Beloved Community Arises

By Monica Burden and Sean T. McConnell

On May 5, a warm and sunny Saturday, more than 300 people visited Grace Cathedral to attend “Building the Beloved Community,” for an opportunity to share in the visioning work of the diocese called for at 2006’s Diocesan Convention. The day opened with the Liturgy of the Word, including the music of Jesse Manibusan, and culminated in a homily by the Rt. Rev. Marc Handley Andrus.

In his homily, Andrus told the gathering that the day was “the beginning of what I’ve been praying for for us as the Diocese of California. It’s the beginning of shaping a vision of how we walk into the future — a future which is deeply changed on the face of the earth.”

Andrus then spoke of Jesus’ call to us as an invitation, but not just an invitation to be encountered at the individual level.

“There is a missed part often to the invitation that Jesus issues when he speaks to us in our world today,” Andrus told the crowd. “When Jesus says “You are the light of the world…” “You are the salt of the earth…” And when he says “The Kingdom of God is among you,” or “within you,” I think I, and I bet many of you, miss the invitation. Well, you’re crippled. The reason is that you weren’t raised in the American South. What you need is a “y’all.” Because what Jesus said is “Y’all are the light of the world.” “Y’all are the salt of the earth. The kingdom of God is among y’all.” So, we have a problem when the second person pronoun in proper English — or degraded English — doesn’t quite get it. So Jesus is actually issuing invitations to live as a body when many of his statements are said. And many of us miss the invitation in the very hearing of the words.

Near the end of his homily, Andrus conducted an abbreviated version of The Cosmic Walk. The Cosmic Walk was walked on the day after Andrus’ institution as Bishop of California, and uses a 122-foot rope laid out in a spiral to show the marking of time since the “Big Bang,” or what cosmologist Brian Swimme has called “The Primordial Flaring Forth,” to the present — 13.7 billion years. That beginning point, that flaring forth, was represented by the cathedral’s paschal candle. The thing to remember in that primordial beginning is that all things, everything that makes us all, was present in that moment. “Everything that is, is deeply, deeply interconnected,” Andrus said. “It is your family story,” he continued, “and all those whom I call enemy, and all those from whom I feel separated are indeed as close to me as every other part of the universe. We are that deeply related.”

During the morning liturgy, two panels flanked the cathedral’s altar.

During his homily, Bishop Marc retold our family story, from the Primordial Flaring Forth to the present.

Dancers cast their nets for diocesan dreams and visions.

Taizé service for diocesan unity. p. 2.

Pilgrimage for Peace
On the road in South Africa.
p. 3.

Not just hearts and minds, but bodies. p. 4.

St. Aidan’s, San Francisco has visitors. p. 8.

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Contemplating Wisdom Christianity Together

Wisdom Christianity — the conscious connection between contemplation and justice — is a way of naming the kind of Christianity that I think well characterizes the faith practiced by the people of the Diocese of California. Today I want to look at the word “contemplation,” because here, in our diocese, this word presents an invitation to greater growth for us.

Like so many spiritual concepts, contemplation is taken immediately to mean something that is to be applied at the individual level. In fact, while a few spiritual concepts, such as worship, are able to maintain a degree of community application in our hearing, contemplation has particularly individualistic associations: we think of solitude, hermetic enclosure, the individual cell for the contemplative. We take the role of the contemplative as being particularly individualistic associations: we think of solitude, hermetic enclosure, the individual cell for the contemplative.

You perhaps have seen me write and speak in various places recently about the social concept of “ubuntu” in South Africa, ubuntu is, “I am, to the extent that I am part of a community” — my self-definition of ubuntu is, “I am, to the extent that I am part of a community.”

African culture. A simple way of defining the social concept of “ubuntu” in South Africa, the TEAM (Towards Effective Anglican Mission) Conference drew on ubuntu when he helped shape the aftermath of apartheid in South Africa, the TEAM (Towards Effective Anglican Mission) Conference brought the concept of ubuntu to life for me. I began to experience how much the Church’s vital engagement in justice is community.

Having read about ubuntu, and then powerfully experiencing it, when I returned to my home here in the Diocese of California I began to wonder how to see Wisdom Christianity in the light of the dynamic I witnessed in South Africa. Standing here, in our diocese, with the practical concepts, such as worship, are able to maintain a degree of community application in our hearing, contemplation has particularly individualistic associations: we think of solitude, hermetic enclosure, the individual cell for the contemplative. We take the role of the contemplative as being particularly individualistic associations: we think of solitude, hermetic enclosure, the individual cell for the contemplative.

