

The Bishop's Address
to the 114th Annual Convention
of the Diocese of Lexington
February 20, 2009

Berashith

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Berashith. This is the word with which the Bible begins. *Berashith*. In the beginning. God's word issued forth from God's mind and it came to be. "Let there be light"; and there was light." "Let there be a dome in the midst of the waters." And there was sky. And so it continued. The earth. The dry land and the waters. And all the life on the dry land and in the waters. First all sorts of vegetation—plants yielding seed "of every kind," fruit trees "of every kind." *Of every kind*. Then swarms of living creatures from the waters—"sea monsters and every living creature that moves, of every kind, with which the waters swarm and every winged bird of every kind." *Of every kind*. Then "cattle and creeping things and wild animals of the earth of every kind." *Of every kind*. All in all, a wonderful and amazing diversity of life, plant and animal, as Genesis says, of every kind. "And God saw that it was good." This is how it was in the beginning. *Berashith*.

And finally at the end of it all, at the culmination of it all, humankind. "So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them." Male and female—words denoting the diversity within a single species of creature just as the words *of every kind* denote the diversity among multiple species of creatures. Male and female. Of every kind. Fundamental diversity. As intended. *Berashith*.

What is fundamental to the creation in the intention of God, and of humanity in the image of God, is diversity. All of creation is fundamentally diverse—male and female, alike and yet different, vegetation, swarms, sea monsters, cattle, wild animals, and human beings of every kind. "Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all their multitude." "God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good." That is God's intention. Diverse. In the beginning. *Berashith*.

When our community falls short of the way it was in the beginning, falls short of fundamental diversity, we fall short of God's own creative word, God's intention, God's image. The image of God in humankind is fundamentally related to, and indeed dependent on, diversity—male and female, and of course, beyond male and female. It is related to, and indeed fundamentally dependent on, black and white and red and yellow, little and big, every language and people and nation, Spanish speaking and English, differently abled and differently oriented, different perspectives and different opinions, different gifts and different talents and different skills and different interests and different tastes—all different and yet only the image of God together.

I am thankful to God beyond words that this diocesan community is gathered here this morning for the 114th time. I am thankful that Bishop Katharine is here with us. I am thankful that we are gathered male and female, clergy and lay, because it suggests something about the image of God, about faith, and about being a Christian.

But I also note that we are not all here. There is a preponderance of adults; not so many children. There is a preponderance of older adults; not so many young adults. And that not only diminishes our community; it diminishes the image of God in us. There are, I am sorry to say, very few faces of color among us, which means that a significant portion of the community we exist to serve is not represented here. We fall short of God's intention for us in that. That not only diminishes our community; it diminishes the image of God in us. There are no Spanish speaking congregations represented here, which means that another significant portion of the community we exist to serve is not represented here. That not only diminishes our community; it diminishes the image of God in us. There is no intentional presence of those with physical challenges. It diminishes us and it diminishes the image of God in us. There is no intentional presence of people with mental and cognitive challenges. It diminishes us and it diminishes the image of God in us. To the extent that we have failed to include the diverse richness of humanity as God intended it, we have failed to honor the creative intention of God. To the extent we have failed to include those who seem different to us in one way or another, we have fallen short of our call to be truly catholic, which means, after all, all-inclusive. To the extent we have failed by intentional exclusion, we have sinned against the very nature of God. To have failed by inattention is only marginally better. The reality and the richness of God's creation is, for us Christians, a matter of faith. It goes in fact to the essence of our faith, our faith as it was *berashith*, in the beginning, in the beginning before our sinfulness confused us and filled us with fear of what was other, foreign, and different.

Honoring our diversity, indeed seeking diversity, goes to the heart of our catholicity as a church. It goes to the heart of our apostolicity as a church. It goes to the heart of what it is to be a Christian as we seek to respond to God by respecting the dignity of every human being, loving our neighbor as ourselves, and striving for justice and peace among all. Respecting human diversity is not an option. Encouraging human diversity is not an extra. Seeking human diversity is something we need not fear.

