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Forward in Christ

The magazine of Forward in Faith North America.

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October, 2015

Anglican Leaders Visit Moscow

Also in this issue:

*May They all be One
Anglicanism and Orthodoxy
Emmanuel Hope Mission
From Russia With Love*





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Contents

4 In The News

Fr. Michael Heidt is Editor of *Forward in Christ* and a priest in the Diocese of Fort Worth.

5 May They all be One

Fr. Michael Heidt.

6 Anglicanism and Orthodoxy in the age of the “New Ecumenism”

The Very Rev Dr Chad Hatfield, is Chancellor/CEO of St. Vladimir’s Orthodox Theological Seminary in Yonkers, New York.

8 An Interview With Bishop Ray Sutton

Forward in Christ interviews ACNA’s Dean of Ecumenical Affairs.

12 From Russia With Love

Bishop Keith Ackerman is the former Bishop of Quincy and FiFNA’s Ambassador for Anglican and Ecumenical Affairs.

15 Thinking Out Loud

William Murchison is an author and journalist. He lives in Dallas, Texas.

16 Are we the New Pharisees?

Fr. Lawrence Bausch is President of FiFNA and Rector of Holy Trinity, Ocean Beach, San Diego, California.

16 News From Australia

Br. Ned Gerber OSB, CPA, CGMA, is Prior of the Anglican Benedictines of Christ the King. He has served for years in Government Health care, and at Hospitals such as those run by the Sisters of Mercy and Sisters of Charity. Ned is the V.P./Treasurer of Forward in Faith International (Australasia).

17 Emmanuel Hope Mission

Fr. Thomas Anderson, MSJ, is Pastor at Hope Anglican Church, in Oscoda, Michigan.

20 A Penitent Among Many

Fr. Gene Geromel is Rector of St. Bartholomew’s Anglican Church, in Swartz Creek, Michigan.

21 Sanctity of Life

Br. Ned Gerber, OSB.

Correction!

The article “Reflections of a Liberal, by a liberal orthodox Christian,” by Don Ishler of the FiFNA Council, was published anonymously in error in the last issue of *Forward in Christ*.

The title of the article was originally “Reflections of a Liberal Orthodox Christian,” and was changed without the author’s knowledge or permission.

The picture accompanying the article was the Editor’s choice, and did not in any way reflect the author’s views on same-sex unions.

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In the News

Anglican Leaders Visit Moscow: Archbishop Foley Beach, at the invitation of Patriarch Kirill of Russia, led a delegation this August from the Anglican Church in North America to Moscow for ecumenical meetings with the Russian Orthodox Church.

The delegation met with Metropolitan Hilarion, Chairman of the Department for External Church Relations and was received by Patriarch Kirill at his residence.

Patriarch Kirill praised the Anglican Church in North America:

“Your church went through a very difficult period of its history, and the faithful took courage and had the ability to respond to a great temptation. There are two models of the behavior of the Church and of Christians. One involves obedience to the secular power and the powerful forces that have an impact on social development. The other model involves the ability to speak the truth and to remain faithful to the Christian message.”

The Anglican delegation was headed by Archbishop Foley Beach, Bishop Ray Sutton, Dean of Ecumenical Affairs, Bishop Kevin Allen, Chair of North American Anglican/Orthodox dialogue, Bishop Keith Ackerman, Dr. Moheb Ghali, and The Rev. Canon Andrew Gross.

They were also joined by Fr. Chad Hatfield, Chancellor of St. Vladimir’s Seminary in New York and a member of the North American Anglican-Orthodox dialogue.

See this issue for further news and commentary on this important ecumenical visit.

Get Gay or go to Jail: A Kentucky County Clerk, Kim Davis, was found in contempt of Court for refusing to issue gay marriage licenses to homosexual couples.

Davis was sentenced to jail but released after 5 days, with the proviso that her office would issue gay marriage licenses. Davis’ lawyers have filed an appeal. In a similar case, an Oregon Judge, Vance Day, is under an ethics investigation for refusing to perform gay marriages. Day is accused of violating 13 counts of the judicial code, and has filed a response citing freedom of religion, association, and speech according to the US and Oregon Constitutions.

The Church of England Gets Another Woman Bishop: Christine Hardman, former Archdeacon of Lewisham and Greenwich, in the Diocese of Southwark, has been appointed as the next Bishop of Newcastle.

According to Church of England statistics, only 5 dioceses in the CofE grew between 2008 and 2012, with the other 38 showing a decline. Average church attendance shrunk by 37,000 persons in the same period.

The Episcopal Church energetically endorses women bishops and has lost over a third of its worshipping attendance, some 200,000 worshippers, since 2003.

Bishop Heather Cook Pleads Guilty: Former Suffragan Bishop of Maryland, Heather Cook, has pleaded guilty

to vehicular manslaughter, drunk driving, texting while driving, and leaving the scene of an accident.

The accident took place 2 days after Christmas, when Cook, who was driving while intoxicated, hit a bicyclist, Thomas Palermo, killing him. Cook fled the scene of the crime and returned 30 minutes later, after being followed by a suspicious cyclist.

Cook, who has a history of drunk driving and narcotics use, was subsequently forced to resign from her position as a bishop and a clergyperson in the Episcopal Church. If found guilty, she faces up to 10 years in prison.

Bishop Ball Pleads Guilty: The former Church of England Bishop of Gloucester, Peter Ball, has pleaded guilty to sexually abusing 18 young men between 1977 and 1992.

Ball admitted in court that he used his position as bishop to “manipulate and prevail upon others for his own sexual gratification.”

Detective Chief Inspector Carwyn Hughes, of the Sussex Police, described Ball’s activity: “It became clear that under the guise of his status as a Bishop, Ball had systematically abused the trust of the victims, many of whom who were aspiring priests, whilst others were simply seeking to explore their spirituality. He abused that trust and used religion, through his ‘Give a Year for Christ’ scheme, as a cloak behind which to carry out his grooming activity, the principal aim of which was to satisfy his sexual interest in and desire for young men.”

Ball resigned from the Diocese of Gloucester in 1993, after being accused of “gross indecency” with a teenager.

The Archbishop of Canterbury Calls a Primate’s Meeting: The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, has invited the Primates of the Anglican Communion to meet in January, 2016.

In a Press Release from Lambeth Palace, Welby urged unity and in the face of cultural differences:

“The difference between our societies and cultures, as well as the speed of cultural change in much of the global north, tempts us to divide as Christians: when the command of scripture, the prayer of Jesus, the tradition of the church and our theological understanding urges unity.”

The Primates of the GAFCON movement, which represents the majority of Anglicans worldwide, stated in reply:

It is on this basis that the GAFCON Primates will prayerfully consider their response to the Archbishop of Canterbury’s letter. They recognize that the crisis in the Communion is not primarily a problem of relationships and cultural context, but of false teaching which continues without repentance or discipline.”

The Anglican Communion has existed in a state of *de facto* schism since the consecration of the world’s first openly gay bishop, Gene Robinson, by the Episcopal Church in 2003.

Whether a meeting of the Primates will further cement division or heal it, remains to be seen.

May They all be One

By Fr. Micchael Heidt

With apologies to the blind, it should be apparent to all Christians that the Faith, and the Church, is under attack.

On the one hand, Muslims are waging genocidal Jihad against Christian communities, especially in the Middle East, and on the other, aggressive secularism is working to erode Christian culture in the West. In this context, Christ's prayer that "they may all be one" (John 17:21) takes on a special immediacy.

It doesn't take any great degree of imagination to suppose that the recent wave of anti-Christian, pro-gay legislation in the U.S. and Europe would have had a very different outcome if it had come against a vibrantly united Church. The same thing is true with the ongoing scandal of abortion, or outlawing prayer in US public schools. Would either enjoy government sponsorship, in Planned Parenthood's case, to the tune of hundreds of millions of dollars, in the face of strong, united, Christian opposition?

By the same token, would the apparent inability of the West to defend Christians in Syria and Iraq be possible if governments were held to account by a powerful, united Church? Possible, yes, but much harder. In brief, the old adage holds true, united we stand, divided we fall, to say nothing of the Gospel imperative for unity.

Archbishop Foley Beach's recent visit to Moscow this August, with a delegation of conservative Anglican leaders, took place against this backdrop.

Invited by Patriarch Kirill, the head of the Russian Orthodox Church, the Anglican delegation met with Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, and the Patriarch himself, to explore ways in which their respective Churches could move towards the unity for which Christ prayed. They did so with encouraging precedent.

Anglican-Orthodox dialogue goes back to the early 1600s and gathered momentum in the second half of the 19th century, leading to what Metropolitan Bishop Kallistos Ware has described as "firm bonds" of "solidarity."

"As a result of pioneer work by An-



Patriarch Kirill with Archbishop Foley Beach

glicans such as William Palmer (1811-1879), J. M. Neale (1818-1868), and W. J. Birkbeck (1859-1916)," writes Ware, "firm bonds of Anglo-Orthodox solidarity were established by the end of the nineteenth century." (*The Orthodox Church*, Timothy Ware, Penguin, c. 1993, p. 318).

This solidarity continued into the 20th century, with increasingly formal efforts to explore union between Anglicanism and Orthodoxy. These culminated in the setting up of the Anglican-Orthodox Joint Doctrinal Discussions (AOJDD) Commission in 1966, subsequently renamed as the International Commission for Anglican-Orthodox Theological Dialogue (ICAOTD) in 1990. The work of the ICAOTD has been fruitful, resulting in a series of joint statements: The Moscow Agreed Statement, 1976; the Dublin Agreed Statement, 1984, and the Cyprus Agreed Statement, in 2006.

These reflect a significant level of agreement on key points of doctrine and ecclesial identity, such as: Knowledge of God in its trinitarian and ecclesial context; Inspiration and Authority of Holy Scripture; Scripture and Tradition; Authority of the Ecumenical Councils; the Filioque clause in the Nicene Creed; the Church as Eucharistic Community, and the Invocation of

the Holy Spirit in the Eucharist.

However, substantial as the statements are, progress towards unity was dealt a serious blow with the ordination of women in the 1970s, and later on, by the consecration of homosexuals and the celebration of same-sex marriages in parts of the Anglican Communion. For Archbishop Athenagoras, Orthodox co-chairman of the AOJDD in 1978, the ordination of women alone changed the nature and outcome of the ecumenical dialogue. This was no longer aimed at corporate reunion but as an "informative exercise":

"... the theological dialogue will continue, although now simply as an academic and informative exercise, and no longer as an ecclesial endeavour aiming at the union of the two churches."

Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, speaking some 30 years later at the Nicean Club, in 2010, was more direct:

"I can say with certainty that the introduction of the female episcopate excludes even a theoretical possibility for the Orthodox to recognize the apostolic continuity of the Anglican hierarchy."

