

THE APOSTLE

+ A Warming Anglican
Presence in Mexico

+ Tampa's Trinity
Anglican Church

+ Mission
West Virginia

... and more



ANGLICAN CHURCH
IN NORTH AMERICA

REACHING NORTH AMERICA WITH THE
TRANSFORMING LOVE OF JESUS CHRIST



from a Shepherd's Heart

In the time in which we find ourselves, isn't it wonderful to know that as followers of Jesus, he really is a good shepherd? There seems to be SO MUCH going on in our world which challenges all our senses and perspectives. And yet, Jesus has promised and is our good shepherd (John 10).

In Psalm 23 the shepherd David, reveals a lot about this good shepherd whom we have. As a shepherd David learned a lot about leadership, about servanthood, about people, about the wilderness, and most importantly, about the Lord.

In verse 1, David says: *The LORD is my Shepherd.* He uses the actual name of God here in this passage. The LORD. God's Name. James Montgomery Boice writes: *It is an inexhaustible name, like its bearer. Chiefly, it refers to God's timelessness, on the one hand, and to his self-sufficiency on the other. Self-sufficiency means that God needs nothing. He needs no wisdom from anyone else; he has all wisdom in himself. He needs no power; he is all powerful. He does not need to be worshipped, helped, or served. Nor is he accountable to anyone. He answers only to himself.*

The Lord. The Lord is my shepherd. The Lord, this infinite, transcendent ONE, is MY shepherd. David is saying: *He cares about me. Almighty God Himself is concerned for my welfare. Jesus claims to be this shepherd, I am the good shepherd* (Jn.10.11). And being our good shepherd means lots of things! Ps. 23 draws out some of these provisions of the shepherd.


Verse 1 continues: I shall not want. This means I will lack nothing of what I need to be who I am in the Lord. The BCP 2019 uses the revision of the Coverdale Psalter by C.S. Lewis and T.S. Elliott and translates this as: *The Lord is my Shepherd; Therefore, I can lack nothing.* A shepherd tends to the sheep's every need, and the sheep have many needs. As many commentators have written, the sheep left to themselves are pretty helpless and dumb animals. So, it is with us humans!!

In the remainder of Psalm 23, David shares what the Lord provides so that the sheep do not want (or so that the sheep lack nothing). The Lord provides REST (v.2). The Lord provides RENEWAL and RESTORATION (v.3). The Lord provides RIGHTEOUS DIRECTION (v.3b). The Lord provides RESCUE FROM DANGER (v.4). The Lord provides a TABLE PREPARED FOR US (v.5). The Lord provides his LOVE ON EARTH and FOR ALL ETERNITY (v.6)

Jesus our good shepherd loves us, cares for us, provides for us, protects us, and leads us into the ways of righteousness and eternal life with him now and for all eternity. The Apostles Paul says: *My God shall supply all your needs according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus* (Phil.4:19). The good shepherd said in John 10 that he knows his sheep, and his sheep know him. He does not force us to become his sheep, but to those who are willing, they find him a faithful, trustworthy, and good shepherd. I know I have! And he invites all people to come to him and have life (Jn.10:10).

+ *Foley Beach*

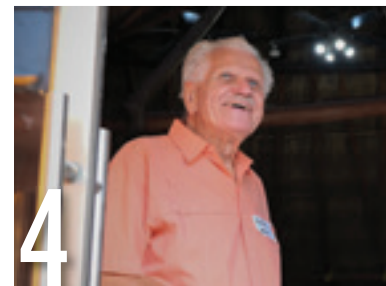
The Most Rev. Dr. Foley Beach
Archbishop and Primate
Anglican Church in North America



THE APOSTLE

Pentecost 2023

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editors' note:

There is a not-too-discreet pattern throughout Scripture that demonstrates God's desire to reconcile to Himself as family people from every tribe, tongue, and nation who will love and enjoy Him forever. In this issue of the Apostle, we hope you will see glimpses of this growing family in the perhaps unexpected places of North America. In a context in which people from countless tribes and tongues are living amongst each other, where else can people so distinctly different be knit together as sisters and brothers except in the Body of Christ, the Church. This is God's good pleasure to take joy in us in all our distinctiveness and, through His great mercy, to be known to us, even as we make His name known throughout all the world.

The Rev. Canon Andrew Gross, Editor-in-Chief · **Rachel Thebeau**, Senior Editor · **Ernie Didot**, Managing Editor



