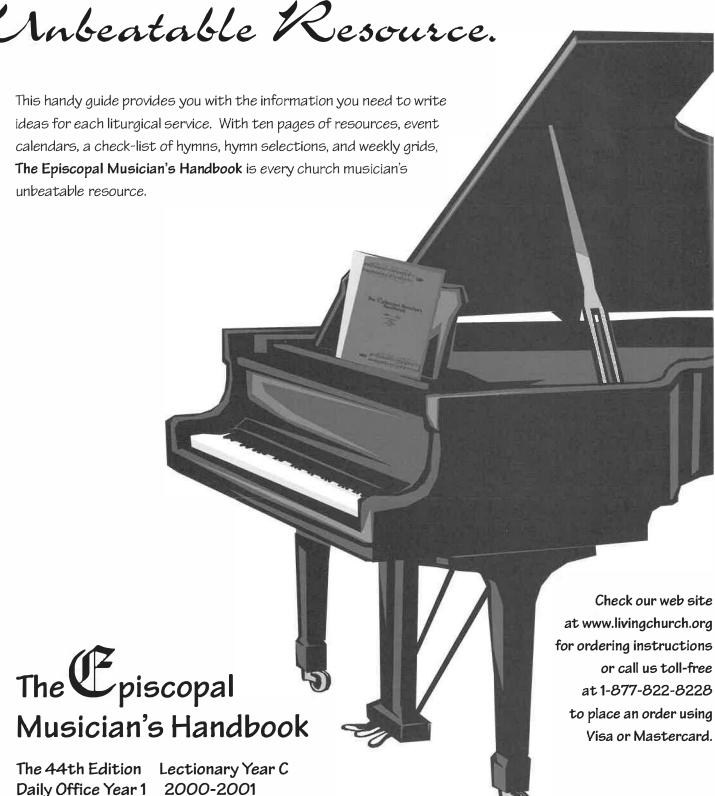
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LIVING CHURCH

SUNDAY'S **READINGS**

Welcome the Children

'Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me . . .' (Mark 9:37)

The Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost (Proper 20)

Wisdom 1:16-2:1 (6-11) 12-22; Psalm 54; James 3:16-4:6; Mark 9:30-37

The disciples of Jesus are arguing among themselves about which one of them is the greatest. It's like they are all raising their hands saying "Me, me, me — I want to be first." The disciples' attitude reminds us of presidential campaigns. It also reminds us of ourselves in our insecure moments.

Jesus sits the disciples (and us) down, and again tries to teach them (and us). He says, "Whoever wants to be first must be last of all and servant of all" (Mark 9:35). This is a teaching that Jesus has been giving them (and us) over and over again in many different ways. Elsewhere he says, when we go to a banquet take the last place, not the seat of honor. Or don't invite people who can pay us back in return. Invite rather those who can offer us nothing in return. In other words, he is telling us not to feather our own nest. He is telling us not to have the selfish ambition that James talks about in his letter (James 3:16), the pride that God opposes (James 4:16).

Then in today's story Jesus gives us

an example of hospitality. He says that whoever welcomes a little child in his name welcomes him and the one who sent him (Mark 9:37). To truly welcome another is to be vulnerable. That means that if we are to be last of all and the servant of all, and not looking out for our own advancement, we will welcome those we find in helpless positions.

In Jesus' day children were not given much attention in adult company as they are in our society. That's what made his statement so radical. Our society is more child oriented. Nevertheless, there are so many neglected children, children without basic needs or health care. Many of us are crying "Me, me, me — I want to be first," while needy children are wondering who will welcome them. When this happens, we lose our souls, we are no longer who God has made us to be. Aptly James quotes this scripture, "God yearns jealously for the spirit that he has made to dwell in us" (James 4:5).

Look It Up

Go to the public library or to the Internet and check out the statistics on child abuse and neglect. Find out how many children in your state and local community are without health care coverage. Or go to your local public health nurse or school nurse and ask questions about this issue. Ask what you can do to help locally.

Think About It

Being vulnerable in our hospitality requires personal involvement. Beyond those in our own family, how involved are we with children? Do we talk to the neighbor kids? Do we show an interest in the activities of the kids at our church?

Next Sunday
The Sixteenth Sunday a

The Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost (Proper 21)

Num. 11:4-6, 10-16, 24-29; Psalm 19:7-14 (or Psalm 19); James 4:7-12 (13-5:6); Mark 9:38-43, 45, 47-48

Reclaiming Our Roots

An Inclusive Introduction to Church History, Volume II. From Martin Luther to Martin Luther King, Jr. By Mark Ellingsen Trinity. Pp. 456. \$29 paper

General histories of Christianity are difficult to write, held in disdain by specialists, and in constant demand for undergraduate survey courses and lay people who want an overview. The subject matter is spread over two millennia and the entire globe, resulting in a variety of complex trends, and therein lies the difficulty.

Given this reality, the question here is whether this book has any advantages over similar one- or two-volume treatments and whether it will be useful for the general reader.

The answer, alas, is "Probably not," in both cases, and that evaluation will hold even if we assess the book by the author's own criteria. His purpose is threefold: 1. to foster an appreciation for the importance of church history to community building, error finding, liberation, and theological creativity; 2. to offer "a truly inclusive presentation of the rich diversity of Christian roots" (p. 1); and 3. to initiate a conversation "between readers and the data of the Church's history" (p. 1).

The importance of church history to the various areas identified by the author receives no attention in the narrative that follows. An inclusive presentation would be a welcome addition to the literature, but "inclusion" in this book goes little beyond the emphasis toward the end on Martin Luther King, Jr. and the civil rights movement.

