



# *Episcoparific*

*for and by the 20s, and 30s of the diocese of texas*

ISSUE 2, FALL 2008



## mid-year new year

taking a fresh look at where we  
are, where we're going & what  
we stand for

## Wear your helmet!

*Heya! and welcome to the second issue of Episcorific, a zine for and by the 20s, 30s & beyonds of the Episcopal Diocese of Texas (EDOT). The big idea? Young adults are not big church-goers generally. Our lives are hectic and often unstable. We are at the mercy of the education system, budding careers, frequent moves and our own indecisiveness. We are justifiably self-involved as we try to make our place in this world, define the bounds of our lives. But for many of us the church is an important site for that self-creation, a place of expanding the me-box to let God in. So, this is just another attempt at bringing the few, the brave, the young adult Episcopalians of this diocese into closer communion. Read. Listen. Think. Pray. And when you're ready, lend your own voice to the babble. Let's share our lives of faith.*

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## Submissions:

The Next issue will be the Advent/Christmas issue.

Submissions should be received no later than **November 1**. Please submit all stories/poems/artwork/thoughts/questions to [episcorific@gmail.com](mailto:episcorific@gmail.com)

Visit us online at [episcorific.org](http://episcorific.org) and be sure to subscribe to our e-mail list so you can keep up-to-date on deadlines, releases & events.

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# A Note from the editor(s)

It's been years since I stuffed my backpack full of school supplies (blue, black, and red pens; pencils; at least three college ruled notebooks; one set of colored pencils; a box of Kleenex; and, of course, a Trapper Keeper), and headed off for the first day of school, showing up in awful new clothes—Jurassic Park T-shirts or neon colored shorts—and hoping to find my friends just as uncomfortable and nervous as I.

Despite the inevitable awkwardness and the sad end of summer vacation, I used to look forward, somewhat apprehensively, to the end of summer and the start of the new school year. New classes, new activities, new classmates and teachers: all of it scary and exciting and refreshing.

I sometimes miss getting a little back-to-school mid-year new year in September, when I got to rethink my activities and my schedule. I look forward now to the end of summer for a completely different reason. Aside from big-budget blockbusters, about the only thing the summer in Texas has to offer is sandal-melting heat. Me and my sad little un-air-conditioned car are ready for the temperature to drop.

Still, even post-college, the lives of young adults are constantly changing; getting refocused or heading in new directions. Some of us are going off to seminary, looking for new jobs, beginning new relationships. Even those of us who aren't going anywhere need to shake things up every now and then just to keep our hearts and minds from atrophying.

September, when the church is kicking off new programs and students are buying lined paper and pencil boxes, is as good a time as any to ask questions, evaluate our lives and ourselves, and think hard about where we'd like to go.

Many of the articles and reflections in this edition of *Episcoric* are doing this work: struggling with transitions, evaluating our current state, thinking about new beginnings; two priests discuss the future of worship, an Episcopalian reflects on the state of the Anglican Communion, and others consider major changes in their lives.

These articles ask the same questions that the Anglican Church has been trying to answer and I and young adults are constantly asking ourselves: Who are we? Where do we want to go, and how do we get there? So read on and spend some time with the questions.

—Jeremiah Sierra

from the

**BOOK** <sup>of</sup> **BCP** **PRAYER**

tell me all yo

On

O God, by whom the meek are guided in judgment, and light rises up in darkness for the godly: Grant us, in all our doubts and uncertainties, the grace to ask what you would have us to do, that the Spirit of wisdom may save us from all false choices, and that in your light we may see light, and in your straight path may not stumble; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. —*A Prayer for Guidance, page 832*

Q. What is prayer?

A. Prayer is responding to God, by thought and by deeds, with or without words.

Q. What is Christian Prayer?

A. Christian prayer is response to God the Father, through Jesus Christ, in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Q. What are the principal kinds of prayer?

A. The principal kinds of prayer are:

ADORATION is the lifting up of the heart and mind to God, asking nothing but to enjoy God's presence.

We PRAISE God, not to obtain anything, but because God's Being draws praise from us.

THANKSGIVING is offered to God for all the blessings of this life, for our redemption, and for whatever draws us closer to God.

In PENITENCE, we confess our sins and make restitution where possible, with the intention to amend our lives.

OBLATION is an offering of ourselves, our lives and labors, in union with Christ, for the purposes of God.

INTERCESSION brings before God the needs of others; in PETITION, we present our own needs, that God's will may be done.

—*from An Outline of Faith, page 856*

ur thoughts

# Prayer

## a way to pray *Jennifer Cobb*

For a long time my prayer time consisted of singing the Lord's Prayer in my mind right before bed, something that was an automatic and routine part of my day. On occasion others would ask for prayer and I would agree to keep them in my prayers even though I was really thinking I would probably forget, and I didn't think anything would actually happen even if I did pray for them. It seemed unlikely that God was going to intervene or change a situation just because I asked.

Many friends and people I looked up to seemed to really believe that God was listening and responding to their prayers. So my faith was based on a hope that their experiences were real. I wanted what they talked about, a personal relationship with God and a story to share of how I had encountered the Divine in my life. Okay, I was jealous of this because I wasn't feeling anything.

At some point, I saw the movie *Shadowlands* and the part where C.S. Lewis' character says something to the effect that maybe the purpose of prayer is not to change God's mind or a circumstance, but to change ourselves. I liked that. It seemed like a good thing to be asking for. So I started praying for various relationships and situations, asking for God to change me instead of the other person or situation. When I did this, I saw changes in relationships that were strained or awkward or hurtful. I became more open, understanding and compassionate and this in turn affected how I interacted with others and the responses I received.

My personal practice of prayer has continued to deepen as I learn about and try different techniques, like breath prayer, Christ-centered prayer, and healing prayer. With breath prayer I am reminded with each breath that God created me and breathes His life, His breath into me. In Christ-Centered Prayer, I try to quiet my mind and ego enough so I can listen for what God is saying. With healing prayer, I ask to be a vessel for the love and healing God wants to share through us.

