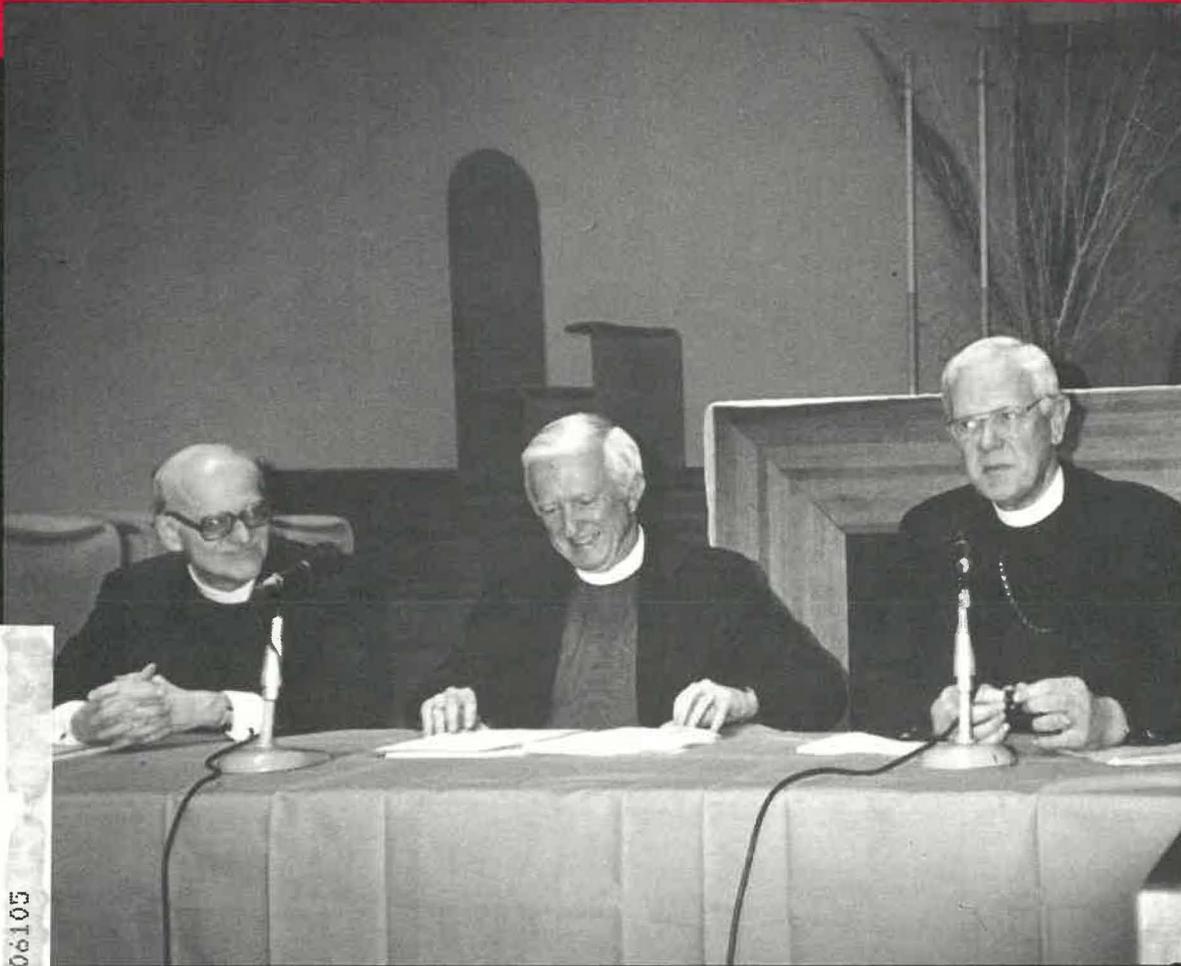


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'Concordat of Agreement'

Episcopalians and Lutherans issue a text that contains concrete proposals for full communion between the two churches.



Faces and Fins

One of the happy memories of my childhood was visiting the aquarium in Chicago at the time of the world's fair of 1932. Many years later I was able to visit it briefly, and found it just as good as I remembered. Half a century later I was able to take some of my own family there. I have in middle life visited many other aquariums, and found all of them fascinating.

What is it about the aquarium which grips the attention of young and old? Why do crowds pack up to the glass in front of the larger tanks? How does it benefit us or teach us? Indeed, why does it even entertain us?

In part it is certainly the distinctive experience of looking through a window into an enclosed little world, with some similarity but considerable difference from our own world. In this little world the figures are not inanimate dolls, as in a dollhouse, nor are they mere flashes on a screen, as in cinema or TV. In the aquarium they are real creatures, living real lives.

Yet fishes are so very different from us: how can we have any sense of relationship to them so that their actions can seize our attention and interest? Is it not that they have eyes, and that two eyes, two nostrils and a mouth constitute a face? This we immediately recognize, do we not? An aquarium presents an extraordinary spectrum of aquatic faces. Some apparently malevolent, like those of congar eels, some clown-like as in many colored tropical fishes, some wide, some of a knife-like thinness, with big mouths, little mouths, upturned mouths, downturned mouths, and so forth. Yet almost all have two eyes, eyes that we immediately recognize as such, placed somehow in some sort of face.

As the face is the most striking physical expression of the image of God in human beings, some sort of face is what we most readily recognize in so many of our fellow-creatures. A fish-face, in contrast to ours, is in no sense godlike, and their "expressions" are only what we read into their shapes and colors. Yet in this, as in other things, we learn what is what by comparing what is like and unlike. We understand our own humanity better as we observe our very distant cousins.

Meanwhile, if fishes have stupid, funny or fearsome faces, they move about with an effortless grace that inspires our admiration. We may dance, or watch a ballet for an hour or two, but for some fish their very life seems to be a continuous, graceful and harmonious dance through the water. Here is a dimension of the beauty of creation that communicates a significant though wordless reality to our minds and spirits.

"O ye whales and all that move in the waters, bless ye the Lord; praise him and magnify him forever."

(The Rev. Canon) H. BOONE PORTER, senior editor

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ON THE COVER

At a press conference to issue a text on a plan for Episcopal-Lutheran full communion, the Rev. William Norgren, ecumenical officer of the Episcopal Church (left), joins Presiding Bishop Edmond Browning (center) and Bishop Herbert W. Chilstrom of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. [Story, page 8]

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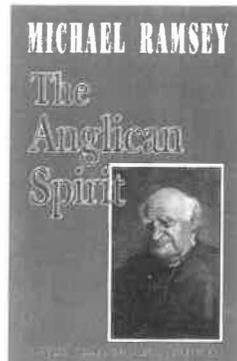
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EDITORIAL AND BUSINESS OFFICES
816 E. Juneau Ave., Milwaukee, Wis. 53202
TELEPHONE 414-276-5420

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editor and general manager
The Rev. Canon H. Boone Porter,
senior editor

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LETTERS

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Sharing God's Love

I am tired of reading about what is perceived by some as negative aspects of the Episcopal Church. I believe our church is a marvelous journey of faith which tries to bring words of healing to those who might feel excluded from our liturgy.

Put away the tar and feathers for Bishop Spong. If we are to continue to be a prophetic church which ventures out with the good news of Jesus Christ to a hurting humanity, then we need to look past our stained glass (however beautiful) and wrestle with issues of abortion, divorce/remarriage, ecology, homosexuality, or whatever else perpetuates the brokenness of humanity from the loving grace of God.

I am incarcerated in prison, but my church continues to minister to me. My pastor flew from another state to visit me and drove five hours to visit and counsel my parents. A group from my parish gathers each month to celebrate the Eucharist with special intention for me.

Many Episcopal churches have been quietly loving, accepting and sharing God's love to individuals for years. When shown the unconditional and inclusive love of Christ, power is given to stand against all odds. I know, for each new day I find myself still standing.

NAME WITHHELD

Searching for Language

In his examination of *Supplemental Liturgical Texts, Prayer Book Studies* 30 [TLC, Dec. 30] the Rev. Canon H. Boone Porter observes that "the only common use of the word [king or kingdom] in American speech today is in the Lord's Prayer, and in the reading of the New Testament." Yet, in this week's *Boston Globe* I noticed an advertisement for a movie which probably appeared in many other city papers: "Van Damme is Lion Heart. When the streets are a jungle . . . there can be only one *king*."

And another advertisement, in the book review section: "Non-stop action from the *king* of medical thrillers — Robin Cook."

