



# Convocation Quarterly

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## A Vision Seen, A Call Obeyed

### The 2005 Convention Emphasizes God's call to Mission in Europe

#### Special points of interest:

- 2005 Convention

#### Inside this issue:

Frankfurt Hosts 2005 Convention

The Canterbury Rap

Baptism in Wiesbaden

Bishop's Advent message

A View from the Parishes

Anglican Communion: After the Earthquake The Diocese of Peshawar, Pakistan

Under sunny German skies, delegates from parishes and missions of the Convocation of American Churches in Europe met October 12-16, 2005, for their Annual Convention at the Dominikanerkloster, a Christian conference center in downtown Frankfurt. Bishop-in-Charge Pierre W. Whalon joined with clergy, laity, and youth delegates from Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, and Switzerland and representatives of the Diocese in Europe (Church of England), the Board of Foreign Parishes (USA), the Office of the Presiding Bishop, and the Office of Communication of the Episcopal Church Center to discuss and shape priorities which will guide the European mission and parishes for many years to come.

A new mission hymn, the presence of representatives of a fledging Spanish-speaking congregation in Rome, Italy, and of three free-standing Francophone missions in Toulon, Clermont-Ferrand, and Bordeaux,

France, and a decidedly mission-minded agenda contributed to shatter any lingering image of laid-back English-speaking chaplaincy churches.

The convention approved a budget of over \$465,000, proposed changes to the canons regulating the life of the Convocation, and agreed upon six mission priorities: Youth Ministry, Training and Nurturing, Building New Missions, Spirituality and Worship Development, Environmental Justice, and Leadership and Visioning.

The convention's approved mission priorities call for planting congregations in English and other languages as the need is discerned.

Indeed, the convocation has recently published editions of the Book of Common Prayer in French, Italian and German. A bilingual English-Spanish edition of the Book of Common Prayer is also in use. "Pray as if expecting your prayer will be answered, because it will," Whalon challenged

the delegates and visitors in attendance to the opening Convention Eucharist. "Who's calling us? What for?" The business of the convention is to make happen "what we ask Jesus to do in each Eucharist--to be sent in mission into the world," said Whalon. On Friday, Oct 14, the Convocation appropriately gathered at the Heilig-Geist-Kirche (Church of the Holy Spirit) for Morning Prayer and the commemoration of the Rt. Rev. Samuel Isaac Joseph Schereschewsky (1831-1906). Schereschewsky, a gifted linguist and former Bishop of Shanghai, translated the Bible into Mandarin and, despite a relentlessly devastating condition, "spent the rest of his life completing his Wenli Bible, the last 2000 pages of which he typed with the one finger that he could still move." His ministry, indicative of "how much can be accomplished with so little," highlighted the convocation's pressing need of educational materials in the Anglican tradition in languages

*Continued on Last Page*

## The Bishop's Advent Message

The Rt. Rev. Pierre W. Whalon

Dear friends,

"For what can someone give," asked Jesus, "in return for his life?" (Mark 8:37) This is perhaps not the typical Christmas scripture, but it comes to mind as we contemplate what God has given us in the Christmas gift who is Jesus. What can we give indeed, in exchange for our life that Jesus has given back to us?

Behind all the noisy Christmas merry-making is the celebration of the remarkable exchange between us and God. God first chooses us, gives us the gift of his Son, and then we discover that gift, just like

children find theirs under the tree Christmas morning. Do you remember what that felt like? I have a clear memory of coming into the living room of my parents' home in Newport, Rhode Island, early one Christmas morning. There sat the most wondrous sight: a Lionel train on an oval track, fixed to a sheet of plywood painted green. Oh, how marvelous it was, the red Diesel engine whose light glowed, the caboose lit from within, the logging car, and yes! a searchlight car... I had no inkling I would get something like *this*. It was totally unexpected. My father told me that he and the men of his organ-

building shop had put it together. That was special too--the thought of his craftsmen taking time away from the beautiful organs they made in order to put together a toy train just for me.

What could I give in exchange for this gift? Forty-plus years later its memory still warms my heart. How much more wondrous and marvelous is the gift that God has given each of us! For God has not left you alone, out in the cold, hands empty. No, by his choice he has made you prince or princess in his kingdom, though we are all emphatically commoners. What a surprise!

Honestly now--if you were God, would you choose *you*? And yet that is exactly what has happened--we have new and eternal life through Him who came down at Christmas. What can we give in exchange for this gift? Only thanksgiving and praise to the incredibly generous Gift-giver.

