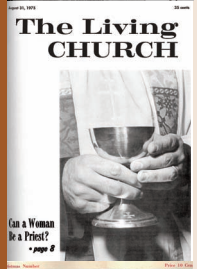
The Writings of Clare of Assisi: Letters, Form of Life, Testament and Blessing contains essays situating Clare and her followers in their historical context, along with the historical context of Clare's writings and their reception history. Particularly helpful in this volume is Ingrid Peterson's essay describing the history of 20th-century scholarship on Clare and summarizing the research separating Clare's authentic letters (to Agnes of Prague) from a number of spurious letters attributed to her. Lezlie Knox's article on Clare's *Form of Life* also describes the historical significance of the first rule written by a woman to be confirmed by the pope. Essays by Blastic and Godet-Calogeras complete the book by describing the scholarship and historical context of Clare's *Testament* and *Blessing* to all her sisters. The authenticity of both texts had been questioned several times during the 20th century and then re-established after a thorough palaeographical study by Bartoli Langeli in 2000.

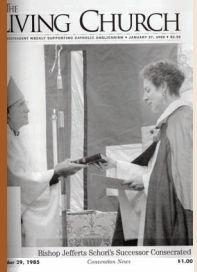
The studies presented in these three volumes are written by specialists and presuppose the reader's general familiarity with the writings of Francis and Clare. Several essays supply large portions of the text being interpreted; others will quote important phrases or pericopes, but readers unfamiliar with the texts will not be aware of the literary context in which they are situated.

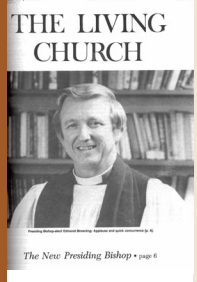
G.K. Chesterton described three ways of approaching a history of Francis of Assisi. The first is from the perspective of a rationalist who admires his "modern" sensibilities; the second perspective is that of a saint, a mendicant beggar whose religious vocation allows him to understand the love for Christ that motivated Francis; the third way was for ordinary people who are sympathetic but skeptical. That is, they admire many of Francis's qualities but are at a loss to explain his religious significance.

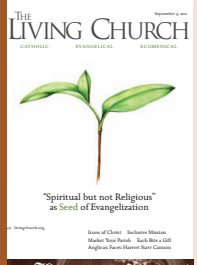
These essays show that there is another perspective. This approach entails admiring Francis and Clare and sharing their faith and love for Christ without seeing them exclusively as "modern" or merely as possessing a sanctity that transcends history. This approach attempts to understand their holiness in terms of their historical context. The scholarly rigor of this approach is sure to perpetuate the living memory of these beloved medieval saints.

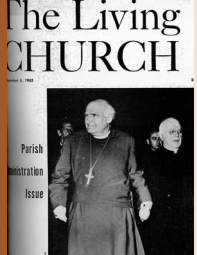
Aaron Canty is associate professor of religious studies at St. Xavier University in Chicago.











EDITORIAL

James De Koven, Pray for Us

Speaking to General Convention in 1874, the same body that declined consent to his election as Bishop of Wisconsin, the Rev. James De Koven said that to adore Christ in his sacrament "is the inalienable privilege of every Christian and Catholic heart. How we do it, the way we do it, the ceremonies with which we do it, are utterly, utterly indifferent. The *thing itself* is what we plead for."

Father De Koven endured another rejection only one year later, after he was elected Bishop of Illinois. THE LIVING CHURCH came into being in 1878, before the Episcopal Church came to accept Anglo-Catholic piety, in a variety of forms, as a welcome and indeed essential voice in the choir.

Today, building on a longstanding commitment to inter-party healing and cooperation, TLC describes its focus as Catholic, Evangelical, and Ecumenical. We see these three aspects of Christian belief as necessarily complementary, and in fact as mutually constitutive. Catholicism *is* evangelical and ecumenical, because the Christian gospel is universal and ancient, encircling the globe, rooted in personal conversion and belief: *Credo*.

