

Response A:

Sitting in church in a pew halfway down the long center aisle of St. Mary's, I could hear the priest's words of consecration over the bread and wine, and yet could not see him. Instead I stared at the beautiful arched ceiling paintings of God and Jesus in the clouds of heaven, and knew at the age of six that I was being drawn to something and someone much larger than my universe. The son of a Roman Catholic father and a Lutheran mother, my sister and I were being raised within the sacramental life of the catholic Church, yet one that through my parent's "mixed marriage" was characterized by openness and the seeds of Protestantism.

The formation I received as a Christian was significantly impacted by my years within the Catholic Church as an altar boy and faithful communicant. I was also raised within the confines of a lower-middle class family, and not having that much would later greatly influence my call to serve those in need, especially children of poverty locally, and in Haiti, Ecuador, and Uganda. At the age of sixteen I began dating Ellen, my wife of 27 years and a cradle Episcopalian, and this would prepare me for a most significant change of course for my faith journey. Through Ellen I was introduced to Christ Episcopal Church, Garden City, Long Island, and participated in their EYC and attended Sunday, Christmas, and Easter services with her family. And at the age of 21, as a senior at Villanova University and a former officer in training in the United States Marine Corps, I experienced the call of God to the priesthood. As Ellen and I were talking about marriage, it became clear to me that the Episcopal Church was to be the spiritual home of that call. When I met with Father Brown, the rector of Christ Church, he welcomed me with a gracious smile, affirmed my call, and began to assist me through the journey and process of ordination.

The call to ordination is indeed a mysterious one. From an early age, deep within my heart I felt both a yearning and pulling toward the call to serve. One fall night at Villanova University, it became clear that God was calling me to the priesthood, and I did that which has only worked once in my life. I said to God, "If you really want me to be a priest, then when I flip open this Bible the page has to tell me so!" My Bible opened to John 15: "I am the vine, and My Father is the vinedresser... You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you. These things I command you, that you love one another."

My faith journey and priesthood of 24 years has been profoundly affirmed throughout my life. During my first call as Curate of Grace Church, Ellen and I experienced a deepening of our faith in Jesus Christ through the Cursillo community. Shortly after we were married, that renewed faith helped sustain us during the tragic loss of both of my wife's parents. I have also been blessed by significant priest-mentors throughout my years of priesthood. The Reverend Martin Gable of St. Martin's, Atlanta, taught me that one is always a priest and pastor—you cannot step in and out of that call—and above all else you must be an individual that never breaks trust with the people whom you serve. Today my wife and I continue to struggle with God's will and call for our lives and ministry. I am deeply passionate about my love for Jesus, The Episcopal Church, the Anglican Communion and my desire to serve the people of God. I have been enormously blessed to serve as dean of Trinity Cathedral for ten years. I recently went as a Deputy to the 76th General Convention still discerning God's call to be open to the possibility of the sacrificial call of a bishop. There it was affirmed both in prayer and through others that I may have much to give in service to the people of Upper South Carolina, and within the councils of the larger Church. That is of course for God and His people to decide, and I am humbled by this possibility.

Response B:

When I reflect upon my management style, I cannot help but look at it through the lens of Christian leadership. There are two quotes that are essential to my approach. One is from a childhood hero, Vince Lombardi, who in 9 seasons as head coach of the Green Bay Packers led them to 5 NFL championships and two Super Bowl victories. He became a national symbol of single-minded determination to win. This is what he said: "The difference between a successful person and others is not a lack of strength, not a lack of knowledge, but rather in a lack of the will." The second is found in St. Paul's Letter to the Philippians 4:13, and is really the foundational verse from Holy Scripture for the way in which I seek to lead: "I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me."

As the brand new 30 year-old rector of Holy Trinity Parish, Decatur, Georgia, I sought the wisdom on how to lead and develop a staff from a very successful and older rector of a neighboring congregation. His words continue to guide me: "Philip, surround yourself with stars and yours will shine even brighter. Never be afraid of having really gifted people around you." These words have served me very well and have also been a determining factor in how I look to have those that support my leadership and ministry as those who are self-motivated, creative, prayerful, and hard working individuals. I am not one who micromanages, but rather I expect those I lead to be excellent in their field, with me as guide, encourager, and colleague.

