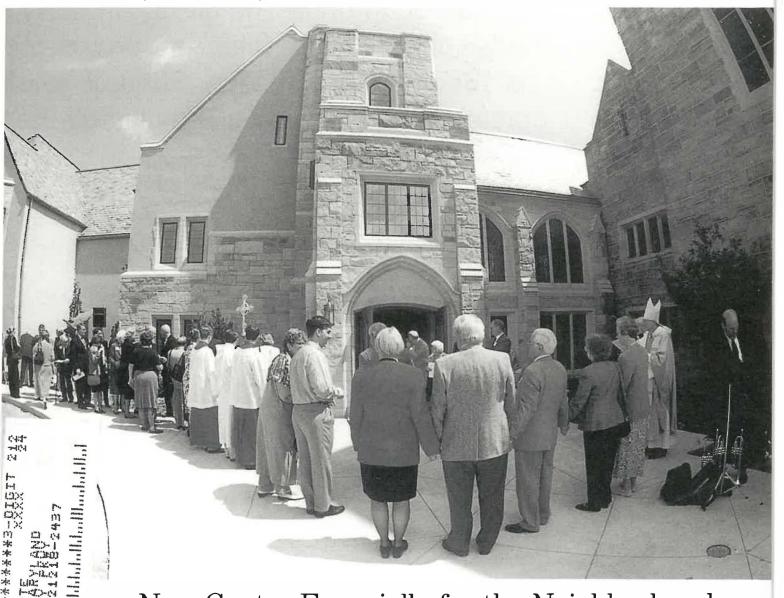
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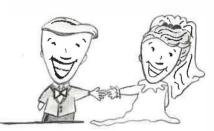
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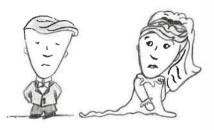
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laying of the cornerstone at their new
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Herb Gunn photo

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TRAVELING

TAKE ALONG YOUR TLC FOR The Church Directory Guide. (See Page 18)

#### SUNDAY'S **READINGS**

# **God's Fashion Show**

'The Lord is King; he has put on splendid apparel; the Lord has put on his apparel and girded himself with strength.' (Psalm 93:1)

#### The First Sunday after Pentecost: Trinity Sunday

Exodus 3:1-6; Psalm 93 or Canticle 2 or 13, Rom. 8:12-17, John 3:1-16

Can't you imagine a child asking, "What does God wear?" Many a preacher and teacher may want to run from that one as much as trying to avoid dealing with the mystery of the Trinity. Actually, that question would be a good start for a children's sermon today. It would lead to the psalm's answer of splendor, strength and holiness (vs. 6). The rich biblical material provided by the lectionary today also offer ways to deal with the wonderful truths of God as Three in One.

Let's start with the ground upon which we stand. When we are speaking of God's nature and identity, it is the same holy ground which Moses discovered in the Exodus story of the burning bush. Recognize that holiness is the first step to enjoying and worshiping the One God in Three Persons. When we have a holy fear to approach the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob as Moses did, then we are ready to hear and receive the truths in the epistle and gospel readings. St. Paul's words to the Christians in Rome reveal that there is a dynamic of community within the Godhead which we experience as grace is given us. When we turn our hearts and mind to God as Father, that is the work of the Holy Spirit going before us (prevenient grace) and with us to confirm our

familial relationship with God in Jesus Christ, i.e., children of the Father and joint heirs of the kingdom of God with Christ by the power of the Spirit. That's justifying grace at work in our hearts that bear the fruit of living according to the Spirit in sanctifying grace. In other words, standing upon the holy ground of God's presence and power leads to our fashion make-over into the holy people of God dressed in the white robe of his righteousness. That living involves sharing the suffering of the Son, for example, the tears of mourning for our sins and the sins of the world as listed in the Beatitudes according to Matthew's gospel.

The most important truth knowable in this world is also expressed in a dynamic way by Jesus in his teaching of Nicodemus. The same work of the Triune God in giving us new life in himself is pictured as the Son "lifted up" on the cross as God's gift to believers for eternal life, that abundant life begun by the Spirit of God. It's like being caught in a rotary engine or a nuclear reaction — a self-sustaining release of energy that leads us onward to being and always becoming who we are created and called to be; children of the Father. Don't avoid this good news today. Rejoice in it, enjoy it and share it with enthusiasm.

#### **Look It Up**

Look up in a Bible dictionary and map the location of "the wilderness" of Horeb. Consider that work of God in that remote place and the possibility God can meet and be with you wherever you are.

#### **Think About It**

Pray over today's collect again and again, even diagram it, to see the dynamic at work in it. God has preceded our faith and worship with grace to believe and confess that trust in baptism, confirmation, and creed and Eucharist in order to lead us to worship in his power ("strength" in the psalm).

#### **Next Sunday** Second Sunday after Pentecost

Job 38:1-11, 16-18; Psalm 107:1-32 or 107:1-3, 23-32; 2 Cor. 5:14-21, Mark 4:35-41;(5:1-20)

#### The Journey from Texts to Translations

The Origin and Development of the Bible By Paul D. Wegner Baker. Pp. 462. \$39.99.