Thus, we can see that Desmond Tutu drew on ubuntu when he helped shape the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in the aftermath of apartheid in South Africa. The Archbishop’s emphasis was on the potential for the transformation of the whole society, if the whole society would enter into the truth and reconciliation process. During the Pilgrimage for Peace in South Africa, the TEAM (Towards Effective Anglican Mission) Conference brought the concept of ubuntu to life for me. I began to experience how much the Church’s vital engagement in justice is community.

I would like to encourage you of the Diocese of California, the practitioners of Wisdom Christianity, to experience contemplation in gathered community.

Taizé Service Features Prayers from All

On April 30, 2007, members of the Diocese of California came together in prayerful recognition that we are all one in Christ. The evening service at Grace Cathedral was in the Taizé form, and included chants, prayers, readings, and concluded with more than 200 people writing prayers on small wooden hearts and laying them at the foot of a large wooden cross. Others brought their prayers to the cross by touching or kissing it.

The Rt. Rev. Marc Handley Andrus told those gathered that the service would serve as a reminder that no group or individual in the diocese should have to shoulder their burdens alone. Members of the diocesan ethnic ministries, Oasis (a ministry to LGBT persons), congregations that maintain companion relationships in the developing world, and other groups were invited to share prayers and special concerns for the creation of a litany that was prayed at the service. The Rev. Anthony Turney, and the Rev. Kathleen Van Sickle, diocesan Archdeacons, collected the prayers and concerns, and crafted the litany that included a sung Kyrie response.

The Litany for Diocesan Unity can be found at episcopalbayarea.org/taize. Taizé services for diocesan unity will be held at congregations around the diocese once a quarter. The next service will be held at Trinity, San Francisco, then following services will cycle through the deaneries.
Pilgrimage for Peace Goes to South Africa

As the winter months drew to a close, a group of young people traveled halfway around the world in search of deeper connections to others and a deeper sense of Christian responsibility. Pilgrims from the Diocese of California, Washington state, Alabama, and Rhode Island converged in Boksburg, South Africa, at the Toward Effective Anglican Mission (TEAM) conference, where they were joined by other young people from South Africa and Mozambique. This Haynesville, Alabama, by the Rt. Rev. Marc Handley Andrus, and the visit to South Africa was the second of its kind.

Pilgrimage for Peace offers an opportunity for young people to encounter veterans in the cause for justice and peace. According to Andrus, pilgrimage is "a form of sacrament where God’s energies for peace, justice, and reconciliation are renewed in the faithful seekers." Pilgrimage for Peace has a global focus, drawing young people from around the world to an international "tender spot."

While in South Africa, Andrus and the pilgrims did attend some of the TEAM Conference, but they also went on daily excursions with guides from HOPE Africa. They spoke with the Episcopal Church’s Presiding Bishop, Katharine Jefferts Schori, and with the Archbishop of Capetown, Njongonkulu W. H. Ndungane. They met with bishops and others from developing nations, and they visited with children infected and affected by HIV/AIDS. They met with the Rev. Michael Lapsley, S.S.M., a white priest who joined the African National Congress. Lapsley received a letter bomb from members of the South African government in 1990. In the explosion, Lapsley lost both hands and an eye, and his eardrums were profoundly damaged.

Pilgrims Stephanie Monteiro, Liz Wagner, and Mércio Langa blogged about the experience of meeting Lapsley at bishopmarc.com. They wrote, “Although Father Lapsley was a white man, he felt the need...”

In his mind there were three groups of people in South Africa; the oppressed, the oppressors, and humans. Because of his race he was forced to be the oppressor, but more than anything he wanted to be a human. In his efforts he was targeted by the South African government as a threat due to his anti-apartheid theology.”

You can read the daily reports from Pilgrimage for Peace on bishopmarc.com, and you can see the pilgrims’ photos at flickr.com/photos/bishopmarc.

The Episcopal Diocese of California is 27,000 people in 81 congregations, with 40 educational institutions, who speak English, Spanish, Chinese, Japanese, Filipino, and American Sign Language, and minister to one another, proclaiming the good news of God’s unconditional love as shown to us in Jesus.

The Rt. Rev. Marc Handley Andrus, Bishop
1055 Taylor Street
San Francisco, CA 94108

The Episcopal Church is a community of 2.5 million members in 114 dioceses in North America and abroad. Organized in 1789.

The Most Rev. Katharine Jefferts Schori, Presiding Bishop
Episcopal Church Center
815 Second Ave.
New York, NY 10017

The Anglican Communion is a global community of 70 million Anglicans in 37 member provinces.

The Most Rev. and Rt. Hon. Dr. Rowan Williams
London, England SE1 7JU

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Outreach Commission to Sponsor Iraqi Child

By Dean L. Winslow

We hear every day about the sectarian violence resulting in the deaths of innocent Iraqis and the tragic deaths of American troops serving in Baghdad who are trying to give Iraqis the security “space” needed to reconcile the terrible divisions in their society. Despite all the depressing news I want to report that hope and love are still alive in Iraq, and the Church of the Epiphany, San Carlos, is a part of that.

