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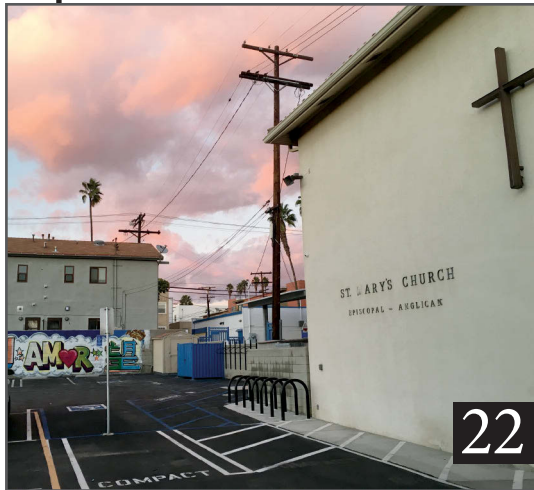




ON THE COVER

General Convention's 47-woman special committee on sexual harassment and exploitation raises questions about church discipline, prevention of misconduct, and the committee's limitations (see "A #MeToo Moment in the Church?" p. 18).

Illustration by Matthew Townsend



THE LIVING CHURCH

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LIVING CHURCH Partners

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St. James the Mission?

By Kirk Petersen

It was a bit like a local zoning board meeting, in which neighboring homeowners have a chance to object to a proposed change of use for a piece of property. This meeting, however, started and ended with prayer, and it will be followed by a formal, year-long focus on reconciliation.

The current bishop and standing committee of the Diocese of Los Angeles held a public forum on March 10 to discuss plans to reopen St. James the Great, an enormous church property in tiny Newport Beach. The facility has been padlocked for nearly three years by order of the now-retired former bishop, the Rt. Rev. J. Jon Bruno — a move that engulfed the final years of his episcopacy and resulted in his suspension from ordained ministry, on charges of “conduct unbecoming a member of the clergy.”

The diocese invited members of the four nearest Episcopal churches to the forum “to support or oppose the proposal or just seek more information” about granting mission-station status to St. James the Great.

No significant opposition arose. The meeting “probably couldn’t have gone better,” said the Rev. Canon Cindy Voorhees, who has been leading worship services for a flock of about 100 at Newport Beach City Hall.

In December, the Rt. Rev. John Taylor succeeded Bruno as Bishop of Los Angeles. When asked after the forum about a timetable for a decision on the reopening, Taylor replied by text message: “The Standing Committee meets on March 21; I would expect a decision would be announced pretty soon after that.” Taylor no doubt will carefully consider the opinions of the committee, but the final decision is his alone.



Google Earth photo

St. James sits at the entrance of the bridge to Lido Isle, a neighborhood of multimillion-dollar homes on an island that juts like a yacht-encrusted finger into Newport Bay.

Regardless of timing, the likely reopening of the facility at 3209 Via Lido will not resolve the trauma suffered by the Episcopal Church’s fourth-largest diocese.

The Rev. Michael Archer is rector of St. Wilfrid of York, a church in nearby Huntington Beach that got its start half a century ago as a mission of St. James. In remarks prepared for the forum, he wrote that he and his parishioners generally agree that “there is room for another Episcopal Church in our part of Orange County.”

But that does not mean they all favor the specific proposal to reopen St. James the Great. “On this, there is *not* a united sentiment at St. Wilfrid’s,” he wrote. “The past almost three years have been painful and contentious at times, with very strong emotions being expressed on both sides of this struggle.”

While nobody will discuss it on the record, there is an undercurrent of resentment in the diocese based on the belief that the people of St. James misused the Title IV disciplinary process

by bringing charges against Bruno as part of a relentless effort to torpedo the sale of the church and regain access to the building. (This argument is blunted somewhat by the charges being found meritorious.)

In December, the diocese’s annual convention passed a resolution asking the broader church “to collect information on the operation and effects of confidentiality provisions of Title IV; and the effects of the lack of pastoral care directed to the diocese, parish, or mission in the Title IV proceeding when not a respondent or complainant.”

In disciplinary proceedings under Title IV of church canons, all parties are asked to maintain confidentiality about the specifics of the dispute. But unlike a secular court, the church has no way to enforce such a provision against anyone who is not ordained. This meant that while Voorhees and Bruno maintained personal confidentiality, members of the congregation felt free to express their outrage through social media. The matter will

be considered in July at General Convention.

At the January meeting of the churchwide Executive Council, council member Steven Nishibayashi, who is from the Los Angeles diocese, said in a committee hearing that no pastoral support was provided to the diocese, and clergy members had no guidance on how to respond to the concerns of their congregations.

The Rev. Canon Melissa McCarthy, Taylor's new canon to the ordinary, has announced a structured approach to reconciliation. In a newsletter for clergy in the diocese, she wrote, "I have been in regular conversations with the Lombard Mennonite Peace Center (LMPC), who will function as our facilitators, mediators, and teachers, over the next year as we engage this process on a diocesan-wide scale."

The process will begin in mid-April with a series of workshops led by LMPC. Since 1983, the Illinois-based LMPC has offered "training to help churches discover how conflict can be an arena for God's revelation," according to the organization's website (lmpeacecenter.org).

If St. James the Great is approved as a mission station, it will move into what is likely the most valuable piece of property ever occupied by a fledgling mission church.

The 40,000-square-foot facility sits at the entrance of the bridge to Lido Isle, a neighborhood of multimillion-dollar homes on an island that juts like a yacht-encrusted finger into Newport Bay.

The controversy began in May 2015, when Bruno announced plans to sell the property for \$15 million to a local developer. Although the building was in excellent condition and had been extensively renovated in the early 2000s, the developer intended to bulldoze the property and construct luxury condominiums.

There is already a 10-story luxury condominium building across the street. Unit 4F in the 66-unit building is currently for sale — a two-bedroom apartment listed at \$2.3 million.

The planned sale of St. James fell through after members of the congregation launched both a civil lawsuit and a Title IV charge against Bruno.

The lawsuit was quickly dismissed, but the disciplinary process dragged on for month after month, leading to three days of public testimony in March 2017, in front of a hearing panel that was essentially an ecclesiastical court.

In June, the still-deliberating panel was outraged to learn that Bruno had for the second time secretly negotiated a contract to sell the property. That sale also fell through. The panel eventually voted to suspend Bruno from ordained ministry for three years.

Bruno is appealing the suspension.

St. James, founded in 1941, has something of a star-crossed history. The parish was one of four churches in the diocese that voted to leave the diocese. The parish claimed ownership of the building, leading Bruno to launch what became nine years of litigation to establish that the diocese was the rightful owner. That congregation was evicted, and in 2013 Voorhees began working fulltime, initially without pay, to rebuild a congregation there.

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Building a Culture of Evangelism

About 400 clergy and lay people from 80 dioceses gathered in Cleveland Heights March 14-17 for the Episcopal Church's second Evangelism Matters conference. It was a program of worship, fellowship, inspiration, and advice on "practical evangelism with an Episcopal heart," in the words of the Rev. Canon Stephanie Spellers, the presiding bishop's canon for evangelism, reconciliation, and stewardship of creation.

The conference is part of an effort to inspire "a dramatic change in culture" in the church, Presiding Bishop Michael Curry said. He described a culture change that has already occurred: If you asked "How does your church serve others?" of the average Episcopalian in the 1950s, the answer likely would center on worship and Sunday school, and maybe hosting an AA meeting or the Girl Scouts.

"If you asked the average Episcopalian today, the word *outreach* would probably come up in the conversation," Curry said.

"That was a profound culture change in the Episcopal Church," he said. "I pray for the day when evangelism is as common in the Episcopal Church, and comes alongside outreach and justice and service, as an equal partner as what we do as a church."

"Evangelism is first and foremost a spiritual practice," Spellers said, rather than a way to attract more people to church. "Here's the definition: we seek, name, and celebrate Jesus' loving presence in the stories of all people — and then, invite everyone to more." In an "Episcopal 101" workshop, participants unpacked that definition phrase by phrase.

One plenary session featured Curry and the Rev. Gay Clark Jennings, president of the House of Deputies, interviewing each other about painful experiences in their lives, then describing how they had recovered through the evangelism of others.

Curry described how his maternal

grandmother moved in with his family in the late 1960s when his mother had a cerebral hemorrhage that left her semi-comatose and proved fatal nearly a year later. His father and grandmother would take the kids to the nursing home most evenings to do their homework and watch TV in their mother's room. "I didn't know that they were teaching me not to be afraid of sickness," Curry said. "And they were teaching me how to walk through death."

"Our beloved daughter died in 2010," Jennings said. "I didn't really blame God," but she found that being in church brought up too many emotions. "I can't pray," she told a friend who was a priest. "I just am not there." And he said, "You know what? I'll pray for you. For this next month, don't you worry about it. ... He really carried me through that month."

Jennings told another story that led to one sour note. She described her revulsion at a childhood playmate, in an incident when Jennings was 9 and growing up in a privileged family. The other girl used a racial slur to refer to "Laura," the woman who provided child care for Jennings's family.

"Frankly, I beat her up," Jennings said. "Laura came and pulled me off my now former friend, took me home, and sat me down, and evangelized to me about how we treat those who do not yet understand the respect and dignity of every human being. And then I got swatted with a newspaper."

Rather than using a euphemism in recounting the story, Jennings quoted her playmate's invective. The Rev. Marcus Halley, whose Twitter profile says he is a DMin student at Sewanee, tweeted: "I am trying to remain open, but the fetishizing of black religion and the actual use of the word ... by a white woman is unacceptable. Nope. #EM2018."

This prompted tweets by people outside the room who did not know the



Jennings

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context. Later in the day, Jennings tweeted “I apologize and ask forgiveness,” which Halley noted and said, “I appreciate her apology & the space she created to listen.”

In a wrap-up session, the Rev. Frank Pogue, a co-convenor of the conference who is also canon to the ordinary in the Diocese of Georgia, said that while the incident was unfortunate, “it’s also sparked, I think, important conversations that in some cases are leading toward reconciliation.”

He added, “What we need to do is take opportunities life gives us, to begin to build the beloved community that we all long for.”

Throughout the conference, Curry and other speakers emphasized the need to focus continuously on Jesus in their evangelism efforts, as part of “deepening faith formation of Episcopalians.” Curry’s clarion call from the day he took office has been “We are the Episcopal branch of the Jesus Movement.” He poked a bit of fun at himself: “I’m a one-note Charlie,” he said. “And y’all knew it when you elected me.”

Video of the plenary sessions and some workshops is available at evangelismmatters.org.

Kirk Petersen

Conflict Escalates in South Carolina

As Episcopalians and Anglicans in Pittsburgh were announcing an out-of-court settlement of most of the disputes between them, the battle lines were hardening in South Carolina.

On March 1, the Episcopal Church in South Carolina filed a series of motions seeking to broaden the defendant pool in a federal trademark lawsuit. The suit seeks to resolve the conflict about which faction has the right to call itself the Episcopal Diocese of South Carolina. Based on a prior ruling, that name currently is being used by the diocese affiliated with the Anglican Church in North America (ACNA).

In 2013, the Rt. Rev. Charles von Rosenberg, then the provisional bishop of the Episcopal Church’s diocese, lodged

a trademark infringement suit against the Rt. Rev. Mark Lawrence, who had led dozens of South Carolina churches out of the Episcopal Church. The most recent motions seek to add the ACNA diocese and all of its member churches as additional defendants, and to prohibit them from using *Episcopal* in their names without explaining that they are not affiliated with the Episcopal Church.

The motions also ask the federal court to enforce the August 2017 ruling of the state Supreme Court, which ordered 28 congregations to turn over church buildings to the Episcopal Church in South Carolina.

Specifically, the court is asked to order the 28 churches to remove from their vestries any persons who are not “capable of and willing to carry out their fiduciary obligations to the Episcopal Church,” and replace them with those who will turn over the properties.

The ACNA diocese has filed a petition asking the U.S. Supreme Court to consider the matter, and no property has changed hands.

Kirk Petersen

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Agreement on Guns, Sexual Harassment

During its spring meeting, the House of Bishops agreed to two statements on March 7.

On the subject of gun violence, the bishops expressed support for the young people of Parkland, Florida, who are calling for elected officials to ban the sale of assault weapons, prohibit the sale of high-capacity magazines, and close loopholes in background checks.

They also noted that others seek to ban the sale of bump stocks, raise the age to 21 years to purchase firearms, or challenge the National Rifle Association to support safe-gun legislation.

“We, the bishops of the Episcopal Church, wholeheartedly support and join with the youth in this call to action,” they said. “At the same time, we acknowledge that black and brown youth have continuously challenged the United States to address the gun violence that they and their communities are experiencing. We repent that, as bishops, we have failed to heed their call.”

On sexual harassment, gender-based violence, gender bias, and gender inequality, the bishops observed that their gathering was the first since the #MeToo movement began.

“We continue our own work of reconciliation within our branch of God’s Church, honoring what we have learned and accomplished, as well as acknowledging the distance we still must travel. Reconciliation is the long work of healing offered by the Spirit, made possible by grace, which requires our truth-telling and repentance,” they said.

“Many of us have experienced sexual harassment and perhaps sexual violence. Bishops who are women know the ‘MeToo’ experience. Some bishops who are men know it as well. We live with different experiences of the cultural endowment of power. We know the Church has fallen short of our responsibility to listen and respond. In this time of heightened awareness it is with greater intention that we now invite the church to a deeper examination of what God

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intends for our relationships.”

The bishops will convene an open meeting at General Convention (5:15 p.m. on July 4) to hear the stories of those who have been victims of sexual harassment and violence in the church.

‘Protect Children, Not Guns’

Episcopalians gathered in Springfield, Massachusetts, outside the headquarters of Smith & Wesson Corp. to rally behind STOP SELLING ASSAULT WEAPONS signs. Episcopalians in Trenton, New Jersey, participated in a 12-hour Day of Lamentation over gun violence. Students of Episcopal schools from New York to Florida walked out of class to participate in a nationwide call to action.

Student-led demonstrations across the country and dozens of separate events at Episcopal cathedrals and churches coincided March 14 to mark one month since the deadly high school shootings in Parkland, Florida. Though independently organized, the variety of events — on what was billed by youth organizers as National Walkout Day — served to underscore a common push for political action to address the seemingly relentless outbreak of mass shootings in the United States.

“This is the only developed nation in the world that has a gun death problem at the rate we do,” New Jersey Bishop Chip Stokes said in his sermon at a Eucharist held at Trinity Episcopal Cathedral in Trenton. “Those of us who oppose it need to get in the face of the problem and cry out in the name of the Lord.”

Such calls have been growing since 17 students and educators were shot and killed Feb. 14 at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School. A 19-year-old former student has been charged in the massacre.

The series of Episcopal events on March 14, coordinated by Bishops United Against Gun Violence, included services, prayers, tolling bells, and in some cases a more direct form of advocacy.

An estimated 100 or more demonstrators, led by young people and interfaith leaders, including the bishops of the Diocese of Western Massachusetts and the Diocese of Massachusetts, stood for an hour outside the Smith & Wesson

facility in Springfield. PROTECT CHILDREN / NOT GUNS, read one protest sign.