This book should prove to be a valuable reference in many parish and clerical libraries. It has chapters



which take us back to the very beginning of language and the writing process. It explains how scribes used materials. their how biblical languages were written, and how the

earliest manuscripts were produced and transmitted.

There are chapters which deal with the problem of variant readings. Scholars must give rules to decide which readings are most authentic. And so the methods of textual criticism are explained and illustrated.

Of special interest are those chapters which deal with English translations. Even such people as Caedmon and Bede translated portions of the Bible into English. The process, of course, begins in earnest with Wycliffe, continues through the 16th century, and literally blossoms in our own time. Many will be surprised to learn that many English translations, including the AV of 1611, are deeply indebted also to the Latin Vulgate.

A helpful part of the reference book is its description and evaluation of all these English translations, especially of the ones produced in our century. We learn what texts were used for each translation, and what characteristics are associated with each one. We are treated with the version of the Lord's Prayer as it is found in each version. There are negative comments about some versions, notably the Jehovah Witness version.

Many valuable lessons are to be learned from this book. It points out that any translation is to a certain extent a paraphrase. For good or ill any translation has a certain bias. A good translation is much more than a mere transferral of words from one language to another. The Bible student will be convinced more and more that there is no substitute for a knowledge of Greek, Hebrew and Latin.

One could quibble about a few things. The author writes from a narrow "evangelical" point of view and uses such words as "infallible." He implies

that even the first chapters of Genesis are accurate history. He says that the Bible is "self-authenticating" and needs no action by church councils. Every now and then one detects a certain anti-Roman Catholic, anti-Orthodox and even an anti-Anglican stance.

> (The Rev.) M. Fred Himmerich Watertown, Wis.



# EPISCOPAL NEWS SERVICE

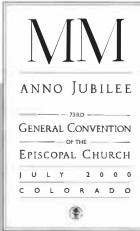
## For Immediate Release

General Convention 2000 news stories, photos and Internet audio webcasts will be posted daily from Denver, Colorado, by Episcopal News Service.

Webcasts will be anchored by James E. Solheim, Director of News and Information, and posted daily at 6:30 p.m., Mountain Time, from July 3 to July 17. Once posted, the webcasts will remain online for listening at any time.

Webcast reports will cover all convention actions, interviews and audio segments from House of Bishops and House of Deputies legislative deliberations.

Tune in to General Convention webcasts and also see all Episcopal News Service releases and news photos www.ecusa.anglican.org/ens



## **Canadian Church Hit Hard by Litigation**

The Most Rev. Michael G. Peers, Archbishop and Primate of the Anglican Church of Canada, told members of Canadian congregations that because of the cost of legal actions stemming from sexual abuse in the nation's residential schools, "... we are faced with litigation so costly as to change radically our structures and our life as a national church." The archbishop asked that the statement be read in all parishes May 28.

Since the allegations came to light last year, 1,600 claims have named the General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada and the Canadian government as defendants and found them liable for damages. "The costs of litigation and settlements for these (cases) is sufficient to exhaust all the

assets of the General Synod and some of the dioceses involved," Archbishop Peers said.

"I want to assure all Anglicans that what is at risk financially are our assets, not the contributions that provide for the ongoing ministry and mission of the church at parish, diocesan or national levels," he said. "Your contributions serve the mission of the church — not the costs of litigation."

He noted that the ways the Anglican Church of Canada carries out its mission "will be modified." Speaking of the negotiations with the government seeking alternative means for the church to provide "a just contribution to compensation" for the victims, Archbishop Peers told church members, "we will be a very different church."

## **Task Force Proposes Ways to Help Resolve Conflicts**

The first regional meeting of the New Commandment Task Force [TLC, May 7] gathered May 15-19 at Christ Church, Short Hills, N.J.

Fourteen members of the regional team issued a proposal which asks the House of Bishops to study the scriptural and historic role of church leaders as reconcilers, including a study of reconciliation/mediation methods. It then asks that the bishops, after their study, issue a pastoral letter on reconciliation with a study guide.

Other suggestions would require definitive change. For example, a request to develop a process of appeal in situations of theological and pastoral conflict would require the development of a council of bishops and a national church reconciliation team. At the outset, the governing body (vestry or diocesan executive council) would have to approve the request for assistance by a two-thirds vote.

The task force also requests that candidates for ordination, lay leaders and currently ordained clergy undergo a two-day training program in reconciliation and that funding in the amount of \$640,000 be approved for reconciliation initiatives during the triennium.

#### **Camp Cleanup**

Owen Thompson, Eric Robinson and Phil Gillespie joined more than 100 people for a reunion of Camp De Wolfe. Alumni campers, staffers and others who came from as far away as Japan spent a May weekend sprucing up the Diocese of Long Island's summer camp in Wading River, N.Y.

Anita Wallace photo



# **Teaching Mission Stresses Christian Responsibilities**

The Church of the Advent in Boston was host to a teaching mission on May 6 titled "Christ Our Future." Clergy and laity heard a number of addresses.

The Rev. Canon J. Roy Porter of Oxford University and the University of Exeter (retired), refuted the idea that wealth itself is the cause of evil, misery and suffering, and that merely redistributing it is the cure.