We are thankful to be part of a worldwide Anglican Communion that welcomes the spikiest Anglo-Catholics and the evangelical revivalists of Holy Trinity Brompton, home of the Alpha Course, and we recognize the place for many other voices as well. We seek a comprehensive generosity and faithfulness within the one Church, even across Christian divisions. At our best, Anglicans do not settle for mere toleration of one another but seek to press into a deeper formation in and by Christ that may yield holy obedience among the many nations and peoples — and temperaments, tastes, political commitments, and cultures — of the world.

TLC seeks to embody such a spirit of sacrificial love. In this still-new century, we are resolved to escort THE LIVING CHURCH to its sesquicentennial and, by God's grace, to a 175th year in 2053.

135 YEARS
THE LIVING CHURCH

The second of two articles commemorating the 50th anniversary of the 1963 Anglican Congress in Toronto

The Anglican Congress at Maple Leaf Gardens, Toronto, August 18, 1963. Gilbert A. Milne & Co. photo

CATHOLIC VOICES

MRI's Spiritual Diagnosis

By David Cox

The Most Rev. Donald Coggan, Archbishop of York, stepped to the podium of Toronto's Maple Leaf Stadium to address the second — and last — Pan-Anglican Congress on August 17, 1963. He read a document with the unwieldy title "Mutual Responsibility and Interdependence in the Body of Christ" that concluded by calling for "the rebirth of the Anglican Communion." Its concepts captured the imagination of the Congress and, as word spread, of the Communion, as nothing else has since.

"MRI," as it became known, aimed to change relationships within the Communion. The old gentlemen's club that was the British Empire at prayer, plus some Americans, was rapidly welcoming independent provinces in newly independent nations with increasingly indigenous leadership. No one saw better that old ways were not working than the Communion's first executive officer, Stephen Bayne. Holding a position created by the 1958 Lambeth Conference, this former Bishop of Olympia traveled the world, listened, and wrote of what he saw.

As a result, Bayne gathered missionaries from across the Communion to meet before the Congress and discuss needs of these emerging churches. The needs were many, especially for personnel and

money. A delegate representing Japan asked whether the conference was "a group of older churches inviting younger churches to listen in or whether we were a group of the whole church thinking together." Beneath his question lay the nature of the Anglican Communion: Did it consist of mothers and daughters, of senders and receivers, or of partners and equals in the Church's mission?

MRI emerged from that question, basing its precepts on Paul's statement at 1 Corinthians 12:27: "Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it." To be in Christ transcends givers and receivers; rather, God gives each something to offer and something to receive. We are interdependent.

MRI called for the entire Communion to enter anew into mission, on every level. It asked for a worldwide effort to learn of new possibilities, and new dedication to global mission. It challenged Anglicans to give an ambitious $15 million and for men and women to go forth to support myriad opportunities around the world. Most basically, it called Anglicans to a different way of relating to each other.

When the Primate of Japan explained MRI to his clergy, an American priest in Okinawa named Edmond Browning found his report "one of the most moving things I ever heard," especially these two sentences: "We are no longer a receiving Church. We have something to contribute to the whole Communion." Congregations and dioceses around the world held educational programs, the likes of which the Communion had never seen and has not since. Dioceses created or energized companion relationships, exchanges, and projects.

It was soon over. American attention turned to civil rights and Vietnam: Martin Luther King, Jr., proclaimed his dream in Washington barely a week after the congress. The General Convention Special Program of 1967 took the idea of funding projects from MRI, as did the more successful Venture in Mission in 1976, which raised as much as $150 million, but both were from the Episcopal Church only and neither tried to foster mutual partnerships. Meanwhile, various institutions were created to foster conversation between provinces, notably the Anglican Consultative Council, but controversies over women's ordination and sexuality increasingly led to division.

> MRI made average parishioners vastly more aware of a worldwide Communion of which each was a part.

If the Communion was reborn 50 years ago, how fares it now? If nothing else, MRI made average parishioners vastly more aware of a worldwide Communion of which each was a part. In fostering such now-familiar practices as mission trips and parish giving, its success continues. By encouraging awareness and relationships overseas, it helped open eyes to missionary needs at home. Congregations became more involved in mission than ever. So it remains, even if in partial consequence the dollars that once flowed to dioceses and the Episcopal Church Center have diminished in favor of local efforts.