ANGLICAN PRESENCE

IN
Mexico

~~~~~ By Ernie Didot ~~~~~

Having come from the colder regions of North America in the middle of winter, a warm smile is generally kindled for most travelers arriving in sunny Puerto Vallarta, Mexico. Flame red bougainvilleas, brilliant bird of paradise flowers, white boats bobbing in the harbor, and the people of the Anglican Diocese of the Southwest Mexican deanery all greet the attendees of the Diocese's Synod with gusto.

*"The people are just so gracious, relational, and hospitable"*

"This is the first time for this deanery to be hosting," said The Right Rev. Steven Tighe, bishop of the Diocese. "The people are

just so gracious, relational, and hospitable." But this warm welcome and hospitality is just the beginning for what appears to be an Anglican church getting hotter and growing in Mexico.

Meredith Omland, a missionary at the Iglesia del Gran Pastor in Fresnillo, Mexico said, "[Synod] was exciting because most Mexicans in the Diocese could come and be a part of it, since most of them do not have visas to attend anything in the United States. For these guys and my congregation, it was exciting for them to feel like they were a part of something bigger, as opposed to just a little congregation in the middle of nowhere." Meredith further explained, "It was also a good opportunity to come and get a sense of what it means to be part of the Anglican community as well. There's an interest-

ing dynamic between Mexico and the U.S. They [Mexicans] appreciate a lot of what goes on in the States, but a lot of times they are only receiving [from the States]: receiving missionaries and receiving funds. Having a chance to be here in Mexico for a Synod and hosting, meant they were giving and serving."

*"We get people from all kinds of denominations represented here"*

The deanery can trace its roots to the sailboat, Snowbird, drifting into the Puerto Vallarta harbor in 2001 with Father Jack Wehrs, Sr. at the helm. Searching for warmer waters than his San Diego home and a bit of relaxation, Jack simply invited fellow boaters by VHF radio to join them for Eucharist on their sailboat. They moved to a larger boat offered to them as the group quickly grew to 70 people. When the owner sold the boat, they knew they needed to move to land. They rented a condominium and Iglesia Anglican Puerto Vallarta (Anglican Church Puerto Vallarta) was formally established. It grew even more, forcing them to find a more permanent home building. God provided through creative financing, right as the Puerto Vallarta real estate demand began to take off. The palapa (thatch) roofed church that ended up hosting this Synod has an international feel as tourists from all over the world are drawn to it: "Retirees and vacationing clergy come down to lay on the beach, but get bored, looking for a place to worship and a

church doing real outreach in the community," said Jack. "We get people from all kinds of denominations represented here; we preach Jesus Christ and avoid getting caught up in politics."

When he first went to Diocesan Synod meetings, he noticed that the Mexicans and Americans tended to sit separately. He noticed that it started to get better over the years, "but now at this one, it's hard to tell who was from where by their seating--Mexico or the U.S.--we are becoming like one family." Jack also attributes a lot of the unity at this Synod to housing most of the participants in one facility and feeding them together under the palapa roof of their church.

*"Mexico finally feels united to us, which is so cool."*

"Mexico finally feels united to us, which is so cool." said Gus Haddad, the Director of Mission/Finance/Operations for the Anglican Diocese of the Southwest. Gus is also excited about the expansion of the church on both sides of the border, Albuquerque, New Mexico and Juarez and Puebla, Mexico.

Gus continued, "Bishop Steven is on board with what we are doing in developing missionaries who are planting churches." One of the missionaries Gus referred to is in Juarez and the other in Puebla, Mexico.







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Archbishop Foley Beach attended the Synod and helped in the ordination of several priests and a deacon, “All them are involved in church planting. One of the great things we are seeing here [in Mexico] is the new church plants and people hungry for the gospel,” he said.

Rev. Isai Valenzuela Lopez is a bi-vocational minister in Juarez and was ordained to the priesthood during the Synod. He teaches half-time at Christ for the Nations seminary and is planting an Anglican church. “There are not many Anglican churches in Juarez at the moment, but the field is ripe for the harvest so establishing a mission is critical,” Isai said.

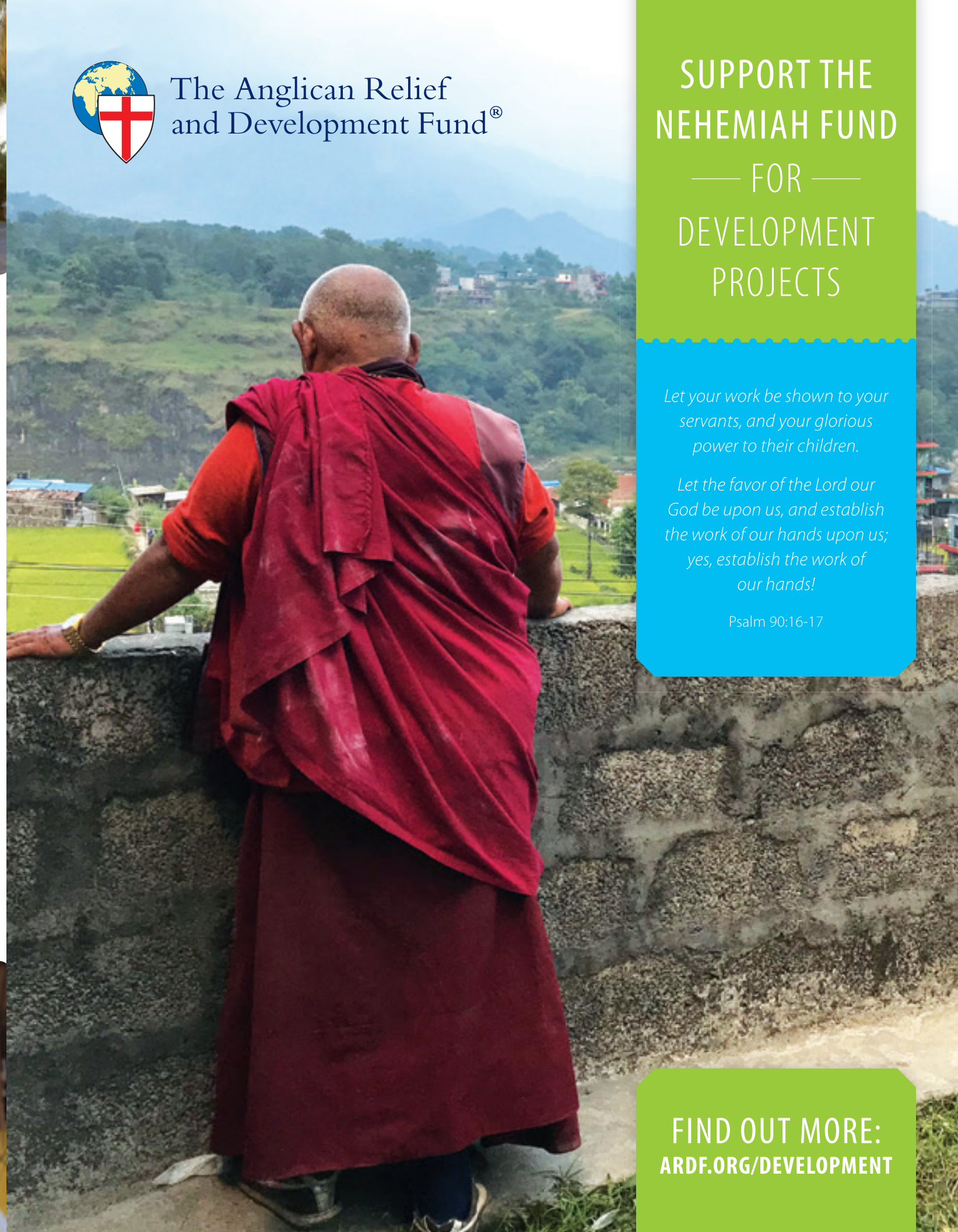
### “We are actually creating a Mexican Anglicanism”

Rev. Dr. Joel Rene Gonzalez Garcia, is a former doctor from Cuba and has been working as a missionary with 12 pastors in the Puebla, Mexico area. The pastors, from Lutheran, Pentecostal, Reformed, and even Ukrainian Orthodox backgrounds are finding Anglicanism very appealing. “The historical aspect to Anglicanism is beautiful and they enjoy being a part of a bigger, longer history,” Joel explained. “Theologically it is more flexible and bearable than others, but they also like the structure of accountability. And then others like the liturgy. I had one couple say to me a few Sundays ago, ‘I am a nominal Roman Catholic, but I never knew what Anglicanism was until now. If this is An-

glicanism, I tell you, you should be ready to expand the venue we are at because people will be flocking to attend the services.’”

Gus noted that, “Joel is such a wonderful, charismatic leader who was even taught by John Stott in England.” Joel observed that, “Some Mexicans say that it [Anglicanism] is too similar to Roman Catholicism, and I tell them, ‘Yes there are some similarities but it actually draws from the best of both traditions, Catholic and Protestants.’” He sees that people often comment on how they like the beauty of combining Bible readings and prayers of intercession, but also a bit of spontaneity. “We are actually creating a Mexican Anglicanism. We cannot expect them to be the same as the Anglo-Saxon, American way, so our Anglicanism will probably be more colorful, maybe a bit more spicy...you know, like Mexico!”

There appears to be no cooling on the vision for Mexico within the Diocese, but this energetic vision reflects the reality happening in the field. From the windswept central plateau of Fresnillo, to the industrious engine of Puebla, and the bustling border cities like Juarez, God appears to be at work in the largest Spanish-speaking country in Latin America. Whether it be through unique beginnings on a sailboat or through a growing seminary, the uniting leaders of the Anglican Diocese of the Southwest echo Gus’ words, “People say, ‘Ah, come on Gus, really tell us the truth, you know you couldn’t have done all of that. And the truth of the matter is, we could not, but God has and he gets all the glory.’”



*Let your work be shown to your  
servants, and your glorious  
power to their children.*

*Let the favor of the Lord our  
God be upon us, and establish  
the work of our hands upon us;  
yes, establish the work of  
our hands!*

Psalm 90:16-17

FIND OUT MORE:  
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# unfinished BUSINESS:

## WHY WE NEED THE GLOBAL MISSION INITIATIVE

By Jenny Noyes

### Unfinished.

That one word perfectly captures the work of the church and its mission. While the work of Jesus on the cross is finished, our work as a church is unfinished. There is more to do, more people to reach, more lives to change. The reality is that nearly 42% of the world's 8 billion population still have never heard the name of Jesus. Let that sink in. It may not be the case on the street where you live, but it is a fact across the world for billions of people. Jesus who?

And yet, many of our congregations report that they don't have any global mission involvement. Others report some involvement globally, but confess that their partnerships aren't strategic or, worse, may be fostering unhealthy dependencies. At the same time, many of our congregations are doing amazing things in missions, but their work isn't coordinated with other churches in their diocese or with others also partnering in the same region.