He said the Old Testament prophets repeatedly warned against profligacy and oppression of the poor, although there was nothing intrinsically evil or disordered about the possession and proper enjoyment of wealth.

During the Solemn Mass, the Rt. Rev. Ewen Ratteray, Bishop of Bermuda, preached on the need for a life-long commitment to Christ, and the urgency of coming to the Eucharist with proper spiritual preparation.

The Rt. Rev. Donald J. Parsons, retired Bishop of Quincy, speaking of Christ and the New Testament, asked the conferees to consider anew the question of who Christ is, and what is the meaning of his life and teaching.

The Rev. Mother Catherine Grace, of the All Saints Sisters of the Poor, spoke of the liberating value of the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience.

At the conclusion of the mission, the Rt. Rev. Geoffrey Rowell, Bishop of Basingstoke, former chaplain at Oxford, recalled his recent visit to Nicaea, where the Nicene Creed was developed and two Ecumenical Councils held. Its lack of a living Christian presence reminded him that while churches die, the church does not.

Joe McLellan

## Newark Youth Group **Delivers Computers** to Appalachia

In early May, the Youthreach Ministry group from Holy Trinity Church, Hillsdale, N.J. (Diocese of Newark), delivered 70 computers to the people of Monteagle and Gruetli-Laager, Tenn. Seven teenagers and four adults took part in this ministry. They brought back a lifetime of valuable lessons learned and the profound experience of Christ's love shared.

The Rev. John J. Negrotto, a volunteer firefighter and rector of Holy Trinity, has worked with the New Jersey Fire Department's Exempt Association, which reconditions and distributes used computers to handicapped children and various charitable institutions in need.

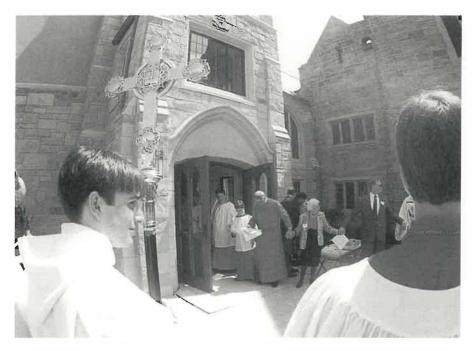
In the summer of 1999, Fr. Negrotto began a sabbatical in Monteagle, sponsored by Episcopal Appalachian Ministries. In conversations with the Rev. Clark Baker, vicar of the Church of the Holy Comforter, Monteagle, and St. Bernard's, Gruetli-Laager, Frs. Negrotto and Baker realized that the people in the Tennessee parishes had a great need for computers.

In the fall of 1999, Fr. Negrotto suggested that the Holy Trinity Youthreach Ministry take computers to the people in Tennessee. The group approved the idea and began to shape its execution. The use of a trailer, a truck and a seven-passenger van were donated.

In the weeks prior to Easter, the Youthreach group tested and boxed the computers and loaded the trailer.

On the weekend after Easter the Youthreach Ministry group arrived in Tennessee. In Monteagle they distributed 48 computers and provided instruction. At Gruetli-Laager, 22 computers were set up and distributed.

The Youthreach Group returned to home exhausted, elated, and thankful for having had the opportunity to serve and to share the love and abundance of Christ.



#### **NEW MINISTRY CENTER**

Parish members at Christ Church, Grosse Pointe, Mich., gather to celebrate the laying of the cornerstone on their new combined education, youth and community building May 21. The three-story building, with 45,000 square feet of space, replaces two older structures and was designed as a continuation of the neo-Gothic church building. The classrooms, designed to accommodate the Montessori-based Godly Play program, are open and have carpeted flooring. The Rev. Ed Putnam, rector, said the entire lower floor is designed to incorporate visiting young people. Situated next door to the city's largest high school, Christ Church opens its old rectory to 75-80 students



on Thursdays for a pizza lunch - in the new building Fr. Putnam expects 300-400 students. "The kids are really excited." he said. "The administration loves it ... it's taken kids off the street corners." By a special deal with a pizza chain, kids pay 50 cents for a slice of pizza and have "a happy place to come to watch videos, play games, or just sit and talk - which is what most of them do.'

### BRIEFLY ...

The Nippon Sei Ko Kai (Anglican Communion in Japan) has elected the Rt. Rev. John Junichiro Furumoto, Bishop of Kobe, as Primate for a twovear term. Bishop Furumoto succeeds the Rt. Rev. John Makoto Takeda, retiring Bishop of Tokyo. Until his election, Bishop Furumoto had served his entire ministry at Church of the Ascension, Kobe.

The Episcopal Church of Jerusalem and the Middle East has appointed the Most Rev. Iraj Mottahedh, Bishop of Iran, as its President Bishop and Primate. He succeeds the Most Rev. Ghais Abdel Malik, Bishop of Egypt, who is retiring. The Rt. Rev. Mouneer Hanna Anis is the new Bishop of Egypt.

Through the cooperation of the **Episcopal Environmental Network and** its partner organizations, the General Convention in Denver will use renewable energy as power. The electricity for General Convention will come from Colorado windmills providing energy that will not harm the atmosphere or affect the global climate.