A conversation between the reader and the material is the goal of every historian. There is nothing in this volume which specifically leads to that conversation. Indeed, there is very little analysis in the book.

Most of the material is a narrative stroll through familiar territory. The narrative is not bad, but there are problems even here. The discussion of the Oxford Movement, for example, gives far more attention to Methodists, Quakers, and Reformed piety than to Newman and Keble (the only two leaders mentioned). The other traditions

deserve careful treatment, but to lump the entire discussion under a subheading entitled "The Oxford Movement" is curious.

Then there is the problem of organization. Immediately following "The Oxford Movement" is "French Colonial Venture in the Americas" (p. 240-241). There may be some link, but the author fails to reveal it, and this

reviewer lacks the wisdom to discern it. Similarly, the jump from a discussion of Kierkegaard to Barth needs some help (pp. 320-321).

This book, and its companion first volume, will not adequately replace McManners, Marty, Pelikan, or even Latourette.

> Gregory Holmes Singleton Chicago, Ill.

PLANNING YOUR WEDDING?

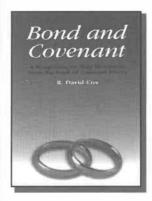
Bond and Covenant

A Perspective on Holy Matrimony from the Book of Common Prayer

R. David Cox

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The Rev. Jeffrey A. Mackey, The Living Church



This practical and accessible book is a detailed discussion of the Book of Common Prayer rite of Holy Matrimony and the Episcopal understanding of the sacrament. It is an invaluable resource for those approaching marriage or for a parish study group. Although the author does not purport to have written a "how-to" book, he does give some cogent and welcome guidelines in the final section which priests, musicians, and the altar guild will

be delighted to see in print. This book should be required reading during the premarital counseling period.

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Anglican Mission in America Gaining Support

Congregations in Central Gulf Coast and Colorado align with new group

The Anglican Mission in America, formed to receive parishes which are leaving the Episcopal Church, has taken its "full speed ahead" initiative [TLC, Aug. 27] seriously, drawing three congregations into its fold. Two churches in the Diocese of the Central Gulf Coast aligned with the new group late in August, and four priests of the Diocese of Colorado took a similar step.

Nearly all the members of St. Andrew's by-the-Sea Church in Destin, Fla., and their three priests were received into the Episcopal Church of Rwanda under the oversight of the Rt. Rev. Charles H. Murphy III, who has been designated by that church as a missionary bishop to North America. The decision came a week after the rector and about 80 members of the Church of St. Francis of Assisi, Gulf Breeze, Fla., aligned themselves with the Rwandan province.

In Colorado, four priests resigned their parishes, and a new congregation, the Anglican Church of the Savior, was formed.

The Rev. Mike Hesse, rector of the Destin parish, said 550 letters of transfer were received from members who wanted to transfer to St. Andrew's by-the-Sea Anglican Church. He told TLC he had been considering a move for some time.

"Heritage has been the stumbling block," Fr. Hesse said in a telephone interview. "It is a God-appointed way out for us, under Anglican authority. We don't miss a beat."

St. Andrew's held a parish meeting on Aug. 27, and all 412 members present signed a request to be received as a parish of the Rwandan church. The Rev. Rob Grafe, associate rector, and the Rev. Forrest Mobley, priest associate, also left the American church.

The standing committee of the Diocese of Central Gulf Coast was scheduled to meet Sept. 7 to discuss

the situation. Fr. Hesse said everyone had voted knowing that the parish probably would lose its property.

"Events in the Episcopal Church ... have caused us increasing alarm as we have seen the primacy of scripture

Methodist church and a Baptist church also offered their assistance.

A few miles west, in Gulf Breeze, the Rev. Mark DiCristina, rector of St. Francis of Assisi Church, and about 80 of the church's 257 members



Fr. Hesse addresses members of St. Andrew's at the Aug. 27 parish meeting.

replaced by human experience and opinion," said a statement sent to parishioners by the clergy and vestry of St. Andrew's. "As we have looked back over the last two decades we have seen the Episcopal Church increasingly reflect not the gospel of Christ, but rather our secular culture. We believe we are in a spiritual war where the stakes are people's salvation."

"The issue is not sexuality," Fr. Hesse said. "That is just the symptom of the underlying problem.

"What we are questioning is that at the General Convention it was acknowledged and committed to writing that they recognize that there are other lifestyles besides heterosexual, monogamous, lifetime commitments that are holy — effectively making marriage one option. In effect, they are moving toward blessing what God has called sin."

Fr. Hesse told *The Log* of Destin that if the diocese prevents the parish from using its building, the Destin Middle School could be a future site for the congregation. A

established the Anglican Church of the Messiah, meeting in a Holiday Inn. It, too, has become a congregation of the Episcopal Church of Rwanda. Fr. DiCristina told the Northwest Florida *Daily News* that the resolution adopted by General Convention affirming relationships other than marriage was a factor. The church's "continued departure from the apostolic faith" helped bring about the decision, he said, "but the recent resolution is the final straw."

Fr. DiCristina was rector of St. Francis' for nine years, and told the *Pensacola News Journal* that the decision was difficult.

"I have struggled with this for a long time, and I am still crying every day," he said. "I am a priest who said, 'I can't do it anymore'."

Steve Hogg, senior warden at St. Francis', told the *News Journal* he would remain in the congregation where he's worshiped for nearly four decades.

"Most of us who are staying are (Continued on next page)

(Continued from previous page)

sympathetic with Mark and his group and feel the same way about the church's permissive attitude, but we chose to stay and see if we can change the church's direction."

