

THE LIVING CHURCH

AN INDEPENDENT WEEKLY SERVING EPISCOPALIANS ♦ JUNE 29, 2003 ♦ \$2.00

Southern Exposure

The Convent of St. Helena in Augusta, Ga.



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Volume 226 Number 26

The objective of THE LIVING CHURCH magazine is to build up the body of Christ, by describing how God is moving in his Church; by reporting news of the Church in an unbiased manner; and by presenting diverse points of view.

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The patio at the Order of St. Helena's convent in Augusta, Ga. [p. 10].

Sr. Cintra Pemberton photo



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SUNDAY'S READINGS

True Satisfaction

'It is a question of a fair balance' (2 Cor. 8:13)

The Third Sunday After Pentecost, June 29, 2003 (Proper 8B)

Deut. 15:7-11; Psalm 112; 2 Cor. 8:1-9, 13-15; Mark 5:22-24; 35b-43

If one wishes truly to learn about Christian financial stewardship, one can hardly do better than consider the standard set by the Macedonian Christians in the first generation of the church. Paul uses them as a shining, even faultless, example for the Christians in Corinth. Many American Christians in this era have much in common with the Corinthian Christians: affluence, sophistication, good education, confidence. These attributes are by no means inherently inconsistent with Christian profession, though smugness and even arrogance are not far from them. By contrast, the Macedonians, in the words of scripture, had experienced "a severe ordeal of affliction" and were noted for "extreme poverty." Many of them were laborers.

By worldly measure, most Corinthians would look down upon the Macedonians. Yet, in the matter of Christian financial giving, it is the latter whom Paul holds up for the Corinthian believ-

ers to imitate. Almost certainly, those in Corinth could afford to give impressively more than their Macedonian fellows, denarius for denarius, but this is not the point.

For Christians, it never is. Paul exhorts the Corinthians to imitate the Macedonian believers, not because they gave lots of money, but because of the latter's "joy under affliction" (verse 2); volunteering (verse 3) to give generously without Paul's exhortation; giving "according to their means, and even beyond" (verse 3); and "genuineness of love" (verse 8). Perhaps most importantly of all, the Macedonians, before they gave of their substance, "gave themselves first to the Lord" and then, "by the will of God, to" Paul and his companions (verse 5).

In short, the Macedonians were deeply dedicated to Jesus and the converted life. From this comes not only true Christian financial giving, but true Christian joy.

Look It Up

In 2 Corinthians 8:2, find out what it was that led to the Macedonian Christians' "wealth of generosity."

Think About It

In the Old Testament lesson, regarding giving to the needy, Moses says, "I command you." On the same topic, in the epistle, Paul says, "I do not say this as a command." Reflect on the difference.

Next Sunday

The Fourth Sunday After Pentecost, July 6, 2003 (Proper 9B)

Ezek. 2:1-7; Psalm 123; 2 Cor. 12:2-10; Mark 6:1-6

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Aging, Spirituality, and Religion

A Handbook Volume 2

Edited by Melvin A. Kimble and Susan H. McFadden. Fortress Press. Pp. 479. \$ 35. ISBN 0-8006-3273-7.

Aging,
Spirituality,
and
Religion



Given the rapidly growing population of senior citizens, one would think this lengthy book by 38 experts on aging would be of interest to many beyond its target audience of scholars, gerontologists and clergy of various faiths. And it does contain some interesting nuggets of information and advice.

One author notes, for example, that in contrast to our culture, traditional African cultures valued longevity; everyone wanted to be the oldest person in the village. Another author, discussing the problem of senior alcoholics, notes that "Alcoholism and other addictions are often deeply hidden in the elderly population." Even loved ones who are aware of elders' addiction may be indifferent to their affliction, reasoning that these addicts have so little time left to live that they might as well stay as they are.

The implication of the latter attitude is because elders [as they are usually called, in preference to "old people"] have reached the end of the line, they have nothing to live for. In response, this handbook suggests various exercises to give the elderly a sense of purpose such as meditation, prayer for others, social action, and leaving an "ethical will" of advice for future generations. One popular idea in gerontological circles these days seems to be "life-review": seniors are encouraged to write their spiritual autobiographies, in order to discover patterns where God has worked in the course of their lives.

The authors admit, though, that most churches are more interested in youth. John T. McFadden, in an amusing fictional account of two pastors having a drink at the Preachers' Bar and Grill, complains that the churches today are so keen to recruit young families that they ignore the numerous elders in the pews. "Maybe it's time we lined up the

55-year-olds and told *them* they are the future of the church!"

In general, there was little in the book that would actually give elders hope; immortality, for example, is hardly mentioned. However much you might enjoy remembering old times, even if that process would help you understand who you are now, you still at some point need to look to the future with hope.

I found the problems raised in this book very disturbing. I was amazed that the sum total of advice from these experts was so meager compared with the vast number of problems to which the elderly are prone. The appropriate response of our churches, though, is not to criticize the shortcomings of gerontology but to pay more attention to the seniors in our pews.

*(The Rev.) Douglas Ousley
New York, N.Y.*

Reconciliation

Restoring Justice

By John E. de Gruchy. Fortress Press. Pp. 255. \$19 paper. ISBN 0-8006-3600-7.

This is an exciting, gripping book by the Robert Selby Taylor Professor of Christian Studies at the University of Cape Town, South Africa. In our contemporary world fraught with deepest conflicts, almost all of which are, at base, between the members of the descendants of the house of Abraham, there could hardly be a book more timely. As Prof. de Gruchy states on the first page, "reconciliation is a theme that demands constant consideration in ways that relate to the context in which we live ... the world in all its agony and hope."

The heart of Prof. de Gruchy's argument is "that reconciliation is about the restoration of justice, whether that has to do with our justification by God, the renewal of interpersonal relations, or the transformation of society."

Using the history of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) of South Africa headed by Archbishop Desmond Tutu as a case study, the book is divided into three parts: The first part deals with the language of reconciliation, especially the relation-

ship between theological and political speech. The second examines the history of the Christian Church as an instrument to enable and embody reconciliation in the world and with the relationship among Christianity, Judaism and Islam. In the final section, the process of reconciliation and the goal of restoring justice within a new covenantal relationship is explored. The author traces the development of the doctrine of the atonement beginning with Paul through the medieval theologians to the 19th-century philosophers and culminating in thorough examination of the writings of Dietrich Bonhoeffer. This section of the book alone is worth the study.