Last year, while serving as an emergency room physician in Baghdad at the US Air Force EMEDS surgical hospital, many of the U.S. military doctors and medics working in and around Baghdad volunteered at a free clinic sponsored by U.S. Army Civil Affairs located just “outside the wire” of our base where we treated poor patients from Baghdad and surrounding villages. While the Iraqi Ministry of Health has made great strides in repairing the health care and public health infrastructure that was starved and allowed to deteriorate under Saddam Hussein’s brutal regime, sadly, much highly specialized medical and surgical care is no longer available in Iraq. This is largely due to the threat of common criminal activity and kidnapping as well as sectarian violence.

As a result of this, during the three days each week that we held clinic, we were often asked to see dozens of Iraqi civilians, many of whom had complicated medical problems. Since we worked alongside an Iraqi physician who intimately knew the capabilities of the various Iraqi specialty hospitals, in many cases we were able to make an accurate diagnosis and still refer the patient “downtown” to an Iraqi hospital. That was fun since we generally spoke by cell phone to an Iraqi doctor (all of whom are well trained and speak excellent English), and they obviously appreciated the professional courtesy we showed them and that we were augmenting, not supplanting, the fragile Iraqi healthcare system.

However, in some very complicated cases, the care some patients required was beyond the capabilities currently present in Iraq, and it was appropriate to work with the National Iraqi Assistance Center (NIAC) to try to obtain care for a patient in Europe, elsewhere in the Middle East, or in the US.

In April of last year, a father brought his 10-year-old son, Ali, to see me. The child had a severe growth abnormality of his chest wall and had developed a severe spinal curvature (scoliosis) as a result. Despite being able to arrange surgical care for him for him in Philadelphia, his family very sadly decided at the last minute to not make the trip to the US. After I returned home to San Carlos in May, I kept in close touch by email with many of the Iraqi friends I made, the Iraqi doctor with whom I worked in Baghdad, and the wonderful Iraqi doctors at the NIAC. Just before Christmas I was contacted by NIAC and U.S. Army Civil Affairs and was asked to arrange surgical care for a 12-year-old girl from Baghdad with severe scoliosis. Through the generosity of Shriner’s Hospital in Philadelphia, little Shahad Abdulzahra has an appointment on June 12 for initial consultation and surgery. Shahad and her mother will be arriving in Philadelphia in early June and will be staying with a lovely Iraqi-American family in the Philadelphia suburbs. The housing was arranged by another great organization, Hosts for Hospitals. Our bishop, the Rt. Rev. Marc Andrus, has generously promised to donate some of the money our Outreach Commission lost when the tickets for the other Iraqi child were forfeited last fall, allowing the Church of the Epiphany to pay for the airline tickets for Shahad and her mother to travel from Kuwait to the US and to return once her recovery is complete. I would like to thank the members of the Church of the Epiphany and Bishop Andrus who, by helping Shahad get the medical care she needs in order to lead a normal life, are helping heal the world, one child at a time.

Dean L. Winslow, MD, is Medical Director and Chief of the Division of AIDS Medicine at the PACE Clinic, Santa Clara Valley Medical Center. He has been a flight surgeon in the Air National Guard since 1980 and State Air Surgeon in the Delaware Air National Guard since 1995 with the rank of colonel. He has been deployed to the Middle East several times since the first Persian Gulf War, including to Iraq three times. Last year he was assigned to the 447th EMEDS (USAF surgical hospital) in Baghdad for three months, where he worked as an ER doctor and flight surgeon. His duties were primarily to care for Coalition soldiers, sailors, and airmen, although he also cared for civilian contractors and detainees on occasion. He has been an Episcopalian since age 13 and a member of Church of the Epiphany, San Carlos, since 2002, where he served on the vestry from 2004 to 2007.

Dean Winslow, Shahad, her mother Anaam, and the host family, Mr. and Mrs. Shalchi. Their son, Mustafa is the photographer.

Some of the staff and brave Iraqis who risk their lives each day to work with the Coalition Forces to settle claims, help out in the clinic, and try to help their fellow countrymen.
Introducing Our Newest Veterans
By the Rev. William Schooler

Most of us are familiar with the news broadcasts of our military men and women serve and their lives — Veterans Affairs hospitals, particularly the Veterans Affairs Palo Alto Health Care System, which includes Menlo Park, Martinez, Livermore, and various outpatient clinics.