## **Life as a Borderland Missionary**

By Mary Mendenhall

The winds blow the dust into swirling heaps. Coughs, fevers. eye problems and hunger are common complaints in the dry season. In the cool mornings I rise to start a charcoal fire and breakfast before beginning classes with my three children at home. My husband, Richard, spends his day at the diocesan vocational training school he started in 1995, balancing the books, sorting out staff problems, mulling over next year's curriculum, writing project proposals to prospective funders, and occasionally getting into the workshop to show a student (or teacher) a carpentry technique that's not in the textbook.

People never seem to tire of hearing the material details of missionary life — what we eat (highly vegetarian), how we bathe (with no plumbing) how the people around us live and cope (they live from day to day). We are in a "classic" missionary situation: 50 miles from the nearest paved road, tucked into the extreme southwest corner of Uganda, five miles from Rwanda and eight from the Democratic Republic of the Congo — the corner where a handful of tourists met a grisly death not long ago. On a map, it looks to be just next door, but in reality many rough miles separate that gorilla park from the one that lies just beyond the edge of our town of Kisoro.

The people in our area share a Bantu culture, language and lifestyle with their distant cousins in Rwanda and with the Bakiga, who live only over a few hills. They dig crops to live, even the professional teachers and shopkeepers, because it's hard to make money in Kisoro District.

The gospel was first preached here in the 1920s, and has been slowly permeating the society ever since. People still burn their spirit shrines and get baptized by the dozens. Just last week a girl in my Bible class gave her life to Christ. It is the mandate of our sending agency, Mid-Africa Ministry, a branch of the Church Mission Society, that

mission partners (like us) work alongside locals, under the direction of African church leaders like Bishop Ernest Shalita.

Bishop Shalita invited us to come and live in the hilly borderland of the Diocese of Muhabura to begin a small vocational training school, helping high school students learn a skill. Right now it is carpentry. The school began a few years ago, and still strug-



Mrs. Mendenhall with her husband, Richard, and sons Brendon (left), Stephen and Michael.

gles to get a precarious hold in a world where working with one's hands is no longer respected. A "white-collar" education is seen as the single way out of poverty — and is very hard to get. Our "job description" is to make practical the advice St. Paul gave to the Thessalonians: "Make it your ambition to lead a quiet life, mind your own business, and work with your hands, that your daily life may win the respect of those outside your number and that you may not be dependent on anyone (1 Thess. 4:11-12). We do our best to give priority to orphans. Uganda is full of orphans.

My days are full of walking, because the roads are rough and it takes less energy to walk than to drive. I greet many people in their language on my way to and from town. Their welcome is warm and amused. Someone has taken time to learn their words, to be with them.

The children play with trilingual friends amid green hills, hills that harbor beautiful flowers and insects as well as tropical diseases and guerillas. It is not an idealistic life, but for us, it is a good life.

It is good because we have chosen to live in the Borderlands among people of East Africa who hardly hope to catch up with the affluent West. Hope-

fully we will grow to understand how they think and learn so we can simply encourage them to use the gifts that God gave them long ago, and to learn from them, about living simply and in gratitude for each and every day. The widows are especially good teachers of a vital missing ingredient in racy Western living: faith.

We do not hope to transform the society of our neighbors the Bafumbira. It will take more than the efforts of non-governmental agencies and itinerant evangelists who preach loudly and move on to the next village. It will take friendship with bicycle-riding pastors who can't afford to send their own children to school, and partnership with behind-the-scenes Christians who put up no personal monument but leave behind a rock-solid example.

We believe that practical Christianity inevitably attracts others to seriously consider the claims of the gospel. Living it out is always tougher than talking it, no matter if you are in Chicago or Palm Beach, in London or Kisoro. There is room for "borderland missionaries" in all sorts of places. The borders can still be crossed, by anyone who takes up the call and cross of the Lord Jesus, the missionary par excellence, who left his comfortable world to enter ours.

Join us in prayer for peace and lasting godliness in this chaotic, developing world of Africa — and for the world next door to your own.

Mary Mendenhall is a missionary in southwestern Uganda serving in the Diocese of Muhabura.

# **Gripping the Hard Questions**

As I read The Living Church virtually cover to cover and observe the deep divisions plaguing the Episcopal Church, the impression I get is that spokespersons on both sides are proceeding on the basis of different assumptions and are therefore going right past each other, like ships passing in the night, without ever coming to grips with the issues that arise at the point where the assumptions part company.

There are four areas that the church has not been adequately addressing, at least not in the general church press, as far as I know. One is a simple matter of clarity and charity, two are theological in nature, and one is a matter of biblical interpretation.

First, it would be immensely helpful if references to homosexuality would state clearly whether it is orientation or sexual practice that is under discussion. It makes a world of difference to many readers in

has some hard thinking to do.

This possibly leads to the other theological

issue, which has to do with relativism. This generation knows (as public knowledge) what no previous generation before it has so known — that people do not choose to be homosexual; they only become aware of who they are. This raises the possibility that God may be trying to tell us something now that we were not ready to hear any earlier — something different from what we have understood him to be telling us in the past.

