

Foreword

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For nearly fifty years the Episcopal Church Foundation (ECF) has identified and supported emerging scholars, teachers, and leaders who are addressing important areas of need in the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion. We are extremely proud of our 195 Fellows who, over the years, have been scholars, writers, teachers and deans, pastors and bishops, community organizers, artists, farmers, and lay leaders at all levels of the church. ECF Fellows are making a significant difference in the lives of faith communities in classrooms, congregations, and gatherings of people around the world.

The Fellowship Partners Program is ECF's most longstanding ministry. Conceived in 1964 as the Graduate Fellowship Program, it sought to address significant concerns about theological education in the Episcopal Church, and the need for talented and trained seminary faculty. In 2006, in response to the changing needs of the church, ECF enhanced and expanded the program to become the Fellowship Partners Program. In addition to providing grants to individuals pursuing advanced academic study, ECF now also supports lay and clergy leaders throughout the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion who are involved in innovative transformational projects and ministries at the grassroots level. The idea of the renewed program is to raise up scholars who are able to provide an essential theological and academic context for practical ministry, as they live out their theology "on the ground" in tangible ways. The program links theory with practice toward the ultimate goal of enhancing lay and clergy leadership formation throughout the church.

In addition to providing financial support, the program also partners with Fellows to help them share their knowledge, experience, and best practices with the wider church. ECF seeks relationships with Fellows not only when they are receiving financial support, but over

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the long haul, so that our community of Fellows may serve as a gift and resource to the church in serving God's mission. This collaboration with the *Anglican Theological Review* (*ATR*) is one such example.

ECF is an independent, lay-led organization that helps congregations and other Episcopal groups develop leadership and raise resources for ministry. While our programs have changed over time, our commitment to excellence in education, training, and leadership development has remained steadfast. ECF is about transformation, growth, and responding to God's call in very practical, innovative, and spiritually-grounded ways.

All the editors, writers, and contributors to this issue of the *ATR* are ECF Fellows. I want to offer my special thanks to the Reverend Canon Dr. C. K. Robertson, the Reverend Stephanie Spellers, and the Reverend Dr. Ellen K. Wondra for their commitment and talent in conceiving of and bringing forth this significant volume. We are grateful they have invited other ECF Fellows to join them in exploring *New Dimensions for Theology in the Episcopal Church*. These editors and contributors exemplify how all ECF Fellows are leading the way on important issues that will define the future of our church and the wider society.

Fellows often appear on the pages of the *ATR* as individual contributors, but we are delighted to partner once again with this wonderful journal in promoting a special Fellows issue. Our thanks to Jacqueline B. Winter, *ATR's* Managing Editor, to the Board of the *ATR*, and to the many generous organizations and individuals who made this volume possible.

I also want to acknowledge ECF staff members Anne Ditzler and Miguel Escobar, who oversee the Fellowship Partners Program and continue to make it a dynamic resource for the church, as well as the ECF Board of Directors and donors who have been faithful stewards of this program over the decades.

Finally, I offer my deepest thanks to all of ECF's Fellows for their ministries. These leaders continue to respond to God's call as they inspire the Episcopal Church to more fully become the body of Christ in these challenging and changing times. As we acknowledge and celebrate the past, present, and future of the Fellowship Partners Program, I commend this important issue of the *ATR*.