The motto of the Department of Veterans Affairs comes from Abraham Lincoln, who said we are to “care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow and orphan.” I have the great privilege to serve as a chaplain to these men and women in such a hospital.

More than 600 casualties from the current war in Iraq and Afghanistan have come through our hospital, and more are on the way. We also care for those who have served in WWII, Korea, Vietnam and Desert Storm.

Some of these veterans have done remarkable things in service to our country. We have a man in one of our units who survived the Bataan Death March. Another veteran helped liberate those held in Dachau. I recently conducted a memorial service for a USMC WWII veteran who served in Iwo Jima, Saipan, Tinian, and with the occupation of Japan. Last week I said the Litany at the National Center for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder.

A piece of it always follows them just as well as the men.

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Building the Beloved Community

Visioning Day: From page 1

piece behind the altar, these two panels were in Martín Luther King, Jr., and on the right a woman of

By the end of the day, the white background had been replaced by images of many different people, woven together. The images represented the rich diversity of our diocese and our human family, and the two primary

the people who attended the visioning day.

Following the morning service, participants met in groups of 10 to 15 people for a facilitated discussion about their personal responses to the bishop's address and their vision for the future of the diocese.

Groups addressed vital questions about the visioning process, such as: “I wonder what the Diocese of California would look like as a beloved community?” “I wonder what we would need to build this beloved community?” “I wonder how you might participate as a member of the beloved community?”

Currently, responses to these questions are being processed, but early analysis shows some interesting results. A number of participants recommended regularly visiting other congregations in the diocese and made helpful suggestions about building communications networks throughout the diocese. Also, a large number of responses called on us to not think locally when we think about community, but to extend our understanding to reach beyond the walls of our congregations and across the borders of our towns, states, and nation.

AIDS, Art, and Forgiveness

By Monica Burden

Keiskamma Altarpiece tells her story, the altarpiece becomes more than a work of art; it becomes a living testimony to the work of God in the world. The Keiskamma Altarpiece was made by more than

Hamburg where nearly one third of the population has died of HIV/AIDS. It is a sensory feast and a profoundly moving expression of the ravages of AIDS that also proclaims a message of deep joy, wonder, and hope. And Eunice Mangwane, a self-described housewife and mother of two, is in large part responsible for its existence.

When Eunice's husband retired in 1996, she convinced him to let her move to Hamburg to earn money. There she paid little attention to the banner on the Anglican church advertising HIV/AIDS information workshops, but one day her irrepressible curiosity got the better of her, and she signed up. That decision transformed Eunice. Like many others, she had believed that HIV/AIDS was a white person's disease that happened far away and would never affect her. But after she learned to recognize the symptoms, AIDS, Eunice felt compelled to gather as much information as she could and to talk to people about HIV/AIDS at every opportunity.

After her husband died in 1999, Eunice returned to Hamburg, not knowing how she would care for the family's cattle and still earn sufficient wages. One day Dr. Carol Hofmeyr, a medical doctor with a fine arts degree whose husband Justus had opened an AIDS clinic in Hamburg, approached Eunice about working as an unpaid AIDS counselor. When Carol

But the people of Hamburg did not want to be educated about HIV/AIDS. They were suspicious because Eunice had not been born in Hamburg, and because she was working with a white woman. They believed AIDS was caused by “a white man who spread powder on a plane,” or by witchcraft, or by condoms.

So Eunice took her pamphlets and her umbrella and went to neighboring villages, but she met resistance everywhere she went. People refused to speak with her, and she walked long distances between villages because no one would give her a ride. Once she entered a village and saw a large poster of herself warning people to avoid her because she spread AIDS. At that moment she considered quitting, but as she wondered who had taken the photo, words came to her: You haven't finished your destination yet. And so she kept on. Her daughters saw the photo and called her. “Stop your work and come home,” they said. “We’re afraid someone will burn the house down.” Eunice walked on to the next village. When she returned home, her in-laws instructed her to pack her things and leave. “Your husband died a long time ago,” they said. “You are doing bad work; you must go.” Eunice refused to leave.
In the afternoon, participants engaged in workshops designed to provide a space for furthering the visioning of the beloved community — were incorporated into the afternoon Liturgy of the Table. The completed altarpiece panels were set by the altar, liturgical dance was used to present the net containing the participants’ prayer scrolls, and the newly written psalm and prayers of the people were read. The day concluded with Andrus presiding over the Holy Eucharist. “Loved the dance and symbolism of the nets and the prayer scrolls caught in the nets,” wrote one participant. “‘Y’all and ‘yall’s are great words to include everyone. Bishop Marc’s ability to relate to us by coming into the area of the crowd and singing and dancing with us is absolutely brilliant and energizing!”

Although the “Building the Beloved Community” conference day is over, the process of envisioning the future of the diocese will continue throughout the year.