Let each of us allow our hearts to overflow in our Christmas offering to God of our wonder, love and praise. We'll make memories that will warm our hearts for all time.

In Christ,  
Bishop Pierre

## Ritual of Initiation St. Augustine's Celebrates Baptism

By Brian Huck

Our parish in Wiesbaden had the privilege to receive a visit from our bishop for the third time within the year on 3 April 2005. Each visit had a different purpose, though, and, appropriately enough, a different liturgical colour.

Having been here for the Convocation Convention in October during the green of ordinary time and routine business, Bishop Pierre returned, dressed in penitential purple of Lent in February to celebrate the Eucharist with us during the maternity leave of our rector, Martha Hubbard. The Bishop's third visit was in the joyful white of Easter and Holy Baptism for the christening of Martha's newborn son, Nicolas Hart Hammad Hubbard-Brucher, on the second Sunday of Easter.

While he is growing quickly, Nicolas is still quite a bit shorter than his name. His first name is all his own, but he has acquired both a middle and a last name from each of his parents. On his mother's side, a relative of Martha's, Seth Hart, was an Episcopal priest. While, in the family of Dr. Marco Brucher, a tradition developed of giving an Arabic middle name. (Marco's parents lived in different Middle Eastern countries when each of their own children were born.) Hammad means "righteous one" in Arabic.

The Rev. Clair Ullmann, from the Church of the Ascension in Munich, sent some water from the Jordan River to be mixed with the baptismal water. During the week leading up to Ash Wednesday, she had also celebrated the Eucharist at St. Augustine's during Martha's maternity leave.

We were grateful for this sign of the interconnection of different parishes within the Convocation.

Nicholas' baptism was Bishop Pierre's first baptism since being consecrated Bishop. He did quite well at the task judging from the reaction of little Nicolas, who remained very quiet while being passed from the arms of his

godparents to those of the bishop. Even the feeling of water on his head seemed to be exactly what the baby was expecting. Nicolas's godparents, Tim Martin and Mitzi Jeffrey-Martin, flew in from upstate New York for the occasion. They have known Martha since her discernment process before she attended seminary.

While Nicholas is no longer the newest member (two weeks later, another baptism was celebrated), the parish is delighted that we, together with his godparents and Bishop Pierre, could "receive Nicholas into the household of God" (BCP, p. 308).



*Bishop Pierre holds freshly lit baptismal candle*

*Brian Huck is a vestry member at St. Augustine's. Photo by Jim White, St. A's parishioner and unofficial parish photographer.*



## Youth Delegates Enliven Convention with Canterbury Rap

By Rebecca Döbler

*'The year was five ninety-seven A.D.  
When Augustine met Ethelbert  
And helped him see  
That Christ was the real thing  
The biggest, baddest king  
Berthie got baptised-it wasn't just a fling!*

*The Canterbury Rap-break it down now!"*

That was the beginning to our "Canterbury Rap", which Thomas Sandlin, my younger brother Robert, Jennifer Adams-Maßmann and I performed at the 2005 Convocation Convention in October in Frankfurt. We were putting forward a motion that our Convocation delegates [to the General Convention of the Episcopal Church, Columbus, Ohio June 2006] request that Queen Bertha and King Ethelbert of Kent be added to the Calendar of Lesser Feasts. Beforehand Father Allan had explained to the Delegates that our Confirmation Group had visited Canterbury, England in May, and had decided that Queen Bertha was definitely important enough to be given a feast day.

The Christian Queen Bertha had invited St. Augustine to England, supporting his mission. Her faith and St. Augustine's teaching led the king to the Christian faith. Once the king was converted, as many as 10,000 of his people followed his example within that year. Ethelbert believed in freedom of religion, so no one was forced to convert. He gave his royal palace in Canterbury to Augustine for his use, founded a cathedral there and laid the foundations for many other churches.

We were very happy when the convention delegates all voted in favour of our motion. We knew then that our idea had been a good one!

*Rebecca Döbler is a communicant at Christ-the-King, was a delegate to Convention.*



St. Augustine Baptizes King Ethelbert.

