



GLAD TIDINGS

ANGELICAN CHURCH
MAGNOLIA, TX - A MISSION OF ST. TIMOTHY'S

FEBRUARY 2010

AMiA Winter Conference

As I write this I am preparing to travel to North Carolina for the Winter Conference of the Anglican Mission in the Americas. This will be the third time I have attended and the second time I've gone as a member. The first time I attended was in 2008, when a number of us visited as observers while we were in the discernment process that eventually led to the formation of St. Timothy's Anglican Church. I can't say that I made my own decision in that matter based strictly on my experience there, but it certainly did have an effect. We joke about it now, but it really was exciting to attend a church conference that was given over entirely to worship, teaching and fellowship without the legislative sessions that had been the largest part of every other church conference I had ever attended as a member of the Episcopal Church and the United Methodist Church.

It's not my intention to criticize those churches in this – their polity requires that they come together periodically in convention or conference to make decisions that order their common lives together. But I will also confess that those conferences I attended in those traditions often seemed to emphasize the political over the spiritual. Frequently the decisions that were necessary to order the life of the church were supplemented with legislation that purported to state the church's position on matters not connected with its internal governance and that were often quite divisive. As I think about it I can recall resolutions on the invasion of Grenada, Panama, Iraq (I and II), and the subjects of illegal immigration, affordable health care, statehood for Puerto Rico and the government of El Salvador. All of those were subjects of real importance and appropriate subjects for prayer, but they also proved to be occasions for people of good conscience to disagree. By the time those conferences had ended I always found myself departing for home with a sense of relief and it often seemed necessary to find some time to unwind afterwards. All in all, a strange reaction to what should have been a time of renewal and fellowship.

When we became members of the Anglican Mission, we accepted some significant changes in our church governance. The Anglican Church of Rwanda, of which AMiA is one part, operates in a much more top-down fashion. New bishops, for example, tend to be designated by Archbishop Kolini in conference with the other bishops and, I assume, some of the senior clergy and laity. Even so, having grown used to the Episcopal and United Methodist systems in which bishops were elected on at least a somewhat local basis, I was a little surprised the first time I heard new bishops-designate named. I had no personal objection to any of the persons named, but neither had I been asked for my opinion in the matter anyway. The experience caused me to reflect a little more on our new Anglican home – was I really comfortable with giving up the input I had had in other

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Our Mission Is: We Will Know, Love, Serve, and Obey Christ and Will Make Him Known to Others!

Our Core Values:

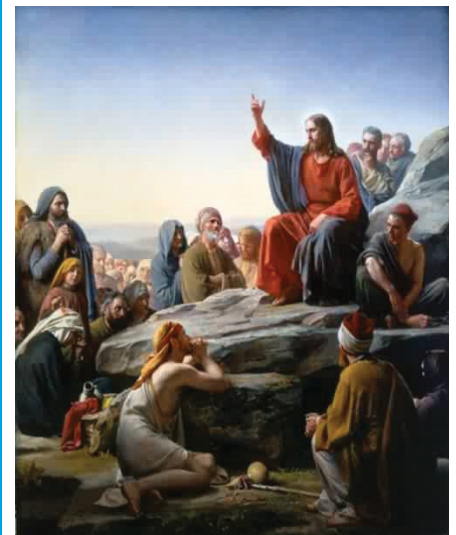
Growing and Discipling the Family of God

Reflecting the Love of God Through Hospitality, Friendship and Fellowship

Encountering the Living God Through Traditional and Contemporary Worship

Raising and Nurturing Children through the Grace of God

Sharing God's Love By Reaching Out



The Sermon on the Mount
Carl Heinrich Bloch

(Fr. Craig continued)

organizations through my votes?

In the end I decided I was. A certain amount of trust is required in our new system. We must trust that those who make the decisions about our leadership and overall direction are doing so prayerfully and are sufficiently orthodox in their faith that they will not appoint persons who would do damage to the church and its people. I found after reflection that I do have that trust in our leadership. Now, as I anticipate my third year of attendance at our winter conference I find that I'm looking forward to it without the mixed feelings I used to have in former tribes.

My experience has been that the AMiA conference places its emphases where it can do the most good – corporate worship in which AMiA folks come together in a big group and serve as a common witness to each other of the great things God is doing among us and Bible study in which we are reminded that we are called to constantly grow as disciples. It's good to see just how many of us there are

because, at least in this part of the US, we're rather few and far between. Our congregation is part of the Little Rock Network of AMiA churches, but since that network extends up into Missouri and as far east as parts of Tennessee we don't get to see some of our fellow network brothers and sisters very often. Seeing that huge crowd of people in worship and study, and remembering that for every person present there are many more unable to be there, is a testimony to just how active God has been among us.

Every time I've attended I've come back reenergized and ready to tackle some new challenges. This year I'll do my best to share what I'm doing and seeing on our Yahoo group and Facebook pages so that you can be there with me vicariously. Please keep the contingents from Savior and St. Timothy's in your prayers and know that you will be in ours.

In Christ,
Fr. Craig

Lent

“Let's have a good time first!” Have you ever said or thought these words to yourself when faced with a time of testing, trial, or change? Long ago, Lent often meant wearing drab, dark clothing, eating meals without meat, and putting away all good times for the forty days of Lent. Thus, it became a custom for people to have a celebration of some kind before Lent began.

The weeks before Easter are a wonderful time to focus on the disciplines of the spiritual life – both individual and church-wide. The season of Lent lasts for forty days, excluding Sundays. It begins with Ash Wednesday and ends with Easter. The number 40 is special for many reasons. Back in the days when Moses led his people through the Red Sea and into the desert, they wandered and survived with God's help for 40 years. (Exodus 34:27-28) Elijah fled for his life through the wilderness, fasting 40 days and nights until he came to Mount Horeb. There God appeared and instructed him on how to overcome his enemies. (1 Kings 19:1-18) Jesus spent 40 days fasting (eating little or nothing) and praying in the desert after His baptism. (Matthew 4:1-2; Luke 4:1-2) Lent is a word that's been around for a long time. The Anglo-Saxons (about 1,500 years ago) really looked forward to spring after their long winters. Our word *Lent* comes from their word *Lengten*, the time in spring when the days started lengthening or getting warmer.

At first, Lent was a time for eggs, bunny rabbits, and flowers. Before they became Christians, many people in

England worshiped the sun, moon, trees, and other things in nature. After Christ had risen and gone to heaven, the news about His life, death, and resurrection spread to many parts of the world. When the teachings of Jesus came across Europe to them, many of them turned to God, and stopped putting their faith in nature. They decided to combine the celebration of spring's new life with the observance of Jesus' death and resurrection to new life. The Christian way to observe these events is with fasting, abstaining (not eating meat), and making special sacrifices. When the Anglo-Saxons put the Christian and nature practices together, they called the time of preparation Lent, and the celebration of new life's arrival Easter.

Make this Lenten season a special time for meditation, prayer, and penitential practices; increased understanding of Christ's sacrifices and resurrection; and a renewal of your baptismal vows and recommitment to the Christian life. Studying Christ's life and death can bring new meaning and relevance to events that may sometimes seem very distant from today's world. Christ urged His followers not to be complacent, but to actively pursue faith. (Matthew 7:7) Observing Lent can help you to experience the full joy of Easter! “Be doers of the Word, and not merely hearers”. (James 4:22)

In Christ's service,
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