

RELIGION

A Church's Crisis Deepens

WHEN THE VATICAN refused to allow Henry VIII to divorce his wife, Catherine of Aragon, the king abandoned Roman Catholicism and created the Church of England, a self-governing community of Christian worshipers that has since grown into a worldwide Anglican Communion of 77 million members and 38 independent provinces, like the Episcopal Church in the United States of America (ECUSA). But the absence of a unified hierarchy is making possible a schism that threatens to break apart the



FIRST: Bishop V. Gene Robinson, who is gay

church: a commission, convened in 2003 in the wake of ECUSA's decision to consecrate a gay bishop, last week released the Windsor Report, a document that strongly encourages

bishops on both sides of the issue to express regret, and places a moratorium on ordaining gay bishops in same-sex relationships and giving ritual blessings to same-sex couples. While some ECUSA leaders expressed optimism that the commission called for a moratorium (and not an outright ban), conservative leaders like Nigeria's Archbishop Peter Akinola voiced outrage that the commission failed to issue a direct prohibition. "Where is the language of rebuke for those who are promoting sexual

sins as holy and acceptable behavior?" he said.

Although the current dispute is in many ways similar to the conflict experienced after ECUSA began ordaining women in the mid-1970s, some conservative U.S. congregations recently took the extraordinary step of renouncing their association with ECUSA, instead becoming missionary outposts under authority of foreign bishops. (Three congregations in Los Angeles say they've seceded from the L.A. diocese and are now affiliated with the province of Uganda; two parishes in Olympia, Wash., sought pastoral oversight from Recife, Brazil.) The Windsor Report says this violates an ancient principle that each bishop governs only his own diocese. Akinola vows that unless American leaders "repent," the worldwide Anglican community "shall have to begin to learn to walk apart." Prior to his divorce, Henry VIII earned the title "Defender of the Faith." It's unclear which, if any, bishops are heir to that throne.

-JULIE SCLEFO

SCHOOL

Stop. Go. Shut Up.

REMEMBER WISHING that mean lunchroom monitor would be replaced by, like, a lamppost? She has been. Talk Light, sold by Garland, Texas-based Talk Light Inc., uses an internal circuit board to show a green light (OK to talk freely), a solid, then blinking yellow light (you're getting too loud) or a red light (in some schools a signal for 45 seconds of silence). The machine can be set between 60 and 120 decibels. Shelly and Dan Seltzer, the company owners, say orders for their large model, which starts at \$750, rose by nearly 40 percent last year from the 2002-03 school year.

Education Essentials, a division of Greenville, Wis.-based School Specialty, offers another light, the smaller Yacker Tracker, which can be set up to 15 decibels.

Suzy Woodard, principal of Minshew Elementary School in McKinney, Texas, and a friend from another school district ordered Talk Lights after attending a principals' conference. "It's a way to help kids manage their own behavior," Woodard says. At First Street School in Lincoln, Calif., staffers say the device lightens the load in the lunchroom. "We used to have the monitors take the mike out and say, 'It's getting noisy!' Now the kids look up at the colors and they know what they mean," says Vickie Vineyard, a school clerk. That frees staff to focus on other things, like helping to open those little ketchup packets.

-LISA HELEM

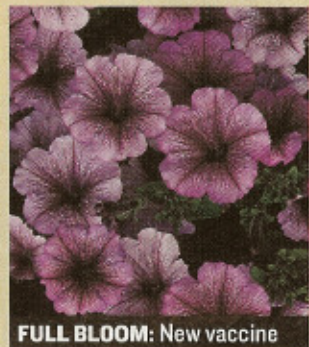


GO ON GREEN: Lights check sound

VACCINES Petunia Power

Your mother (we hope) told you to eat your vegetables, but someday soon security moms may be nagging their little ones to eat their petunias. That's the hope, at least, of Philadelphia-based INB Biotechnologies, which has been experimenting with petunias to develop a nontoxic anthrax vaccine. In conjunction with the Navy and pending FDA approval, it will test the vaccine on 30 Navy volunteers next June. The rush to study plant-based vaccines, which are cheaper and could also be used in Third World countries to prevent plague and cholera, comes just as U.S. vaccine readiness is tested with the flu debacle, complaints that Homeland Security's Bioshield program is ineffective and reports of a dubious anthrax vaccine tested on the military during the gulf war. "We could potentially immunize large groups without injections," says INB's Orn Adalsteinsson. "Plants are very compatible with humans." Scientists inject a genetically modified virus into a plant, which causes the plant to make new proteins. When that plant is eaten, the body reacts to the new proteins as if infected, and makes new antibodies. Because oral vaccines can be self-administered, large groups can be treated quickly in the event of a bioterror attack. And what kid wouldn't want a petunia over a needle?

-EVE CONANT



FULL BLOOM: New vaccine