*The Royal Mail, UK 1987*

### Queen Bertha Resolution

Resolved, the Convocation of American Churches in Europe meeting for Annual Convention in Frankfurt am Main, Germany, 13-16 October 2005, requests that the 75<sup>th</sup> General Convention direct the Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music to add Queen Bertha and her husband King Ethelbert (baptised by St. Augustine in 597 and died 616), early Christian witnesses in England, who shared with St. Augustine of Canterbury in re-establishing Christianity in England AND WHO PRACTISED RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE, to the Calendar of Lesser Feasts and Fasts, with appropriate Propers and biographical materials.

***The above resolution was passed unanimously by the delegates to the 2005 Convocation Convention and will now be considered by the appropriate committee at the 2006 General***

EDITOR'S NOTE - Lesser Feasts and Fasts is a book collection of proper collects, lessons, and psalms for the Eucharist on each of the weekdays of Lent, weekdays of Easter season, and each of the lesser feasts of the church year. Guidelines for new commemoratives specify that the proposed individual possess certain personal qualities or traits, including "heroic faith, love, goodness of life, joyousness, service to others for Christ's sake, and devotion." The Guidelines call for an individual to be recognized by "the faithful at local and regional levels; and for widespread support for the person's inclusion over a reasonable period of time (historical perspective), generally for two generations or 50 years."

## A view from the Parishes

The Rev. Allan Sandlin

Dear Friends:

Here is a question that people ask me from time to time. (or if you don't ask it out loud, I can see the question in your faces . . .)

### ***When should my child begin receiving Communion?***

First of all, to understand the Church's teaching on this matter, it is worth noting that the 1979 Book of Common Prayer states that "Holy Baptism is full initiation by water and the Holy Spirit into Christ's body, the Church." That means that nothing has been left out or postponed that requires completion later in life. And if a baptized person is a full member of the Church, then the spiritual graces of the Christian life, especially Holy Communion, are available to any of the Church's members.

The Rev. Louis Weil, the respected professor of worship at one of our Episcopal Seminaries, has written:

*"Children experience much that they cannot verbally articulate. We do not delay the first bath until the child understands hygiene, nor do we require knowledge of nutrition prior to the first meal. The child experiences many baths and many meals – really experiences them – and at the most basic human level apprehends their meaning through the experience."*

Another way of looking at this question is summed up in this comment: *Children may not understand the holy communion, but they certainly understand acceptance and rejection.*

Does this mean that learning about the Eucharist in a more traditional way is unimportant? Not at all. From time to time, our Sunday School teachers offer a multi-week class for children on the meaning of the Eucharist. Some parents prefer their children to have this teaching before receiving Communion, and that's fine. In addition, we hope that our youth will continue to ask questions as their faith matures, and certainly during

Confirmation classes for both youth and adults it is appropriate to talk about the significance of the Eucharist in our lives as Christians.

When should children begin receiving Communion? They may receive any time following Baptism, but finally, the decision is up to the parents. That is why at Christ the King (and the Church of the Good Shepherd) you will see some infants who receive and some teenagers who do not. On this and other theological matters we live with different understandings and accept each other's perspective as valid.

Before our son Thomas was born, Gretchen and I decide that we wanted him never to remember a time when he didn't receive communion. (The same was true of course, when his sister, Elizabeth, came along four years later.) We had learned from our experiences in our home parish in Atlanta that understanding the

*"if a baptized person is a full member of the Church, then the spiritual graces of the Christian life, especially Holy Communion, are available to any of the Church's members."*

Eucharist is not a prerequisite for receiving. Rather, understanding grows out of participation.

Indeed, all people who seek God's grace and love are welcome at the Lord's table. We do not ask to see your credentials, no matter your age or country of origin or faith background.

Faithfully,

The Rev. Allan Sandlin

Rector

Christ the King, Frankfurt

**This letter was reproduced from *The Chronicle of Christ-the-King*, the first in a series of articles which endeavor to present interesting and relevant comments on our daily lives together from the various parishes. [Ed.]**



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### **MEMBERS OF EMMANUEL CHURCH, GENEVA AT THE CONVENTION**

*Convention, Continued from front page*

other than English-- in French, Italian, German, Spanish and, eventually, even in Chinese, as according to Whalon, there are conversations for developing an English-Chinese mission congregation in Eastern Europe.

Traditional chaplaincy ministry to English-speaking residents, to ministry to US deportees, to ministry in higher education, to outreach to the unchurched in their native languages, under Whalon's leadership the congregations of the convocation are actively and faithfully involved carrying out God's mission in this world "to reconcile all things in Christ."

