

**Transcription of Owen Burdick's Interview with Alec Wyton**  
**Thursday, June 27, 1996 Hotel Washington, Washington, D.C. and**  
**Tuesday, 13 August, 1996 Hotel Marriot Marquis, New York, NY**

Owen Burdick: Thank you so much for agreeing to this interview; you're about to celebrate your 75th birthday, and I think it is very meet, right, and our bounden duty, that we should do this. So let's start at the beginning -

Alec Wyton: I was born in London and lived there for five years until my Mother and Father had a breaking up. I had a brother, Maurice, and we all went to live with my Mother's sister in North Hampton and lived there happily, I guess. At some tender age, when I was about five, my brother got sick with diphtheria and they gave him a shot of anti-toxin at home and took him to the hospital and gave him another shot and it killed him; he just died like that. That shock devastated my mother who was suffering from tuberculosis, and she died pretty shortly thereafter.

OB: How old was Maurice?

AW: He was about two years older than I. And so there I was with my dear Aunt and she just took me over, bless her heart. She brought me up in North Hampton and just did everything for me; she spoiled me rotten. I was a *dreadful* child - talk about naughtiness and that kind of stuff! I was a choir boy in two parish churches, and could write quite a book about those times! She sent me to a good school - the North Hampton Town and County School - and the music master was the organist at the principal church in North Hampton. He had me take piano lessons and gave me a harmony and counterpoint book when I was about ten.

OB: What was his name?

AW: Ralph Richardson Jones. He used to give me ear tests at every lesson. So I really started training my mind and so forth. I was so fortunate, I just can't tell you, and I was writing music by the time I was twelve.

OB: Was this the same teacher who insisted that you get some solid piano technique under your belt before you started playing the organ?

AW: Yes. He put me through all the 32 sonatas of Beethoven. Oh yes, and tons of Haydn and Mozart. In the mean time, as soon as my voice changed, I started to fool around with the organ at the parish church. I became a sort of unofficial deputy organist at Holy Sepulcher in North Hampton, and I played with my left foot the best I could. When I was about sixteen he finally started to give me organ lessons. And - whoosh! - like that, I was an Associate of the Royal College of Organists by the time I was eighteen and a Fellow just a few years later - all because of his good training. Then the war started. In the meantime, my Aunt insisted one couldn't possibly make a living at music. So I was articleed to a solicitor and was set on becoming a lawyer. I learned Pitman shorthand so I could take notes at trials, and when old enough to join the army, I ran away and joined the Signal Corps and did my bit there. When I got invalided-out with a duodenal ulcer I decided to go "music-wise." I came out of the army and got a job in Watford which is near to London, and enrolled at the Royal Academy of Music. With the salary

from my church in Watford and a scholarship at the Royal Academy, I started taking organ lessons. Fortunately, I became a pupil of G.D. Cunningham who was the great City Organist of Birmingham and Professor of Organ at the Academy. He was just marvelous.

OB: Let's go back one step to when were you in the army. Didn't you once tell me that if someone *dared* fall asleep while on watch in the Signal Corps they could be shot?!

AW: Yeah, that's right.

OB: So aside from a basic "fear of death," how did you keep yourself awake?

AW: I'd rehearse things. We had to watch for those bloody thugs that came in to bomb London at night - so I went through all kinds of music in my head - Mag(nificat)s and Nunc (dimitti)s mainly.

OB: Wow! And then you went to Oxford.

AW: Well, I went to the Royal Academy first of all, and was playing in a church near North Hampton. The rector was a graduate of Exeter College, Oxford, and knew they were looking for an organ scholar. So he pressed me to apply and supported my application, and I was appointed Organ Scholar in 1943.

OB: What then?

AW: There was a shortage of organ scholars because of the war. So I was made Assistant Organist at the Cathedral at Christ Church and I held the two jobs in tandem; it was tremendous fun! The organist at Christ Church Cathedral was Sir Thomas Armstrong. He was away a lot, so I got a lot of experience in playing for the choir. We had daily services and all kinds of people visited. There was a nice gentleman who came and watched me one day when I was playing Evensong, and Sir Thomas said "Alec, I'd like you to meet Herbert Howells." That's how I met all kinds of people, and I had a wonderful time. The experience of the Cathedral Choir - with its professional choir, made up of a boy's choir school and lay clerks - and my own choir at Exeter - where the choir was made up entirely of undergraduates - was a *splendid* one, and we had a jolly good time - we all worked pretty hard.

OB: So, would you credit G.D. Cunningham with being your main teacher?

AW: Yes; I went on studying with him as long as I could, even when I was at Oxford. He and George Thalben-Ball were the country's two leading recitalists. Cunningham became a great friend. He played everything from memory; when he made one tour of America he didn't even bother to take any music with him. He was a wonderful devout Roman Catholic who *never* went to a service when there was any music because it always got on his nerves. He was a great mentor to me.

OB: What kind of repertoire did you work on with him?

AW: One had to know all six (Bach) trios - you always had a trio on the go - and then he gradually added to them. As the City Organist of Birmingham, he played a major recital every week at the Town Hall, though he never played choral preludes because he thought they didn't have any place in concerts. Cunningham played over 900 recitals, and was there for many years.

OB: You mentioned Thalben-Ball; did you know him fairly well?

AW: Yes, I knew him very well. He was at Temple and succeeded Sir Walford Davies who had been there for many years. I had him come over here and play - he was just a great character.

OB: After that you then took a job back in North Hampton?

AW: Right. I was expecting that I'd now go to a big cathedral job or something like that. I was urged to go to North Hampton because of their Vicar who was a man named Walter Hussey. He had commissioned Benjamin Britten to write *Rejoice in the Lamb* in 1943 for the fiftieth anniversary of the Church, and needed an organist. I was urged to go there and I'm glad I did. I worked with Walter for four years, and every year he commissioned a big work for their Patronal Festival on September 21st, St. Matthew's Day. It would be a big weekend and the Bishop would come and preside over the Mass and all that. I know the first year I was there (1946) Gerald Finzi wrote *Lo, the full, final sacrifice* for us.

OB: What did you think of Finzi?

AW: He was a very nervous and sensitive person, and unfortunately died at a very early age.

OB: Fifty-five or something?

AW: Something like that. But he was very charming, very concerned, very musical, and a *huge* help. I was sorry he never wrote any organ music. Oxford (University Press) has just come out with a book of arrangements for organists of some of his chamber works. Later, of course, Henry Moore sculpted his great *Madonna and Child*, and we had C.S. Lewis come and preach a sermon.