The work of the Global Mission Initiative (GMI) is starting to change these realities. The GMI was created by the ACNA in 2019 to help coordinate our cross-cultural work as a province. Currently, almost every diocesan bishop has appointed a volunteer GMI Advocate to serve on a team led by me as the GMI Provincial Leader. The GMI Advocates meet monthly online and once a year face-to-face in conjunction with an Anglican Global Mission Partner (AGMP) gathering. In addition, each GMI Advocate is encouraged to connect with one key missional leader from each congregation, then build a GMI leadership team within their diocese to support and coordinate their local and diocesan global mission efforts.

In just a few years, the GMI has strengthened our collective provincial global impact through:

- Record attendance at the New Wineskins Mission Conference.
- More congregations highlighting World Mission Sunday.
- Diocesan GMI leadership teams formed to help cross-cultural partnerships and missionary efforts.
- Record numbers of dioceses joining the AGMP network (60% of our dioceses are members!)
- Discovering that our churches are engaging in mission partnership and outreach in over 90 countries!

An African proverb states: If you want to go fast, go alone, but if you want to go far, go together. Now the GMI is helping to focus our collective attention on the ends of the earth through local, diocesan and provincial collaboration with one another and with our AGMP missional ministries and New Wineskins networks.

Through the GMI, we have a vision to create a missionary pipeline unlike any that we've ever had before. Now is the time for innovation in mission and sacrificial giving to support those willing to go to the billions that still need to hear the beautiful message of Jesus, our Savior and Lord!

Remember, the work of the Cross is complete! Praise God. But the work of the church is unfinished. Let us continue to press forward, to reach more people, to change more lives, and to make disciples of all nations.

For more information on how you can get involved with GMI, contact Jenny Noyes at [jenny.noyes@anglicanchurch.net](mailto:jenny.noyes@anglicanchurch.net).



## MATTHEW 25 INITIATIVE

JUSTICE + MERCY | CONTENDING FOR SHALOM

"Listen" and Draw Near - By Christine Warner



In Huntington, Indiana, there is a small Anglican church – not of great means that is making a huge impact in their community. Father Rick Leone, the rector of Risen Savior Anglican Church, tells the story of God calling his congregation to draw near to those struggling in their community. Sharing the Gospel in tangible ways meant opening a food pantry to meet the physical needs of their neighborhood. But as they began building relationships in Huntington and *listening to their neighbors*, the church realized food wasn't the biggest need. What the community really needed was access to hygiene and cleaning products. Things as ordinary as toothpaste and soap were proving to be a huge barrier to dignity for many of their neighbors.

Anglicans are changing individuals' experiences of basic human thriving; that's us! By faith, Risen Savior applied for and was awarded a M25i grant last spring. They cleared out a room in the basement of their church, purchased as many hygiene products as they could and welcomed their neighbors into their space. They arranged the products to offer a shopping experience that honors their neighbors' dignity and ability to choose.

One of the definitions of poverty is described as the inability to choose. Poverty in North America also includes fear for the future and anxiety from feeling powerless. It means living without support on the sidelines, watching economic growth and prosperity pass you by. Our neighbors, in our cities, are living this reality every morning when they awaken. Poverty doesn't just exist in "other countries;" it is experienced every day by your neighbors in "our own backyards."

As He so often does, God showed up for Risen Savior Anglican Church. With tears in his eyes, Fr. Rick declared, "It has transformed our church. We have built more relationships in months than we had in several years prior. We're not sure who has been blessed more or received more; we just know that our parish has been refreshed with energy and joy that we would never have expected."

And they are just getting started...

If you pour yourself out for the hungry and satisfy those who are in need, then... you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters do not fail.  
Isaiah 58:10-12



Learn more at [AnglicanJusticeAndMercy.org](https://AnglicanJusticeAndMercy.org)







# Tampa's Trinity

## ANGLICAN CHURCH



By Ernie Didot

Over a 125 years ago, cigar factories in West Tampa Bay, Florida, known as Ybor City, established the area as the cigar-making capital of the world. Back then, it was also known as a melting pot for immigrants from Cuba, Spain, China, Italy, Germany, and Jews from Romania who hand-rolled the cigars. Ybor City's reputation for cigar making lasted until the 1930's when cigarettes became more popular and factory machines slowed the demand for hand-rolled production. In the 1960's, the Cuban embargo was the nail in the coffin, forcing most of the factories to close. [source, Smithsonian Magazine Online] The neighborhood declined.

But nestled in the shadow of the "Home of the Cuesta-Rey Cigars" sign, stands an old, white church with blue trim and a grey metal steeple; a banner advertising Trinity Anglican Church now indicates that a new church body is worshipping inside.

"This church building is in the middle of a very walkable neighborhood," said the Rev. Travis Lowe, church planter for Trinity

Anglican. "And so we have a number of people – now that we've moved in – who just walk to church. They live around the corner and this church is the neighborhood church for them."

In walking the streets of Ybor City, it is clear that the multi-ethnic residents from a century ago have been replaced by Black and Latino communities. For this reason, Travis and his wife, co-church planter, Rev. Mical "Mickey" Lowe, have embarked on planting a bilingual church in English and Spanish.

What is even more interesting is how the provision of the church building came along in close tandem from the very outset with the first gatherings of the church body – it was a clear case of God's provision.

Travis had grown up in the Episcopal Church and Mickey had grown up in the Assemblies of God in both Argentina and the U.S. Of their journey, Mickey said, "He and I both met



at an evangelical church. So that's kind of what brought us together, but with these different backgrounds, he got to see my side of my upbringing and I got to see his. When I discovered the liturgical background that he had grown up with I was like, 'This is it!' This is a piece of what I feel like had always been missing. And so we always talked about what it would look like for a church to exist that had all three things: that was evangelical, charismatic, and liturgical, and we didn't know that that existed until we started diving deeper into the Anglican world."

After a year and a half period of church planting discernment and evaluation with the diocese, Churches For the Sake of Others, they felt God leading them to the western part of Tampa called the Ybor City area. As an ordained clergy, Travis continues to work in a local coffee-shop wearing his clerical collar. As a result, Travis knows all the baristas within a ten-mile radius.

### How do I want that to change their walk with the Lord?"

Travis reflected that people are seeing meetings being held in the coffee shop and that, "We were not just here in the city because it looked good in Instagram pictures, but we were actually part of the life of the city. I'm a huge theology nerd and so apart from having some checks in my life, I could just sit and hole myself up with my books and I could preach a whole homily. That's nothing but sort of ethereal high-level doctrine, but the fact that we just have people from our community here has forced me to say, 'OK. I'm preaching on the baptism of Jesus. What does this mean for them? Because I'm going to see them at the coffee shop or in the neighborhood. What do I want them to do with the baptism of Jesus? How do I want that to change their walk with the Lord?'"

