



**In this issue**

A servant with a mission ..... 1  
 Building up the church ..... 2  
 Whither thou goest ..... 2  
 Community notes ..... 3  
 Practical points for creation's sake .....

**Sep/Oct  
1991**

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**#140**

*For Proper 19*

## **A servant with a mission**

*It is the Lord God who helps me . . . Faith by itself; if it has no works, is dead.—Isaiah 50:9, James 2:17*

Each of us, like the prophet in Isaiah, is called to be a servant. In our walk with God there is some task or mission to which we are called. Our sense of this mission—whether a strong conviction, or a still small voice within gently calling us forth—will urge us on to respond to the suffering we see around us with the certainty of the servant in Isaiah, who knew that through it all it was the Lord God who helped him.

In the Letter of James we are given some guidelines on how we are to fulfill the mission to which we've been called. One of these is to *show no partiality or privilege*. Yes, it's often easier to deal with someone who's clean and neat and seems to have enough money to get by fairly well. But many with whom we come in contact have either never had enough to get by on, or have exhausted what resources they once had. And James is telling us we need to treat these less fortunate souls with just the same love and charity as those more well off. After all, our Lord Jesus Christ, in whom we believe, shared his love equally with *all*, died and rose again to save *all*—not just a choice few, but *all*.

Jesus, who made himself our brother and a perfect example for us, gave us the gift of faith and, as James writes, we need to take the concept of the sovereign law—to love our neighbor as ourself—and make it a living reality. We can't simply and solely *believe*. Whether we begin in faith and are led to love, or begin in love and are led to faith isn't terribly important. The important thing for James and for us is that we let our faith grow and lead us on to action—works that give evidence that we are living the faith we profess. For James tells us that professing one's faith is meaningless unless we prove that faith by the works we do.

The scope or limit of any works we might do can be reached only through the guidance and direction of the Holy Spirit, the study of Scripture and other readings, and prayer. Realizing and accepting that God's ultimate plan is much larger than we are, and that the variety of gifts we share provides for a multitude of ways to serve, it becomes easier to see how our faith and love in Christ can lead us to a committed use of the gifts we have been given. No matter how simple, we can look on each task as something we've been called to do at that time and proceed in the faith that God will pro-

vide. It may be giving a glass of water to someone who is thirsty; taking the time to explain something to someone or simply to be with someone; helping to care for the sick: visiting in hospitals, nursing homes, or hospices; providing food when there is need; sharing a smile or showing in some way that you care.

Think of one of these as the mission to which you've been called, your own particular service that the Lord has given you to do. Offer it up to Christ, and do your best. And keep in your heart the surety that through it all the Lord God will help you.

*Br Thaddeus David Williams, (life professed), served on the Maryland Diocesan Task Force on AIDS, working in post-hospital care and education. His ministry includes visiting and caring for the sick, calligraphy, and sewing.*

## Meeting the community

# Building up the church



*Christopher Stephen Jenks, BSG*

A major part of my vocation is related to buildings. Ever since I was a kid I have been

fascinated with architecture. Because my father is a priest, I spent most of my childhood in venerable churches and rambling rectories, and developed a great love for these old buildings. Following through on this, I decided to pursue a career in architectural history and building conservation.

I am particularly interested in working with older religious buildings. Besides being masterpieces of architectural design, I have found that older churches and synagogues are centers—or at least potential centers—of community life, especially in anonymous and alienating urban environments such as New York City. Besides worship, these buildings are often home to all sorts of community-building programs, from sports teams for inner-city kids to Alcoholics Anonymous

meetings, space for pastoral care and spiritual direction, and a host of other work.

On a somewhat less tangible level, these old structures are icons of the communities they serve; they are stabilizing influences in fast-changing urban environments; and their physical presence as works of art adds immeasurably to the quality of life in urban neighborhoods. This community-focusing aspect of churches and synagogues is an essential character of their mission.

However, many of these buildings have suffered from extreme neglect and are now in need of major repair and restoration. No parish or institution seems to be immune from this, no matter what its economic status. My own parish (a midtown mission) and Trinity Church, Wall Street (the wealthiest parish church in New York City) are both in the midst of expensive restoration efforts. In both cases, the restoration is needed, not for cosmetic reasons, but in order to prevent the collapse of the building. In both cases, the

cause of the severe structural problems is not the age of the building, but ignorance of proper maintenance techniques over a period of five or six decades.

Currently I work as a consultant in building maintenance and restoration and serve as consulting editor for *Common Bond*, a newsletter on the maintenance and repair of older religious buildings, published by the New York Landmarks Conservancy. I serve as chair of the Capital Campaign Building Committee in my parish, St Peter's Chelsea, Manhattan.

In one example of how building restoration and mission can overlap, at St Peter's we are establishing an in-house restoration workshop that will help train displaced workers in wood, metal and stained-glass restoration. With the number of buildings in New York City in need of repair, these skills are in great demand and should provide those trained at St Peter's with rewarding employment for the rest of their lives.