OB: Please tell me about the commissioning of Benjamin Britten's *Rejoice in the Lamb*.

AW: Walter Hussey had just become the Vicar, and wanted to do something special for the church's fiftieth anniversary. So he went to see Sir Walford Davies who was then Master of the King's Music. Davies said "Well, Bullock's at the Abbey, and Bairstow's at York - they'll write you a *fine* thing! Well that isn't what Walter had in mind, and he heard about this young man who had been in America for some time and who was writing an opera called *Peter Grimes*, and he thought he'd seek him out. Ben was so surprised he said "Yes!" He'd been very much turned off by the church early in his career, and yet *Rejoice* was a huge success - it took the town by storm. Interestingly, in 1946 he wrote his only organ piece for me, the *Prelude and Fugue on a theme by Victoria*, which was based on Victoria's motet *Ecce Sacerdos Magnus*. You see, on their patronal feast, St. Matthew's had always done *Sacerdos et Pontifex* by Widor. At Oxford we always did the *Ecce Sacerdos* when a Bishop would show up, and so I suggested we try it at

St. Matthew's. But it's a very short unaccompanied motet - I had to improvise like mad. So Britten's piece is a sort of extension of the Victoria with all kinds of pauses so you can stop and look over your shoulder to see how far along the procession is. It was very handy and is still in print. But it should be done in conjunction with the motet to be of any use.

OB: How long were you at St. Matthew's?

AW: I was there for four years, and it was a very exciting time. There was always something happening. I was busy teaching and traveling a lot and playing recitals and composing a bit; I had a wonderful time there.

OB: How did you get to this side of the pond? Didn't you come to Texas after North Hampton?

AW: Right. The Bishop of Dallas in those days, C. Avery Mason, had gone to his first Lambeth conference in 1948, when all the Bishops of the Anglican Communion converge. He'd heard all these English cathedral choirs and said "That's what we need in Texas!" In 1949, he sent a colleague and a friend who had relatives in England on a long trip and said "Find me someone who can make me a choir like that." This guy came to St. Matthew's, because he'd heard that we had that kind of choir, and told me what he wanted. So I told him to go to Oxford and Cambridge and the Royal Academy and the Royal College; they would help find him someone. And in a month or so he came back and said "They all said *you* should go." So I thought, "What the hell?" I was footloose and fancy-free. My dear old Aunt was still alive but aside from her I had no other ties, so I packed up six crates of books and sailed on the Queen Elizabeth and came over to Dallas in 1950. He had told me that they needed culture down there. But the first thing I heard was a performance of (Walton's) *Belshazzar's Feast*, with the Dallas Symphony and the SMU choir - a magnificent performance - and I heard an organ recital played splendidly from memory by somebody right in Dallas. And, I thought "These people don't need culture - they have *plenty* of culture." Anyway, I made them their choir which is now St. Mark's School. It's funny, I had one birthday down there and was given seven parties and seven cakes. I shall never forget my Texas birthday when I became an honorary Texan. I've always said my body may have happened in England, but my *soul* entered it in Texas!

OB: How did you end up in St. Louis?

AW: Well, I didn't know what to do; whether to look for something else or return to England and pick up where I'd left off. So I wrote two letters: one was to Norman Coke-Jephcott who was then the organist at St. John the Divine in New York; and the other one was to T. Tertius Noble, bless his heart, who was the retired organist of St. Thomas Church. Coke-Jephcott never replied, but Noble wrote me a long handwritten, wonderful letter suggesting I get in touch with Paul Callaway at Washington Cathedral who was a former student of his. I was going up that summer to the AGO convention in Boston, and I took the train to Washington to see Paul who was so helpful. He took me around the cathedral and showed me the organ and all that. Then he took me out to lunch at a men's club and we sunbathed in the nude - something of a new experience for me - it was fun anyway. But he put me in touch with someone in St. Louis who needed an organist at Christ Church Cathedral. Eventually they invited me to come, and I stayed for four years and had a wonderful time.

OB: Did they have a choir of men and boys as well?

AW: Yes. There was a crazy old Bishop there who finally retired and was succeeded by Bishop Lichtenberger who became one of my great heroes.

OB: And then, from St. Louis to the Cathedral?

AW: Yes. That was strange *and* interesting. One day in St. Louis I got a call from a man named James Pike, who was the Dean of the Cathedral in New York. He said, "I should like to come and see you; we are considering your name as the new Choir Master and Organist for Coke-Jephcott who's recently retired." He said he wanted to come and see me "in action." So he came down and I met him at the airport and drove him to his hotel and he watched me work with the choir, and watched Sunday, and just watched everything I did, and talked to people. Then he went back to New York. Two weeks later I got a call from Bishop Horace Donegan who was the Bishop of New York - and an Englishman who had never been West of the Mississippi. He wanted to come and see me too, so he came down and watched me work.

OB: You mean, the *Diocesan* Bishop of New York came all the way to St. Louis to audition you?

AW: Yup! And a couple of weeks later I got a call from Bishop Donegan who said "Please come up and see us." Well, airport security was very different in those days; when my plane arrived at La Guardia, there was Dean Pike with his car out on the tarmac waiting for the plane to stop! When I came down the steps he said "Watch for your bags!" and I grabbed my bag as it came off the ramp. He didn't waste any time and threw it in his car, and then drove me into New York and put me up in a room in Cathedral House. I went in to see the Bishop who said, "We were impressed with you!" and so forth, and he offered me the job, which was a fairly big job you know - two services a day, except Mondays - that was the day off.

OB: Let me be sure I've got this right: you and Mary were married in St. Louis where your first son, Vaughan, was born in 1953, and then you all moved to New York in 1954.

AW: That's it. We had an apartment in Cathedral House and everything was going fine except there was a big row around the school. There was a man called Darby Betts who was then headmaster, and he was a crazy man. He caused a big paddling scandal. When Darby came, he succeeded Canon Green - who was an Englishman - who'd been headmaster for a number of years and had all kinds of strict rules about the way the boys should behave and so forth. Darby Betts came along and said, "these boys don't need rules, they're gentlemen, they know how to behave." So, they did away with the rules and - whoop! - he had an uprising. He decided instead of punishing the students by "lack of opportunity" that he'd paddle them. And instead of just quietly paddling them, he made a whole list of how many strokes with the paddle you'd get for this or that or the other and circulated it to the *parents* so they should know what the boys were up against. Naturally, a couple of parents sent it to the press, and one day the Bishop woke up with twenty reporters on his doorstep. Since there was not much else going on in the city soon it was all over New York. So the Bishop called me into his office and said "Look here, you've got

a degree in history,” and I said “Yes, when I was at Oxford, I finished the music requirements so fast I had to do something else.”