Hilarion went on to condemn homosexual advocacy in the Anglican Communion, "Some Protestant and Anglican churches have repudiated basic

Christian moral values by giving a public blessing to same-sex unions and ordaining homosexuals as priests and bishops." The impact of this on Anglican-Orthodox relations was as clear as it was disastrous:

"Our Church must sever its relations with those churches and communities that trample on the principles of Christian ethics and traditional morals. Here we uphold a firm stand based on Holy Scripture."

Strong words, and they imply something very like a death knell to meaningful ecumenical dialogue with a Communion that allows the ordination and consecration of women, and appears unable or unwilling to discipline those provinces which actively promote homosexuality within and without the church.

This brings us back to Archbishop Foley Beach's invitation to visit Moscow this summer. The Anglican Church of North America, which Beach leads and represents, stands for Christian ethics and morals, and as with Orthodoxy, takes its stand on Holy Scripture as opposed to the spirit of the age and its secular power. Patriarch Kirill recognized this in his audience with the Anglican delegation, stating:

"Your church went through a very difficult period of its history, and the faithful took courage and had the ability to respond to a great temptation. There are two models of

the behavior of the Church and of Christians. One involves obedience to the secular power and the powerful forces that have an impact on social development. The other model involves the ability to speak the truth and to remain faithful to the Christian message."

There can be no doubt that the Anglican Church in North America wants to be loyal to the latter model. Will this loyalty extend to an embrace of the catholic principles outlined in the Agreed Statements of the last 40 years? More than that, will it result in the cessation of the ordination of women, without which sacramental unity with Orthodoxy is impossible.

Christ's high priestly prayer in John 17, and the increasingly virulent assault on Christianity, argue that a successful resolution to the above questions is a matter of urgency. By the grace of God, the Anglican-Orthodox dialogue will continue until unity is achieved.

May they all be one. 

Fr. Michael Heidt is Editor of Forward in Christ and a priest in the Diocese of Fort Worth.

Anglicanism and Orthodoxy in the age of the "The New Ecumenism"

By The Very Rev. Dr. Chad Hatfield

I have often spoken of a hundred year cycle that can be explored in Anglican-Orthodox relations since the time of the Elizabethan Settlement. Richard Hooker, the great theological advisor to Elizabeth I, needed to make the case that one can be a Catholic Christian apart from the See of Rome. He found his source in correspondence with the Russian Orthodox Church. This is an area ripe for mining in our own day and Russians are taking this up. In fact, the young deacon who helped with hosting the recent Anglican Church in North America delegation to Moscow is doing his doctoral work on this very topic.

The next cycle in the 1600s was, that of, the non-Jurors including such notables as Jeremy Taylor and Lancelot Andrewes, the later being highly praised by Nicholas V. Lossky a noted Orthodoxy theologian, and lesser known figures such as Thomas Deacon. It was Deacon who argued for infant communion to be restored to Anglicanism following the pattern of Christian Initiation as preserved in Orthodoxy.

Records show that he, in fact, communed his own son at the time of his baptism.

The connection between the non-Jurors and Eastern Orthodox Christianity is also a place where more serious study awaits.¹

In the 1700's in the Church of England the efforts to revive the State Church through a series of "methods", which would eventually create the Methodist churches, has a link to Orthodoxy. The Wesley brothers and others had exchanges with Orthodox Christians. The Methodist doctrine of "Sanctification" is closely aligned with the Orthodox understanding of "Theosis" or "Deification".²

The 1800's brings the Oxford Movement, beginning with the Assize Sermon preached by John Keble from the pulpit of St. Mary's Church in Oxford.

What is clear is that the assumed foundation of this movement was towards Rome. This is surely due the West's fascination with John Henry Newman. What is often forgotten is the

inspiration and interest of both John Keble and E.B. Pusey. Their desire was a return to the undivided Church of the first Millennium. These scholars were deeply immersed in the writing of the Early Church Fathers. Much of this is lost in the rise of ritualism within Anglicanism but this Patristic Foundation is, for the Orthodox, a place where true dialogue can be found.

In the last century there were what can be called the "golden moments" in Anglican-Orthodox relations. These include the formation of the Fellowship of Ss. Alban & Sergius; the bond of friendship between Bishop Grafton of Fond du Lac and St. Patriarch Tikhon of Moscow, sometime Archbishop of North America, and the positive evaluation of Anglican Holy Orders by some Orthodox Patriarchates.³

It is at this juncture that I want to make note of two things. The first is the intercommunion scheme proposed by John Douglas in 1923 and the Lambeth Conference of 1930. Douglas had great hopes that the Lambeth Confer-



The Fond du Lac Circus

ence would provide the path forward. As noted by author Bryn Geffert, the talks started where they have largely remained in our own day. He writes:

The Orthodox arrived (1930 Lambeth Conference) well-prepared with a list of pointed questions. Their opening query revealed nagging doubts about earlier attempts by the Church of England to describe Anglican theology in terms thought palatable to the Orthodox. Did the "Terms of Intercommunion" drawn up by the Eastern Churches Committee in the early 1920s, asked the Orthodox, express the mind of the Anglican Church? If not, "where and in what do they diverge from the mind?" The Anglican bishops responded (presumably with straight faces), that "The Terms" – while never officially communicated to the different provinces of the Anglican communion – nevertheless "represented the mind and doctrine of the Anglican Church."⁴

Here is the problem – which Anglicans are the Orthodox engaging? Douglas, in his time agreed that: "if all Anglicans were Anglo-Catholics agreement would be easy."⁵

Anglican comprehensiveness was always a problem in the dialogues and this would prove to be the source for the eventual collapse of any hopes for intercommunion. Beginning with the movements for abandonment of catholic priesthood with the ordination of women and the "adjustments" to catholic moral teaching, the goals were changed to acknowledge that any sort

of mutual recognition was now impossible from an Orthodox perspective.

We are now in yet another hundred-year cycle. Within the Anglican Communion, through the Global Anglican Future Conference (GAFCON) and other conservative provinces, there is a definite re-alignment. The Anglican Church in North America (ACNA) was called out by GAFCON to create a new province reflecting Anglican orthodoxy. Metropolitan Jonah of the Orthodox Church in America spoke boldly at the formational meeting of this new Anglican Province. Shortly afterwards a new dialogue was formed between the Orthodox Church in America (OCA) and ACNA. Once again, there was hope for picking up the historical work. The Holy Synod of the OCA has blessed this endeavor, along with the College of Bishops of the ACNA.

At Nashotah House in 2013, the members of this dialogue were challenged by Metropolitan Hilarion (Alfeyev), of the Department of External Relations for the Moscow Patriarchate, to focus much of our work on the vexing social issues of our day here in North America. Through his office, an invitation was given to send a delegation of ACNA bishops to meet with Patriarch Kirill of Moscow in August 2015. His Holiness commended this work and once again stated that the local effort in North America is paired correctly between the autocephalous OCA and the ACNA. It was further noted that our

culture is the same and our challenges and opportunities are the same.

So how do we prevent another fruitless effort? The Orthodox are all waiting for the Great and Holy Council of 2016 for global guidance on ecumenical matters. Will the ACNA be able to articulate to her own members, and the members of the GAFCON provinces, the importance of this "new ecumenism" in our day? Where does it rank in importance for both ecclesial bodies?

Once again, I want to quote from the book *Eastern Orthodox and Anglicans*, by Geffert:

One might still legitimately ask – if only theoretically – whether a unified Orthodox Church could ever reach agreement on fundamental theological issues with a unified Anglican Church. The odds seem remote at best. What is abundantly clear, however, is this: so long as neither confession can get its own house in order, any dream of interconfessional unity stands no chance at all.⁶

FC

Endnotes:

1. See for further reading Miller, E.C. Jr., *Toward a Fuller Vision: Orthodoxy and the Anglican Experience* (Wilton, CT: Morehouse Barlow, 1984).
2. See for further reading Kimbrough, S.T., Jr., ed., *Orthodox and Wesleyan Ecclesiology* (Crestwood, NY: SVS Press, 2007).
3. Hatfield, Chad Richard, "Nashotah House, Bishop Grafton and St. Tikhon of Moscow" (Sesquicentennial Academic Convocation, Nashotah, WI, May 1992).
4. Geffert, Bryn, *Eastern Orthodox and Anglicans: Diplomacy, Theology, and the Politics of Interwar Ecumenism* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2010):187-188.
5. Ibid, 185.
6. Ibid, 272

The Very Rev. Dr. Chad Hatfield is Chancellor/CEO of St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary, Yonkers, New York.

An Interview With Bishop Ray Sutton

Forward in Christ interviews ACNA's Dean of Ecumenical Affairs

FC: What is your role and vision as the Anglican Church in North America's (ACNA) Dean for Ecumenical Affairs?

As Dean of Ecumenical Affairs, I chair the Ecumenical Relations Task Force. We have been so extraordinarily blessed with jurisdictions and other various Christian groups (i.e. Messianic Jews etc.), who want to be in dialogue with ACNA. Our task force has twelve different sub-committees reflecting various levels of dialogue, conversation, and developing relationships.

My vision for Ecumenical Affairs is first and foremost what Jesus prayed in Gethsemane, "That they may all be one . . . that the world may believe" (John 17:21). In many ways the vision of seeing God's people live into their oneness – for there is a sense in which we are already one – means we are striving to resume and continue historic dialogues that the Anglican Communion and the Episcopal Church had before liberalism took over the ecumenical agenda. When the historic faith is not the basis for bringing God's people together, social and political objectives replace the Gospel. Decades and centuries ago, orthodox Anglicans as a *via media* church in some sense worked to bring together Christians. These churches, although differing on some points of theology, agreed in the main on the authority of Scripture, the Gospel and the ancient Catholic creeds. Liberalism, redefined from its historic meaning of generosity, to heterodox belief and practice, to radical departure from the faith has actually undermined every single historic ecumenical relationship. ACNA, as the only orthodox Anglican jurisdiction in North America that has been received in the Global South of the Anglican Communion, is also the only Anglican province in a position to pick up where the liberal Episcopal jurisdictions have failed.

Not only is my vision to restore the historic dialogues, however, it is also about a new kind of ecumenism that is centered on the Gospel and historic



Bishop Ray Sutton, third from left, in Moscow

faith and practice. Most of the time many who quote Jesus' great statement in His prayer calling for unity, "That they may be one," often stop there. The Lord though didn't end his sentence on this point. He continues with the purpose for unity, "That the world may believe." In other words, the purpose for unity is mission and evangel.