As he traces the concept of reconciliation, we see that always it is God who moves first toward us, the sinned-against to the sinner, to initiate and empower reconciliation, coming finally in Christ, the victim to the perpetrators.

The book ends on a note of hope, in a quotation from the poet Vasi Mahlasela:

"I don't know much, but I do know that out of fear comes hope... This hope is the obsession of life"

*(The Rev.) George Ross
Pacifica, Calif.*

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New Hampshire Election Draws Worldwide Attention

Reaction has ranged from elation to despair over news that the Rev. Canon V. Gene Robinson was elected Bishop Coadjutor of New Hampshire at St. Paul's Church in Concord on June 7. The election is believed to be unprecedented within the worldwide Anglican Communion in that it is the first time a homosexual person in a committed relationship has been elected to the episcopate.

Bishop-elect Robinson has served as canon to the ordinary of the diocese since 1988. It took two ballots for him to be elected over three other

finalists: the Very Rev. Ruth Lawson Kirk, rector of St. Peter's, Glenside, Pa.; the Rev. Canon Pamela Jane Mott, canon pastor at Trinity Cathedral in Portland, Ore.; and the Very Rev. Robert L. Tate, rector of St. Martin-in-the-Fields, Chestnut Hill, Pa. A fourth candidate, the Rev. Joe G. Burnett, withdrew after being elected Bishop of Nebraska [TLC, June 1]. After results of the second ballot were announced, *The Concord Monitor* reported that St. Paul's erupted in thunderous applause, whistling, foot stomping and a sustained standing ovation that continued while the bishop-elect processed up the center aisle to meet and embrace his long-time partner, Mark Andrew.



Canon Robinson

Reaction to the news was not unanimously joyful, however. Some in the church sat in quiet disapproval or exited the building quickly and at least four diocesan bishops said they will not consent to the election. Before he can be consecrated, Canon Robinson must be confirmed by a simple majority from the House of Deputies and diocesan bishops at General Convention, July 30-Aug. 8. His confirmation

process is expected to be contentious and may further weaken the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion, both of which are deeply divided over homosexuality. Two weeks ago, the primates of the Communion unanimously refused to permit individual provinces, of which the Episcopal Church is one of 38, to ignore the existing position, which is that all sex outside monogamous, heterosexual marriage is sinful.

"I hope that my being a good bishop and not being a gay bishop will do more for gay and lesbian people in the church than anything else I could do," Bishop-elect Robinson told the *Monitor*. "I believe I was elected today because people will believe I'll be a good bishop, and that's what I'm going to try to be."

Mistaken Identity

A Jacksonville, Fla., television station was forced to issue a correction in mid broadcast on June 8 after it mistakenly identified the Rt. Rev. Stephen Jecko, who is Bishop of Florida, as the "non-celibate gay man" recently elected Bishop Coadjutor of New Hampshire.

Earlier in the day the television station called Bishop Jecko for comment about the election. During the 11 p.m. newscast the station ran videotape from the New Hampshire election, showing the Rev. Canon V. Gene Robinson happily addressing his constituency with Bishop Jecko's name at the bottom of the screen.

Both Bishop Jecko and many others in positions of leadership in the Diocese of Florida have in the past vigorously upheld traditional church teaching, which is that sexual intercourse is appropriate for Christians only within life-long, monogamous, heterosexual marriage. At least several viewers called the station immediately and the news anchor apologized before the conclusion of the newscast.

NEW HAMPSHIRE				
Ballot	1		2	
C = Clergy; L = Laity	C	L	C	L
Needed to Elect			39	83
Kirk	6	43	6	38
Mott	15	17	10	12
Robinson	51	77	58	96
Tate	5	28	3	19

Province 4: No Change to Teaching on Homosexuality

If bishops and deputies in Province 4 have their way, there will be no legislation to liberalize church teaching on homosexuality at General Convention, which begins in Minneapolis July 30.

In a surprise move, the bishops serving 20 dioceses in the Southeast met before the opening of the provincial synod at the Kanuga Camp and Conference Center near Hendersonville, N.C., and drafted a resolution which stated that the Episcopal Church had not achieved consensus and that attempting to force the issue through legislation at this time would be damaging to the unity of the church. The five-part

resolution appears closely worded on a similar recommendation contained in "The Gift of Sexuality," a theology paper presented last spring at the House of Bishops' retreat. That report was received, but not endorsed when the house met at Kanuga in March.

The Province 4 bishops unanimously endorsed their resolution and offered it to the plenary session on the condition that it could not be changed or amended. After a lively debate, the clerical and lay deputies overwhelmingly endorsed the resolution in a voice vote.

(The Rev.) Bob Libby

English Appointment Stirs Controversy

Adding to the concern by some of the selection of a sexually active homosexual man as bishop-elect of New Hampshire is the revelation that the newest appointed bishop in the Church of England has been co-habiting with another man for more than 20 years.

The revelation came after assurances that the Rev. Canon Jeffrey John, currently treasurer and canon theologian at Southwark Cathedral, would uphold official church teaching that sex outside heterosexual marriage is incompatible with scripture. A number of conservative international primates, bishops within the Church of England, and clergy from within the diocese have subsequently requested that the Rt. Rev. Richard Harries, Bishop of Oxford, withdraw his appointment of Canon John to be Bishop Suffragan of Reading.



Haidee Joy photo

The Rt. Rev. Nathaniel Garang (seated), Bishop of Bor in the Episcopal Church of The Sudan, delivers a children's sermon during Sudanese Sunday at Good Samaritan Church in San Diego on May 18. The event was jointly sponsored by Good Samaritan and St. Luke's, San Diego. For more than 20 years, a civil war has claimed more than 1 million lives and left Anglicans and other Christians disenfranchised and persecuted for their beliefs by the Muslim-dominated government. There are now more than 2,500 resettled Sudanese refugees living within the Diocese of San Diego, including several members of St. Luke's who were baptized in the Diocese of Bor.