Who is not aware that those who organize the world of drugs and crime

are consistently referred to as "lords?" Yet Dr. Porter says that former connotations of the words lord, king and kingdom "are felt by fewer and fewer people." He is quite correct that in this country none of us has the experience of king or kingdom in the way it was once used. But we are not free from the experience of power over us which the words denote.

Dr. Porter's implied judgment that the *Supplemental Texts*, prepared by the Standing Liturgical Commission, is "ephemeral," "petty" and to be "filed away or forgotten" may please many who want nothing that is "different from . . . the Prayer Book." It fails to recognize that the authors of the texts are searching for language that opens the hearts of the hearers to God. For all too many, words like lord, king and kingdom are associated with fear, violence and violation. We need Dr. Porter's gifts to help find new language for the sake of those who would hear the word of God as liberating.

(The Rt. Rev.) OTIS CHARLES
Dean and President

Episcopal Divinity School
Cambridge, Mass.

The Wrong Word?

What has happened to the "e" word — evangelism — for this decade in the Episcopal Church? Perhaps it was a misnomer!

The focus appears to have shifted to the "s" word — sexuality. In fact, sexuality has become all-consuming.

A bit simplistic perhaps, is the first stanza of hymn 529: "In Christ there is no East or West, / In him no South or North, / But one great fellowship of love / Throughout the whole wide earth."

We are all children of God. Let us move forward in the true purpose of the church and stop judging our brothers and sisters in Christ.

SHEILA WALKER

Tampa, Fla.

Out of Touch

The letter of Bishop John H. MacNaughton regarding the attitude and performance of Bishop Spong [TLC, Dec. 23] and the letter of Glen Schafer [TLC, Dec. 30] continue to highlight the arrogance of much of the leadership of the Episcopal Church. With the church in decline and disarray, many in leadership roles are either not

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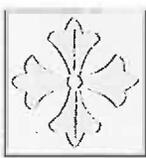
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listening to, or not hearing what is coming from the people in the pews. Many are saddened by the isolation and resultant loss of touch by those placed in positions of trust and responsibility.

Your article based on the visit of Bishop John Brown to the Episcopal Church Center while en route to the Diocese of the Rio Grande [TLC, Dec. 30] appears to be based on a press release from the Episcopal News Service. This is further evidence of either not hearing or of arrogant distortion of the facts by our national leadership. While Bishop Brown made the statements quoted in your article, he went much further in discussion with various groups within the diocese.

On November 30, meeting in Albuquerque with clergy and lay leadership interested in a possible companion relationship with the Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf, Bishop Brown said that, in his discussion with the Presiding Bishop and staff, he had indicated that the Presiding Bishop's let-

ter to President Bush was wrong and probably harmful to efforts to bring a non-violent solution to the situation in the Persian Gulf. This disagreement with the actions of the leadership of our church was the main thrust of his remarks, not those quoted in the press release. In the media, this is known as "spin" on the news.

It is time for those in leadership positions to take stock of themselves, their staffs and their councils of advice. Actions of past leadership has led to decline in membership to the point where we continue to delude ourselves with the thought that we are a large mainline church. We are a railroad train looking for a wreck.

EDWARD L. BALE, Jr.
Vadito, N.M.

The Full Gospel

It is sad to encounter leaders in our church who seek to water down and rewrite the faith once given to suit their political agendas. Such seems, unfortunately, to be the case with Bill

Lewellis, communications minister, Diocese of Bethlehem [TLC, Dec. 9].

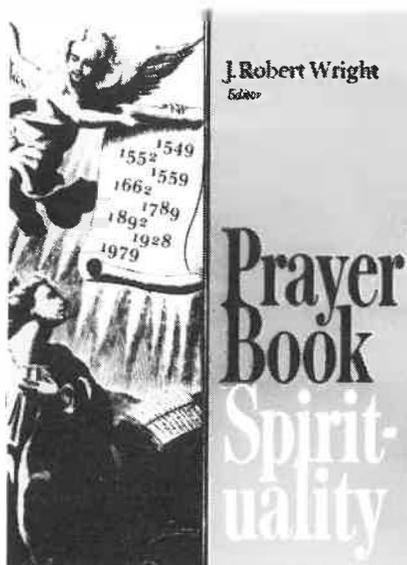
In his letter, Mr. Lewellis writes that the bishops would better serve their apostolic ministry by focusing on God's good news and not be side-tracked by issues of morality and doctrine. Then, to justify this position, he gives the following quotation of Jesus: "Seek first the kingdom. . ."

If Mr. Lewellis were to read that portion of our Lord's teaching in its entirety, he would know that Jesus said, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness" (Matt. 6:33).

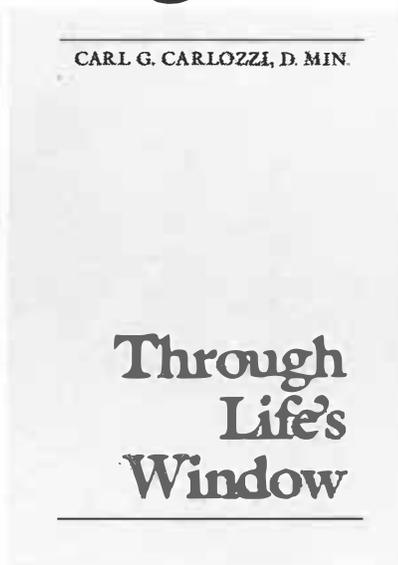
We who have been called into positions of leadership in the Episcopal Church had best be careful not to present a weak Jesus molded into our image for our convenience. The Jesus of holy scripture, God incarnate, expects us to be not only hearers of the word, but doers also. It is our responsibility as part of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic faith to proclaim and uphold the full gospel of Jesus Christ!

(The Rev.) JAMES M. CLARKE
Scotia, N.Y.

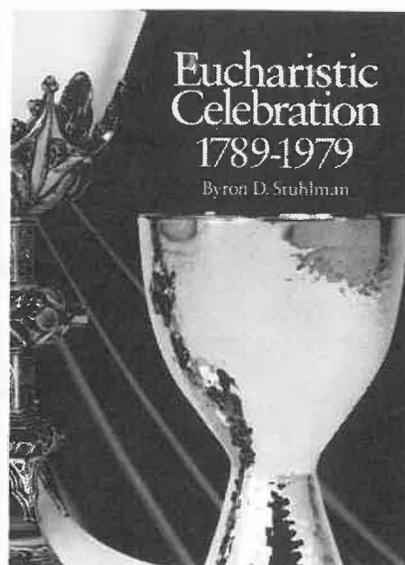
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Episcopal-Lutheran Text Proposes Interdependence

A proposed "Concordat of Agreement" between the Episcopal Church and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America was introduced January 18 at St. Peter's Lutheran Church in New York City. The Concordat, the text of which was completed in Delray Beach, Fla., January 6, contains a set of concrete proposals leading to full communion between the two churches.

By "full communion," the Concordat understands a profound, interdependent relationship between two different and autonomous churches which affirm the catholicity and the apostolicity of each other based on mutual recognition of the essentials of the Christian faith. The two churches are committed to the sharing of fellowship, ministry, sacraments and service, while each retains its own ethnic, cultural or ecclesial particularities.

Bishop Herbert W. Chilstrom of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and Presiding Bishop Edmond L. Browning were both present at the announcement and agreed that the Concordat is "an important day in the history of our churches." They pointed to the 20 years of dialogue, research and prayer shared by Episcopalians and Lutherans that led to the historic agreement. They attested to a cooperative spirit between the two churches and reminded listeners of previous efforts, including the Lutheran-Episcopal Dialogue (concluded 1972), the Lutheran-Episcopal Dialogue 2 (concluded 1980), and the Lutheran-Episcopal Agreement of 1962, which included a welcome to the Lord's Supper mutually among the Episcopal Church and the three participating Lutheran churches: the American Lutheran Church, the Lutheran Church in America, and the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches. These three churches in 1988 merged to form the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Bishop Browning pointed out that "these documents (i.e., the Concordat and the Report of Lutheran-Episcopal Dialogue 3) are not being received in a vacuum," while Bishop Chilstrom stressed that much further conversation and study are necessary for both churches before final approval. "It's (the Concordat) a complicated document," he said.