Theology that has deep waters and everyday practicality is important to Travis; he feels that this resonates with the people at his church

As Travis and Mickey began the transition from the church planting discernment period to form Trinity Anglican, a couple who knew about Travis' preaching and Mickey's gift in leading worship, approached them with an offer to give them \$1,000,000 towards the purchase of a church building.

"At the time, we hadn't done anything. And so, it was sort of like Field of Dreams, if you buy it, they will come. We didn't and that was super wise. And so, we asked them, 'Could you hold on to that [money] because we don't want to buy a church before we know if anybody will come to this or not.' And they said, 'Sure,' and helped us pay for the lease at the space we rented in 2022." Amazingly, the couple still committed to them at the price they originally offered if the Trinity Anglican group could find a church building in that range. In the summer of 2022, they found the Ybor City church building, but right at the top of the price range. The church was in disrepair and needed a lot of work, so they offered the seller about \$200,000 under the asking price and that offer was accepted! Renovations have been done along with a lot of sweat equity, but these are only just the beginning. A church and building home was established within roughly the span of a year, and the bones are good! Praise God!

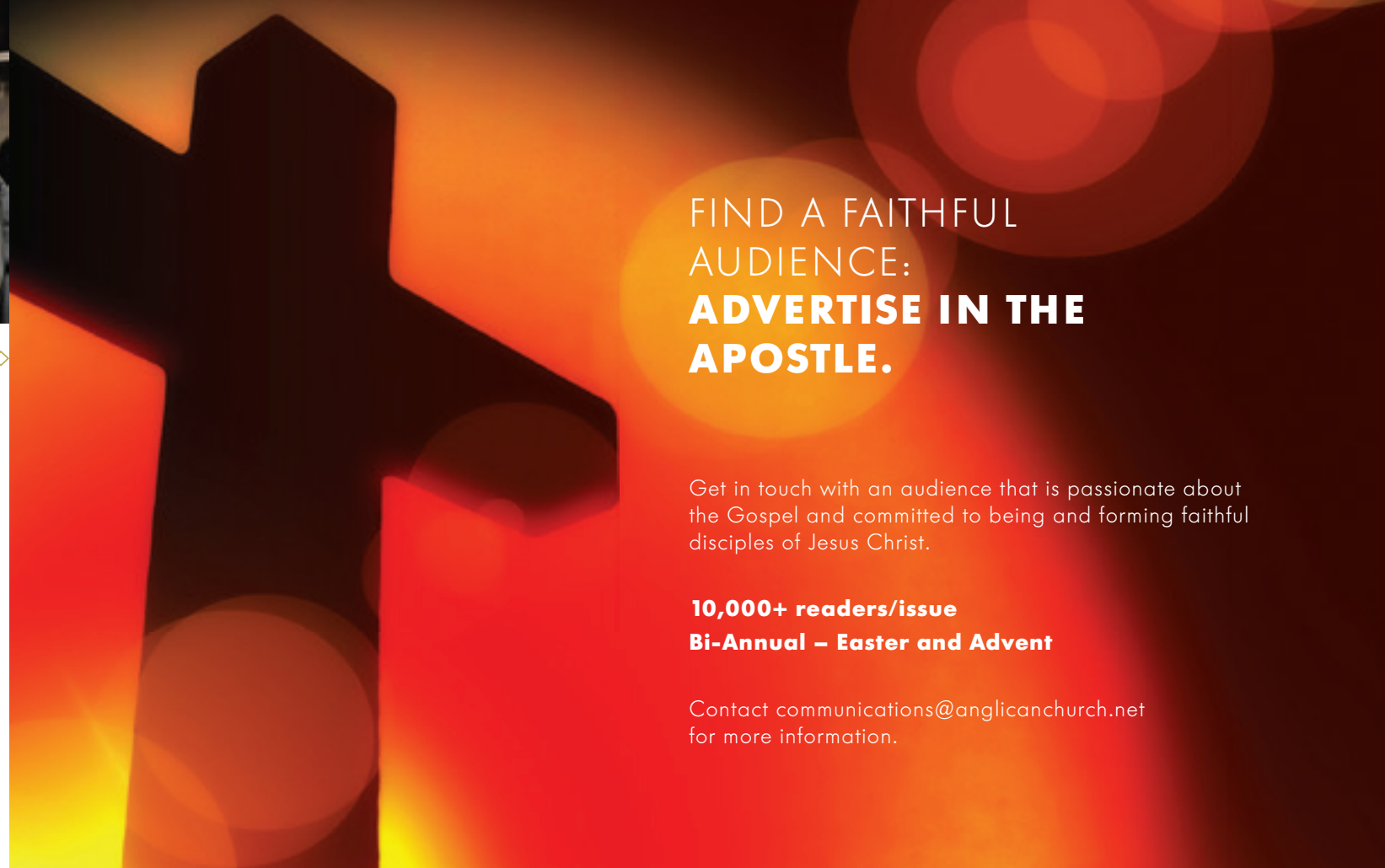
"Essentially, church planting is what led my family to move here to the States. So, it's kind of always been a part of my story," said Mickey. When you combine Mickey's church planting, latino culture and language background, experience coordinating church volunteers, and leading worship in music, it's easy to understand why she would say, "I feel as though, you know, the Lord had been orchestrating that since the beginning...I'm just so grateful too for that gift."

Trinity tries to hold as much of their service as they can in both languages, but it is not fully bilingual. The Scripture readings are in Spanish, the Call for Purity is in both languages, the songs are a mix, and the sermon is in English. "A long-term goal for us is to have the technology to be able to translate in real time and interpret via earpieces," said Mickey.

### "We draw people from kind of a wide spectrum of different cultures and ethnicities"

But Travis explains that the latino culture is not the only one represented: "We draw people from kind of a wide spectrum of different cultures and ethnicities. We have a lot of people who are coming from metal and punk and hardcore music subcultures. I grew up in that, and so it's been fun to see the friends that I grew up with doing mosh pits, now celebrating Eucharist and reciting the Creed, which has been pretty amazing."





For Southwest Florida, even in January, it was an unusually cold day – hovering over freezing around 36 degrees – there was reason to believe that the attendance would be a little lower than the roughly 75 people who showed up. It did not hurt that some of those who made the excellent, hot coffee for the shivering Floridians entering, were experienced baristas. When asked about why the church appeared to be getting traction so quickly Travis said, “I think there is a hunger for Christianity that’s not performative or even entertainment-driven but has substance to it. So being able to anchor our liturgy and our worship in the historic Christian tradition and say, ‘Hey, you know we say the Sursum Corda before Eucharist because we trace that back to the Fathers, and we’re not just doing this because we made it up in our living room and thought it was cool.’ This has a history and a lineage to it that’s resonated with a lot of people. We’ve seen a lot of people who grew up in church, who’ve maybe become jaded on church, and who are rediscovering their faith afresh as they encounter the ancient faith as it’s expressed in Anglicanism.”

## I do see the Lord’s love just flourishing in the building

Outside of the entrance to the church stood a burly, bearded man named Alberto Santiago. Keeping his hands in his pockets to stay warm except to greet and welcome people, he explained his excitement since being a part of the launch in April of 2022: “I do see more people coming in again and again. I do see the Lord’s love just flourishing in the building and how He’s blessed us with the building. I just love seeing



the community, and you can hear it inside – you can hear the laughs...I can’t wait to see it grow more.”

Another man, Jordan Beasley, said that he started coming because the liturgy drew him. He found it to be grounding and, “I liked the fact that it was so participatory. We’re not just here to watch. Not everyone can be up front on the worship team.”

The church appears to just be warming up as community members are only beginning to realize that new life has been breathed back into the building. One gentleman stopped his car in the middle of the street, got out, and approached Travis. He was African-American and began to tell Travis about how he grew up in the neighborhood and had memories of when the church was alive and active. He wondered what was going on and asked if he could visit sometime.

On close examination, the church’s edifice and steeple have a long way to go in renovation. “The next big thing for us,” Travis said, “and it’s not a fun thing, but we know we’re going to have to do it – is the roof. It’s one of those big expenses that you don’t have a lot to show for other than it’s not going to leak anymore.”

Indeed, there is hardly a corner of the church that does not need some kind of attention. Travis’ sermon that day focused on the life of Peter, with all of his wars and rough edges; how Jesus did not look at how he was, but what he will become in the future. It appears that Travis, Mickey, and the congregation are looking at the Ybor City neighborhood in the same way, and like the building, they are seeing the potential for a return to a vibrancy from years gone by.



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#### William Cavanaugh

Professor of Catholic Studies, DePaul University

#### Carmen Imes

Associate Professor of Old Testament, Biola University

#### Peter Leithart

President of Theopolis Institute for Biblical, Liturgical, and Cultural Studies

### BREAKOUT SPEAKERS

#### Jeff Bailey

Canon for Leadership Development in the Diocese of Christ Our Hope

#### Ryan O’Dowd

Rector of Bread of Life Anglican Church and Senior Fellow at Chesterton House

#### Sarah Lebharr Hall

Director of Children’s Ministry at Incarnation Anglican Church and Adjunct Professor of Old Testament at Trinity School for Ministry

#### Bryan Hollon

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#### Vivek Mathew

Executive Director of Chesterton House at Cornell University

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# CHRIS & SHARON'S

## Choice

By Ernie Didot

### GOD'S GRACE AMIDST DIFFICULT CHOICES

It is not often in life when you have the choice to discover something about yourself, which could potentially rock your equilibrium and throw you into a completely unknown direction. Do you stay comfortable in the known, never really risking what it would take to understand a mystery, or do you trust in a faithful God, taking the chance that after the door has been opened, only one thing is certain: life will never be the same as it was before?

That was the position Father Chris Culpepper (52) found himself in 22 years ago, when as a 30 year-old youth minister at Saint Andrews parish in downtown Fort Worth, Texas, he received a call out of the blue from his parents asking him to come over to talk and go for a walk

"That's always how you know something happened in my family when you're asked to go for a walk – usually it's good, but sometimes you don't know. And so, we went for the walk as we always did, and they asked me if I knew a lady named Sharon Kolb. And I mean, I was racking my brain from all facets of my life and just could not come to recognizing the name. And they said, 'Well, she's your birth mother.'"

Chris' birth mother was reaching out to connect with him and he had to decide whether he wanted to follow up with her or not.