What God has told us in the past has come to us largely through scripture, which, as the Articles of Religion tell us, "containeth all things necessary to salvation." A quick reference to the context (Book of Common Prayer, p. 868) will clarify what is meant — that nothing can be taught as necessary to

salvation that cannot be grounded in scripture. This phrase is often quoted as if it meant the opposite — that everything in scripture is necessary to salvation.

I am the daughter of an Episcopal priest. If I should (God forbid!) wind

up as a call girl, should I be executed? If not, why not? That's what scripture says (Lev. 21:9). The question this raises has indeed been brought up several times, but I have not seen it adequately answered yet. The church needs its best theological thinkers to come to grips with the question of how we decide which parts of scripture to give weight to and which to pass over, and then to lay their conclusions before the church at large.

These are difficult questions to face. Some might even call them distasteful questions. Many probably would prefer not to face them. However, if we do not come to grips with the issues that lie where we part company, we will keep on parting company. Having the courage to face these hard questions and explore them may help us to take a step back from the precipice of schism.

Our guest columnist is Laura Rico, a member of St. Alban's Church, Los Banos, Calif.

#### Did You Know...

Radio station WOI, the most powerful in lowa, maintains a news bureau at St. Paul's Cathedral, Des Moines.

#### Quote of the Week

The Most Rev. Peter Kwong, Archbishop of Hong Kong, on the world: "The world has become like Cinderella with amnesia. It has forgotten its true identity ..."

# If we do not come to grips with the issues that lie where we part company, we will keep on parting company.

weighing what follows. I am haunted by the title of a brochure I saw, "It's Not Enough to Be Celibate — You Have to Go Back in the Closet." If a person of homosexual orientation who is sincerely trying to lead a life according to traditional and scriptural standards of morality feels this way in the church, we have some repenting to do. If such a person feels this way in the world, we have a job to do.

The first of the two theological issues has to do with creation. We know now that homosexual orientation is discovered rather than chosen. What we do not yet know is whether it is innate or acquired. The church needs to pay close attention to what scientific research is able to discover about this subject and then deal with the theological implications of what science has found. If the orientation is acquired, it cannot be part of God's creation, nor can the lifestyle be according to his will. If, on the other hand, it can be shown to be innate, then the church

#### **VIEWPOINT**

# A Match Hatched in Hell

By James Steele

Three years ago, with the discussions around the Concordat of Agreement, and now with those about Called to Common Mission (CCM), much of the argument in favor of communion in sacris and ministerial interchangeability with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) has used the metaphor of marriage. "Far from giving things up, we will find our full identity in partnership with the beloved" seems to be the gist. I have never been able to let a figure of speech alone, and so

please indulge me while I probe marital imagery.

In other times and cultures, romance had little to do with marriage. Rather, parents, marriage brokers, and even the town yenta, met together and planned matches between suitable young people. All questions of settlements, residence and ceremonial were worked out at this level. If the

prospective bride and groom objected on the grounds of indifference or even aversion, they were told that suitability and affinity were far more important and that love would come later. Western literature from every land is replete, however, with what happened when love did not come later.

I suggest that CCM is such a professional arrangement, with ecumenical officers, seminary faculty, and some bishops playing the brokering roles, while the intended couple remain puzzled, indifferent, or even downright hostile to the proceedings. When one or the other has objected, most of the advice received has been of the "we know-better-than-you-what-is-good-for-you" variety, although of late there have been attempts at salvaging the betrothals

by changes to the settlement itself.

It seems to me that the heart of disagreement between the bridal couple is their differing conceptions of the ordained ministry. It is not my purpose here to advance one over the other, but rather to state the difference. Whatever greater and lesser prelates might be part of the Episcopal baggage, the ordained ministry is irreducibly three-fold. Our ordained ministry consists of bishops, priests and deacons. The Lutheran concept of ordination, however, is clearly sin-

gle: They are pastors, whatever political overlay may have been found convenient. Scriptural argument can be made for each of these conceptions, but they are not, in the final analysis, compatible and certainly not interchangeable.

Certain suspicions of some Episcopalians have now been fueled by the ELCA bishops' resolutions interpretelected term expires. It is some comfort that if re-elected, such bishops will not again have hands laid upon them at their installations. B.2 states clearly that ordained ministers from non-episcopally ordaining traditions will be received onto the roster of ELCA pastors without re-ordination. That has evoked a quite specific reaction from the Episcopal Church's House of Bishops that such pastors will not be accepted as interchangeable. The ambiguity of the English word "regularly" has caused the

House of Bishops to request clarification of paragraph 20 of CCM because as worded, it would appear to sanction ordination of pastors by pastors under certain circumstances. And A.4 would seem to rule out any adoption of an ordained diaconate by ELCA ever.