Nashotah House Approves Interim Policy Stating Who May Celebrate the Eucharist

The Board of Trustees at Nashotah House recently approved an interim policy which grants the dean more discretion in who is invited to be a celebrant of the Eucharist at the seminary.

The new policy states that "Celebrants of the Holy Eucharist and others who function sacerdotally at Nashotah House: shall be drawn from the faculty, adjunct faculty, the chaplain, those visiting bishops designated by the dean as 'Bishops-in Residence,' officers of the board of trustees, the warden of the alumni association, and other such guests as the dean may invite to celebrate from time to time. Membership in one of the aforementioned categories does not entail a 'right' to celebrate at Nashotah House. The invitation to celebrate (or, in the case of employees of Nashotah House,

the assignment to serve as a celebrant) shall be the prerogative of the dean."

The bishops among the board of trustees have been asked to review the proposed policy and submit a final version for approval at the next meeting. Although there were no outright restrictions against women celebrants in the previous policy, it is believed that the pool of those eligible to be celebrants under the previous policy consisted of men with the one exception being that diocesan bishops who are ordaining students are allowed to celebrate. No women bishops have sent students previously.

The Very Rev. Robert S. Munday, dean and president, had not responded by press time to several messages left at his office by THE LIVING CHURCH.

Spiritual Responses to 9/11

Five New York City-based organizations have collaborated on a multi-media collection of spiritual responses to 9/11. A special viewing and book signing for the print version took place June 24 at the New York Historical Society.

The book, *Will the Dust Praise You?*, is written by R. William Franklin and Mary Sudman Donovan. It is published by the Church Publishing Corp., and details the many activities and ministries that grew at and near Ground Zero.

"Revelations from Ground Zero" is a two-hour documentary produced by Trinity Television and New Media, a ministry of Trinity Church, Wall Street. A website (www.spiritualresponsesto9/11.org) has been developed specifically as a companion to the multimedia series by the Church Pension Group.

Canadians Remain at Odds

A recent vote by the annual synod in the Canadian Diocese of New Westminster suggests that positions may be hardening and support among diocesan deputies may even be slipping for continuation of a controversial liturgy to bless same-sex relationships.

Last year's synod approved a resolution to develop and implement such a rite. The first blessing occurred May 28 in East Vancouver [TLC, June 22]. The annual diocesan meeting occurred the following weekend and a resolution to revoke authorization for same-sex blessings failed by more than two-thirds, 181-85, but the vote tally did not include the 73 clergy and lay deputies from eight dissenting parishes.

They declared themselves out of communion with the diocese and its bishop, the Rt. Rev. Michael Ingham, after the synod vote last year.

Following the announcement of the vote total on May 31, a letter announcing the Province of Nigeria was breaking communion with the diocese and Bishop Ingham was read.

BRIEFLY....

The Rev. **Steven W. Mues**, rector of St. Luke's Church, Rochester, Minn., for the past 14 years, has been appointed chief executive officer of St. Jude's Ranch for Children in Boulder City, Nev. According to its Internet website, St. Jude's is a not-for-profit, non-sectarian home for abused and neglected children. It was founded by an Episcopal priest in 1966 and now has three campuses in Nevada and Texas.

The General Synod of the Anglican Episcopal Church of Brazil elected the Rt. Rev. **Orlando Oliveira**, Bishop of Southern Diocese, as its new primate on June 1 at the cathedral in Porto Alegre. Archbishop Oliveira will replace the Most Rev. Glauco Soares de Lima, who served as primate and Bishop of Sao Paulo for the past 10 years.



Maggie Hasslacher photo

Worshippers at the confirmation service during convention in the Diocese of Albany.

AROUND THE DIOCESES

The Dry Bones

More than 1,000 persons responded to an altar call in the Diocese of Albany as part of an emotional three-day convention which also included a fatality due to natural causes.

Early in the evening of the opening session on June 6, Alice Cook, a priest's widow, ceased breathing and died. Paramedics attempted resuscitation as the whole assembly prayed and quietly sang. One of her friends commented, "If Alice could have chosen how to die, this would have been it, surrounded by a thousand praying and worshipping believers."

The next afternoon, the Rt. Rev. Harold Miller, Bishop of Down and Dromore, Church of Ireland, preached to the convention, including 60 adult confirmands along with their families and sponsors. Calling up the words of Ezekiel, "can these bones live again?" he pointed to the churches that once held great wealth and power and prestige and are now fading away. His clear answer is that the bones can live

if the Holy Spirit comes upon them.

Following the confirmations, the Rt. Rev. Dan Herzog, Bishop of Albany, extended an invitation for those who desired the renewing power of the Holy Spirit to come forward. More than 1,000 responded, streaming to the four bishops who laid hands on them in prayer. Two hours and 20 minutes later the Eucharist resumed.

Parallel with convention was a youth rally whose participants led a youth Mass on Pentecost. Preceding the liturgy of the word, the younger children staged an enactment of the Ascension-Pentecost story, which grew out of their VBS weekend. The youth held their own healing service on Saturday night with Bishop David Bena, suffragan of Albany.

Also on Saturday, delegates saw the first architectural drafts for the new Spiritual Life Center, being built on more than 600 acres. It will include a new motherhouse for the Eastern Province of the Community of St. Mary, now in Peekskill.

Maggie Hasslacher

'A Community of Wisdom'

Presiding Bishop Griswold Commends Executive Council for 'Judicious' Actions

After General Convention enacts legislation and creates headlines, Executive Council is delegated the more unheralded responsibility of making the necessary changes. The outgoing council, whose final meeting concluded last month, was exceptionally judicious in dealing with a number of potentially divisive issues, according to the Presiding Bishop Frank T. Griswold. Bishop Griswold discussed some of his own observations about council with THE LIVING CHURCH at the conclusion of the meeting in Ellicott City, Md.

"It's one thing to say something should exist," Bishop Griswold noted. "It's quite another to figure out how to accomplish it. A number of people [elected to council] come out of General Convention where the complete focus is on legislation. Executive Council is not just about legislation. This is a community of wisdom."

Bishop Griswold noted that deputies to General Convention are elected for only one term whereas Executive Council members serve for six years. The longer term, Bishop Griswold said, provides more time for reflection. He commended council for the way in which it dealt with a General Convention resolution on ordination of women which required fact-finding visits to the three dioceses whose bishops do not believe that women are called by God to ordained orders.