Each of these methods has helped me experience God's presence and has opened my heart, mind, body and soul to a real and transformational relationship. I'm still learning (sometimes over and over) to be comfortable and trusting in this relationship—to ask my questions and for what I or someone else needs; to express doubt, anger or despair as well as thanksgiving and joy; and to trust the response. While I sometimes still wish I could pray as eloquently or powerfully as others, I do know now that God is listening, no matter which way we choose pray, and is working in and through each of us. Even when we don't feel anything, God is present and waiting, like a good friend, to hear from us.

# beyond contemporary

*The Reverend James Derkits  
& The Reverend Kevin Schubert*

How many years can we still call a particular style “contemporary,” without it changing much? The great gift that “contemporary” worship, and what is commonly known as praise music, gave us Generation X’ers and Y’ers is the realization that there are options out there. We have found praise music (worship music led by guitar and/or a band using flowing seventies melodies) to be very liberating when we first heard them at Camp Allen led by the likes of Kyle Pearson and Pat Green. It was a style of music we could call our own, and when we participated in leading that style of music while in high school and into college, it gave us a sense of connection back to the Camp Allen community. It was our brand of music. Not our parents (or not all of our parents.) It was a gift that the evangelical portion of the church, particularly the Cursillio community and adults at Camp Allen gave us to help search for an authentic expression. We could go on singing the praises of praise music, except we can’t go on for long with much integrity.

There came a point when we started paying close attention to what we were singing in those praise songs, and comparing the lyrics to what we were singing in our traditional hymns. It became clear that the rich metaphors and mystery found in the hymns drew us closer to a clearer understanding of the vastness of God, and a broader understanding of our relationship with God. One drawback of “contemporary” music, from our perspective, is that the theology tends to be narrowly focused (Jesus suffered, I benefit) instead of the wide variety of understandings in the relationship between God and humanity found in the story of Scripture, not to mention our full year of seasons. Another drawback is the undertones of unconscious/repressed sexuality. Sexuality and spirituality go hand in hand, and we stand with Solomon in that the sexual metaphor can be an approach to understanding the desire of our hearts, i.e. to be in communion with God. But that theme should be explored honestly and openly. Some of the lines in praise songs hint at frustrations needing to be expressed in another venue.

So, if “contemporary Christian music” is not the only way to sing to God, what do we have to offer the church instead? We have been given the gift in “contemporary” music, the opening of a door to new expressions. We have the gift of our traditional hymns, and the more recent collections published in the church. Now, what do we do with those? Trinity, Houston has one fine example in their 12:30 Jazz Mass, where they offer a variety of texts (traditional and recent) in a jazz setting. At one of the author’s ordination, the psalm was chanted and the refrain was set to the melody of Nirvana’s “Smells Like Teen Spirit.” At both of our ordinations, the traditional “Litany for Ordinations” was chanted in the traditional way, but was supported by the steady

rhythm of a djembe. Many churches have explored using different instrumentation on hymns like “Open your hearts of faithful people,” such as drum and mandolin. A favorite song by many from the praise movement is “We are one in the spirit.” Recent exploration with that song using only percussion to support a capella voices, gives it a renewed, moving feel. St Gregory of Nyssa Episcopal Church in San Francisco does all a capella singing, and they dance while they sing, but that’s for another article.

Those of us taking an interest in Episcoporic are postmodern. Our job is to take a look at what our tradition has to offer us, consider how to express that with our own twist in the variety of instruments or styles of music we have at our fingertips, and see what gift we can offer the church. We in the Episcopal tradition tend to sing hymns that are community focused, theologically grounded in the Trinity, incarnational, and beautiful. The movement to explore and broaden the options for music in liturgy is already happening in a variety of ways across the church, and across our diocese. We have been involved in that exploration and wondering why we are no longer content with what is called “contemporary” music. We’re wondering what’s next, and what we (and all you reading this) can offer as an authentic expression of postmodern Christians living beyond the “contemporary” movement?

*want to be a part of services that are trying something a little different? check out what these churches are doing with their worship:*

**Trinity, Houston**

12:30 Jazz Service

**Christ Church Cathedral, Houston**

10:00 Magdalene Community Meets at the Rothko Chapel

**St. Matthew’s, Austin**

5:15 Alternative Liturgy

**St. David’s, Austin**

5:00 Celtic Communion

*have more recs? send them to us at [episcoporic@gmail.com](mailto:episcoporic@gmail.com)*



# higher education

## thoughts on a new life in seminary

Chase Danford



*“Can you become a new version of you...I need a new version of me.”*

Those are some of the lyrics from the theme song of the television show *Felicity*. *Felicity*, a show I watched religiously in high school, chronicled the life of a young woman attending college in New York. I often joked, once I had arrived at university myself, that I was a male *Felicity*. Like the character, I always seemed to be in search of—and creating for myself—meaning, identity, and purpose. A good education should never leave us the same, should never simply confirm all of our prior assumptions. I am proud to say I had a good education in college. I became a new version of me. I wonder if the same will be true in the next phase of my education.

I am about to begin graduate studies at Virginia Theological Seminary. My academic goal is to earn a Master of Divinity, which is basically a professional degree for clergy (comparable to the Juris Doctor that attorneys need to practice law). Virginia Seminary, like all educational institutions, is not just in the business of awarding degrees. Academic programs are really all about formation, and seminaries form spiritual leaders—whether parish priests or theologians. As I enter into my formation process for the ordained ministry, I will also continue to be formed as a believer. So, when I get into a contentious religious discussion with a family member, and she or he wonders how a future priest can have such (from their perspective) heretical views, I sometimes say, “Well, maybe after seminary I’ll feel differently.” Of course, I don’t really want seminary to change my beliefs, but I recognize that it would be unusual (and perhaps unfortunate) to spend three years in a graduate-level academic and spiritual formation process and not leave without a change in perspective on at least one major issue.

And that’s the scariest part about beginning this new journey. I don’t know if I want to change, but I probably will. I mean, sure, I’d like to make some changes in my life—work out more, manage stress better, do more to help others—but I don’t really want to change anything at the core of my identity. And yet, I suspect some major change might happen during seminary. What version of me will I be at the end of three years?