At the closing Eucharist, celebrated at Christ the King Church, Frankfurt, Whalon handed over the Cross of Canterbury to the Very Rev. Zachary Fleetwood, ninth Dean of Holy Trinity Cathedral, Paris, France. The 4 foot tall wooden cross was dedicated in 1997 as a commemoration of the arrival in 597 AD of St. Augustine to the British Islands. As a powerful reminder of the power of prayer and of the proclamation of the Gospel, the cross is sent from the congregation hosting the current year's convention to the next hosting church which, in 2006 will gather in Paris, France.

All through the Convention "A vision seen, a call obeyed," a hymn recently composed by former Convocation Bishop-in-Charge Jeffery Rowthorn of the Convocation "to be sung at the Annual Convention of the Convocation of American Churches...in commemoration of the first use of the new Book of Common Prayer(1552) by the English exiles in Frankfurt am Main in May, 1555," uplifted participants singing to be empowered, "with a faith well trained" to follow in St. Paul's missionary steps .

***The Rev. Thomas Mansella is Translation Services Coordinator for the Office of Communication, at the Episcopal Church Center.***

## **After the Earthquake; Life in the Diocese of Pakistan**

By David Johnson, MD and The Rt. Rev. Mano Rumlalshah

On the dreadful morning of Saturday 8 October 2005 at 8:54 a.m., the bowels of the mother-earth boiled over and erupted in one of the most beautiful valley of Azad (Free) Kashmir and Northern parts of Pakistan. Its epicenter lay only about 95 km north of Islamabad. The shock-waves enveloped this western ridge of the Himalayas, announcing death and destruction all around. In describing the Valley of Kashmir, its Prime Minister is purported to have said, "I am the Prime Minister of a Graveyard." When personally visiting Abbottabad and beyond on the day after, one could only describe the area which is famously known as the **Silk Route** to have become the **Death Route**.

There are all kinds of estimates and conjectures flying around, but the current death toll is being put around forty thousand plus. *"The devastation let loose by the October 8 earthquake in Pakistan is far bigger than the Tsunami for it has affected 4 million people – 2 million of them severely; has rendered an estimated 2.5 million people homeless and has left millions others in grief and in need of immediate humanitarian assistance,"* says WHO Regional Director Dr. Hussein A Gezairy.

As regards to the Christian Community, those of us in the NWFP (Anglican Diocese of Peshawar) are pretty safe according to initial estimates. We are rather sparse in this Province (Ca 100,000) and are located in groups of 10-15 families. At this stage, we can only guess that at least 200 families (within Peshawar Diocese) must have been affected to varying degrees. In addition to that there have been about a dozen churches and school buildings which have been structurally damaged. The scale of it all can be measured by the fact that damage to St. Luke's Church Compound in Abbootatad alone is about 100,000 USD.

What does one do in such cataclysmic circumstances? One feels so inadequate and impotent to deal with such a mammoth task. We as a Church are so miniscule and as one dares to launch into such a situation, one has to grope even for a faith the equivalent of a mustard seed. It is like literally, pouring a drop in an Ocean.

Our Church is rising to the challenge and doing its utmost to play its part in this mission impossible. Our people have been generously and selflessly contributing with money and material goods for this purpose. We have also sent a medical team which we hope will become a field hospital, serving in the neighborhood of Garhi Habibullah for at least six months. There are other volunteers also who are contributing towards the general well-being of the victims offering food and tenting facilities. The Diocese proposes to adopt a specific area and become a sign of life and hope for its people, with a focus on long-term rehabilitation and healing.

We, as a nation, and in the Diocese of Peshawar are enormously grateful for those who have contributed so generously and willingly. We are slow in formulating projects, but in spite of our haphazardness, know that "we are endeavoring to reach the people of God who are struggling to be part of this life on earth."

*David Johnson, M.D. a pediatric cardiologist from the Diocese of Western North Carolina., is an Episcopal missionary. Bishop Mano, Anglican Bishop of Peshawar, and his wife Benita, are also serving as appointed Episcopal missionaries. Their work and life in the Diocese of Peshwar is featured in the Windows on Mission series produced by the Episcopal Church Anglican and Global Relations Office. ON DVD, Bishop Mano gives a 15-minute walking tour of Peshawar, and tells the compelling story of God's mission in the Pakistani frontier. The DVD is available for education on mission or the Anglican Communion. Contact Canon@tec-europe.com*