Following the resignations, Bishop Charles Duvall of the Central Gulf Coast issued a pastoral letter which was read in all churches Sept. 3.

'Frankly, I did not expect anything.' Bishop Duvall said he intended to recommend that the clergy be inhibited from officiating in the diocese "due to their abandonment of the communion of this church." If after

Bishop Duvall

six months they have not returned, with the approval of the standing committee, I will depose them.

Bishop Duvall told TLC he was surprised by the action. "Frankly, I did not expect anything," he said. "We're considered a conservative diocese. I'm considered a conservative bishop."

He said one or two more churches in his diocese could take similar steps. "I'm in communication with those congregations," he said.

The four Colorado priests who left their parishes could face possible disciplinary action from the Rt. Rev. Jerry Winterrowd, Bishop of Colorado. The Rev. James Stone, rector of Grace Church, Buena Vista, and the Rev. Dennis Garrou, rector of St. Barnabas', Cortez, were among the clergy who decided to align themselves with the Anglican Mission in America. The Rev. Kathy King and the Rev. Alan L. Sulzenfuss, both associated with the Buena Vista congregation, also left.

The Rev. Robert Franken, a spokesman for the bishop, said, "We haven't decided what our next step will be. It's a bit different than someone leaving for the Baptist church, or a church with which we have no communion."

Most members of the Buena Vista church were reported to have left for the new one, which is meeting in a former Baptist church building.

Nebraska Priest Found Stabbed to Death

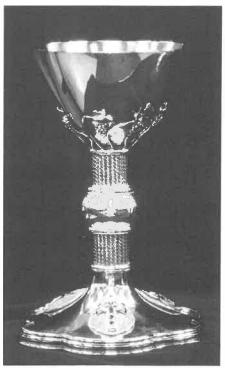
A priest of the Diocese of Nebraska, whose lifelong fascination with Russia led him to live and work in that country, was found dead in his Moscow apartment. The Rev. Steve Charles Malcom had been stabbed several times, and had apparently been dead for six days when he was found in late August by a Russian friend. The Associated Press reports that while the Russian police have not cited a motive, they have noted that audio and video equipment was missing from the apartment.

The Rev. Canon Tim Vann, canon to the ordinary of the Diocese of Nebraska, described Fr. Malcom as "a gentle, gentle soul" who reached out to everyone. This summer when Fr. Malcom was home visiting, "I'd never seen him happier," Canon Vann said, echoing family members' comments that he'd been doing what he'd always wanted to do.

"Russia is a chaotic, dangerous place to live right now."

Fr. Malcom served as curate at St. Andrew's Church, Omaha, from his ordination in 1986 until his call to St. Mary's, Nebraska City, where he was rector from 1988 to 1998. In Moscow, he worked as a teacher of English full time, until "in the bad economy, the job dried up," and he began tutoring privately. He had recently returned to Moscow after a month in Irkutsk, in Siberia. Canon Vann said it's likely Fr. Malcom knew the person who came to his apartment. "But even if he didn't, he'd have let him in. That's just the kind of person he was."

The Rt. Rev. James Krotz, Bishop of Nebraska, preached at memorial services at both St. Christopher's, Cozad, home of Fr. Malcom's parents and sister, and at St. Mary's. Describing a nursing home visit with Fr. Malcom, Bishop Krotz said, "I can assure you that Steve knew the presence and life giving power of Jesus' love ... I know that Jesus lived in and through him in a way that brought life and hope to others."



Memorial Chalice

Sacred vessels were blessed recently at Trinity Church, Sonoma, Calif. The chalice (above) and paten memorialize past members and friends of the church. Gold and silver objects were contributed by parishioners and friends of the church to make the vessels. Among the objects were many cherished heirlooms.

Vermont Nominees

A search committee in the Diocese of Vermont has presented six nominees for the election of a bishop, to succeed the Rt. Rev. Mary Adelia McLeod, who has retired.

They are the Rev. Howard R. Anderson, rector of St. Paul's Church, Duluth, Minn; the Rev. Roy F. Cederholm, rector, Christ Church, Needham, Mass.

The Rev. Thomas C. Ely, missioner, Greater Hartford Regional Ministry, East Hartford, Conn; the Ven. Mark Hollingsworth, archdeacon, Diocese of Massachusetts; the Rev. Donna-Mae Siderius, director of vocational ministries in the Diocese of Southern Virginia; and the Rev. Lydia Agnew Speller, rector of St. Mark's, St. Louis, Mo.

A special electing convention will take place Nov. 18.

Five-Finger Prayer

By Kathy Siefferman

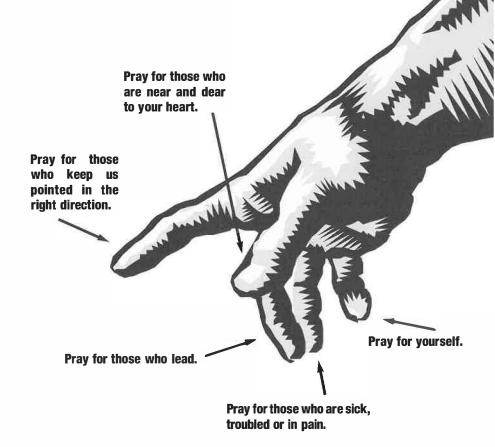
My childhood memories of Sunday school have grown dim. We vacillated between hearing Bible stories and "moral" lessons attempting to make the Ten Commandments relative to our lives — right from wrong, good versus bad. Yet nowhere do I recall being taught to pray, other than memorization (forgive me, Mom, if I am merely not remembering). It wasn't until I was an adult that I really started to hear, feel, and take to heart the words of the prayers uttered in church.