One of my fears is that I might become more conservative (not really likely, but you never know); another is that I could lose my faith (just the other day a church friend warned me about “theological cemetery”). A third fear is the possibility that I’m not called to ordained ministry after all. A fourth is that I might eventually decide I can’t remain Episcopalian anymore because I am tired of the church trying to preserve unity at the cost of truth and justice.

These fears threaten to prevent me from fully appreciating the journey I am about to embark on, and that would be a shame. Fear is a recurring theme in my life, and it is a constant struggle to keep it from controlling me. I had many fears going into, and throughout, the discernment process required before seminary, and one of the gifts of that long process was that I learned to better manage my fears. I eventually told myself, “You know, if this doesn’t work out, I’ll be ok. There are lots of things I want to do in my life, and many areas in which I’m skilled.” An even greater gift was that I learned to better trust God. Even if the process didn’t end the way I wanted it to, and I felt crushed, God would be with me. And that’s what alleviates all my fears—knowing that no matter how I feel or what kind of situation I’m in, God is there with me.

So no matter what version of me emerges from seminary, it will be one that is loved by God and that lives and moves and has its being in the presence of the divine.

*Rita Rohr*  
*to Remember*

This is the resting place of my maternal great-grandmother, grandfather, grandmother, and two of my uncles. These beautiful monuments celebrate the memory of those that have passed. Unlike other American cities, they are not hidden outside the city or behind walls thus creating a strange beauty, uniquely a part of the cities culture. These beautiful cemeteries remind me of my mortality and the awareness that I only belong to this world for a short time. I feel peace and joy when visiting my grandmother in this place knowing that she is finally home with God.

*Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word  
and believes him who sent me, has eternal life. He does not  
come into judgment, but has passed from death to life. —John 5:24*



*Chagnard  
Family Tomb,  
St. Louis III  
Cemetery,  
New Orleans  
February '06*

# Looking Ahead

after Lambeth 2008

Matthew Chen

After Lambeth 2008 I was catching up on episodes of the *Daily Show* and the *Colbert Report* when I noticed a particular clip: Stephen Colbert interviews Laura Goodstein of the *New York Times* on the Anglican schism. Whoa, I thought, our church has made it to prime time: the *Colbert Report* on Comedy Central! Stephen Colbert's cogent and light-hearted riff on the current state of the Anglican Communion offered a welcome departure from the intense media coverage surrounding the 2008 Lambeth Conference.

Whoa, I thought,

Since 1869, and with few interruptions, Anglican bishops from around the world have gathered in Canterbury, England for the Lambeth Conference.

our church has made it to prime time!

The conference, which meets every ten years, provides an opportunity for bishops to renew relationships that help to tie together the autonomous churches that form the fractious family of Anglicans around the world.

Disputes focusing on sexuality and authority in the church have torn the unity and witness of the Anglican faith. (This disunity over sex garnered much media attention.)

I don't happen to believe that the substance of the disputes is worth schism and that our infighting is attracting people to become Anglican Christians. Yet, our communion of churches cannot just muddle through, as it has in past when confronted by controversy.

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In protest over the progressive direction of the Episcopal Church, USA, and the Anglican Church of Canada, approximately 200 Anglican bishops from the "Global South" (Africa, Asia, and Latin

America) boycotted the Lambeth Conference. Whatever their views, the boycotting Nigerian bishops represent almost 20 million Anglicans, compared to the 125 Episcopal bishops in the U.S., who lead a small church of 2 million. Also absent was Bishop V. Gene Robinson of New Hampshire, the first openly-gay Episcopal bishop, whose formal participation was prohibited by the Archbishop of Canterbury.

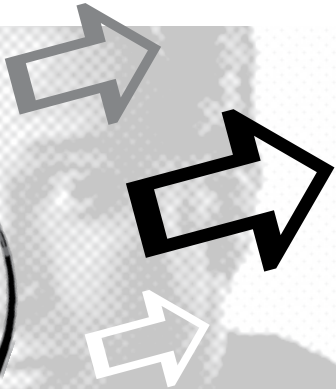
Much ink has been spilled on the controversies facing our church and the communion to which it still belongs. What seems most important now is to look ahead and ask: where we are headed? Or as vice-presidential candidate James Stockdale put it in 1992: "who are we and what are we doing here?" The preface to the first American

prayer book (1789) states that “[...] this Church is far from intending to depart from the Church of England in any essential point of doctrine, discipline, or worship; or further than local circumstances require.” Today, Anglican churches around the world have embraced the concept of unity in diversity, while arguably stretching the historical, doctrinal, and practical bonds that have held us together. Bishops at the Lambeth Conference appear to have backed plans to create an Anglican Covenant to clearly spell out what doctrine, discipline, and worship Anglicans have in common. Additional measures have been proposed, such as a Faith and Order commission that would provide guidance to provinces that take actions outside a Communion-wide consensus. These connections would prioritize interdependence-in-communion over provincial autonomy.

Ironically, these plans have pleased neither liberals, who predominate in the Episcopal Church, nor conservatives, who are the vast majority in the Global South. It is still unclear, first, whether the Anglican Communion can continue to exist as an international Christian community and, second, what place the Episcopal Church would occupy in an “Anglican Communion 2.0.” Even so, Anglican identity through the ages has been grounded in finding a middle way between extremes, such as Reformed Protestantism and Roman Catholicism in the sixteenth century. The difficult task of carrying that conversation forward into the 21st century continues today. Yet, I am hopeful that we will find ways to stay united.

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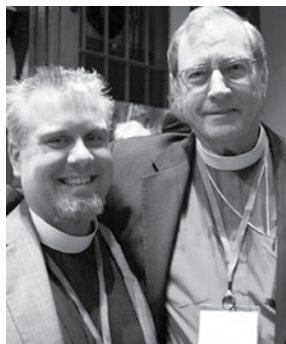
During one day of the conference, nearly all the bishops in attendance (some 670) marched through London to protest global poverty, joined by Jewish and Muslim religious leaders, as well as fellow bishops from the Catholic and Orthodox churches. This “walk of witness” showed faith communities at their best. May we in the Anglican family be able to reclaim our heritage of common prayer, even with our differences and disagreement, in shared witness to the wider world.



