



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

It's Good News



has been and is being confiscated by a people who had an incredible injustice occur to them in WWII. But the answer to one injustice is not to inflict a new injustice. One of the perspectives that seems to be a part of this complicated issue is that the Palestinian people are paying for the sins of the anti-Semitic behavior in Europe during WWII. They don't think it's fair. And they dislike that America helps fund it with \$5 billion in taxes yearly.

The Palestinian people have suffered because of the sins of anti-Semitic history over the many centuries. Many people in our country and elsewhere are trying to heal their guilt over WWII by supporting the State of Israel as though it were beyond criticism.

The State of Israel needs to continue to prosper, and its existence needs to continue

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as a nation among other nations, but it must come to terms with its need to apologize to and compensate the people whose land and villages have been confiscated.

There needs to be a Palestinian state that is viable and is not occupied by Israel. The present occupation breeds the violence. It is important that the occupation end soon with a complete withdrawal from the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem.

We also must remember that the Christian churches that exist in Israel and the West Bank, including the Anglican Church, are made up of Palestinian Christians who trace their roots back to Pentecost. They feel abandoned by other Christians throughout the world who blindly support Israel. The Christian presence is one of non-violence and the Christian organization of Sabeel in Jerusalem, under the leadership of the Rev. Naim Ateek, an Anglican priest, even now is promoting a just and non-violent solution to the problem that exists there.

As national chair of Friends of Sabeel North America, I would hope that we would become better informed on this issue of Palestine/Israel and find a way to allow a United Nations intervention to protect Palestinians and Israelis and stop the violence. □

The Rev. Richard K. Toll is the rector of St. John the Evangelist Church, Milwaukie, Ore.

Some people cannot stand good news. Instead of celebrating the ecumenical breakthrough that *Called to Common Mission (CCM)* is and rejoicing in the many and increasing instances of that common mission all across the country between the Episcopal Church and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), folks like David Veal [TLC, Nov. 11] and Tim Huffman [TLC, Jan. 20] prefer to focus on the admittedly troubling bylaw on ordination under unusual circumstances passed by the ELCA Churchwide Assembly.

I do not intend to offer here what Prof. Huffman calls "bland reassurances of denominational leaders that all will be well," but to correct certain misapprehensions which may be troubling to TLC readers. First, while CCM is a carefully nuanced document, it certainly does not paper over "fundamental disagreements" as he claims. The "dueling resolutions passed by the respective conferences of bishops" are actually helpful guidelines as to how CCM is to be implemented in the two churches.

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Those Lutherans whom Huffman perceives "were not told the whole truth about the implications of CCM" apparently did not bother to read material produced by the ecumenical office of their church or the document itself which make clear that traditional elements of ordination (i.e. the laying on of hands and invocation of the Holy Spirit for the office and work of a bishop) are indeed employed. How else could Anglicans have entered into the agreement and be consistent with point 4 of the Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral?

Because I am personally referred to as one Episcopalian who "should not be surprised" by some Lutheran opposition to CCM, let me assure Prof. Huffman that I am not. I was chair of our drafting team for CCM while Bishop of Iowa, worked closely with the Lutheran colleagues in the Midwest, and, both before and after assuming my present position, have been consulted and kept fully informed by the ecumenical officers of the ELCA.

Finally, most Episcopalians are not "angry" as Prof. Huffman seems to believe. Saddened, perplexed perhaps, but not angry. Like our Presiding Bishop Frank Griswold and Archbishop George Carey whose "wise counsel" Prof. Huffman helpfully commends to us, we rejoiced in the passage of *Called to Common Mission* and continue to work and pray for its full implementation for the sake of Christian mission.

*(The Rt. Rev.) C. Christopher Epting
Deputy for Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations
Episcopal Church Center, New York, N.Y.*

Prof. Tim Huffman's "sour grapes" commentary on CCM should be followed by equal space for a representative of the two-thirds majority of the ELCA who approved it. The ELCA Churchwide Assembly is a democratically elected representative

body and by no means a "rubber stamp" as he falsely alleges.

We Anglicans do not have a universally uniform theology of the episcopate ourselves, so why should we expect Lutherans to conform to a particular view? There will be growing pains as