The Lord's Prayer, Nicene and Apostles Creeds, were all said by rote, or read aloud in an almost monotone voice. Little attention was paid to punctuation or emphasis on important words and phrases until I was an adult. Now, having matured in my spirituality, I emphasize "He will come again."

The Book of Common Prayer has, literally, a prayer for every occasion. It would be impossible to remember them all. And, as adults, sometimes we let our pride get in our way and we don't want anyone to know, we bow

If we have trouble focusing, how do we teach our children to pray?

our heads and wait an appropriate time to look up, so it will be perceived we are praying. So we bow our heads after entering church and, as we struggle to find words, we let other thoughts indicative of the fast-paced lives we lead rush into our heads. Who just sat behind me? I wonder if church will start on time. How long will the sermon be? Do I know the hymns today? Where did I put my offering?



Should I stop at the store on the way home or go back out later?

If we have all this trouble focusing, how do we teach our children to pray? How do adults learn to pray when they were never taught, or perhaps have recommitted to their own spiritual growth and are faced anew with this concept? When we enter the church and adjust our attitude from the world outside to our soul inside, what do we do? Where do we start?

I sit in the pew and, glancing at the

cross, take a cleansing breath. I bow my head and think these simple words: Lord, open my heart and open my mind. Slow the maddening pace and breathe your

words and your peace into my soul.

Then I begin my five-finger prayer. Five-finger prayer, you ask? You never learned that one either? Let me help:

- 1. Touch your thumb and remember that your thumb is closest to you. Pray for those who are near and dear to your heart.
- 2. Touch your index finger, your pointer finger, and recall those who teach, guide and heal. Pray for teach-

ers, clergy and doctors — those who keep us pointed in the right direction, so to speak.

- 3. Touch your middle finger, your tallest finger. Pray for those who lead. Pray for the president and leaders in your church, country and community. These people need God's guidance.
- 4. Touch your ring finger. This is your weakest finger (ask any piano teacher) and will prompt us to pray for those who are sick, troubled or in pain.
- 5. Touch your little finger, your smallest finger. This is where the Bible tells us to put ourselves in relation to God and others. "For he who is least among you all is the greatest" (Luke 9:48). Pray for yourself.

And just as my mother taught me, and your mother taught you, we need to say "thank you."

Thank you, Lord, for your unfailing love, your peace, and the many blessings you bestow upon me. Amen.

"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God" (Phil. 4:6).

Kathy Siefferman is a resident of Honeoye, N.Y. and a member of St. Peter's Church, Bloomfield, N.Y.

We're on the Threshold

The ice-cream store will give you

a tiny spoonful of a new flavor

to get you to buy a whole cone.

Whatever happened to heaven?

I read a lot of church news, and I noticed recently that little is said about heaven anymore. One side talks about tradition, the other talks about the modern age. One talks about salvation, the other about self-realization. But neither talks much about heaven.

Maybe we're afraid of heaven. Maybe we're afraid of the risk — the risk of staking all on the invisible and the inconceivable.

Psalm 84 says, "For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand [at home.] I had rather be a door keeper in the house of my God, than to

dwell in the tents of wickedness."

Think of being a doorkeeper in an ancient desert land. The sun beats down, the dust and sand get in your teeth and eyes, and you're downwind from the camels.

The tents of wickedness must get awfully attractive. There is something very portable about wickedness, isn't

there? Footloose and fancy free, always ready to catch the next freight train out of town. Can't you just see the tents? Cool and dark and inviting. You're out there in the sun, your feet hurt, and the people either ignore you, or are condescending.

But inside the courts of God ...

This world can supply only a taste of that. The ice-cream store will give you a tiny spoonful of a new flavor to get you to buy a whole cone. The pleasures of this life — family, love, friends, home, work — are just nibbles of the pleasures that await. That, anyway, is our faith and our hope.

In our society of instant gratification, it is hard to accept that we are only door-keepers on the threshold. Sometimes we hear the hymns from inside. We can marvel at the beauty of the exterior. We can smell the incense. But we are not yet inside. This life indeed is only the rough draft, the rehearsal, the dry run. This life is only the kindergarten that prepares us

for the real schooling.

Psalm 102 says, "Of old hast thou laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of thy hands.

"They shall perish, but thou shalt endure; yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed.

"But thou art the same; and thy years shall have no end."

This world will be thrown into the hamper like a shirt at the end of the day; it will

grow faded, and torn.

Finally it will be rags, and then, dirty and used up, it will be thrown away. We are just like that: We too will wear out and be ready for the Goodwill box.

The serenity of the Christian, the peace that passeth all understanding, is not some cosmic tranquilizer that makes us serene (and answers all our prayers). The peace

is the willingness to accept that the only real answer to our prayers won't come here, but will come in a level of being we can only glimpse dimly.

This is not to doubt that God blesses this world and all that is in it. It is only to understand that this world is only the first steps in a marathon, the first day on the job, the first lesson on the first day of school in the first grade.

That is the source of our peace. This life is that first pop quiz on the first day of class. This cosmos — this shabby, patched-up universe — is only our old, paint-spattered clothes for working around the house. Our faith is that someday we're going to be dressed up in a new world that will be as graceful and elegant as Fred Astaire's top hat and tails.

Our guest columnist is Jim Tynen, a member of St. Stephen's Church, Wilkinsburg, Pa. Did You Know...

St. John's Church, Christiansted, St. Croix, USVI, has been part of four different dioceses.