Looking at it another way, when the church is united in a pure sense around Jesus Christ, the Gospel, and the Catholic Faith, the world believes. The proof of this is in how far the Gospel was spread around the world in the first millennium before the great division between East and West in A.D. 1054. My ecumenical vision, therefore, is not only to restore the true historic ecumenical work done by the Anglicanism, but also to unite the orthodox of all branches of Christ's Church in the spread of the Gospel.

FC: How did the recent ecumenical visit to Moscow come about, what was its purpose?

It came about through renewed ecumenical dialogue between the Orthodox and Anglicans in North America and goes back to the formation of ACNA in Bedford, Texas, in 2009. Metropolitan Jonah of the Orthodox

Church in America (OCA) responded positively to our invitation to attend the event. We invited him because of an important letter from Metropolitan Kirill of Moscow that had been sent to Bishop Robert Duncan and other faithful Episcopal Bishops in 2003, at an historic meeting in Plano, Texas.

In this letter, Kirill expressed his support of the courageous stand being taken by the Episcopal Bishops and others who were joining them. Subsequently, Metropolitan Kirill became Patriarch of the Russian Orthodox Church and Bishop Duncan was elected our first Archbishop.

Significantly, the Orthodox Church in America whom Metropolitan Jonah represented at our first ACNA organizing Provincial Assembly, has an important connection to the Russian Orthodox Church. The history of the OCA extends back to the missionary activities of the Russian Orthodox Church in the latter 1800s through a famous Missionary Bishop, Tikhon, who later became Patriarch of the Russian Orthodox Church and who was martyred in the Bolshevik Revolution. He was declared a Saint for his faithful witness to Christ. Important for us as Anglicans, when St. Tikhon served as a Missionary Bishop in this country he met many Episcopal Bishops, in

particular Bishop Charles Grafton, of the Diocese of Fond du Lac. These bishops, Russian and Episcopalian, had many meetings at Nashotah House. Bishop Tikhon was so impressed with the theological education at Nashotah House that he sent his postulants for seminary training there. Bishop Grafton even made an historic trip to Moscow, where he met the Patriarch and began the first official Episcopalian-Orthodox ecumenical dialogue. As a result, a wonderful icon of St. Tikhon is on the wall of the chapel at Nashotah House to this day.

Unfortunately, World War I and the Bolshevik Revolution ended the dialogue. It was only in the 1960s and '70s through the efforts of the Archbishop Michael Ramsey and the Orthodox leaders of that time, that the dialogue between Orthodoxy and Anglicanism was renewed. Sadly though, Western Anglicanism was rapidly moving away from the type of Church with which St. Tikhon had wanted to have unity.

Therefore, when ACNA came into existence, the Orthodox Church in America saw the opportunity to begin to make our way back to the blessed fellowship that had been known between our churches in the early 1900s. Metropolitan Jonah of the OCA was actually agreeing to continue the historic dialogue that his church had had with The Episcopal Church (TEC), with ACNA. By the early 2000s, all ecumenical dialogue with TEC had come to an end because of the consecration of a practicing homosexual to the episcopate.

The Orthodox never wanted the dialogue with TEC to come to an end, and they certainly did not approve of ordaining practicing homosexuals. Consequently, the OCA found the dialogue with ACNA as a way to remain faithful to their Orthodox convictions and still continue historic ecumenical dialogue with Anglicans. As part of this renewed effort, a concordat was formed between Nashotah House and St. Vladimir's Orthodox Seminary. Fr. Chad Hatfield, Chancellor at St. Vladimir's, has chaired the OCA dialogue with ACNA, which is led on our side by Bishop Kevin Allen.

Two years ago, Metropolitan Hilarion Alfaeyev from Moscow, was awarded an Honorary Doctorate

from Nashotah House. As Chairman of the External Relations Department for the Russian Orthodox Church, he expressed his support of our dialogue on behalf of his Patriarch Kirill, in a meeting with the ACNA ecumenical team.

A year later, when he was at St. Vladimir's Seminary receiving another honorary doctorate, I introduced him to our new Archbishop Foley Beach. Metropolitan Hilarion indicated at that time that we would be invited to meet the Patriarch and discuss further the potential for expanding our dialogue. Last spring we received an official invitation to visit and meet the Patriarch, on August 25 of this year.

If one follows this amazing history and background, in some sense history has repeated itself. A Russian Orthodox Bishop in the person of Tikhon became Patriarch and encouraged an ecumenical dialogue. Now once again, a Russian Orthodox Bishop, Kirill, has become Patriarch, who had contact with an Episcopal Bishop, Robert Duncan. Both of these men have done similarly to their predecessors. They initiated conversation, that has led to dialogue, and now historic contact between our Archbishop and the Patriarch. Only God, I believe, could bring about such significant events.

FC: Can you describe the tenor of the meeting?

The tenor of the meeting was extremely friendly and gracious on

the part of the Russian Orthodox Church. We are grateful for and were humbled by their hospitality, and the honors accorded to us as an Anglican Archbishop and Bishops. We were accommodated at the Danielovskaya Hotel on the site of the historic Danielov Monastery. We were allowed to participate in a pilgrimage to many ancient holy places, the most famous being the church in which the relics of St. Tikhon are reposed for witness and veneration.

In the house on that same campus where St. Tikhon was kept under house arrest by the Bolshheviks, we were moved to find a picture of an historic meeting among Episcopal Bishops, St. Tikhon and other Russian Orthodox Priests, at Nashotah House. We all came away with a sense of spiritual renewal from the Lord's presence in that place. Then the meeting with Patriarch Kirill was a momentous occasion for us. This godly Patriarch received us with encouragement and official recognition of our international dialogue. He was so kind and gracious to us, and we give thanks to the Lord for his and the Russian Orthodox Church's faithful witness through so much persecution and hardship.

FC: You have described the current state of ecumenical dialogue with the Russian orthodox Church very positively. However, ACNA is perceived as Protestant and it allows the ordination of women, Orthodoxy is against both. Is this a stumbling





block to ecumenical discussion? If so, how can that be overcome?

Yes we also have differences to address. As for the “perceived Protestantism,” I would mention a couple of points. One, although the Russian Orthodox have their areas of disagreement with Protestants, I believe it’s too strong to characterize their stance as “against Protestants.” Metropolitan Hilarion, for example, visited Billy Graham when he was recently in America. He has stated that he has a great deal of respect for the evangelist. He believes that his crusades in Russia several years ago led many to Jesus Christ, which helped his church. No doubt Hilarion is catholic, as an Orthodox Christian, but he often speaks evangelically of the Gospel and the need to spread it.

Two, regarding ACNA, it clearly has a strong Protestant persona. At the same time, we should keep ACNA’s Theological Statement in mind, and also what is happening among Anglican evangelicals in this country. ACNA’s Theological Statement incorporates catholic commitments in ways that a number of previous Anglican statements do not. For example, there is explicit acknowledgement of all seven ecumenical councils, (a key point with the Orthodox) albeit in their Christology. I realize that this may not be as far as many Anglo-Catholics would have liked the statement to go, but it is beyond what many evangelicals preferred.

We should also realize that evangelicalism today in America is not for the most part as anti-catholic as it was a century ago. Many evangelical churches are Eucharistically centered. and Millennial evangelicals love things ancient, liturgical and sacramental. They are embracing in surprising numbers John Paul II’s *Theology of the Body*, which is walking them right into the arms of Incarnational theology.

Then I’d say that those on the catholic side should never forget that Anglo-Catholicism has been fed historically by evangelicals finding their way into ancient faith, liturgy and sacrament. Among the ranks of Evangelicals who take the Bible seriously, there are always some who ironically spawn catholic movements!

Regarding the ordination of women, Orthodoxy for the most part is clearly opposed. There is no question that if GAFCON or ACNA ever allowed the ordination of a woman to the episcopate, it would be the end of any real ecumenical work. Meetings may continue but they would only be for social and benevolent purposes.

As for the ordination of women to the priesthood, the practice is a major challenge to any hope of unity (not the same as amalgamation) between our churches, per the original intent of the dialogues between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Episcopal Church in the early 1900s. Regarding the diaconate, it would remain to be seen. Many Orthodox are not opposed to women in the diaconate. There is

a debate as to whether this practice existed in their church at one time.

FC: Patriarch Kirill praised ACNA for its refusal to be shaped by secular culture and opinion. How can ACNA and Orthodoxy work together, in practical terms, against the threat of secularism?

Your question touches a point of immediate concern and conversation. Even though there are significant areas of difference between our churches, we both realize that more than ever, perhaps since the fall of the Roman Empire, Christians in the West need to stand together. The fact of renewed dialogue speaks to this. Also, we are working together on the area of moral theology and developing an outline for a jointly written book on the history of Anglican-Orthodox dialogue. Then there is the possibility of joint statements on cultural matters such as the Biblical and historical view of marriage.

FC: What do you think Anglicanism has to learn from Orthodoxy, and what does orthodox Anglicanism have to offer the great Churches of the East?

I think this is a very good question, and the kind of question that Christians need to be asking of each other. As you know, I believe that no one church is completely whole without the rest of the Body of Christ. We need each other like marriage partners do for one another. This means each has and brings certain charisms to the other. This is especially true for Anglicans and Orthodox.

I think we have much to learn from the Orthodox. They have done a better job than we have at maintaining their Great Tradition of worship in the midst of antagonistic cultures. They don’t change their liturgy because of cultural or secular pressure. In the West we have been seduced into compromising our Great Tradition of worship, and Biblical faith and practice as well, in the name of appealing to the culture.

While I agree with St. Paul that we should in some sense become all things to all that we might win some, I don’t believe that the Divine Liturgy of heaven is totally negotiable. I

believe many evangelicals in liturgical traditions are realizing that they have given up too much. As I've already mentioned, there are signs that a number are attempting to regain the Great Tradition of liturgy that Anglicanism, at its best, has inherited.

I'd also say that we have discovered there is much to be learned from the Russian Orthodox in the area of church planting. They have been growing at the rate of a thousand new parishes a year for twenty-seven years. There are so many people thronging churches in Moscow alone that they plan on two hundred more churches in the next five years in that city alone. We can surely learn some things from them, since we too are committed to the church-planting approach to evangelism.

Then there is the visual, iconic aspect to Orthodoxy from which we can benefit. In the triad of truth, beauty and goodness, beauty is an invaluable component. The Orthodox emphasis on light, the visual, and beauty, complements well the Western emphasis on truth and goodness. It's been said that the saints in the West bleed and in the East they glow. Both blood and light are central Biblical teachings. We need their light!

On the other hand, I believe the

Orthodox can benefit from us as well. I remember a question and answer session at St. Vladimir's Seminary a few years ago, in which I participated on a panel with Bishop Kallistos Ware. He mentioned that he thought an area where Orthodox could learn from Anglicans is in the matter of private conscience.