“...for the love of our neighbors...” Catholics have a particular duty to love our neighbors, as our Lord taught in the Beatitudes (Matthew 5:42). A neighbor is anyone who is in need, no matter where or how one feels about them. In the last days of Jesus’ earthly life, he taught us to love our neighbors, and the world is in desperate need of love and compassion. It is urgent that the love of God be manifest among his people. The Beloved Community in the Diocese of California will continue to build bridges among communities and work to heal our broken world. The Beloved Community in the Diocese of California will have a significant impact on the world. The Beloved Community in the Diocese of California will be a reflection of the love of God and a witness to the world.

Data collected from the small group discussions will be presented at the Diocesan Convention in October. The prayer net and altarpiece panels, designed by Mel Ahlborn, President of the Episcopal Church & Visual Arts (ecva.org) group will be available to inspire congregations around the diocese, and the small group inquiry methods can be replicated locally. Many different groups will participate in this process in many different ways throughout the year, enabling all members of the diocese to contribute their voices to the conversation. Contact Faith Formation Coordinator Julia McCravy-Goldsmith for details: juliam@diocal.org, 415.869.7826.

Photos by Sean T. McConnell.
Around the Diocese

Jay Bakker Speaks at St. Aidan’s, San Francisco

By Sara Miles

Jay Bakker, of Revolution Ministries, came to the Bay Area in April to speak at St. Aidan’s, San Francisco, and meet with Episcopal churches here. He was interviewed by Sara Miles of St. Gregory’s, San Francisco.

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iews of Sara Miles of St. Gregory’s, San Francisco.

Jay Bakker Speaks at St. Aidan’s, San Francisco.

be wounded and hurt by the church, and fury the church’s leadership can unleash upon the impure. The 30-year old preacher — who founded his Revolution Ministries out of the punk scene, and runs his unconventional church out of a hipster bar in Williamsburg, Brooklyn — recently lost major evangelical supporters and his biggest donor for declaring his a slight man whose arms are covered in tattoos, is not particularly surprised. “The church is living in a bubble,” he says, quietly, “Whenever you go back to the message of Christ, people get threatened.” Bakker takes the hypocrisy of the church personally. His televangelist parents, Jimmy and Tammy Faye Bakker, helped start the Trinity Broadcasting Network and the 700 Club in the 1970’s, and later founded the PTL (Praise The Lord) Club. At the height of their popularity, they pastored the largest church in the country, building a theme park, raising over million dollars a week, and living an extravagant, over-the-top lifestyle. From infancy, Jay appeared with his parents on television and entertained the faithful. “Everyone wanted to sit on our sofa and have their picture taken,” he said. “Everyone wanted a piece of my parents.” Then scandal hit. Amid rumors that he’d hidden an affair with a former church secretary, Jimmy Bakker was indicted on 24 counts of fraud and conspiracy and sentenced to 45 years in prison (he served only five).

Fellow evangelist Jerry Falwell called Bakker a liar, and embattler, a sexual deviant, and “the greatest scar and cancer on the face of Christianity in 2,000 years of church history.”

The experience was scaring for Jay Bakker. Just thirteen when his father was sent to prison, he began drinking heavily to deal with his sudden disillusionment about the meaning of Christian charity. “All of a sudden, our church and all our friends disappeared,” he said. “Nobody visited my dad in prison; nobody wanted to be near us.”

It took Jay years of despair to hear that he calls “the real story” about God, that “God loves us unconditionally.” It’s not about how we look or whether we act right.” He began working in a coffeehouse in Phoenix with punks and street kids, “the lost people — the people we’re not supposed to bother with,” and started Revolution. Its goal: “to show all people the unconditional love and grace of Jesus without any reservations due to their lifestyle or religious background, past or future.” And “all” meant all: unlike many evangelical churches, Bakker was clear that he could not compromise by excluding gay people or any other group.

Today, Revolution has gatherings in Williamsburg, Atlanta, and El Salvador — “Church, but not buildings,” Jay’s quick to say. “We work out of bars and tip the bartenders. We don’t want to be a new denomination, or a franchise.” Jay’s deep distrust of religion — “Religion Kills” is the slogan on the home page of his popular Website, http://www.revolutionnyc.com/idea.htm — hasn’t stopped him from working full time as a preacher, speaker, and evangelist, organizing young people from all backgrounds into informal communities. And it hasn’t stopped him from his own kind of televangelism; his new series, “One Punk Under God” http://www.revolutionnyc.com/onepunkad.htm is featured on the Sundance Channel.