# Thirteen Meditations for an august evening

*Mark Provence*

1. In magical unison, a quintet sings evensong across the five boroughs: Manhattan soprano, Bronx bass, Brooklyn tenor, Staten Island baritone, and (also conducting this evening) a contralto in Queens.
2. Bathsheba shifts in her bath.
3. Oh Lord won't you buy me a Mercedes-Benz?
4. Amidst rancorous divorce proceedings, the Valentines load up the mini-van and go for ice cream. Against all odds, there's enough Rocky Road for everyone.
5. Grant this failing sophomore just one sparkling night of studious dreams.
6. A thousand Mexican bats wake up in the flowers of a cactus forest, a thousand miles from home.
7. After the gondolier is buried, his faulty boat will be bonfire-burned.
8. Two novitiate nuns fight over who gets to pick tonight's video.
9. A peacock wanders onto the set of a Hollywood game show. The crowd is silenced, the camera whirrs. Our hometown hero buzzes in to take the lead.
10. An astronomist names a moon after his oldest and greatest enemy.
12. "What is your only comfort in life and death?" "That I am not my Own, but belong body and soul, in life and death, to my faithful Savior Jesus Christ."
13. If it be your will, oh God, may Egypt's oldest woman live to see another day.



# Sitting down with **ANDY**

an interview with  
the new Bishop Coadjutor-Elect  
*by Emily Walters*

**One Election down. One more to go.** But at least we know that our diocese is in good hands. On Saturday, May 24, delegates from around the diocese, both clergy and lay, descended on downtown Houston to elect the next bishop of Texas (well, technically to elect a Bishop Coadjutor, who will become the next bishop following Don Wimberly's retirement next year). The Rev. C Andy Doyle will be ordained a bishop in the Episcopal Church at St. Martin's on November 22 by Presiding Bishop, Katharine Jefferts Schori. Emily Walters had the chance to interview Andy this summer about the diocese and the future of young adult ministries.

**Emily Walters:** *How are you feeling since the election is over?*

**Bishop Coadjutor Elect, Andy Doyle:** As you can imagine I am very excited about the opportunities before the Diocese of Texas and me. There is a lot of work to do over the next year. There are some key events that will mark the transition: the new Canon to the Ordinary's start in October, the ordination to the Episcopate in November, the co-adjutor work of transition, the celebration of ministry for Bishop Wimberly, and the seating at Christ Church Cathedral in June. During this time I intend to spend time traveling around the diocese and listening to our common vision and trying to better understand the challenges that face the diocese and the Episcopal Church. I will also spend this year working on assessing broad oversight, congregational development challenges, and goals and strategies for the diocese.

**EW:** *What does the outlook for young adult ministries look like in this diocese?*

**BCE AD:** I believe that we are at an important and crucial time in young adult ministries. A time when we have got to ask questions about how we achieve life-long formation opportunities for every age. Which means we must ask the questions about real needs for each age group specifically. I think for us we need to begin to ask what is needed for young adults to live a christian life. How do we help them find what they are looking for, what they need? As I listen, one of the things I am hearing is that young adults need discernment groups to help with life choices. Bishop Harrison is working with a collaborative team in West Texas to see if we can't figure out a way of training and providing discernment groups in our parishes for young adults.

All of that being said, I think there is a larger issue. Young adults along with most everyone else are also looking for us to be intentionally Christian and I think this is a learning curve for us. As leaders this requires that we be clear

about our faith and what "We believe." We have to be able to speak plainly about Jesus and the impact he makes in our lives. We must be prepared to talk theologically and to help people develop rules of life. We as a church must understand and live into the reality that each of our congregations must be a theological and spiritual center for living a Christian life.

**EW:** *At 25 years old what kinds of things were you struggling with? Did these things change by 30 ?*

**BCE AD:** At 25 I had just finished struggling with the call to ordained ministry and was in seminary. I was struggling with the realities of achieving an advanced degree and new family life. JoAnne and I got married in 1990. I was 23 when we got married. I was trying to figure out if I was going to be an academic priest working in a university or rector of a church. I loved and still love systematic theology. At 30 JoAnne and I were preparing for our first child and I was beginning to think about being a rector.

What I have discovered is that living a Christian life requires: a community of faith, private and daily prayer, weekly eucharist, friends, a peer group to do discernment, and regular bible reading and study. At 42 I am now in a new stage of life marked by my election, but more so by the process of discernment and new ministry God is providing for me.

**EW:** *Do you have a specific message for young adults? If so, what is it?*

**BCE AD:** Let me begin with some thoughts: Young adults are at a particular time in their lives where understanding how to truly be responsible for your own spiritual life takes on new meaning as it is lived out in the dimensions of work, family, and friends. At the same time, young adults have a responsibility not only to find and discover what it means to live a rule of life, but they must also complete the circle by returning gifts of ministry to the community. It is a challenge to move into circles of leadership in a church that may be less than accommodating. Nevertheless it is our mutual responsibility to be good stewards of the gifts we are given. We as a church need young adult leadership, and young adult leadership can benefit from those who have walked a life of discernment. Some of the most important companions along the way have been older mentors who have helped me. This is an important aspect of the pilgrimage and one we must each look for—our spiritual mentors or spiritual directors.

The one message is this: I believe in the hope and vitality of our church. Young Adults are an integral key to that hope and vitality. I would say don't wait for your leadership to be asked for, but step into it and help us lead our church well into the future.



# unchristian. unreal.

Emily Walters

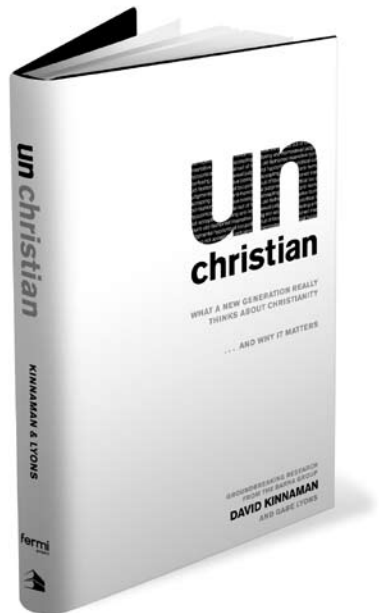
Gay hater, anti-homosexual, homophobic. Do you identify with any of these three words? Chances are you probably don't think of yourself that way, but according to David Kinnaman and Gabe Lyon's book *UnChristian*, these words might as well be tattooed on your arm.