"They chose a very sensitive approach," Bishop Griswold said. "The visits were as respectful as they could be under the circumstances."

As part of the final legislative session before General Convention, Executive Council members engaged in a lengthy evaluation process during which some members cited the sudden collapse of negotiations to relocate the Episcopal Church Center to the campus of the General Theological Seminary as an example of a lack of trust between Church Center

staff and the council. Bishop Griswold said that a perception of mistrust in many ecclesiastical systems is somewhat common lately, but he believes communication is improving between staff and council members.

"I was very heartened by this," he said. "I think it is a giant step forward to name these dynamics. I think by naming they are also accepting some responsibility for changing it. I think a sign of [improved] trustfulness [in the future] will be diminished use of private conversations."

Most Episcopalians draw a blank about legislative bodies, and in an era of more and more communication, Bishop Griswold believes the church needs to do a better job of keeping its members informed about church structures. Perhaps even more importantly the church needs to ensure that its structures are capable of articulating and accomplishing the right objectives.

This summer one of the most widely talked about issues concerns a proposal to include a liturgical blessing for same-sex unions in *The Book of Occasional Services*. Bishop Griswold said unlike three years ago there are no plans at this time to create a special committee to debate resolutions dealing with sexuality. Nor is there a formal agreement among the House of Bishops to preempt debate on the topic, despite what some fear based on the recommendation against passage which a theology paper urged when it was presented at the spring House of Bishops' meeting.

"[The theology paper] very clearly describes two realities," Bishop Griswold said, "but sexuality is not a church-dividing issue. One of the things the study makes clear is that we are very clear on the creeds and scriptures."



Steve Waring photo

Bishop Griswold at a press conference during a meeting of the Executive Council.

"It's one thing to say something should exist," Bishop Griswold noted. "It's quite another to figure out how to accomplish it."

Steve Waring



Benches and a cross invite meditation in the convent's Quiet Garden.

Southern Exposure

The Order of St. Helena renovates and revives its monastic ministry at its Georgia convent.

Sr. Cintra Pemberton photos

By Patricia Nakamura

Sister Carol Andrew, of the Convent of St. Helena in Augusta, Ga., refers to the whole long struggle as the “wretched renovation.” But the process that began with a brave decision and ended with a lovely home and home-away-from-home for the sisters and their guests was worth it all.

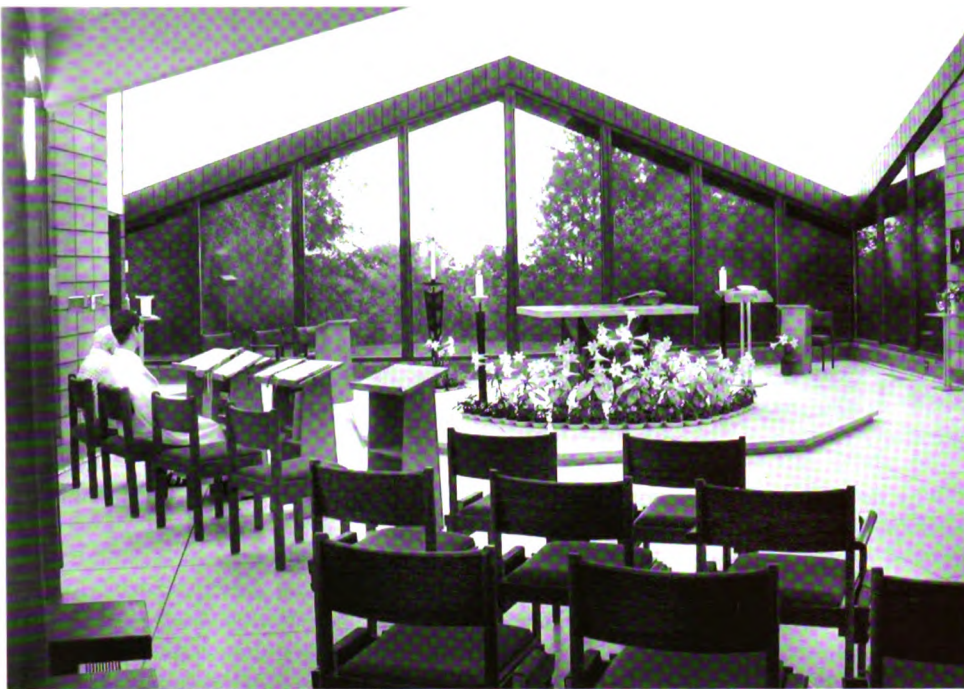
The order has three houses, the oldest in Vail’s Gate, N.Y., and another in Manhattan. In the early 1990s, “Augusta went through a fallow period,” Sr. Carol said, especially in regard to the use of the facilities and the changing mission of the sisters. “It was all hard surfaces, glass, terrazzo and concrete. Light and sound traveled everywhere, at all hours. There was no privacy.” The traditions of silence and intense prayer

were giving way to the work of spiritual direction, guided retreats, and workshop series. And aging bones found the surfaces tiring.

Another consideration was location. “It was the conservative South. We’re not a conservative order,” she said. “We were involved in civil activism, doing AIDS ministry before the church began to cope.” The community’s newsletter states, “Recognizing the importance of the monastic ministry in the Episcopal Church in the Southeast, [we] agreed it would be a great mistake to close the convent, so the decision was made to renovate and build.”

During Phase I, completed in 1999, guest house kitchenette and bathroom facilities were upgraded, windows were replaced with thermal glass, and floors were carpeted. An accessible bedroom with bath was added.

Phase II included a new wing with carpeted



The renovation at the convent in Augusta included extensive work done on the chapel.

bedrooms and common room for the sisters, a patio and exercise room, and storage space. The sisters moved into their new space in 2002, a few months before oft-revised plans for Phase III, the renovation of the old convent, were approved. This called for extensive work on the chapel, creating a

“brand new all-stainless-steel kitchen,” and turning some of the old cells into individual offices.