## Whither thou goest



*Maurice John Grove, n/BSG*

I am I suppose what is called a cradle Episcopalian, having been born in England

and baptized in the Anglican Church so many years ago I hate to look up the date. My own religious experience began as a choir boy—one of those ruffled, angelic little horrors you see in the movies—in the City of London. I spent most of my years as a youth at Merchant Taylor Company, an ancient Guild Company of the City. My father was the Beadle. I went to school at Battersea Grammar School, one of the more prestigious

schools in London. Being somewhat musically inclined I won a scholarship to the Royal Academy of Music and spent a somewhat unrewarding six years there.

As time progressed it became necessary for me to complete my National Service in the Air Force, during which time I was confirmed by the Bishop of Pretoria (South Africa). Having served my time I was allowed to return to civilian life as an insurance clerk for Lloyds of London. It was during this time that I was transferred to the U.S.A., got married to an English girl and moved to New York City, working in the insurance business.

After five years in New York, with the exception of a year in Mexico City, we returned to England and opened an Old English Pub (with a decidedly Victorian flavor) near the Thames. It became quite a popular place, and people would show up in period costume. This was a delightful but hectic five years.

Finally bored with this, and feeling more ambitious, we moved to a Spanish island in the Mediterranean, called Ibiza, and bought a 100-bedroom hotel with the romantic name of Don Quixote. However, it was far from romantic and in order to prevent my death from madness (those

who know Fawly Towers will understand what I mean), we sold it and moved lock, stock and barrel to Mexico City to open a business in the entertainment field with some of my close Mexican friends.

However, this didn't materialize, so on to Lisbon, Portugal to open a nightclub, which was highly successful until the revolution, at which point, the communists—taking a dim view of decadent foreigners—closed the club overnight. Fortunately I was also engaged at that time with shipping American-made antiques back to the U.S.A. and had a number of friends and contacts there. So, as the future of

Portugal at that time didn't seem too bright, we moved to the U.S. once more, and continued in the antique business.

I have always had a good knowledge and interest in wine, so I used this to my advantage to become a sales specialist for a wine supplier in Long Island. It was here I encountered Anglican religious life for the first time, at Little Portion, and I became a close friend of the Franciscans there. Time passed and the urge to relocate to the country became insistent, along with a desire to change profession and life style. This brought us to Mexico, New York, north of Syracuse, where we began growing apples and running a

country store, and doing real estate work. My wife, Jean, died in 1988, and I am grateful to the Rev Betty Bone Schiess, who was my rector at the time, for her care and concern during Jean's illness.

During all my travels and journeys I actively attended and participated in worship in the Episcopal and Anglican Church, in parish matters and on a diocesan level. Eventually, I was led to the realization of a life-long dream: to become a member of a religious community. The Brotherhood of St Gregory has now realized that dream. I am proud to be able to attach the initials *BSG* to my name.

## *Here and there with the Brotherhood and Companion Sisterhood*

# Community notes.

The Founder and the Editor were working at the 70th General Convention in Phoenix, and will report in the next issue.

### Province I

Br Donovan Aidan Bowley continues his work with the Iona Cornerstone Foundation, which maintains the ecumenical quiet house, Duncraig, on the island of Iona. He has returned to active service at the Parish of the Messiah, Auburndale MA, after a sabbatical year. He participated in the "World Without End" quiet day in Province II (see below).

Br Roy Tobin and postulant Steven Hill made a retreat with the Society of St Francis, Mt Sinai NY. They were grateful for the hospitality and spiritual support from our Franciscan brothers. Little Portion provided an oasis where the brothers could enjoy God's presence. Steven also participated in a quiet day at St Stephen's, Hingham, led by one of the Sisters of St Margaret.

### Province II

The set of collects in the last issue ("Prayers for the Seven Days of Creation") were from the summer workshop, "World Without End: Creation Spirituality and Environmental Stewardship" which took place at St George's Church, Manhattan. The workshop was structured

on the seven days, each beginning with a musical breathing prayer and scriptural meditation, followed by a reflection. Topics included: humanity's role in creation, the nature of heaven and the vital significance of water, the importance of healing care for each other and the world, the wise use of energy and resources (see next page), the responsibility of being a guest in God's creation, our fellowship and kinship with the animals, and the call to simplicity and rest in the Lord's Sabbath. "Practical Points" appear on the next page. We hope to publish the meditations and other material from the workshop in the future.

### Province III

On Saturday, June 15, Br Edward Munro was ordained a deacon at the Cathedral of the Incarnation, Baltimore, by Bishop A Theodore Eastman. The day was 90° and the cathedral was jam-packed with clergy and well-wishers—thanks be for

air conditioning! In addition to Brs Thaddeus David Williams, William Edward Orce and novice Br Mark Harris, of Province III, Province II provided Brs James Teets, William Francis Jones, Stephen Storen, Tobias Stanislas Haller, Charles Kramer, Richard John Lorino and novices Christopher Thomas Connell and Maurice John Grove. The cathedral held a gala reception for the six ordinands,

and Edward's wife Barbara and family arranged a wonderful outdoor luncheon party at their home following the reception. The next morning found James, Tobias Stanislas, Richard John and Maurice John at St Andrew's, Pasadena MD, where Edward is on staff. His first service as a deacon will always be remembered by that parish family, and they celebrated the occasion with another reception. Upon bidding farewell, the four travellers from Province II began their trip home, stopping off in Newark DE for lunch with Mark and his wife Kathryn. It was a glorious weekend and a privilege to share it with our beloved Edward!