I also think that just as we can learn from them about church planting so they can learn from us. Ironically, their culture is much more open to the church. At the same time they have begun to encounter the kind of materialistic and cultural secularism we've faced for many decades. Yet, we are planting new missions parishes as well. Surely we could learn from each other in this area where we both are so committed and doing well.

There is also the area of hymnody and congregational singing. Our tradition has produced great hymns of the faith. Our congregations are also used to singing. Eastern liturgies are full of music but mostly sung by the choir; their music is beautiful and glorious. Nevertheless, the congregation may sing the liturgy but when it comes to other hymns of the faith their participation is not like ours. We have so much to offer here.

Then I believe we possess a great tradition of preaching and teaching the Holy Scriptures. I was pleased to see in Moscow that there are Bible studies going on in some of the churches. Our Western tradition, particularly in the Anglican Way, of having emphasized the Word so strongly, results in a powerful preaching and teaching history. We believe in the importance and place of the sermon. Our homilies at their best are Biblical, Christological, and pastoral. This is a great aspect of the Western Church in the Anglican and Protestant traditions.

Therefore, we both have great traditions that I believe can benefit from each other. I pray that in our growing relationship we will see mutual benefit to both our churches.

FC: Bishop Sutton, thank you and may God bless your work as Dean for Ecumenical Affairs.

FC

Bishop Ray Sutton is Bishop Coadjutor in the Diocese of Mid-America of the Reformed Episcopal Church and Dean of Ecumenical Affairs for ACNA.

The Unity of Christians Resides in Prayer

From an address on unity by Pope Benedict XVI, November 18, 2010.

The unity of Christians is and remains prayer, it resides in prayer. On the other hand, another operative movement, which arises from the firm awareness that we do not know the hour of the realization of the unity among all the disciples of Christ and we cannot know it, because unity is not "made by us," God "makes" it: it comes from above, from the unity of the Father with the Son in the dialogue of love which is the Holy Spirit; it is a taking part in the divine unity.

And this should not make our commitment diminish, rather, it should make us ever more attentive to receive the signs of the times of the Lord, knowing how to recognize with gratitude that which already unites us and working to consolidate it and make it grow.

In the end, also in the ecumenical path, it is about leaving to God what is only his and of exploring, with seriousness, constancy and dedication, what is our task, being aware that to our commitment belongs the binomial of acting and suffering, of activity and patience, of effort and joy.

We confidently invoke the Holy Spirit, so that he will guide our way and that each one will feel with renewed vigor the appeal to work for the ecumenical cause.

From Russia With Love

By Bishop Keith Ackerman

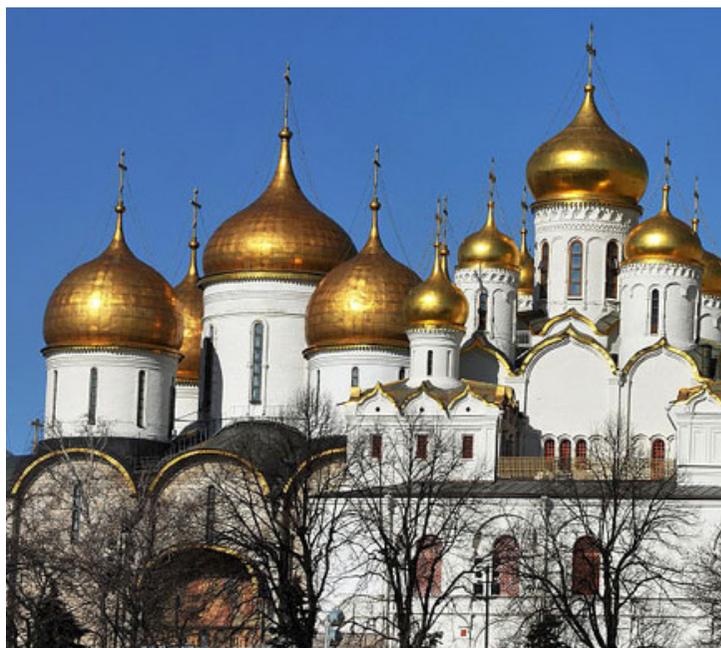
On arriving at Moscow airport, three Italian men asked for a blessing since they were in Russia for a professional wrestling match. One of the three was the coach. After the blessing and about 7 pictures, we waved goodbye and an hour later I was at the church-owned hotel. The revival of Christianity in this country is amazing, and the enforced atheism of the Soviet Union days has produced religious fervor. Christians here are not just a group of stada babas with babushkas, they are young families, including many men. When I hear all of the excuses which American Christians have about why don't go to church, and what their "bad experiences" were, I wish they could spend a few days in Russia!

The next day, I went to one of the churches on the grounds of the hotel and attended two hours of Matins and Divine Liturgy, followed by a funeral; all very beautiful and quite overwhelming. The various priests went out of their way both during and after the Liturgy to engage me, and they were most cordial. The other amazing thing is to see how young, by and large, the priests and bishops are in Russia. God raises up much out of conflict. In the end, I discover that the simple faith of simple people impresses me more than the pseudo-intellectual musings of the post-modern age in which we find ourselves today in the Western world.

Then we went to meet at the Monastery of St. Tikhon - a man worth reading - and a graduate of Nashotah House. St. Tikhon was the Bishop of Alaska and then Bishop of America, and since the Eastern Orthodox Church did not have a Seminary, he designated Nashotah House, where he was awarded an Honorary Doctorate, as the official Seminary for the Eastern Orthodox until they officially founded their own - St. Vladimir's north of NYC. An icon and a stained glass window honor him in the House's Chapel of St. Mary the Virgin. Bishop Tikhon eventually returned to Russia and was elected as Patriarch of all of Russia.

As you may know, Eastern Orthodoxy is the second largest Communion in the world, with the Roman Catholic Church being the largest and the Anglican Communion being the third. As I understand it, most of what is today called the United Kingdom would have been theologically much more like the Eastern Orthodox Church, but due to its proximity to Europe looked more like the Roman Catholic Church. That's why some say that Anglicanism is, at its best, "Eastern Orthodox dressed like Roman Catholics." Perhaps this come from early missionary endeavors in Russia, the United Kingdom and Scandinavia, which reflected the overall ethos of the Byzantine world.

During the Bolshevik revolution, many, many Russians were executed, as you know, but due to his popularity, Patriarch Tikhon was put under house arrest, and not allowed to be among his people. He was even once drugged by a dentist and told to publicly renounce Jesus, as a condition for his release. Obviously he did not. The Soviet Union continued to dishonor holy people and even exhumed their bodies, grinding them up or burning them. I saw the debris



where people sift through destroyed tombs and caskets.

However, Patriarch Tikhon's body was hid in a small casket, and was protected during Soviet rule. This casket, and now the newer one in which his remains are placed, were made available to us. We are one of the very few groups of non-Orthodox bishops who have had the privilege of entering several of these holy places. In all, we went to three churches associated intimately with St. Tikhon. The famous picture that I have, entitled "The Fond du Lac Circus," is on display in St. Tikhon's sitting room - a picture taken at St. Paul's Cathedral in Fond du Lac Wisconsin.

The tradition in the Orthodox Church is to have a Vigil on Saturday night. In some ways it is like Evensong, but much fuller. In fact, at the Monastery chapel where I went for the Vigil there were about 500 people present, women wearing babushkas and men standing in great piety. I looked into the eyes of a very old woman, and thought about the fact that when Christianity was forced to go underground during the Soviet era, she might well have never expected to be in a church again.

Only a few churches were allowed to exist by the Communists, and most were destroyed, desecrated, or transformed into museums; now people run up to priests asking for blessings. I have blessed more people in Moscow than I can possibly imagine. They ask for nothing other than a blessing.

Towards the end of the Vigil the celebrant takes the Ikon Cross and also a bucket like an aspersorium that has Holy Oil in it, and with a small paint brush "paints" the sign of the cross on each person's forehead. The people receive the anointing, then kiss the priest's hand. When it was my turn, the priest handed the brush to me and withdrew his hand, Bishops anoint themselves and do not kiss the priest's hand. It is clear that my cassock is not an Orthodox one, and it is

clear that Orthodox Bishops do not wear zucchetos, yet this Orthodox priest was not interested in the fact that I am not Eastern Orthodox. This was a clear symbol of what our trip was about.

Since the Episcopal Church in particular and Anglicanism is general, have broken so many agreements with the Orthodox by virtue of changing Doctrine and the Sacraments (Holy Orders and Holy Matrimony), it is obvious that this small delegation of four bishops represents the last hope for ecumenical relationships between Anglicans and Eastern Orthodoxy. At the end of the Vigil Liturgy a young man whom I had seen earlier came to me and handed me an apple. A real gift of love, and symbolic. The Soviets had failed to eradicate the Godly inspired mandate to share, by imposing a "sharing" ideology instead of a theology.

On Sunday, we had a modest breakfast in the hotel and were taken by a van to the Cathedral of Our Lady of Consolation, where Metropolitan Hilarion was the celebrant and preacher. He is a very young man, 49 years old, and was a musical prodigy, a soldier, and a scholar before ordination. As Metropolitan, he is the second most important bishop in the Russian Orthodox Church. He is very consistent in demeanor, and he is sober in his affect. Due to the phenomenal role he has played in the Church and in the world, I nominated him 5 years ago for an Honorary Doctorate at Nashotah House, and then we had him lecture on the religious elements of Bach's compositions. It may well have been one of the best lectures I have heard. He is fully fluent in 5 languages, and has an earned Doctorate from Oxford University.

The Divine Liturgy had about 1000 people crowded together standing for about 2 1/2 hours. It was, as the Orthodox understand Liturgy to be, a true foretaste of Heaven, with splendid singing. At the end of the Liturgy, the Metropolitan introduced the four bishops and the three wives. He spoke extensively about his admiration for Nashotah House and his respect and admiration for Anglicans who had not succumbed to the pressures of secularism. He pointed out that compromise did not win the day for the Orthodox in Russia, and that standing firm on the Revealed Truth always, in the end, results in victory, whereas compromising and bowing to the pressures of the culture results eventually in defeat.

After the Liturgy we were invited to lunch with the Metropolitan, then went to the Kremlin by van (all provided by the Russian Orthodox Church) and walked through Red Square before arriving at the Kremlin compound. This is a huge place, where Tsars were crowned, bishops consecrated, and life writ large was lived, not least the Communist revolution.

Communism, from my perspective, is idealistic. It is by and large not unlike the Labor Unions; at one time workers needed to be protected by the Unions and then later they needed to be protected from the Unions, who took on the self-serving corruption of the old "Management."