OB: You were a history major?

AW: No, I was a music major, but in order to fill out all the time I took some history courses. So he said “Why don’t you be our headmaster too? The parents will listen to you!” And he moved Darby Betts out and moved me in, and that’s when we moved into the choir school in the [Headmaster’s] apartment [on the second and third] floor. And for eight years I was Headmaster as well as Master of the Choristers. I particularly remember two things Dean Pike said that always remained with me: he said, “Everybody should have two jobs in order to keep each one in perspective. If you’re not entirely dependent on one job for your income you can be much more independent in what you do, you can make strong career decisions.” Another thing he said was, “God put you into the world to make music, he put other people in the world to type and answer the telephone, and things like that.” He said “How much help do you need?” So I told him, and I always had a secretary. That was a *huge* help and enabled me to do so many things. I just got very busy in all kinds of areas, teaching and playing, and work-shopping and taking care of the Cathedral Choir.

OB: How did you handle the overlap when you were both headmaster of the school and teaching up at Union?

AW: Well, I tried to arrange it so that I always had an assistant or associate at the Cathedral, and my assistants after the first couple were all graduate students of Union. My first assistant was Alastair Cassels-Brown, who was an Englishman - and who became more English all the time! He’d been up in New England at a school and was my assistant for two years before he went up to Grace Church in Utica. And after him Larry King came to work with me, and during his tenure he received a Fulbright and went to England for a year. So I pulled in Robert Powell for two years. He started composing under me.

OB: You wrote a great deal of music during your Cathedral years, and much of it was what we now call “service music” - all before congregational participation was *de rigueur*. Tell me how that came about.

AW: Well, the Cathedral had no “parish community” *per se*, the congregation was made up almost entirely of visitors each week. Jim Pike was so anxious that people be able to sing the Lord’s Prayer and the Nicene Creed and so forth, that I came up with the idea of having the congregation sing the given words on a monotone while the choir sang a fauxbourdon setting around that central pitch. Eventually I set all the canticles so the congregation could participate in them. Say, when did you go to the Choir School?

OB: I was a year ahead of (your son) Richard, and graduated in ‘68. My first year, ‘64, was the last year of the boarding school - it became a day school after that.

AW: Right. And your brother?

OB: He was (your son) Pat's age, and was there for the next four years, 'till 1972.

AW: Oh! That's right! Ed West (the Subdean) used to speak of the Burdick and Wyton Boys' "reign of terror" - I think your brother was my finest choir boy ever - and you were the naughtiest!

OB: OK, new subject! How did you come to join Union Theological Seminary's faculty?

AW: In 1956 Ethel Porter came to see me. Hugh Porter was the Director of the School of Sacred Music at Union, and his wife, Ethel, was a musician and also a member of the faculty. She taught a course in children's choirs and said, "Could I bring my children's choir course over to hear your boys rehearse?" I said "Of course." And so this group of students from Union came to a rehearsal. We went through a Palestrina Mass and some Byrd and then some Benjamin Britten, and stuff like that. Afterwards I said "Now then, Mrs. Porter, when your junior choir can do that I'd like to hear your senior choir, please!" and Hugh Porter was on the phone within an hour asking me if I'd join the faculty. And that's how I came to teach at Union.

OB: You were Organist and Choirmaster at The Cathedral (of St. John the Divine) for 20 years from 1954 to 1974. Tell me about the end of that era and what precipitated your move to St. James?

AW: Well, (Dean) Jim Pike got a case of "purple fever;" he was ambitious and had to have the highest office which the church bestows. He wanted desperately to be a Bishop, and eventually got elected in California. So he left and was replaced by John Butler. John was a great fellow, and I enjoyed him very much, though he didn't do anything particularly notable. But he was a pleasant man, and his era was a creative period for me at the Cathedral. And then he was appointed to Trinity Church because, I guess, the Rector retired and (the Director of Music) George Mead, who had been there forever retired too. So John Butler phoned me up and said "Would you come and have lunch with me?" which I did, and he asked me if I'd like to be organist at Trinity, and I said "thank you, it would be wonderful to work with you, but I'm having such a good time at Cathedral, I don't think I could tear myself away." But I said "I'd help you find someone. I knew he'd come to a Christmas Eve Service at the Cathedral and seen me there with my children, afterward he said "When I saw you there with your family, I realized you just couldn't have left." But Larry King, my former student at Union [and associate organist at the Cathedral] was just so impressive, I recommended they call him. And so he went down, and "wowed 'em" and they appointment him to Trinity - did you know him?

OB: Sure! He was one of my heroes growing up.

AW: That's right, of course he was! Well, Bishop Donegan never appointed another Dean, and Canon Edward West became the Sub-dean.

OB: Why do you think it was that he never appointed another? Was there in practical matters really a difference between a Sub-Dean and a Dean? As I remember, for all intents and purposes Canon West ran that place.

AW: Yeah, I really don't know. Bishop Donegan was a fine old character. Ed West was a bit crazy; he was very much into the Orthodox Church, but he could never have behaved in the Orthodox Church the way he did in the Episcopal Church! We got on all right, Eddie and I.

Anyway, the Bishop had retired at 72, and he wasn't happy about it. I think it is great mistake for clergy to have to retire at 72; John Coburn was another one who shouldn't have had to retire. Well, Bishop Donegan's successor, Paul Moore - who was a nice guy, we got on awfully well - appointed this Jim Morton to be the Dean. I was impressed at first, because Morton seemed interested in everything that was going on. We had all those wild "happenings" on Sunday afternoon in the late '60s! But when Morton got settled in the job, I realized I couldn't work with him. You see, he didn't work in committee - he worked in a complete vacuum and made decisions in total isolation which affected everybody in the place. These included things like bringing in tight-rope walkers and elephants. It just got so crazy, and I'd had such a good time, I didn't want to spoil it. Well, John Coburn was one of my heroes and had been the Dean of the Divinity School in Massachusetts. He was a person I admired enormously - he'd been offered several Diocesan Bishoprics and said "No" - and he was then Rector at St. James, Madison Avenue. His organist, John Coach, had retired because of ill health, and Coburn asked me if I'd meet him at lunch to talk about the search, and I said "Well, you'll need a committee and someone to work as interim organist while you do that." Then he talked to Robert Baker who agreed to be the interim. So Bob Baker, of all people - he was a *Presbyterian* - became the interim at St. James. So, when (the) Union (Seminary School of Sacred Music) moved to Yale, Bob went with them, and John Coburn called on me again. This time I went to see him and said "would you be interested in an aging Cathedral organist?" So I left the Cathedral and went to St. James to work with John Coburn and within a year, he'd been elected Bishop of Massachusetts. I guess he'd been waiting for that.