Ecumenical conversations between Lutherans and Episcopalians have faced what the report calls a "historic impasse." "Since the adoption of the Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral of 1886-88," the reports explains, "the Episcopal Church has been committed to 'the historic Episcopate' (as) one of the four elements (together with the holy scriptures, the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds, and the sacraments of baptism and Eucharist) that constitute the *terminus a quo*, the irreducible basis for any approach to ecumenical reunion of churches." In ecumenical conversations, Anglican participants include the historic episcopate as essential to either organic reunion or full communion.

"Lutherans, on the other hand, have opposed the notion that the historic episcopate is required as a condition for full communion," the report states. The Lutheran position has been that "for the true unity of the church it is enough to proclaim the gospel according to a pure understanding of it

and to administer the sacraments according to the word of God."

However, Lutheran and Anglican theologians and church leaders were unhappy with the impasse and determined to continue study and conversation.

The report summarizes the historical and theological meaning of *episkope* in the Lutheran and Anglican traditions and develops the grounds of their "coming together" while still retaining their distinctiveness. Future Lutheran bishops, for instance, though ordained by the laying on of hands by both Episcopal and Lutheran bishops, will have neither greater authority nor powers they do not now have. "They will continue to exercise *episkope* on the basis of (current) constitutional accountability," the report asserts. Furthermore, Episcopal bishops will have no authority over Lutheran bishops. Episcopal and Lutheran bishops, however, will be mutually accountable for the common life and mission of the churches they serve.

Praying with the President

Presiding Bishop Edmond Browning and Bishop Herbert W. Chilstrom of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America discussed the war in the Mideast at a press conference in New York City January 18. They traveled to the Mideast in December to try to find some opening for a peaceful solution, but at the same time had been prevented from visiting troops in Saudi Arabia for security reasons.

Both stressed the need not to "demonize the military." Bishop Browning said he had a great personal loyalty to President Bush and called the President in the morning of January 15 to pray with him over the phone. But he still believes that options short of war were far from being exhausted.

Bishop Browning told a story from his trip to Baghdad. As he left the airplane, he found himself walking next to a family — two parents and three children. The mother was carrying two children and the father was carrying a child and large package. Bishop Browning offered to carry the package

to help the family. His offer was accepted and he carried the package until the family had its luggage and found other assistance.

His voice breaking with emotion, Bishop Browning concluded, "When I heard the bombing had started, all I could think of was those children and whether they were safe."

The bishops then turned to questions of, "What are the churches doing now?" Both urge "prayer and more prayer." One project already underway in the Episcopal Church is a 24-hour hotline staffed by reservist chaplains to assist families and friends of persons involved in Operation Desert Storm. Additionally, plans are underway to develop a refugee assistance program. The Presiding Bishop's Fund for World Relief is sending out a special mailing to ask for donations toward refugee relief. Bishop Browning and Bishop Chilstrom concluded by expressing their determination to continue to look for peace strategies.

BONNIE SHULLENBERGER

In order to accomplish full communion, the Concordat makes the following provisions:

1. The Episcopal Church and the ELCA will submit the Concordat and the report to their respective national conventions this year for study by the churches at large (hoping, for shared study in local groups made up of Episcopalians and Lutherans).

2. The General Convention of the Episcopal Church will be asked to enact a temporary and this-time-only suspension of the restriction in the preface to the ordinal of the Book of Common Prayer that "no persons are allowed to exercise the offices of bishop, priest, or deacon in the church unless they are so ordained, or have already received such ordination with the laying on of hands by bishops who are themselves duly qualified to confer Holy Orders." The churchwide Assembly of the ELCA will be asked to suspend for Episcopal ordinands the requirement of subscription to the Unaltered Augsburg Confession. These suspensions will allow presbyters (pastors in the ELCA, priests in the ECUSA) and deacons of one church to function in the other without reordination.

3. Future bishops in the ELCA will be ordained by the laying on of hands by both Episcopal and Lutheran bishops, to allow Lutheran bishops in the future to receive the gift of the historic succession. Lutherans will seek to make the constitutional and liturgical provisions so that only bishops will ordain clergy.

4. Both churches pledge to further study of the diaconate in consultation with one another.

5. Both churches will continue to live in communion with those churches with whom communion now exists, but the Concordat does not imply or inaugurate any automatic communion between, for example, the ELCA and the other provinces of the Anglican Communion.

6. While each church retains ecclesial and historical autonomy, the creation of a common and therefore interchangeable ordained ministry will occur with the full incorporation of all active bishops in the historic episcopate and the continuing process of collegial consultation in matters of doctrine, witness, Christian life and service.

BONNIE SHULLENBERGER



A seaman aboard the USS Wisconsin reacts to the announcement of the beginning of war January 16. [RNS photo/Reuters]

A Look at 'Foxhole Religion'

The author spent five weeks in Saudi Arabia in November and December.

The matter of how to worship has been an issue faced daily by soldiers deployed in Saudi Arabia, the staunchly traditionalist Islamic heartland. The highly conservative kingdom is ruled by the House of Saud in alliance with Sunni (traditional) religious authorities, whose interpretation of Islam is based on the "purifying" teachings of the 18th century fundamentalist reformer Muhammad Abd Al-Wahab.

The other Gulf monarchies follow Islam but are not as strict as the Saudis in applying Islamic laws against liquor and immodest dress for women.

No other formal religion is permitted to be practiced openly in Saudi Arabia. But even before the deployment of some 400,000 U.S. troops, experts say there were several hundred thousand Christians in the kingdom who worship discreetly.

American and British military authorities have taken special pains to keep reporters away from Christian or Jewish worship on Saudi soil, while acknowledging that it has been conducted regularly in military enclosures since the deployment began last Au-

gust. Reporters have been able to write about worship services held aboard ships in international waters.

For the military, the guiding principles have been to keep Christian or Jewish worship, such as for Christmas or Hanukkah, out of sight for fear of clashes with Islamic authorities such as the Saudi religious police known as the *muttawa*. U.S. authorities permitted media coverage of secular trappings of Christmas in the kingdom but kept the religious strictly off limits.

Don't 'Flaunt It'

"Religion has been a problem since the first day," declared a senior U.S. military official who spoke on condition of anonymity. "We've always had religious services in Saudi Arabia, but the (Saudi) government let us know that 'if you flaunt it, we've got to do something about it.' We'll continue, but we won't publicize it," the official said.

The United States not only worries about offending the "host country" but also seeks to avoid handing a propaganda weapon to Saddam Hussein, the traditionally secularist Iraqi presi-

(Continued on page 16)

God's Little Hammer

Help for Lent from Thomas à Kempis

By BOYD WRIGHT

Need a pick-me-up to combat the late-winter spiritual blahs and prepare for Lent? Try Thomas à Kempis' *The Imitation of Christ*.

It's possible that no book except the Bible has ever consoled more Christians. And no book anywhere is easier to use. Feel angry? Jealous? Sorry for yourself? Begin to wonder if God really exists? Just glance down Thomas's wonderfully complete table of contents and you're bound to find a chapter that fits your mood. Then turn to the little essay itself, only a page or two long, and you'll feel better after the first sentence.

Thomas à Kempis (1380-1471) entered a monastery at age 19 and spent most of the next 70 years in a cell copying and composing. No life could have been more removed from our modern hurly-burly. Yet he manages, by devotion, simplicity and quiet eloquence, to transcend lifestyles, bridge the centuries and touch our hearts. No writer of any age has so completely bared his soul to let us see right down into the extraordinary, genuine goodness of the man. No one has so vividly revealed how a person can pour his life, his every energy, his whole being into adoring God.

Thomas has become known to Christendom as Kempis from his birthplace, Kempen, near Dusseldorf, Germany, but his family name was Hammerken, which can be translated into Little Hammer. The name fits not only because his father was a blacksmith but because Thomas in his writings hammers away, blow by blow — some are gentle, some clang — to pound his own pure and shining faith into the mind of the reader.

For instance, if you find yourself questioning the Trinity as too complicated for today, Thomas gave you a comeuppance 600 years ago: "What avail is it to a man to reason about the high, secret mysteries of the Trinity if

he lack humility and so displeases the Holy Trinity?"

If you weary of the wordiness of the Bible, Thomas replies: "Charity and not eloquence is to be sought in Holy Scripture . . . Seek . . . spiritual profit rather than eloquence of style."

He isn't all sweetness and light. His words can be a kick in the pants: they hurt but they get you moving in the right direction. He says we should ask God to let "other men know our faults and rebuke us for them." If a man, he says, "can in his heart fully despise himself and desire as well to be despised by others, then he may have good trust that he has gained somewhat in grace."