I believe that there are three vital qualities necessary for the next bishop who leads our diocese. The first is loyalty to the vision of the diocese and to the oath at consecration to "guard the faith, unity, and discipline of the Church. The second quality is to be trustworthy. In order to have a meaningful and fruitful relationship with God's people and Church there must be trust—assured reliance on the character, ability, and truth of the leader. Trust within 21st century America and the Church is an increasingly rare commodity and is one of the greatest gifts one can bring to their leadership and episcopate. Finally, a leader must be flexible. Leaders in their management style must not be stuck in a thinking that articulates, "We have always done it that way," or, "We tried that and it did not work." When we are flexible we are willing to learn from one another and are willing to think outside of the box. This does not of course mean that we do not honor that which is true from Scripture, Tradition, and Reason.

Throughout my years as rector and dean I have sought to lead both my parishes and staffs by building a strong sense of joy and oneness in the Body of Christ. This is centered upon a vision that has grown from a deep life of corporate and private prayer, as well as an articulate Anglican and orthodox theology. Of course my ministry like others has had its share of challenges. The greatest challenges I have faced have been related to conflicts with staff, i.e. between a priest and parishioner, or priest and another staff member; and the aftermath of the 74th General Convention following the election of the bishop of New Hampshire. Although these challenges differ in scope and magnitude, in all instances my work and ministry toward resolving the conflicts relied upon the same skills and strategies. Above all else conflict resolution must begin in prayer and our common faith and unity in Christ—a oneness exemplified in our communion at God's holy altar. I strive to have a listening heart to all sides of those in conflict, and then with pastoral sensitivity mediate between the parties, seeking to find consensus while continuing to emphasize our abiding unity in Jesus Christ. In the final analysis though, I am called upon to lead, especially if bishop, to make what may be a very difficult decision to move the church forward.

An inevitable part of the sacrificial call of bishop is to be chief pastor when conflict arises for a clergyperson, church, or institution. However, as bishop I would work proactively to head off such problems through the attainment and support of spiritual health and wholeness for our clergy and congregations. I would work hard to establish a strong personal relationship with every clergyperson, congregation, and institution I serve. At Trinity Cathedral this kind of hard pastoral work, a personal knowing and serving the membership, has helped us weather some very difficult challenges. I would now apply that kind of care and focus upon the clergy and people of Upper South Carolina.

Response C

I have just returned as the Deputation Chair for the Diocese of Upper South Carolina to the 76th General Convention. I have considered it a privilege to serve and represent the people of our diocese in this way. The 12 days in Anaheim were long, exhausting, and at times quite frustrating—it was the Holy Eucharist and fellowship with our bishop and deputation that sustained me.

I recently came across the following quote about the Anglican Church written during the Elizabethan period: “This may be counted among the greatest evils with which this age is infected, that they which are called Christians are miserably divided about Christ.” (Common Prayer on Common Ground-A Vision of Anglican Orthodoxy, Alan Jones) The Church in every age has had its issues; human sexuality has certainly been ours. Ironically, I asked to serve on the World Mission Committee because of my personal passion and commitment for our Church’s mission and missionaries throughout the world, and especially in Haiti, Ecuador, and Uganda. Personally, I am fatigued with all of the time that The Episcopal Church has been literally consumed by our divisions over human sexuality. And yet, it was the 14 member World Mission Committee that was charged with the enormous task of deliberating upon resolution B033 from General Convention 2006, and how we might through God’s grace find a way forward for our beloved Church within the worldwide Anglican Communion.

I gave much time, prayer, and voice to the development of Resolution D025 called, “Anglican Communion: Commitment and Witness to Anglican Communion.” In 2006 I voted for B033, dealing with “manner of life” and the election of bishops, as the best way forward at that moment in time. What became clear at this General Convention was that B033 would not hold anymore on its own, so the deep question for me was how can we find that Anglican place of middle ground? I felt we must come to the great Anglican principle of the via media—that the truth lies in the tension of the extremes.