OB: That must have been a major disappointment - to lose him so soon after coming to St. James.

AW: It was the biggest shock I've ever had! When he got up in the pulpit and said "I've accepted."

OB: You mean, that was the first you'd heard of it?

AW: Yes! But I stuck with the job after he left, and, in the meantime, had become involved with the Standing Commission on Church music and the revisions of both the Hymnal and the Prayer Book.

OB: Let's go back a bit: at what point did you become President of the American Guild of Organists? Weren't you the first *elected* president.

AW: Yeah. I became president in 1964. You see, the Guild was very much a New York "thing" in those days, and even though the organization had national influence, the officers were all nominated and came from within striking distance of New York. My predecessor was a man called Harold Heermans who was a fine old musician and -



OB: Oh! the cartoon!

AW: Yes! I was written-in as a candidate for president by thirteen chapters all over the country, so I accepted the nomination and there was an election and I won hands down. In the mean time the Diapason ran that cartoon of the two of us running in track suits.

OB: It showed you beating him past the tape at the finish line, I think.

AW: Yup.

OB: What changes were you instrumental in bringing about?

AW: Well, I started to make it a truly national organization, with offices all over the country instead of just in the New York area. I reduced the number of national meetings, and said we'd only talk business - forget all the tea-time gossip and chitchat - and I reduced the meetings from a day and a half to only half a day. And then I appointed the first women, Ruth Milliken, to be Registrar.

OB: And she was the first woman to hold a national office in the Guild?

AW: Yes.

OB: How many years did you serve as President?

AW: Five years, but it began to get in the way, because you know, I had my jobs at Union and the Cathedral, and I was doing recitals all over the county; workshops, choir festivals - that sort of thing.

OB: OK, back to 1974 - the year you left the Cathedral and went to St. James'. Didn't you become Coordinator of the Standing Commission on Church Music of the Episcopal Church that same year?

AW: Yes; I'd been on the Commission as a member years before. But I went down in '74 as Coordinator.

OB: What were your duties?

AW: I had to organize all the events - get everybody together and get them talking and doing things - luckily, they gave me plenty of secretarial help.  
The purpose of all this, of course, was to develop the new Hymnal.

OB: How did the need for a new Hymn book arise; did someone just say the old "1940" just isn't taking care of business anymore?

AW: Well, the Prayer Book revision came first in 1979 because it was decided that the old book was very much a 16th century, Reformation-kind-of-thing, and represented the "Old Church."

And so the Standing Liturgical Commission started its work on revising the BCP. At some point, it was decided the "1940" was just too limited, given the scope and content of the new texts being written, and so we became a Standing Commission (on Church Music) in the early '70s. We began meeting very regularly, and I organized a series of conferences across the county - usually held at theological seminaries - to talk about the various issues. On these conferences, I'd try to have a theologian, and a parish priest, a musician, and a composer present so we would get a good mixture and "cross fertilization" of ideas. That's how we got settings of things by Ned Rorem, Richard Felciano, and Ian Hamilton - people like that.

OB: That sounds like (the hymn book) *Ecumenical Praise*.

AW: That came later on -1977, I think.

OB: That volume was one of the most eclectic and imaginative compilations of "cutting edge material" I've ever seen. Please digress and tell me how it came about - it was such a marvelous collection.

AW: Well, it's not in print anymore. Agape Publishing Company was one of my publishers and I wanted a Hymnal which represented the *present*. I'd said for years that God created everything, and so everything should praise God in its own way - with jazz, atonal music and electronic music and things like that - and so we had a composer's conference. We assembled texts and sent them to a bunch of composers and asked if they'd send us some settings. And that's how we got *Ecumenical Praise*, and it's also how we got some older historical things as well.

OB: It must've cost a fortune to secure all those rights! How did you -

AW: No, we didn't pay anything!

OB: You mean, you got the likes of Charles Wuorinen, William Albright, Ian Hamilton, Richard Felciano, and *Duke Ellington* to either submit materials, or have their publishers agree to -

AW: Yeah. I'm trying to remember - Richard Felciano, for instance, was Composer-in-Residence at CDSF in Berkeley California, and he sat down at a piano and said to a group of us "I want you to sing out to me "Lord Have Mercy" and everyone sang "Lord Have Mercy" (Alec sings the passage "S. 97 in the Hymnal 1982" which simply goes up a semitone, and then back down to the starting pitch). Then he said "Now sing that out three times," all the while playing some wild stuff on the piano underneath it. When we finished he said "Congratulations! You just sang a piece of atonal church music!" I said "Richard, dear boy, please set the rest of the (communion) texts." He's a Roman Catholic and had actually already completed a setting, but 'round the time of its composition, the Second Vatican Council had adopted textual changes, so he had to revise it. I said "Well, please dust it off and send it to me." And that's how it came to be in our hymnal.

OB: So - getting back to the Standing Commission and The Hymnal 1982 - it sounds as if there was a six or seven year period when a great number of exciting - yet difficult - meetings took place in order to accomplish what must have been an enormous task.

AW: Indeed! You see, the (Standing) Liturgical Commission was only responsible for the texts; it had no responsibility for the tunes, which were left entirely up to the Music Commission. All we had to do was find a series of texts. And, of course, we were working on the music at the same time. But we got our texts finally approved by the General Convention in 1982, and had that series of workshops around the country I mentioned earlier. We received a tremendous number of submissions; sometimes a beautiful tune would come in which was “married” to an undistinguished text. Sometimes it was the other way ‘round. It was a lot of work.

OB: I’m sure of that! What made the Commission decide to have a separate service music section of the Hymnal with “S” numbers followed by the Hymns?