Quote of the Week

The Rev. Sarah Brockmann, recently ordained a priest in the Diocese of Delaware, on the journey to ordination: "When the Hounds of Heaven call, you run."

Painful Decisions

ERIE

ZCE

In an editorial titled "Still Together" [TLC, Aug. 6], we noted that the Episcopal Church appeared to have gotten through the 73rd General Convention in Denver intact, and that it was likely that the church would stay together, at least for another three years. Apparently, we spoke too soon. A series of events has shaken parts of the church and now causes us to wonder about its future.

The establishment of the Anglican Mission in America [TLC, Aug. 27] as a place to receive churches which are considering leaving the Episcopal Church began this related string of occurrences. A gathering in Nassau of Anglican pri-

> mates, American bishops and representatives of various organizations in the Episcopal Church [TLC, Sept. 17] addressed the matter of bishops visiting congregations outside their dioceses. And in this issue we report on the departure of two churches in the Diocese of the Central Gulf Coast and four priests in the Diocese of Colorado [p. 6].

The seriousness of the situation in the Episcopal Church cannot be minimized. The traditional and orthodox faith of the church, particularly the primacy of scripture, is under siege. Those who have left the church recently, and others who have departed previously, have cited the church's decision to regard experience on equal or higher status than the long-held Anglican three-legged stool of scripture, tradition and reason. For many, General Convention's move toward recognition of

the blessing of same-sex relationships was the latest manifesta-

tion of this reality. Indeed, at the time the Central Gulf Coast congregations severed their relationships, two well-publicized same-sex blessings were held in Episcopal churches in the Diocese of Vermont.

The creation of the Anglican Mission in America makes it tempting for conservative congregations to turn their backs on the Episcopal Church. The new entity's bishops have been recognized as members of the houses of bishops of two Anglican provinces (South East Asia and Rwanda), even though they have not been welcomed by the bishops of the Episcopal Church, nor their consecrations "regularized" by the Archbishop of Canterbury. Those who make the move to the new body are tempted by the opportunity to maintain traditional Anglican theology and to receive the historic teaching.

For clergy and their parishioners who believe the Episcopal Church has become apostate, there will be difficult, even painful decisions ahead. Schism is the least desirable of alternatives to the current crisis, yet some have come to the conclusion that it is the only way to address it. Many traditionalists have waited patiently through various crises — prayer book revision, ordination of women and changes in leadership — and ironically it is their accommodating stance over the last quarter-century which is partially responsible for the church having reached its current state. Congregations which decide to leave will face the issue of who owns their buildings and property (in nearly all cases it is the diocese).

It is difficult for us to provide advice in a matter like this. We hope individuals and congregations will remain in the Episcopal Church, providing a badly needed witness to traditional Anglicanism in this country. Yet we cannot know the depth of the struggles endured by faithful persons who have tried to remain as members of this part of the body of Christ. We urge our readers to pray for those who are leaving and to pray vigorously for the church. The prayer for the church on page 818 of the prayer book may be helpful. We can find some strength knowing that it is God's church and that his will eventually will be done.

Those who have left the church recently have cited the church's decision to regard experience on equal or higher status than the long-held

Anglican three-legged

tradition and reason.

stool of scripture,



We Are Spoiled

The worship of the golden calf was as a Sunday school worship service compared to many of our compatriots' worship of the "green calf."

By George W. Wickersham II

f there is a Creator, he loves us with a very tough love. The natural disasters which have befallen the human race from the beginning of time — the earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, tidal waves, forest fires, floods, hurricanes, etc. — have devastated inhabited areas. and have carried away millions of people in every era.

Worse than all these have been the diseases, plagues and assorted maladies which often have taken more people than they have left. I remember viewing the remains of a village in Dorset, England, in which every last citizen had died of the plague.

It is hard to reconcile these unalterable facts with belief in a benign deity. But the truth of the matter is that without them the human race probably would not have become human. Yogi Berra, that sage of baseball, once uttered the most basic of truths when he said, "If the world were perfect, it wouldn't be." Right on, Yogi!

Olandina, gonana, gonina! These are the words which my college roommate and I got from a recording of the fourth act of Puccini's "La Boheme." We had all sorts of interpretations of them, all of which, of course, were wrong. The libretto didn't say that anyway, so naturally our translations were beside the mark.

This, however, is about the way many of us interpret religion. We don't get what is plainly said to us and therefore we misinterpret it.

St. Paul puts it with typical Pauline directness: "For what is known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. Ever since the creation of the world his invisible nature. namely, his eternal power and deity, has been clearly perceived in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse..." (Rom. 1:19-20).

No Olandina, gonana, gonina here! But, alas, millions of our brethren and sisteren are full of it.

Consider: Look out the window and what do you see? Trees, grass, flowers, fruit, fields of corn, beds of vegetables,

rain, water, sunshine, cows, chickens, indeed an abundance of everything to fill all human needs and desires. Look at humanity and its capacities: language, literature, music, two voices (speaking and singing), sense of color, art, mathematics, science, electricity, electronics, business acumen, the professions (not the least of which is medicine), abstract thought, defenses against disasters and disease, romantic love, family devotion, and beyond all other gifts, the gift of divine love — what the Greeks called agape — the love of humanity, a gift



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Truth is, we take it all for granted. But the minute the sky darkens,

we fall on our knees and cry out to God.

which comes from God himself: the Holv Spirit.

What more do we want? Well, there is one more vital item: freedom of the will. What a dangerous gift! This is what brings about the human disasters — "wars, and rumors of wars." Read Mark 13. Think, if you can, of World Wars I and II, of the holocaust and of the continuing chain of wrongs, of cruelties, of just plain bestiality which mar the pages of newspapers, not to mention the volumes of history.