"I mean, there's not a word to describe what that meant. And they said, 'You know, we've always been open with you about it [your adoption]. You're a grown man. You can do what you want to do with this information.' And again, just out of the deepest sense of respect, my first thought was, 'I don't know what to do with this,' like, 'Lord help me here 'cause I've got no idea.'" Chris also added that his parents were lovingly and completely supportive of the decision he made, whatever that might be.

Chris had grown up learning to take 24 hours of time to think through big decisions, so he returned to that practice.

"In that 24-hour period I went home, prayed, contemplated, and thought. The scripture the Lord gave me was pretty simple

and profound. 'Who are my mother and brothers? ...but those who do the will of my Father in heaven.' [Mark 3:33-34] And that was enough, you know, that was enough."

Over thirty years before this moment, Sharon Kolb had a decision to make. She had returned from a trip over Christmas with her best girlfriend and had wondered if she had been frequently sick during the travel due to car sickness. Finding herself still sick after returning home, and missing her period, she and her friend knew she was pregnant.

"My friend asked me on the phone, 'Well, how can you be? I mean, you're not dating anybody. How did this happen?'"

*"And then I told her about the rape."*

Sharon was date raped when she was 18 years old. She had known the guy for several months before going out together for the first time on Halloween night when he raped her.

"I went home and didn't tell anybody and lay down on the bathroom floor. I can remember this so clearly. I put my cheek on the cold tile and thought, 'What? What do I do?'" she said. "Well, I didn't do anything. I didn't tell anybody."

Sharon had not realized that while she told her friend about the story, her mother was around the corner listening in on the conversation. The next day, her mother told her she had heard everything. The two of them went to her uncle who then found the man who had raped her, and he confessed.

Some family members offered different suggestions for keeping the baby – some even offered to adopt the baby, so as to keep him in the family. None of these options set well for Sharon.

"And then another uncle called, and he said, 'I can get you an abortion.' And I said, 'I can't do that. As bad as what happened to me, this child had nothing to do with that.' I told my mother that I wanted to birth him and put him up for

adoption so he would have a mother and a daddy. So, I started praying then that he would be raised in a Christian home, that if I didn't know him on earth, I would know him in heaven."

*"In my head I kind of separated what happened to me to what I could do for this baby. How could I give this baby life and a mother and daddy?"*

However, it was difficult emotionally for Sharon as she processed through the questions and discouragement anyone in her position would have had. She had just graduated from high school but wondered about a job and her future, realizing college was now on the back burner. And there was anger: "This man had taken my first born away from me."

She and the family decided to have the baby at Florence Crittenton, at that time, a home for mothers in her position in Lynchburg, Virginia, far away from their Gastonia, North Carolina home at the time.

"I was scared to death, alone and confused, and seriously, I did not know anything about being pregnant, birthing a baby, or even how you feel with a baby growing inside of you." Sharon recalled the first time she felt the baby kick and the intense emotion she felt throughout the whole experience of carrying the baby. She had even researched ways to induce early labor to abort which led her to feeble attempts like getting under the bed and doing pushups with the bed.

But one day she finally did go into labor and was rushed to the hospital and placed in a separate ward. "They pulled my name tag out a little bit so they would know that I was from the Florence Crittenton Home and told me that I couldn't see him after he was born, but I insisted. My Mother and Daddy came up and they brought him in so I could see him while the nurse held him – she didn't want me to hold him or bond with him or anything."

Sharon gestured with her hands and fingers: "I took his little hand, and he wrapped it around my finger like this. And so, I had a touch. And then nothing else...until we were united."



Chris and his birth mother, Sharon, are sitting on a bench together in a prayer garden at the Ridgecrest Conference Center in North Carolina where the missions conference, New Wineskins, was being hosted. Chris had attended the conference and had tagged on a visit with his birth-mother who lived in the area. They are completely at ease with each other as they tag-team telling the story of how they reunited for the first time since Sharon last touched his little hand as a newborn.



lunches together over the phone and correspond in all manner of communication. Throughout the process of becoming acquainted with each other, Chris was careful to respect and honor his mom and dad; neither he nor they quite knew the full story of why Sharon gave him away. When the full story was shared to him by Sharon, all the pieces started coming together.

After the adoption, Sharon went on to marry and have another son and a daughter. She began to have a yearning to connect with her son and researched to find him. She had left a message with his adopted parents conveying that she was working in Christian ministry, and she learned enough from them to know that he had been raised in a Christian household, which was an answer to prayer. Then she waited for a response.

This information relayed to Chris and the confirmation from scripture motivated him to pick up the phone and call her, but no one answered the phone. He left a message and then hung up, waiting for the unknown.

Sharon later listened to the voice message and asked God, “What do I do, what do I do?” And I heard God’s voice so clearly, God spoke to me and said, ‘I’m giving you the desires of your heart. Pick up the phone and call your son.’”

The next morning Chris was getting ready for work when the phone rang. Providentially, his wife, Margie, was pregnant with their second child, Caleb Isaac, at the time. The thoughts of pregnancy, birth, and life were very much on their hearts and minds as Chris answered the call. “I answered the phone, and I heard her voice and there was just this flood of tears. Because one of the interesting things about being adopted is you don’t know anybody who looks like you at all in the world. And the only person I knew who resembled me at all was my daughter, the only child we had given birth to at that point. And so that was kind of the only part of me that I really had to hang onto. And so, when I heard her voice and we started talking... again, there are no words to describe that.”

Tears were streaming down both of their faces as the story they shared unfolded.

Sharon said, “We talked two hours that morning, two hours that night, and two hours the next day.” They went on to eat

“The more I heard about the story...ok, she was actually date-raped...and then the trauma, and then the healing and how all of that took place... that was when the depth of appreciation grew for what she endured, what she suffered, loving me enough to keep me and give birth to me in spite of all of that.”

The next unknown milestone for each of them was how they would react to seeing each other face to face. After a bit of doubt and second guessing, Sharon came to visit him in Fort Worth, Texas. The big moment came in the airport as Chris held his daughter, Sarah Grace, in his arms (Chris confessed he did that just in case either of them felt awkward to hug each other). Sharon looked around the airport and had begun to think that Chris had decided to not meet her when she heard a voice behind her, “Sharon.” She turned around and her first instinct was to grab Sarah Grace and said, “I have a granddaughter, yeah! I have a granddaughter here, yeah, yeah!”

From that point on it was easy between the two of them, meeting everyone on both sides of the family, and visiting each other regularly. When Chris visits his birth mother now, it is like a big family reunion – a whole new side of him and his life that he never dreamed he would discover.