David Kinnaman, president of the highly acclaimed scientific research organization the Barna Group felt compelled to write his first book after analyzing the compiled data and realizing that Christianity really does have a problematic reputation. The research was spurred on by Lyon's need for hard data when it came to founding his non-profit organization, The Fermi Project.

While Kinnaman does his very best to smooth over all of those statistics and graphs to make it an easier read, the book itself still remains very dry. While in part more interesting than just numbers, there are some places that may demand more concentration than others in order to understand the scope of it all.

This book delves into how the new generation, that's you and me, of young adults ages 16-29 in America view Christianity. The results aren't good. At the top of the list comes the perception that Christians are anti-homosexual. With all the numbers and all the hardcore, can't-be-disputed data, Kinnaman writes, "Out of twenty attributes that we assessed, both positive and negative, as they related to Christianity, the perception of being antihomosexual was at the top of the list.

"When you introduce yourself as Christian to a friend, neighbor, or business associate who is an outsider, you might as well have it tattooed on your arm: anti-homosexual, gay-hater, homophobic. That it doesn't matter if you align yourself under the heading of homophobic or gay hater, when you introduce yourself."



Kinnaman and Lyons define “outsiders” as those that are outside the Christian faith, explaining that through their research terms such as “non-believers,” “non-Christians,” the “lost” are considered derogatory and when used in conversations with others have a tendency to sabotage any meaningful conversation that may follow. These words define people by what they are not, instead of what they are.

The authors form all of their research into six big headings of what the outside world really thinks about Christianity. In short Christians are perceived as the following: hypocritical, too focused on getting converts, anti-homosexual, sheltered, too political and judgmental.

If the idea of already being prejudged as being gay-haters doesn't effect you much then maybe the realization that only 16% of those interviewed said Christianity was a faith they could respect, while only 9% said Christians are people they can trust.

While waiting to be amazed by their findings (the cover of the book itself even professes to hold “Groundbreaking Research”) don't be too worried if the information they give you seems old hat or all too familiar. After all, a large number of the “outsiders” used in this research were not just outsiders who belonged to other religions or lacked a spiritual bond entirely, but were formerly practicing Christians.

But there was something lacking amongst all the numbers, figures and pie charts—though I suspect it was lacking intentionally. Through the maze of what all of this really means—and though there is some personal opinion from the authors of what we as Christians should do with this information—the challenge isn't hard to identify. Kinnaman and Lyons do well in giving the reader hard evidence, evidence that is hard to swallow but also hard to ignore and challenges us, a new generation of believers, to change the face of Christianity as we know it. For more information visit [www.unchristian.org](http://www.unchristian.org) or [www.fermiproject.com](http://www.fermiproject.com)

**dis•cern•ment:** figuring out what God's got in store for you

# vocare 2.0

## cuz life ain't a road you walk alone

Vocare is a ministry for and by young adults (20s, 30s & beyond) aimed at helping us discern our callings: in ministry, in work, in relationships, in life. On hiatus for some serious revamping, Vocare's coming back at ya better than ever in the new year.

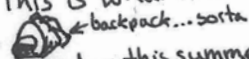
# Confessions

of an Episcopalian youth minister



by an anonymous Episcopalian Youth Minister





Back to school. This is what I've been putting all my hopes in.

Back to school.



There was a Sunday this summer when I had one youth at EYC. ~~One~~. People ask me about my youth group and I always feel the need to "fudge the numbers" in order to make myself look successful. "Oh, it sure felt as if we might need a larger space very soon, I do say" ... So on days like Sunday I feel the need to remind myself, "School's back pretty soon ... people will be back ... my numbers and job security will rise and all will be perfect."

Truth be told, I had a great night when there was only one student. There were 3 sponsors , 1 student . We talked, played games & finally that one student left about 30 minutes late. That was real youth ministry. I got to know that student much better than had there been other students. The other adults weren't just acting like there was a kid in the room. We treated that student with respect and had a great time goofing around.

I look forward to summer  ending  so we can start up bible studies, prepare mission trips & other fun outings, but I wonder ... will I reach a point where I wish I could go back  to just one student and really show them the  of Christ? Will that one student ever feel like there are too many people and they should find a smaller youth group where they are interacted with more? I pray that each EYC meeting, I can interact and love these students like they are the only one. I pray that I won't walk away from a conversation or from a student in need when someone else catches my attention.

So with that, may the school year begin!



# digital native

*Ross Alan Heinsobn  
episcorific.org webmaster*

Our generation lives in a time where the latest and greatest technologies are at our fingertips. Technology has not only become a part of everyday life, but in some cases it has become everyday life. Our generation is one that grew up in an age of

cable television, gaming consoles, the personal computer, and the cell phone. This is our part of the world. We know technology not because we were taught it, but because it was and is part of our lives and our native world.

Being a “digital native” myself, I’ve always wondered why the general church has been so slow and/or hesitant to adopt the tenants of the technological world.

When I was a kid, I didn’t like church. I found it boring, and uneventful. The building itself scared me. The traditions of the Lutheran church I grew up in were confusing. “Why do you drink wine so early in the morning dad?” “Can I have some bread? My tummy’s rumbling...” “Is it story-time yet?” Instead Best Buy and Circuit City were my sanctuaries. I could find limitless amounts of information and answers, and the world opened before my eyes—usually through some sort of High Definition TV. I would spend hours perusing the aisles in a vain attempt to know everything about the thing-a-mabobs and whats-it’s that I could not afford.

A vast majority in the Church are “digital immigrants.” They don’t speak technology as their native tongue, and they usually prefer to use technology only when it is a necessity. Hand-outs and paper pamphlets are the weapon of choice for disseminating information to the people. I have to both admit and give props and kudos to the Church for its fair attempts at reaching out to the digital native community, but it’s not enough, we need more.