And doing precisely those things, because they are essential to honoring the very image of God, the very nature of God, the very life of God, in which we find our own life, our abundant life, our eternal life, is exactly what this diocesan family, with God's help, is hereby setting out to do. It is my intention as Bishop that we set out to change the very nature of our community from this moment on—to change the color of its face, to change the language it speaks, to change the nature of its acceptance, to change the way it sees the world because of who in the world it includes, because the church should be every bit as diverse as the humanity it is intended to serve. Indeed, that and only that, is what makes it catholic, and without that it is impossible to be recognizably Christian. We now turn ourselves, God willing, to mining the rich diversity of our Diocese and our Commonwealth so that the quite justifiable criticism of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., that 11:00 on Sunday morning is the most segregated hour in America, will no longer be true among us.

At our last convention a year ago, we accepted a resolution to continue our study of the effects of slavery on the life of the church. That was good, and the congregation that has taken this effort the farthest, the Church of the Nativity in Maysville, has discovered a great deal of fascinating information about itself. But to my great surprise, at the same convention we rejected a resolution mandating anti-racism training for those putting themselves forward for diocesan office. As I reflected on that, I came to realize how deeply uncomfortable even the debate about that resolution had made me. It was a clear signal to me that there was work to be done—that I had work to do in my own soul, and that it was my responsibility as Bishop to lead us to work on our corporate soul.

To those ends, I called together a number of diocesan leaders and then with their help, a number of community leaders to consider the nature of racism in our midst. The conversations have been both revealing and enlightening. Some of the comments were pretty sobering, and I share just a few of them with you:

- We need to acknowledge the reality of racism.
- We have a tendency to ignore what is uncomfortable.
- One of the things we ignore is our history of racism.
- Our own inaction needs to be exposed.
- Ending racism is not a matter of appealing to moral suasion.
- We are experiencing an increase in racism in our country and in our communities.
- What is needed is intensive diversity training.

The most sobering comments of all came from a woman, not an Episcopalian, who reported that in her experience, racism very often comes from the clergy, and from a clergy person, who is an Episcopalian, that she believed racism was increasing and quoting a member of her congregation, a wise African-American woman of 97 years, that we are living through a quiet civil war—sometimes not so quiet perhaps. The issue for us is neither political nor social; it is spiritual. The issue for us is sin against the image of God and the intended order of creation.

That is why I made a decision to use this convention to pay appropriate attention to a man and to a legacy about race in our community, and also to a part of history that needs to be overcome. The man's name is London Ferrill.

London Ferrill moved to Lexington at the age of 22 when another famous Kentuckian, Abraham Lincoln, was two years old and living not all that far from here and when Christ Church, the mother church of Anglicanism in Kentucky, was just 15 years old. London Ferrill had been born a slave in Virginia and endured separation from his mother at the age of eight when he was sold for \$600 in settling his owner's estate upon her death. The exact

circumstances of his emancipation are obscure, but when his master died, he gained both his freedom and a sense of a call to preach the Gospel of Christ. Now Ferrill also felt a call to leave Virginia, the state of his enslavement, which no one could fail to understand, but what is difficult to understand is his choice not to migrate northward to New York or Philadelphia, which he actively considered. Instead, he journeyed westward across the wilderness from Virginia to Kentucky where the institution of slavery to which he had been subject continued to exist and where it was illegal for a free black person not a native of the state to be present for more than 30 days. It was Ferrill's intent, as his biographer reports it, to seek "some unenlightened population in some section . . . without a shepherd and [in need of] his services in the cause of Christianity. . . ." He found it. The same biographer reports that "his kind wife remarked to him that she would go with him any where [*sic*]." Such is the life of clergy spouses, without whom nothing would be possible. And so, London Ferrill came to Kentucky to make his home and to tend the faithful.

His ministry had many accomplishments, not the least of which is that before he died he had baptized nearly 5,000 persons. The First African Baptist Church, of which he was the second pastor, grew to be the largest church, white or black, in Kentucky. He is remembered for two things in particular. The first is that the powerful nature of his preaching and the committed nature of his discipleship proved impossible for the white Baptist authorities to overlook, and he was ordained and recognized by them in 1821. The second is that when a cholera epidemic struck Lexington in 1833, Ferrill, Benjamin Bosworth Smith, the rector of Christ Church and first Bishop of Kentucky, and Fr. Edward McMahon, a Catholic priest, were the only clergy who remained, and together they labored to minister to the sick and dying of whatever race. In the midst of cholera, it seems, the color barrier, even in a slave state, was broken.