“You know, God is the author and giver of life,” Chris said as he turned to look at Sharon, the woman who had made the courageous decisions to give him birth and then give him up for adoption. “Jesus promises us abundant life and for anybody – man, woman, unborn child – you know there is healing and there is hope and you are the testament to this. I mean, you are the incarnational real deal, testimony to that truth,” he said to Sharon.

“She carried me because she loved me and the reason that she loved me is because she understood how Christ loved her.”

Sharon then reflected, “Nine months of my life was nothing compared to the life that he’s lived and the love that he got from a mother and a daddy that wanted children and couldn’t have

them. Nine months was nothing. You know, the way I think about it is just through the lens of scriptures. I mean, you go to Genesis and in the very first chapter the Bible declares, ‘In the image of God, he made them. Male and female he made them.’ And when we embrace that most fundamental truth, we really do realize that every single life matters. Every single life has value from conception to natural death. It matters, you matter. God has a plan. God has a purpose. Like, there’s no such thing as an accidental birth. There’s no such thing, ultimately, as an unwanted child, even if a mom and a father can’t raise that child, that child is wanted. So, in that way, you know, not only does God have a plan and purpose for life, but there’s healing and hope in Christ Jesus that meets every single place of brokenness in which we find ourselves. It’s not that it’ll be easy, it’s just that he’ll be with you and that’s all that matters.”

The prayer garden is nestled next to a babbling creek whose sound seemed to increase in volume as their voices became more quiet, more intimate. And then, an unexpected punctuation to the time together arrived in the form of a hummingbird. The whirl of the bird was initially mistaken for an annoying insect buzzing behind Sharon’s head, but then it made a brief appearance in front of both, and then headed off its busy way. “When we see hummingbirds, it reminds us of my grandfather,” Sharon said.

“One of the really fascinating things about this,” Chris said, “and now we’re to the point where I’m beginning to know her and her family situation enough to know that it was her grandfather who was primarily responsible for walking her through that [the pregnancy]. He became the father figure in her life, and he was the one who told her ‘This is not your fault.’”

Chris added, “You know, my parents couldn’t have their own kids, so even having my sister and me to adopt was grace to them and life to them, you know, and healing and hope. And there’s so many parents or married folks out there in these circumstances who can’t have their own kids. Every life matters. Every life is wanted and the Psalm talks about, you know, ‘I knew you even before you were in your mother’s womb.’ I mean, there is such an immutable and an eternal reality involved in every single life that that inhabits flesh and walks the earth.”

Twenty-two years ago, after he had stepped into the unknown and decided to connect with his birth mom, Chris discovered a new relationship with Sharon along with a whole universe of family members. Making that decision led to this moment in North Carolina where they could wipe their tears as they finish telling their story, hug, and step out of the tranquility of the prayer garden before joining more family for a dinner feast.

*Father Chris Culpepper is the Rector of Christ the Redeemer Anglican Church in Fort Worth, Texas. Sharon Kolb is retired and lives in the Charlotte, North Carolina region. She is the mother of three children, one stepchild, and four grandchildren.*

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# TAKE ME HOME

## MISSION WEST VIRGINIA

By Ernie Didot

John Denver’s song, “Take Me Home, Country Road,” references better-known Virginia geological features – the Blue Ridge Mountains and the Shenandoah River. Denver, however, is not crooning about Virginia country roads, but rather, WEST Virginia! The song has become the official state song of West Virginia, sentimentally sung by Mountaineer fans at all West Virginia University sporting events. Apparently, the song writers only needed two things: 1) a state with beautiful mountains; and 2) a state that had the syllables to fit the melody.

West Virginia had the highest opioid overdose death rate per capita in the country.

West Virginia may not be the first place that comes to mind when thinking of a move of the Lord, especially in the Anglican context. Throughout the ages, rural regions have often experienced disparaging comments and stereotypes, and West Virginia is no exception. “Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?” Nathanael asked. “Come and see,” said Philip.” (John 1:46). And there are very serious issues in West Virginia, beginning with the opioid crisis. According to the U.S. Center

for Disease Control and Prevention in 2021, West Virginia had the highest opioid overdose death rate per capita in the country.

Native West Virginian, Becca Roberts, said, “A big part of our story of why we came back, but also a lot to do with why we originally left, was that there were six people from my high school graduating class who OD’d (overdosed). That was one of the biggest eye openers for us, just the need not only across West Virginia, but within Charleston, which had you asked me that when I was in high school, even probably in college, I wouldn’t have thought that was a problem at all. I think once we stepped away and were hearing these stories about people who we had been close to or who we had associated with, it was then that we kind of realized the depth of the need for Jesus in the city.”

According to the Rev. Ben Sharpe and a growing band of Anglican clergy, the idea of West Virginia being territory ill-fitted to Anglicanism is just flat-out wrong.

“I, along with others, had a preconceived idea that it would be difficult to get people to come to West Virginia to start new churches,” said the Rev. Derek Roberts of Hope Church, an Anglican church in Charleston, West Virginia. “I remember saying, ‘There’s no way anyone with a seminary education will

ever be coming to West Virginia to start a church.’ The interesting thing is that I make these bold claims and then God is like, ‘O.K., yea, watch what I’m about to do.’”

“At first thought, it seems like the most unlikely pairing, right?” commented the Rt. Rev. Quigg Lawrence, Bishop Suffragan of the Diocese of Christ Our Hope, “because Anglicans have liturgical worship. West Virginia mainly has Methodist, Baptist, and Pentecostal Holiness, and so most people say this is a really bad fit. But I think the Lord knew that people wanted something, maybe, more deeply grounded in Scripture; word and sacrament; grace and truth. We’re not the only church. We’re not a perfect church, obviously, but we’re a church that does have these gifts of word and sacrament, and we have an episcopacy that helps oversee and equip.”

The Rev. Dr. Jonathon Wylie of Church of the Resurrection, Huntington, West Virginia in the Diocese of the Living Word, observed that “A lot of these folks have heard the gospel, or have some familiarity with it, but haven’t necessarily had the discipleship in the gospel – they haven’t been shepherded into the fullness of the gospel life.”

In 2018, Fr. Ben was asked to be a part of a team of other priests and churches called Mission Hope West Virginia to come to Beckley, West Virginia to help start a new Anglican parish. After starting, serving, and planting churches in North Carolina since 2007, Fr. Ben fell in love with the people in Beckley and West Virginia. He prayerfully felt God was leading him to come alongside, support, and be a catalyst for new







work in West Virginia. In February of 2022, the Rt. Rev. Steve Breedlove, Bishop of the Diocese of Christ Our Hope, asked Fr. Ben if he would help in the mission which included working with church plants from the Diocese of the Living Word.

