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## *Letters to a Young Episcopalian: Revelation*

*This letter is part of a series of fictional letters by Canon George Maxwell intended for Episcopalians young and old who wonder what it means to be faithful in the world today.*

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Dear Anna,

You made our Christmas!

None of us thought you would be able to make it home. It's such a long way and travel is so expensive. When you first told us you were going to try, your mother could only say, "I'll believe it when I see it."

In thinking about our conversations about faith, it strikes me that most of our religious practices assume the opposite is true. It's more like, "When I believe I'll see it." Our vision of God helps us to see what is true about the world.

I remember when Ruth and I bought our first house.

There were things we wanted to do, like remodel the kitchen, paint the walls of several rooms, and refinish the hardwood floors. But, we didn't have the money to do them all and decided to live in the house for a while before deciding which ones we cared about the most. We thought that our experience with the new house would allow us to make better decisions about how to change it to suit us.

I was saying my prayers at the kitchen table one morning when suddenly I realized that we had missed a step. We didn't need to live "in" the house so that we would know how to change it; we needed to live "with" the house so that we would experience how it would change us.

I felt as though we had been called to learn more about the history of the house, and Mrs. Pew, who had lived in the house for more than thirty years. The house had a distinctive character, and you could feel that she had been attentive to it. The changes she had made, like adding the upstairs master bedroom suite, seemed like an organic extension of the rest of the house.

In the end, it made a meaningful difference. We had plans to knock down the wall that separated the kitchen from the breakfast nook until we saw how the light coming in from the window there made the space so perfect for our morning coffee.

My point is that the house had its own story and when we listened to it, we discovered the gifts it held for us. When we ultimately made changes to the house, they fit the style of the home and had a timeless quality.

Life is like that too. It has its own story. But we have to stop, listen for God's voice, and learn to discern what it is saying to us before we can determine how we should respond to it.

Your affectionate uncle,  
Ames

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