Smith & Wesson made the guns used in the mass shootings in Parkland, in Aurora, Colorado, and in San Bernardino, California.

At the end of the hour, the student leaders delivered three demands to the guards at the Smith & Wesson visitor center. They hope for a meeting with company leaders within the next 30 days. They are asking the manufacturer to stop selling military-grade weapons to the civilian population and to create a community compensation fund to help bear the costs related to gun violence.

Such events shared the spotlight with the day’s widespread classroom walkouts and student-led demonstrations against gun violence. At the Episcopal-rooted Grace Church School in New York, students in grades 4 through 12 linked hands to surround the school, and they placed flowers in memory of a school aide who was shot and killed near the school on Nov. 1, 2017.

*David Paulsen and
Mary Frances Schjonberg, ENS*



Wikimedia Commons photo

Prince Harry and Meghan Markle on Christmas Day 2017

Meghan Markle, Anglican Convert

Meghan Markle, soon to marry into the British royal family, was baptized and confirmed by the Archbishop of Canterbury. The dual ceremony took place at St. James’s Palace in London on March 6. Press reports said Prince Charles attended with his wife, the Duchess of Cornwall.

The marriage of Prince Harry to the

(Continued on page 11)



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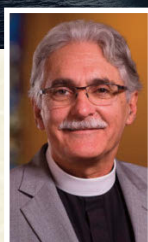


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Markle

(Continued from page 9)

previously divorced actress is an indication of change in British church and society. The actress was married to film producer Trevor Engelson, but the union ended in 2013. It is understood the Archbishop of Canterbury gave the couple his blessing and he will perform the wedding ceremony in Windsor on May 19.

In December 1936 King Edward VIII gave up the throne to marry Mrs. Wallis Simpson, an American divorcée. Likewise in the 1950s, Princess Margaret, younger sister of Queen Elizabeth II, was prevented from marrying the divorced Captain Peter Townsend.

The former *Suits* actress is under no compulsion to become an Anglican to marry Prince Harry. It is understood her decision was taken as a mark of respect for Queen Elizabeth, who is Supreme Governor of the Church of England. Markle is now identified as Protestant, but she attended a Roman Catholic school. Her father, Thomas Markle, is an Episcopalian.

John Martin

Brazilian Primate: Fight for Equality

The Primate of the Anglican Episcopal Church in Brazil, Francisco de Assis da Silva, has called on men and women in the church to work together in the fight for gender equality.

Francisco, who leads the Diocese of South-Western Brazil in addition to his role as primate, said in an open letter, “We live in a time of setbacks sponsored by those who hold power in the Brazilian state. Violence against women has widened. The exclusion of social rights has become systematic against the most vulnerable segments of society and, of course, women are the biggest victims.”

He said that the National Congress, Brazil’s Parliament, had pushed issues of women’s interests to the background while pursuing “conservative stances,”

including measures to repeal or diminish the Disarmament Statute, which limits the ownership of guns and ammunition. “It is good to remember that if this easing happens the statistics of femicide will only tend to increase,” he said.

Statistics published by local news website *G1* show that violence against women in the country continues to rise, with killings of women rising by 6.5 percent in 2017 in comparison with 2016. The website highlights figures showing that of the 126 women killed in a single week six months ago, only one case resulted in a trial.

Separately, the Brazilian Public Security Forum (BPSF) released figures showing that women were murdered at a rate of 4.3 per 100,000 in Brazil last year. Almost a quarter of the violent deaths of women that occurred in Brazil last year — 946 of 4,473 — were caused by femicide, the gender-motivated killing of women. Brazil’s former President, Dilma Rousseff, pushed through a law in 2015 that introduced tougher penalties for people convicted of femicide. Despite this, there has been an increase in the number of cases, the BPSF reported.

“We have much to explore on this journey to gender equality,” he said. “We must continue fighting and this fight is for all people of good will. Men and women are called to commit to a new look, a new way and to build another possible world.

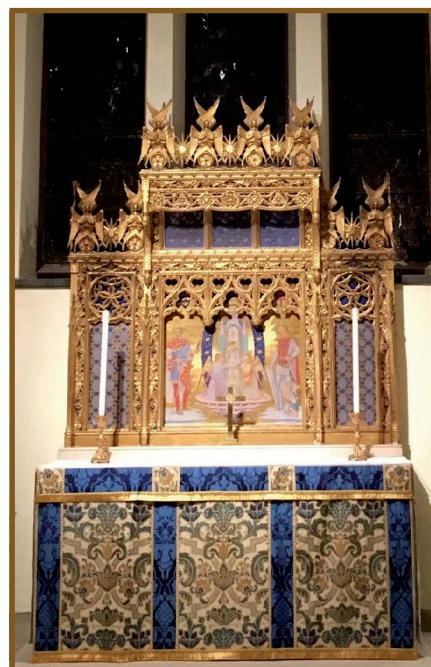
“This new look comes from a liberating hermeneutics, and from the eyes of people who know the oppression.

“Thus, we challenge our dioceses, parishes, and missions to support or make visible actions in favor of the rights of our women, whether in the liturgical spaces or in other spaces of Brazilian society.

“As episcopal people, let us join efforts to make the nuclei of the Union of Episcopal Women of Anglican Brazil, the beacons of hope and presence of the Kingdom of God in their neighborhoods, in their regions and in their cities, every day of the year.

“We are people called to renew our understanding and our commitment to the Gospel that rises against all forms of discrimination.”

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Welby Decries Climate Change

On a lightning three-day visit to Fiji, the Archbishop of Canterbury has made a ringing public call for climate action. Archbishop Justin Welby attended the annual gathering of the Anglican primates of Australia, Melanesia, Papua New Guinea, and Aotearoa, New Zealand, and Polynesia.

Speaking at a public welcome by the president of Fiji, Major-General (Ret.) Jioji Konrote, in a traditional ceremony in the capital city of Suva, the archbishop said he counted it “a particular privilege to be in Fiji — which is playing such an important role in the worldwide campaign to change humanity’s attitude to climate change.”

The president referred to Welby’s book *Reimagining Britain: Foundations for Hope* (due May 8). The archbishop said he had become aware of an error in his book. “In it I say that the issues of climate change are our duty to our descendants, to our children, and grandchildren. Well, that is true. But when you come to Fiji and listen to the stories of what is happening to the oceans, they are an issue for today as well, as important for today as for the future.”

He said Fiji’s leadership in the global climate action was vital. “Here the oceans are rising, in much of Africa the deserts are spreading — in other places climate change is bringing storms on a scale that we have not seen before. It is the greatest challenge we face. And yet not every nation believes that it is a problem.”

The Oceania archbishops met in a closed session to discuss mission in Oceania and plans for the 2020 Lambeth Conference. Finally, Archbishop Welby joined with the other archbishops in a symbolic event, boarding *Uto Ni Yalo* and sailing out to a sandbank in Suva Harbor where they celebrated the Eucharist, waters lapping at their feet.

John Martin



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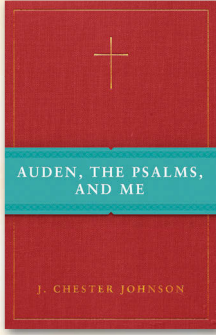


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Gray-Reeves to Resign

The Rt. Rev. Mary Gray-Reeves, Bishop of El Camino Real since November 2007, has announced her plan to conclude her diocesan ministry in January 2020.



Gray-Reeves

“Many will wonder what I am doing after my tenure here is completed. The answer is that I do not yet know,” she said. “I will not run for election in another diocese. Personal considerations include needing more flexibility in my schedule, regaining balance in my personal life.”

Gray-Reeves said the work of a bishop is demanding — and that the Diocese of El Camino Real is not ordinary.

“A leader who will harness the considerable energy, gifts and spiritual depth of this diocese will be needed to engage the Spirit’s call on our church and the ministry we share with our neighborhood partners. Our transition will be orderly and in the best interest of the church. Fresh energy will allow us not to miss a beat as we seek to live out God’s calling as a diocese.”



Stephen and Jane Hawking RV1864/Flickr photo

POSTCARD FROM LONDON

Stephen Hawking, RIP

Martin Rees, a former Astronomer Royal, has said of his lifelong friend astrophysicist Stephen Hawking, who died March 14: “Few, if any, of Einstein’s successors have done more to deepen our insights into gravity, space, and time.”

His early career in the 1960s was by all accounts an exciting time for physics at

Cambridge. It was the decade when theories began to emerge about the Big Bang and black holes. By the end of the 1970s, Hawking became the Lucasian Professor of Mathematics, a post once held by Isaac Newton.

The film *The Theory of Everything* draws on the experience of Hawking’s first wife, Jane Wilde, who shared his life for 25 years with awesome dedication and self-sacrifice. Hawking is played by Eddie Redmayne, depicting his very human struggle as a brilliant mind comes to terms with the onset of motor neurone disease. Redmayne stated of Hawking’s death: “We have lost a truly beautiful mind, an astonishing scientist and the funniest man I have ever had the pleasure to meet.”

“My expectations were reduced to zero when I was 21,” Hawking once said in a *New York Times* interview. “Everything since then has been a bonus.” A man given just a couple of years to live confounded expectations by living to the age of 76. It is testament both to the strength of his mind and determination,

(Continued on next page)



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See you at General Convention in Austin, TX.

Hawking

(Continued from previous page)

the support of his family, caregivers, and his fellow scientists. Technical advances in communication devices played a huge part in propelling him to celebrity.

Despite huge physical limitations, being confined to a wheelchair and requiring a speech synthesizer, he had a rare gift among academics of an ability to engage with popular culture. He appeared on both *The Simpsons* and *Star Trek: The Next Generation*.

He told a *New York Times* reporter, “My advice to other disabled people would be, concentrate on things your disability doesn’t prevent you doing well, and don’t regret the things it interferes with. Don’t be disabled in spirit, as well as physically.”

The image of a powerful mind in a crumpled body powerfully raised issues of faith, purpose, and the problem of suffering. An important subplot in the film

is the contrast of Jane’s faith and Hawking’s views. Quite early in the film Jane joins the Hawking family for Sunday lunch.

“You haven’t said why you don’t believe in God,” she says.

He responds: “A physicist can’t allow his calculations to be muddled by a belief in a supernatural creator.”

This earns a feisty response: “Sounds less an argument against God than against physicists.”

Throughout his career, Hawking seemed to teeter on the edge of faith. He is said to have occasionally attended a Baptist church in Cambridge. His friend Lord Rees has urged people not to put much weight on his theological views, not least because he had read little theology.

Addressing the question of why the universe exists, he wrote in *A Brief History of Time* (1988): “If we find the answer to that, it would be the ultimate triumph of human reason — for then we would know the mind of God.” Hawking later said he meant that “we would know everything God knows, if there was a God, which there isn’t.”

He continued to play a cat-and-mouse game on the subject. “If I say I believe in God, everyone will immediately claim that I believe in the same God they believe in,” he told journalist Andrew Graystone. “So I won’t say at all.”

John Martin

tegration, and the resolution that they’ve drafted, which has several parts, speaks very clearly of wanting to move ahead with this,” said Hiltz, who attended the Cuban church’s annual synod February 23-25. “Like any resolution, there’s never a guarantee that it’s going to pass; I’m anticipating it will pass.”

In the meantime, the Episcopal Church has already been taking measures to prepare for the possible return to it of the Cuban church, Hiltz said. There’s discussion, for example, on providing financial assistance to the Cuban church in the form of “block grants,” which the U.S.-based church provides to dioceses in need. TEC is also planning to put together a working group tasked with “seeing the transition through as smoothly and effectively as possible,” he said.

Still, Hiltz said, no matter what decision is made about the Episcopal Church in Cuba this summer, some connection with the Anglican Church of Canada will remain.

“There will always be a relationship between our church and Cuba,” he said.

Tali Folkins, Anglican Journal

Church of England’s Safeguarding Travails

The Church of England is experiencing an ordeal as its attitudes about accusations of child sexual abuse by clergy are raked over by a public inquiry. George Pitcher, a former media officer on the staff of Lambeth Palace, has testified that that the church’s attitude to abuse was to stonewall.

Pitcher, who worked during the tenure of Archbishop Rowan Williams, said staff had tried to shield him from knowledge of events. Testifying at the Independent Inquiry into Child Sex Abuse (IICSA), Lord Williams said there was a mindset in the church that ordained ministers were beyond criticism. This was “definitely a problem” when it came to preventing and dealing with abuse.

Archbishop Justin Welby requested the three weeks of public hearings by the IICSA. This will not be the end of the matter, and more of the church’s dealings will be examined in future hearings.

Canada-Cuba Ties Will Remain

The Anglican Church of Canada will continue to have some sort of a relationship with the church in Cuba even if — as appears likely — it becomes a diocese of the Episcopal Church (TEC), says Archbishop Fred Hiltz, primate of the Anglican Church of Canada.

General Convention is expected to vote this July on a resolution to reintegrate the Episcopal Church in Cuba after the Cuban church voted three years ago to return. The resolution seems likely to pass, Hiltz said in an interview Monday, March 5.

“I think all the indicators are that the task force ... are supporting — and wholeheartedly supporting — the rein-

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The initial sessions have focused on the Diocese of Chichester, in which a number of pedophile clergy and a former suffragan bishop were eventually jailed. The Rt. Rev. Peter Ball, former Bishop of Lewes, was jailed for sexual assault.

The Rt. Rev. Martin Warner, Bishop of Chichester, made public accusations the against the much-revered Bishop George Bell. He told the IICSA that he was shocked when he gradually became aware of attitudes and procedures in the south coast diocese. He found a culture of “pride and arrogance” that stood in the way of adequate safeguarding.

The Rt. Rev. George Carey, in a written statement to the IICSA, said he had not been aware of abuse in Chichester during his years as Archbishop of Canterbury (1991 to 2002). There are questions about his later handling of the case of Bishop Peter Ball.

The IICSA has heard from survivors, and their testimony has drawn apologies from bishops in attendance. The Rt. Rev. Alan Wilson, Bishop of Hertford, told the IICSA he believed responsibility for safeguarding should be taken from the church and made the remit of an independent body.

John Martin

Bishop Matthews to Resign in May

After almost 10 tumultuous years at the helm of the Diocese of Christchurch, New Zealand, Bishop Victoria Matthews has announced her plan to resign on May 1.



Matthews

“This beautiful diocese has been through many challenges brought about by earthquakes, wind, fire, and floods,” she said in a special edition of Christchurch’s *Anglican e-Life* newsletter. “But through it all, people have been their best selves by helping others, working together, and finding new ways of doing things.”

In a message broadcast to her diocese, Matthews said she is stepping down simply because she believes her Lord told her to do so.

“I’m not retiring and I’m not in ill health, I am merely following where my Savior is leading me, wherever that may

be,” she said. She was “happy the Cathedral reinstatement is going ahead. I am particularly pleased we opted to put restoration of our relationship with the wider community in first place.”

Archbishop Philip Richardson relayed the news of her resignation to the House of Bishops: “I know you will join with me in giving thanks to God for Bishop Victoria’s faithfulness to Christ and her personal courage and resilience through a time of unprecedented challenge in the life of the Diocese of Christchurch and of our Church as a whole.”