When Ferrill died, his funeral was second only to Henry Clay's in the number attending, and his body was buried in the Old Episcopal Burying Ground on Third Street, which was quite a remarkable thing in a day when Christians were segregated not only in life but in death. To the best of anyone's knowledge, London Ferrill is the only black person buried in that place. We will commemorate that fact in the closing service of this Convention tomorrow afternoon when the original marker of London Ferrill's grave will be given to those who loved him best, the people of First African Baptist, and a new memorial will be dedicated to honor this great and faithful man.

That London Ferrill, recognized as a great man by both white and black alike, is buried in an otherwise all white cemetery is a testament to the universal regard in which he was held, but it is also a testament to judgment. London Ferrill's transcendence of racial separation is both a foreshadowing of the coming reign of God and a judgment on a sacrilege to the image of God that his burial at the Old Episcopal Burying Ground is unique. It is at one and the same time a part of our history to celebrate and a judgment on our past, and if we are honest, on our present. Like all judgments, it is also a call to the faithful to repent and reform. Like all judgments, it suggests a message of hope in turning from our old ways to the ways of God. It is well in this season of Lent for us to see it as such.

We have one prayer of London Ferrill preserved for posterity. In it, Ferrill prays that God will: "[B]e merciful to the citizens of Lexington, Kentucky, and may it please Thee to

bless, preserve and keep them from sin. Guide them in all their walks—make them peaceable, happy and truly righteous, and when they come to lie down on the bed of death, may Thy good Spirit hover around, ready to waft their ransomed souls to Thy good presence—Lord grant this for Christ’s sake.” (Could I get an amen?) But Ferrill’s prayer went on. “And, merciful Father! Bless the white people, who have always treated me as though I was a white man.” Ferrill did not say treated me as a man, but “treated me as though I was a white man.”

That prayer, I think, ought to give us pause. Wherever human beings resort to “as though,” to justify kindness to one another, or justice to one another, or mercy to one another, or love to one another, then there is a most grave sin against the image of God. Wherever human beings discriminate among one another on the basis of the color of their skin or gender or orientation or nationality or what part of the country they come from or the value of the gifts they have received from God, then there is a most grave sin against the image of God. And if it does anything at all, it seems to me, the Church must stand against sin.

It is, though, far too easy to stand against something, even sin. It is much more challenging to be doers of righteousness. It is much more challenging to be builders of the kingdom of God. It is much more challenging to be co-creators with God of a world reflecting God’s own mind as it was in the beginning, *berashith*. It is much more challenging to seek to become the very image of God, in all its diversity, in the world. The image of God, the life of God, must be our only vision.

And that vision is glimpsed when we take “as if I were” and turn it on its head in the spirit of Christ who said that all of ethics could be summarized in this way: “In everything do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the law and the prophets” (Mt. 7:12). The Christly standard of our conduct is not to treat someone “as if I was a white man” but to view the world and our neighbor “as if I were a black man.” And “as if I were a woman” and “as if I were gay” and “as if I were from Appalachia” and “as if I were in a wheelchair.” This is the basic ethic of the *imago dei*. Or we could simply leave it “as if I were a human being” for this is the basic ethic of the Incarnation.

To that end, turning “as if” on its head, I hope that we will accomplish three things in the coming year. The first is to implement a suggestion of Bob Sessum to host a Freedom Tour, to take young people, black and white together, Episcopalian and non-Episcopalian together, on a pilgrimage to the sites of the struggle for racial justice in Kentucky to hear firsthand from the people who lived through the events of those days and to contemplate together what they mean for our present and our future.

Second, I intend to convene a conference on inclusion in this Diocese to actively consider how we might go about making sure that, at least among us, being in God’s presence will no longer be our most segregated experience of the week, because when it is, God is more difficult for us recognize, God is not honored, and we come very near to blasphemy.

Third, I hope to work with community groups in Lexington and in other locations in our Diocese to open a frank and honest conversation about racism in our communities. It is my hope that we might use “Traces of the Trade,” a film with deep ties to The Episcopal Church about a

Rhode Island family's discovery of its ties to the slave trade and the complicity of northern commercial interests in what the South referred to euphemistically as its "peculiar institution." My hope is to advance the conversation we have only just begun to have.