I saw a 5 year old on a cell phone and laughed to myself. My 9 year old nephew has an iPod, and I still don’t. I, like most in the Church, stand around and watch the world change and mold into something that I can barely fathom. Living in a time of endless flux, we must continue to adapt our conventional ways of communication. We must not separate ourselves from the world or we will be left behind.

The new media is Digital. First it was story-telling and word-of-mouth, then it was scribing, then the printing press, then radio, then TV, and now it is the internet. Episcorific, the Zine, and Episcorific.org, are out there. The website offers links to information concerning the church and those within it, contact information, mail-list subscribing, an archive of past issues (only one so far), and an electronic copy of all issues up to the most recent one. So, if you like what you read in the Zine and on the website, pass it on. Whether it’s the paper Zine, an email or IM with a link to Episcorific.org, or even word-of-mouth... We’re not above using out-dated methods of communication, like talking to another human being.

# LIVING (and working) with PURPOSE

Mark Trahan

*The man without a purpose is like a ship without a rudder – waif, a nothing, a no man. Have a purpose in life, and having it, throw such strength of mind and muscle into your work as God has given you.*

—Thomas Carlyle, British historian and author

Purpose is defined as something set up as an object or ends to be attained. It is a resolution, a determination and an intention. Having a mission statement for life helps one stay focused on purpose in the midst of career and life changes. A mission statement is the rudder of the ship, giving direction in the midst of the waves of external events. This article offers an approach to building your personal mission statement by examining your own sense of purpose.

## **Our first step is inviting God to guide us.**

In November of 2001, I was desperate. I returned to Houston from an acting career in Chicago after recognizing that I felt empty and void. Despite some successes, I felt lost and alone. Through guided reflection upon my talents, my interests, and my past, I had set out on a new path – therapeutic work with adolescents and families – but I was still unemployed, living with my father and searching for a position both in work and in life. Nothing was coming my way. When my father mandated that I find my own place by January 1st, I felt completely paralyzed. I had no money, no place to live, no job. It was time to surrender. I dropped to my knees and prayed, “Lord, please, please, please, show me what to do. Give me a sign. I surrender!” Suddenly, a thought, clearer than any I have had since, entered my mind and left me dumbfounded. It said, “call The Right Step.” The Right Step is a treatment center for addiction. Immediately, I picked up the phone and called the CEO, a friend of mine. “George, I’m looking for a job, and I want to know if you know of anything,” I said. “Come on down and see me,” he replied. “I am hiring a marketing coordinator, and I was just thinking about you. I’m glad you called.”

Surrender is one of the tools of purpose. It’s the moment when we go, “Okay God, I can’t do it without your help. Show me.” It’s my belief that these are God’s favorite moments. “Sure,” He says, “Glad you finally called.”

*Have you prayed about your purpose? What’s stopping you? Convenience, fear, apathy?*

## **The next step in understanding purpose is to identify and utilize our “gifts.” Our greatest gift can be a talent, ability, interest, passion or character trait.**

I have a friend at Trinity Episcopal Church named Tracie. Perhaps you know her. She cuts the hair of most young adult Episcopal churchgoers I know. She often tells the story of her departure from corporate clutches to pursue her life’s purpose. Tracie was working for a big company making a great salary with benefits, stability and career mobility. She was a success by most definitions, but something didn’t feel right. She had previously considered a career as a hair dresser, but something had stopped her. After spending more and more time at her job feeling discontented, she recognized that becoming a hair dresser was a “calling.” She might have said to herself, “I can’t afford not to follow this call,” or maybe she simply said, “I’ve got to have a change.” Whatever inspired her to leave, she now has a well-established hair salon in Montrose, a great clientele (of course, we are Episcopalians!), and her gift is truly being utilized.

What are her gifts? Tracie listens, empowers, teaches and prays with you during that time while you are in her chair. She cares about each client. She imparts more than fashion; she imparts wisdom. What’s her greatest gift? I’d venture to say making others feel comfortable and beautiful. What purpose!

*What are your greatest gifts? Have you asked others what they think your gifts are? Do you hide your gifts with modesty, shame, shyness or fear?*

## **The next step is to identify our greatest “wound” – the thing that perhaps hurt us the most as a child or an adult.**

One indicator of purpose may come from identifying our greatest wound. A couple of my emotional wounds originated with feeling unsafe in the world as a child and watching my parents divorce. These are two of the wounds that have solidified my interest in helping others to heal. Identifying your emotional wounds may offer a road map in finding your purpose.

John Sage may be known to LSU football fans as an All-American high school football player who led them to three consecutive winning seasons, but that’s not how thousands of men in the Texas prison system know him. They know him as the founder of Bridges to Life. At age 36, John was a millionaire in a land development business that he had worked tirelessly to build. He burned out, and clinical depression crept in. His sister Marilyn was brutally murdered by a felon released on

parole. The crime was truly heinous. John loved his sister, and after the murder, he found himself enraged. Struggling with his anger, his therapist suggested that he visit a prison program for inmates that revolved around forgiveness and reconciliation. John was taken with the program and built on it by developing his own program, Bridges to Life. This program places volunteer victims of violent crimes in groups with prison inmates to create an environment of reconciliation for men who are going to be released. The program boasts the lowest recidivism rate for inmates in the Texas prison system. John combined his gifts in business administration with the wound of losing his sister to build a non-profit that has been featured in *Texas Monthly* and other magazines. John found his life's purpose.

*Think about the difficult times in your life. How did you overcome them? What is your greatest wound? How could the experience from these times become a gift to the world?*

## **The final step is to identify what the world needs.**

Richard Hunt is building an unusual kind of bank. It's a bank that helps each level of the socioeconomic strata to take a step up by providing loans to assist with building small businesses and establishing product lines. What's even more unusual? Richard is not a banker – he is a film-maker and a youth minister, but he has a gift for bringing people together. In talking to him, it quickly becomes clear that Richard sees a deep need in the world. His bank is based on successful model of assistance used in developing countries such as Chile and Chad. Richard has taken a chance on this model here and is building such a bank in the Heights, scheduled to open next year. The building has been donated; he is backed by some large organizations; and he is putting the pieces together. Richard's bravery is a addressing a need that the world has in a proactive way, and he is using his ability to bring people together to make it work.