AW: Well, as you know, the Hymnal follows exactly the Prayer Book in the order of all its contents; we thought the service music should come first and the Hymns follow, arranged in groups so you find everything following the Prayer Book’s order. So that was the reason for that. Then we put a supplement to the service music at the back - extra settings, and so forth - if we took everything and tried to cram it into one congregational Hymnal, the resulting tome would’ve been too heavy to pick up; so that’s why there’s a new edition and two separate volumes of accompaniments.

OB: With William Albright, David Hurd, and Calvin Hampton you had a whole different type of approach to hymn tune composition didn’t you? I mean, *Petrus*, *And’jar*, and *St. Helena* are practically “art songs.”

AW: Oh yes! Gosh, the Calvin Hampton tunes were so wonderful! And he used to play those marvelous midnight recitals.

OB: Did you ever go to one?

AW: Oh yes indeed; it was wonderful - and the church was pretty much packed.

OB: Tell me what those recitals were like.

AW: Well, they took place at Calvary Episcopal Church every Friday night, and he would do wild midnight improvisations and transcriptions of big works. I remember he once played the Franck Symphony.

OB: He did these every Friday night?

AW: Yes, and I used to have him come to the Cathedral to play from time to time to play. Didn’t you and your father meet me at Calvary when Calvin had Olivier Messiaen and his wife over to play that piece for two pianos?

OB: Yes, *Visions de líAmen*. I remember you introduced me to Calvin, the MaÓtre and Yvonne Loriod - musical giants all!

AW: Yes. That was marvelous.

OB: So how long were you at St. James'?

AW: Thirteen years; from 1974-1987. It was wonderful to be with Horace Donegan again; he'd once been Rector there, and then, of course, became Diocesan (Bishop) of New York. When he retired, John Coburn brought him on as Senior Associate. It was one of the many wonderful things that John Coburn did.

OB: And when Coburn left, Hayes Rockwell succeeded him; how did that work out?

AW: Well, Hayes liked to be in charge of everything. And I did everything I could to accommodate him; I brought his organist from Rochester, Carol Doran, to play for his inaugural. Yes, Hayes liked to be in charge, and by then I had something of a national reputation - which I couldn't help. So at times it was very difficult. I was upstaging the Rector.

OB: Yeah. Rule number one: never -

AW: Right! And so it was not easy working with him. But I was able to lose myself in the Standing Commission work. And when the Hymnal was done and finally out, and my job there ceased, I thought I'd like to get the heck out. So I looked at several jobs in New York and New Jersey and then, quite unexpectedly, I got a call from St. Stephen's in Ridgefield, Connecticut. "How would you like to be at your old Parish and be the Minister of Music?" Remember? Each year during my Cathedral days we used to take the choirboys up for a day of swimming and fun to St. Stephen's, then in the afternoon we'd sing Evensong? I'd had such a long association with that place I just pulled out and came to Ridgefield.

OB: Oh yes, I remember - once, we were horsing around in the pool, and I was screamed so loudly, and for so long, that by Evensong, I'd *completely* lost my voice! When you realized in the rehearsal preceding service that I was simply mouthing the words, you stopped everyone, had me stand up, and said in your sternest voice, "Master Burdick it's simply *amazing* how dispensable you really are!"

AW: Hm - I'd forgotten that!

OB: Moving along! Who was it that called you to St. Stephen's?

AW: Fred Bender. He wasn't easy to work with either because he always said "yes" to everybody. He tried desperately to make everyone happy. He was a musician turned priest; but he didn't last long. At any rate Ridgefield has been wonderful.

OB: How long have you been at St. Stephen's?

AW: Nine years.

OB: Don't you now have an all-volunteer choir?

AW: Right; about twenty-five. And we have a young people's choir, and a concert series.

OB: How's your composing?

AW: It's been slow lately – I've got to get back to it. I've got several commissions sitting waiting to be fulfilled. And I do some teaching up there. I taught at the Manhattan School for a long time, until McNeil Robinson became the Acting Chairman of the organ department.

OB: Tell me a bit about that. I know you expended considerable effort to resurrect the old Union Sacred Music "phoenix" from the ashes through your affiliation with the Manhattan School of Music.

AW: It's on hold. We got accredited, then the President said I must raise \$700,000 to fund the program, and I'm not in that business. John Walker, was then Chairman of the organ department, and he moved to Pittsburgh to get out of New York and McNeil Robinson succeeded him - there was no discussion about it, and he was an impossible person to work with. So I gave up going there.

OB: So that takes us up to the present day. I know the poet Chad Walsh was a great friend of yours, he wrote some wonderful texts. Is there any text you've always wanted to set?

AW: Hm – I'd have to think about that. Thanks to Benjamin Britten, I'm a great Christopher Smart fan.

OB: I asked you a long time ago how you'd like to be remembered; as a composer? as an organist? as a choir director? May I ask you again-?

AW: If I'm remembered at all I guess I'd like it to be as an "integrator." It was Walter Hussy (Vicar at St. Matthew's, Northampton) who brought that place into the whole spectrum of life. He welcomed all of God's talents into the worship of God. He taught me if that if God created everything, then everything has something to say about God's praise with whatever talents given them. And that's what I hope I am: an "integrator."

OB: Well, I want you to know - and everyone reading this interview to know - that fifteen years ago you said exactly the same thing. I think your record of devotion to such a single worthy goal is proof of your faith and a testament to the success of your career. Please tell me how you've experienced such integration manifested within your wider *credo*: namely, the church musician as "Pastor-Teacher-Performer."

AW: I think that being pastor means you have to get to know the people with whom you're working and find out what is that makes them "tick" - what turns them on - and then you teach them that it's a two-way street. A good teacher learns as much from his or her students as he or she imparts. And finally, the forum is worship; we are *all* the "performers" together, and we worship the same God who gave us the gifts and tools with which to fashion that praise.

OB: What you are saying is *au courant* these days, largely because of your seminal efforts back in the Cathedral days of the '50s and '60s. Back then, however, it was really maverick stuff.

AW: After Vatican II it became almost obligatory to get the people involved in their work - their liturgy - and this as it should be. But with that responsibility came the possibility of lowering one's musical standards to achieve the "common denominator" of a parish's abilities. But I've always said that one can have a participatory liturgy while maintaining excellent standards. For instance, we don't all get up and give the sermon! There is a place in corporate worship for listening and being moved - but only if there's something worth listening to.

