

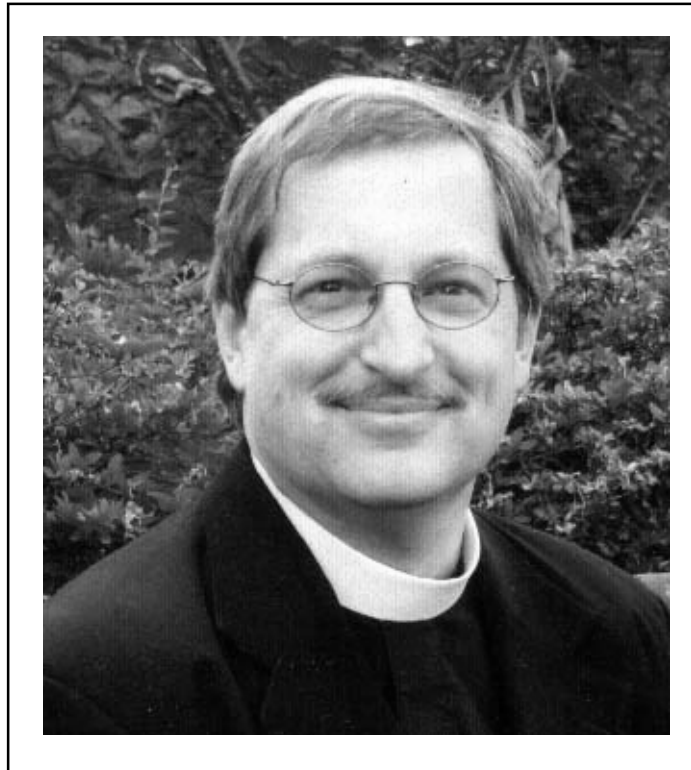
# 10 QUESTIONS FOR Roger Schellenberg

**T**he Sr. Pastor and founder of Church of the Spirit in Kingstowne, Virginia, Roger Schellenberg has had a clear vision of the church as a place where everyone can walk through the doors. Since, as he states, “*The Spirit* was designed to be a safe place for people with questions,” there are still questions worth asking about how a church that welcomes everyone, does not welcome the recent developments within the Episcopal Church.

**What will be your focus be for the church?** We have kept one thing in focus since Church of the Spirit began. We want to help all people find and follow Jesus as fruitful disciples and faithful witnesses. When people experience Jesus for themselves, great things happen. At *The Spirit*, it’s all about changed lives. That’s exciting!

**The issue of gay bishops has been so divisive. The diocese of Newark, N.J., has named a gay man as one of its candidates for bishop. Is now the time to elect another gay bishop?** I went to school with Michael Barlowe and what strikes me about him is not his sexual orientation but his theology. Let’s be clear, the church has always had gay bishops. The question today is one of theology and practice. Can a person in a sexual relationship outside of marriage become ordained? Like a vast majority of Anglican Bishops, I do not agree that this represents a wholesome example of Christ.

**Does that include more than gays and lesbians?** Yes. There should not be double standards in the church. The



discussion is not about justice, or sexual orientation, but about sexual activity outside of marriage for any and all clergy members.

**The Archbishop of Canterbury wrote recently that a two-tier Communion may be a solution. What did you read in his message?** He has offered to set boundaries about the doctrine of the church in a way that allows

churches to choose whether they agree or not. He is offering us a choice, not excluding people or churches. And he’s being clear about what it means to be an Anglican. Please remember, we could all still be in a one-tier church if we all chose to abide by common doctrines. He’s not the one splitting the church apart. I see him working to hold us together.

**There’s much debate about whether science and religion can comfortably coexist. What do you think?** God created science, and there’s nothing in science that will contradict God’s truth, so I’m not worried about science. I am worried about some of the assumptions scientists make, and teach as truth ...

**What is your view on intelligent design?** It sounds pretty intelligent to me ... There’s simply too much of a random element in all things to suggest otherwise.

**Is belief in Jesus the only way to get to heaven?** No, but belief in Jesus is the only way to come to the Father. He is also unique in being God with us. No one else ever was. Others who do not know Jesus will be judged by God according to what they know of God through creation. It’s all laid out for us in Romans.