In so doing, MRI may have anticipated the growing emphasis on ministry by all the baptized. Decades of controversy have not been kind to relationships from province to province. As well, given vast discrepancies in the wealth of nations and churches, "giver-receiver" roles often remain as entrenched as before. But once MRI broadly introduced the idea of partners and companions in mission, each with something to give, each with something to receive, the Communion changed. Anyone who does mission today, anywhere in the Communion, does so in its reflected light. We do know better.

If we're still working on MRI-like relationships, it's because we're still working on Christlike relationships as Paul and others tried to explain them. In each case, the effort continues.

The Rev. David Cox, rector of St. Luke's in Hot Springs, Virginia, wrote his STM thesis on MRI, and represents the President of the House of Deputies on the Episcopal Church's Standing Commission on World Mission.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

We are grateful to the following friends of THE LIVING CHURCH for their contributions since the beginning of the year.

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Phone: 414-276-5420
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SUNDAY'S READINGS | 19 Pentecost, September 29

First reading and psalm: Jer. 32:1-3a, 6-15 • Ps. 91:1-6, 14-16
Alternate: Amos 6:1a, 4-7 • Ps. 146 • 1 Tim. 6:6-19 • Luke 16:19-31

Hope

While under house arrest, Jeremiah hears the word of the Lord telling him that his cousin Hanamel will visit, and that he will bear these words: "Buy my field that is at Anathoth, for the right of redemption by purchase is yours" (Jer. 32:7). Securing this portion of land, even if occupied by a foreign nation, Jeremiah lays claim in hope that a homeland free of foreign domination will yet await his descendants. "Judah will recover her freedom" (Jerome Bible Commentary, p. 328.) Imprisoned, he is planning by the inscrutable providence of God for his people's eventual return home after Babylon exhausts its power, falls to the Persians, and the Persian king, Cyrus, though unknowingly serving the one true God, allows the Jews to migrate home.

"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Heb. 11:1). Faith, hope, and love take the long view, and they alone remain (1 Cor. 13). In this great hope, Jeremiah is able to see a future deliverance in spite of his own peril. "Because he is bound to me in love, therefore will I deliver him; I will protect him because he knows my name" (Ps. 91:14). Such intimate words are never to the individual alone, but to the nation. "The Lord sets the prisoners free," the prophet thinks, even as he sits confined, knowing that a small plot of land contains a promise of liberation. Thus the prophet prays, "I will praise the LORD as long as I live" (Ps. 146:2). Hope is not lost, nor can it be taken, for it is drawn up from a well of grace that will never be exhausted. Into the centuries of centuries hope lives.

Hope grows in the face of need, for need creates yearning. Jeremiah hoped, as did St. Paul, as did Polycarp, all under house arrest. Could a man going to his death be more hopeful? "God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the eternal high priest himself, Jesus Christ the Son of God, will build you up in all faith and truth and gentleness, without anger and in patience and forbearance and tolerance and self-control" (Polycarp, Nn. 12, 1-14).

Fill every need to the full, however, and a gaping chasm may be fixed between the heart and the forward yearning of hope. Satiate every need, stuff the stomach, bruise the brain with alcohol, take only the finest of everything, and you will discover that you are not grieved over the ruin of Joseph, or the ruin of anyone, the emaciated Lazarus, or the millions who look like him (Amos 6:6; Luke 16:19-31). When the senses are always full, they are dull.

Impossible though it is for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven by his own merit, God is able by grace, and by the force of a command which is the costly consequence of grace, to help the rich man hope again, to help the rich man move from his heart to the world. God begins with a crisis, a judgment, truth-telling. You brought nothing into this world, you will take nothing out. Trapped by senseless and harmful desires, many people have plunged into ruin and destruction. Do not be haughty or set your hope on uncertain riches, but on God. Be rich in good words, generous and ready to share. Take hold of that life which is really life (1 Tim. 6:6-19). The imperative follows the indicative. You will take nothing out of this world! Many rich people plunge into ruin and destruction! Your hope is that God will get you, and help you give.