Bishop Quigg reflected, “We needed somebody whose sole job was to be focused on this area. And Ben is extraordinary. I mean, he’s a scholar. He’s an evangelist. He’s a pastor. He knows how to mentor and disciple.”

Indeed, at a local Beckley food and beverage festivity, it is plain to see that Fr. Ben’s transition from his North Carolina roots to the hills of West Virginia would not be difficult. Smoked barbeque and the hops fermentation process kept Fr. Ben locked in conversations at various vendor locations for long swathes of time. There is an ease in Fr. Ben’s deep bass voice and slight, Southern drawl to move effortlessly from the debate over vinegar or tomato-based barbeque sauce to explaining the significance of iconography through church history. Fr. Ben easily connects and makes friends.

Fr. Jonathon had high praise for Fr. Ben in his role at the Mission, calling him an advocate, mentor, pastor, and friend to lean on for anything he might need in ministry. One of the practical resources Fr. Ben has been able to offer the church plants in West Virginia and nationwide has been his “Foundations” catechism course which helps new congregants learn mere Christianity and the doctrinal Anglican way. It does not take long when around Fr. Ben to hear his passion to catechize through the Foundations course: “I want to take the Foundation course into every one of these parishes. I’m convinced that I’m never going to plant another church where we do not take

the launch team through the Foundations course. It’s been absolutely transformational. We’ve seen people congeal as team relationships get formed. Everybody is together doctrinally and formed in the Anglican way, but mostly formed in mere Christianity.”

Fr. Ben shared glowingly about one of the church planting team members: “I’ve been coaching new church planters like the Rev. Nate Dickinson in Summersville, West Virginia. He’s got so much energy and enthusiasm and so many giftings. I just want to give him as much as I can of my experience to equip and help him avoid some of the pitfalls that I had to learn from in my mistakes.”

“I want people to meet Jesus.  
Therefore, I will go.”

Standing on the panoramic overview of the gorgeous New River Gorge at Grandview National Park, the newly ordained Dickinson stepped right into Fr. Ben’s apt description of him with a contagious excitement saying, “I want people to meet Jesus. And there are people who do not know Jesus yet in Summersville, West Virginia. Therefore, I will go. There’s a family in Summersville, West Virginia that has traveled for three or four years at least an hour to find a church that loves Jesus; that celebrates Jesus; that keeps Jesus the main thing. I want to serve them and go to them and say, ‘you can drive fifteen minutes to where you actually feel comfortable inviting your friends to church.’ We believe that when that happens that God is going to do something because he’s already doing something in Summersville with that family and a couple

others. I know families who in Summersville feel homeless in church and I want to be a part of providing them a home in Jesus in Summersville.”

Likewise, the other church plants are offering Jesus and a church home in other parts of the state. “It’s been really rough the past few years,” said Kristin Harvey, parishioner at Christ the King Anglican in Beckley, West Virginia, “but after coming here, we heard the Gospel and I hadn’t heard the gospel in a long time. It was a breath of fresh air. I remember hearing that this place was like a hospital; it has been such a source of healing for me to hear other people’s struggles as well. It’s been an amazing thing for me.”

“God’s heart and love for people who have  
been overlooked.”

“This is God’s initiative,” said Fr. Ben. “God’s heart and love for people who have been overlooked, and in many ways denigrated. They’ve been put down, you know, at the butt end of jokes, but I see God just saying, ‘I love you. I cherish you. And to make this even more hilarious, I’m going to use a way of following Jesus that is often associated with privilege and prestige, that’s going to be the people who are going to lead you into this wonderful, flourishing life that I have for you.’”

Jed Walkup, a parishioner at Hope Church expressed a similar sentiment. “The people of West Virginia are an amazing and beautiful people and maybe don’t have a lot from the world’s perspective, and I think that is why God is doing something in and through the people of West Virginia.”

Fr. Ben and a group of leaders from Mission West Virginia gathered by the banks of the Kanawha River, with a beautiful view of the gold-leaved dome of the capitol in Charleston. A slick, Honda Gold Wing motorcycle rolled to a stop near the group, and the driver unzipped his fluorescent yellow and black jacket as he dismounted the bike. It seemed so typical until a white, clerical collar was revealed underneath with a large wooden cross dangling on the man’s chest. It was the Rev. Jim Sallie, Rector of Church of the Redeemer, Parkersburg, West Virginia – a bit of an unexpected sight. Fr. Jim joins the group, and they talk admiringly of his motorcycle and flame patterned, pointed tip, cowboy boots. This group, this team from Mission West Virginia that Fr. Ben has come alongside, seem wired for taking on the unexpected in this recent Anglican development.

It’s hard to go too far in West Virginia without hearing or seeing reference to the lyrics in Denver’s song:

Take me home, country road.  
To the place I belong.  
West Virginia, Mountain mama.  
Take me home, country road.

But maybe that country road is along the Anglican way, leading the people of West Virginia home to Jesus. As Fr. Jim described it, “They [the people of West Virginia] have experienced that this is not a personality-driven church. Most of our people would not have chosen, right off, the Anglican way of worship. Having experienced it though, it was like coming home to a place they’d never been.”



# WELCOMING ..... THE STRANGER .....

By Ernie Didot

## THE GOAL OF THE EVERY TRIBE AND NATION INITIATIVE

“GOAL!!!!” Can you believe it?!” exclaimed Sergio. The upstart Croatian national soccer team was beating the Brazilian powerhouse in the 2022 FIFA World Cup last December, and the Rev. Sergio Sapunar, a Chilean with Croatian ancestry, was grinning from ear-to-ear. Throughout the day, yips and yelps were heard as different leaders from the Every Tribe and Nation Initiative (ETNI) gathering in Greensboro, North Carolina, checked on World Cup scores during breaks. The representatives from various dioceses reflected the same type of globality seen in the soccer tournament; but instead of coming together to kick a ball around the pitch, these leaders were gathering to identify the barriers for immigrants in their North American diaspora\* and how the Anglican Church in North America can best welcome them.

\*DIASPORA = A population that is scattered across regions which are separate from its geographic place of origin.

Deacon and church planter, Dennis Onyango Ochieng, from Restoration Anglican Church in Charlotte, North Carolina, shared the struggles of newly arrived immigrants to the United States who have grown up Anglican in their country of origin.

“When I came to the U.S., I had my Masters in Human Resource Management and a letter of recommendation from my Anglican pastor in Kenya because: 1) I needed a job, and 2) I wanted to find a place to worship. When immigrants who are Anglicans come to America, the first thing that’s a challenge is knowing which Anglican church to go to and/or who do you question to find it?” This is a common refrain, and particularly from African immigrants who grew up Anglican. Dennis continued: “You might be lucky to find people who welcome you with open hands as opposed to some who look at you a little suspect. It sometimes feels like they are looking at you asking, ‘Did you come to church to really worship or a handout?’ From the immigrant’s perspective and the church’s, there are adjustments to preconceived perspectives that need to be made.”