Ideological paradigms tend to ignore the theological reality of the human condition - sin - and its ability to infect all institutions. Were Lenin and Stalin misguided in their intentions or in their implementations? Did they eradicate poverty? Did they restore self-esteem? Did they provide hope? The very same charges they made against the ruling class and royalty became the cry of the next generation



directed at them. History is rather clear: at some point the persecuted become the persecutors.

The Bolsheviks and Soviets did not destroy all of the churches. They first assassinated, humiliated, and sought to replace the existing leaders with those who would compromise. Somehow, even in the midst of social turmoil, there are those naive enough to believe that all conflict and all turmoil can be mediated through the Hegelian dialectic. This point of view presupposes that all truth is evolutionary, and that there is not absolutism to verity. In effect this approach reduces truth to an emotion whereby what I feel is what is true. I have occasionally referred to that as the "Debby Boone principle": "It can't be wrong if it feels so right, and you light up my life." In all of this, Jesus is reduced to "one of the ways" instead of being the way, the truth, and the life." If I feel it, then it must be right.

Sadly, feelings change. Fortunately, truth does not. The Soviets sought to exert their power by suppressing religious expression. What they unwittingly did was produce a new generation of people who understood that the State had become God. "Judgement is mine saith the State." True - the State had become iconoclastic, but it could only desecrate the externals. The Divine gift of the human soul gives people not only a desire to have a better life in this world, but a resolve to have a better place in the next world. Jesus' triumph over death became the answer to countless Russians who needed answers to question which the State God could not answer. There in front of them were their uninhabited churches beckoning to them, as the Holy Spirit breathed new life into a nation of people who had tasted defeat at the hands of both crowned royalty and uncrowned "royalty."

In the end, even the prelates who acquiesced to the State for the sake of a small piece of the pie were left hungry. Those who marry the zeitgeist will be widows in the next age. Russian Christians have reemerged, having been nursed to health and to faith by previous generations of believers who wondered if they would live to be able receive the Blessed Sacrament. What a shame it is to hear American excuses for not attending church: entertainment, fatigue, a bad cough, etc. The people of Russia shed blood for Jesus, for

the privilege to worship Him, and their blood has become the seed of new growth. Their tears have been the water.

The Kremlin is now a memorial to the Soviets and a living testimony to the Christian Faith. The churches are once again used for worship, and the museums are the failed high rises designed to portray the USSR as benevolent, and the Church as oppressive. The high rises are now empty and abandoned and the churches are full and vibrant with a 2000 year old Faith that is not outdated, because it conveys a 2000 year old, perennial truth.

After the Kremlin we ate at the Mall. At a TGIFriday's. I will withhold my opinion. The next day was a pilgrimage day to see the shrine of another saint - St. Sergius.

The ride to the shrine was about 1 3/4 hours each way. It took us out into beautifully pastoral countryside, including many churches whose domes protruded into the clouds. These churches are not memorials, but rather, once again, living demonstrations of a fervent faith that stubbornly opposed the Communist regime. The entire facility of St. Sergius is breath-taking. Being a great distance away from Moscow, people literally come as pilgrims, drinking of the healing waters, praying for their own healings and the healings of others.

Not surprisingly pilgrims from around the world come to pray, and various languages are heard. One group approached me for a blessing speaking only Spanish but representing four Spanish speaking nations. Numerous Asians snapped pictures like paparazzi, but also asked for blessings. People who have a heart for a blessing and a heart for healing are often healed. Others become a symbol of suffering with Jesus as He and they walk the Way of the Cross. We spent hours praying in churches and taking in the abundance of the presence of Christ.

While many of the ikons are necessarily new, due to the neglect of the Soviets, the buildings, though restored, have weathered many storms, both natural and civil. One of the most remarkable crosses on many of the churches is the Byzantine style cross with the Muslim crescent at the bottom symbolizing the victory of previous generations of Christians who, while attacked by Muhammedists, were able to survive in Faith. I do not believe that this cross would be allowed in the United States, nor were they allowed in Russia during the Soviet era. All of this rebuilding is slightly less than 20 years old. Putin may or may not be a good President, but he is a believer, and even lives near the Patriarch.

The next day we walked to Metropolitan Hilarion's complex, where we were met by members of his staff and led to a large meeting room, where Russian sweets and teas were served by dutiful monks. When the Metropolitan entered we stood, he embraced us, and we sat. He told us that this was an official meeting and that we represented what was best about Anglicanism. I cannot report on what he said nor what we said, at this point, except to say that in terms of Anglican-Orthodox relations, history was made today. He presented us with a CD of his musical compositions, and we presented him with gifts including two cow hides from a former member of St. Timothy's, books from Nashotah House, and items from the International Congress. It was a remarkably positive hour and a half meeting with Russian Orthodoxy's second in command.

At 4 P.M. we were escorted into a large Reception Room



Patriarch Kirill

at the Patriarchal Residence, where we were met by over 20 people from the Russian Press - church and secular - taking our pictures as we waited for the Patriarch to enter. Patriarch Kirill is the grandson and son of a priest. His grandfather was murdered by the Communists and his father was imprisoned. He, himself, as a priest was unable to function freely and like so many priests were "underground" doing secular work and ministering secretly. Now, to see this 69 year old living saint, humbly ministering to the largest Orthodox Nation in the world, is extraordinary. His persona is one of servant humility in the midst of KGB-like guards protecting him and his staff, knowing the mercurial nature of a land that has seen the ebbs and flows of life.

All in all, this may well have been one of the highlights of my ministry - not just having 1 1/2 hours with the second most significant church leader in Russian Orthodoxy, but being a part of living in the middle of the making of church history. The experience leaves me speechless, and I recognize that history will now judge the significance of this trip.

To God be the Glory.



Bishop Keith Ackerman is the retired Bishop of Quincy and FiFNA's Ambassador for Anglican and Ecumenical Affairs.

Thinking Out Loud

William Murchison on Kim Davis and the natural law

Well, we knew where all this was going, didn't we, the law being the law and modern social trends being modern social trends.

The news came on September 3 that a federal judge, explicitly overruling natural law, was jailing for contempt of court a Kentucky county clerk who refused marriage licenses to four same-sex couples. We knew where all this was going because secular law, owing to a 5-4 decision of the U. S. Supreme Court, was made last June to contradict the natural law with which secular law had generally aligned itself.

Natural law, which Cicero defined as "a law... not written, but born with us, which we have not learnt, or received by tradition, or read, but which we have taken and sucked in and imbibed from nature herself" - natural law, I say, made no room for the modern understanding of marriage as pretty much whatever the happy couple might want. As historically understood and taught, natural law provides that marriage means the union of one man and one woman (under stipulations that may vary from culture to culture and religious institution to religious institution).

The natural law persuaded Kim Davis, the county clerk in question, who was in jail as of September 3, that her moral and religious duty compelled her to decline the licensing of marriage to same-sex couples.

Now, as I say, we knew this was coming, what with American democracy's conversion - as registered by polls and the federal courts - to the natural law understanding of marriage. And we knew, frankly, that Kim Davis wasn't going to get away with the assertion that a public official can block the workings of the law as laid down by duly constituted authorities. Free government doesn't work like that. The federal courts were legally bound, by terms of *Obergefell vs. Hodges*, the gay marriage decision, to take offense. And so they have. State overrules church, to put the matter in brutally concise terms.

It's important to put things that

way in order to understand what precisely is entailed by the high court's narrow (if smug) decision to put away the natural law as mediated upon and commended by those who see moral norms as morally binding.

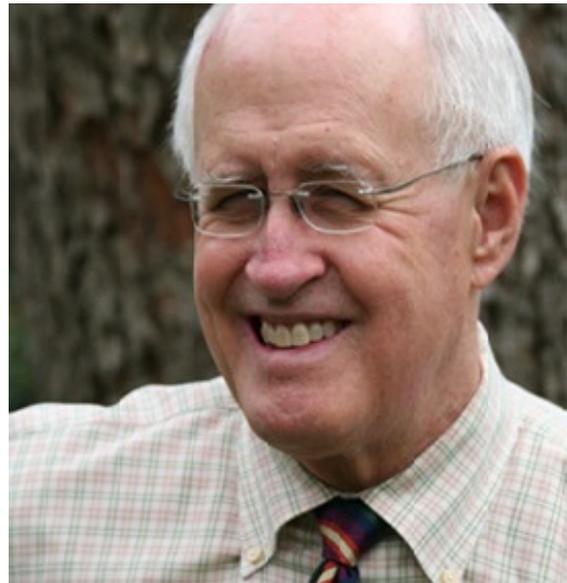
So exuberant were the celebrations of *Obergefell* in late June that few took proper note of the meaning of the thing. Same-sex marriage could thenceforth take place - yes. But just like that? Nothing more to think about? - such as the moral shock attendant on the slow discovery of what it means to overturn the moral law?

One thing it means is that believers in law "not written, but born with us" - Kim Davis being one such - suddenly becomes outcasts, not to mention, when occasion points to it, jailbirds. The idea of jailing a public official for the crime of agreeing with Cicero and St. Paul has its perverse logic. The law's the law, friends and neighbors: the same for Kim Davis as for James Holmes, the Colorado theater gunman-wacko.

Kim Davis. She had to know that in a secular court she doesn't have a leg to stand on. But she stood anyway. Why? On account of the moral obligation she saw as overriding her secular obligations. She'll probably end up losing her job, and the gay couples will get their licenses. But that doesn't end the moral disorder the Supreme Court and the gay marriage movement have brought on our culture and country, dependent as both are upon the assent of citizens to what they know - not just think, not just feel; know, understand, apprehend - to be right and true, as well as verifiable in human experience.

Tampering with the truth has never been a habit worthy of commendation: the less so when the truth (as "sucked in from nature herself") is widely venerated. You get in trouble as a secular authority when you say to a democratic constituency, aw, c'mon, you'll get used to this.

Get used to an untruth? That's the



invitation the culture extends in the case of gay marriage. I hate to share with the culture a piece of unwanted news: as we are wont to say in Texas, that ole dog won't hunt. By pretending it does and will, the culture kindles the spirit of rebellion in the hearts of many sound and law-abiding citizens; it undermines the authority on which obedience and civic peace depend.

Ms. Davis won't be the last victim of the sad, morally bedraggled cause that appears to require her unflinching obedience. All who value the nexus between truth and liberty are destined to lose out, never mind what side of the marriage street they choose to work.

FC

William Murchison is an author and journalist. He lives in Dallas, Texas.

Are we the New Pharisees?

