



The Mike

The Newsletter of St. Michael & All Angels Episcopal Church, Studio City, CA
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Christian Marriage and the Homosexual Person

by the Reverend Canon Henry L. Atkins, Jr., D.Min.

When we do theology in the Christian community we believe that God is involved in the process. The God we encounter in our tradition is one who leads us into all truth. Our encounters with God remind us again and again that our theology is not God (absolute) only God is God.

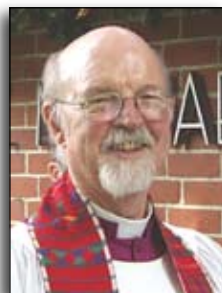
The late Rabbi Abraham Heschel used to speak in a profound way of the glory of God found in the commandments, and then ask his students "when had God broken the commandment against creating an image of God?" Always there was no answer and then he would say, "When God created humans in God's own image." God's liberating justice, grace, mercy and love always moves beyond our concepts, even when our concepts are written in the form of commandments.

The Anglican theological model is a model that begins in dialogue with God and the community moving towards consensus in theology. However, in the dialogue we are also aware that our consensus will also soon be called into question, and again we will need to return to God and the community to begin the process anew. Always we are tempted to opt out of this process, to settle half way to the promised land. To journey by faith, to be led by the Spirit, is to begin our reflection and dialogue again and again.

James Nelson has pointed out that our age has brought a shift from theologies of sexuality to "sexual theologies." Nelson stresses how important experience has become in doing theology, thus the shift from theologies of sexuality to "sexual theologies." However, his statement also reminds us that we will have to learn to live today with many different theologies. The old queen of the sciences appears to have opened herself to all of her brothers and sisters and theology is now representative of many different experiences. We are living in an age where our theological dialogue with the other has broadened.

The hermeneutical issue of the other is central in Biblical thought. We encounter the Holy Other who points us to our neighbor, especially our neighbor who suffers, and calls us to find salvation by giving ourselves in solidarity with those who struggle to be set free from the bondage of alienation and suffering.

The issue of the other is seen clearly in Genesis 2:18, "Then the Lord God said, 'It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a comrade as his partner.'" The very nature of the God of the Bible is that God is community. The Christian doctrine of the Trinity is a profound reflection of this reality. The Triune God sees and understands that the human person created in the image and likeness of God should live in community. Our humanity is realized with the other.



In the sixteenth century Bartolome de las Casas, a Dominican missionary friar from Spain working in what is today Mexico, wrote that the God of life refuses to tolerate the unjust treatment of the Indians by the Europeans. "The gospel," Las Casas said, "calls the European to enter the world of the other, to become the neighbor of the Indian."

Many European theologians attacked Las Casas. The Indian they said was "not a full human person." Some theologians said that the European was doing the Indian a service by destroying the culture of the Indian. Las Casas responded to a group of theologians in Seville, Spain who had put forth these views by stating "if we were Indians we would not think this way." He insisted that the Indian was a human person and that Christians were called to enter the world of the Indian, know their reality, and become friends with them.

It seems to me that in relation to Christian marriage and the homosexual person it is important to ask the question from the world of the homosexual. Are baptized, homosexual persons, reflecting on Genesis 2:18, who know themselves to be loved by God supposed to believe that God only wanted the heterosexual person to have a partner, to not be alone? The heterosexual response made outside the dialogical process, in this case, outside the world of the homosexual, will always be at best an abstract and at worst a faithless response.

In the world of the homosexual person one can hear witness after witness from homosexual people who have lived for years in loving committed relationships that they believe have been instruments of God's liberating grace in their lives. Grace is a mark of the sacrament of marriage. These witnesses know that God intended them not to be alone, but to be sustained by the grace given to us in marriage. From the world of the homosexual, we learn, if we are willing to listen, that the grace of God is not bound by our heterosexual boundaries, theological or otherwise.

In John 8:1-11 Jesus refused to allow a woman taken in adultery to be stoned to death, although at least two scripture passages Leviticus 20:10 and Deuteronomy 22:22-23 supported the stoning. In this context a new dialogue with scripture was initiated by the messianic ethic of Jesus. This transformation has been so profound that today one who obeyed the teaching to stone a woman taken in adultery would be considered a criminal.

In our age the Spirit has opened our blind eyes to enable us to see the homosexual person as a person. Until our age the homosexual person was most often seen as an incomplete

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person—deformed—not a whole person. Many of our brothers and sisters in the homosexual community experienced directly the violence of the heterosexual world. This violence is still very real at both the personal and institutional level. Prop 8, I believe, is a form of institutional violence against the homosexual community.