Look It Up

Read Ps. 146:4. Feel what it is saying.

Think About It

The restless heart is hoping.

First reading and psalm: Lam. 1:1-6 • Lam. 3:19-26 or Ps. 137
Alternate: Hab. 1:1-4; 2:1-4 • Ps. 37:1-10 • 2 Tim. 1:1-14 • Luke 17:5-10

Lamentation

The little faith by which we do our duty expecting no special reward and no opulent praise is the daily round of living, the adult exercise of one's bounden duty, in the midst of which many small chores summon, appointments are set, friends and family and colleagues depend upon promises given as solemn vows or implied commitments. Being faithful in small things, let us endure to the end. In the progress of our days, we may hope for and may well experience the mid-range emotions of contentment, relative peace, a healthy sense of challenge, a burst of life-giving energy, deserved exhaustion to close the day. We feel and know that the Lord presides over our going out and our coming in. But we will not always know this.

The day of lamentation comes. In recent years there has developed a cottage industry of grief support groups, which, no doubt, do some good for some people. Tell your truth in the midst of others who have felt a similar loss and benefit from the strength of mutual support. Still, questions should be raised: Is grief an aberration in the way addiction is? And why aren't one's immediate friends and family the deepest source of love and support? Are we afraid to live with visible lamentation? "She weeps bitterly in the night, with tears on her cheeks" (Lam. 1:2). Grief has gone out to the gravel roads and those who walk them. "The roads to Zion mourn …; her gates are desolate, her priests groan; her young girls grieve, and her lot is bitter" (Lam. 1:4). Whether we are addressing the nation — Egypt, for instance, in all its present turmoil — or the parent delivered the news that a vibrant child is suddenly dead, or the arching loneliness of an elderly man or woman who simply cannot replace all the loves lost in the course of a long life, lamentation is a most human thing. Weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth are not for hell only, but the normal human expressions of loss and woe.

In the midst of such loss, we humans go on — not well, of course, at least in the early days of anguish, but we look out as if hoping the world, or God, or something, will answer: "I will keep watch to see what he will say to me" (Hab. 2:1). The promise is this: "the just shall live by faith"; but what is faith other than the suffering patience of one who has learned to wait for the appointed time (Hab. 2:3-4)? Faith is aged Simeon and the prophetess Anna who waited for the consolation of Israel (Luke 2:22-38).

The Christian is daily drinking of that grace which is life itself, and thus life in all its fullness animates the baptized soul. And yet a life fully lived is a life deeply felt, a life in which the mind and heart, soul and emotion, inner reflection and outward sensing all come alive. So human joy increases; human sorrow grows. This requires work and discernment, learning how to suffer for the gospel in a way that is not indulgent and perversely remorseful. Suffering as we must at times — and let's admit that some people suffer for whole seasons in their lives — tender care should be taken to rekindle the gift of God and claim again that Christ Jesus has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. The herald of this message will have credibility only by suffering too (2 Tim. 1:1-14).

The path from lamentation to hope again is the little faith that God loves and gives (Luke 17:5-10).

Look It Up

Read Lam. 3:26. But ask, "How long?"

Think About It

Groaning that cannot be uttered (Rom. 8:26

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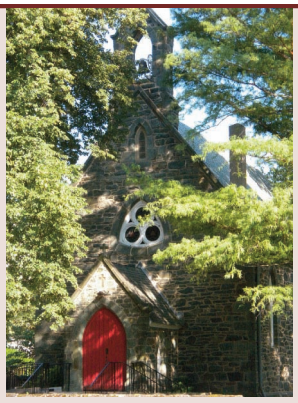

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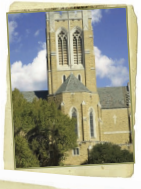

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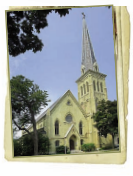

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