Our diversity, and thus our faithfulness, is diminished when any are not present, particularly when any believe they are not welcome to be present. Therefore, I am actively calling us to reach out in the name of Christ Jesus to include those who are not now present in our fellowship. To explain how I plan to do this, it is necessary to review some of our successes over the last year for they point the way to a strategy.

It has indeed been a year of significant accomplishments for the Diocese of Lexington in a number of ways, and it has been, I am convinced, because we faced unprecedented challenges with unprecedented hope, just as we discussed doing at this Convention one year ago. A year ago we faced three facts about our small churches: (1) the significance of their mission potential, (2) the on-going need for clergy leadership, and (3) the inability to compete effectively for clergy in the free market system of clergy deployment because of limited resources. The Network for Pastoral Leadership and Congregational Development was invented immediately after the Convention's close to be part of the solution. Six months later it was operating with a very positive impact on our Diocese and our small congregations, and with very significant implications, I believe, for the larger Church. Six months after that it is bearing much fruit.

Through the Network, we searched for the brightest and most capable of new seminary graduates. We placed four of them in charge of small congregations and one of them in charge of our campus ministry at the University of Kentucky in a very creative partnership with our Cathedral, part of Dean Thompson's vision that the Cathedral live out its role as the servant congregation of our Diocese. Through the Network we put an extensive support structure in place for these new clergy including a monthly supervisory meeting with the Bishop, the Canon to the Ordinary, and the Bishop's Deputy for Leadership Development; seminars in the practicalities of parish priesthood and of congregational development; an experienced priest as a mentor; and a support team from within the congregation.

The Network has been highly successful. The congregations involved are showing encouraging signs of growth. Average Sunday attendance is up 13% in one, 18% in another. Christmas Eve went from 46 in 2008 to 66 in 2009 in another. In all cases, giving is up significantly. The amount pledged went up 11% in one, 14% in another, and 15% in another. The number of pledging units went up 16% in one, 25% in another, and 50% in another. Most importantly, ministry is up significantly. The new priests are learning and thriving. The congregations have a new sense of their own ministries and importance as something like teaching hospitals to help train priests for the larger Church. There are signs of new outreach and mission. One Network congregation is now hosting a Head Start program for the children of migrant workers. Another has just raised \$5,500 to send to Haiti. Two are deeply involved in college ministry. We are now recruiting for new seminarians for three-five more Network congregations in 2010.

The Small Church Ministry Consortium is another part of the solution, especially for our smallest congregations who have no other realistic prospect for clergy leadership at all under a

system where the free market system determines where God is calling clergy to serve. With the leadership of Janey Wilson, increased ministry is taking hold in several of them. Attention and leadership is being provided and developed to meet challenges, particularly at St. James, Prestonsburg, which is showing some very impressive signs of revitalization, and equally impressively, the courage and honesty to face some significant financial challenges that have threatened to undo its ministry.

At the same time, the Consortium has had its problems to overcome, particularly financially, and the core congregations of St. Mark's, Hazard, St. Thomas, Beattyville, and St. Alban's, Morehead deserve much credit from all of us for being the pioneers who led the way. Last year, the Diocese had to subsidize the Consortium in the amount of \$30,000. The main reason is geography. Our smallest congregations are generally our most isolated congregations, typically in the mountains of Eastern Kentucky. And it is good and right that the diocesan community as a whole share in the burden of geography. After all, the geography is ours; it does not belong exclusively to the congregations most isolated by it. In a nutshell, the Consortium congregations have the ability to fund part-time priests for themselves. They are ready and willing to do so. There are two problems. One is like the challenge of the Network congregations. The free market economy of clergy deployment prices these congregations out of the market altogether. We need to create more priests liberated from the inherent values of the free market system of clergy deployment, which confuses the voice of God with the highest bidder and confuses people in collars with commodities. The Commission on Ministry and I are working on that. Another is that the priests we need free of the market system still have to earn a living, and that must frequently be done somewhere other than the smaller communities where our Consortium congregations are located. So, getting priests to these locations involves a great deal of travel. Mileage reimbursements are breaking the bank even though all of the deacons and some of the priests involved work without compensation as a gift to Christ's Church. So, in consultation with the Consortium team and the affected congregations, we have come up with a new model, which has the potential to make the Consortium self-sustaining, partly because the most well-resourced of those congregations financially—particularly new Consortium members Christ Church, Harlan and St. Hubert's, Clark County—will be doing what they are able to do so that the less-resourced congregations financially can do what they are able to do.