This last is perhaps symbolic of the changes in the life of the community. The habit is still worn, but only for formal occasions. “Silence and intense prayer were the norm at the

time of the founding in 1945”; now the sisters give retreats and spiritual direction. They go out to preach and teach. Several are priests, and are called upon to supply — and sometimes play the organ — in area parishes. Leadership which once came from a mother superior, and before that the superior of the Order of Holy Cross, is now by a council from the decisions of the chapter, which is comprised of all life-professed sisters.

The six Augusta nuns, the oldest of whom is 95, maintain a balance between ministry outside the convent and ministry inside, with daily Eucharist, the offices of Matins, Diurnum, Vespers and Compline. The Great Silence is maintained each night until after morning Eucharist and every Monday. Even with retreats and workshops, Sr. Carol said, “Parts of the building are always silent.”

The traditional connection with Holy Cross is echoed in the order’s choice of patron. St. Helena, also the patron of archeologists, was the mother of the Emperor Constantine; St. Ambrose credits her with finding the true cross in a rock cistern. The women’s order became independent in 1975. □

‘Prayer Spaces’

As a part of its “inside and outside” ministry, the convent joined the Quiet Garden Trust, an English organization which helps to create “intentional prayer spaces,” private gardens available for meditation, prayer, and peace, around the world. The 30-foot cross, teak benches, and much work by serious volunteer gardeners has made an area which, like the glass-walled chapel, is open to all.

Sr. Cintra Pemberton met Philip Roderick, the movement’s founder, in England. “I liked the idea,” she said: “Come be still with us. When I moved to the Georgia house from Vail’s Gate a year and a half ago, and became coordinator of the grounds project, I thought, ‘This is a Quiet Garden.’” The criteria, she said, are simple: Small dues, a local committee, occasional programs to invite people, and making the space open to the public. “We have a committee made up of volunteers from six parishes in Augusta. We had programs the first Mondays of April, May, and June. In fall we will have them Sunday afternoons too.”

Programs consisted of a short reflective meditation in the small garden between the chapel and the main convent, followed by time to wander the 20-acre grounds in silence. Later in the morning the groups reconvened to talk of their thoughts, or just listen. For the fall series, flyers will go out around town, especially to garden shops and clubs, churches of all denominations, to invite all.

Sr. Cintra said the order wants to tell the community that this is “spiritual time, not Episcopal time.” And beyond that, she said, “We need to let people know we’re still here, we are up and running, alive and well.”

Just Thought I'd Ask

Did You Know...

The grandfather of Andrew Firestone, star of ABC-TV's "The Bachelor," was once dean of Guildford Cathedral in England.

Quote of the Week

The Rt. Rev. William C.R. Sheridan, retired Bishop of Northern Indiana, recalling for the *South Bend Tribune* when the Archbishop of Canterbury came to South Bend and he couldn't be present because he was filling in for a vacationing priest: "It was like having a being from outer space land in your own backyard and you couldn't go to see him."

My days as an inquisitive newspaper reporter are long gone, but the inquiring nature formed during years in the media won't go away. It's habit forming, I guess. I can't shake myself loose from asking questions:

Why do so many lay persons insist on participating in the laying on of hands in services of ordination?

Whatever became of the "Biretta Belt?"
When did we start calling the interior of Episcopal churches "sanctuaries"?

Why can't we call the nave of a church a nave?

Does anyone besides Anglicans drink sherry?

Aren't albs supposed to be worn as undergarments?

Whatever became of Low Sunday?

Have you ever noticed how many people refer to "our beloved" Episcopal Church?

What will the proponents of same-sex blessings do once the legislation is adopted and being carried out by the church?

Are there any places where the so-called "blended" worship works?

Is it my imagination, or are eulogies creeping into our funeral liturgies?

Wouldn't a shorter General Convention every other year work much better than the current triennial schedule?

Do any Episcopalians pay attention to what Anglican primates do at their annual meetings?

Doesn't there have to be a better way to prepare for the election of a bishop than to stage these awful dog-and-pony shows?

How many readers can name 10 members of the House of Bishops? How about five members? Three?

Do we really want to have two different lectionaries in use at the same time?

Was the Rev. Troy Perry an appropriate candidate for an honorary degree given by an Episcopal theological seminary?

Aren't there a couple of bishops already politicking to become the next Presiding Bishop in 2006?

Won't Canon 9 priests go a long way in

solving the clergy shortage (I'm still not convinced there is one)?

And for that matter, don't we fail to make the best use of retired clergy?

Are you surprised by the number of young seekers looking for a traditional liturgy?

Do any Episcopal churches still observe Corpus Christi?

Aren't parishes without websites missing a great opportunity?

Aren't parishes that don't update their websites showing they don't care?

What took so long for someone to propose C.S. Lewis as an addition to the church's calendar?

Can anyone explain the popularity of "On Eagle's Wings"?

Why would Anglican lay persons want to celebrate the Eucharist?

Are you surprised that the excitement over labyrinths hasn't quieted down?

Wasn't the election of Canon V. Gene Robinson in the Diocese of New Hampshire the surest thing since Secretariat?

Aren't some of our dioceses in serious financial trouble?

Is it possible for the Anglican Church of Canada to dig itself out from its current plight?

Do you start to feel old when your bishop is younger than you are?

Did Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams really think he would be able to avoid dealing with issues of sexuality?

Aren't we all tired of hearing about the Diocese of New Westminster?

Whatever became of the *via media*?

Does the average Episcopalian care even a whit about the General Convention?

Don't the names of many of our new churches sound strange?

Wouldn't we be better off treating the same-sex blessing issue as a matter of theology rather than a matter of justice?

How do you explain the popularity of Taizé worship services?

Do we really want priests who haven't been deacons?

Why do some people stop going to church during the summer?

What's all the fuss about unity candles at weddings?

David Kalvelage, executive editor



The New Hampshire Test

The election of the Rev. Canon V. Gene Robinson as Bishop Coadjutor of New Hampshire [p. 6] presents an interesting test for the Episcopal Church's process of consenting to episcopal elections. Under normal circumstances, when a diocese elects a bishop, the consents of a majority of the diocesan standing committees are required. If that is achieved, the consents of a majority of diocesan bishops are necessary before consecration of the new bishop can take place. However, when an election is held within 120 days of General Convention, the consent process becomes the responsibility of the two houses of convention — the House of Deputies first and then the House of Bishops.