But freedom of the will also opens the door to response to the Holy Spirit. He is there and always has been, leading people to heroism and holiness. We saw him in the campfires, we see him in the idealists of every nation, we see him wherever people choose not to espouse the "natural way" — the way of selfishness and self-aggrandizement.

With the gifts which the Creator has so obviously given us, how can we be so obdurate as not to recognize "his eternal power and deity"?

In the vast reaches of the universe, literally trillions of light years across, can we not see the amazing favor to this single blue planet? Perhaps in the unfathomable mind of God there are other universes. Space and time are, after all, simply his thoughts.

I am reminded of a remark made by

the wife of "the person of the century," Albert Einstein. He would wrestle with his extraordinary discoveries in the realms of mathematics, physics and astronomy, and then endeavor to theorize how it all began. "Albert," his wife would protest, "stop trying to tell God what to do!"

Well, Olandina, gonana gonina! The greatest gifts are plain enough without physics.

Truth is, we take it all for granted. Tough love or not, we are essentially spoiled. But the minute the sky darkens, the sun no longer shines and the moon turns to blood, we fall on our knees and cry out to God.

Save for disease, disaster and general mayhem, we would be like the three-toed sloth, hanging from trees and peeling bananas. All human beings need discipline. When times are too good, as they are now in the Western world, watch out.

Selfishness, materialism and heedlessness become rampant. The worship of the golden calf was as a Sunday school worship service compared to many of our compatriots' worship of the "green calf." And personal morality, what happens to it? Anything you want becomes your "right." One hardly has to look far today.

The facts remain: We have everything we need, and then some, for the lion to lie down with the lamb — for a holy, righteous and godly life — but many in the human race refuse to see this. Personal and communal sanctification are the last things they consider.

Olandina, gonina, gonana. For many, this is how it is. Again, Mark 13.

When a unique person came, and in his life, teachings and subsequent revelation gave humankind what is the ultimate truth in all its fullness, he was politely and with a semblance of legality, nailed to a cross. But 2,000 years have failed to dull his image or disprove his wisdom. He is the Person of the ages. "He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as [did receive him], to them gave he power to become the sons of God..." (John 1:11-12).

The Rev. George Wickersham II is a retired priest who lives in Rockbridge Baths, Va.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Positive Experiences

I am grateful to Robin G. Jordan for the article on Walking the Labyrinth [TLC, Aug. 27]. It is interesting to read something of the history of the labyrinth, and to learn that labyrinths have links with non-Christian worship. Unfortunately, the main message I took from the article was one of caution that I should be wary of labyrinths because of their non-Christian past. I think that is a mistake because my labyrinth experiences have been very positive indeed.

As rector of Transfiguration, Dallas, Texas, it was my privilege to participate in the installation of a labyrinth. The labyrinth quickly became a focal point in the life of the congregation and of the community. In less than a year it was in use frequently by groups and individuals in a variety of spiritual exercises. While I cannot guarantee that one of the walkers was not privately worshiping the Earth Goddess, I never saw any evidence to indicate there was reason for concern.

Taking things from non-Christian sources and employing them for Christian purposes is not new. Much of what we think of as uniquely Christian can be found to have roots in non-Christian sources. If the labyrinth is another example of this Christianizing practice, and is now being employed by Christians in exercises that lead to their spiritual growth and maturity, I can see nothing wrong or controversial about it. I unhesitatingly recommend a labyrinth walk.

(The Rev.) Terence C. Roper Holy Trinity Church Philadelphia, Pa.

Regarding the Viewpoint article, "Walking the Labyrinth", Robin Jordan confuses the tool with the user. A hammer can be used to build a brothel or a church. Its value as a tool is not determined by the spiritual choices of the carpenter.

If our traditional worship were devoid of tools which had been used

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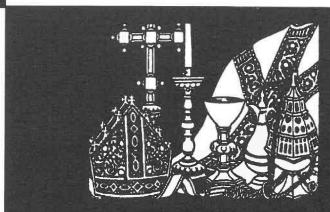


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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

also by those worshiping other deities, we would have no candles, bells, vestments, altars, hymns, Christmas trees or Easter eggs. Our evangelism has been most successful when we have allowed the Holy Spirit to reveal Christ by using tools which are already familiar to people.

Labyrinths are rarely used instead of attendance at Holy Eucharist. Rather, they are a way of allowing thousands of people to pray in a way that is meaningful to them. Instead of condemning this tool, creating yet more dissension where we are trying to heal ourselves, please let us celebrate the rediscovery of another way that God has found to reach so many souls.

> Lizabeth P. Smith Alden, N.Y.

If connecting with God through "Walking the Labyrinth" seems dangerously new age and "pagan" to some devout Episcopalians, they also have to worry about pagan holidays like Winter Solstice that have long since become part of Christians' Christmas. Surely the genius of Christ's impact on our narrow and self-limiting habits of worship is the capacity to enjoy new ways of God's presence among us, throughout all ages. I have benefited from labyrinth walking in many locations, and can't imagine just what "basic teachings of the Christian faith" that particular form of silent worship is accused of threatening.

> Joanna B. Gillespie Rochester, Vt.

My goodness, what a peculiar article on the labyrinth. Using insinuation in place of documentation, Robin G. Jordan ties the labyrinth to Wiccans and pagans, dismissing lightly its use in the medieval cathedrals of Europe. The piece concludes with the assertion that the church should ban the labyrinth and replace it with something just like it, only different. Are we to look forward to future articles about the date of the Feast of the Nativity, the use of Christmas trees. and the name of Easter?