John Martin

Women’s Caucus Work Accomplished

Episcopal Women’s Caucus has decided to disband. “After 47 years of facilitating transformation in the Episcopal Church, the Episcopal Women’s Caucus is taking the bold step of sunseting the Caucus so that justice for women — lay and ordained — can continue to be pursued in the Church in new ways with new goals,” the caucus said in a statement.

“Founded in 1971, the Episcopal Women’s Caucus was formed to be a change agent in the Episcopal Church. Through political means, the Caucus had a singular strategic goal: to gain for

women the right and privilege to be ordained to the priesthood and consecrated to the episcopate. The Episcopal Women’s Caucus has accomplished this.”

The group said the work for equity and justice was far from complete. “The Church needs more women clergy serving in positions of leadership, including large congregations, cathedrals and the episcopate. The #MeToo Movement has made it clear the Church is as involved in sexual harassment, misconduct, and abuse as any other institution in our society.”



Perumbalath

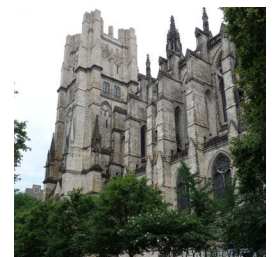
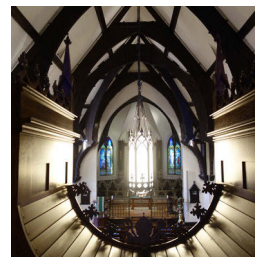
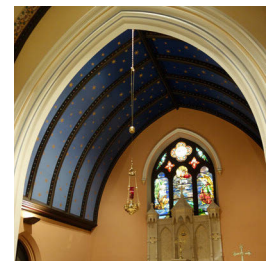
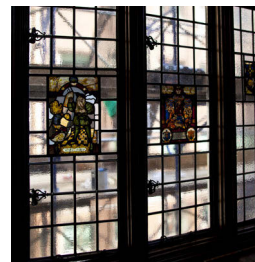
Theologian to Lead Chelmsford

An Indian-born theologian has been appointed Bishop of Bradwell, a suffragan bishopric in the Diocese of

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Chelmsford

(Continued from previous page)

Chelmsford. John Perumbalath, 52, was raised in the ancient Syrian community of Kerala, which comprises one of the biggest concentrations of Christians in the Indian subcontinent.

He trained at the Union Biblical Seminary at Pune, North India. Before his ordination he was a church youth worker and worked for three years as a theological educator. He was a parish priest in the Diocese of Calcutta (Church of North India) from 1995 to 2001. He served on the General Synod of CNI and on its theological commission.

After coming to England, he served in three parish posts in the Diocese of Rochester and as its urban officer. He was appointed the Archdeacon of Barking (Chelmsford) in 2013.

He is a member of General Synod; chairman of the Committee for Minority Ethnic Anglican Concerns and the London Churches Refugee Network; and a former trustee of the Anglican mission agency USPG. He succeeds Bishop John Wraw, who died of cancer last July.

John Martin

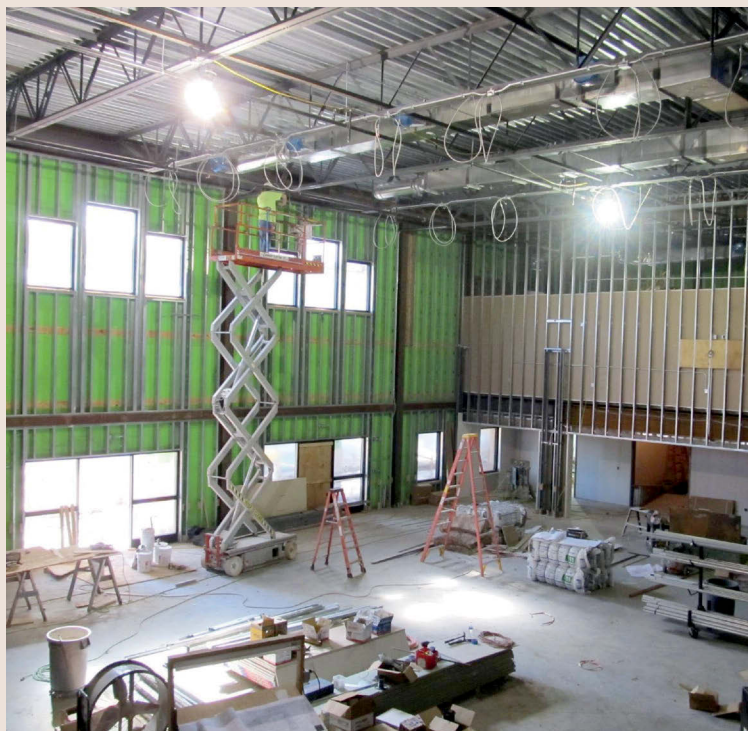
Five Lambeth Details

Momentum is gathering for the next Lambeth Conference, to be held in Canterbury July 24 to August 3, 2020. Archbishop Justin Welby has announced that the theme will be “God’s Church for God’s World: Walking, Listening, and Witnessing Together.”

“This is a significant event in the history of our extraordinary global family as we seek God’s direction for an Anglican Communion equipped for the 21st century,” he said.

Here are five facts about Lambeth 2020:

- The Conference already has a stand-alone website at lambethconference.org. At least 900 people will be invited for 2020, and invitations go out later this year.
- For the first time, there will be a joint



Expansion in Topeka

The completion of a \$5 million construction project has opened new space to Grace Episcopal Cathedral in Topeka, the Diocese of Kansas, and the Bishop Kemper School for Ministry, *The Topeka Capital-Journal* reports.

The massive project means the twin-spired cathedral at 701 SW 8th Street has a sparkling new parish hall for its various social functions and large-group gatherings.

Meanwhile, the Episcopal Diocese of Kansas has new offices built just east of the Great Hall. The Bishop Kemper School for Ministry, which provides training for lay people to be ordained in the Episcopal Church, has new classrooms in a renovated area on the lower level of the church’s west side.

program for bishops and spouses. Bishops’ spouses have attended before in a parallel conference.

- It will be shorter. The first Lambeth, so called because it met at Lambeth Palace, lasted four days and drew 76 bishops. By 2008 it had swelled to three weeks.

- From 1878, Lambeth Conferences were generally scheduled every 10 years. One exception was the conference of 1897, which met a year early because of the 13th centennial celebrations of St. Augustine’s arrival in Kent. Meeting in 2020 breaks from this sequence because Archbishop Welby sought more time for

consultation and planning.

- It became a residential event based in Canterbury in 1978. Archbishop Michael Ramsey reportedly dozed off at least once during proceedings in 1968.

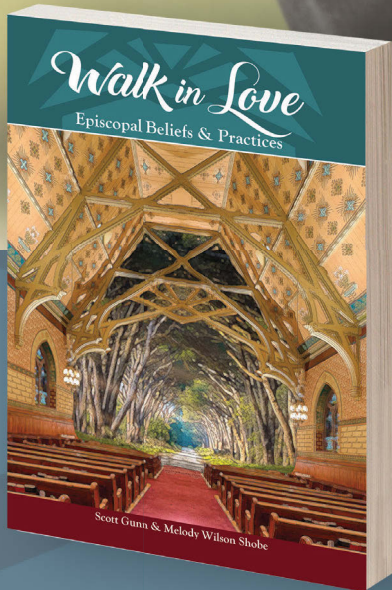
John Martin

Corrections

Monthly blood-pressure screenings at St. Paul African Methodist Episcopal Church in Berkeley, California, began in 2014 [“Faith, Friendship, and Better Health,” March 28]. Annual screenings have been offered at the church since the 1990s. The church has hosted one cancer workshop to date.

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A #MeToo Moment in the Church?

General Convention's 47-woman special committee on sexual harassment and exploitation raises questions about church discipline, prevention of misconduct, and the committee's limitations.

By G. Jeffrey MacDonald

The Episcopal Church is on track to become the first major Christian denomination to confront a history of sexual harassment in the church in the wake of the #MeToo movement, which has triggered a torrent of allegations across industries and toppled powerful men from Harvey Weinstein to Charlie Rose.

But early efforts to bring painful stories to light and seek justice are already consumed in debate about what is needed and what will work.

Observers agree that establishing a system can help assure due process, rather than finger-pointing that leads to abrupt firings and unresolved questions. Yet they differ on what will be needed to ensure churchwide buy-in and fairness for victims and accused alike.

That General Convention would take up the emotionally charged subject of sexual harassment this summer in Austin became a given on Feb. 28. That was when the Rev. Gay Clark Jennings, president of the House of Deputies, announced the appointment of a 47-member special committee to propose legislation on sexual harassment and exploitation. One week later, the House of Bishops announced a July 4 forum at which victims of sexual harassment and violence in the church can tell their stories as General Convention begins.

“We know the church has fallen short of our responsibility to listen and respond,” the bishops said in a statement. “In this time of heightened awareness, it is with greater intention that we now invite the church to a deeper examination of what God intends for our relationships.”

In what ways has the church fallen short? If anonymous stories are any indication, sexual harassment has been an all too common experience for women in the priesthood. A new Litany of Penance for Ash Wednesday, compiled by conveners of two sexual harassment subcommittees, delivers a sampling of what women say they have faced:

- “The rector I worked for called me into his office, and when I opened the door, he was standing there with his pants down. When I shared this with a male colleague, he said, ‘Oh, that’s just the way he is.’”
- “A member said to me, ‘How am I supposed to concentrate on the Bible when there are breasts in the pulpit?’”
- “When I shared explicit acts of sexual harassment I’d endured at the church where I served, the bishop told me, ‘Well, good luck getting another job if you make a big deal out of this.’”

“Any woman who wears a collar has these stories, seething just underneath the skin,” write the litany’s authors, the Rev. Laurie Brock and the Rev. Megan Castellan, in a postscript. “For most of us, we have so many they blur together into a giant mass of discomfort and scarcely-remembered sweeties, honeys, and forced grins at comments about our breasts.”

The committee will explore how such personal accounts might come to light and how perpetrators might be held accountable. One of five subcommittees will craft a truth-and-reconciliation process to address experiences with sexual harassment in the church. Another will examine potential changes to the Title IV disciplinary process.

But even before the committee’s work begins, its lack of gender diversity —

That General Convention would take up the emotionally charged subject of sexual harassment this summer in Austin became a given on Feb. 28.

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A #MeToo Moment in the Church?

(Continued from previous page)

all 47 members are women — is raising eyebrows and prompting concerns. Jennings said people have been asking why the committee has no men.

“There are no men in the church who have demonstrated significant public leadership on these issues,” Jennings said in a statement via email, sent by a public relations agency after she declined to be interviewed. “And of the many people who volunteered to serve on this committee, none were men.”

When asked whether any men were invited to serve on the committee, Jennings declined to respond. She said the appointed women bring relevant expertise to their work, adding that men will have ample opportunity to weigh in after legislative proposals have reached General Convention.

Some applaud the women-only composition of the committee.

“It is long past time that we privilege and amplify the voices of the women that have been the targets of systemic sexism and misogyny that have resulted in harassment and exploitation in the church,” said the Rev. Susan Russell, senior associate for communications at All Saints Church in Pasadena, California. “Men have been abused and exploited, too, absolutely. But what we’re talking about in this particular context at this particular moment is those who have been targeted as a result of systemic sexism and misogyny. And those are women.”

Others say the committee would have benefited from more perspectives on an issue that involves both women and men.

“I really think there was an opportunity that’s been missed” by leaving men off the committee, said Doug Billings, a member of Holy Cross Faith Memorial Church in Pawleys Island, South Carolina. “If a bunch of men are in a room talking with each other, you’re going to have a different perspective than if a bunch of women are in a room talking together. But if you get the two together and interacting, maybe we learn something.”

Outside observers said the decision to exclude men suggests experiences of sexual harassment in the church are still very raw. If sexual harassment in the church had been discussed more openly to date, then the issue might have garnered more advocacy among men, said Ron Simkins, director of the Kripke Center for the Study of Religion and Society at Creighton University.

“There seems to be no male buy-in to this process,” Simkins said. Buy-in will be crucial, he said, especially in the wake of a #MeToo movement in which “an accusation is enough to damn a person [and] suddenly their professional career is at a standstill.”

He wondered if a power play might be in the works to ensure the committee faces no resistance at General Convention.

“Maybe this is the point: by having an all-female committee that brings these things forth to the larger bodies, are we stacking the deck?” Simkins said. Deputies and bishops, he said, might think: *I dare not vote against this because I’ll come across as a heel, a chauvinist, or a sexist.*

Even if the committee’s resolutions do pass both houses, they will not be widely implemented because the process is not inclusive from the beginning, said Colby Bruno, senior legal counsel at the Victim Rights Law Center, a national nonprofit law firm based in Boston.

“That’s the issue with an all-female committee — it doesn’t work,” she said. “If you have a culture of sexual harassment against women and you have only women creating the policies and protocols, what man is going to think the policies and protocols are equal and fair? They’re not because the men are going to think they’re on a witch hunt.”

Having men join the process at General Convention is too late, she said, because by then the committee’s credibility has already been compromised.

“The first step of the process needs to have the most buy-in, the most credibility, because it’s the root,” Bruno said. “If you don’t have it at the first step, then it’s really hard to say you’re going to be able to implement it down the road.”

Unlawful sexual harassment refers to behavior that targets another person on the basis of the person’s sex. It can be sexual in nature, such as making unwanted sexual advances or requesting sexual favors, according to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. But it does not have to be sexual. For instance, when a hostile environment is created through offensive comments about women in general, that too constitutes unlawful harassment, according to the EEOC. The harasser can be a supervisor, colleague, or a non-employed person, such as a customer or parishioner.

How much sexual harassment has occurred in various Episcopal Church settings is unknown because incidents are seldom addressed publicly.



Misconduct of all sorts can be discovered, adjudicated, and punished through processes that run under the public radar. Likewise, when misconduct does go public, its nature can be withheld, leaving observers to wonder if the misbehavior was financial, sexual, or something else — as was the case in 2016 when, after a four-month misconduct investigation, two senior administrators at the Episcopal Church Center were fired for reasons that were never disclosed.

Thus, clarifying and classifying misconduct within the church is no easy task. The disciplinary processes, privacy of victims, legal injunctions, demands for justice, and the desire to prevent future victimization can all come into conflict when clergy and lay staff have failed to live up to the church's standards. Under these conditions, discipline is quietly doled out for reasons unknown to many.

How public should accusations of sexual harassment be? By proposing legislation, the new committee aims to bring sexual harassment out of the church shadows and into the light, where it can be confronted. But questions abound regarding how best to structure a process that can lead to truth-telling, repentance, new safeguards, and reconciliation.

Some say alleged perpetrators must be named publicly, just as dozens already have been as a result of the #MeToo movement. It is necessary to call them out, even before an investigation has begun, Bruno said. Informing potential future victims may help prevent further victimization.