*What need in the world would you like to address? Is there anyone else addressing this kind of need? Can you speak to them about your interest? What wound would you be healing in addressing this need? What gift would you be using?*

Frederick Buechner writes, "The place where God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet." Where do your gifts, your wounds, and the world's need intersect in your life? Take some time out. Pray, reflect, and act. God is waiting, and so are the rest of us!

*Mark Trahan is a Program Therapist at Memorial Hermann Prevention and Recovery Center.*

# My Life in the News

*Jeanette Hargreaves*

I worked in the news for nine years, and it was going to be my life-long career.

I remember when TWA flight 800 crashed into the Atlantic Ocean outside of New York on July 17, 1996. I was producing the number one talk show in New Mexico, and it was a very exciting time. The plane was completely destroyed, all 230 passengers were killed, and there was speculation that a land to air terrorist missile had downed the plane. The newsroom was abuzz, phone lines were lighting up, and I was trying to get an expert on the phone while handing the latest AP wires to Chris Jackson, the talk show host. At the end of the show, we still didn't have any answers and the public was sad and terrified. Chris Jackson and I went to our respective homes and prepared for the next day's show.

Tragedies came and went in the news this way for me until the morning of September 11, 2001. I had been editing video for the local NBC affiliate and their "Firstcast" morning news show (it comes on before the Today show). On a typical night, we had conversations such as "Should we show this bloody leg or this woman crying at the loss of her husband?"

A "slow news" night was one with few or insignificant tragedies to report. It had been a particularly "slow" news week, and we were complaining about it before I went home around 7am on September 11th. I went to fall asleep

on the couch, one eye open, tuned into the Today show. I saw video of a building smoking, and I remembered the first time the World Trade Center was bombed. I thought to myself, "Oh, at last, some NEWS." A few minutes later, I witnessed live with Matt Lauer and Katie Couric as the second plane, United Airlines Flight 175 crashed into the south tower of the World Trade Center. I sat up and watched in horror as the towers smoked, people jumped, and eventually, the towers collapsed.



I didn't sleep that day, and it was an intense night to work in the news, as you might imagine. On my way home from work on the morning of September 12th, I began to weep. I cried myself to bed, woke up for work that night, remembered the terrorist attacks and cried again. I cried on the way to work, got the job done and wept again on the way home. It went on like this for three days.

On the fourth day, I woke up a different person. What was this "news" I was working for? What good was I doing in exploiting these tragedies for ratings?

For five months I continued to work for KXAN, but with a new heart. This new heart, I found, could not stand to watch evil and sadness for so many hours every day—I remember the answering machine messages from victims of 9/11, the carnage of a bus bomb in the Middle East and a store clerk who was shot and died on surveillance video. These post-9/11 images are burned into my brain. Obviously, I had to change careers. I wanted to be a part of the good—I knew it existed—in churches, in schools, in museums. I needed to help create the good and be a witness to it.

The changes I made led me back to school, and eventually to my position today at St. Richard's as Youth Director. Now, I still work for the news. I'm working for the Good News: that the kingdom of God is present with us today. The headlines in my world look like children playing with a parachute, a group of friends planting a tree, a community of people gathered around the altar to eat bread and wine.

In Peter's second letter (1:16-21), he reminds us of this tradition: our Jewish and Christian ancestors were "moved by the Holy Spirit" and some, including his self, were eyewitnesses to the life of Jesus. Their accounts, written in the Bible, have made disciples of us all. How can we take part in their tradition? Can we be eyewitnesses to God? Jesus says that the kingdom of God is at hand and that our job is to seek the kingdom above all else. How can we do this—isn't the world a pretty messed up place? Is God really with us? I think so. I believe in the Good News Jesus taught. It does take practice, like Peter suggests, it's like giving your

attention to a lamp in a dark place. I've taught youth all over the Diocese one way to practice seeing the kingdom. I call it "GodOVision." When I do this with the youth, we all put funny glasses on and we ask ourselves, "How do you think God sees us?" How do I believe God sees me?



I believe God sees me as his child. I am his beloved too, a friend, a sister of Jesus.

Now, take a look around your office, your neighborhood, your congregation. Does this change the way we see each other? What is the Good News? Is there hope and love in the world? How can we share it with others? For some, it might mean a dramatic change in career as it did with me. For others, it might just mean a change in perspective, like GodOVision. We must work to actively seek God's kingdom each and every day. St. Richard of Chichester put it beautifully in his prayer:

*Most merciful Redeemer,  
Friend and Brother,  
may we see you more clearly,  
love you more dearly,  
and follow you more nearly,  
day by day. Amen.*



# Looking out for Number 2

*Ed Ziegler*

After 16 months with a child I have now forgotten completely what life was like without little Edward. Things changed so much with the arrival of that little bundle of joy.

These days people's lives are more and more planned, and that holds very true with reproduction. Families talk and plan and try to figure out when each partner is ready to take on such a big life change. When making the decision that my family was ready to expand, there was a lot of uncertainty: What am I getting myself into? Why is this a good idea? Am I ready for this? This better be as good as people say it is.

Well, it is better than people say, and you are never ready. If we all waited until we were ready to do something, a lot less would get done. I heard once that having a child is like getting punched, you are never ready for it, but when the time comes, you just take it and do your best. I can now say for myself that there is nothing like looking into the eyes of your child and realizing that the love they look back at you with is more intense than anything you could imagine. It is hard to believe that something so little could pack such a punch.

During the pregnancy, life is still about you and your spouse and you still get to be number one. The minute that stork shows up at your door, life gets turned upside down. It is no longer about looking out for number one. At that moment, it is all about looking out for number two. Anyone that has had a child knows what this means in more than one way. You are no longer the focus, friends forget who you are, family members say hi to the new addition before acknowledging your presence, you cannot even be the focus for yourself. The first priority is now always on that child. Your two number ones become a team focused on number two. Everything you do is now about what is best for the little guy: the food they eat, the way they're raised, what they are exposed to, the faith we share with them, baptism, and the environment they are brought into.