By Fr. Larry Bausch

In Acts 15, at the first recorded Church Council, we read about the controversy over how much of Hebrew law was to be required of Gentile converts. “Some believers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees rose up and said, ‘It is necessary to circumcise them, and to order them to keep the law of Moses.’” (Acts 15:5) In the end, the Council discerned that this was not God’s will, implicitly stating that these were elements of the old law which, as fulfilled in Christ, placed no literal obligation on new converts.

Many of our FiFNA members have friends throughout the Anglican world who believe that our adherence to historic teaching and practice regarding the Sacraments is a contemporary example of the “Pharisee party”, resisting the “fresh wind” of the Holy Spirit leading the Church into “greater Gospel freedom”. Are we, like pre-conversion Paul, so zealous for tradition that we are “kicking against the goads”?

This question is worth pondering, and we need always be on the alert for any tendency towards equating our limited understanding of God with God Himself. Nevertheless, we believe that our position regarding sacramental integrity is not mere traditionalism, but rather faithful adherence to God’s revealed will. Here, we will briefly consider two elements of our fidelity which illustrate this.

First, our position is grounded in gratitude. The Sacraments are Christ’s gifts to the Church. They are means by which He communicates Himself objectively to us, binding us to Himself. Without depending on our subjective condition, He, by His promise, becomes truly present. So, in gratitude, we receive the Sacraments, and indeed the

Church, in humility. God redeems us in Christ and so we do not consider it seemly or faithful to “look a gift horse in the mouth”.

However, if some law-loving Pharisees mistook the words of the Torah for the whole of God’s will, is it possible that we have mistaken some of Christ’s words and actions for the same? In addition to our gratitude, then, we add a comprehensive and in-depth study of the whole of Scripture and its interpretation throughout church history, paying special attention to the early, undivided Church. In so doing, we discern a consistent Biblical anthropology and description of God’s sacramental grace which support our traditional position. This also helps us discern that various proposed changes to sacramental practice are not fulfillments of what Christ has given us, but instead overlook basic elements of Scripture itself.

We traditional Christians are perhaps always at risk for a Pharisaical error, and so need to be in regular communion with the Giver of the gifts. Beyond this, we may seek to make common cause with our brothers and sisters who disagree with our positions in delving more deeply into Scriptures and Church Fathers. Our witness will be more clearly made when we help others to see what we see rather than to merely tell them what we see.

FC

Fr. Lawrence Bausch is President of FiFNA and Rector of Holy Trinity, Ocean Beach, San Diego.

News From Australia

New Prime Minister: The ruling Political Party (a coalition of Liberals/Nationals) elected a new Prime Minister on 14 September, Malcolm Turnbull, a former attorney and investment banker with Goldman Sachs. He replaces Tony Abbott, a strong Roman Catholic known for “stopping the boats” of illegal immigrants, but who sadly struggled to articulate a fair/effective budgetary policy. Many conservative Christians were disappointed since Abbott opposes legislation in favour of same-sex marriages, while Turnbull favours it. However, both have now taken the position that a national plebiscite will decide the matter in the future.

Quiet, Encouraging Growth: FiF International (Australasia) has continued to quietly grow in Australasia, with new individual members and supporters also in S. E. Asia, East/Central Africa and the USA/CAN. Such North American

members can be “dual” – supporting both FiFNA and FiF (Australasia) - and some members are “dual” with FiFUK, too. All Australasian members receive regular copies of



Forward in Christ from Fort Worth and *New Directions* from London, along with news updates, program notices and theological comment.

New FiF (Australasia) President: Phillip Maas was elected to succeed Rev. Barry Prinable as President by unanimous decision of the FiF National Committee (Council). Phillip is a professionally trained Music Teacher who studied at the Sydney Conservatorium. He has taught Music/Christian Doctrine for years at Bethel Christian School, and has a special interest in Ecclesiastical Music/Liturgy and Hebrew. Philip is a Jewish Christian, and manages the membership database for FiF here. (Our sincere thanks to Barry, too, for his years

of ongoing oversight. He and his energetic wife, Ashley, have now retired to a lovely home “up the coast” in the State of New South Wales.

Focus on Grammar in Education: After years of debate, many Australian educational leaders are now re-focusing on the teaching of basic grammar in addition to “whole of context” reading. For about 20 years, New South Wales Public Schools had largely stopped this; the results have been a decrease in reading abilities as measured by

global benchmarking. Christian Leaders must now struggle with the effects of this. God has revealed His Truth in Scripture, which requires sound reading skills. But, an entire generation here has come of age without learning the meaning of syntax, case, verbal tense or the role of adjectives, adverbs, gerunds, participles, etc. We hope this discouraging trend will be reversed. 

Br. Ned Gerber is an Anglican Benedictine and Vice President of FiFNA, Australasia.

Emmanuel Hope Mission

By Fr. Thomas Anderson, MSJ

Not long after becoming a Christian, I noticed that the Gospel lessons appointed in the lectionary fell into a couple of broad categories: some of the stories came to us from more than one Gospel writer, and other stories were the product of only one or another of the Gospel writers. St. John closes his Gospel by telling us, “And there are also many other things which Jesus did, which if they were written in detail, I suppose that even the world itself would not contain the books that would be written.” (Jn. 21:25 NASB) It is one of those stories, only coming from the pen of St. Luke, that captivated me early on in my pilgrim journey; namely, the story of the Good Samaritan. (Luke 10:25-37 NASB) The first time that I heard the story I completely identified with the smart-aleck lawyer who just had to ask the question, “Who is my neighbor?” Well, Jesus’ story and the admonition that closed the mouth of the cocky fellow has left me feeling that Jesus was speaking directly to me: “Go and do the same.”

In early June of 2015, Bp. Bill Ilgenfritz made a day trip north from Clinton Township, Michigan where only the night before had ordained Deacon Shawn LaDuc to the Sacred Order of Priests at St. John the Apostle Anglican Church. Three-and-a-half hours north of the Detroit suburbs, in the rural, Huron-lakeshore community of Oscoda, Bp. Bill and his travelling companions visited the Northern-most MDAS community that worships at HOPE Anglican Community Chapel. HOPE is a community of the Missionary Society of St. John the Evangelist (MSJ) where seven vowed members live and worship along with a small congregation in a landmark church building that has been the home of worship services in the community since 1886.

The small community owns the property, purchased from an ELCA congregation that began as Eleazar Swedish Lutheran Church, built in 1886 by the local Swedish lumberjacks during the heyday of the lumber boom in Northern Michigan. The small community was assisted in working out the necessary details of obtaining the church under the leadership of the first Father General and founder of the Missionary Society, The Rt. Rev. Frederick Fick, MSJ (Ret.)

When you live in a community the size of Oscoda, asking a question like, “Who is my neighbor,” seems silly. If not known by name, most everyone recognizes the faces they regularly see. Clergy in small towns like Oscoda thrive in ministry as Tent-Makers. The community of Missionaries



of St. John gathering for worship in the HOPE Chapel, work together to live out Christ’s Luke 10:37b command: “Go and do the same.” The “doing” is lived out through acts of mercy facilitated by the Emmanuel Mission. The Mission is a rural emergency homeless shelter Guild that has, for the past 13 years, taken in those in need of assistance from a four county service area in Northeastern Michigan as part of a regional Continuum of Care that seeks to assist the homeless and the hungry in an area the size of the State of Massachusetts. Nearly one-third of the region consists of State and National Forest lands and the entire region boast about a 27:1 ratio of white-tail deer to human inhabitants.

In December of 2002 the small Anglican congregation took over the operation of a rural homeless shelter program that was on the verge of collapse, despite a steady clientele. One aspect of the Gospel story behind the admonition to, “Go and do the same,” was the element of personal sacrifice that was inherent in the actions of the Samaritan who set aside his own time-table and business to minister to the wounded. The Samaritan spent his own money, and made promises to return and take care of any further debt that might be generated in caring for the nameless soul who was so selflessly rescued and nursed by the traveler. To



meet the needs of those who would come through the door, it was going to require more Samaritans than the small community of worshippers could muster on their own.

Have you ever come out of your prayer closet with one of those ideas that seems right to the brothers and sisters of the community and has that feel of the anointing of the Holy Spirit about it? It was just that inspiration that has led to the formation of the Homeless Shelter Ministry program that is today, Emmanuel Mission. Our MISSION is to live out the belief that: God in Christ is With Man Dwelling, and so, our VISION for service is to “Make Christ Visible” by being a Homeless Shelter Ministry that is a Community of Volunteers, serving the needy who come to us for aid without regard to any of the criteria by which a homeless person might typically be judged. This has become our goal: living the description of Christ’s ministry that St. Paul gives, “namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation.” (2 Cor. 5:19) Wanting to do what Christ has committed to us is a challenge that requires a grounding in the call and grace to be a reconciler as a lifestyle.

The key to this rural ministry is grounded in the life of the Missionaries of St. John and the freedom to recognize and encourage the call to ministry in Christians of diverse backgrounds. To that end, Emmanuel Mission is intentionally an ecumenical Guild. The

Guild’s leadership is predominately MSJ Community members, but missionaries to the work of the shelter are commissioned home-missionaries from a variety of churches throughout the community. Roman Catholic, Evangelical Presbyterian, United Methodist, Nazarene, and several non-denominational churches have commissioned lay-missionaries for service with Emmanuel Mission. Many other churches throughout the Mission’s service region are regular supporters through gifts of food, supplies, and finances. We have some volunteers whose only days of service are on those dark, sub-zero mornings when the wind-driven cold is going to be keeping people in, come to confess, “Padre, I wanted to stay in bed and call the volunteer coordinator to beg off of my assignment, but I couldn’t bear the thought of the next person on the call list having to do my work.” Being merciful is sometimes inconvenient and grueling, but we pray daily for the gifts of the Holy Spirit to encourage us to the task. Being a neighbor who responds to Christ’s call to “Go and do the same” is often a challenge.

Since December of 2002, Emmanuel Mission has annually served over 120 families and individuals with an average of 9422 bed-nights per year. The Mission welcomes single men and women and families of all configurations. The Mission also reserves beds specifically for veterans who are, unfortunately, a growing population, as our Armed Forces draw down from the higher service rates

when the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan were in full swing. Father Jeffery Johnston MSJ, who serves as curate to the Hope Community, and as treasurer and financial officer for the Mission, is himself a Vietnam veteran. In his own words, Padre Johnston relates that, “Upon moving from Texas to serve as Curate at Hope Anglican Community Chapel in Michigan, I had no idea what homeless ministry really was nor the extent to which it could possibly be necessary in such a small community.