To see the homosexual as a person requires serious theological reflection on the part of the Christian community. It requires us to enter the world of the homosexual, to become our brother's brother and our sister's sister and in that context declare as clearly as possible that God did not create the

homosexual person to live in isolation, that God longs for the homosexual person to receive the grace that comes from marriage.

Pax, The Rev. Canon Henry L. Atkins, Jr.

Be the Village! *Photos Courtesy of Margie Mullen*

Below are photos from the last Be the Village party at the home of Karen Rogers and John Pryor. Stay tuned for information on the next party!

Jose Carrillo and Jr. Warden John Pryor



Eddie Mullen and Friends



Rodney Dickson, Jeffry Georgianni,
Jane Wilson, Liz Mullen



Preston Lucy in the pool



Nick and Sharon Renton



From the Vestry *Betty Ferrell, Senior Warden; John Pryor, Junior Warden*

Consecration Sunday Is Coming October 11th

Congregations that approach financial stewardship from a biblical perspective do not view the money Christians give to their church merely as a way to pay its bills. Rather, such congregations see financial contributions as a way to help people grow spiritually in their relationship with God by supporting their church's mission and ministry with a percentage of their incomes.

Our congregation's stewardship committee has again selected the New Consecration Sunday Stewardship Program as a way to teach the biblical and spiritual principles of generous giving in our stewardship education emphasis this year.

New Consecration Sunday is based on the biblical philosophy of the need of the giver to give for his or her own spiritual development, rather than on the need of the church to receive. Instead of treating people like members of a social club who should pay dues, we will treat people like followers of Jesus Christ who want to give unselfishly as an act of discipleship. New Consecration Sunday encourages people toward proportionate and systematic giving in response to the question, "What percentage of my income is God calling me to give?"

During morning worship on Consecration Sunday, we are asking our attendees and members to make their financial commitments to our church's missionary, benevolent, and educational ministries in this community and around the world.

Every attendee and member who completes an Estimate of Giving Card does so voluntarily by attending morning worship on Consecration Sunday. We urge people to attend who feel strongly opposed to completing a card.

The procedure is done in such a way that no one feels personal embarrassment if he or she chooses not to fill out a card.

We will do no home solicitation to ask people to complete cards. During morning worship our guest leader will conduct a brief period of instruction and inspiration, climaxed by members making their commitments as a confidential act of worship.

We will encourage participation in Consecration Sunday events through the Consecration Sunday team and governing board members. Since we will make no follow-up visits to ask people to complete their cards, we will make every effort to inform, inspire, and commit everyone to attend Consecration Sunday worship.

Thanks in advance for your enthusiastic participation in Consecration Sunday events.

Betty Ferrell, Senior Warden
John H. Pryor, Jr., Junior Warden



Treasurer's Corner *by Margie Mullen, Treasurer*

July, 2009 – Revenues and Expense Summary

	July Actual	July Budget	YTD Actual	YTD Budget
Total Revenues:	\$26,940	\$30,810	\$187,181	\$216,815
Total Expenses:	\$39,757	\$46,393	\$269,599	\$314,633
Net Total:	(\$12,817)	(\$15,583)	(\$82,418)	(\$97,818)

We continue to remain on track and in line with our year-to-date Net Total vs. our Budgeted Total. The income continues to lag, but so do expenses, but by a larger amount, so we remain ahead of budget.



BIONEERS

Revolution from the Heart of Nature

Come to Bioneers SFV

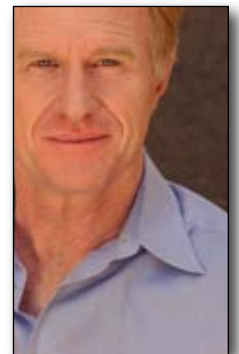
Meet Ed Begley, Jr., Wednesday, September 2nd at 7 pm in the Parish Hall.

As part of a growing effort to promote and support ecological sustainability, St. Michael and All Angels Episcopal Church is host to the newly-founded BIONEERS SFV chapter. Scheduled for Wednesday night, September 2nd, 2009, at 7:00 p.m., St. Michael's is proud to welcome ED BEGLEY, JR. as its keynote speaker, in St. Michael's Parish Hall.

Star of Planet Green's *Living with Ed*, this accomplished actor and activist will share how he began his 39-year eco-journey in 1970, including humorous stories about his first electric car and his first attempt at composting. "Everything I have done for the

'environment' has also been good for my 'pocketbook,'" states Begley. He'll also talk about products and services that he has used that actually work, "Our planet is an asset with value—let's not treat it like a 'going-out-of-business' sale!"