I saw our passage of Resolution D025 as our acknowledgement of what is, as a way forward that is not perfect, but nonetheless a way for us to state boldly that we as Anglicans, as Episcopalians, are now recommitting to our faith and love in Jesus Christ now with a desire to fully focus upon mission and ministry in His name. As a Church and as a diocese the way forward are mission and evangelism. I believe that we have turned a major page in going forward in a most Anglican way in the power of the Holy Spirit. Some may choose to interpret this differently, however I firmly believe that we have respected the spirit of the worldwide Anglican Communion.

If I were to be elected bishop of our diocese, I would be fully committed to the Church’s theology of welcoming all baptized members into the full life of our church. However, I would as well be fully committed to the oath at ordination to “guard the faith, unity, and discipline of the Church,” as both an Episcopal bishop and as a constituent member of the Anglican Communion. It was for this reason that at the 76th General Convention I was not able to support the House of Bishops’ recommendation to study and develop resources for the blessing of same gender relationships. I firmly believe that neither The Episcopal Church nor the Anglican Communion is in any way prepared theologically or emotionally to embrace such a practice as “official.” Clearly the blessing of same gender relationships are unofficially taking place in certain dioceses and other jurisdictions within the Anglican Communion, however that is very different from the Church officially sanctioning them as a body. Within the Diocese of Upper South Carolina I do not believe that our congregations or people as a whole, support the blessing of same gender relationships either from a scriptural or theological understanding, and as bishop I would not allow this practice. If a priest in our diocese were asked to perform such a blessing, I would not allow it, but rather invite the priest and the church members involved to meet with me to discuss why their bishop and our diocese stands in that place. I would offer to them my love, prayers, and concern; and, yes from a pastoral perspective it would be very difficult.

Response D

"I lift up my eyes to the hills; from where is my help to come? My help comes from the Lord, the maker of heaven and earth." (Psalm 121) These words of the psalmist have guided and given me strength since the days of my priestly and Anglican formation at The General Theological Seminary. If I were called and blessed to be the next bishop of our diocese, I would above all else rely upon God's direction through His Son Jesus for the vision and history to which we are now being called in this part of God's kingdom, and the larger Episcopal Church.

Priest and theologian Henri Nouwen once wrote, "Do we have a clear goal in life? Without a clear goal, we will always be distracted and spend our energy on secondary things...what is our prize? Is it the divine life, the eternal life, the life with and in God? ([Here and Now](#), p.68-9) And Proverbs 29:18 proclaims, "Where there is no vision, the people perish." As bishop of Upper South Carolina it will be critical from the beginning to articulate a vision that comes not only from deep within my spiritual life and thinking, but is also gathered from the clergy and lay leadership within our diocese—a bishop is called to lead and pastor with vision. What follows is just the beginning of such a vision.

A foundational starting point as bishop would be to gather and form a team for ministry from both within the diocesan house, as well as from within the rich diverseness of clergy, congregations, and ministries in our great diocese. When I became the dean of Trinity, one of the initial great challenges was building a team of colleagues that both shared and informed the vision to which I believed God was calling. As bishop, I would initially learn from those who have been there, and then with this as a genesis form a team that would support and serve this new era and vision for EDUSC. I believe that the present economic difficulties within our nation and Church will necessitate our learning how to do more with less—this has certainly been the experience of the cathedral and most congregations. I also believe that there must be effective communications, transparency, and accountability as a new staff and operations are being formed.

During my ten years as dean of Trinity I have worked very hard, in spite of our size, to know the people that I served and to be available to them. Above all else, as bishop, as chief pastor, I will be passionate about getting to personally know my clergy. This will be my top priority. Being an ordained person can often be very isolating and lonely; a clergyperson needs to also have a pastor—a bishop who cares for them, prays for them, and loves them for who they are as a person called by God. True it is vitally important that a bishop make regular visitations to the congregations and institutions of the diocese, however I believe that one of the greatest gifts a bishop can give to a congregation is to be a pastor to their clergy. I will regularly seek out appointments, lunches, and "Starbucks" meetings with the clergy that would find that helpful in support of their life and ministry. My goal would be that a clergyperson would feel very comfortable calling my cell, emailing, or texting me.