I also carried with me the experience of fifteen years of ministering in Austin, TX, a town fraught with thousands of panhandlers and “presumed” homeless. I carried a deep bias and dislike toward those I saw as gaming the system, conning the sympathetic passerby, and faking neediness. I attempted to cover my bias and hard heart by claiming that: “this homeless shelter thing is just not my calling.” Well, I came to find (as God worked to soften my heart and heal my attitude) that the shelter and feeding needs are great, perhaps greatest in areas such as ours: fraught with high unemployment, lack of marketable skills, few jobs, substance abuse, a high rate of home foreclosures, etc. It became more and more clear that there can be no doubt that the Christian imperative to feed the hungry and shelter the homeless is both explicit in the Gospel and central to Jesus’ teachings. As followers of Christ, it simply is our calling.

Emmanuel Mission can, depending on the needs of the client population, serve up to 17 individuals on twin beds, many of which are what we call, “Mobile Murphy” beds—beds that can be stood up on their headboards with all of the bedding remaining in place, and rolled from room-to-room as needed. Each client is provided fresh linens, a pillow, towels and toiletries, and when necessary, comfortable and modest sleeping attire. Clients can shower in our family-sized shower facility, free laundry is available in-house, and a full kitchen and pantry are provided so that evening meals and breakfasts are available. The staff encourages clients to work together to cooperate in cooking, maintaining a clean kitchen, and basic housekeeping chores to build a sense of community in the Mission. Clients who cannot be housed in the Mission due to crowding

or other extenuating circumstances are placed in area motels.

The Mission's status in our service region is that of an "emergency" shelter, so our operating day typically begins at 5:00 P.M. and the Mission closes at 9:00 A.M. Everyone leaves for the day. Given the often long and bitter Michigan winters, the Mission has an inclement weather plan to shelter clients in place when wind chills dip to zero. Clients can pack a lunch before heading out for the day, and they can leave their belongings at the Mission if they intend to occupy their bed again that night. The all-volunteer staff of home-missionaries is a unique expression of service to the needy of the greater rural community. The Mission has no payroll, even the Director is a simple missionary who pulls shifts at odd hours when necessary, but all serve with a quiet, humble attitude.

Some volunteers provide case management oversight for clients as they search for jobs or work with other agencies to find housing. Lack of ID can be the single most important barrier to employment and housing, so some of the missionaries assist in obtaining basic identification, such as birth certificates, social security cards, and state ID. One of our vowed lay members lost her husband, also a vowed member, but has continued to serve as a key housekeeper, overseeing our cleaning and providing oversight for those who are adjudicated by the courts to any number of days of community service.

Another of the missionaries responsible for maintenance and upkeep, Stephen, also serves as a role model for young men in the shelter by engaging them in conversation, actively hearing their stories, and demonstrating dependability and personal sacrifice. This missionary says that his own childhood was happy enough, but missing Christ, which is the same story that many of our clients share. Stephen often shares that despite the fact that his family was indifferent to the Gospel, he met Christian woman, was wooed by the Good News and married into a family with a Christian heritage and all of that has worked together to make him want to serve in a manner that will allow him to live the Gospel message.

Many clients come to the Mission with only what they can carry. Often



they have had their possessions taken or destroyed and have lost contact with their family. Many have lost jobs and may be in shock and depressed to find themselves homeless. While major factors that lead to homelessness are found in mental health issues, addictions, and histories of criminal behaviors, nonetheless, those who want help get what we can give. It has been our experience that it is rare to find rural folks who have chosen homelessness as a lifestyle, and given the opportunity, most people are willing to work toward independence when encouraged and coached. While urban areas have greater access to federal and state financed programs like rapid re-housing because of the sheer volume of need, most rural areas do not have homeless numbers or communities with the depth of resources necessary to get folks into transitional and sustainable housing quickly. Over the years, we have seen an increase in the number of clients whose service needs exceed the ability of the resources available to assist in a timely manner. Couple that with a high incidence of transient behaviors and strained relationships with family, friends, and neighbors, rural homelessness is as discouraging a circumstance as anyone would ever want to find themselves or their family in. Our missionaries serve with a desire to bless Christ and see God glorified in caring for the least of these our brothers and sisters.

The Mission is primarily funded through grants from several

sources, and grant-writing and grant management takes up a fair amount of time and effort. Additionally, demonstrations of the living presence of Emmanuel are made evident in the Mission's relationships with Christian Churches throughout the four-county service area. The evidence of there being but one Lord, one faith, one baptism is unmistakable as the Body of Christ works selflessly to share the variety of resources necessary to meet the needs of our homeless clients. We have seen barriers to cooperation among churches torn down and a persistent growth of missionary enthusiasm over the years, along with growing support among community service agencies too.

For the last thirteen years Emmanuel Mission's small community of missionaries have been answering the question, "Who is my brother?" with the same realization that the stone-faced, unnamed Pharisee uttered when our Lord asked of him, "Which of these three do you think proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell into the robbers' hands?" And he said, "The one who showed mercy toward him." Then Jesus said to him, "Go and do the same." Let us too then, be merciful, just as we have received mercy.

FC

Fr. Thomas Anderson, MSJ, is Pastor at Hope Anglican Church, in Oscoda, Michigan.

A Penitent Among Many

By Fr. Gene Geromel

“Ye who do truly and earnestly repent you of your sins...” These are the words of the invitation to the general confession. As part of our tradition we have a general confession in the Communion service and in Morning and Evening prayer. Massey Shepherd reminds us that repentance, love and faith are a prerequisite for receiving communion. Our Lord reminds us that if we have something against our neighbor we must settle it with him before we go to the Altar. We must confess our sins before we receive the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ or we shall eat and drink damnation. “For, as the benefit is great, if with penitent hearts and living faith we receive the holy Sacrament, so is the danger great, if we receive it improperly, not recognizing the Lord’s Body.”

Before I went to Seminary I asked my priest why we had the Prayer of Humble Access after the confession. He looked at me and smiled and said that as a priest you never know what thoughts you might have about the Senior Warden or Bishop between the confession and Communion. All of us sin, in thought, word and deed.

Some times, as with a good wife or husband, we take the General confession for granted. We just go through the motions without giving of ourselves in heart, soul and mind. It is just a prayer we know by heart and say by rote memory.

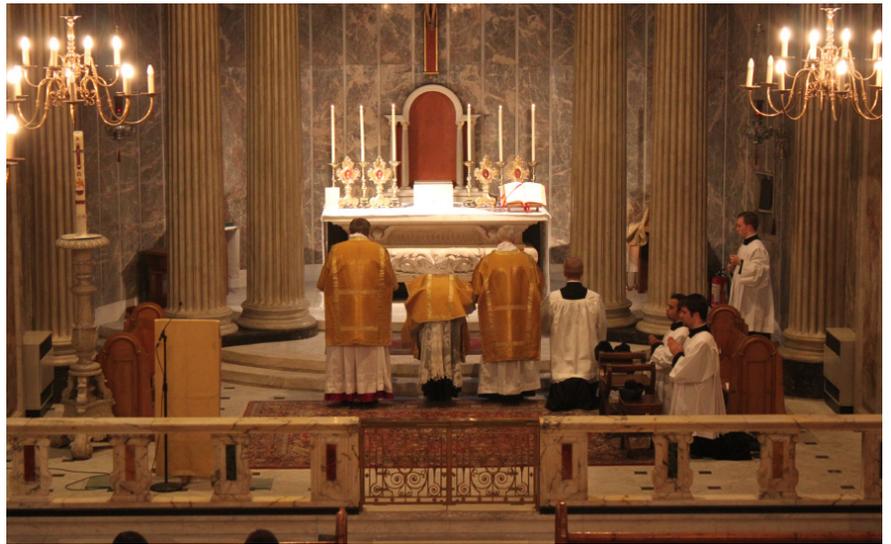
There is a word which we see twice in the prayer of confession. “Which we from time to time, most grievously have committed,” and, “The remembrance of them is most grievous unto us.”

“Grievous”, according to Webster, is heavy, burdensome. It also means causing grief. It is hard to bear. Lastly, he says that it is deplorable and atrocious. All of these are what we should experience when we recognize that we have sinned. The psalmist says it best when he writes, “a broken and contrite heart, O Lord, shall thou not despise”.

Most of us know what it is like to grieve. We feel empty. We burst into tears. We would do anything we could to have the lost loved one back, or the lost opportunity or cherished object. Do we feel like that when we realize we have sinned? Or are we like Washington politicians who shed giant tears only when they have been caught?

The last time you hurt your spouse, how contrite were you? If you let your Mother or Father down, could they tell by your behavior that you were sorry? Most importantly, does God know you are sorry?

Some might wonder why we need to confess to God. “If I am mean to my wife, and then I apologize, isn’t that enough”? Well, no, it isn’t. Many of us have children, some of us have grand children. If someone hurts them, how do you feel? Do you feel particularly close to the person? Will their behavior toward your grandson effect your relationship? We now have a broken relationship with that person. It is the same



The Confiteor

with God. When you hurt one of God’s children, you hurt God.

You have probably noticed that the Sacred Ministers may strike their breasts when they pray that they have sinned in “thought, word and deed.” It is similar to the publican in Our Lord’s parable of the Pharisee and the Publican. In the Confiteor we strike our breast when we pray, “by my fault, by my own fault, by my most grievous fault.” This line makes it perfectly clear that we have committed the sin. No one made us do it. Flip Wilson was wrong, “the devil doesn’t make you do it.” (although he may run a temptation or two past you). Accepting responsibility is as important as naming the sin.

One of the reasons we call it a General Confession is because we confess in the midst of the congregation. We are all members of the Body of Christ. We are brothers and sisters in Christ. We are all sinners and when we sin, our sin affects the whole community. They may not know what we have done, but we have done it. If it became known, what would the consequences be? Many of us have threatened divorce at particularly difficult point in our marriage. “I cannot take the pressure, I want a divorce”. It may be a normal occurrence but it does show a faulty theological understanding of the Sacrament of Marriage. If you were interviewing a candidate for Rector and his wife mentioned at the interview that he had threatened divorce that morning, would that affect anything?

Sometimes it appears that when I drive I channel my grandfather. He would shout various and sundry things at the driver in front of him. Occasionally, when the window is open, my wife will remind me that the person ahead might hear me, and seeing my collar, draw certain conclusions about priests. I can just imagine someone speaking to one of my parishioners saying, “I almost met your Rector today, he was shouting something like, ‘Granny, your car won’t explode if you do the speed limit.’” My behavior does affect the image of our parish; as does yours.

What we are talking about is our spiritual life both as

a parish (the Body of Christ) and as individuals. In the Offices and in the Mass we are given an opportunity set right our relationship with God and our fellow man. When we make a private Confession we usually make an appointment with our confessor. Before we make the confession we prayerfully sit down and consider the sins we are going to confess. Should not the same time be taken before Mass or

even the Divine Offices? This is not as difficult as it might seem. Time could be taken each Saturday evening, or while driving to church that morning.