Anglican Primate from El Salvador Visits Diocese

By Sean T. McConnell

On May 2nd, an Anglican Primate from a developing country came to the Diocese of California for a six-day visit. He did not come to denounce the Episcopal Church or to consecrate a schismatic bishop. The Most Rev. Martin Barahona, Bishop of El Salvador and Primate of the Anglican Province of Central American Dioceses (IARCA), came to build relationships with congregations with the Diocese of California and to visit with friends from this diocese who have made pilgrimages to El Salvador in the past.

The Rev. Tommy Dillon, Rector of St. Aidan’s, San Francisco, is a longtime friend of Barahona and has visited the bishop in El Salvador on many occasions. “He’s been with our church on some very important days in El Salvador and Central America,” Barahona says of Dillon. “He was there when he was a student, El Salvador — an American woman but in El Salvador. Tommy was there when I was installed as a primate for the Province of Central America. They were very important to me.”

These two friends have worked closely over the years to foster understanding. When Barahona attended the consecration of Gene Robinson as Bishop of New Hampshire, Dillon’s former parish, St. Luke’s in Baton Rouge, Lucas in San Miguel, El Salvador. Upon hearing of this, Dillon appealed to the New Orleans chapter of Integrity for support. At the same time St. John the Evangelist, San Francisco, and other congregations began providing support to the mission and other ministries of the Diocese of El Salvador. The response and new relationships far surpassed any support that had been with the more traditional church.

While at the General Convention of the Episcopal Church in Columbus, Ohio, in June 2006, Dillon met Sarah Lawton from St. John the Evangelist, San Francisco. The two quickly realized that they held a common interest in doing the work of God in El Salvador, and a new coalition was born.

In September of 2006, Dillon led a group of Episcopalians from St. Aidan’s and St. John’s to El Salvador, and members of both churches had the opportunity to meet with Barahona and to learn about the missionary needs in the country’s eastern provinces. Upon returning from this trip, Dillon began speaking with other congregations about the need for mission development in El Salvador, especially for the work of the Centro Pastoral Anglicano del Oriente, a newly formed pastoral region in eastern El Salvador. “The Episcopal Church in that region is growing, and the pastoral center is far from San Salvador,” Barahona says. The new pastoral center will provide training to a growing group of lay volunteers in the area.

Through his advocating for the needs of the church in El Salvador, Dillon recruited two more San Francisco congregations, St. Gregory of Nyssa and Holy Innocents, and a coalition of support began.

An agreement was drawn up, and the Bay Area Episcopal Salvador Mission Coalition was born. With the assistance of Vermont-based Fundación Cristosal, the coalition will provide annual support of $3,500 to the new pastoral center in eastern El Salvador until 2012, and Cristosal will provide assistance in organizing mission trips for members of the coalition’s congregations.

Nurturing old friendships and making new friends, Barahona has helped Episcopalians in the Diocese of California develop new visions of what Bishop Marc Andrus calls “the Kingdom of God.”

To learn more about Cristosal, visit cristosal.org.

Special thanks to Betty Jerez for providing translation services for this article.
Starting a Conversation About MDGs

By Nina Brooks

What a wonderful experience it has been encountering the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) together as a community at Church of the Epiphany, San Carlos. Our discernment of how to engage the MDGs in response to last summer’s national convention resolution has given and pray about how God may be calling the church, and our parish in particular, to more deeply live into our Baptismal Covenant and discover the spiritual transformation that happens when we reach out in Christ’s name. Encountering the MDGs has opened new windows to potential partnerships born out of hope, compassion, and God’s great abundance.

If you are similarly seeking to engage the MDGs in your parish, here are some ideas used successfully at Epiphany:


Bring hunger to the coffee hour table. In November 2006, Epiphany held a classic Oxfam model. Each bulletin contained a color-coded ticket to be redeemed at coffee hour. Coffee hour was devoid of the usual food and drink. Three tables occupied the parish hall with color-coded tablecloths that matched the tickets.

Thanksgiving dinner. The second was modestly set with a meal of rice, beans, and coffee. The third table offered a cup of cooked rice and a tin of water.

 Teach a study group. The MDGs were the subject of Epiphany’s Advent series, “Thinking about Resources in a Spiritual study group, but has evolved into much more and is continuing to meet to discern where the Spirit is calling our congregation. We discovered that our seminary intern had ties to El Salvador and we asked her to share experiences with us. We watched the movie “Romero.” Greenwell arranged for unique Stations of the Cross this Lenten season that consist of scenes from the Salvadoran civil war with biblical passages and excerpts from Archbishop Romero’s sermons.

Ask your vestry to commit 0.7 percent to the MDGs. Epiphany’s September 2006 vestry meeting was a deeply moving experience. The gathered group quickly grasped that the MDGs are achievable and that achieving the MDGs would further the building of the Kingdom of God on Earth.