As bishop of our diocese I will proactively seek out gifted clergy for our parishes as they experience openings. An initial question to grapple with is how can we assure that our diocese is a place where good clergy remain? How can we better support those missions where it is financially more difficult to recruit clergy? The strength of a diocese is only as strong as the clergy and congregations within the diocese. We must also face head on the need to strategically establish missions and evangelize. As one who studies and speaks Spanish, I have been impressed with our outreach and establishment of congregations to the growing Hispanic population, this must continue. Our diocese is also uniquely blessed with vibrant Cursillo and renewal ministries. And although I have not been able to give my time to this as dean, as bishop and one who has previously been active in Cursillo, I will fully support these ministries by my presence at weekends and their continued incorporation into the diocese's vision as a tool for evangelism and renewal. Finally, today perhaps more than any other time in history, it will be critical to be a bishop that within the House of Bishops and Councils of the Church is a sound Anglican theologian that gives voice, intellect, and spirit to the unity to which we are called by God in Jesus Christ.

PHILIP CONRAD LINDER

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OBJECTIVE

To remain faithful to my prayer that I be used in this life to my fullest for God's will, purpose, and the spread of Christ's kingdom

WORK HISTORY

Dean

Trinity Episcopal Cathedral

Columbia, South Carolina 29201

Sep 1999 to present

Trinity is a vibrant, mission-minded, community of faith that is steeped in dynamic corporate Anglican Worship

- Cathedral has grown from 3,200 to 4,300 members
- The annual budget has increased from 1.8 to 2.8 million dollars
- Two major capital campaigns have raised over 12 million dollars
- Trinity gives 25% of her budget to outreach
- The Trinity Center for Mission and Ministry built in 2006
- The cathedral is presently undergoing major restoration in preparation for its bicentennial celebration
- Seven years ago began the Camp Bob, Kanuga, Columbia week for under served children
- Trinity feeds breakfast to some 250 to 300 homeless persons every Sunday

Rector

Holy Trinity Parish

Decatur, Georgia

Nov 1990 to Sep 1999

An historic downtown/suburban parish of 1400 members known for its liturgy and ministry to the homeless and hungry

- Average Sunday attendance grew from 175 to 425
- Membership grew from 700 to 1400
- Annual budget increased by 70% to 565,000
- 10 to 12 homeless families housed on site
- Supported an onsite food pantry and emergency assistance
- Christian education program for all ages revitalized

Priest in Charge

St. Martin in the Fields

Atlanta, Georgia

Jun 1989 to Nov 1990

Was asked to assume this position when this 2400 member congregation began their search for a new rector, following his unexpected death after 23 years in office. This included the responsibility for St. Martin's Episcopal School, a pre-k through 8th grade day school

Youth Minister and Chaplain to the Day School
St. Martin in the Fields

Atlanta, Georgia
Dec 1988 to Jun 1989

- Under the gifted supervision of the rector, Father Martin D. Gable, learned a pragmatic theology of priesthood and the ministry of pastoral care

Curate and Chaplain to the Day School
Grace Episcopal Church

Massapequa, New York
Jun 1985 to Sep 1987

A small suburban parish with a very active Cursillo and renewal community

EDUCATION

The Graduate Theological Foundation
Doctor of Psychology

South Bend, Indiana and Oxford,
England
Sep 2003 to May 2006

Columbia Theological Seminary
Doctor of Ministry

Decatur, Georgia
Sep 1990 to May 1993

The General Theological Seminary
Master of Divinity

New York, New York
Sep 1982 to May 1985

Villanova University
Bachelor of Science cum laude

Villanova, Pennsylvania
Sep 1978 to May 1982

Major in Education
Minor in Political Science

MEMBERSHIPS

- Salvation Army Board 2000 to present
- Harvest Hope Food Bank Board 2008 to present
- Bishop Masereka Christian Foundation Board, USA and Uganda 2008 to present
- Kanuga Board of Trustees 2003-2006
- Deputy to General Convention 1997,2006,2009
- Chair of Hispanic Ministries, Diocese of Atlanta, 1994-1996
- Chair of Episcopal Charities Foundation,Diocese of Atlanta, 1992-1995
- Dean of East Atlanta Convocation 1993-1999

LANGUAGE SKILLS

Conversational in Spanish with reading and writing skills

REFERENCES

Available upon request