We spend so much time focused on that miniature version of ourselves, it is no wonder that we get wrapped up in everything they do, including number two. You are not even allowed to leave the hospital until number two. Once you prove to the hospital that your baby can have number two, and that you can look out for number two, you are set free to continue living into this life-changing event. Our sleep, our hygiene, our own desires are put on the back burner as number two gets all the attention. Parents are called to sacrifice everything to make sure their new offspring is well cared for and gets everything they need, and they continue to watch out for number two: "Did he go today?" becomes a regular question in the house of a newborn. Who knew something so little could pack such a punch?

I guess we could all learn a lesson from life here. We spend so much time growing up looking out for number one that sometimes we forget number two until it is thrust upon us. Maybe along with being a small child we have to care for, number two could be a guy we have never met face to face. If I, if we spent more time looking out for number two, the world would be a better place. It is so rewarding to do something for someone else without even thinking about it and it becoming second nature. I feel blessed everyday to have a son that I love so much, and know that I am trusted with his care by God, knowing that we are all God's children: God is always looking out for number two.

# Where do we go from here?

by Tracie Jae

Where do we go from here? On the street where I live, there is a strange phenomenon occurring. My peers are moving back home with their parents. For me, it felt weird. Here I am in my mid-thirties with my three daughters and I've taken up residence in the room where I grew up. It's a more adult version of the room, but still—it's my childhood room. Gone are the pre-nose job Michael Jackson posters and the flowery off-white furniture. In their place are neutral, posterless walls and grown-up mahogany furniture.

I'm an adult living between two worlds. In some ways, it's very much a fresh start. I get a chance to retreat to a safe place where I know I'm loved and cared for. It's a place where my daughters can be showered with grandparently affection. Having found no use for my larva stage, I'm a happy pupa.

On the other hand, sometimes, I don't feel very much like an adult. I am aware that I am inhabiting someone else's space and home doesn't feel much like home anymore. Much like pregnancy, I am defying the law of physics that says two objects cannot occupy the same space at the same time. And much like pregnancy, it will end in its own time when the forces of the universe are ready.

I wonder about my peers as I see them depart for work. I wonder if they are suffering from a bad case of the in-betweens like I am. I wonder if they are buying time, or if they are hunkering down for the long-haul.

The simply beautiful, butterfly-rific thing about being in-between is that there is a big new world awaiting me on the other side. Not sure where I go from here, but I can't wait to find out.



# Back to School

Cuz clearly yo mama didn't teach you nothin'

## Pack your backpack

Some recommendations for the journey:

*Traveling Mercies* by Anne Lamott

*Eat, Pray, Love* by Elizabeth Gilbert

*Spiritual Direction: Wisdom for the Long Walk of Faith* by Henri Nouwen

*A Dresser of Sycamore Trees: The Finding of a Ministry* by Garret Keizer

## Art Supplies

Go to an art store, buy some charcoal, and draw something. It's fun AND dirty!  
Then send it in to Episcorific for the next issue.

## P.E.

Start an impromptu game of freeze tag in your office.

## Get your schedule

Make your weekday more than a workday. What's going on at your church  
Monday thru Friday?

Make some time for regular prayer and/or meditation.

Young adult group: Join one. Start one.

like what you saw  
in this issue?

be a part of something. get your voice out there.  
say what you gotta say. submit to episcorific.

The next issue will be the Advent/Christmas issue to be released in late November.

**The submission deadline is November 1.**

So write, compose, draw, dictate or scribble your way into the babble.

We want to hear from you: [episcorific@gmail.com](mailto:episcorific@gmail.com)

## Austin

All Saints'  
(512) 476-3589  
<http://www.allsaints-austin.org/>

St. Luke's on the Lake  
(512) 266-2455  
[www.stlukesonthelake.org](http://www.stlukesonthelake.org)

St. David's  
(512) 472-1196  
[www.stdave.org](http://www.stdave.org)

## Baytown

Trinity  
(281) 421-0090  
[www.trinitychurchbaytown.org](http://www.trinitychurchbaytown.org)

## Bryan

St. Andrew's  
(979) 822-5176  
[www.standrewsbcs.org](http://www.standrewsbcs.org)

## Houston

Christ Church Cathedral  
(713) 222-2593  
[www.cathedralyoungadults.org](http://www.cathedralyoungadults.org)

Emmanuel  
(281) 493-3161  
[www.Emmanuel-Houston.org](http://www.Emmanuel-Houston.org)

Epiphany  
(713) 774-9619  
[www.epiphany-hou.org](http://www.epiphany-hou.org)

Palmer Memorial  
(713) 529-6196  
[www.palmerchurch.org](http://www.palmerchurch.org)

St. John the Divine  
(713) 622-3600  
<http://www.sjd.org/>

St. Martin's  
(713) 621-3040  
[www.stmartinsepiscopal.org](http://www.stmartinsepiscopal.org)

# Young Adult Ministries in the DOT

Trinity  
(713) 528-4100  
[www.trinitychurch.net](http://www.trinitychurch.net)

## League City

St. Christopher's  
(281) 332-5553  
[www.stchrishchurch.org](http://www.stchrishchurch.org)

## Nacogdoches

Christ Church  
(936) 564-0421  
[www.christchurch-nacogdoches.org](http://www.christchurch-nacogdoches.org)

## Round Rock

St. Richard's  
(512) 255-5436  
[www.SaintRichards.org](http://www.SaintRichards.org)

## Tomball

Good Shepherd  
(281) 351-1609  
[www.goodshepherdomball.org](http://www.goodshepherdomball.org)

## Tyler

Christ Church  
(903) 597-9854  
[www.christchurchtyler.org](http://www.christchurchtyler.org)

## Waco

St. Paul's  
(254) 753-4501  
[www.stpaulswaco.org](http://www.stpaulswaco.org)

[epi.center.org/edot/Young\\_Adult\\_Ministries.asp](http://epi.center.org/edot/Young_Adult_Ministries.asp)