Plan a summer camp or Sunday school event. In 2005, Epiphany’s Outreach Commission voted to dedicate our parish’s celebratory offering funds to Heifer Project International, a program supporting the MDGs that would appeal to all parishioners, including children. The following year, we held a children’s service addressing world hunger and explaining the Heifer Project’s mission, and we launched Heifer’s Fill the Ark program. Our 2006 summer camp curriculum was loosely based upon Heifer’s Animal Crackers program and revolved around the Heifer animals.

Watch synergies, large and small, emerge. Our youth planned and led a February deaurey youth event on hunger and advocacy. Dean Winslow, a parish member and Air Force reservist, brought the congregation the opportunity to assist one or more Iraqi children to obtain needed medical treatment in the United States. Emil Torres, a longtime Lions Club member, is collecting glasses to donate around the world. Amber and Lucy Olsen, our Senior High Youth Group participants, accompanied Bishop Marc to South Africa and have begun to witness eloquently about what they experienced in that part of the world.

Harry White, the head of our Amnesty International letter writing effort, arranged an April talk on fair trade issues. Epiphany’s April book club selection is A Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a Boy Soldier by Ishmael Beah. The Spirit is clearly moving in our midst and I am looking forward to discovering what more will happen as we at Epiphany listen, follow and continue to engage the MDGs.

Nina Brooks is a member of Church of the Epiphany, San Carlos, and served on the diocesan MDG Working Group.

On September 13, Bishop Marc will walk on water.
Stewardship in an Asian Context: A Different Approach

By The Rev. Dr. Franco Kwan, Rector of True Sunshine Church, Member of the Standing Commission on Stewardship and Development of the Executive Offices of the General Convention of the Episcopal Church

I remember being the vicar for Chinese ministry in a mostly white church, whose rector always asked me to push the Chinese congregation to sign pledge cards at year-end. He said, “It seems as if the Chinese congregation doesn’t want to support the church.” I replied, “Yes, but if they don’t sign pledge cards, we will not be able to budget for next year.”

Today’s Episcopal Church is a diverse entity with many cultures, and culturally distinct stewardship practices. Church leaders often ask, “Why don’t Asians like to sign pledge cards?” There are several reasons:

1. New Immigrants
   Most members of Asian congregations are new immigrants, many without permanent jobs. Not knowing if they will have a job tomorrow, they do not want to commit themselves in advance, in case they lose their jobs.

2. Honoring Commitments
   In Chinese culture, if someone has made a commitment, is a Chinese saying, “Teeth are worth as much as gold.” It means that a promise is just as good as a contract. If a promise is not fulfilled, a person loses face as well as credibility.

3. New Christians
   The majority of the members of a Chinese congregation are newly baptized Christians unfamiliar with church practices. In Buddhist practice, followers usually give what they have at hand, and when they feel like it. The majority of the members of a Chinese congregation are newly baptized Christians unfamiliar with church practices. In Buddhist practice, followers usually give what they have at hand, and when they feel like it. There is usually no set schedule or amount.

4. Not Giving in Order to Receive
   Churches in Asia are known for being “wealthy,” for giving away food and helping the needy. My own parish had a box of school supplies every semester. If you went to church, you would receive more. Many parishioners went to church more because they needed food and help than because they genuinely believed in God. This is still often true today. There was a church in Hong Kong with a neon sign out front which said, “Believe in God and have everlasting life.” One day, a big storm damaged part of the sign, which then read, “Believe in God and have a buffalo.” Many more people started lining up at the church. When asked by the puzzled priest one of them said, “I’m here because I want a buffalo.”

5. Diverse Denominations
   Many Asian Episcopalians come from different denominations with different practices. Some denominations do not encourage pledges but ask members to give as they can, often more than 10% of their income. There is a Korean church in New York where the congregation was unwilling to give money to the church so that their priest could have health insurance and a pension, since they live on a mission.

At the same time, the congregation may buy their priest a new car because he or she broke down.

6. Clergy Training
   Many Asian clergy received their training overseas before being “transplanted” into American churches. Although stewardship was a subject in their training, pledging was not.

Just because Asian members do not pledge does not mean they do not provide support to their church. Often, they may provide support in other ways, such as volunteering, providing food, or financial assistance. We must remember that cultural differences are important and should be respected.

InFormation: Speaking in Tongues

By Julia McCreay-Goldsmith

L a formación, no debe ser un privilegio de algunos, sino un derecho y un deber de todos.” So says the Rev. Javier Torres, Vicario of the Latino Community at the congregation of Holy Trinity/La Santisima Trinidad, Richmond. His English-speaking colleague, Rev. Pam Higgins, might have understood him to say, “Christian formation should not be the privilege of a few, but rather the right and the responsibility of all.”