Now there are voices that would tell us that what we need to do is help these smallest congregations recognize that they are not viable, are a drain on the Church, and need to close gracefully, to which I say, quite frankly, "Hell, no." I have no intention of closing any of these congregations, and if the congregations are willing to help me, I will go to the mat to assure not only that they survive but that they flourish because they are the building blocks of mission. Our mission as The Episcopal Church matters in these small communities. We have something important to offer. We present the saving reality of faith in Christ in a way that is beautiful in its appreciation of mystery, intellectually credible in its appreciation of critical thought, refreshingly honest in its appreciation of openness in facing its problems, and decidedly counter-cultural in its appreciation of diversity, including diversity of thought. It is not only people in big cities who need a church like that. It is people in small towns and rural settings as well. It is vitally important that we be present everywhere in our Diocese where people make their homes in order to proclaim that the day of the Lord's favor has arrived and that a sign of that is that "The Episcopal Church Welcomes You," which we are willing to demonstrate that we mean. What

we have to offer may not appeal to everyone, but I also know that there are people even in our smallest communities who need it and for whom we are the only community available in which to worship without having to hide who they are. And, God willing, this Diocese will never, never abandon these people in the name of some misguided understanding of church growth, financial expediency, missiological efficiency, or the heretical idea that the Church is a business.

In fact, contrary to all conventional wisdom, it is my intention in the coming year, to ask the Network and the Consortium to be the primary congregational development instrument of the Diocese of Lexington under the direct leadership of the Bishop. The Network and Consortium congregations will become, in their own right, resource centers to serve their small communities and others like them as well as the Diocese as a whole.

First, now that the Network and the Consortium are up and running, and our smallest congregations for the first time in many years can turn their attention from survival to mission, this is the year to follow through on a long-dreamed dream to use the Education for Ministry program not only to strengthen those within our congregations but to reach out to those outside them. It is not necessary to be a fundamentalist to be a Christian. It is not necessary to check your mind at the door to be a Christian. It is not necessary to be hostile to education in general and science in particular, especially evolution, to be a Christian. The Episcopal Church, in much of the territory we serve, is the only witness to this truth, and beginning this year, with the cooperation of the Education for Ministry program in our Diocese, we will introduce an intellectually sound study of the Bible and the Christian tradition into small towns in Kentucky as a way of inviting people into a Church that respects them for who they are, including their curious, questioning, and seeking minds, which we proclaim to be a gift of the Holy Spirit and not a source of shame. The Episcopal Church hardly has anything to fear in the Bible or in people knowing the Bible. What we have failed to do is teach the Bible so that the Scriptures speak for themselves instead of being used to perpetuate ignorance, incorrect assumptions, and outdated prejudices.

Second, the Network is working so well to connect the larger diocesan community in the support of new priests in the leadership of small congregations that it poses the potential for using the same model to develop new congregations from scratch. So, let's use it.

We have long needed, and had some limited funds available for developing, a new congregation in Northern Kentucky. We have enough money designated for this purpose from the Second Century Campaign either to bring in a church developer or to buy land (maybe), but not both. There will be no need for land until we start to gather a congregation. So I'm for the developer. People first; buildings second. And I've come to realize that this is an effort that is going to have to be led at the diocesan level, and the Bishop in particular. I hope that the Northern Kentucky congregations will come to see this as part of their mission, too. So, I will propose to the Executive Council that we use the Network to develop a new congregation in Northern Kentucky.

Indeed, three new congregations. If I can find two congregations willing to partner with me on this plan, I also want to use the Network to develop two more communities along an emergent church model intended for young people, one in Northern Kentucky and one in

Lexington. The intention is to explore a new way of starting churches, beginning with a demographic group, and developing it in time into a fuller expression of inclusion, of catholicity.