She said a fair process would involve an independent adjudicator, such as an attorney trained in evaluating evidence, assessing the merits of individual claims. If harassment charges do not pass muster, then exoneration would be publicized to clear the accused's name.

A restorative justice process that aims to mediate agreements and reconciliation between parties will not suffice, in Bruno's view, because power imbalances remain and parties are never truly satisfied with the results.

"I would caution against these informal processes where people think they're going to solve everything," Bruno said. "There are a lot of people out there who advocate for restorative justice. I just have never seen it work."

When alleged behaviors involve lawbreaking and violence, the church should report such crimes to authorities and await adjudication in secular courts, Simkins said. In cases of sexual harassment, he said, public confession will be a necessary part of true repentance.

"I can see a person saying, *I'm willing to confess to my bishop or even to a body of bishops, but I don't want my parish to know*," Simkins said. "But secrecy just breeds further abuse."

Others, however, believe it's often better for the church not to go public with accusations and names of the accused.

"Libel is definitely a big issue, particularly if you take an issue that could have been handled discreetly and make it a public event," said Myron Steeves, an attorney and founder of the Church Law Center of California, a law firm that represents churches.

Steeves suggested parishes need processes whereby allegations can be heard discreetly and addressed promptly. These could include designating one person to receive complaints and establishing protocol for candid conversations with the accused. Rectors could summon staff, encouraging them to meet with the accused privately and identify past incidents or patterns.

Parish leaders should communicate to their flocks that allegations will be taken seriously, Steeves said. But that does not mean a church has to invite publicity for scandals.

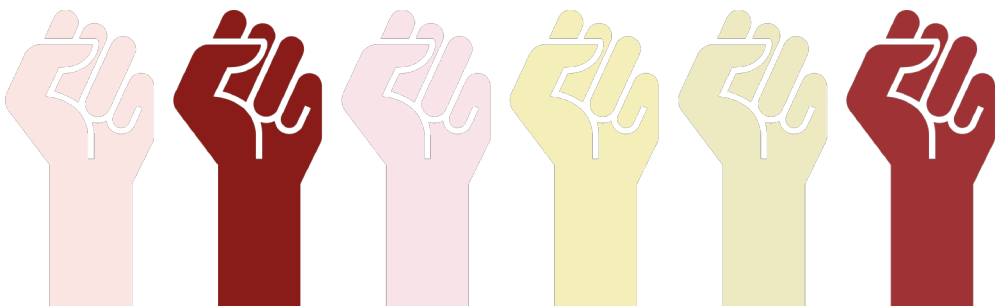
"To meet with a staff member and say, *In light of what you have acknowledged, you ought to move on*, is far superior to having someone from the congregation draw up the light and force a 24-hour firing," Steeves said.

For its part, the House of Deputies' special committee has not yet discussed how a truth-and-reconciliation process might work. Brock and others on the committee declined to comment. Castellan, convener of the Subcommittee on Title IV and Training, did not respond to request for comment.

Observers agree the church is wise to be proactive, design processes, and handle past events in an orderly manner, rather than wait and react to what could become a slew of public accusations. Having a system, they say, can increase the likelihood of due process and fair treatment.

But the particulars could have far-reaching effects on whether victims feel vindicated or once again ignored; whether the accused are publicly shamed, fired, or allowed to carry on; and whether acts of sexual harassment remain church secrets or become known to the world.

"Churches need to make sure that they are consistent with the current values of realizing there is a serious problem here," Steeves said. "And we need to be prepared for it." □



Safety in a Church's Parking Lot

Foxes have dens and birds have nests, but a homelessness crisis of “epic and heartbreaking proportions” in Los Angeles is bringing weary people to a Koreatown church parking lot. Homelessness in Los Angeles is so bad that the Los Angeles Times editorial board recently asked, “How can a place with 58,000 homeless people continue to function?” Headlines about the city’s homeless people have spread around the world in the last five years, but the crisis continues to deepen. One example: last year, the city began enforcing an ordinance that prohibits people who live in their cars from parking on any residential street between 9 p.m. and 6 a.m.

The city’s churches, such as St. Mary’s in Koreatown, are trying to discern a way to help. St. Mary’s has responded by opening its parking lot to those in need, with overnight security and a portable restroom. The Rev. Anna Olson, rector at St. Mary’s, told Matthew Townsend about the parish’s decision to pilot this program in partnership with Safe Parking L.A.

How did St. Mary’s go about deciding to partner with Safe Parking L.A.?

We were connected to Safe Parking L.A. by an interfaith organization that I’ve worked with on many issues over the years, CLUE (Clergy and Laity United for Economic Justice). St. Mary’s had been looking for the right opportunity to lend a hand in the city-wide effort to address the crisis of homelessness in L.A. When we met with the Safe Parking folks, they



seemed to have a plan that would work for what we were able to offer and the political and community relationships to make it happen.

Have you started hosting people? How has it gone?

We have started in a low-key kind of way. So far, so good; already [there has been] some nice interaction between guests and parishioners.

The expectation is that working up to the 10 vehicles we have committed to will take some time, and that time will give us all a chance to work through any bumps. There are a lot of people who need to work together to make it all work — Safe Parking L.A., the church, guests themselves, social service providers, local police, city attorney, city and county governments, other communities that use

our space, neighbors, and so on. So, we expect it to be some work to make the model a reality on the ground. That’s why someone has to go first! Hopefully each new site will learn from the existing models. We’ve already learned from models in other cities and one L.A. United Methodist congregation that has done a similar project under a different model with different partners.

Is this in response to the ordinance that effectively forbids people sleeping in their cars in residential areas?

I don’t completely understand the very complicated regulations about who can park and sleep where in L.A., but my understanding of the reality on the ground is that it is very difficult to live in a vehicle long term without accumulating citations and parking tickets, which can create an insurmountable burden for an individual or family that is already in economic crisis. I live about 1.5 miles from the church and I see daily evidence of people living in vehicles (as well as tents and in the open) in my residential neighborhood.

I know there have also been recent legal changes here that make it more possible for faith communities to provide temporary shelter either indoors or outdoors for unhoused neighbors.

How would you explain a ban on overnight parking to someone unfamiliar with the role that cars can play for homeless people, especially in a place like L.A.?



everywhere — under every bridge, on every sort of street, in every public space. I read a recent estimate of 60,000 people living unsheltered in Los Angeles County.

The recent massive increase in homelessness includes many people who are highly functional, sometimes employed, and remarkably creative about making life work on the streets. The days when most unhoused individuals showed visible signs of severe untreated physical or mental illness or substance abuse are long gone, although there are, of course, folks with those issues in the mix. There is just a tremendous mismatch between the price of housing and people's ability to pay for it. A full-time job at \$12.50/hour brings in a little over \$2,000/month before taxes. One-bedroom apartments in the church's low-income neighborhood start around \$1,500. The math just doesn't work.

Our mayor has asked every Angeleno and particularly every faith community to find a way to step up on behalf of our unhoused neighbors. Safe Parking is St. Mary's first concrete step beyond donations of food and toiletries to local social service programs. We hope that our willingness to help Safe Parking L.A. pilot its program will inspire other faith communities to offer their parking lots as well. We are also exploring other ways that we might use our space to partner with public agencies and local nonprofits who are working in our neighborhood.

How can people pray for the homeless of L.A.?

Everyone deserves a home in this world — a place of safety, rest, love, and protection. No one wants or deserves to be endangered, exhausted, lonely, and constantly vulnerable.

I pray that we all will hang on to and find ways to act on those basic truths in the face of a world that allows far too many lives to be regarded as disposable. □

For many families and individuals experiencing economic crisis, the car is the last “indoor” space they are able to hang onto. L.A.'s mild climate makes sleeping in a vehicle viable most nights of the year and provides protection from the elements, some minimal security, and a place to store personal belongings. Many people who live in cars are employed, often using gym memberships or family member's homes to take care of hygiene needs. Living in a vehicle can be a way to stay in the neighborhood where school and work and extended family and familiar services are close at hand. At the same time, people who live in their cars are vulnerable to crime and to both enforcement and harassment by police. Many housed neighbors do not want people living in vehicles in their neighborhoods, and trash disposal, cooking, and toilet facilities are a challenge.

At the same time, we at St. Mary's recognize that living in a car is often

the last point in an economic crisis where people retain a relatively solid chance of moving back into a more stable life without first losing everything. Living in a vehicle, with the mobility, privacy, security, and access to possessions that provides, is still far preferable to living on the street or in many shelter situations. We hope that by providing the safest and most stable possible environment for vehicle dwelling, we give people a chance to make that the “bottom” of their economic crisis, so the next step can be towards housing and stability.

What should people outside of L.A. know about homelessness there — what it's like, who tends to be homeless, and how the church is involved?

Homelessness in Los Angeles is a crisis of epic and heartbreaking proportions. I have lived in L.A. for 20 years and had never seen anything like the past five or so years. There are people living in tents and makeshift shelters

Two Schools of Congregational Development

By Kirk Petersen

Marital discord can have effects far beyond the married couple. The Church of England resulted in part from Henry VIII's desire for an annulment. Less momentously, a marital breakup is part of the reason there are two large Episcopal programs — similar in many ways, yet separate — focused on congregational development.

Both programs are entirely independent of the Episcopal Church Center. More about that later.

Congregational development is the practice of helping churches grow, both numerically and spiritually. It draws on the well-established business discipline of organizational development, which studies how organizations perform and change.

The College for Congregational Development (CCD) was started in 2009 in the Seattle-based Diocese of Olympia by the Rev. Melissa Skelton.

The Diocesan Church Development Institute (DCDI) is the successor to organizations of various names that have been led or influenced by the Rev. Bob Gallagher since the 1970s.

Skelton and Gallagher used to be married. Neither currently leads these programs. In 2014, Skelton was elected Bishop of New Westminster in the Anglican Church of Canada. Gallagher



Skelton

is “mostly retired” and no longer participates in DCDI, but takes on smaller projects for dioceses and churches.

Both organizations draw rave reviews from participants. It is difficult to pin down how the programs differ, even after talking to nearly a dozen people. Some leaders and former leaders of the programs declined to talk about differences, saying they are less familiar with the other program.

Similarities, on the other hand, are easy to find.

- Each program involves formal instruction in two successive years, with the expectation that participants will apply what they have learned to a major project in their home parishes in the year between training sessions.

- Each has been offered in two formats, with formal instruction each year either in a weeklong intensive or on four consecutive weekends.

- Each is offered by multiple dioceses, with some variations between dioceses.

- Each encourages participation by teams of clergy and lay leaders from the same church, because the teams develop common language and toolkits.

- Each makes extensive use of terms and concepts from the secular field of organizational development, such as cultural dynamics, conflict resolution, facilitation skills, leadership in a team context, and understanding the congregation as a system.

- Each has two former instructors

who have become bishops. In addition to Skelton, former CCD instructor Gretchen Rehberg last year became Bishop of Spokane, the diocese that shares the state of Washington with the Diocese of Olympia. Former instructors of DCDI and its predecessors include the Rt. Rev. Steven Miller, Bishop of Milwaukee, and the Rt. Rev. Scott Benhase, Bishop of Georgia.

Gallagher and Skelton met when she became vice president of administration at General Theological Seminary. “She was my boss,” Gallagher said. He was running what was then called the Parish Development Institute, which was based at General for a few years. An ad in a 1996 edition of TLC names them as co-instructors of “innovative workshops in congregational development.”

Skelton has an extensive business background. After two years at Virginia Theological Seminary, she finished her divinity degree at the University of Chicago while also completing an MBA. She was ordained while she was a brand manager at Procter & Gamble in the early 1990s. “I’ve got marketing in my veins,” she said. She later earned a certificate in organizational development from NTL Institutes, a pioneer in the field since the 1940s.

Gallagher has a master’s degree in organizational development from Goddard College, and started doing congregational development con-



Gallagher



Rickel

sulting in Pennsylvania in the 1970s. In the early 1980s he joined the staff of the Diocese of Connecticut to create a similar program that program was a precursor to DCDI.

The Rt. Rev. Greg Rickel provided the catalyst for CCD after he was consecrated Bishop of Olympia in 2007. He declared that congregational development was one of the top priorities for his episcopacy. To lead that effort he turned to Skelton, who was rector of St. Paul's, near the Space Needle in downtown Seattle.

Rickel and Skelton both graduated from DCDI when it was called CDI Trainers. "There was discussion about doing CDI in the Diocese of Olympia. At the time Melissa and I were having trouble in the marriage," Gallagher said. "She didn't really want to be part of the CDI system that I was still part of, and so she created the College for Congregational Development — which in format is basically the same thing."

"The Diocese of Olympia has recognized the extent of its debt to CDI in an agreement to pay a licensing fee to CDI Trainers for a five-year period," Gallagher has written on congregationaldevelopment.com.

Rickel said via email that "though all our attorneys were clear that we did not have to do this, acknowledging our debt to them, we did agree to a five-year fee for that. We are no longer paying that." He added, "Over these years we have both evolved very differently. I took CDI and I am very grateful for its vision and what it taught me."

Skelton said via email that CCD has "drawn on Bishop Greg Rickel's and my experience of versions of PDI/CDI over the years, on my own work with NTL in Organization Development, on my own parish experience, and now, more than ever, on the experience, training, and contributions of the many directors and trainers in the program."

Consciously or otherwise, DCDI has also borrowed a page from the CCD

playbook by evolving into a diocese-based organization. It previously had been a national program, first at seminaries and then as a standalone organization.

Diocesan was added to Congregational Development Institute in 2011 to create DCDI.

Both programs appear in multiple dioceses across the continent.

CCD spread from Olympia to the dioceses of Chicago, Northern California, Rochester, and Spokane in the United States. In Canada, in addition to Vancouver-based New Westminster, the Diocese of Ottawa is preparing for its first class.

DCDI programs are in the dioceses of Colorado, Georgia, Long Island, Michigan, Milwaukee, and Northern Indiana.

CCD in Olympia is now run by the Rev. Alyssa Newton, who was a member of Skelton's parish before being ordained. She worked with Skelton in establishing the college before Skelton became a bishop. As canon for congregational development for the Diocese of Olympia, she oversees the network of consultants who deliver the program in other dioceses. It's a quarter-time position; for the other three-quarters, she serves as vicar of St. Columba's in Kent, a Seattle suburb.



Newton

DCDI is led by the congregational development officers for each diocese, "and we kind of run it as a team," said Peggy Bean, canon for congregations in the Diocese of Milwaukee.

Both organizations want to maintain their independence from the Episcopal Church Center. Leaders of the groups expressed no hostility for broader church leadership, but instead stressed the importance of basing the programs in dioceses.

Church headquarters is fine with that.

"I think they're doing brilliant work and they're teaching the whole church, and that's as it should be," said the Rev. Stephanie Spellers, one of three canons to the presiding bishop, referring to both CCD and DCDI.

"I've been pointing people and dioceses toward them. I'm saying, 'Do you know about the College for Congregational Development? Do you know about CDI?'" she said.

She said there has not been a church-wide congregational development officer or department since 2009, when General Convention slashed the budget in the wake of the financial crisis, resulting in 40 layoffs. Some of the church planting work done by the Rev. Tom Brackett [TLC, Oct. 8, 2017] overlaps with congregational development, she said, but he focuses on starting new churches.