I was perplexed by the editorial treatment of the article as well. Illus-

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CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

trated with a photo from General Convention and featured on the cover, I was led to expect something different than what I found. It comes across as vet another slap at the church and the convention.

> (The Rev.) Robert Lundquist St. Gabriel the Archangel Church Cherry Hills Village, Colo.

Why should anyone care if the labyrinth is of pagan origin when Christians follow its paths in prayer and meditation seeking a conscious contact with God? Who among those in the movement would know about the ancient labyrinthian connection to Elesian initiations or pig sacrifices?

It is presumptious to assume that the labyrinth substitutes for biblical study, Daily Office attendance or worship at the Eucharist, but its walkers may find its paths a supplemental spiritual benefit.

> John Bratton Sewanee, Tenn.

What to Wear

Did you happen to see our Bishop Suffragan of the Beltway leading a Gore love fest on the last night of the Democratic Convention? As a Democrat, I thought it inappropriate for Bishop Dixon to appear in her clericals on the convention podium giving the impression that the vice president enjoys our church's official backing. She has every right to be as politically active as she wishes, but she needs to be so in her civvies.

> Hugh Straub New Orleans, La.

And what to my wondering eyes did appear, but a lady bishop in full battle gear ... Regardless of one's political party affiliations, the spectacle of Bishop Jane Dixon affirming the candidate of the Los Angeles convention must be seen as an irresponsible act for a bishop of any stripe. Could her

"discretionary fund" have funded her getting there, let alone her involvement in the political arena? As my kids used to say, "She's an embarrassment."

> (The Rev.) John M. Galagan Tehachapi, Calif.

ID Needed

I am writing to ask if anyone can identify the persons found in the picture on page 3 of the Aug. 20 issue. I have a feeling that I might be in that picture.

> (The Rev.) Ray Clark Sheridan, Wyo.

... As Charged

I thoroughly enjoyed "From the Back Pews" [TLC, Aug. 20]. I have to plead guilty myself. Perhaps we are taking Matthew 19:30 too literally.

> Nancy Sullens Bethany, Okla.

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Florida — Travis Boline, Mary Ruth Busse, Lynne Dukes, Mark Eldredge, Alex Farmer, Shari Hobby.

Kentucky — George Greer, assistant at St. Francis', Box 128, Harrods Creek, KY 40027.

Olympia — Marilyn J. Brandenburg, St. Barnabas', Box 10207, Bainbridge Island, WA 98110; Jayne C. Gott, chaplain, St. Andrew's Place, Port Angeles, and St. Luke's, Sequim, WA; Genevieve M. Grewell, St. John's, 114 20th Ave., Olympia, WA 98501; Julie Honig-Smith, assistant, St. Barnabas', Box 10207, Bainbridge Island, WA 98110; Joyce McConnell, deacon-in-charge, Faith, Box 505, Kingston, WA 98346; M. Anne Novak, St. Andrew's, 111 NE 80th St., Seattle, WA 98115; Jerry Shigaki, St. Benedict's, Box 3811, Lacey, WA 98509; Carol E. Westpfahl.

Deaths

The Rev. **Charles Matthews Wyatt-Brown**, 84, retired priest of the Diocese of Texas, died of pneumonia Aug. 13 in Beaufort, S.C.

Fr. Wyatt-Brown was born in Asheville, NC, and earned both undergraduate and theological degrees from the University of the South. He was ordained to the diaconate in 1942 and to the priesthood a year later. He was assistant at Church of the Good Shepherd, Jacksonville, FL, 1942-44; rector of Grace, Waycross, 1944-48; rector of St. Mark's, Beaumont, TX, 1948-66; and rector of Palmer Memorial, Houston, 1966-80. When he retired in 1980, he was named rector emeritus of Palmer Memorial. In 1971 he led the establishment of the Palmer Drug Abuse Program, a spiritually based 12step program for young persons now established in nine cities in the Southwest. He is survived by his wife, Mary, three daughters, Alexandra Quintard Malick and Darrell Jervey Kirkland, of Austin, TX, and Laura Lingard Neuhaus, of Houston.

The Rev. **Richard Gunsaules Urban**, 93, a priest since 1932, died July 25 in Gonzales. TX.

Fr. Urban was a graduate of Haverford College and the General Theological Seminary. Following ordination to the diaconate and priesthood in 1932, he served in the dioceses of New Jersey, Albany, Florida and West Texas. He was rector of Holy Trinity, Toms River, NJ, 1932-33; St. Margaret's, Menands, NY, 1933-36; St. Peter's, Fernandina Beach, FL, 1940-45; St. Paul's, Jacksonville, FL, 1948-54; Christ Church, Laredo, TX, 1954-69, and Messiah, Gonzales, 1969-79. He assisted at other congregations. He was a four-time deputy to General Convention. He is survived by two daughters.

Send your clergy changes to People and Places:

tlc@livingchurch.org P.O. Box 514036, Mlwaukee, Wl 53203-3436 Fax (414) 276-7483

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Next week...

Attitude Change Needed

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POSITIONS OFFERED

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CANON FOR MISSIONS sought for dynamic cathedral of 3,300 members. This priest would oversee a large and growing outreach ministry within the local community and beyond, to as far as Cange, Haiti. Responsibilities would include oversight of a substantial budget, work with the Cathedral Missions Committee and representation on local outreach and diocesan boards. A sharing in the liturgical and pastoral life of the cathedral will also be expected. Applicants send resume and CDO profile to: The Very Rev. Philip C. Linder, Trinity Cathedral, 1100 Sumter St., Columbia, SC 29201.