Some Episco-

palians of "high church" stripe would welcome the apostolic gifts that Lutherans would bring to the common mission, specifically fidelity to scripture and greater doctrinal integrity. But we rather expect to be able to make our own apostolic contribution to the union. Both the basic revisions to the Concordat in CCM and the resolutions of the Lutheran

Basic revisions to the Concordat in CCM and resolutions of the Lutheran Conference of Bishops make us think that our contribution of apostolic order would deteriorate.

ing the basic document CCM. A.3, for instance, states that there will be no defined role for the Presiding Bishop or synodical bishops after their

Conference of Bishops make us think, however, that our contribution of apostolic order would deteriorate (Continued on page 12)

#### **VIEWPOINT**

# Better Together Than Apart

By Michael Root

Why should the Episcopal Church adopt *Called to Common Mission* (CCM), the revision of the earlier Episcopal-Lutheran Concordat of Agreement? At one level, the answer is simple: CCM furthers the visible unity of the church in a way that accords with both Anglican and Lutheran theological convictions. But questions are raised: Haven't the Lutherans distorted the earlier agreement and are they so internally divided they cannot be a reliable ecumenical partner? As a Lutheran who

has been closely involved in the revision of CCM and the debate surrounding it, I want to answer these questions.

Has the earlier agreement been fundamentally changed? No. The agreement at the core of the Concordat remains untouched. On the basis of a shared under-

standing of the gospel and of the apostolicity of the church, the two churches "now make the following commitment to share an episcopal succession that is both evangelical and historic. They promise to include regularly one or more bishops of the other church to participate in the laying-on-of-hands at the ordinations/installations of their own bish-

the Concordat. Procedures have been streamlined, e.g., fewer bishops from each church will need to be at each ordination or installation of a bishop. Ambiguities have been clarified, e.g., a difficult sentence on three-fold ministry has been rewritten to make clear what members of the dialogue have insisted was always the case, namely, that the ELCA is not committing itself in this proposal to an ordained diaconate. The crucial expectations of each church, however, are still met. The

Episcopal Church will recognize in word and deed the existing ordained ministries of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and the ELCA commits itself "to enter the ministry of the historic episcopate." These two actions together constitute an ecumenical breakthrough. The Episcopal Church took a major step two years ago in

Haven't the Lutherans distorted the earlier CCM agreement and are they so internally divided they cannot be a reliable ecumenical partner?

ops as a sign, though not a guarantee, of the unity and apostolic continuity of the whole church." The revision that produced CCM met a variety of detailed objections without altering the essential theological structure of

affirming the Concordat, and now the ELCA has become the first protestant church in American history to vote to enter episcopal succession. It has done so because of its dialogue with the Episcopal Church. It would be tragic if this breakthrough were now to fail on the Episcopal side.

The possibilities of Lutheran-Episcopal communion are significant. These include specific projects of cooperation in many places, but they go beyond that. Lutherans and Episcopalians should together explore the catholic and evangelical center of the faith. Both traditions underwent the Reformation of the 16th century, even if in different ways, and each sought during that Reformation to

preserve as much as possible of the common tradition of the Western church. Together, Lutherans and Anglicans represent what an American Lutheran of the 19th century called the "conservative Reformation." Such a catholic and evangelical vision of the faith has much to offer contemporary America. The peculiar possibilities presented to our churches today can

better be met together than apart. What continues to make us different, e.g., the difference in how we assess the importance of episcopal succession for the communion of the church, need not undermine our communion with each other. We can each learn from the other, while preserving our relative distinctiveness. If the ecumenical movement is to make progress toward that greater unity we pray for, it will require a network of such new relations of communion.

But is the ELCA a dependable partner? The ELCA has taken CCM with great seriousness and debated it vehemently. Vigorous theological debate has been a part of the Lutheran tradition beginning with Martin Luther, and too often it has (Continued on page 12)

#### **VIEWPOINT**

A Match Hatched in Hell



(Continued from page 10)

for the reasons stated above into an episcopate that is evanescent, a presbyterate that is uncertain, and a diaconate that is non-existent except in the person of the bishop. It would appear that the wedding gifts are being returned even before the ceremony.

Difficulties with in-laws are legendary in marital affairs. Here we find each tradition not only absolved in advance if it cannot cope with the other's kith and kin, but also relieved of any necessity even to try (paragraph 25).

All is not well, even with the professional marriage brokers. In paragraph 24 we read, "Each church promises to issue no official commentary on this text (CCM) that has not been accepted by the joint commission as a legitimate interpretation thereof." But simultaneous to the issuance of CCM, the Lutheran Conference of Bishops issued the resolutions cited above. That, of

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course, prompted the Episcopal House of Bishops to issue their own "Mind of the House" resolution on April 3. What the brokers have presented the bride- and groom-to-be is a prenuptial agreement with footnotes, one set for the bride and one for the groom.

The ELCA and the Episcopal Church have traditionally gotten along fairly well, and we have eucharistic sharing. Why take a perfectly good friendship and

complicate it with matrimony, at least until such time as the couple are truly in love?

A good union has objective reasons for its success, but there are also subjective ones. Without strong attraction, without an overwhelming desire to make their way together, a bridal couple is doomed to misery or divorce or both regardless of how suitable a match their elders think it. Instead of a marriage made in heaven, I fear that CCM would become a match hatched in hell.

The Rev. James Steele is the rector of St. Thomas' Church, Morris, Ill., and an alternate deputy to General Convention from the Diocese of Chicago.