### Province West

Br Michael David Elvestrøm has completed a triptych for Trinity Church, Natchitoches LA, which was installed and blessed by Bishop Hargrove during the celebration of the parish's 150th anniversary. The panels of the triptych, over doors leading to the nave, show the birth, death, and resurrection of Christ.

*Note: in the last issue, the photograph of S Michael Phillips and Steven P Hill was flopped at the printer's, so that the caption no longer matched the postulant!*

## Practical points for creation's sake

### ***The wind from God***

- Rediscover your creativity: paint a picture; write a poem; sing a new song!
- Learn and use a breath-prayer.
- Check your car's emission control.
- Don't use polystyrene-foam products (cups, plates, &c.).
- Buy products in pump bottles, rather than aerosol.

### ***The separation of the waters***

- Don't let water run while you shampoo, shave, or brush your teeth.
- Use a low-flow shower head, low-volume toilet.
- Don't let leaks and drips last—stem the flow!
- Fill an insulated carafe with cold water, instead of letting the tap run until it gets cold.
- Find substitutes for products with toxic chemicals (cedar chips for mothballs, borax for bleach)
- Dispose of toxic substances with care.
- Use detergents free of phosphates; soaps free of antimicrobial agents.
- Use baking soda and salt as cleansers; white vinegar and water for glass and windows.

### ***The trees and plants***

- Plant a tree; participate in Arbor Day observances.
- Buy fruits and vegetables in season.
- Accept the fact that fruits and vegetables with blemishes are still delicious.
- Eat your vegetables (or more of them, cutting down on meats).
- Buy products that are minimally packaged, or not packaged at all.
- Start a garden—at least a window box.
- Eat organically grown vegetables.
- Use recycled paper; recycle what you use.
- Forego the Sunday paper once a month.
- Support work to protect the rain-forest.
- Don't buy meat raised on former rain-forest land.
- Don't buy products made of wood from the rain-forest.

- Use cloth instead of paper: napkins, place mats, towels, handkerchiefs, diapers, rags.
- Save paper bags from grocery trips, and bring them back for second use—or invest in some reusable cloth or net shopping bags.
- Get your name off of junk mail lists (write Direct Marketing Association, 6 E 43d St, NY NY 10017).
- Don't waste food (9% of American garbage is edible food); find uses for food you used to throw away.

### ***The sun, moon, and stars***

- Replace incandescent light bulbs with fluorescent fixtures.
- Don't operate appliances unless you're using them: turn off lights when you leave a room, and don't use the T.V. as background company.
- Use a thermal carafe to keep coffee hot, instead of the hot plate.
- Let foods cool to room temperature before freezing or refrigerating.
- Do an insulation survey of your home, and take action on what you discover.
- Plant shade trees to help cut back on the need for air conditioning.
- Use solar powered products when possible.
- Plan your travel activities to cut down on driving time.
- Don't drive anywhere on a trip less than one mile: walk instead, or bicycle, or use public transportation.
- Car-pool when you can.
- Dry clothes on a line or rack.
- Keep the air conditioner thermostat set high, the heater low.
- Watch the thermostat in your refrigerator and on your water heater.

### ***The birds and fish***

- Buy tuna that's "dolphin-safe."
- Avoid pesticides that damage wildlife and birds.
- Set up a bird feeder and bird bath.
- Don't throw away six-pack holders without cutting them up; better yet, recycle; or best, don't drink beverages you can only get in six packs!

- Don't litter anywhere, but especially on the beach. Never throw anything in oceans, rivers, lakes, ponds, or streams.

### ***The animals and humans***

- Eat less meat.
- Adopt a pet from a pound or shelter.
- Spay and neuter pets.
- Never leave animals out in the cold, or in a hot car.
- Don't wear fur.
- "Adopt" an endangered species.
- Take part in the Blessing of the Animals.
- Don't treat an animal as a wardrobe accessory, alive or dead!
- Report acts of cruelty to animals.
- Avoid sports or shows which offer the opportunity to exploit or mistreat animals.
- Before you give children a pet, be sure they understand what it means to take responsibility for another living being.
- Brake for animals on the road; heed "crossings."

### ***The Sabbath***

- Spend an hour reading the Bible or a spiritual book, sitting in natural light, indoors or outside.
- Pray for the creation, and our stewardship of it.
- Look for opportunities where cooperation can work better than domination.
- Know the products you buy, and who manufactures them.
- Invest responsibly: check on companies' records.
- Take part in shareholder actions.
- Cut down on nonessential purchases of all kinds.
- Borrow or rent an appliance or tool you only need rarely.
- Attend a retreat or conference on spirituality and stewardship.
- Go on vacation to a place you can get around in on foot or bicycle.
- Vacation close to home; you may be surprised by novelty in the familiar!
- If your job offers sabbatical leave, take it.

— TSH