"Our entire churchwide system is saying, we can handle congregational development really well at the diocesan and trans-diocesan level," Spellers said. "We would love to partner with them, given the resources."

Two weeks after Spellers expressed that wish, Executive Council added a \$500,000 line item for congregational redevelopment to the budget for the coming triennium, earmarked for "redeveloping declining congregations." The budget is subject to approval at General Convention in July.

There also is some prospect for partnership between the two congregational development organizations, which for years have had no contact.

In separate interviews with Bean and another DCDI leader, the Rev. Walter Hobgood from the Diocese of Georgia, each independently broached the idea of connecting with CCD.

Newton seemed surprised and interested: "I have never been approached by anybody in the CDI organization, but I'll talk to anybody." □

Renewal Works (If You Work It)

Spiritual growth comes through personal practice, intentional service, and a fellowship enlivened by transformative mysteries.



Sidebotham

By Kirk Petersen

The Rev. Jay Sidebotham probably is best known for the cartoons he has drawn for many years, but he also has a day job as director of RenewalWorks. It is a ministry of Forward Movement, which in turn is a ministry of the Episcopal Church. RenewalWorks describes itself as “a guided methodology of self-reflection, sharing, and workshop discussion,” which “challenges parishes to refocus on spiritual growth and to identify ways that God is calling them to grow.” The program recently released a research report on Episcopal churches (renewalworks.org/researchsummary), and I spoke with Sidebotham about it. The interview has been edited for length, clarity, and narrative flow.

I write a column called In Search of Growth. It primarily focuses on numerical growth, but also on spiritual growth, and of course the two can go hand in hand. What does your research show?

A friend asked me, “Why is it that Buddhist meditation halls, AA meet-

ings, and yoga studios are packed, but the churches out there are not?” She opines that it has to do with the promise of transformation. People come expecting that they will leave differently.

Twenty-one percent of our folks are in churches that are described as “complacent,” which is basically saying that they don’t expect any transformation to happen at all. We had one church that did RenewalWorks and they were in that category and they wrote a new tagline: “St. Swithin’s: We’re spiritually shallow, and fine with that.” They were kidding, but it was an interesting bit of self-awareness. People really didn’t expect much to happen, and that has something of a self-fulfilling dimension to it. I think maybe that’s in the Bible.

There’s a lot of expectation of change in Alcoholics Anonymous or yoga. That has to be one of our core values in the Episcopal Church, and it hasn’t traditionally been. Probably for centuries, the Episcopal Church functioned by just being the church of power and the place to go if you wanted to connect and network. That

has all dissipated, which I think is probably just fine. We are trying to help churches find their own pathways for growth and transformation.

In addition to the “complacent” churches, your research characterizes more than half of Episcopal churches as “troubled,” and most of the rest are “extroverted,” or devoted to service in the world.

Yep. For the troubled thing, there’s a sense in the churches that they are looking for more, they want to go deeper. They would like to grow spiritually and they’re not finding the avenues to do that. I take that as a great opportunity.

The extroverted churches are really committed to outreach but not exactly sure why that’s a Jesus thing. That’s also a great opportunity for clergy.

The complacent piece I find hard. Probably only the Holy Spirit can make people want what they don’t want, or what they don’t know.

You have a section [in the RenewalWorks report] about how clergy lose track of why they entered the priest-



Jay Sidebotham cartoons

hood in the first place, because of the stresses of being a rector. One of the reasons must be that our Episcopal priests are spread too thinly across too many churches. There are so many churches where they share a part-time rector with the church five miles down the road. And then the rector also drives for Uber on the side to make ends meet.

I think that's right, I think that's going to be a challenge for the future. Part of our work is trying to get lay leaders to understand that they're spiritual leaders. That's one way we're going to enable some of these communities to keep going, by spreading that sense that the clergy aren't the only spiritual leaders in the community, there's a broader sense of ministry to all the people in the church, so how do you equip people to do that?

Churches need to say, what are we doing and how can we do fewer things better? How can we focus on our core mission, and are there things that we can stop doing? That's a hard conversation. It's not unlike the conversation the bishops have about whether some churches need to be closed. I pray for

bishops because I think it must be a really hard job, to try to figure out how you address the need for closing churches. I run across that need in every diocese.

We can help clergy reconnect with why they got into this work in the first place. So much of the work of clergy removes them from that original calling and passion and excitement. In any job there's stuff you have to do so you can do the part you like to do, but I think that for clergy, working on their own discipleship, their own joy in a relationship with God, is just really critical. I run across a lot of clergy who seem really bummed out and tired.

I don't think we raise clergy in the Episcopal Church to be teachers in local parishes. I think for generations we've focused on them as pastors, which is obviously indispensable, but some of these places that seem to be thriving have put an emphasis on teaching.

How did you get involved in this work?

I was the rector of a big church in Chicago for 10 years, and about seven

years into it, I was working my butt off, and I was finding that our pledging and our attendance was flat. I talked with colleagues about it, and we decided that flat was the new up.

It was really what prompted this work. I said there's gotta be something else, we really have to focus on going deeper in our relationship with God, our relationship with Christ, and let the members follow — or not.

I think some churches say they're going to focus on spiritual growth, and that makes some Episcopalians mad, and they leave. So I don't necessarily think in the short run that this work is going to redound to numerical growth or more pledging units. I think it will result in growth in vitality; I'm not always sure it will grow numbers. And I don't actually care that much about that.

I was in a church softball league once, and we were supposed to gather both teams for a prayer before every game. Some people were very uncomfortable with praying in public. There was a sense of "Go easy on the God

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stuff, we're Episcopalians, you know?" Interesting. Yes, we've certainly run across that. I'm deeply grateful for the articulation by our presiding bishop that we are "the Episcopal branch of the Jesus Movement." I think that helps us maintain that there's a distinctive Anglican identity, but the goal is people becoming more centered in their relationship with God and Christ.

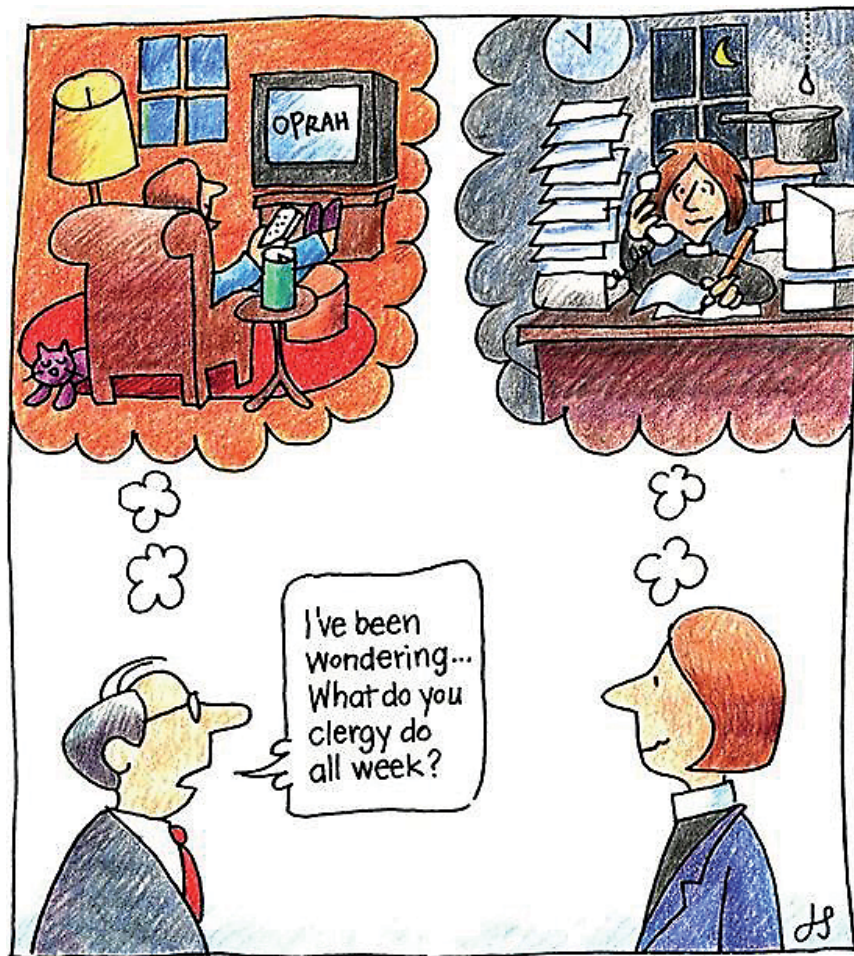
We find there are a lot of Episcopalians who say, "I'm not that interested in that." I think for rectors, that's actually helpful to know. What we're trying to do in these workshops is to have that kind of conversation and to really get people to talk about their own understanding of why their faith matters.

We find people who say, "I sat behind this couple for 20 years at the 8 a.m. service, and I never had a sense of what was important to them about their faith." We find this opens an opportunity to talk about that kind of experience, and I would characterize that as growth.

Earlier you talked about AA, and a huge part of AA is people telling their stories.

Of course. In our work we try to measure spiritual vitality in congregations, and a friend who is in AA told me that making a numerical measure of that is the dumbest thing she ever heard. I explained that we measure three categories: the church's role in people's spiritual lives; what people do when they're not in church, whether it's prayer or Scripture reading or whatever; and then faith in action, or outreach.

"That's the program!" she said. "You make a commitment to be of service" [along with attending AA meetings and focusing on personal spirituality]. It was like a lightbulb went on. It made me think that there is some fundamental truth that our spiritual selves need those three components.



Episcopalians are often quite good on the church thing, although the statistics are changing. Our research shows that we're distinctive in our mission and outreach work, although Episcopalians don't necessarily know why that's different from some of their [secular] volunteer efforts. One of the growth opportunities is to make the connection to discipleship in the kind of service we do in the world. But the daily spiritual practices, what people do when they're not in church, is relatively lower than other denominations.

We tell churches to focus on things that feel authentic and helpful to your people, anything that we can do to focus on Scripture and create a deeper prayer life. We find with Episcopalians that the Eucharist seems to be transformative for many people, particularly as they begin to be intentional about a spiritual journey. Anything we can do to help people understand the Eucharist is helpful.

"These holy mysteries."

Exactly. When I started this work, I wrote a thing called "Understanding the Eucharist," and somebody quickly came up to me and said, "good luck." I think I changed it to "Trying to Understand the Eucharist," or some kind of Anglican waffle.

There is a lot we'll never know, but there's a lot we can know about why we worship the way we do, and I think people's experience is enriched if they do that.

So there are barriers to growth in the Episcopal Church, but maybe that's one thing in our favor: we practice the Eucharist every week, and a lot of denominations don't.

Exactly. In a lot of churches, the sermon is the thing. That's kind of iffy, because the sermon can be good or bad. But there's constancy in the practice of the Eucharist that I've experienced personally. It's not dependent on the personality of the presider. It's got a power of its own. □

Why do I care that people are talking so much about ASA?

I Hope to Be in that Number

By Carrie Willard

Whenever I am around a group of Episcopal clergy, the conversation inevitably veers toward ASA, or the Average Sunday Attendance at their churches. I invariably dismiss myself from the conversation and leave the room.

I am sure there are legitimate, useful reasons to measure the number of people in the pews of a church on any given Sunday. But I think the weight we have assigned those numbers as a measure of success has become a sacred cow. I liken the ASA to someone's cholesterol count: it can be a useful metric, sure, in a conversation between a patient and a doctor, but it is not really interesting to anyone at a cocktail party (sorry), and it is not the best measure of overall health.

My husband is the rector of my church. I do not care about the ASA. This surprises some folks: why would I not want to know how many people grace the pews of our church on Sunday mornings? (Are pharmacists' spouses asked how many prescriptions their spouse dispenses every week? Are journalists' spouses asked how many words they have written each year?)

Why do I care that people are talking so much about ASA? I think it is harmful to put too much weight on this number. For one thing, it reduces the people in the pews to a number, and as a real live person who sits in those pews, I find that unsettling.

When Jesus gave the Great Commission, he instructed his disciples to baptize people and preach the good news. If we are so busy navel-gazing and bean-counting, we are in really danger of losing sight of that.

Another reason that I find the ASA headcount to be unsettling arose when I was talking with my mom about her childhood. My mom has always attributed her faith to her mother, who died before I was born. Her mother worked in healthcare, and often had to work on Sunday mornings. When Sunday mornings were her only time off, she used that time to prepare for the week as a full-time working parent of five children. She did not always make it to church on Sunday, but somehow she found a way for her children to get there. My grandmother wasn't counted in the Holy Grail of Average Sunday Attendance, but I am confident that she is now counted among the company of heaven. A lot has changed in the world since my mother attended her church in the 1950s, but class divides have only grown steeper since then, leaving a lot of people (including Episcopalians) no choice but to work on Sunday mornings sometimes. Do they count less?

Perhaps most troubling is the idea that clergy are sometimes pressured to make decisions based on how those decisions might affect their churches' ASA. Should we save resources by reducing our summer schedule from

three services to two, or should we keep the three services so we can count the choir and the clergy team twice? (Ick.) Clergy may rely too heavily on ASA when making decisions that affect the very people who are being counted.

In these conversations about ASA, I can sense everyone in the room tensing up. The anxiety is palpable as everyone wonders how they measure up to everyone else. It is never about the people in the pews, or what they have done for each other and for the world.

I would like to see ASA conversations return to their rightful place, as one of many metrics reported to the bishop each year. If a conversation needs to flow from that, it should be between the diocese and the priest, and not as a measure of success or failure. If we try for perfection through numbers, we will all fail to measure up. As the people in those pews feel that they are failing to measure up in their lives, as all humans do from time to time, they need to hear the good news of the gospel. God loves us enough to number the hairs on our head, which may be all the counting I need.

Carrie Willard lives in Houston, and attends Palmer Memorial Episcopal Church. She works at Rice University and enjoys spending time with her husband and two young sons. She also writes for Mockingbird, Episcopal Café, The Anglican Digest, and Grow Christians.

CATHOLIC VOICES

A Theology for Anglican Church Growth

By David Goodhew



St. Francis of Assisi preparing the Christmas crib at Greccio

“It’s just an unspiritual bigging yourself up.” This was the acerbic verdict of one Durham ordinand on the subject of church growth. His hostility to talking of growing churches is widely shared, at least in the Global North.

When two or three clerics are gathered together and the subject of church growth comes up, a multitude of theological objections rapidly appear: It’s the kingdom that matters, not numerical growth, It’s an ungodly sidelining of the need to love one’s neighbor. Isn’t church growth just something those uncouth schismatics obsess about?

These are serious objections, but beyond them, there is often a lurking sense of other fears. For many parish priests in North America, Britain, and much of the West there is a troubling worry that looking for numerical church growth is not only theologically dodgy but also practically futile. In the Western world, nearly every media and academic outlet trumpets the decline of Christianity. When many parishes and even whole dioceses are being spliced together because of their decline, looking to expand congregations can seem like wishful thinking.