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RECTOR: Church of the Resurrection in beautiful Austin, TX, an orthodox/conservative parish with "high church" liturgy. Seriously consider Hispanic or bilingual Anglo. Family church, yearning to be program. Exceptional outreach, functioning well. Excellent campus and facilities. Send resume and letter to: James Baker, Senior Warden, 2008 Justin Lane, Austin, TX 78757,

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

CLASSIFIEDS

POSITIONS OFFERED

PRIEST ASSOCIATE for downtown program-sized parish. Primary responsibility will be sustaining a pastoral ministry to elderly and infirm parishioners: visiting them, coordinating lay visitors and drivers, organizing fellowship events for parish seniors. Additional responsibilities will be as celebrant and occasional preacher at midweek and Sunday Eucharists as part of a three-person clergy staff, as well as general pastoral ministry and support of lay leadership. Patience, humility, team spirit and a sense of humor essential. Contact: Andy Fiddler, Rector, Trinity Church on the Green, 129 Church St., Suite 705, New Haven, CT 06510. Telephone: (203) 624-3103. E-mail: afiddler@snet.net

RECTOR: Is God calling you to be St. Mark's rector? Located in downtown Gastonia, NC (15 miles west of Charlotte), a 2000 All-America City, our parish is seeking a rector who is a person with a vision that will inspire and motivate us to do God's work. Our new rector will inspire us through sermons that relate the Gospel to our everyday lives. He or she will help empower us through delegation and help heal us as a faithful pastor, counselor and crisis minister. The person we call will be compassionate, committed to Christian education, be able to communicate with people of all ages, and have a great sense of humor. St. Mark's is a parish of 400-plus members who strongly supports one another, is financially solid, values the wisdom and expertise of our older members, is active in its community and that is full of parishioners with a broad array of gifts, talents and leadership skills. We seek growth in both worshipers and facilities and a more diverse congregation. If you are someone who feels a calling to our parish, please send a letter of interest, resume and CDO profile (if available) to:

Search Committee, St. Mark's Episcopal Church, 258 W. Franklin Blvd., Gastonia, NC 28052.

HISTORIC MIDDLE TENNESSEE CHURCH with growth potential seeks caring spiritual leader with strong preaching and teaching skills. Rectory (exceptional), stipend and benefits package. Will consider retired part-time priest. For profile send resume and CDO profile to: Search Committee, Elaine Drake, 100 Vine St., Shelbyville, TN 37160 or e-mail rossandelaine@juno.com

ALL SAINTS', ATLANTA, GA, seeks an associate rector. This priest will work closely with the rector to supervise clergy and other program staff in implementing the ministries of the parish. He or she will have direct responsibility for parish life programs, newcomer ministry and all groups associated with worship. The successful candidate will be an extrovert with an intuitive understanding of southern culture. While every applicant will be given full consideration, the position is ideal for someone seeking a second curacy with the hope of becoming rector of a large parish in the future. For a position description or to apply, please write to: Bert Clark, Advisory Committee Chair, c/o All Saints' Episcopal Church, 634 W. Peachtree St., NW, Atlanta, GA 30308. For more information about the parish go to www.allsaintsatlanta.org

RECTOR: Christ Church, Cape Girardeau, MO. Read the other ads; that's us too! Except that we live in the center of this country on the Mississippi River; the church serves an area with population of over 150,000. We enjoy a regional medical center and good shopping. Southeast Missouri State University is building new River Campus near church; near enough to St. Louis to see Cardinals, hear symphony, far enough away not to smell the factories. We worship in small, historic church with up-to-date facilities, financially sound, usually about 100 members. We need enthusiastic leadership to help us achieve our goal of being effective lay ministers and to share our faith with the community. Check us out at users.clas.net/episcopal for links to community information. Contact: Search Committee, Christ Episcopal Church, 101 N. Fountain, Cape Girardeau, MO 63701 e-mail f844non@semovm.semo.edu

POSITIONS OFFERED

RECTOR: Gifted with talents for leadership, preaching, teaching and pastoral care? Love traditional worship, liturgy and English cathedral music? Consider the challenge of All Saints, Richmond, a large suburban parish with active lay ministries and thriving programs. Send CDO profile and resume by 11/1/00 to: Carolyn Hedges, Search Committee Chair, All Saints Episcopal Church. 8787 River Rd., Richmond, VA 23229.

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ST. STEPHEN'S CHURCH, program-size parish, seeks an organist/choirmaster. Please send resume to or contact: The Rev. Dr. Jacob W. Owensby, P.O. Box 4207, Huntsville, AL 35815-4207: E-mail: revdrjake@aol.com. Phone (256) 881-7235.

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KEY - Light face type denotes AM, bold face PM; add, address; anno, announced; A-C, Ante-Communion; appt., appointment; B, Benediction; C, Confessions; Cho, Choral; Ch S, Church School; c, curate; d, deacon, d.r.e., director of religious education; EP, Evening Prayer; Eu, Eucharist; Ev, Evensong; ex, except; 1S, 1st Sunday; hol, holiday; HC, Holy Communion; HD, Holy Days; HS, Healing Service; HU, Holy Unction; Instr. Instructions; Int, Intercessions; LOH, Laying On of Hands; Lit, Litany, Mat, Matins; MP, Morning Prayer; P, Penance; r, rector; r-em, rector emeritus; Ser, Sermon; Sol, Solemn; Sta, Stations; V. Vespers; v, vicar; YPF, Young People's Fellowship. A/C, air-conditioned; H/A, handicapped accessible.

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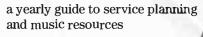


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