Bioneers is a nonprofit educational organization that highlights breakthrough solutions for restoring people and planet. Since 1990, Bioneers has acted as a hub of social and scientific innovators with practical and visionary solutions for the world's most pressing environmental and social challenges. A celebration of the genius of nature and human creativity, Bioneers connects people with solutions and each other. Its acclaimed annual national and local conferences are complemented by extensive media outreach including an award-winning radio series, book series, and a role in media projects such as Leonardo DiCaprio's film *The 11th Hour*.





The Calendar

September, 2009

Sunday Services are 8:00 AM (no choir) and 10:30 AM (with choir) in the Sanctuary.
 Sunday School (Godly Play, Youth, and Adult Forums) begin for all ages at 9:30 am. (First Sunday 9/13)
 Children's Church begins at 10:30 in the Purple Room and the children are brought into Eucharist for the Peace. (First Sunday 9/13)
 Coffee Hour immediately follows the 10:30 AM service unless otherwise noted.

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 10:00 AM Staff Meeting (CO) 7:30 PM Community Outreach Projects Committee (UR)	2 7:00 PM Bioneers (PH)	3	4 12:00 NOON Fourth Quarter (CO)	5
6 Women's Care Cottage Clothing Collection 9:00 AM Men's Group Morning Prayer	7 Labor Day Parish Office Closed	8 10:00 AM Staff Meeting (CO) 7:00 PM Finance Committee (CO) 8:00 PM Executive Committee (CO)	9	10	11	12 11:15 AM Adult Education Committee Meeting (FR) 6:30 PM Angel Award Dinner & Presentation
13 Parish Directory Photos Sunday School Begins for all ages, 9:30 AM. 9:15 AM Choir Rehearsal 10:30 AM Choristers Reh 10:30 AM Children's Church 12:15 PM Choir Orientation Meeting (CR) 12:00 PM New Consecration Leadership Meeting (PH) 12:30 PM Ushers Pizza Lunch	14 6:15 PM Book Discussion Group (Home of Barbara Beckner)	15 10:00 AM Staff Meeting (CO) 7:00 PM Vestry Meeting (UR) <i>October '09 Newsletter Articles DUE</i>	16	17 7:30 PM Choir Rehearsal (CR)	18	19 (Time TBD) Bishop Suffragan Candidate Meeting (Campbell Hall)
20 Parish Directory Photos 9:15 AM Choir Rehearsal 10:30 AM Choristers Reh 12:15 PM Healing Prayer (FR) 12:15 PM Youth Group (YL) 6:00 PM Newcomer Dinner (Home of Karen & Bill Haddock)	21	22 10:00 AM Staff Meeting (CO)	23	24 7:30 PM Choir Rehearsal (CR)	25	26 11:15 AM Liturgical Committee Meeting (UR) 3:00 PM Phil Wheaton Book Event
27 Parish Directory Photos 9:15 AM Choir Rehearsal 10:30 AM Choristers Reh	28 10:00 AM & 7:00 PM Prayer Shawl Knitting Groups (FR)	29 10:00 AM Staff Meeting (CO)	30			

Locations:
 CO: Church Office
 CR: Choir Room
 FR: Fireside Room
 PH: Parish Hall
 UR: Upper Room
 YL: Youth Lounge
 S: Sanctuary

GOINGS ON AT ST. MICHAEL AND ALL ANGELS CHURCH

Thanksgiving for a Job Well Done

To: **Louisa Herrmann:** *for her dedication and hard work in keeping the St. Michael's Wig Exchange going. Louisa and her husband, Andre, are moving to the Riverside area. We'll miss you both!*

and to Ed Sugar and the Men's Group for coordinating the "spiffing up" of the Sanctuary, including carpet cleaning and window washing!

The next time you see Louisa, Ed, or a member of the Men's Group, please give them heartfelt thanks for their contributions.

In the months that follow, the Vestry will continue to recognize the gifts of work and time that help keep St. Michael's a beautiful and useful campus, and a thriving parish.

Parish Office Gets A BRIGHT New Coat of Paint!

And the Preschool gets a new fence. Photo courtesy of Treadwell Atkins.



Always-Needed Food Pantry Items

Canned fruit and vegetables.

Baby food in plastic jars.

Tuna.

Peanut butter in plastic jars.

Powdered milk in individual packets.

Individual size snacks.

Plastic and paper shopping bags.

Diapers and feminine hygiene items.