Dose of Humility

Need an extra dose of humility this Lent? Thomas's medicine tastes awful but it helps. His prescription: go out and seek out suffering. "O Lord Jesus," he prays, "make possible to me by grace what is impossible to me by nature. You know well that I can suffer little, and that I am soon cast down by a little adversity. Wherefore, I beseech You that hereafter I may love and desire trouble and adversity for Your name: truly, to suffer and to be troubled for You is very good and profitable for the health of my soul."

When I first came to Thomas à Kempis years ago, I made the mistake of reading the *Imitation* straight through. It's too pithy for that. And too useful. Now I dip into it when I need a specific antidote for feelings I shouldn't be feeling.

Above all, I've found the book useful for reading just before going to holy communion. The last of its four sections deals entirely with the Eucharist. You won't find a sermon or any explanation of the mysteries. You won't find the dogma of the church. You'll hardly find any theology at all. What you will find are quiet words of awe and love for the sacrament.

Take ten minutes before communion to read one of Thomas's 18 essays on the Eucharist. They'll never grow out of date. When you've finished the cy-

cle, start again. I find these chapters a bigger help every time.

By most accounts the Little Hammer was a small man; by all accounts he was shy. Joining the monastery of Mount St. Agnes at Zwolle in what is now the Netherlands at 19, he became a priest at 33. His love was scholarship, but the monks insisted on making him sub-prior in charge of novices and later treasurer. Thomas detested these duties. "I sought for rest," he lamented, "but never found it save in a little corner with little book."

Finally, the monks agreed Thomas was too unworldly for administrative tasks. They sent him back to his cell and his writings, and we can bless them for it.

Thomas turned out volumes, but the *Imitation* is his masterpiece. Scholars have lost track of the number of translations published. As with Shakespeare, researchers, some of them reputable, keep finding other names they think should be attached to Thomas's writings. Perhaps this was because the modest monk seldom signed his work. A contemporary who knew him may have said the last word on this: "He did not wish to name himself . . . but Jesus knows his name well."

Only a glimpse of his brilliant mind shines through his simple piety. A man with such a gift for words and images, with such a genius to inspire, must have found it hard to stay humble. But if he stumbled, we can find no hint. He kept his intellectual lights well hidden under his humility. "I would rather," he once declared, "feel compunction of heart for my sins than merely know the definition of compunction."

Can a man so devout that he urges other men to rebuke him, so holy that he asks God to send him adversity because it would be good for his soul, really speak to us today? He can if we let him. He was strong and we are weak. He might be just what we moderns need to toughen moral muscles grown flabby from indulgence. This Lent could prove a time both to feel the fiber of his strength and find comfort in his faith.

Boyd Wright, a retired journalist, resides in Mendham, N.J. He writes frequently for The Living Church with special attention to church history.

Other Suggestions for Lenten Reading

The weeks of Lent are a time of reflection, prayer and self-discipline for many, and books can aid in concentration and enlightenment. But what have others found useful during this long pause before Easter?

The Rev. O. C. Edwards, Professor of Preaching at Seabury-Western Seminary in Evanston, Ill., has a number of favorites, some old and some new, that he recommends for Lenten reading.

One which he describes as "wonderful" is Helen Waddell's *Desert Fathers* (1957, University of Michigan Press). A classic, it is still in print and Fr. Edwards says it is a book he "enjoys the most."

Other classics "highly recommended" by Fr. Edwards for a Lent reading list include *The Art of Preaching*, by Charles Smyth (1953, SPCK), and Dorothy Sayers' *Comedy of Dante Alighieri, the Florentine* (1959, Penguin). Though Smyth's book is out of print, several seminaries have copies in their collections, including Nashotah House in Nashotah, Wis. Paulist Press's *Classics of Western Spirituality Series* include numerous volumes, and its *Early Dominican Writings*, edited by Simon Tugwell, is especially noteworthy, says Fr. Edwards.

Recently-published books which would be worth perusing include Ian Ker's *John Henry Newman: A Biography* (1988, Oxford) and Owen Chadwick's new *Biography of Michael Ramsey* (1990, Oxford).

'Framing Issues'

Fr. Edwards considers author Henri Nouwen to be "one of the most admired spiritual writers of today" and suggests *The Wounded Healer: Ministry in Contemporary Society* (1979, Doubleday); and *The Genesee Diary: Report from a Trappist Monastery* (1981, Doubleday). The latter is described as good for "framing issues coming up in any retreat situation and important for reflection."

Great sermons by John Donne and Lancelot Andrewes also come highly recommended. "There are a number of anthologies available," he said. "Because they are sermons, they are best read aloud to get a full sense of meaning. The sermons of many great preachers are worth reading this way."



A young man receives ashes. [RNS]

The Rev. Thomas Monnat, rector of Gethsemane Church in Minneapolis, Minn., said he includes *The Lenten Spring* by Thomas Hopko (1983, St. Vladimir's Press) on his Lenten reading list. A series of meditations, it has "an Orthodox perspective, but a very good one," Fr. Monnat said.

He also recommends Michael Marshall's *The Restless Heart: The Life and Influence of St. Augustine* (1987, Eerdmans) as "a well written and lively presentation of the life of St. Augustine." John R. Stott's *The Cross of Christ* (1986, Inter-Varsity) is "a fine theological testament of the life and passion of our Lord." A prolific writer, Robert Coles' *Harvard Diary: Reflections on the Sacred and the Secular* (1988, Crossroad) should be on a reading list. "He has wonderful perspectives on the secular and Christian world," Fr. Monnat added. "These are very fine essays."

For priests, the books of Kenneth Leech should be considered, said Fr. Monnat. His *Spirituality and Pastoral Care* (1989, Cowley) is a follow-up to his popular book *Soul Friend: The Practice of Christian Spirituality* (1980, Harper and Row), and deals with four portraits of priests and pastoral care.

In Atlanta, Ga., the Very Rev. John C. Sanders, dean of St. Philip's Cathedral, is also a fan of Henri Nouwen, and adds *Lifesigns: Intimacy, Fecundity, Ecstasy in Christian Perspective*

(1988, Doubleday), and new *Walk with Jesus* (1990, Orbis) to anyone's Lenten reading list. The latter he describes as "stations of the cross in a contemporary setting."

Other good books, he said, are *The Word Is Very Near You: A Guide to Praying with Scripture*, by Martin Smith (1989, Cowley) and *Thinking the Faith*, by Douglas John Hall (1988, Augsburg), which he describes as "Christian theology in a North American context." *Finally Comes the Poet*, by Walter Brueggemann (1989, Augsburg) tackles the theme of poetry and its influence in spiritual development.

The Very Rev. GERALYN WOLF, dean of Christ Church Cathedral in Louisville, Ky., recommends *Living Contradiction: Reflections on the Rule of St. Benedict* by Esther de Waal (1989, Harper & Row) as being "especially good for these times. Esther lifts up the value of living with contradictions, something we all have to deal with," she said.

Prayers from a Troubled Heart, by George Appleton (1983, Fortress) is also good reading, said Dean Wolf as "a compilation of uplifting prayers." Douglas Van Steere's *Together in Solitude* (1982, Crossroad) is well worth some time, she added.

Books by Eugene Peterson

The Rt. Rev. Terence Kelshaw, Bishop of the Rio Grande, suggested several books by Eugene Peterson, including *A Long Obedience in the Same Direction* (1980, Inter-Varsity); *Five Smooth Stones for Pastoral Work* (1980, Westminster-John Knox); and *Earth and Altar: Community of Prayer in a Self-Bound Society* (1985, Inter-Varsity).

He also recommends *The Broken Image: Restoring Personal Wholeness Through Healing Prayer*, by Leanne Payne (1981, Crossway Books); *Christian Faith and Life*, by William Temple (1982, Morehouse); and Evelyn Underhill's *Abba* (1982, Morehouse), and *The Fruits of Spirit* (1982, Morehouse).

Though it is out of print, Maurice Nesbitt's *Where No Fear Was* (1981, Seabury) is also well worth the search, says Bishop Kelshaw.