A priest friend of mine has a sign as you enter the church: "Speak to God before Mass. Speak with your friends after." After all, isn't that why we have the eighth sacrament after communion, otherwise known as "coffee hour"? So there really is time to make that

examination of conscience, in order that you may "prepare carefully before eating of that Bread and drinking of that Cup."

FC

Fr. Gene Geromel is Rector of St. Bartholomew's Anglican Church in Swartz Creek, Michigan.

Sanctity of Life

Brother Ned Gerber on an essential evangelical and catholic truth

Many attended the July Congress, where there was a helpful focus on catholic teaching about the Sacraments, the Conciliar Church, and like matters. But in the last issue of FC, our Editor wisely added a piece by REC Bishop Mott. Mott reminded us that there are more essentials in the Catholic Faith including the biblical imperative to "remember the poor". This article highlights another imperative – the precious unborn souls who are denied life by "abortion", and the frail but esteemed Seniors who are denied life by "euthanasia".

These are not minor concerns. Christ came that we might have "abundant life". But how can a Faith that offers such life possibly allow that which brings death - often with horrific cruelty in abortion, or at times, without prior consent in euthanasia? (The tragic record in Holland documents this. A "supposed safeguard" was that prior consent would always be obtained. But audits of patient records show euthanasia has occurred – perhaps in over 20% of cases - without the person even knowing it was happening. They were just "put to sleep" due to the wishes of a family member, or someone with Power of Attorney.)

FiF Int. (Australasia) highlighted this vital area of Catholic Faith by featuring Georgette Forney of Anglicans for Life at its 2014 Assembly. Some were surprised that FiF even cared; others rejoiced that Anglicans were at last taking a stand. But before our program, a like event was badly disrupted by a mob of screaming protesters. Attendees (this author included) had to be escorted into the meeting hall by local police. Yet, such rabid opposition only highlights the urgent need for still more godly teaching and ministry on behalf of "sanctity of life".

This article contains brief highlights from our AUS/NZ consideration of this essential aspect of Evangelical and Catholic Truth. We encourage you to contact Anglicans for Life directly if you, or your parish, want to also take a stand in this key area: www.anglicansforlife.org.

The FiF Movement in Australia/New Zealand does not wish this topic to lead to the condemnation of anyone, but to repentance, healing and restoration in Christ. However, there can be no true repentance or healing from sin, if we do not first acknowledge the sin itself.



The Christian Faith and Abortion

Holy Scripture teaches human life begins at conception. In fact, Jeremiah 1:4-5 says:

"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations."

Note the use of the personal pronoun. God did not know a clump of cells – but rather, a person. In fact, if there was no "Jeremiah" with a unique identity as an individual made in the image of God, such prophetic appointment could not have occurred.

Exodus 21:22-25. This pivotal verse is often obscured by unclear English. The text is rendered by the NIV as follows:

"If men who are fighting hit a pregnant woman and she gives birth prematurely but there is no serious injury, the offender must be fined whatever the woman's husband demands and the court allows. But if there is serious injury, you are to take life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, bruise for bruise."

The phrase “gives birth prematurely” is technically true, but obscures the facts. In the original Hebrew, it says that a *yeled* comes forth. This is the same word used many dozens of times in the Old Testament, and almost always translated as a young human, e.g., “child”, “boy” or “baby” in the NIV. (There are two instances of *yeled* listed as untranslated by any English term in the 1990 *Exhaustive Concordance*.) And as Keil & Delitzsch note, the plural is used in the Hebrew because there could be more than one child in the womb. In any case, even if a foetus is not fully formed, the Bible describes the foetus as a person.

Careful reading also shows that the mother here may be injured as a result of the fighting, but still gives birth. Hence, if circumstances demand it, compensation of one type or another can be required for either the mother or the child. Even “life for life” may be enforced, with the assailant compensating for the tragically murdered foetus, which is legally recognised as a human being in the Mosaic Law. The effect differs in degree, but is similar in principle to “Zoe’s Law” in Australia, by which harm cannot occur to an unborn child without recompense.

- **Medical Science:** This teaches that a full set of genes is present in the fertilized ovum from the point of conception – though clearly the tiny embryo must grow enormously, with countless cell divisions, and come to assume its ultimate morphology.

The argument that the unborn child is not “human” until he/she is born is false. When the USA Supreme Court first spoke to this in *Roe V. Wade*, it was thought impossible that births could occur before 24 weeks gestation.

Now, at least in some cases, premature babies survive at just 23 weeks. [Wood, Mary and Hawkins, Lisa. *State Regulation of Late Abortion and the Physician’s Duty of Care to the Viable Fetus*, 45 Mo. L. Rev. 394 (1980)]. From even earlier in the womb, the unborn child has a heartbeat, too. In fact, there are deeply unsettling reports of infants crying as they emerge during abortion from their mothers’ bodies, before they are finally killed.

- **The Didache** (first or early second century A.D.):
“You shall not murder a child in an abortion. Nor shall you



kill one that is born.”

Brant Pitre has provided this translation for *The Sacred Page*. In the original Greek the word *teknon* is used for the “child” in the womb. This is the same word used almost 100 times in the NIV, overwhelmingly translated as “children” - “child” - “son” or “daughters” – all of which clearly refer to people, albeit very young people.

- **St. John Chrysostom** (*Homilies on Romans* 24 – A.D. 391):

“Why sow where the ground makes it its care to destroy the fruit? – where there are many efforts at abortion? – where there is murder before the birth?”

- **Apostolic Constitutions** (7:3 – ca. A.D. 400):

“Thou shalt not slay thy child by causing abortion, nor kill that which is begotten. [I]f it be slain, [it] shall be avenged, as being unjustly destroyed.”

- **Church of England:** As even the secular BBC notes, the “Church of England shares the Roman Catholic view that abortion is ‘gravely contrary to the moral law’. A 1980 statement by the Board of Social Responsibility said, “in the light of our conviction that the foetus has the right to live and develop as a member of the human family, we see abortion, the termination of that life by the act of man, as a great moral evil.” This was modified a bit by a 1983 Resolution of Synod, after expressing concern about the number of abortions in recent years, which said that, “In situations where the continuance of a pregnancy threatens the life of the mother a termination of pregnancy may be justified and that there must be adequate and safe provision in our society for such situations.”

This is a classic ethical crux. A child’s life may indeed be sacrificed to save the life of a mother. But thankfully, this deeply complex moral dilemma is statistically rare. And even then, Synod was only willing to say that termination “may” be justified.

The Christian Faith and Euthanasia

- Holy Scripture teaches from the beginning of Genesis that life is a gift from God. As a result, the Church has classically preached against the moral error of suicide. Supporters of euthanasia may argue that “assisted suicide” is necessary to avoid extreme pain or suffering. However, huge advances have been made in palliative care and pain relief in recent years. But these are not always shared with those who face a debilitating illness; sometimes a doctor or family member just wants to “bring matters to a conclusion”. (*European reports also show that “assisted suicide” is now being provided to people in many surprisingly new settings. Euthanasia is not provided only to terminal patients who will “soon die anyway”. Other applications include temporary depression, where counselling could make a vital difference, to one woman who wished to die simply because she didn’t feel she was “pretty” anymore.*)

Large-scale euthanasia is a more recent development in our modern world than abortion, and its history and variations are beyond the scope of this brief summary. However, support for euthanasia does seem to arise from a secular, utilitarian view that elderly and frail people are really just



a “burden on society”. Scripture strongly contradicts this grievous error with verses such as the following:

“The righteous... will still bear fruit in old age, they will stay fresh and green, proclaiming, The LORD is upright; he is my Rock, and there is no wickedness in him.” (Ps. 92:14-15)

“Even when I am old and grey, do not forsake me, O God, till I declare your power to the next generation, your might to all who are to come... Though you have made me see troubles, many and bitter, you will restore my life again; from the depths of the earth you will again bring me up. You will increase my honour and comfort me once again.” (Ps. 71:18; 20-21)

“Young men, in the same way be submissive to those who are older.” (I Pet. 5:5)

“Therefore, although in Christ I could be bold and order you to do what you ought to do, yet I appeal to you on the basis of love. I then, as Paul – an old man and now also a prisoner of Christ Jesus – I appeal to you for my son Onesimus, who became my son while I was in chains.” (Phil. 1:8-10)

People say, “It is no fun to grow old!” But, Holy Scripture sees the wisdom of years and a righteous life as a blessing, and not a sign of a person who is a burden to either Society or the Church. In fact, the greatest service has often been given by those who seem very old – like Moses, starting his noble leadership of the Jewish People at 80. Or the aged Elijah, or the very aged Anna in the Temple with Mary, Joseph and the infant Christ.

In the New Testament, the term “elder” seems to have a sense of “being elderly” or “older”. Elders who directed the affairs of the Church well were said to be “worthy of double honour” (cf. I Timothy 5:17). Built into the very fabric of the Church there was a respect

for those who faithfully served God for many years. Sts. Peter and Paul are good examples. We often picture the Apostle Paul as a great Evangelist and Theologian, and he was indeed both. But when writing to Philemon, he was old – yet still immensely respected. And *per* Ignatius, we read that Paul’s heartfelt request prevailed. Onesimus, the runaway slave, was restored and finally became a great Bishop at Ephesus.

Conclusion

Evangelical/Catholic Faith includes more than Sacraments, liturgy and ecclesiology. In its fullest sense, it calls us to embrace the “whole counsel of God”. That counsel includes the great truth that life is a profound gift. Hence, the title of this article: “Sanctity of Life” – for human life was sanctified (Gen. 1:26) when God said: “Let us make man in our image.” Therefore, we must uphold the right of children in the womb to be born, and the right of Senior Citizens in the Nursing Home to receive every reasonable form of assistance.

The Church recognises there is “a time to be born and a time to die” (Ecc. 3:2). As a result, we do not advocate the prolonging life beyond all hope or reason. Besides, death should not frighten us, since we only leave this life to be with Jesus, which is “better by far” (Phil. 1:23). But many dear brothers and sisters may be overwhelmed by terminal illness, and we must stand with them in every practical and loving way.

The Church also recognises that children are a blessing and “reward” from God. But, some may be overwhelmed by an unexpected pregnancy, and we must stand with them, too, including the possibility of adoption where appropriate.

Above all, we must hold fast to the sanctity of life, made in the image of God.



Br. Ned Gerber OSB, CPA, CGMA, is Prior of the Anglican Benedictines of Christ the King. He has served for years in Government Healthcare, and at Hospitals such as those run by the Sisters of Mercy and Sisters of Charity. Ned is the V.P./Treasurer of Forward in Faith International (Australasia).

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