(Continued from page 11)

been polemical. The opposition to CCM has been well funded and technologically savvy. But opponents have never been able to sway more than about one third of the church. In both 1997 and 1999 about two-thirds of the ELCA Churchwide Assembly voted for the proposal. Once in place, a two-thirds majority would now be needed to reverse this decision. The chances of such a negative supermajority forming are slim.

But what about the continuing opposition among some Lutherans? It certainly exists, although its size is difficult to estimate from the noise it puts forth. Nevertheless, it has repeatedly shown itself to be a minority and seems to be increasingly regional in nature. The debate in the ELCA over CCM has become the escape valve for various pre-existing tensions. The Episcopal Church is also no stranger to internal argument. What is important is that the leadership of the ELCA, the bishops and the Church Council, have consistently reaffirmed the church's commitment to the new relation with the Episcopal Church. There is some talk of exploring the possibility of exceptions in "unusual" cases to the strict rule of episcopal ordination, but such talk has consistently been joined with the statement that such possibilities are matters for discussion in the projected Episcopal/Lutheran Joint Commission. No unilateral action of any sort is being suggested. In addition, such talk is still only talk, and this possibility has been strenuously rejected by various voices in the church. Even more importantly, the commitment of the ELCA to all bishops entering office in the future through the laying-on-of-hands in historic succession has not been questioned.

The road to the vote at next month's General Convention has had its bumps and unexpected turns. The Episcopal Church has been patient with the ELCA as it has discerned its way forward. But, to paraphrase Midge Roof of the Episcopal Church's ecumenical office, what is at stake is a relationship, not a text. We will need to live into the new relation over the coming years. Because this proposal calls for genuine change from both our churches, it is inevitably controversial. But we cannot let controversy obscure the achievement — the first significant bridging of the episcopal/non-episcopal ecumenical divide in American religious history. This opportunity is simply too great to be thrown away.

Michael Root is professor of systematic theology at Trinity Lutheran Seminary in Columbus, Ohio. He was a member of the drafting team for CCM.

## CCM: Not the Right Time

Three years ago, when General Convention was voting on whether the Episcopal Church should become involved in full communion with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), we were enthusiastically supportive. The Concordat of Agreement offered a promising arrangement to both churches to enter into an unprecedented relationship. That bond never came to be, for the Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA failed to approve it. Now General Convention has a new document to consider — *Called to Common Mission* [p. 10] — and the situation is reversed. This time the Lutherans already have adopted it, at their assem-

bly last summer, and it is up to General Convention to decide whether the Episcopal Church should enter into full communion with the ELCA.

It is difficult to commend this resolution to the deputies and bishops who will be participating in the 73rd General Convention in Denver. For one thing, a sizable amount of opposition remains in the Lutheran church. It is estimated that perhaps a third of the Lutherans opposed Called to Common Mission (CCM), and the threat of schism hangs over the ELCA if the measure is adopted. At issue is acceptance of the historic episcopate by the Lutherans, a concern even to those in favor of the document. Asking the Episcopal Church to suspend its preface to the ordination rites (BCP, 510), since 1662 an expression of Anglican doctrine concerning ordination, in order to accommodate a body which is not entirely enthusiastic about it, would be an unwise move. The Lutherans' idea of the ordained ministry is considerably different from the historic threefold ministry of bishops, priests and deacons.

There are additional concerns. It would appear that CCM differs considerably from its 1997 predecessor in order to make the document more palatable to the ELCA. We also question the wisdom of foisting such a plan on a badly divided

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Episcopal Church and a still relatively new Lutheran body. Then there is the matter of the ELCA already having achieved full communion with three churches of the Reformed tradition, an accomplishment which certainly points Lutherans in a more protestant direction.

The Episcopal Church has enjoyed a healthy, positive, deepening relationship with the ELCA ever since eucharistic sharing between the two churches was achieved some 20 years ago. Churches from the two traditions work well together, occupy the same buildings, even share clergy. Taking an additional step toward full communion now seems to be shaky at best.



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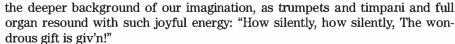
#### **LETTERS** TO THE EDITOR

# **The Easter Moment**

I would like to express my appreciation of Ann Rose's sensitive and evocative essay on the "Blessed Ambiguity in Resurrection Art" [TLC, May 28].

Some examples of Christian literature from the second century do attempt to represent the "Easter moment" through literalistic description, but the gospels themselves, as Ms. Rose points out, suggest more the mystery of the half light of that dawning Sunday morning and the shadows of the candlelit upper room.

Perhaps the poetic text from Phillips Brooks' Christmas hymn would have a place too on Easter morning, at least in



(The Rev.) Bruce Robison St. Andrew's Church Pittsburgh, Pa.

LIVING CHURCH

**The Purpose Forgotten** 

I was delighted to read Bryce McProud's Viewpoint article, "Almost a Fundamentalist" [TLC, May 28].

Two points come to mind. The first is that because of the essentially destructive mode of seminary biblical studies, ordinands have become, for the most part, cynical about the product itself and have forgotten its purpose. It's rather like having mechanics get so involved in the parts of the car that they forget that the wretched thing is intended to convey people from one place to another. As a result once ordained, priests tend to regurgitate what they can remember of their studies. In the pulpit they either sus-

pend their disbelief, albeit in a selective manner, or regularly ignore the propers and the Christian year and preach their own gospel.