One of our successes in the last year has been St. Paul's in Newport. I began speaking to Convention nine years ago about the importance of redeveloping St. Paul's, located on the courthouse square in a rapidly redeveloping part of Northern Kentucky, as a place we would dream of putting a church but could never afford to do so were it not for the fact that we already owned the land and the building. We realized that what we needed was a priest with a background in and talent for redeveloping churches. We found such a person in Matthew Young. The diocesan community and the people of St. Paul's entered a partnership to share the redevelopment expense over five years. Those five years ended in September. And now, St. Paul's is thriving and it is completely self-supporting. Over those five years it has gone from an average Sunday attendance of 27 to an average Sunday attendance of 46—up 70%. Its pledges have gone from 28 units giving \$26,000 in 2004 to 46 units giving \$91,000 in 2010—up 64% in pledging unites and 250% in dollars pledged. Most importantly of all, in my mind, it has opened a food pantry that serves 40-50 households per week and received a UTO grant in the amount of \$30,000 to further its work. It has been a partner in the Northern Kentucky Reading Camp. It hosts four recovery groups each week. It now has a nursery every Sunday and a growing Christian Education program. What happened is that St. Paul's turned from survival to mission, and when that happens freedom and adventure and abundance replace fear and safety and scarcity. And when they do, the Lord is able to do great things. And it is marvelous in our eyes.

We now have a similar need at another congregation, also in Northern Kentucky, this time at Grace Church in Florence. Its circumstances are quite different, but its need is quite similar. And its potential is quite similar. For a variety of reasons, it has fallen on hard times in recent years, but I have no intention of abandoning it. The diocesan community needs to turn its attention here. And so, I propose working with the Executive Council and the Bishop's Committee at Grace to forge a redevelopment plan, again using the Network, to restore Grace to being a mission center in Boone County, the only Episcopal Church in that county, one of Kentucky's largest and fastest growing. The first thing I will ask to happen is a meeting between a delegation from the Executive Council and the Bishop's Committee as quickly as possible this spring.

If we are to be successful in increasing our diversity, the task cannot fall solely to the Network, the Consortium, St. Paul's, and Grace. It must be our communal responsibility. And that is why I am asking each and every church to search for a place to nurture a new community in the next year, and to report to convention next year on its success—that's right all 35 congregations. I'm not talking about what is traditionally called church planting, which is a term I do not particularly like. I am talking about every single congregation looking around itself to see who is not included in community life and then reaching out to include them. It could mean starting a service in a nursing home to nurture a community of those who would otherwise be lonely. It could mean starting a service on a college campus. It could mean that group of young Latinos you see playing soccer when you take your daughter for practice. It could mean a retirement community. It could mean a prison. It could mean something among refugees. It could mean the Native American Pow-Wow that takes place annually in Corbin. It might be truck drivers who stop along I-75 to share a cup of coffee on Sunday mornings. I am convinced

that one place it could be is among those who need community the most but often have the hardest time finding it precisely because they seem different to us, and I particularly mean those who have Asperger Syndrome, or who are blind, or who are deaf, or who have other special needs. It does not have to be a community that is going to have a pay off for the budget. It does mean looking for those places where people need to be included, need the life that comes from being part of a community centered in Christ, and then reaching out to draw them into one. At next year's convention, I am asking that every single congregation bring its new community to this Convention, to be part of our celebration, to share its joy with us. Each one. I am expecting 35.

Our successes in mission during the year have not only been local; they have been global. We may be a small diocese, but we are having a major impact, far beyond our numbers.

On the Fourth of July, Paul Korir, a priest from the Diocese of Eldoret in Kenya, stepped off an airplane at Blue Grass Airport in Lexington. Ginger and I were there. It was a homecoming of someone we had never met before. And since that time, Paul has been as much a part of the Diocese of Lexington as any priest we have, and perhaps the greatest advocate for this Diocese and this Church among our greatest critics. Paul has worked in the Small Church Ministry Consortium and supplied where needed. He has now been assigned to Emmanuel Church, Winchester and will be helping Melanie Mudge there, where I know he will have a significant influence. But most importantly, he has been the incarnation of a connection with brothers and sisters we did not even know we had half a world away. He brought our attention to the suffering caused by drought and famine, particularly among that society's most vulnerable, the elderly and widows. We were able to help, and a glorious distribution of farming supplies presided over by Bishop Thomas Kogo took place over the Christmas holiday. Paul and Melanie have also worked to connect clergy here with clergy there by exchanging letters. The first step in improving things, he rightly points out, is in getting to know each other. It is harder to fear the known than the unknown. It is my hope to raise funds to send two people to Eldoret this summer to continue that effort. Paul has expressed an interest in bringing Reading Camp to Kenya. We hope to have someone go for the purpose of beginning to plan for that venture this summer, too.