In Charlotte, North Carolina alone, Dennis estimates that there are about 2,000 Kenyans: almost half are Roman Catholic, over a quarter are Anglican, and the remaining are non-denominational. The typical East African immigrant who holds a green card\* is a professional and is being “hosted.” The host will generally be the connection to a local church. But in addition to the struggles of finding a job and a church community, the families are going through a huge social upheaval. Children are often caught between two cultures: their parents’ culture and the North American culture of their peers. The roles of husbands and wives become challenged as women will sometimes bring home an equal or better salary. “Men are sometimes expected here to cook and do house chores, but culturally in Kenya, I was never expected to do anything in the kitchen. It was completely new to me what I was supposed to do here in America.”

\*GREEN CARD = In the United States, a green card will let you live and work lawfully in the country as a permanent resident. Lawful permanent resident status is not the same as citizenship, but it does come with immigration benefits like work authorization.

Amidst the upheaval that can characterize the transition to a new life in North America for many immigrants, ETNI is working to reach the “world at our doorstep.” As ETNI’s Director, the Rev Leah Turner, explained, “Archbishop Foley Beach called us to do more to reach the people that are here from every tribe and nation and so ETNI was formed. A couple of different models have been tried, but in the end it’s about all of us, regardless of what tribe we come from, whether it’s Anglo or whether it is from Kaku, Lua, or Gundam, or any of the tribes across the entire earth. It’s putting aside those designations as barriers and putting our identity as brothers and sisters in Christ with Jesus being the Lord of all of us and celebrating our differences. God made us different. We’re not supposed to be the same. But we are one in Christ.”

The ETNI gathering began with the centering calm of Morning Prayer, led by Nigerian-American, the Rev. Sulmane Maigadi, and the Rev. Herb Bailey II, a leader in the Matthew 25 Initiative (M25i). From this common understanding of magnifying our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ who has opened the way for all peoples to commune together with the living God, the group turned to listening to each other as they grappled with the turbulence that characterizes the lives of so many trying to make a home in North America.

The Rt. Rev. Alan Hawkins, Bishop Co-Adjutor of the Diocese of Christ Our Hope, preached, “I’ve discovered in the Book of Revelation, that the end of all things, the great telos of God is that there will be every tribe, every tongue, every people in every nation. What intrigues me the most about this phraseology is that it is nascent, it is latent, and it is rampant. It’s nascent in the very early pages of the whole Bible. God calls Abram and says, ‘I will make you by following me in faith, trusting in me. I will make you a great nation.’ And then we see that it becomes latent. It’s all over the prophets.

It’s in Jesus’s injunctions to the church. Go into the world and preach the gospel and make disciples of all nations. But then when we get to the Book of Revelation, it’s rampant. Why does it appear? Seven times in all these different combinations and structures, and that is because what God is up to and has been from the beginning is creating for himself one family. One people. One tribe.”

Sergio, Biblical Counselor at Church of the Redeemer and ETNI Coordinator for the Anglican Diocese of Christ Our Hope, explained the complexities in working with what in North America is often classified as one ethnic group, “Hispanics” or “Latinos:” “We are 30 different countries with very different cultures and ways of speaking Spanish, Portuguese, or other indigenous languages. Reaching a Mexican is very different from reaching a Chileno. And then third or fourth generation Hispanics who are very established can be quite different from first generation immigrants who can be low-income with limited education.”

Sergio notes that culturally, families are extremely important. The church can not only play a key role in sharing the gospel, but it can also help support immigrants, both by bringing families together and offering counseling. Practically, he suggests the church focus on relational activities like small groups and dinners.

As another, long exclamation of “GOOOOOAL” wails from someone’s smartphone in the room, those gathered are reminded that events somehow involving soccer probably would not hurt in reaching the Hispanic demographic.

As a counselor though, Sergio sees that many have gone through great trauma in coming to North America – perhaps a traumatic event motivated them to move. “Counseling is a way to reach them and share the gospel because they bring their own problems,” Sergio said. “They may have a job and more money now, but sometimes they may be worse off because they come with broken lives and families.”





“One of the beauties of being part of an Anglican Communion is that we are, at least in some sense, a global communion,” said Matt Foster, Director of Mission and Ministry at Christ The King Anglican in Boone, North Carolina. “You know, the average Anglican doesn’t look like me [blond haired Caucasian]. There are far more African Anglicans than there are North American Anglicans. But our common liturgical forms of worship resonate with so many cultures around the world so that means that we have that in common.”

“Our hope is to be able to develop leaders from within our congregation that are from other places in the world,” says Sulmane, Curate at The Church of the Resurrection in Washington, D.C.. “So the discussion is about how to develop leaders in those communities and also help majority white churches to think about how they can be inviting in their spaces and to learn from them. We don’t want them to be a siloed part of the diocese, but an integral part.”

Sulmane continues, “When they’re right there with you, next door, it’s imperative for you to get to know who your brother, your sister in Christ are, because the final vision of God for his people is that they’re going to be under one King, Jesus. In a very real sense, we’re all going to be worshipping together and living lives together. And so this is something that moves us in that direction. This is the will of God. This is not about

the will of the society. The society may be thinking about these things right now, but this is something that has been in scripture for a long, long, long time.”

The ETNI gathering concluded with representatives from around the globe and North America holding hands, singing, and praying together. There was nothing forced or schmaltzy about the moment. It felt like it happened before, like it happens regularly.

The roars of the big soccer tournament also concluded as fans waved #SayNoToRacism banners. While the efforts of sporting organizations are admirable in their efforts to draw people together – and they can – we all know that it is only as sustainable as what the next tyrant or dictator will bring to bear to divide and destroy. Who can save us from ourselves? From each other?

Unsurprisingly yet appropriately, Herb Bailey, suggests that we live out the gospel through hospitality to the stranger, “Literally, hospitality is how we practically embody what Christ has called us to do unto himself, because he identifies as the stranger. He doesn’t identify with [the stranger], he identifies as the stranger. And so, as a stranger in a strange land, a foreigner in a strange land, you are looking for a person of peace. Who are these people of peace? We [ETNI] are practically working out what that means.”



## Every Tribe & Nation Initiative



On June 25th, 2023 ETNI is partnering with the Anglican Diocese in New England and Grace & Faith Anglican Parish to host the East African Festival. Celebration is one of the 4 pillars of the ETNI mission, and festivals that join people from every tribe, tongue and nation are one of the ways to come together as one church to share in the richness and diversity God has created among all the peoples of the earth.

- Worship - with music and dance led by choirs and praise and worship teams from across the ADNE
- Clergy, Bishops, and Archbishops from across GAFCON - including Kenya, Uganda, Sudan, South Sudan, and the United States will speak throughout the day
- Food from across East Africa will be served

Come Join Us!

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