There is some value in wariness of church growth. It *can* be an unspiritual bigging yourself up. But the reverse is also true. When Anglicans in the United States and Britain disdain “mere” numerical growth, as attendance in many dioceses drops, there is a certain convenience in the assumption that decline is inevitable. Anglican disdain for church growth is ecclesiological palliative care.

I want to sketch the outline of a possible theology for Anglican church growth. It is not original, being drawn

largely on the work of others. A nuanced theology of church growth is possible but also necessary. The growth that churches in the Global North so urgently need cannot come unless there is a robust theology beneath it.

Church Growth Is Biblical

If, just for a moment, we move the Gospel of Luke after the Gospel of John, we see immediately the nature of Luke’s two-part work. At its heart is the resurrection of Jesus: the end point of Luke’s Gospel and the starting point of Acts. The first part of Luke’s work is suffused with talk of the kingdom; yet in the Book of Acts, kingdom is mentioned relatively rarely. This does not mean that the theme is eclipsed, but the primary way in which the kingdom is expressed in the world after the Ascension of Jesus is by the formation of local churches.

More than a few theologians downplay the local church as something second-rate compared to the kingdom. The New Testament knows nothing of this. Indeed, the Book of Acts is punctuated by a series of summaries by Luke that note the numerical growth of the Church (6:7; 9:31; 12:24; 16:5; 19:20). Most moving of all are those points when the apostles arrive at places like Tyre and Puteoli and find a community of believers *already* there. The obvious inference is that unnamed Christians carried the gospel there. These unnamed Christians were quite possibly not apostles,

but they were acting apostolically. They challenge us to go and do likewise.

Church Growth Is Doctrinally Necessary

A theological basis for seeking numerical church growth is readily to hand in Scripture. But it is not quite so obvious when we turn to doctrine. Here the work of writers such as professors Alister McGrath and Ivor Davidson and of Bishop Graham Tomlin is immensely helpful. These writers, alongside other key scholars, discuss what constitutes a nuanced theology of church growth in David Goodhew (ed.), *Towards a Theology of Church Growth* (Routledge 2015). They point us to how the fundamental doctrines of Incarnation, Atonement, and Trinity call us to an extrovert faith, which seeks the growth and proliferation of communities that incarnate the gospel in every community.

Graham Tomlin argues that when we look at the Spirit, we see a God whose essence is sending:

Theologically speaking, mission and the consequent growth of the church begin with the begetting of the Son and the procession of the Spirit from the Father. It starts with the Trinitarian life of God before it ever involves the creation, let alone the human part of that creation. (“The Prodigal Spirit and Church Growth,” *ibid.*, p. 136)

In saying this, Tomlin commends the importance of a full-blooded pneumatology. But he is also alert to the way we can sometimes fall into an idolatrous assumption that the Spirit can be controlled by humans. Tomlin perceives the tension in seeing the Holy Spirit as free from human control yet given freely by God as akin to the tension between seeing church growth as in the hands of God yet requiring committed human effort if it is to come to pass. For Tomlin, the practice invoking the Holy Spirit is the way of managing this tension. By asking continually for the Holy Spirit we have access to him, but our need to ask means we cannot ever control him.

Tomlin also stresses that suffering is intrinsic to such a ministry. Any pneumatology has to be a *pneumatologia crucis*. This is the crucial underpinning for growing churches. This is cross-shaped ministry, rooted in suffering, not in neo-liberal paradigms of what constitutes success. Growing churches means taking up the cross.

Emphasis on the Holy Spirit requires that emphasis on numerical growth be balanced by desire to grow in personal holiness and in service to society. The Holy Spirit grows congregations, *but also* grows people by maturing them and by healing them.

That is why church growth matters. Healthy, well-

functioning churches are places where people can be restored and become agents of change and renewal within the world beyond the church. The reason we need churches to grow is not to pay the bills, or to feel good about ourselves. It is to enable humanity, in tune with the Spirit of God, to fulfil its divine calling to care for and nurture the world that God has created (*ibid.*, p. 141).

And to say this is to challenge Anglicans on whether our tendency to shrink may be linked to our failure to invoke the Holy Spirit and our general tendency, like many Western Christians, to downplay the third person of the Trinity. Anglicanism in recent decades has sought a greater emphasis on the Holy Spirit, but it may be questioned whether modern Anglicanism in the Global North has yet arrived at a truly robust pneumatology.

Church Growth Is Faithful to Tradition

In 1800 the population of London was around 1 million. By 1900 it was around 6 million. During the 19th century, huge numbers of Anglican churches were planted by Anglo-Catholics and evangelicals alike. Anglicans have often stood by as modern cities in the United States and Britain rapidly expanded in recent decades, in ways as dramatic as anything the Victorians saw, and failed to emulate our forebears by founding new churches. In our inaction, we are being unfaithful to tradition. Indeed, we engage in a decidedly postmodern worship of the individual, which sees sharing faith as arrogant (although promulgating individualism, for some reason, is never arrogant).

As we look more widely across the Christian tradition, we discover that enthusiasm for church growth was evidenced by some surprising figures. Living in the north-east of England, I rejoice in ancient saints like the seventh-century St. Cuthbert. He is usually depicted as a man of prayer who had a deep communion with nature. This is true, but not the whole truth. Bede tells us how Cuthbert “often did the rounds of the villages, sometimes on horseback, more often on foot, preaching the way of truth to those who had gone astray” (Bede, *Life of Cuthbert*, chapter 9). Cuthbert sought to grow the Church.

Likewise, St. Francis is portrayed as a man who profoundly loved the poor and God’s creation. And he did, but he also loved to share the gospel and build up the Church. The aphorism attributed to St. Francis that one should always preach the gospel but only use words “if necessary” — with its implication that the verbal proclamation of faith is secondary — has become an ecclesial cliché. But the *practice* of St. Francis points in the opposite direction. He and the friars were at the center of

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intentional Church growth in the Middle Ages.

It is well known that St. Francis invented the concept of the Christmas crib: but it is less frequently appreciated that he did so precisely because there was a pressing need for new ways to teach the story of Jesus' nativity to an ill-educated population that knew nothing of the Christian story. The work of evangelism was foundational to the friars. Chapter 12 of St. Francis's 1223 Rule was devoted to "regulating and promoting missionary activity" (Miranda Threlfall-Holmes, "Growing the Mediaeval Church," in *Towards a Theology of Church Growth*, pp. 188-89).

Thomas Cranmer was deeply concerned that the local church connect with its locality. This was expressed by his passion for liturgy in the language of the people and pastoral use of Scripture to draw people closer to God; hence the role of the "comfortable words" in the prayer book's communion. The power of scriptural rumination and cultural contextualization has much to teach Anglicans today (see Ashley Null, "Divine Allurement: Thomas Cranmer and Tudor Church Growth," *ibid.*).

Reason and Experience Require Church Growth

Anthropologist Tanya Luhmann of Stanford University writes:

What one might call an avalanche of medical data has demonstrated that, for reasons still poorly understood, those who attend church and believe in God are healthier and happier and live longer than those who do not. (*When God Talks Back: Understanding the American Evangelical Relationship with God* [Vintage Books, 2012], p. 331)

A recent research report details the full extent of this avalanche (Nick Spencer et al., *Religion and Well Being* [Theos, 2016]). It is academically proven that joining a congregation is connected to marked improvement in physical, mental, and relational well-being. In an age when attending church can be seen as a quasi-pathological disorder or optional lifestyle choice, this needs saying. In an age when people love their phones and computers but forget that their phones and com-

puters never love them back — I take this phrase from Kallistos Ware's *Orthodox Theology in the Twenty-First Century* (Geneva, 2012), p. 26 — Christian congregations are deeply good news, so their growth and proliferation is deeply good news too.

Church growth is not peripheral and it is not optional. When we look outside the Western world, it becomes clear that such growth is also eminently possible.

This raises the crucial and disturbing question of whether the decline of many Western churches, not least Anglicanism in the United States and Britain, has some theological roots. When we understand Scripture, doctrine, and tradition as if growing local churches were a side issue, or even something to be disdained in favor of supposedly higher kingdom goals, we are not only distorting Scripture, reason, and tradition. We

are, arguably, buying into the secular mindset that is the air we breathe.

More and more, I find myself turning to Charles Taylor's bracing diagnosis of our condition. Taylor sees us as living in a secular age. Part of living in a secular age is to assume growing churches is unnecessary or impossible or both. It will take deliberate act, a kind of exodus, to let go of such decline theology. Much of Anglicanism in the Global North suffers from this decline theology, in which the growth of congregations is sidelined or even looked down upon. My friends from the Global South find this a bizarre way in which to understand the world. I think they are right.

A range of research shows that churches that intend to grow tend to grow. And intentionality only comes through theology. Having a nuanced theology of church growth will assist churches in growing numerically, but doing so in a godly way. Such a theology will also inoculate us from the hopeless horizon of secularity that assumes this world is all there is. A theology of Anglican church growth, rooted in the hope of the resurrection, shows us what treasure we have to offer a world of aching loneliness: a community of thoroughly fallible people made strong by the hope of the risen Jesus.

The Rev. David Goodhew is director of ministerial practice at Cranmer Hall, part of St. John's College at Durham University.



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TLCI Explores How Faith Talks

Discussion on Christian education kicks off Dallas-based series.



March 8 saw the soft launch of the Living Church Institute in Dallas, in the form of its public conversation series, Faith Talks. “Lay Christian Education: How, Why, and What?” served as the first installment in the series and met at Canterbury House, just off the campus of Southern Methodist University. An ecumenical group of clergy, lay educators, and parishioners gathered for conversation about how to approach Christian education today.

TLCI’s program coordinator, Abigail Woolley, hosted a panel discussion that featured theologian Bruce Marshall (Roman Catholic), classical school administrator and teacher Brett Tohlen (evangelical Protestant), and the Rev. Ryan Waller (Episcopalian), parish priest and author.

When introducing the topic, Woolley recalled her teenage years. “When I asked in church how what I was learning at school connected to the Christian faith, I got blank stares,” she said to nods and murmurs of assent.



The inaugural Faith Talks panel on lay Christian education (left); Jessica Allen (above) of Church of the Good Shepherd asks a question.

Richard Hill photos

The next two Faith Talks events are scheduled for 7 p.m. April 6 (“Shaping Christian Community in a Lonely World”) and April 27 (a conversation with the Rev. Nathan Jennings of Seminary of the Southwest on “Liturgy and the Inside-Out Economy”) at Canterbury House, 3308 Daniel Ave., Dallas. Like the Living Church Institute on Facebook for regular updates.

“A lot of people were very thoughtful in their professional fields, but they didn’t seem to bring that same level of engagement to their faith.” Partly as a result, she said, she has seen young Christians conclude that the faith is too simplistic for thinking people.

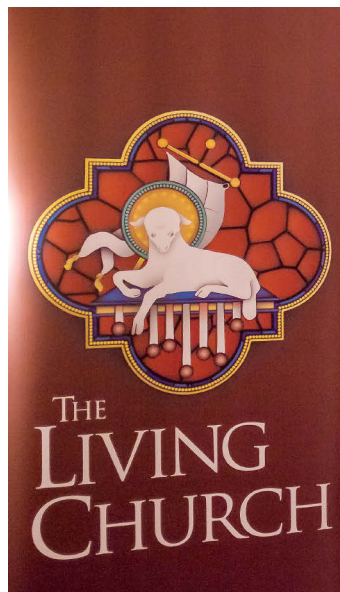
Marshall, stressing the importance of Christian education for laity, spoke of his experience encountering students who come into seminary unprepared. They struggle to benefit from advanced theology and biblical studies because they lack basic knowledge about the content of the faith. “Two generations ago, this wasn’t the case,” he said.

Waller, by contrast, did not have trouble learning biblical content in his Baptist boyhood. He summed up his catechesis this way: “Bible, Bible, Bible It was great. I learned my Bible. But this knowledge was divorced from the canon of Church history.”

Now an Episcopal priest, he encounters a lower level of biblical literacy than among Baptists, “but Episcopalians do seem to have a sense of how this all fits together.” The Baptist way of teaching Scripture and the Anglican way of adding context through historical worship and tradition are “like yin and yang I see a need to meet in the middle and to merge these things.”

Tohlen recalled that as a fourth-

(Continued on next page)



From top: St. Alban's Chapel viewed from the foyer; Professor Marshall lingers with SMU students; Evie Burdette and Rose Uche Ofoegbu converse following Faith Talks.



Professor Marshall answers a question about evangelization.

(Continued from previous page)

grader in Sunday school, he heard “What do you think this story means?” far more than he was instructed. Feelings seemed more important than wisdom, and he was desperately hungry for wisdom — a problem he tries to rectify now as a teacher in The Covenant School of Dallas. “The history and great intellectual tradition of Christianity are not given to young people,” he said. “Just like we need to eat good food, we need great ideas” to push us beyond our personal feelings and experiences into the truth.

Waller, associate rector of Church of the Incarnation, offered encouragement when describing what effective teaching can look like. When Incarnation hosted a late-night Bible class on the premise that all questions were welcome, no matter how remedial, “We packed that place out.” It was not because of any gimmick, but “because people are desperate for their Bible.” When a priest asked about the risk of alienating people with the gospel, Waller said, “People are profoundly drawn to those who actually believe what they’re saying.”

The panel also considered whether Christian education can be too brainy. Waller said the most profound formation is in the sacraments, through the love of God. Tohlen pushed back: embracing that love with our whole being includes cognitive engagement.

“Not everything we encounter is God,” Marshall said. “Discernment is fundamental” to the goal of Christian education. “It’s not possible to be ‘too brainy,’ but it is possible to use your brain in an unhelpful way.”

After the conversation, the panelists and audience — about 30 in all — joined in praying Compline, led by TLC’s executive director, Christopher Wells.

“We’re excited about the Faith Talks series, especially as an opportunity for folks to learn again about the basics of the faith,” Wells said. “We urgently need new spaces and places for all sorts and conditions of people to meet each other, before God, led by the Holy Spirit. That’s why we begin and end with fellowship, and with prayer; and then we trust one another and start to inquire together. It’s a great adventure, really.”

Amber Noel

EDITORIAL

Introducing the Living Church Institute

I’m *delighted* to introduce here for the first time the burgeoning teaching ministry of the Living Church Foundation — in multiple modes, spanning geography and genre — under the umbrella of the Living Church Institute.

This part of our work includes (1) the in-person teaching ministry of TLC in parishes and dioceses across the Episcopal Church (soon in Canada and England); (2) the publication of catechetical materials, aimed at various ages and audiences; and (3) the happy establishment of a second office at the beautiful Canterbury House and St. Alban’s Chapel in Dallas as a center for creative work in the areas of leadership development and discipleship.

Let me say a bit more about each of these, and describe the vision animating them.