From all indications, Canon Robinson is, in many ways, an outstanding candidate. He has carried out an effective ministry as canon to the ordinary in the Diocese of New Hampshire and as the executive officer of Province 1. The dilemma arises when one considers the bishop-elect's lifestyle. He is in an openly acknowledged, committed gay relationship. That raises the question of just what it is that the standing committees, or in this case the House of Deputies, and the bishops, are consenting to. Is it their purpose to certify that the canonical requirements have been met, or do they have an obligation to rule on the suitability of the candidate? The Episcopal Church's canon that addresses this matter uses such phrases as "we know of no impediment" and "duly and lawfully elected" and "godly character" when consent is given.

On the surface, the process looks sound. A diocese gets to elect its own bishop. Then the clergy and lay leaders of other dioceses, and the diocesan bishops consent, because a bishop is elected not only for a particular diocese, but for the entire church. For the most part, this process has resulted in rubber-stamp approval no matter whether it's the General Convention or the usual procedure. We hope that when the convention considers whether to give consent to the consecration of Canon Robinson, as well as several other bishops-elect, that bishops and deputies will give serious consideration to the nature and purpose of the responsibility which they are called upon to fulfill in this process. Before they act, some clarification of their role is in order.

The fact is that the election of Canon Robinson throws down the gauntlet, not only within the Episcopal Church, but throughout the Anglican Communion. Can we indeed proceed to consecrate as a bishop for the whole church a person whose lifestyle is morally unacceptable to many?

Keep Them Brief

An acquaintance of ours was visiting a parish one Sunday and reported that the liturgy unfolded smoothly and uneventfully. Following the blessing the congregation was asked to be seated. The rector made one announcement after another for nearly five minutes. When finished, he asked if others had announcements. Several persons in the congregation had something to say. After a period of about 10 minutes of announcements, the deacon gave the dismissal and persons went on their way. Our acquaintance reported he had already felt like an outsider, but the lengthy announcements made him feel even more out of place.

The ironic part of our friend's visit was that persons in the congregation had been handed a bulletin when they entered. The bulletin contained nearly all of the announcements that had been made verbally. Announcements, of course, may be an important part of the life of a particular church, but if they're already printed in a bulletin, why do they need to be repeated? We hope clergy, wardens and other church leaders will keep visitors and seekers in mind when they make announcements. Two or three brief announcements, of course, should not be disruptive to a congregation, but when they lengthen a service by 10 minutes and repeat what is printed elsewhere they are no longer useful.

**To what are
deputies
and bishops
being asked
to give their
consent?**



READER'S VIEWPOINT

New Roles for the Laity?

By Anthony F.M. Clavier

One of the changes the Anglican Church adopted at the Reformation was the abolition of the "minor orders."

In the Western Church, those who were to be ordained to the diaconate, priesthood and episcopate were first required to be ordered by a bishop to grades of service, the reality of which had been obscured and lost in the midst of time. They included such offices as "doorkeeper," "tonsured cleric," "exorcist," and "lector," culminating in the office of "sub deacon." All were memories of functions performed by members of the Christian community in the early church and each, originally, had a utilitarian purpose.

Students of church history well know that in earlier medieval times, such "clerics" had a certain status and protection under ecclesiastical law. Not all in minor orders, by any means, proceeded to major orders. They occupied positions of certain privilege in the life of the church. Their status was confusing.

I welcome most parts of the proposed revision to Title III of our canons. This revision is the fruit of the work done under the auspices of the Office of Ministry and Development. I am particularly grateful that the proposed revision annuls the distinction between Canon 7 priests and Canon 9 priests.

However, it is the proposed revision titled Canon 4: Of Licensed Ministries, to which I would call your

attention. In this section, seven "offices" of ministry are identified and described. Each is obviously an "order" or "function" in the church. A calling or vocation to such a ministry is first to be discerned by the congregation in which persons pursuing orders will serve. The priest-in-charge of such congregations will have a part to play and will request the bishop to license such persons to their office for a renewable time certain.

These orders of lay ministry are largely liturgical, although the last two are perhaps more functional. The revised canon identifies them as pastoral leader, worship leader, preacher, eucharistic minister, eucharistic visitor, catechist, and "other licensed

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ministries." The canon goes on to describe the job function of each of these ministries. One presumes that a certain lay person could be licensed to a number of these offices at the same time.

We do not yet know whether each of these ministries will be identifiable by a particular vestment or badge. What one can rejoice in is that we are catching up with other Anglican churches which have, for

The articles that appear on this page do not necessarily represent the editorial opinion of THE LIVING CHURCH or its board of directors.

a long period of time, licensed people to lead worship, and if properly trained, to preach.

The issue to be raised is not whether this revision is at fault in recognizing various liturgical and non-liturgical roles for lay people. The issue I raise is the absence of a recognition of those callings which have been exercised by the laity for centuries. That absence, I suggest, points not to an empowerment of the laity, but to their clericalization. Are we, perhaps, at that point in the early church, at which lay folk were empowered to watch the doors for non-believers, exorcise the "unclean," read the scriptures, except for the gospel, and assist the deacon in public worship? If we are, how will such ministries develop this time?

Missing from the list of those "discerned" and licensed are vestry members, those who serve on the Altar Guild, look after the grounds, members of ECW, men's groups, and a host of other people who do not dress up and help out during worship. Indeed almost all those lay people who enable the church to be the church are ignored in these canonical revisions. What will inevitably transpire is that there will appear among us a group of laity, recognized by solemn discernment and episcopal license, however temporary, who are in "minor orders."

The driving force behind these revisions to the Title III canons is the theory of mutual ministry. The rising cost of professional clergy has created a sub group of congregations, some perpetual missions, others once parishes, which cannot afford a full-time parish priest. In the hinterland of the Episcopal Church, this is a growing phenomenon.

Thinking "outside the box" is an excellent Christian virtue. The idea of empowering lay people to do that which a priest and his or her people once did is surely splendid. However, the present solution articulated in the proposed Title III canons has drawbacks. Until now our polity suggested that the essential expression of the church was the diocese and not the parish. Those entrusted with "discernment" identified vocation to ministry from among those who were the diocesan *parochia*, or family.