OB: Much as we might love the English choral tradition, music can become its own *raison d'être*; we can forget about why we're really -

AW: Yes, and that's why I'm perfectly willing to do a rock or jazz setting provided its done well; a very simple folk setting within the right liturgical context can be very moving indeed. It's so very important that people praise God actively, and that there is an opportunity for dialog. But it's equally important to remember that there are singers and instrumentalists who *engage* the congregation as they sing and play and that is *also* dialog!

OB: Where do you think Sacred Music is headed in the next 50 years?

AW: Good question - I don't know. I just hope that people will keep their standards high. Expect the *best* of everybody; don't become those who just show up. Get moved by it!

OB: Tell me, a little about the prayer book rubric "silence may be kept." Weren't you responsible-

AW: Well, James Pike, used to say that we spent so much time singing and speaking and praying and preaching that we ought to occasionally shut up and let God answer. I remember once when the Archbishop of Canterbury, Michael Ramsey, was invited to a Diocesan Clergy Conference. He would give a meditation, and then keep ten or so minutes of silence; it was just wonderful. Jim said you should allow time after singing something or saying something for people to think about it before you get onto the next thing. That was how silence came into the prayer book. He brought that.

OB: Well, maybe the future of church music will include a bit more silence and a bit more time for active listening. It's kind of funny how the pendulum swings in our lifetime we've gone from total performance situations where the choir and clergy did everything to a total reaction in some circles to their very existence.

AW: Oh, yes! But I think the correct response is somewhere in the middle.

OB: That brings us to the last part of this interview; I wonder if I might put forth a few names, places, or events, and have you respond with any comments or impressions you'd care to make?

AW: Sounds fine.

OB: Please tell me about Yankee Lake, and what that place meant to you.

AW: “Solace in the midst of woe” is what it was! A choirboy, Gerald Ashbey - who was way before your time - well, his father was a real-estate agent out there. He told us about this place on a hundred and fifty feet of lake-front property on a man-made lake which was available for \$5000 in 1958, so we bought it. In those days Monday was the day off, and we used to drive out after Sunday evensong, and come back Monday evening. We just had a wonderful time. I had a rowboat, and would tether the boat to a tree limb and sit with a big sombrero on my head to keep the sun off. That’s where I used to go to write my music. We made it a year-round place by 1970 so we could go out in the winter too. It was a very great blessing.

OB: Richard (Wyton) told me that you would come in after a day in the row-boat, sit your family down at the dinner table, and sing through your day’s work; he remembered especially singing an early draft of *The Vision of Isaiah*.

AW: Oh yes!

OB: Tell me about your compositional process. Did you ever use a keyboard?

AW: No, I never needed a piano. I just wrote the ideas down. Sometimes now I flesh them out at the piano, but I rarely used to.

OB: Do you have perfect pitch?

AW: No.

OB: You once said you could remember an “A” because you remembered the Bach *A-minor Prelude and Fugue* for organ, and from that you’d get your bearings.

AW: Yes. I have good relative pitch, and can still hear written pitches pretty well in my head.

OB: Sounds like Yankee Lake was a wonderful place.

AW: I think everyone needs to have something like it if possible; once a week you can then just get right away.

OB: Tell me about the birthday party that you all had with Leo Sowerby for your youngest son, Patrick.

AW: Good Lord! Well, Gerald Near was Leo’s student at the time, and baked us a splendid birthday cake and, in the meantime, Leo’s housekeeper had also made us a cake. Leo used Gerald’s and stuck the housekeeper’s cake in a cupboard and forgot all about it. Well, when she finally discovered it she just up and quit!

I remember once Leo came to dinner, and Richard was trying to write music like Daddy and scribbling on all this paper. Richard said "Uncle Leo, won't you play my music?" So Leo looked at it, and finally he said "All this looks *very* difficult," and Patrick who was then [five] years old said "I don't think you're a composer, I think you're a big fat *phony!*" And Leo loved it, because Patrick was red-headed - as Leo was.

Oh, and I remember staying with Leo at the time of the installation of the Presiding Bishop (John Hines) and I came down in the morning to get some breakfast and I tried to find some milk. Well, there was no milk - just jugs of martinis in the refrigerator! He was trying to get them cold without the ice. Oh, Uncle Leo was such a wonderful man!

OB: Tell me about Jim Pike, I know he was one of your heroes-

AW: Yes, he was. Well, he went off his rocker; he had to have the highest office that the Church conferred; you called it "Purple Fever," I believe. But there are some things a Bishop can't do: as Dean of a non-parochial cathedral he was free to be himself; and he was so creative. But he quickly got into all kinds of trouble as the Bishop of California.

You see, a Bishop has got to be the Bishop of *all* his people. He's got to back them up. Jim got into all this spiritualism, or mysticism, and that was partly his undoing. He divorced his dear wife, Esther, who was a sweetheart, and his son committed suicide. As he was driving somewhere, the car broke down - it was hot summer, somewhere in the Sinai desert - and instead of waiting, he got out and started to walk, and, of course, he collapsed and just died in the sun. It was just a tragedy! But I think at the time there had been talk about his being removed as Bishop, whatever you do to a Bishop - defrocked or whatever - there was talk of that. He came to such an unfortunate end, poor man. He was at his absolute best when he was a Dean.

OB: Did he and Bishop Donegan get along?

AW: I don't really know. But I remember once they televised the big Easter service, and all the while the Bishop was in the pulpit preaching, the camera was focused on Dean Pike sitting in his stall! Jim Pike had a larger-than-life persona.

OB: John Vernon Butler.

AW: John was very friendly, yet firm - a *very* good dean. (His predecessor) Jim Pike, was a crazy man, but John was very well organized. I'd known him in Atlanta, and was delighted when he came to the Cathedral as Dean. We got on splendidly.

OB: Now, please tell me about Bishop Horace Donegan.

AW: Oh, he was marvelous. He was very much the bachelor, and he had this affinity for the Queen Mother - he used to see her every summer - and we always wondered if there would be any kind of - ehem! - well, when I went to the Cathedral, Bishop Donegan's mother was living with him. She was a very charming and very strict Englishwoman, and when he came to dinner



several times a year at the choir school, she'd always come with him. Bishop Donegan was first-rate; he was basically a conservative man, but he went along with some of my wilder ideas. When I wanted to have the *Hair Service* (celebrating the third anniversary of the smash-hit Broadway musical, *Hair*) I went to see him first and said "Look, these people want to do this." And he said, "Well, if the people from *Hair* want to say their prayers in the Cathedral, who am I to keep them out? But let's keep control of it!"