**Pastoral work can be all-consuming. How do you relax?** I guess it’s ironic to say I’m still working on that.

**Do you have a favorite Bible verse?** I have many ... like “Be not conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind.” And there’s “God did not give us a spirit of timidity to fall back in fear, but a spirit of love, power and self-control.”

**What is your prayer for the church today?** That it be faithful to Jesus and sensitive to all who do not yet know him for themselves. We can be clear about the standards God has set so long as we remain clear that none of us have lived up to them. That means we will always need to keep the doors open and our arms outstretched, especially to those who do not agree. ■

# 10 QUESTIONS FOR Katharine Jefferts Schori

**R**ough waters aren't new to Katharine Jefferts Schori, 52, a former oceanographer who is the Presiding Bishop-elect of the Episcopal Church of the U.S.A. Bishop Katharine, as she's known, takes over a denomination rocked by controversy at home and abroad for its liberal stance on gay clergy. She talked with TIME's Jeff Chu about her mission of social justice, the relationship between science and religion and whether faith in Jesus is the only path to heaven.

**What will be your focus be for the church?** Our focus needs to be on feeding people who go to bed hungry, on providing primary education to girls and boys, on healing people with AIDS, on addressing tuberculosis and malaria, on sustainable development. That ought to be the primary focus.

**The issue of gay bishops has been so divisive. The diocese of Newark, N.J., has named a gay man as one of its candidates for bishop. Is now the time to elect another gay bishop?** Dioceses, when they are faithful, call the person who is best suited to lead them. I believe every diocese does the best job it's capable of in discerning who it is calling to leadership.

**Many Anglicans in the developing world say such choices in the U.S. church have hurt their work.** That's been important for the church here to hear. We've heard in ways we hadn't heard before the problematic nature of our decisions. Especially in places where Christians are functioning in the face of Islamic culture and mores, evangelism is a real challenge. [But] these decisions were made because we believe that's where the Gospel has been calling us. The Episcopal Church in the U.S. has come to a



reasonable conclusion and consensus that gay and lesbian Christians are full members of this church and that our ministry to and with gay and lesbian Christians should be part of the fullness of our life.

**The Archbishop of Canterbury, who leads the Anglican Communion, wrote recently that a two-tier Communion may be a solution. What did you read in his message?** The pieces that I saw as most important had to do

with the complexity of the situation and the length of time that this process will continue. He's very clear that we're not going to see an instant solution. He's also clear about his role: it is to call people to conversation, not to intervene in diocesan or provincial life—which some people have been asking for.

**There's much debate about whether science and religion can comfortably coexist. You're a scientist and a pastor. What do**

**you think?** Oh, they absolutely can. In the Middle Ages, theology was called the queen of the sciences. It asks a set of questions about human existence, about why we're here and how we should be in relationship with our neighbors and with the divine. And science, in this more traditional understanding, is about looking at creation and trying to understand how it functions.

**What is your view on intelligent design?** I firmly believe that evolution ought to be taught in the schools as the best witness of what modern science has taught us. To try to read the Bible literally about such issues disinvites us from using the best of recent scholarship.

**Is belief in Jesus the only way to get to heaven?** We who practice the Christian tradition understand him as our vehicle to the divine. But for us to assume that God could not act in other ways is, I think, to put God in an awfully small box.

**Pastoral work can be all-consuming. How do you relax?** I run regularly. I like to hike, and I take one long backpacking trip a year. Flying is also a focusing activity. I come from a family of pilots, and it's always been part of my experience. It takes one's full attention, and that's restful in an odd kind of way. It takes your mind away from other concerns, not unlike meditation.

**Do you have a favorite Bible verse?** Chapter 61 of Isaiah is an icon for me of what Christian work should be about. That's what Jesus reads in his first public act. In Luke, he walks into the synagogue and reads from Isaiah. It talks about a vision of the reign of God where those who are mourning are comforted, where the hungry are fed, where the poor hear good news.

**What is your prayer for the church today?** That we remember the centrality of our mission is to love each other. That means caring for our neighbors. And it does not mean bickering about fine points of doctrine. ■