Putting words — both the English and Spanish ones — to Christians who — empowered by the Holy Spirit — declared the wonders of God in many tongues. “We are one faith community with two languages. The most important aspect of having this kind of multicultural, bilingual community is the underlying commitment to be the people of God, together, here in Richmond.”

than done. But underlying their ministry is a commitment to Christian formation — the kind of learning that may begin in lesson plans and classrooms, but like the mighty wind of the Spirit itself, never rests there for long. “There is much we have to learn about weaving various cultures and languages together,” confesses Pam. But that is exactly the kind of learning that her colleague Javier has in mind when he says that catechesis — instruction in the foundation of Christian faith — is not enough. “Formation must prepare us to live as Christians and...
W hen Hurricane Katrina hit New Orleans in August 2005, my heart went out to the people affected in that devastated city. My colleagues at St. Luke’s Hospital and I talked about going there to assist a sister hospital, but it was not able to reopen following the evacuation. In addition, my mother had died just before the storm, and I was swirled into the vortex of settling her estate. My trip to New Orleans would have to wait.

Late last year, a call went out to deacons around this country and Canada from the Ven. Ormonde Plater in New Orleans asking who might be interested in going there to engage in the work of reclaiming the city from its devastation. The time was right for me to make this longed-for trip and I signed on immediately. It seemed a good omen that this project was to begin the day following my birthday. The group that ultimately made its way to Louisiana included deacons with many years of ordained ministry behind them, deacons ordained just the week before, aspirants to ordination, and one person who was not even an Episcopalian although her best friend was a deacon. There were 18 of us in all, and we came from New York, Maryland, Iowa, Minnesota, Washington, Oregon, California, Texas, Louisiana, and Ontario, Canada. We arrived by plane, auto, and train on Sunday, March 11, at the Urban Ministry Center adjacent to Christ Church Cathedral — our home for the next week.

Most of us worked for the week gutting houses around the city. Our coordinators made sure that we had an opportunity to experience all phases of the process — from walking into a place that had not been touched all water-damaged walls and ceilings. In addition, we were scheduled in many different areas geographically. We were gifted by the presence of the owners of two of the places where we worked. Their willingness to work alongside us and share their personal stories of “The Storm” (as people there call it) enriched our experience.

On Thursday, April 19, the Venerable Kathleen Van Sickle and the Venerable Anthony Turney were installed as diocesan Archdeacons in an Evensong service at Grace Cathedral. Presenting Van Sickle and Turney were the Rev. Vicki Gray (standing left) and the Rev. Mary Louise Hintz, members of the Executive Committee of the Diocesan Deacons Council. The service, which commemorated St. Timon, Apostle and Deacon, and featured music from Dan Locklair’s Montreal Service, also celebrated the ministry of the Venerable Dorothy Jones, Archdeacon Emerita.

On May 18, the Church Divinity School of the Pacific (CDSP) awarded honorary degrees on the Rt. Rev. William E. Swing, retired Bishop of California (left), and Canon Holly McAlpen, missioner of the Diocese of California (center), along with the Rt. Rev. Frank T. Griswold, former Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church (right), and the Rev. Dr. Winfred Bagao Vergara, the Episcopal Church’s director of ethnic congregational development and Asian American missionary (not pictured). Griswold delivered the commencement address in which he told the graduating seminarians to allow their baptismal call to guide their ministry. Swing served as bishop for 26 years and McAlpen has worked for the diocese for 22 years. Both were instrumental in bringing the HIV/AIDS pandemic into the Church’s consciousness. Swing retired in 2006, the same year McAlpen became the diocese’s Ethnic and Multicultural Missioner.

Sign me up! If you are interested in joining us, or know of a local group planning a trip, please contact me. I can’t wait for the next opportunity to put my new skills to use. Call me if you want to go, or know of a local group planning a trip. Sign me up!”

The Rev. Jan Cazden is Deacon at Trinity San Francisco and Manager of Spiritual Care Services for California Pacific Medical Center.

Photograph credits: PCN11 | March

PCN photo by Jim Forsyth
Did you know that every year during Holy Week, the clergy of the diocese gather in Grace Cathedral to renew their ordination vows and to receive the holy oils of chrism and unction that are blessed by the Bishop. One member of the clergy was overheard saying that he comes to this service “for an oil change and to renew his vows.”

At a luncheon following this year’s Chrism Mass, the Rev. Dr. Monrelle T. Williams, new rector of St. Augustine’s, Oakland (pictured shaking hands below), was received into the Episcopal Church from the Anglican Church in the Province of the West Indies. In his sermon, Bishop Marc challenged the clergy to become “the same community that we seek to form.”

**Scenes from The Chrism Mass**