Travel-size soap, toothpaste & disposable razors.

And money!

October 2009 MIKE Deadline: Please send copy and/or pictures via e-mail to lauren@stmikessc.org by Tuesday, September 15. If you don't have a computer, bring your articles to the Parish Office by that time.

Quotation for September

"Justice consists not in being neutral between right and wrong, but in finding out the right and upholding it, wherever found, against the wrong."

*Theodore Roosevelt (1858–1919)
26th President of the United States*

Read the MIKE Online! All you do is go to the website, www.stmikessc.org, and click on "THE MIKE ONLINE." Back issues are available there as well. And while you're at the web site, you can shop at Amazon.com through its link. St. Mike's gets a small rebate for each purchase made through this link.

September Birthdays

Day	Name
1	Charlotte Oliver
2	Jane Mason
3	Michael Beckner
6	Margie Mullen
13	Barbara Beckner
18	Gail Wright
	Kyle Grace
19	Jonathan Heuer
22	William Haddock
24	Zofie Basta
	Martha Shaw
25	Wesley King
	David Connors
26	Julie Meine

September Anniversaries

Day	Name
14	David Connors & Alex Morales

Should you be listed here? Or, if you wish to leave your birthday or anniversary unpublished, give the church office a call or e-mail (lauren@stmikessc.org) to let us know. *Please Note: Birthdays and Anniversaries will be celebrated on the last Sunday of each month.*

By the Numbers By Betsy Foldes Meiman

After a summer filled with worry over whether California was going out of business or not, comes a breath of fresh green air. Fresh as in progressively environmental. Green as in cold hard cash. You may have heard of Assembly Bill 811 (AB 811) passed in July of 2008. I hadn't. And surprisingly not many others have either.

AB 811 allows local governments to offer sustainable energy project loans (solar panels, retrofitting windows and other energy efficiency improvements) to eligible property owners. The loan is paid back in a raise in their property taxes. The loans are comparably low interest. If the house is sold, the lien is assumed by the new owners of the property.

Maybe it got lost in the cries of a statewide budget crisis and the thud of IOU's as they sucker punched the neediest organizations right in the fiscal gut. Maybe there just wasn't enough dough to back up a really great idea. But...and there's not always such a nice one...

Of the 7 billion dollars rolled out by The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of '09 for energy efficiency and clean energy programs across the US, \$600 million has been slated for California!

There's even more sunshine: \$220 million from the Feds to the California Energy Commission of which \$170 million is slated for retrofits; The Energy Efficiency and Conservation block grants are giving \$302 million to local CA governments (LA is getting \$15 million of which \$11 million is to be used to get AB 811 programs off the ground); \$185 million from the new Weatherization Assistance Program; and \$30 million from the Energy Efficient Appliance Rebate Program. These numbers were reported by Joe Calliani who attended the June 24th LA County meeting. Go to his blog www.creativegreenius.com for a comprehensive read. I vetted the numbers with Howard Choy, who heads up La County's Office of Energy Management. And the LADWP solar rebate program has survived the too. It is still available through 2017.

The AB 811 program is about a year away from granting its first loans to property owners. Howard Choy is looking for cities to participate in future meetings. To be a part of the county's program, your city council has only to pass a resolution saying that they want to be a part of the county program.

Green programs create green jobs which can turn the color of California's IOU's back to green.



Message From the Rev. Peter Ackerman

Dear St. Michael's: I have received a number of supportive cards and emails from my friends at St. Michael's as I deal with my colon cancer, and I just want to thank you for the community's support and prayers.

My surgery, three weeks ago, successfully removed the tumor (along with part of my colon) and I am still mending from that. Because the cancer had spread to one of the 19 lymph nodes they removed I will begin to undergo chemotherapy in approximately 3 weeks. For now I am back at work (on a reduced schedule) and happily serving God in any

way that I can. One mantra that has supported me during this journey is attributed to St. Francis—"Preach the Gospel at all times...use words when necessary."

If you wish to know more about my journey I welcome you to read the journal at <http://www.caringbridge.org/visit/peterackerman>—you may share that with anyone who might be interested in reading it. It is at this website that I will occasionally post updates. If there is anything else I can do to thank the community of St. Michael and All Angels, please let me know how I might do that.

Finally, I look forward to receiving the Mike every month and am delighted to continually read and experience how God's hand is infused within the community. I humbly remain...