Reading Camp is also expanding in South Africa. Again with the help of UTO, we received a grant of \$23,000 to fund expansion in South Africa. Reading Camp is also being taken to Liberia this summer through a partnership we established with a church in the Diocese of Virginia. We are expanding in the United States and in the Diocese of Lexington as well, with new camps this year in the Dioceses of Virginia, Ohio, and Southern Ohio, and at Emmanuel Church in Winchester. The spread of mission surely evidences the hand of God.

Our companion Diocese of Haiti, as we all know, was devastated by a massive earthquake on January 12. You have responded beyond generosity to the requests for assistance. Both small and large churches have given sacrificially, many thousands of dollars. I would estimate \$50,000 or more. Three weeks ago two people from our Companion Diocese Commission traveled to Haiti as part of a medical mission team. They were able to see Bishop Duracin and deliver a letter to him for me. In that letter I made an offer on your behalf to send, at his direction and request, medical teams in the short run and church building teams in the long run. I made the offer confidently knowing of your generosity and your desire to respond to these

our brothers and sisters who so enrich our lives. If at all possible a mission team from our Diocese will travel to Haiti in July. We will be looking for other ways to assist as well.

Another significant accomplishment this year was the completion of a new pool at the Domain. Actually, it was not so much the completion as the funding that was the accomplishment. That funding was a response that began at last year's Convention when one single teenager who loves the Domain and appreciates what it had done in her life went home after hearing on Friday about the need to repair the pool to make it safe and brought back her entire savings—a little over a hundred dollars—on Saturday. She is a page at this Convention and her name is Autumn Geerer.

A few large gifts, but mostly many, many smaller gifts, followed, and the new pool is now a reality. The total cost was \$87,195. Donations totaled \$82,164. There are enough people here right now to write checks that would more than cover the \$5,031 deficit. I am going to be surprised if we don't have it in hand by the close of Convention tomorrow. Perhaps the most important aspect of this outpouring was what it indicated about support among the people of the Diocese for the Cathedral Domain and its ministry, something I have always known was there. Not only did you give almost the entire cost of unplanned for but necessary safety improvements to the pool, but you increased your giving in general. Another \$36,000 was given for general support. \$21,000 came in for scholarship support for campers. Altogether that means that you gave \$139,000 last year to support the ministry of the Cathedral Domain to our children and youth. This speaks very well for the future.

The other thing that speaks well for the future is the fact that we made a lot of progress in the last year in controlling the Domain's expenses. For 2008, the Domain had an operating deficit of \$84,000. This is very hard to see from the financial reports you have because of the idiosyncrasies of fund accounting and something called "GAAP," which stands for Generally Accepted Accounting Practices, but the bottom line is that the Domain's operating deficit for 2009 shrank by 58% to \$35,000. That is very good news. We are making significant progress toward saving this ministry.

At last year's convention I stated that I would call for a capital campaign to secure the future of the Cathedral Domain if two things occurred before now. The first is that we had made progress in doing things differently for the betterment of our camping ministry. We have unquestionably done that. The second is harder. It was that we had not had to draw further on unrestricted endowment and so had demonstrated that our camping ministry was sustainable. We did not do that. The question is did we get close enough.

Here is the dilemma. We are not where I hoped to be or where we need to be, but we are much closer than we were a year ago. Much. And, if we continue to delay a campaign, we are only going to use more of our existing endowment resource. Furthermore, the success of the Domain in fundraising in the last year indicates that it definitely has the base of support, even during difficult times, to make a campaign successful. What is unknown is the answer to this question: What do we have the will to do? Do we as a Diocese have the will to take the final step and eliminate the remaining deficit? Do we as a Diocese have the will to raise the necessary funds to secure our camping ministry? There is no way to know the answer to these questions

except to ask. So, I am not calling for the beginning of a capital campaign this year, but I am calling for us to answer those two questions.