OB: You say Bishop Donegan was conservative. But isn't this the same man who said "we will not complete this cathedral building while there is still poverty outside its front doors"? Wasn't it his successor Paul Moore - a liberal - who began building again?

AW: Yes, and they used up much of their endowment to get it going. Bishop Donegan had wisdom that Paul Moore didn't. But I'm very fond of Paul Moore.

OB: You mentioned a name a while back that strikes *terror* in the heart of many former Cathedral Choirboys - tell me about Edward Nason West.

AW: Ah! Eddy West! Bishop Manning, who was the 10th Bishop of New York, said "Canon West knows a lot more about the unimportant things in the Church than any other living person." He was just a pompous ass, is what he was. I laughed with him when I could, but I laughed at Eddy most of the time. He liked to organize everything his way, and *only* his way. I remember once he was leading a rehearsal for the ordination of Bishop Stuart Wetmore. And at one point, when he had all the participants together, he bellowed "here, during the service, the State Trumpets shall *sound!*" I said "Canon West, there won't be a dry seat in the house!"

OB: Tell me about Canon West and Pitman shorthand.

AW: Oh! Well, my family gave me every musical encouragement when I was young, and I was taught to play the piano, and compose, and all that kind of stuff - but they didn't think one could make a living at it. So I was to become a lawyer, and I was articled to a firm of solicitors. In order to be able to take notes at trial I had to learn Pitman shorthand, and in Pitman shorthand your consonants are strokes and your vowels are little dashes and dots. I was sitting one day thinking about Canon West and remembering Pitman shorthand, and I realized that in that system of shorthand, Canon West and Canine Waste had the same outline! That made my day!

OB: Please tell me about Larry King.

AW: Oh, Larry was a marvelous, extremely gifted, energetic, and creative person. I remember that I was sick for a couple of months with some wretched thing which kept me low, and I swear the choir was better when I came back. Larry King was just first-rate; he was meticulous.

OB: Marilyn Keiser.

AW: Well, she interviewed and played my *Fanfare* as an audition. I was so impressed that I ran to get my wife in to hear her, and Mary said "Alec, she plays better than you do!" Marilyn was

wonderful as an assistant organist; she excelled at Union (Seminary), and was very good with the choir. She was also the first woman ever at the Cathedral to have her name on the masthead.

OB: I know this is an unfair question - you were mentor to such a who's who of gifted students - did one stand above the rest as your finest assistant?

AW: Probably Larry King.

OB: Because of his overall abilities?

AW: Yes, all of it, but - above all - he was *thoroughly* loyal.

OB: What were the qualities you looked for in an assistant?

AW: To be himself or herself, as the case may be, and to do what I wanted them to do, but to accomplish the tasks in their own way, so that I could leave knowing that everything would be OK.

OB: Healey Willan?

AW: He was wonderful. I met him for the first time at the International Congress of Organists in Canada, and he was just such fun! I said "You must let me come back and interview you with a tape recorder - as we're doing here - he was so full of beans! He called himself English by extraction, Canadian by adoption, and Scotch by absorption. They once gave a performance of his music - which was a huge honor - but he was extremely critical of the way they performed his work; he just blasted the hell out of them!

OB: Didn't you finally interview him in 1967, the year before he died?

AW: I think the tape is still available through the A.G.O. resource center, but I've got an uncensored copy of it somewhere. There was an awful lot of "salty dog" stuff which had to be cut out of that tape.

OB: I understand he could tell quite a limerick.

AW: Oh yes, he was a great soul!

OB: Herbert Howells?

AW: Howells was such a lovely man. When I was at Oxford there was a war going on, and there was a shortage of young people. So I had two jobs; I was Organ Scholar at my College at Exeter, and Assistant Organist at Christ Church Cathedral. One day this gentleman was standing there and I didn't know who he was, and Thomas Armstrong came up and said "Oh Alec, this is Herbert Howells, I want you to meet him," and we became firm friends. Michael, Herbert's son, had been in the choir there, and Herbert used to come back from time to time when I played

evensong. He was a very gentle man, a very kind man. He was just a sweet, wonderful person. As I remember, he spent an evening with us during A.A.M.'s first trip to England.

OB: Please tell me about Benjamin Britten.

AW: I think I mentioned that in 1943, St. Matthew's, Northampton was 50 years old. The Vicar, Walter Hussey, wanted to commission a special choral work, and he'd heard of this young man named Benjamin Britten. Ben was a conscientious objector, and so he went to America during the war, where he wrote an opera called *Peter Grimes*. Walter searched him out and asked him if he would write a piece, and Ben was so surprised that he agreed to do it.

OB: Up to that point he'd not written a great deal of sacred music, had he?

AW: He'd written some, but the Church had treated him badly, and he'd left. During this period, Ben had been studying the poetry of Christopher Smart, whose work had been recently rediscovered. In 1939, a big volume of Kit Smart's work was published - only 750 copies exist - and I have one of them. Somebody had showed Ben *Rejoice in the Lamb*, and so he selected sections from that marvelous poem, and that setting became St. Matthew's first musical commission.

OB: Tell me what you remember about him.

AW: Ben? I just met him a couple of times. When he wrote his only organ piece the *Prelude and Fugue on a Theme by Victoria* for me, I remember going to London to get the manuscript. I met him and we went to his apartment, and he produced the score and played it on the piano. He was a very nice gentle person, but I was not in the nature of being attracted to him in the way he'd like to be attractive.

OB: Tell me about your experience with Leopold Stokowski.

AW: He called me up on the phone and said "I'd like to come and see you," and I said "May I come and see *you*?" and he said "No, no! I'd like to see you in the Cathedral." And so I met him there, and he said "I have this work for three choirs and three organs - *Epitaph for This World and Time* (by Iain Hamilton) - and I want to perform it in the Cathedral and I want you to play the organ." I asked "why do you want me to do it?" and he said "well, I've heard you play; I like the way you play!" So that was that; we did it. I got the Cathedral and Trinity choirs together, and I got Jim Litton who was at Trinity, Princeton - he said he would come. I was teaching at Westminster Choir College, so I thought we'd also get the Westminster choir - Stokowski was going to use them for a performance of Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony*.