Teaching in person: During the last year, the staff of TLC organized an impressive set of conferences, workshops, and teaching days in parishes and dioceses across the church, including “Living Sacrifices,” a conference at Nashotah House Theological Seminary on the vocation of Anglicanism (June 2017); “Anglo-Catholicism: Uncovering Roots” at Church of the Advent, Boston (Nov. 2017); “To the Bottom of the Night,” a teaching day on the season of Advent in the Diocese of Pennsylvania (Dec. 2017); and “Wisdom Calling: A Conference on Local Formation” in the Diocese of Florida (Feb. 2018). This work springs first of all from our devotion to the Word and words of God, and to communicating the faith of the Church. It also springs from our 140 years of publishing and pedagogical know-how, our network of teachers and talent spanning the globe, and our social media and marketing heft. Add to these our many and expanding partnerships with seminaries of the Episcopal Church and their faculty members, seminaries in Canada and England, and a web of parachurch ministries and institutions (the Episcopal Church Foundation, the Saint Francis Foundation, and the Consortium of Endowed Episcopal Parishes, among others). We are now preparing for “Worship the Lord in the Beauty of Holiness,” a conference at Christ the King Spiritual Life Center in Albany (Oct. 2018), in addition to recurring events with Church of the Advent, Boston, and the Diocese of Pennsylvania, plus conferences with St. George’s Church in Nashville, the Saint Francis Foundation, and several public teaching days with the contributors to our wildly popular weblog, *Covenant*. Stay tuned for dates!

Publishing: We are planning a line of catechetical materials — pamphlets, curricula, catechisms, and books for teaching the faith to all ages — that we hope will become a regular and beloved part of the lives of Episcopalians and Anglicans for the next generation. Those with lively memories will recall that publishing books, tracts, and catechetical materials both for children and adults occupied a good bit of TLC editors' time in the greatest period of our long history: when F.C. Morehouse and his son Clifford oversaw, from 1900 to 1952, the publishing of both our flagship and an exemplary catalogue of Christian literature under the aegis of the then-nascent Morehouse Publishing Company in Milwaukee. That catalogue grew over decades, and it lives today as an imprint in the care of Church Publishing, the official publisher of the Episcopal Church. We believe that now is the time for TLC to return to this play-book in precisely the same spirit, with the same catholic, evangelical, and ecumenical commitments of our forebears. We will kick things off next Fall with a set of 21 pamphlets, *Anglicans Believe*, each given to a brief, accessible introduction to a single topic: God the Trinity, Jesus Christ, Creation, the Church, the Book of Common Prayer, and so on. We hope this series, written by some of the best teachers and scholars the world over, edited to emphasize the fullness of the faith, will find its way into the tract racks of hundreds of parishes across the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom (to start), and so help to form the minds and hearts of thousands of Anglicans, to the glory of God.

Leadership Development and Discipleship: As a con- venger of conversations across the Church, TLC has the honor of gathering and serving a broad network of leaders, influencers, teachers, and creative thinkers, and sharing their gifts with the faithful. To this end, we have taken an interest in cultivating communities of discourse in institu- tional and geographical “hot spots” — seminaries and uni- versities, vital parishes, and cities of all sizes. To be sure, wherever the people of God may be found, there is the Catholic Church. But certain places, due to a confluence of cultural, intellectual, and economic energies, become cre- ative crossroads and, in God's providence, major forces for change in the world, including spiritual change. Dallas, set within the booming economy of Texas, is surely among these. Projections anticipate population growth of 54 per- cent by 2040, and the Christian dynamism of the city is pal- pable, enriched immeasurably by a great influx of immi- grants, speaking more than 150 languages. We there- fore jumped at the generous invitation of Bishop Sumner and the Episcopal Diocese of Dallas to set up a second office here, within hailing distance of neighboring dioceses in Texas, Oklahoma, and Louisiana, among others. Comfort- ably situated in the historic Episcopal chaplaincy across the street from Southern Methodist University and its excellent

Perkins School of Theology, Canterbury House includes a large common room, classroom, library, two offices, kitchen, and three updated bathrooms, in addition to the stunning St. Alban's Chapel. It presents an ideal laboratory for theological researches and teaching, meetings with lead- ers, and especially for sustained attention to formation and discipleship in an ecumenical mode. I myself am now based here, overseeing a broad program, one fruit of which we recently harvested with the inauguration of our Faith Talks series (see the story and pictures in this issue, pp. 34-36), which will double in size next academic year.

On a wall in the foyer of Canterbury House we installed three black-and-white photographs taken by our friend and colleague, the Dallas-based artist Dickie Hill, that aptly depict the missionary challenge for a communications and teaching ministry like *THE LIVING CHURCH* (see next page). On the left, Eritrean immigrants exercise civil rights in their new home; on the right, Chris- tian leaders pray for reconciliation in the face of continu- ing agonies over racial division; in the middle, centered on the cross, the unswerving call of our Lord is issued to the next generation — to “go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you” (Matt. 28:19-20).

In the face of a broad decline of Christian culture in the West and too-little formation of the faithful, a *living Church* can only determine again to sow seeds of re-evan- gelization, and then head into the harvest with all the help we can muster (see Matt. 9:37). Working with Christ — *in* him, enabled by him — we cast anew the seed of the gospel along paths, among stones and thorns, and in good soil. We cannot know which seeds fall where, though we may be sure that *God* will give the growth at the proper time and in the proper way (Matt. 13:1-9; 1 Cor. 3:6). By God's grace, moreover, and because of our Lord's promise that the gates of hell will not prevail against the Church, we follow the faithful work of those who have gone before, “entering into their labor” (John 4:38; cf. Matt. 16:18).

Precisely in that spirit of loyalty to and love of the insti- tution of the Church, given shape for us in our devotion to global Anglicanism as a visible movement within the broader Church Catholic, and above all as servants of the Word made flesh, who bids us follow him: because, in short, we believe in the unity of signs and things, as in the sacra- ments and the Incarnation of God himself, we see our min- istry as subsisting in the enlivening word in all its forms — in print, and in the mouths of our Lord's many servants whose feet come bearing good tidings (see Isa. 52:7) through varied teaching ministries, and in the sustained conversations of formative friendships over a lifetime.

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EDITORIAL

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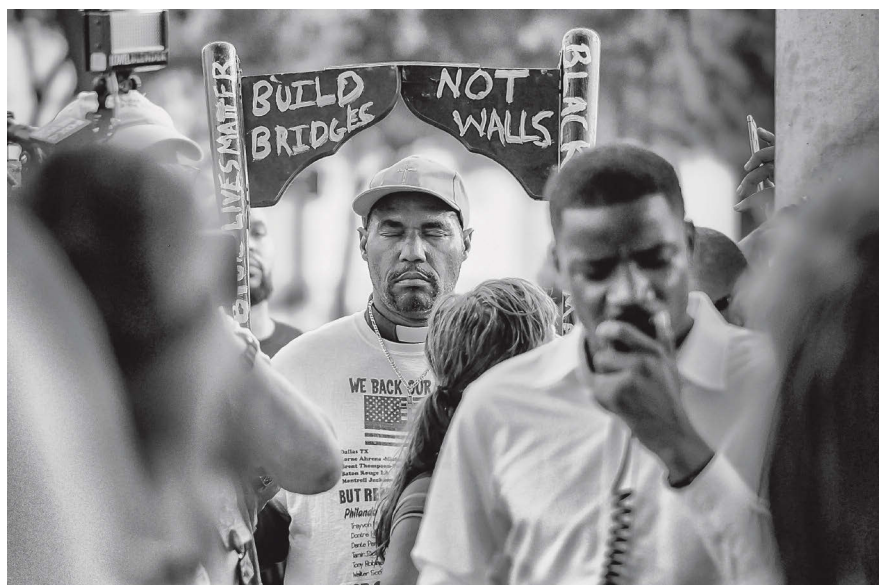
Among the gifts that THE LIVING CHURCH brings to this educational work are the freedom and agility of an independent, disciplined non-profit ministry with a clear and distinctive mission, long-since accustomed to responding quickly to needs, committed on principle to creative improvisation. We subject all of these to continual prayer, relying on the leading of the Lord. Like blood traveling throughout the body, we would be communicative missionaries in service of the whole “for Jesus’ sake” (2 Cor. 4:5). Subjected to him, we seek to encourage common clarity, renewed zeal, and trust in all that is true, according to God’s promises and the created order.

I will write more soon about our endowment campaign, which will help to fund this ambitious expansion of TLC’s program. For now, please pray for us. Pray for the flourishing of our ministry. Pray for our own faithfulness and obedience to God. And pray about how you can lend your support. We welcome invitations to come and visit, to teach, and to partner.

If you’re on Facebook, please like the page of the Living Church Institute to follow all that we are doing — both to attend events and to read about and otherwise enjoy them afterward as we post stories, photos, and audio or video recordings. Also, please drop in when you are in Dallas — and, of course, when you are in Milwaukee, where we still gratefully produce THE LIVING CHURCH and operate the business affairs of TLC out of the Cathedral Church of All Saints.

Onward, in the name of Christ.

Dr. Christopher Wells
Executive Director and Editor



Richard Hill photos displayed at Canterbury House in Dallas

Then to the Geeks

Review by Matt Stromberg

Geek used to be considered a pejorative word for smart but often strange people with an obsessive interest in a particular subject, usually genre literature, television, and movies. Recently, however, it is being worn with pride by an increasing number of people. If you have not heard, geek is chic. Whatever the reason, what started out as a subculture has gone mainstream. Geeks are quickly becoming the new trendsetters.

Jordan Haynie Ware, an Episcopal priest with a passion for youth ministry, has written an introduction to the Episcopal Church with this niche group in mind. She is no bandwagon-hopper, but embraces the nickname *geek priest*.

The book is basically a user's manual for those new to the Faith. The book lays out some basic theological concepts, introduces readers to the Book of Common Prayer, and explores the faith and practice peculiar to the Episcopal Church. There is extensive explanation of the various "churchy" terminology that can often baffle newcomers, as well as a helpful description of the various vestments and vessels used during worship.

If this were all the book covered, it would probably make for pretty dry reading. Instead, Ware manages to present all of this information in a quirky, fun, and often exciting manner. In a very effective use of contextual evangelism, everything is presented through the lens of geek culture. Ware writes the book as if she is a Dungeon Master, the storyteller and guide in the role-playing game of Dungeons and

Dragons. She peppers her book with obscure, insider, pop-culture references that are often pretty funny if you are in on the joke.

That is not to say that Ware leaves her non-geek readers completely in the dark. The book is also a kind of introduction to geek culture for those whom she describes as *n00bs*, which geeks use for newbies or the uninitiated. In that way, the book can serve not only as an introduction to the Episcopal Church for geeks, but a manual for the would-be evangelist seeking to reach this strange and sometimes hostile people group.

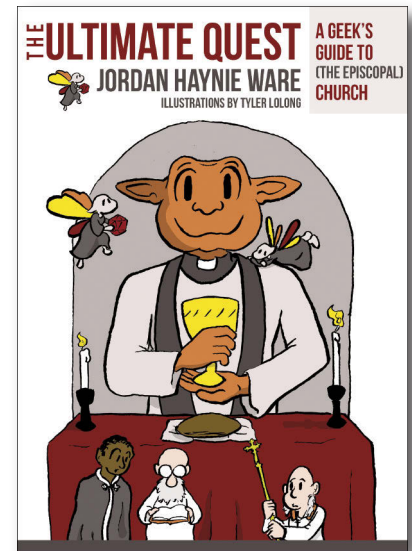
Like geeks, Christians have always been a peculiar people. Our spiritual and moral values set us apart as an odd and sometimes marginal bunch. We speak in odd ways, dress in strange clothing, and participate in weird practices that can sometimes seem impenetrable to outsiders.

Ware believes that the Church and geeks have a natural affinity. "Geeks and the Church belong together," she writes. "We both seek the adventure that comes from pursuing a mission bigger than own personal identity."

With that in mind, Ware invites her readers, both geek and Christian, to join her on the greatest adventure path of all time, following Jesus.

Bible scholars, theology nerds, and liturgists may find things to argue about in this book — that is what geeks do, after all — but overall I think it is a solid resource. I can think of several geeky young acolytes and confirmands with whom I would love to share this book. I bet you can too.

The Rev. Matt Stromberg is rector of St. George's Church, Schenectady, N.Y.



The Ultimate Quest

A Geek's Guide to
(The Episcopal) Church

By **Jordan Haynie Ware**

Church Publishing. Pp. 176. \$16

PEOPLE & PLACES

Appointments

The Rev. **Doyle Dietz Allen** is rector of St. Patrick's, Kenwood, CA.

The Rev. **Roy Allison** is rector of St. James, Ormond Beach, FL.

Bonnie Anderson is chair of EDS at Union's board of trustees.

The Rev. **John Merritt Atkins** is rector of St. Paul's, Dayton, OH.

The Rev. **Trevor R. Babb** is rector of Christ Church, Staten Island, NY.

The Rev. **Lori Babcock** is staff chaplain at the University of Maryland Medical Center.

Pam Bell is archivist in the Diocesan of Oklahoma.

Buck Blanchard is missionary for outreach and mission in the Diocese of Colorado.

The Rev. **Jacob Bottom** is priest-in-charge of Our Saviour, Gallatin, TN.

The Rev. **Emily Rowell Brown** is vicar of St. John the Baptist, Charlottesville, VA.

The Rev. **Michael Cadaret** is rector of Olivet, Franconia, VA.

The Rev. **Christine Cassels** is deacon at St. Luke's, East Greenwich, RI.

The Rev. **Suzanne Cole** is rector of St. Luke's, Wilton, ME.

The Rev. **William Coyne** is priest-in-charge of East Cooper Church, Mt Pleasant, SC.

The Rev. **Thomas L. Culbertson** is interim rector of St. James, Monkton, MD.

Tyler L. Davis is director of stewardship and development in the Diocese of Oklahoma.

The Rev. **Kim De La Vars** is priest-in-charge of Holy Covenant, Baltimore.

The Rev. **Peter DeFranco** is priest-in-charge of St. John the Baptist, Linden, NJ.

John Dwyer is chief operating officer of Church Divinity School of the Pacific.

The Rev. **Paul Elliot** is interim rector of Ascension, Birmingham.

The Rev. **Jeff Evans** is rector at St. Stephen's, Huntsville, AL.

The Rev. **Richard Fichter Jr.** is rector of Hanover-with-Brunswick, King George, VA.

The Rev. **Donald Allston Fishburne** is priest associate at Holy Cross Faith Memorial, Pawleys Island, SC.

The Rev. **Anne Fraley** is rector of St. Peter's, South Windsor, CT.

Gloria Gallant is canon for finance and Episcopal Service Corps program manager in the Diocese of New Hampshire.

Devin Gillespie is lay curate at All Saints, Safford, and Sts. Philip & James, Morenci, AZ.

The Very Rev. **Mark Goodman** is corporate director of community development at Haverland Carter Lifestyle Group in Albuquerque.

The Rev. **Kevin Goodrich**, OP, is rector of St. John's, Dubuque, IA.

The Rev. **Jane Soyster Gould** is rector of St. Luke's, Long Beach, CA.

The Rev. **Lisa Green** is associate rector of St. Martin's, Williamsburg, VA.

The Rev. **Brian Grieves** of Hawaii is interim executive director of Camp Mokule'ia, Waialua, HI.

The Rev. **Chris Hartley** is rector of St. Matthew's, Madison, AL.

The Rev. **John T. Harwood** is priest-in-charge of St. Mark's, Lewistown, PA.