KIRSTEN KRANZ

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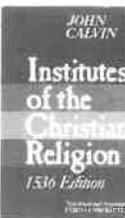
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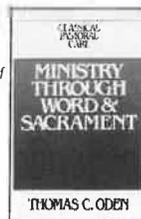
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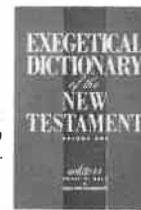
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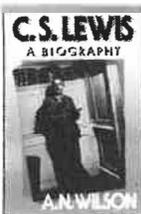
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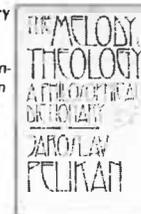
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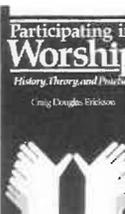
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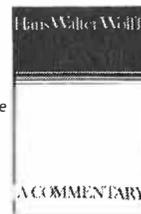
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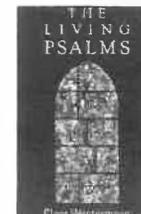
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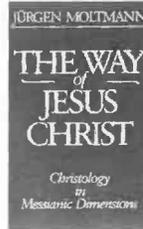
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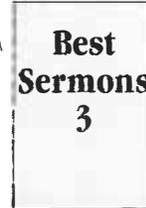
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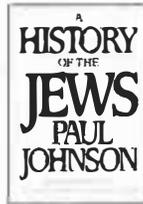
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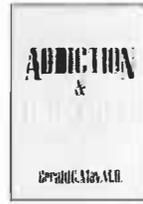
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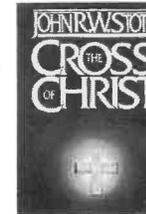
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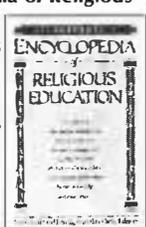
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EDITORIALS

The Opportunities of Lent

Lent is nearly upon us once again. This holy season means, for many of us, a time to sacrifice. We may give up candy or cigarettes or whatever we believe to be a significant act of self-denial.

But Lent is more than that. Not only is it a time to give up something, it also is a time to take on something else. If we are serious about the traditional Lenten disciplines of prayer, fasting and almsgiving, it will indeed involve adding something to our lives.

The opportunities for additions to our prayer lives are numerous. Join a Bible study in your parish or neighborhood. Make a weekday Eucharist a regular part of your Lenten observance. Read one of the daily offices of Morning or Evening Prayer.

Fasting is a natural part of Lent. Add an additional meatless meal to your routine. Skip lunch one day a week and give the food or the money you save to a local food bank.

Almsgiving, like any responsible stewardship, involves more than money. It makes good use of our time and talents as well. In addition to the consideration of a Lenten offering, this is a good time to be a volunteer. One of the outreach ministries in your parish probably can use

your help. Community service agencies usually need volunteers who can share their time and talents.

We invite you, in the words of our Prayer Book, "to the observance of a holy Lent, by self-examination and repentance; by prayer, fasting and self-denial; and by reading and meditation on God's holy words."

Meaningful Reading

Traditionally, Lent has been a time when people have done more reading than usual. It is an appropriate time to learn more about the Bible, spiritual matters or the doctrine of the church.

With this in mind, we present our Lent Book Number. It is one of four special book numbers we publish each year which have additional advertising and articles about books. Our regular issues also contain helpful features about books, including reviews of books published in the religious field, "Short and Sharp," which appears occasionally and provides shorter notices about books, and "Books Received," which lists other recently-published religious books.

We hope this Lent Book Number will be of value to those who are hoping to do some meaningful reading this Lent.

ALL GOD'S CHILDREN

By GRETCHEN W. PRITCHARD

Helping the Word to Speak

In three previous articles in this series, we have looked rather critically at the standard or typical "children's Bible." The usual formula for a children's Bible is to glean from the scriptures those portions that appear in narrative form, and arrange them into a single narrative in roughly chronological order. The narratives may be heavily or sparingly edited, but the portions of both Old and New Testaments that are not "stories" are barely represented at all. The most one can hope for is a few select passages, anthologized within the narrative or summarized and interpreted by an authorial voice that is usually

pretty glib, both theologically and morally.

There is a place for imaginative retellings of Bible stories, and a place for moral commentary (though the community of faith is a far better place than the printed page for drawing "lessons" from scripture). But our first priority should be to encourage and assist children "to engage the Bible, to think about it, to feel about it, to wonder about it, to explore it, and to make sense of it for themselves as richly and deeply as they are able," as A. Roger Gobbel and Gertrude G. Gobbel recommend in their excellent book, *The Bible — A Child's Playground* (Fortress Press, 1986, p. 67). We can and must offer older children the whole, unabridged Bible, to browse and muse over. But for younger children, and for family reading, we are constrained to select, arrange and rephrase. The question we must now ask is, "By what principles should this selecting, ar-

ranging and editing be carried out?"

The issues raised so far in this series lead Anglicans and other liturgical Christians to respond along these lines: "In a way that will assist children to encounter the whole canon of scripture, including those non-narrative portions that have nourished the church in faith, hope, prayer and witness . . . in a way that can help them to see the story of salvation as a unity — and as a story that is 'our' story as a people, and 'my' story as a child of God. In a way that allows the different parts of scripture to speak to each other: Old Testament to New Testament; prophecy to fulfillment; ancient tale to its echoes, memories and transformations . . . in a way that gives children a vocabulary of rich and suggestive images and metaphors that will serve as the tools for their own theological musings . . . in a way that suggests meanings and moral implications without flattening metaphor,

Gretchen Wolff Pritchard, of New Haven, Conn., publishes The Sunday Paper, materials for Christian education with an emphasis on conveying the gospel to children. This is the final article in a four-part series.

reducing ambiguity, glossing over difficulties, or losing the strangeness and the power of the original text.”

The church long ago asked essentially the same questions as it selected and arranged the scriptures for the liturgical use of adults and children alike. It was inappropriate, as well as impossible, to begin with Genesis and read the Bible through during the liturgy. The solution that evolved — the liturgical year, the lectionary, the liturgy itself with its tissue of scriptural quotations, allusions and references in hymns, antiphons, canticles and prayers — might serve as a model for those who would try to help the scriptures speak to children. A lectionary approach, at least to the gospel, is emerging as a standard model for church school curriculum for all ages. But here we are looking at “children’s Bibles” designed primarily for home and family reading, not for classroom use.

I have found only two volumes now in print that make any effort to incorporate the whole breadth of scriptures for children on a liturgical model. *The Macmillan Book of 366 Bible Stories*, retold (originally in Italian) by Roberto Brunelli and translated by Colin Clark, was published in 1988 and runs to nearly 200 pages, with abundant full-color illustrations by Chris Rothero. Both text and pictures come across as competent but a bit bland and wooden: the book has something of a textbook flavor about it, and the stories are often so condensed that they have lost all their vividness. This may be a deliberate device to send readers back to the original text, whose chapter references are given carefully at the head of each story.

Rapid Tour

The book’s year begins in July; it makes a rapid tour of the Old Testament that ends in mid-December with the messianic visions from Daniel, and gives proportionately more space than most children’s Bibles to such themes as the temple, the law, the Elijah and Elisha sequence, and the Book of Job. There is biographical material on Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel, but almost nothing from their writings, or from the Psalms. The gospels are apportioned over the winter and spring, much as they are in the lectionary, with the whole month of April being given to the events of Holy Week

through Pentecost. May and June are devoted to Acts, a moral snippet or two from the epistles, and one passage from Revelation.

Bible Stories for the Church Year, by Kristen Johnson Ingram with Joseph P. Russell (Harper & Row, 1987, pp. 175) is an attempt to organize the Bible for home reading, specifically on the foundation of the three-year lectionary. Unfortunately, it is visually uninspired and disappointing in concept. The stories are printed in standard Bible order, first the Old Testament and then the New, with the



usual narrative emphasis and the usual distortions and omissions characteristic of children’s Bibles. The link with the liturgical year, which is supposed to be the book’s selling point, in fact appears only as a series of tables at the end.

A family that followed the editors’ recommended schedule of readings would find its attention veering unevenly between the Old and New Testaments week by week (especially in the weeks after Pentecost) and its text sometimes matching one of the week’s lessons in church and sometimes not. The editors suggest only one story for each week of the three-year cycle, favoring the gospel but turning to the Old Testament in certain seasons and (more confusingly) whenever the lectionary’s gospel is deemed unsuitable or uninteresting for children.