So, one day he rang me up and said he was going to Princeton to rehearse them, and asked if I'd like to join him. I got in my car and I met him - he had an apartment on Fifth Avenue on the Upper East side - and we drove to Princeton and chatted, and he rehearsed the *Epitaph* and the *Ninth Symphony*. As we were driving back on the New Jersey Turnpike he said "I'd like to find a cafe where they'll have a cup of hot chocolate made with milk!" So we drove along until we

found his chocolate; we just had a marvelous time together. You know, he was organist at St. Bartholomew's?

OB: Yes, my notes say he came to America and took up that post in 1905, and became an American citizen in 1915.

AW: That sounds right. Well, we rehearsed and performed *Epitaph*. It was spectacular! He scarcely ever moved when he conducted - he was 89 years old! I remember at one point during rehearsal, Joan Lippincott, who was turning pages for me said "Alec, he's *looking* at you!" That was my cue! Oh, he was an incredible man.

OB: Tell me about Duke Ellington?

AW: What a wonderful fellow! He lived on Riverside Drive, near the Cathedral. Apparently he was a very religious man, but he was not a "denominational person." He used to visit the Cathedral, and said one day that he'd like to do a sacred concert; he had done one in San Francisco at Bishop Pike's invitation in Grace (Cathedral). And I said "of course!" I got in touch with Bishop Donegan who said his usual "well, let's just keep control of it." And so I got St. Phillip's (choir) in Harlem to join us, and the Cathedral choir, and St. Hilda's choir. Everyday for a week I walked into the Cathedral and heard the Ellington band rehearse. What Joy! You were in the choir at the time and played a part, as I recall. And then we *did* it; remember? The place was so packed we had to leave the Great West Doors open, and over six thousand people spilled out onto Amsterdam Avenue!

OB: I do remember! My mom was next door at St. Luke's Hospital at the time, and my dad would come up to see her, and then stop in for rehearsals. He brought me peanut butter and jelly sandwiches.

AW: Remind me how it was you came to be involved?

OB: The only reason I got the part of *The Apple* was because I was such a naughty boy: I'd been sneaking practice time on the chapel organ over Christmas break, and heard the band rehearsing. I managed to steal past the security guard to listen. Ellington spotted me sitting in the far corner of the room and shouted "Hey son! You a choirboy?" And I said "yes sir, I am." And Duke said "Com' on over here, Red." Well, he looked at his band, looked at my red hair, and said "boys, *this* is our Apple!" He was wonderful! At one point in the soliloquy, I was "sposed to say ihe (the serpent) beguiled and *coerced* her." I couldn't spit that diphthong out, and ended up saying "he *caressed* her." Duke said "that's OK Apple; I like *your* version better!"

AW: I'm sure! What fun! That was 1968-

OB: You've already mentioned Leo Sowerby, but didn't he write an organ work for you?

AW: Yes, he wrote the *Prelude and Fugue on Deus Tuorum Militum* for me. I remember him bringing the manuscript to the Cathedral to show me. And he said "well, let's go upstairs and

play it!" I said "wonderful!" and he put the score on the music stand and said, "well - play it!" So I did the best I could with sight reading it. Gosh, I was so enamored of him.

OB: Was he a good player? I mean anyone who'd write *Pageant*-

AW: I never heard him play; I would suspect he was, but he was the most un-showy, unassuming person in the world - a really modest person.

OB: John Coburn?

AW: Oh, John Coburn, one of my great heroes! I sort of knew John when he was Dean of the Cathedral in Newark, and I'd come across him from time to time at conventions, big services, and the like. He preached so well, and then finally, when he was Rector of St. James' and looking for a musician, I got a chance to work with him. John is simply a wonderfully compassionate person, a real scholar, a well disciplined person, and a person who really *listens*. You know that he's listening to you when you're in conversation with him. I must go up to see him; he's living in a town up in Martha's Vineyard.

OB: Tell me about Bishop Arthur Lichtenberger?

AW: Bishop Lichtenberger was just great. When I was in St. Louis we had a Diocesan Bishop, William Scarlet, who was so "low church" it was embarrassing. We used to say if you were outside it, you wouldn't know there *was* a diocese in Missouri. Anyway, when he retired there was a big - almost Methodist - movement within the diocese. Arthur Walmisley, who was then Bishop in Connecticut, nominated Bishop Lichtenberger to succeed Bishop Scarlet. "Lichty," as we used to call him, was a Professor from the Episcopal Divinity School, and got elected. He was so wonderful; he talked and knew all about music, and he wanted the *Missa Marialis* used at his consecration.

OB: Really? What a wonderful thing for a Bishop to actually want to *hear* the *Missa Marialis*, let alone use it during his -

AW: Right! And when it came to the *Gloria*, I asked the Presiding Bishop "how would you like to present the opening incipit?" "Oh, don't *bother* with that sort of thing!" he responded. Yes, "Lichty" was just very encouraging; and then he became Presiding Bishop shortly after I went to St. John the Divine, so that was wonderful.

OB: Well, that's about all I have; you've been tremendously patient to wade through all this with me. Happy 75th Birthday!

AW: Thanks. What are you going to do for me when I'm one hundred?

OB: I'll probably be dead by then; your grandson Andrew can bake your cake! Is there anything else you'd like to cover?

AW: Nope, I think we've hit everything. Oh yes! It has to do with this whole business of retirement.

OB: Oh?

AW: Well, my present Rector said to me three years ago "you're now about to be 72. Clergy must retire at 72, what are your plans?" I said "my plans are to go on doing what I am doing, as well as I can, as long as I can." I said "I think it's a great mistake that the clergy have to retire at 72 - some of them should retire at 50!" But I want to go on. I love being part of the action. Things are going well. I just also want to say that I think one of the great travesties today is the "pro-forma" resignation of clergy and lay staff when a new rector is chosen. I believe this is reprehensible behavior, and the National Network of Lay Professionals - of which I'm a founding member - is helping, along with organizations like A.A.M., to stop such madness.

OB: That brings us to the present day.

AW: Well, I have to concentrate very hard these days because my memory gives me trouble. I now practice all my hymns; I'm very careful about that. But I think I'm going to start learning some new music. It's just incredible how much there is, it's just mind blowing!

OB: Anything else you'd like to say?

AW: Just that I'd love to live to see the resurrection of Union Seminary's sacred music program - and I'd like to see you run it; it could be your *other* job! But this interview has been splendid fun, Owen; I'm so glad you're at Trinity! God bless you, dear boy!

OB: Thank you, and blessings on you, Alec!

11,202 words