The new proposals retain the role of the bishop, and to one extent or another, diocesan agencies in identifying finally those called to the diaconate and the priesthood. However, the focus of discernment is now initially and importantly in the local community. The parish/mission will now assume a new role in Anglican polity.

Within the local Christian community there will now arise a bewildering catalog of discerned and licensed ministry whose function may well be regarded as something "clerical."

Finally, I would suggest that recognition of lay callings could be achieved by a much simpler system. In most parts of the Communion a lay reader is

a person who is discerned to have gifts and talents of use in the total ministry of the church, local and diocesan. Such a person is trained intentionally to lead worship where a priest is not available, to preach sermons of his/her own composition, to teach and catechize and to help out in pastoral situations where there is no settled priest or where there is a vacancy. This in no way limits the use of lay people to administer the chalice or to take communion to the sick.

The ancient order of reader has a long history in all Anglican churches and a heritage of manifest utility which leads back to the earliest days of Christendom. To re-enforce this ministry seems sensible. To do so would in no way diminish the reality of those lay vocations which remains at the heart of our parochial system. If election to a vestry or mis-

sion committee is regarded as something less than reading the second lesson or administering the sacrament; if serving on an Altar Guild, teaching Sunday school or serving as an acolyte is seen as something inferior to being "discerned" and possessing a license, what we shall have done is thoroughly clericalize the church rather than empower the laity.

One can only imagine the struggle for pre-eminence as those involved in the ministry of word and sacrament seek to line up on Sunday morning for the procession. □

The Rev. Anthony F. M. Clavier is the rector of Trinity Church, Watertown, S.D.

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Ending Internal Divisions

Since bishops in the Episcopal Church are elected to their office, it should come as no surprise that most of the bishops are getting far "ahead" of the church membership as a whole. Internal elections in private organizations are usually driven by activist groups within the organization. Activist groups, during the last 40 years or so, are almost invariably comprised of left-wing, socialist, special-interest individuals who drive elections toward their candidates, relying on the non-activist nature of the majority to ensure victory.

So we should not wonder at the hard-over leftist philosophy of so many elected to the episcopate, which we now find to be the principal force driving the internal discord and division within the church. Recent history leads me to conclude that no amount of talking about these problems will result in any satisfactory conclusion. Therefore I propose a solution which should satisfy both sides: Those Episcopalians who believe that the Bible is the inspired word of God should return to their roots in the Roman Catholic Church (it's a very short trip, believe me); those who believe that the Bible is a mildly interesting collection of religious folk tales should become Unitarians. I think both groups would welcome their new members, talents and assets with open arms.

*Michael Burcke
Oklahoma City, Okla.*

Not Traditional

I am not only dismayed, but angered, by the so-called "traditionalists," who elevate the issue of the church's blessing of gay committed relationships to a dogma of the church equivalent to the doctrine of the Trinity and the Incarnation, because they imply that if an action approving such blessings is taken by the General Convention, it would justify some kind of schism.

These Episcopal traditionalists are in every sense not traditional but radical, revealing little understanding of catholic theological tradition and practice. The tremendous flexibility of the

thought of the great saints and thinkers within the context of the central dogmas of the faith, as they responded to the intellectual culture of their time, is what is truly "traditional."

The issue of the blessing of gay persons in committed loving relationships as raised by traditionalists has little to do with traditional theology, but with a limited, very untraditional manipulation of a few Bible passages to support very narrow modern prejudices. To us who know devoutly Christian gay persons who have been in committed relationships for many years, to postulate some kind of theological opposition to blessing such a relationship debases the transcendent dignity of traditional theology to conform to the narrow outlook of an element of our society.

Such blessings should be a matter of pastoral care and caring, and not elevated to a huge issue which in no sense is rightly theological in import.

*(The Rev.) John M. Kettlewell
St. Stephen's Church
Schuylerville, N.Y.*

'Wonderful Relief'

Why would I want the Eastertide liturgy to direct me away from the reason the resurrection matters to me personally by eliminating the confession and absolution [TLC, May 18]? It occurs to me that too many have only the vaguest notion of their personal sins when they speak the words of the confession, thus they miss the experience of wonderful relief at the absolution. The confession focuses resurrection light on my personal darkness and the absolution is graciously therapeutic and health producing.

*(The Rev. Canon) Donald L. Woodrum
St. Luke's Church
Live Oak, Fla.*

It's Misunderstood

Regarding "It's Still a Sin" [TLC, May 18], if there is a New Testament "sexual ethic," it is that intercourse is solely for procreation, not pleasure. And, if application of this is to be made today (as Rome attempts), all sexual intercourse without this intent is "still a sin" — with or without benefit of a marriage license. There seems to be a misunderstanding of this by the letter writer and others. The mar-

Past General Conventions have ignored church growth, and placed far too much emphasis on social/political issues.



riage license is not a license to have sex but to have legitimate children. It is this selective application of "rules" which one hopes the General Convention might address.

*(The Rev.) Paul Evans
Greenfield, N.Y.*

Too Much Politics

The editor's column, "20/20 Proposals Have Potential" [TLC, May 25], is positive and forward thinking if some clergy and lay leaders will try to keep their opinions and politics out of the pulpits on Sunday mornings.

The 20/20 proposals would double Sunday attendance by 2020, from the present 830,000 to 1.6 million. Past General Conventions have ignored church growth, and placed far too much emphasis on social/political issues. Some church pulpits have become sounding boards for social causes.

There are far too many empty pews on Sunday mornings.

*Charles S. Peete, Jr.
Memphis, Tenn.*

Appointments

The Rev. **Wheigar Bright** is rector of Redeemer, PO Box 20427, Greensboro, NC 27240.

The Rev. Canon **Preston Beifield Hannibal** is canon for academic ministries in the Diocese of Washington, Mount St. Alban, Washington, DC 20016-5094.

The Rev. **Zelda M. Kennedy** is assistant at All Saints', 132 N Euclid Ave., Pasadena, CA 91101-1796.

The Rev. **T. James Kodera** is rector of St. Luke's, PO Box 339, Hudson, MA 01749.

The Rev. **J. Patrick Peters** is rector of St. Paul's, PO Box 96, Columbia, PA 17512.