The Rev. **Kristen Hawley** is rector of St. David's, Washington, D.C.

The Rev. **Holly Herring** is associate for community life at Trinity Cathedral, Phoenix.

Beverly Hurley Hill is canon for mission and lay ministry in the Diocese of East Tennessee.

The Rev. **Corinne Hodges** is vicar of Holy Family, Santa Fe, NM.

The Rev. **Jeff Hual** is rector at All Hallows, Davidsonville, MD.

The Rev. **Sheryl Hughes-Empke** is associate rector of St. Mark's, Des Moines.

The Rev. **Ed Hunt** is superintending presbyter of the Pine Ridge Episcopal Mission in South Dakota.

The Rev. **John Inserra** is rector of St. Alban's, Harlingen, TX.

The Rev. **David Jackson** is rector of All Souls, Ft Myers, FL.

The Rev. **Jay C. James** is associate rector of Church of the Advent, Boston.

The Rev. Canon **Brian Jemmott** is canon to the ordinary and transitions officer in the Diocese of New Jersey.

The Rev. **Johan Johnson** is vicar of Trinity, Rocky Hill, NJ.

The Rev. **Tim Johnson** is rector of St. Andrew's, College Park, MD.

The Rev. **Jo Ann Jones** is associate rector of Redeemer, Bryn Mawr, PA.

The Rev. **Tyler Jones** is rector of St. Paul's, Poughkeepsie, NY.

The Rev. **Hyvenson Joseph** is priest-in-charge of St. Mary the Virgin, Pleasantville, NJ.

The Rev. **Charmaine Kathmann** is deacon at All Saints', River Ridge, LA.

The Rev. **Kenn Katona** is priest-in-charge of St. Clement's, Rancho Cordova, CA.

The Rev. **Don Keeler** is priest at St. Martin's, Perry, IA.

The Rev. **Kirk Kubicek** is priest-in-charge of Christ Church, Rock Springs, MD.

Sue LaRose is interim executive director of Camp Marshall in Poison, MT.

The Rev. **Robert Marshall** is rector of Redeemer, Midlothian, VA.

The Rev. **Thomas E. Mathews** is rector of Christ Church, Ridgewood, NJ.

The Rev. **Mary Alice Mathison** is priest-in-charge of Grace and St. Thomas by-the-Sea, Panama City, FL.

The Rev. **Katlin McCallister** is priest-in-charge of Holy Apostles, Hilo, HI.

The Rev. Canon **Melissa McCarthy** is canon to the ordinary in the Diocese of Los Angeles.

The Rev. **Richard Meadows** is priest-in-

charge of St. Michael and All Angels, Baltimore.

The Rev. **Emmanuel Ato Mercer** is rector at Christ Church, Columbia, MD.

The Very Rev. **Neal Michell** is prebendary for the Diocese of Dallas.

The Rev. **Deke Miller** is vicar of Holy Cross, Winter Haven, FL.

The Rev. **Virginia Monroe** is interim rector of Nativity, Huntsville, AL.

The Rev. **Elizabeth Montes** is rector of St. John's, Wichita.

The Rev. **J. Fletcher Montgomery** is rector of Holy Trinity, Gainesville, FL.

The Rev. **Daniel T. Moore** is rector of St. Paul's, Doylestown, PA.

The Rev. **Alistair Morrison** is rector of Christ Church, Duanesburg, NY.

The Rev. **Diedre Moulmier** is deacon at St. Thomas, Clarkdale, AZ.

The Rev. **Michael Muller** is priest-in-charge of St. Peter's, Essex Fells, NJ.

The Rev. **Thomas Murphy** is rector of St. Philip's, Brevard, NC.

The Rev. **Paul Nancarrow** is canon theologian in the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia.

The Rev. Canon **Kevin Nichols** is chief operating officer and canon for mission resources in the Diocese of New Hampshire.

Kirstin Nielsen is diocesan coordinator in the Diocese of Idaho.

The Rev. **Beth O'Callaghan** is rector of St. Nicholas, Germantown, MD.

The Rev. **Matthew Opredek** is priest-in-charge of St. James', Fordham, Bronx.

The Rev. **Kathleen Patton** is vicar of St. Anne's, Washougal, WA.

The Very Rev. **Patrick Perkins** is dean of the Cathedral of St. Paul, Fond du Lac, WI.

The Rev. **Jim Perra** is rector of Holy Apostles, Arbutus, MD.

The Rev. **Joseph Peters-Mathews** is rector of St. Joseph-St. John, Lakewood, WA.

Tina Pickering is canon for ministry development in the Diocese of New Hampshire.

The Rev. **Jason Prati** is rector of All Saints', New Albany, OH.

The Rev. **Christian Rabone** is rector of St. Mary the Virgin, Big Spring, TX.

The Rev. **Michele Racusin** is missionary for financial stewardship and chief financial officer of the Diocese of Los Angeles.

The Rev. **Rebecca Ragland** is rector of St. Paul's, St. Louis.

The Rev. **Douglas Errick Remer** is interim rector of St. Timothy's, Raleigh, NC.

Mildred J. Reyes is missionary for collaborative formation in the Diocese of Washington.

The Rev. **Cara Rockhill** is the Diocese of Rhode Island's young adult missionary, based at the Cathedral of St. John, Providence.

The Rev. **Tracy Johnson Russell** is rector of St. Monica's, Hartford, CT.

The Rev. **Blake Sawicky** is priest-in-charge of St. Mark's, Berkeley, CA.

The Rev. **Douglas F. Scharf** is rector of Good Shepherd, Tequesta, FL.

The Rev. **Claudia Scheda** is rector of St. David's, W. Seneca, NY.

The Rev. **Joyce Scheyer** is priest-in-charge of Grace, Plainfield, NJ.

Kyle Smith is director of communications for the Diocese of Nebraska and Trinity Cathedral, Omaha.

LaTonya Smith is director of administration for the Diocese of East Carolina.

The Rev. **Faye Somers** is archdeacon of Southeast Florida, and continues her work as chaplain of the lower school at St. Andrew's, Boca Raton, and deacon at the Chapel of Saint Andrew.

Dennis Stark is treasurer of EDS at Union's board of trustees.

The Rev. Canon **Gregory Straub** is vice chair and secretary of EDS at Union's board of trustees.

The Rev. **Stacy Stringer** is director of hurricane recovery in the Diocese of Texas.

The Rev. **Maryalice Sullivan** is priest-in-charge of All Saints' Memorial, Providence.

The Rev. **Roberta R. Taylor** is rector of St. James', Indian Head, MD.

The Rev. **Elaine Ellis Thomas** is rector of All Saints, Hoboken, NJ.

Deb Tickle is lay missionary at Emmaus, Surprise, AZ.

The Rev. **Debra Trakel** is interim pastor of Advent Lutheran, Cedarburg, WI.

The Rev. **Kathleen Travis** is rector of St. Mark's, Des Moines.

The Rev. **Stephen Cecil Trever** is rector of St. Anne's, Fremont, CA.

Adrian Tubbs is lay curate at St. George's, Holbrook, AZ.

The Rev. **Hank Tuell** is associate for community life at St. Matthew's, Chandler, AZ.

The Rev. **Allen Wakabayashi** is curate at St. Luke's, Gladstone, NJ.

The Rev. **Michael G. Wallens** is vicar of St. Paul's, Marfa, TX.

The Rev. **Dan Warren** is interim priest-in-charge of St. Peter's, Bridgton, ME.

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Acts 4:32-35 • Ps. 133 • 1 John 1:1-2:2 • John 20:19-31

Hearing, Seeing, Touching

The “whole group of those who believed were of one heart and one soul, and no one claimed private ownership of any possessions, but everything they owned was held in common” (Acts 4:32). This primitive ideal continues today as a distinctive feature of monastic life. Most Christians, though keeping private wealth, will acknowledge that Christian life is never merely private. The Church is one heart and soul, a shared life of all the baptized who bear the triune name of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Ps. 133:1). The heart and soul of the Church is its common witness to the resurrection of Jesus Christ, a witness marked by power, grace, and joy (Acts 4:33; 1 John 1:4).

“Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came” (John 20:24). He refused to believe, saying, “Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe” (John 20:25).

A week later, when Thomas was present, Jesus appeared. Thomas saw and believed. Jesus said, “Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe” (John 20:29). “We walk by faith, not by sight” (2 Cor. 5:7).

Yet is not faith a form of seeing, a way of touching, and a kind of deep hearing? “We declare to you what was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the word of life” (1 John 1:1).

There is a sense in which this is true of every Christian in every age. Not only do we understand and see God’s eternal power and divine nature in created things, but we also see and touch the risen Lord in the sacramental life of the Church and the material wonders of creation. Jesus is a body, and faith is a way of seeing him, and hearing him, and touching him.

The Eucharist is the setting in which this is most vivid. Christ is present as

the community gathers, present as Scripture is read and preached, present in prayer and the exchange of peace, present in bread placed in hands and wine that touches lips. He is heard and seen and touched. Notwithstanding the long and labored debates about the meaning of the Eucharist, it is theologically appropriate to affirm the real presence of Christ is the most graphic way and devotionally fitting to use majestic and beautiful words.

Consider Richard Hooker: “Let it therefore be sufficient for me presenting myself at the Lord’s table to know what there I receive from him, without searching or inquiring of the manner how Christ performeth his promise; let disputes and questions, enemies to piety, abatement of true devotion, and hitherto in this cause but over patiently heard, let them take their rest; let curious and sharp-witted men beat their heads with what questions themselves will, the very letter of the word of Christ giveth plain security that these mysteries do as nails fasten us to his very cross, that by them we draw out as touching efficacy, force, and virtue, even the blood of his gored side, in the wounds of our Redeemer we there dip our tongues, we are dyed red both within and without, our hunger is satisfied and our thirst forever quenched” (*Laws*, Bk. V, LXVII, 12)

We have met him, seen him, and touched him. Thus, our joy is complete; thus, we have life in his name (1 John 1:4; John 20:31).

Look It Up

Read Richard Hooker on the Eucharist.

Think About It

“O my God thou art true, O my soul thou art happy” (Hooker).

It Must Be Said

Go into your room, shut the door, and study in secret, and your Father who sees in secret will help you. Read, mark, and inwardly digest. Let questions arise, let consolations come, let trouble begin. Hold and use a pen as John Henry Newman did at prayer. Pull down dictionaries and commentaries. Inspect and read the trail. Revise and renew. Do not resist your petty thoughts, your impetuous conclusions, and your droning on of words. Let them surface and let them go. Learn how to hear boredom so it may pass. Listen for interest, energy, and life. Watch for a reasonable hope and a rational love. How will you lift up hearts in 15 minutes?

Inspiration is never mere bluster. A slow simmer and a quiet gaze and some concession to problems will settle the hearer and win trust. These words have filled the room: “When Peter saw it, he addressed the people, ‘You Israelites, why do you wonder at this, or why do you stare at us, as though by our own power or piety we had made him walk? The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, the God of our ancestors has glorified his servant Jesus, whom you handed over and rejected ... you rejected the Holy and Righteous One ... and you killed the Author of life’” (Acts. 3:12-15). Peter, a Jew, stands in the midst of Jews, saying that “faith in his name, his name itself, has made this man strong.” Healing comes through the name of the Lord Jesus, the one who rests in the bosom of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. This is, for our New Testament writer, an inter-Jewish story, and thus cannot be an anti-Jewish story, though, as we know, such words have been and — God forbid — may be deployed again with demonic consequence.

“You acted in ignorance, as did your rulers,” Peter says, mindful, no doubt, of his own denial of Jesus. “All have sinned and fall short of the Glory of God” (Rom. 3:23). About this “there is

no distinction” (Rom. 3:22). *All* refers to the entire human family; it never refers to an identifiable group of the guilty. We should feel grave concern that nativist populism targets perceived outsiders as the cause of nearly every social woe and that this garners from within the Church. Jesus is the recapitulation of the entire human family, and therefore the gathering of all into the Father’s love. God’s love endures. An informed Christian would not dare limit “justification by grace as a gift” to an overt and public profession of faith. Finally, a Christian will listen to and gratefully receive wisdom and knowledge from any culture or people as a gift from God.

In a better world, such things would not need to be said. But they must be said to make the world better. Christianity is not a search for the guilty, but is God’s gift of salvation through his Son, a mystery into which we have been engrafted and privilege to know but not privileged to exhaust.

Judge not. Trust the Lord. Put gladness in your heart. Lie down and sleep in peace. Be a child of God. Open your mind to his name in all nations (Ps. 4; 1 John 1:3; Luke 4:27). The full joy of the resurrection is a full joy in all creation, in all peoples who fear God and do what is right (Acts 10:35).

Look It Up

Read Acts 3:15.

Think About It

Discomfort gives rise to thought.



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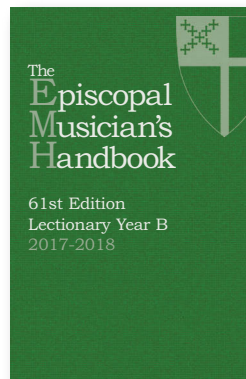
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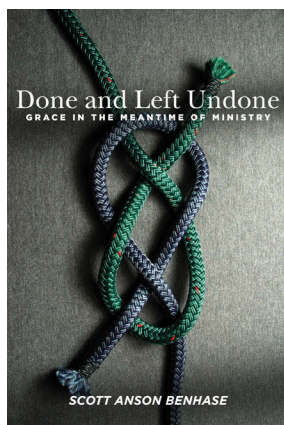
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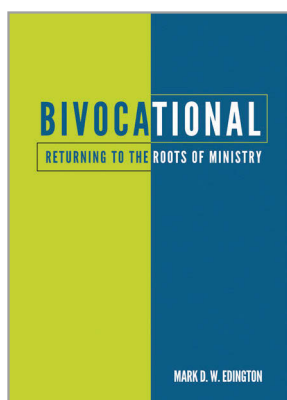


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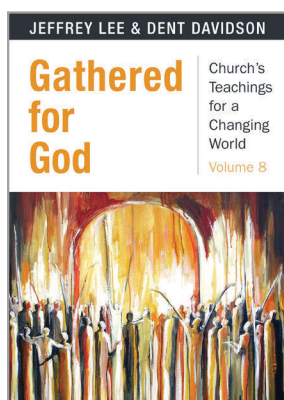


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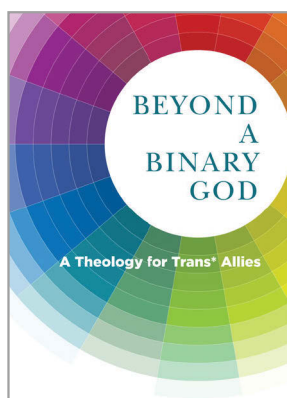


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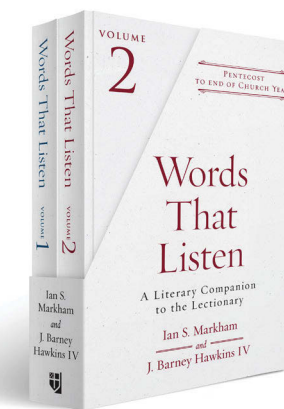


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