It was with amazement and delight that I found, in the public library, one “children’s Bible” which rises superbly to these challenges in the work of helping the word to speak its whole story to children. *With the Bible Through the Church Year: Around the Year from Genesis to Apocalypse with Psalms and Texts on the Liturgy* is a handsome volume of 243 pages brought out in 1953 by Pantheon. Originally published in Germany, it was compiled by Richard Beron, O.S.B., and translated into English by Isabel and Florence McHugh, with seasonal liturgical prefaces by Mary Perkins and illustrations by an anonymous group of Benedictine brothers. Suitable for readers 10 and up to tackle alone, or for reading aloud with school-age children of a wide range of

ages, its outline is worth looking at in detail:

Autumn consists of Old Testament narrative — Genesis through David and Solomon, the temple, and one Elijah story. The Elijah stories continue in *Advent*, followed by Tobit, the early chapters of Isaiah; Jeremiah, the destruction of Jerusalem, passages from Lamentations, Ezekiel and Daniel; the building of the second temple, parts of Maccabees, and the first chapter of Luke. *Christmas and Epiphany* provide all the infancy stories and the Baptism of Jesus. In *Septuagesima, Lent, Holy Week*, and *Easter* we read the life of Christ, including not only miracle stories and parables but also the Sermon on the Mount, discourses from John, prophecies of the Second Coming, and all the post-Resurrection appearances; then *Ascension and Pentecost* offer most of John 14-17 and the first two chapters of Acts. The year is rounded out with *Corpus Christi*, which includes much of Acts, interlarded with extensive selections from the epistles, including the themes of baptism, adoption and the cosmic rule of Christ; an account of the martyrdoms of Peter and Paul from the Epistle of St. Clement; and large portions of Revelation.

Imitating Daily Office

The arrangement of the primary texts to form a coherent story on a liturgical basis is striking and successful. But even more effective is the way the editor has interposed non-narrative material, chiefly psalms, throughout the narrative. Each group of two or three narrative passages is followed by a psalm or a canticle, a prophecy or a lament. This imitation of the daily offices’ technique of setting the scripture into dialogue with itself is complemented by the illustrations, which strike just the right balance between stylization and realism, and subtly suggest parallels between certain stories, such as Isaac carrying the firewood and Jesus bearing the cross. But one notices with regret that, in the New Testament (and not the Old), nearly all the figures have yellow hair.

The scriptural text is in simple and dignified contemporary English (in 1953, this Roman Catholic publication was using the pronoun “you” in addressing God!); the prefaces to the

(Continued on next page)

(Continued from previous page)

seasonal sections relate the scriptural story explicitly and implicitly to the church's ritual, and exhort the reader to greater devotion, in a way that is informative and never condescending. Obviously a product of the Liturgical Renewal movement, the book is nowhere near as dated as its publication date would suggest. With only minor revisions in the liturgical material and the spelling of biblical names ("Elias," "Nabuchodonosor," etc.), the text could be brought entirely into line with post-Vatican II (and 1979 Prayer Book) usage.

For the Old Testament alone, a selection from the King James version entitled *God and His People*, edited and arranged by Harold Bassage and published in 1966 by Seabury, uses some of the same techniques. The brief and informative foreword suggests to the reader:

"Perhaps, on a rainy afternoon or during a long quiet evening, you can settle down and read this entire book in one sitting. Then, all at once, you can gain a bird's eye view of the one majestic story that surges through the Old Testament."

In 206 pages, there are 12 chapters, and the last three pick up where most children's Bibles leave off: they are composed entirely of material from Ezra, Nehemiah, the prophetic books, the Psalms and the wisdom writings. The King James text is slightly simplified, and handsomely laid out in short lines, a device which enormously enhances readability. The monochrome illustrations, by Clark FitzGerald, are spare and elegant but probably more appealing to adults than to children.

Responsible Efforts

Both of these books are out of print. Both of them richly deserve to be reissued, with appropriate minor revisions. They are thoughtful and responsible efforts to meet a crying need of our children: the need to have a door opened for them into the world of the church's own story, so that they may be free to "make the circuit of Zion, walk round about her, count the number of her towers . . ." so that they may come to love her and know that she is "the very center of the world and the city of the great King," and so that they in turn may be able to "tell those who come after."

NEWS

(Continued from page 9)

dent who has cloaked himself in the mantle of Islam since invading Kuwait and who has called for Muslims to wage jihad ("holy war") to expel Westerners from the land of the prophet.

Despite the diverse conditions, soldiers and chaplains interviewed in the region said attendance at Christian and Jewish worship and interest in religious, spiritual or existential matters has increased among U.S. service men and women since the deployment.

Talking About the Bible

Corporal Rick McAbee, a Tennessee Southern Baptist serving with an air assault brigade, said members of his unit, when not involved in desert training, often read the Bible and talk about questions of prophecy, life and death and the possible role of Israel in the current conflict. If Israel gets in a fight with Arabs, he said the U.S. must come to Israel's aid to avoid being on the wrong side of God.

"The majority of our crew are non-affiliated, but many are coming to the faith. The issue is not heaven or hell but the meaning of life — more existential," said Capt. James O'Connor, chief chaplain on the aircraft carrier

USS John F. Kennedy.

He added that "foxhole religion is quite valid" because it represents a searching. Though regular weekly worship services on the Kennedy were attracting only about 500 of the more than 5,000 crewmen, he said that figure represented a 40 percent increase since the deployment began.

The mission in the Red Sea has even sparked the formation of a small shipboard congregation of Muslims who hope to visit Mecca while in the area.

Both Captain O'Connor and Rabbi Bob Feinberg, a Reform Jew and senior rabbi for the fleet normally based in Naples, Italy, said they see the U.S. deployment as meeting the criteria for a "just war."

Captain O'Connor, a Lutheran from New York who has been a naval chaplain for 22 years, said he finds the current crisis entirely different from Vietnam, except for the "uncertainty."

"Just war theology" is what has sustained me in this chaplaincy and this situation. . . . The parallel between the 1920s and now is very real to me. I can see the ripple effect of giving in to Saddam Hussein. This is a very difficult situation in which you can only hope peace with justice will prevail. There are dark days ahead of us."

RICHARD WALKER/RNS

Mood 'Positive' at Fort Worth Cathedral

Though All Saints' Cathedral in Fort Worth, Texas, voted to give up its cathedral status last year, the move has not hurt the parish financially, despite some predictions.

In October, the vestry of All Saints' asked the Rt. Rev. Clarence Pope, Jr., Bishop of Fort Worth, to find another parish to serve as the diocese's cathedral, one which would be more comfortable with the bishop's leadership of the Episcopal Synod of America [TLC, Nov. 4]. At that time a number of people, including the parish's treasurer, predicted that parishioners who were ESA supporters would pull their pledges, causing a devastating impact on All Saints' budget.

But the Very Rev. William Nix, dean of All Saints', reported recently that pledges for 1991 are up an average of 12 percent, more than offsetting the five percent pledge decrease by 22 households protesting the vestry's action.

"As a parish, we are doing fine," Dean Nix said, adding that the mood of the parish was "very positive." Only two people have indicated they will leave the parish.

Bishop Pope's Letter

In a letter sent to the parish after the vestry's decision, Bishop Pope said he intended to "vigorously promote the revealed religion of our Lord Jesus Christ, based upon holy scripture and the tradition of the undivided church, and the moral behavior which flows from it using whatever legitimate organized help I can get." He has indicated he has no immediate intention of naming another cathedral.

Dean Nix said he has not heard from Bishop Pope recently. Though All Saints' contract with the diocese does not end until October of this year, "We are not functioning as a cathedral anymore," Dean Nix said.

BRIEFLY

In a move which surprised many, the Rev. **William Oddie**, well-known English priest, traditionalist, and freelance writer of topical religious features, has announced he will leave the Church of England and become a Roman Catholic. In a letter to the Rt. Rev. Richard Harries, Bishop of Oxford, Dr. Oddie said the Church of England had become "an independent liberal Protestant denomination" which let members virtually make up their own doctrines. He has no immediate plans to become a Roman Catholic priest.



Although more than half of the nation's adult population reads the Bible at least monthly, only a little more than a third can name the four gospels, according to a report by the Princeton Religious Research Center entitled "The Role of Bible in American Society." The report, based on a Gallup organization phone survey of 1,021 adults, also found that 24 percent of Protestants read the Bible daily and another 28 percent read it weekly, compared to seven percent and 16 percent, respectively, among their Roman Catholic counterparts.

Around the Church

The Diocese of Spokane is working to expand the ministry of its Camp Cross beyond the normal summer camping season, with the desire to provide camps and conferences for more people within and outside the church. Bathhouses are being constructed this spring and renovation of the dining room and kitchen will start in the fall. Future plans call for new program and office facilities and a retreat center for smaller conferences.