The Rev. **Mark Spaulding** is rector of Holy Cross, 19179 Center St., Castro Valley, CA 94546-3616.

The Rev. **Richard Vettel-Becker** is rector of Trinity, 1668 Bush St., San Francisco, CA 94109.

The Rev. **Stephen Woods** is rector of St. John's, PO Box 1221, Kingston, NY 12402.

Ordinations

Priests

Eastern Michigan — **Phillip A. Soltz**, priest-in-charge of Grace, Standish, and Trinity, West Branch, MI; add: 3003 Mill Station Rd., Hale, MI 48739-9213.

Eau Claire — **Lawrence Edson**.

Florida — **Ella Farshing Breckinridge**.

North Carolina — **Chantal B. Morales-Dennis**, assistant at St. Francis', 3506 Lawndale Dr., Greensboro, NC 27408.

West Missouri — **Christine Mote Westermann Gilson**.

Deacons

Florida — **Mark Jones**, Our Saviour, 12236 Mandarin Rd., Jacksonville, FL 32223.

Deaths

The Rev. **James Paul Spata**, 62, former priest-in-charge and longtime assistant of Caroline Church of Brookhaven, Setauket, L.I., NY, died May 6.

A native of New York City, he graduated from SUNY Potsdam and taught school on Long Island for 32 years. He graduated from George Mercer School of Theology and was ordained to the diaconate in 1981 and the priesthood in 1983, and served in Setauket until 2000, when he moved to the Holy Trinity Cluster. In recent months he had been a supply priest at All Souls', Stony Brook. He was a member of the Order of St. Luke, and was spiritual director of youth ministries in the Diocese of Long Island. He is survived by his wife, Christine; and three children, Dawn, Stacey and Nicholas; and three grandchildren.

Next week...

Taking Us Home

CLASSIFIEDS

BOOKS

ANGLICAN THEOLOGICAL BOOKS — scholarly, out-of-print — bought and sold. Request catalog. **The Anglican Bibliopole, 858 Church St., Saratoga Springs, NY 12866-8615. (518) 587-7470. AnglicanBk@aol.com.**

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Gifts of God, catechumenate by Patricia Swift. Eight-week course considers Old & New Testaments, Episcopal Church, sacraments, prayer book, parish with ministries, life as gifts. For adult confirmation and renewal. 56 pp. paper spiral bound, \$7.00 plus postage. Phone: (954) 942-5887 Fax: (954) 942-5763. Available in English, French, or Spanish.

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CONFERENCES

THE VITAL CHURCH FOR THE 21st CENTURY: A conference for church leaders who want to build vital, growing congregations by reaching out to the unchurched in our society. The conference will feature: **The Rev. David Roseberry**, Rector of Christ Church Episcopal in Plano, Texas, **The Rev. Canon Mary Hays** from The Diocese of Pittsburgh and **The Rev. Kevin Martin**, Director of Vital Church Ministries. Major themes for the conference are Leadership, Evangelism, Discipleship and Stewardship.

Where: Christ Church Episcopal, Plano Texas
When: September 15-17, 2003

To obtain a conference brochure or for more information on Vital Church Ministries, visit us at www.VitalChurch-Ministries.org, or write or call our office: **Vital Church Ministries, 4550 Legacy Drive, Plano, Texas 75024, 972-618-0222 ext. 129.**

POSITIONS OFFERED

FULL-TIME CLERGY WANTED: We are willing to pay the right clergy person \$20,000 more than you are now earning, plus parsonage, utilities, automobile and moving expenses. Our church, which is more than half a century old, needs two assistant pastors for two new churches being planted in Atlanta, Georgia, and Memphis, Tennessee.

We are seeking a caring, compassionate, and enthusiastic assistant pastor with a sense of humor, and committed to pastoral care. This person must have the quality of being a loyal team member of a church staff.

Our church is an ecumenical and evangelical church that worships in the fifteen-hundred-year-old Anglican tradition, but reaches out to the entire community. Please send your resume to: **Candis Darken, Search Committee, Saint Matthew's Ecumenical Evangelical Church, 459 Columbus Avenue, # 234, New York, NY 10024.**

ASSISTANT PRIEST FOR ADULT EDUCATION AND "TWENTYSOMETHING" MINISTRY. Biblically based Episcopal church seeks a committed ordained or soon to be ordained Christian with a strong personal relationship with Jesus Christ to serve as assistant rector and be responsible for small group ministry, adult education, and nurturing college-age/twenty-something ministry. Pastoral, liturgical, and preaching responsibilities shared equally with the rector. Other full-time staff include rector and lay youth pastor. All Saints', Long Beach, CA, is an alive, Christ-centered, and AAC-affiliated parish with average Sunday attendance of 220 between two services. The parish is also much involved in the Alpha Course. All Saints' has a tradition of "high church" worship and evangelical preaching flavored with a measure of charismatic spirituality. Candidate must be well organized with good communication skills. Salary commensurate with experience. Applicants are asked to send a letter of interest and resume to: **The Rev. William A. Thompson, 346 Termino Ave., Long Beach, CA 90814; Office (562) 438-3650; Fax (562) 438-5565; E-mail: alstrector@uia.net.**

FULL-TIME RECTOR: Seeking full-time rector for growing parish church in the Diocese of New York. We have much to offer the right candidate: committed congregants, opportunity to solidify shift from pastoral to program model, beautiful location in recreation-rich Hudson River Valley, 1 hour north of NYC. Do our needs and goals match your strengths? Our top goals: strong sermons emphasizing practical Christianity, continued growth, physical plant expansion (now in planning stage), strengthening of Christian Education and youth/teen programs, development of mechanism to more fully engage laity in inreach/outreach. Housing provided. Generous compensation package. Expressions of interest welcome from all qualified candidates without regard to gender, age, race, sexual orientation or family status. Please send updated CDO profile and resume by *June 30* to: **Search Committee, c/o St. John's Episcopal Church, PO Box 477, Cornwall, New York 12518. Contact Phil Dutton at pdutton@hvc.rr.com if you have any questions. Interviewing to begin in early July.**

ATTENTION!

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Walker Art Center, Sculpture Garden, Minneapolis, Minn.

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