As to the first one, whether we have the will to reduce the remaining deficit, I am calling on Andy Sigmon, the Director, Bryant Kibler, the Deputy for Administration, and the Camps and Conferences Board to apply their best efforts and determine, over the course of the next year, whether or not the will exists to manage the Domain in a responsible way that assures its viability into the future.

As to the second one, I will ask Executive Council to authorize a feasibility study to test whether or not we as a community have the will to raise what it will take to secure the Domain's ministry indefinitely, and I will ask the Camps and Conferences Board to begin a concerted effort to educate the people of the Diocese about this important ministry. We need, at the very least, \$2 million, which would generate enough income to cover the amount coming from congregational assessments, any remaining deficit, and part of the deferred maintenance on buildings badly in need of repair. We need something more like \$5 million to take care of all that needs to be taken care of and to assure that the fee for attending camp never becomes prohibitive to anyone.

The answers to the questions about our corporate will will be reported to the 115th Convention of the Diocese next February. My hope is that we will kick off a campaign at that time. Whether we do or not, however, is a matter of what we as a community decide we have the will to do in the coming year.

The reason this is important is not that the Domain is the be all and end all of ministry in the Diocese of Lexington. It is not. It is one means to the end, and it is crucial that we see it this way. For one thing, seeing it as the end in itself is more likely to do damage to it than help it because it will make it more difficult to see through our sentimental attachment at the expense of seeing with the objectivity necessary to do what needs to be done. For another, seeing it as the end in itself will mean we fail to take advantage of what its true value is, to help us build the sort of vision I have been laboring to describe. The Domain is an incredible asset to us as a means to that end, building the reign of God to come with a firm foundation, one young person at a time, the only way it can be built—painstakingly but lovingly and surely.

So, I close with one final proposal, which is to invite African-American churches, Chinese churches, Korean churches, and Hispanic churches in the eastern half of Kentucky to be our partners in building the reign of God using the Cathedral Domain as a tool. Once again, as has served us well so many times, we have a God-given resource, not given to us to keep or to hoard, but given to us to share with others. What might it mean to the well-being of the world if black children and white children and Asian children and Hispanic children and Native American children were formed to take up their ministries in the world together and not separately? What might it mean to the well-being of the world we exist to serve if church segregation were never given a chance to take hold because we made it irrelevant right from the beginning? That is precisely what I hope to do. And that is precisely what I hope the role of the Cathedral Domain will become.

The end, after all, is not the Cathedral Domain itself. It is, for that matter, not the Diocese of Lexington itself. The end is nothing short of a world as God dreamed it from the beginning. *Berashith*. This is how Martin Luther King, Jr. put it: “[T]he end is reconciliation; the end is redemption; the end is creation of the beloved community. It is this type of spirit and this type of love that can transform opposers into friends. It is this type of understanding goodwill that will transform the deep gloom of the old age into the exuberant gladness of the new age. It is this love which will bring about miracles in the hearts of [human beings].” We are after nothing less than miracles, not at all unlike the miracle of creation, in the beginning.

There is, you may be interested to know, one other book of the Bible that begins in exactly the same way as the Book of Genesis: “In the beginning.” It is the Gospel According to John. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” This is no coincidence. John was very intentionally bringing to mind the creation story of the first chapter of Genesis when he wrote his majestic Prologue. The creation in diversity is the direct result of the action of the creative Word, Jesus. The diversity is hardly separate from the Lordship of Christ Jesus. It is a direct result of the Lordship of Christ Jesus. To be a Christian has everything to do with our statement of faith—“the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory.” We have only to show forth that glory in all of its marvelous diversity, a diversity inherent in the creation from the beginning. What is at stake here spiritually is the image of God, but not only the image of God. It is also the Incarnation of God. It is Christ himself. Our response gets at the core of faith, of everything we believe in. Our response has much more to do with what we do and not so much with what we say. The proof of it is in the creation of the beloved community God has dreamed for us, in making our own life reflect more of the image of God, in living out God’s intention for creation, in being the instrument of God’s Incarnation in the world. For that is how it was in the beginning. *Berashith*.

Thank you.

The Rt. Rev. Stacy F. Sauls
Bishop of Lexington