* • *

St. John's Church in Hopewell, Va., recently celebrated 150 years during a special service of thanksgiving. Built in 1840, St. John's was an active parish up until the Civil War, when it was used as a signal station, theater and dance hall by soldiers. In 1867, parishioners cleaned the building and resumed services, which have continued to the present. During the anniversary service, the Rev. David Bercaw, rector, incorporated prayers from the first American Prayer Book of 1789 and music appropriate to the era was used.

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BOOKS

Solid Introduction

THE SPIRIT OF THE TEN COMMANDMENTS: Shattering the Myth of Rabbinic Legalism. By Roger Brooks. Harper & Row. Pp. 199. \$21.95.

In this beautifully presented volume (including the unpointed Hebrew texts that are cited) Roger Brooks offers his readers the comments of the rabbis found in the pages of the Mishnah and Talmud concerning the Ten Commandments, usually referred to here as the Ten Utterances, in keeping with the Hebrew: "ten words." The presentation is orderly and very rich, and provides excellent insights into the spirit of Rabbinic Judaism.

This reviewer, who has spent much of his adult life reading Judaica, and who considers himself a friend of the Jewish people, is not so ready to state that this volume dispels the notion (myth!) that rabbinics is legalistic. I don't think the volume accomplishes that, and I am not even sure that it ought to be attempted. The world of Rabbinic Judaism is a very special world, a very enriching and rewarding world, but it is also a very legalistic world. Brooks does amply illustrate his contention that the concept of holiness or ethics in Rabbinic Judaism draws upon scripture, experience and moral example. For those who want a solid introduction to the decalogue, as viewed by the classic rabbis, no better volume could be recommended.

(The Rev.) JOSEPH I. HUNT
Prof. of Old Testament and Hebrew
Nashotah House
Nashotah, Wis.

Vigorous Life

MAUDE ROYDEN: A Life. By Sheila Fletcher. Basil Blackwell. Pp. 294. \$49.95.

Maude Royden was formidable when she confronted her church with the proposition that women ought to be ordained, and especially when she preached the pride she practiced. It is curious that a woman born during the Victorian era — in the centennial year of the American Declaration of Independence — should be so stubbornly resisted by Anglican authorities. After all, the Church of England drew its temporal authority from Victoria herself, queen of the United Kingdom, empress of India and exemplar of fe-

male accomplishment.

But then, a generation after Maude Royden's death, London accommodates a woman monarch and has had a woman prime minister but remains cautious about women priests and bishops. The determined, vigorous life of Maude Royden, daughter of a wealthy Liverpool shipbuilder and the curiously wispy Lady Royden, has much to say to the Decade of Evangelism.

There are abundant quotations from letters and other sources, most of them so interesting that the reader must wonder why they are printed, long line after line of them, in smaller type than the rest of the story, as if the typographer might be in cahoots with Bausch & Lomb.

This scholarly, readable account of the life of a woman who believed Christ to be the first feminist, a pacifist whose provocative and somehow prophetic preaching more than 70 years ago brought out the London police to control the queues, is more than a reminder that you can't keep a good woman down.

A.E.P. WALL
Orlando, Fla.

Rewarding Essays

WORSHIP: Reforming Tradition. By Thomas J. Talley. Pastoral. Pp. ix and 155. \$11.95 paper.

This volume contains nine essays which, as the author says, "have appeared in various places at various times during the quarter century that I have devoted to teaching and writing about the liturgy." Talley is the now retired professor of liturgics at General Seminary. The essays constitute a wide spread of fairly technical studies, ranging from "The Source and Structure of the Eucharistic Prayer," to "The Origin of Lent." All of them are written with meticulous scholarship, lucid style, and that wistful, bitter-sweet sense of regret, known to all who work this field, that ancient sources don't yield better information. His figure of speech, "stepping stones across a torrent of ignorance" (p. 29) is memorably exact.

Probably no one will agree with all Talley's conclusions. I'm not sure myself that the differences between Jewish thanksgivings and Jewish benedictions as models for Christian anaphoras are as sharp as Talley argues, granted the presumably extem-

poraneous character of early Christian prayer, though it is surely important to recognize both types. I'm much less sure that the kind of historicism which Gregory Dix associated with Cyril of Jerusalem is the same as the historical foundation for the Christian *pascha*, which he convincingly demonstrates as having been celebrated on an annual basis much earlier.

On the other hand, the chapters on the origin of Lent and the liturgical year seem to this reviewer convincing and significant contributions to the field. All the chapters in fact raise ponderable questions, for which we must thank Tom Talley.

The concluding note of the book is worth quoting. "Renewal itself will be better served as we seek, observe, and honor the continuities that connect us with all of Christian history and with all who honor it today."

Not an easy book, but a rewarding one.

(The Rev.) CHARLES P. PRICE
Virginia Theological Seminary
Alexandria, Va.

Development of Monotheism

THE EARLY HISTORY OF GOD: Yahweh and the Other Deities in Ancient Israel. By Mark Smith. Harper & Row. Pp. 197. \$26.95.

Did Israelite religion evolve from that of the Canaanites? Were the early Israelites Canaanites? To what degree were the attributes of Yahweh absorbed from the worship of El, Baal and Astarte? Did the early Israelites, though exclusively focused on Yahweh, acknowledge the existence of other gods? These and other questions are the subject of this book.

The book is not one for the casual reader. It is very academic: about a 60-40 split on text to footnotes. It is a must for those who would move into current scholarship in the world of Hebrew scripture. Dr. Smith, an excellent scholar, has written an outstanding work dealing with the history of the development of monotheism. The chapter headings describe his approach: deities in Israel in the Period

of the Judges; Yahweh and Baal; Yahweh and Asherah; Yahweh and the Sun; Yahwistic Cultic Practices; the Origins and Development of Israelite Monotheism; and, postscript: Portraits of Yahweh. This book, combined with the published results of Frank J. Yurco's analysis of a hieroglyphic text in the Cairo Museum and the four battle scenes carved on the temple wall and Karnak in Egypt, have stirred the waters. Much of what many of us were taught in seminary courses has now been dated. Reading this book and *Biblical Archaeology Review* dated September, 1990, would be a good start in catching up. I heartily recommend this investment.

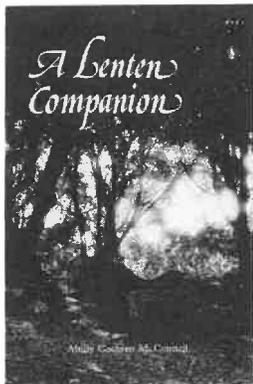
(The Rev.) C. CORYDON RANDALL
Del Mar, Calif.

Excellent Course

MATTHEW FOR TODAY: Expository Study of Matthew. By Michael Green. Word. Pp. ix and 301. \$9.99 paper.

Michael Green was for many years rector of St. Aldate's, Oxford, and is
(Continued on next page)

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BOOKS

(Continued from previous page)

currently professor of evangelism at Regent College, Vancouver. His many books have been characterized by solid content expressed in a clear and engaging manner. The present volume is no exception. Green, who has often found commentaries “rather dull and rather unhelpful,” has set out to share the excitement he has found in Matthew and its relevance to the Christian life.

He focuses not on verse by verse exegesis but on the pattern of the book as a whole and how each section fits in its context. He attends to the place of each passage and comments on its content but does not interpret each with equal thoroughness. Much cultural and historical background is offered, as well as application to life that is not a mere moralizing. Throughout there is solid scholarship lightly worn, expressed with many delightful turns of phrase. The result is less like a typical commentary and more like an excellent course.

As Green guides us we see how powerfully Matthew conveys the gospel of the kingdom and its universality. As seems fitting from a professor of evangelism, this book would be an excellent study book for small groups as a part of the Decade of Evangelism. It provides much food for thought on what the gospel actually is and thereby provides a foundation for discussion of how it might be shared today.

(The Rev.) **RODNEY A. WHITACRE**
Associate Professor of Biblical Studies
Trinity Episcopal School for Ministry
Ambridge, Pa.

As We Pray

NAMING THE MYSTERY: How Our Words Shape Prayer and Belief. By **James Griffiss**. Cowley. Pp. xv and 204. \$11.95 paper.

The language we use to name or address God is a lively and sometimes adrenaline-charged topic in many parts of the church today. James Griffiss in this book provides a useful resource both for individuals and groups. He gives a thorough, well-reasoned and understandable examination of many of the implications of naming God and the historical, religious and cultural issues that surround our attempts to do so.