Yours in Christ, Peter K. Ackerman+



Message From the (Almost Dr.!) Peter Carlson

Peter Carlson Completes Dissertation and Joins Bloy House/ESTC Faculty

Peter Carlson will join the faculty of Bloy House (the Episcopal School of Theology at Claremont) as its new professor for Church History II. Carlson is a Ph.D. candidate in History of Christianity at the Claremont Graduate University's School of Religion, he turned in his dissertation on August 17th, which is a huge step closer to becoming a full-fledged doctor. His specialties are late medieval and early modern/Reformation British Christianity, with additional concentrations in the history of monasticism, American Christianity, literature and religion, gender and sexuality in religion, and the history of Muslim-Christian relations.

He is the author of *Quid me dicis bonum?*, a study of the library and theology of the Good Men of Ashridge. His scholastic presentations include "The Womb and the Grave: Religion, History, and Birth Imagery in Milton's *Paradise Lost*," at the North American Conference on British Studies and "Songs in a Strange Land: Exile and Domicile in the Golden Age of Hispano-Hebrew Poetry," at the Conference on Christianity and Literature. He was moderator for the session "Celebrating Desire: the sexual voice of the LGBTQ community in the study of religion," for the Western Conference of the American Academy of Religion. He has published several reviews in Anglican and Episcopal History and in *Comitatus*.

Carlson has been a teaching assistant for Christian traditions at Claremont School of Theology and for major interpreters of the study of religion at Claremont Graduate University. He has also taught history of the world's religions courses at Los Angeles Valley College.

St. Michael's Community Outreach Projects

By Jane Wilson, Committee Chair



You are cordially invited to attend the fourth annual Saint Michael's Angel Award Dinner

Angel Award Recipients

Dennis Gibbs, Chaplain & Restorative Justice Director

Sally Martinez, Office Manager & Case Worker

Angel Emeritus

Soni Wright, Artist

Cherubim and Seraphim Honorees

Daniel Frank, Writer/Comedian * Ellen Harrigan, Baseball Executive
Danielle Koenig, Writer/Mother * Jennifer MacLean, Writer/Mother/
Gardener

Saturday, September 12, 2009

6:30 p.m. Cocktail Reception * 7:30 p.m. Dinner & Ceremony
and Silent Auction in the Parish Hall
\$75 per person

All Proceeds Benefit PRISM

PRISM provides services to the Los Angeles County Public Safety facilities, including Twin Towers Correctional Facility, Men's Central Jail, the Century Regional Detention Facility, Pitchess Detention Center, county-run juvenile halls and hospitals. Expanding outreach includes the California State Prison System.

Program Advertising:

A 1/4 page ad is \$100, a 1/2 page is \$175, or a full page \$300, artwork due by September 5th.

Please call Jane Wilson if you would like an invitation mailed to you, 818-267-4058 or call the church office if you'd like to make reservations with your credit card, 818-763-9193.



FALL PROJECT: A COVER FOR A CHAIR & A BOTTLE OF WINE!

Our goal for the fall is to collect both of these items to make the seating look a little fancier and the wine flow a little easier at the Angel Award Dinner on September 12th. You can purchase chair-cover fabric, hem it or do both. Please, if buying the fabric, purchase it in one of three colors: black, ivory or dark purple. Make sure the fabric is a three-yard piece, machine washable and wrinkle-resistant (very important—we do not want to iron these!) You can also purchase ribbon for the chairs in these same colors; each ribbon should also be three yards. As far as wine—all types of wine would be most wonderful, including boxed wine or *two-buck chuck*. Please sign up for what you'd like to do to contribute to this fun project by contacting Treadwell Atkins at hleeatkins@aol.com.

NEXT MEETING OF SMCOP

The next SMCOP meeting will be on Tuesday, September 1st at 7:30 pm in the Upper Room. It's not too late to get on board volunteering for the Angel Award Dinner as well as all our fall and winter plans. Please contact Jane Wilson with questions, 818-343-8438.



Pictured: Liz Mullen, Jane Wilson, Betsy Hailey, Sarah Nichols, and Gary Lucy at the ITV Fest Awards show on August 6. Photo courtesy of Margie Mullen.

St. Michael and All Angels Church

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Anne Kelly, Clerk
Phyllis Bracey
Bob Bucker
David Connors
Preston Fray
Leonard Harman
Mary Ann Jacobson
Norma Johnson
Ed Sugar

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Vision Statement

We are a welcoming and evolving community of conscience engaged in the renewal of our faith by embracing diversity and encouraging growth through prayer, scholarship, social action, and artistic endeavor.

Our Mission Priority

Our mission priority is to focus on the United Nations' First Millennium Goal: To eradicate extreme hunger and poverty.