This is not at all to say that we must all become fundamen-

talists or deny the valid and helpful insights provided by biblical scholars from the past and the present. Unfortunately, most fundamentalists are unaware of church and sacraments and tend to involve their own anachronistic social, religious and political views as thoroughly as many on the "liberal" edge of biblical scholarship.

Strangely, it was the Puritans' insistence that the word preached was

more important than the word read and heard which developed, in reaction, our old Anglican belief that the word is primarily communicated by its public recitation and is defined in the context of the Christian year and liturgical worship. The 16th-century Anglican position was "Let the story tell itself." Our reformers, tutors to a man, really believed that our structure of daily worship annexed to the yearly telling of the story, by sheer repetition gradually forms and deepens the spirituality of the participant. Thank God the majority of worshiping Episcopalians don't attend study groups.

> (The Rev.) Tony Clavier Trinity Church Pine Bluff, Ark.

Our reformers believed our structure of daily worship, annexed to the yearly telling of the story, by sheer repetition gradually forms and deepens the spirituality of the participant.

I was interested in Bryce McProud's wrestling with notion of "the inerrancy of scripture" as he wrote about being "Almost a Fundamentalist," but I am concerned about how blithely he embraces the first four "fundamentals" of the faith that are, as he says, "unassailable."

For example, if he is truly wanting to hear God speak in the scriptures, where does he hear God speaking

#### Is the substitionary theory of the Atonement the most ancient or most orthodox view?

unequivocally about "a substitutionary theory of the Atonement?" I think that topic was dealt with in a very helpful way by Kathleen K. Ennis in her essay on the Atonement [TLC, March 5], in which she shows how problematic it is to endorse either Anselm's view of the Atonement or the "penal substitutionary theory" of the Atonement. Similar criticisms of the "Latin" view of the Atonement were made years ago by Gustaf Aulen in his classic book *Christus Victor*.

I agree that the term "fundamentalist" should not be used in a derogatory fashion, but at the same time, I think it is important to raise questions about whether or not the substitionary theory of the Atonement is actually the most ancient or most orthodox view.

(The Rev.) John Morris East Dover, Vt.

#### The Same Page

I had to chuckle when I saw the cover showing Visitors Weekend at the Episcopal Seminary of the Southwest [TLC, May 7]. Did anyone else notice that the couple in the forefront is turned to the front of the book while everyone else seems to be in the back of the book? Is this an indication of the clergy of the future — that we still won't all be on the same page?

(The Rev.) Beverly L. Dexter San Diego, Calif.

#### **A Strange Term**

I wish to respond to the book review of *The New Church's Teaching Series* [TLC, May 14]. The author, Jeffrey Lee, is quoted, "We may not see another printed bound version of the BCP," and "one book in any form is insufficient to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse church." Diverse church is a strange term in that the church by definition is a body of people with a common belief regardless of how diverse the individual people within it are.

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Although it was banned in England during Cromwell's rule, the people continued to use it privately. After Cromwell's demise, it was officially reinstated.

Today the banned (in many places)

1928 BCP is still being used. I predict the bound Book of Common Prayer will be around long after the current Episcopal Church implodes.

> Dana Herbert Nashville, Tenn.

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The Rev. **Keith Matthews** is congregational developer of the Diocese of Southern Ohio, 412 Sycamore St., Cincinnati, OH 45202-4179.

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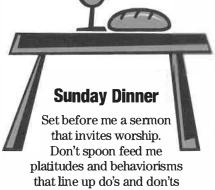
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The Rev. **Ronald Spencer**, as staff chaplain at St. Luke's Hospital, Kansas City, MO.

The Rev. **Charles Sumners**, as rector of St. Philip's, Beeville, TX.

The Rev. **Barry Thiering**, as rector of Emmanuel, Lockhart, TX.

# Next week... Triennial Issue



It's not my behavior that needs conversion.

It's me!

in a spiritual setting of

sin and non sin.

Voice words that feed, Gleaned from cross of love, that I may partake a diet of devotion, prayer, silence, and confession that sheds the weight of self and trims the soul to serve.

Then call me to the table
where symbol and substance meet,
where bread and wine complete
my need for presence;
And send me, now replete,
to reveal Christ
to the desperately hungry
who might not have had a
Sunday Dinner.

**John Desaulniers** 

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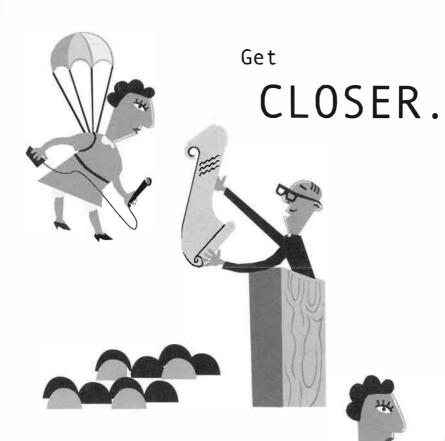
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