He begins by acknowledging that naming God is both a controversial

and emotional subject. He shares his hope that the book will be a pastoral resource, helping Christians in prayer, worship and service in the world. This is not, in other words, a book addressed to a particular side of the language question. It is a very careful treatment of the subject, always stressing the multifaceted nature of our language about God and pointing us toward the mystery we are trying to name.

The name of God, he said, is unlike any other name: “. . . it is a name of power, holiness and mystery; the name of one with whom I have a personal relationship, one whom I can call by name.”

How do we identify the authority of names we would use for God? Griffiss points us to scripture (read in its proper context), to tradition (living and vital while seeking to remain faithful to what has been revealed), and to present experience (balanced against scripture and tradition). While he would not ask us to abandon the great revealed names for God, he would also urge us to be open to the possibility of new ways of speaking about God.

None of this, however, is meant to be dealt with at a strictly intellectual level. As he points out, the book is concerned with the relationship between prayer and naming God. Consequently, what we believe about God, what we experience of God, and how we understand ourselves all come into play as we pray.

One unanswered question has to do with naming and addressing God in worship. If the way we name God hinges in part on our own experience of God and those experiences are unique for different Christians, how do we arrive at a satisfactory and reconciling common prayer? For instance, if some find “mother” a helpful and prayerful form of address and others find it repugnant, how do they worship together?

Perhaps there is no answer to that question, but Griffiss has given us a valuable resource for working on it by drawing from the richness of tradition, making us aware of the contemporary context and always reminding us of the centrality of prayer which draws us deeper into the Mystery.

(The Rev.) **KRISTI PHILIP**
Spokane, Wash.

SHORT and SHARP

By TRAVIS DU PRIEST

GOD'S GIFT: A Prayerful Contemplation of the Gospel According to John. By Ruth Dodge. Ivy (Box 1116, Sykesville, Md 21784). Pp. 143. \$14.95 (1-5 copies); 6 copies or more, 40 percent discount, paper.

Painter and conservator of oil paintings, Ruth Dodge shares her personal vision and reflections on each line of John's Gospel (Revised English Bible). For example, John 1:38: "What are you looking for?" he asked," spins off into "Are you looking for material worth, position and power? Or are you searching to find a life that seeks not pride of performance . . . ?" The operative word is personal, though she also has ample cross references and footnotes to scholars. Good Lenten meditation.

WHEN YOUR NEPHEW JOINS THE MOONIES: And Letters to the Christians of St. Woebegones. By Richard E. Wentz. Cowley/Forward Movement. Pp. 176. \$7.95 plus shipping, paper.

Episcopal priest and editor of the *Anglican Theological Review*, Richard Wentz writes letters on various topics (money, stress, prayer, lack of faith) to the church in a post-Christian, post-modern world. Easy-going style: "Be a human being! Jesus Christ is the key to being a mensch, an honest person! He's the end of white-shoe college boys."

NICENE CREED: Poetic Words for a Prosaic World. By Stephen C. Rowan. Twenty-Third. Pp. 71. \$5.95 paper.

Phrase-by-phrase meditation on the Nicene Creed by a Roman Catholic priest and professor of English at Seattle University. Helpfully corrective: "almighty," for instance, does not mean God is meddlesome but that God's plan remains firm. Also, very good on "according to the scriptures." Questions for discussion follow each chapter. Good for Lenten study group.

A WITNESS TO CHRISTIAN HEALING. By Allen Whitman. Nightingale (distributed by Trinity Episcopal Book Store, 1412 W. Illinois, Midland, TX 79701). Pp. 94. \$8.95 plus \$2.45 for

tax, postage, handling; paper.

Personal anecdotes sprinkled with clarifying definitions, this booklet offers a broad view of healing: not a whole lot new, but would introduce a skeptic to the matter of spiritual healing. Nicely balanced between "unthinking" and "thinking" concepts of the miraculous. Interesting chapter on music as healing. The author is rector of Holy Trinity, Midland, Texas.

HE WAS THE DEAN: A Memoir of Lawrence Rose. By James Elliot Lindsley with a preface by Norman Pittenger. Forward Movement (printed for General Theological Seminary). Pp. 57. \$2.50 paper.

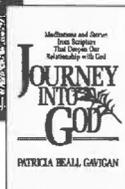
A personal memoir of the dean of General Theological Seminary from 1947 to 1966 by the editor of the *Epis-*

(Continued on next page)

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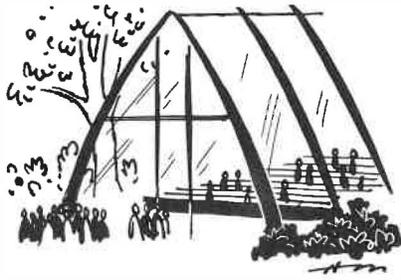
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SONG IN A STRANGE LAND: The Wellspring Story and the Homelessness of Women. By Rosemary Haughton. Templegate. Pp. 178. \$14.95 paper.

A story of love and dedication by theologian Rosemary Haughton, so admired by Thomas Merton and others. Wellspring House, one of the oldest in America (1649) was transformed in 1981 into a refuge for homeless women.

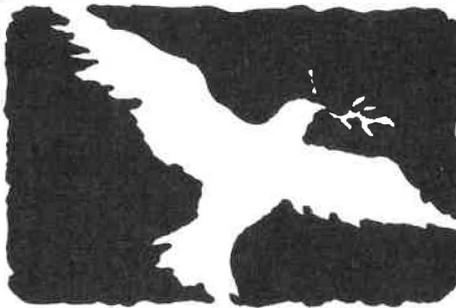
WE CELEBRATE: Prayer Services for Special Occasions. Ave Maria. Pp. 159. \$8.95 paper.

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BENEDICTION

The author is the Rev. Bruce A. Gray, rector of St. Alban's Church, Annandale, Va.

Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return." Those familiar words of Ash Wednesday are pretty potent reminders that our lives are limited, that our mortality is real. We who accept the sign of ashes must remember that our lives will end. In that sign, we are marked, we are claimed by God as his own. We can choose to accept that claim, and know our lives are not our own; or we can reject it, and close God out from our lives. That's the choice this beginning of Lent holds before us. The fact is that we do both.

Every now and then, we rise to greatness. We are obedient, even when it is costly. We do just what

Isaiah proclaims is God's will for us. We live for justice. We raise up the poor and neglected among us. We demonstrate God's love for his creation as we reach out with love to others.

On the other hand, we know that we often fail to live such lives; are self-centered instead of self-giving; seek the praise of others instead of giving thanks to God; and try to hold on to our piece of life as if it really were our own instead of God's. By our sinfulness, we separate ourselves from God and isolate ourselves from one another. The sign of the ashes, the sign of the cross, is a reminder of our human frailty.

But there is another sign. It comes at the end of our baptism. It too is a cross, but in water or oil, placed upon us like the ashes: "You are sealed by the Holy Spirit in baptism and marked as Christ's own forever."

We are marked women and men. We cannot escape God forever, and while there is a reminder of our mortality and our ultimate dying, there is also the powerful redemption of the cross. The sign is always the sign of the cross, the sign of life: new life in Christ Jesus.

The sign is yours and mine. The outward sign, however, only has impact as we allow it to change and transform our inward or spiritual selves. The sign's reality is in the cleansing of our lives.

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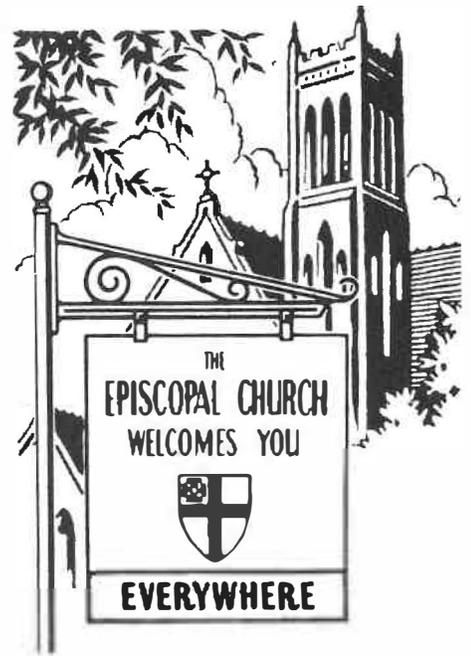
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