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LIVING CHURCH Partners

We are grateful to Saint Francis Ministries [p. 33], and All Souls Anglican Foundation (p.35), whose generous support helped make this issue possible.



ON THE COVER

The Episcopal School of Nashville (ESN) is growing from scratch, adding grades and modular buildings year by year on a rented parking lot (see "A Heart Open to Others," p. 4).

Episcopal School of Nashville photo



A Heart Open to Others

Nashville school grows steadily in humble downtown setting

By G. Jeffrey MacDonald

In a rapidly gentrifying neighborhood of East Nashville, a three-year-old private elementary school is offering families a new alternative for educating their young kids. But it's not just for people of means — and that's the point.

The Episcopal School of Nashville (ESN) is growing from scratch, adding grades and modular buildings year by year on a rented parking lot, with a vision to raise up well-formed children from a variety of backgrounds. Keeping costs low is a priority. At \$9,945, tuition per child is below average for Nashville private schools. Fifty percent of ESN's 70 students receive scholarships.

"I knew that I needed to make opportunity for those that didn't have it," said Ketch Secor, one of ESN's co-founders and the current chair of its board of trustees. "That was the Christian ethos of the message. It was to redistribute opportunity in my neighborhood and in my city, and to do it with the help of the Episcopal Church."

Founding ESN marks Secor's delayed entry into what he calls "the family business." Secor, 41, is a Grammy-winning musician, the front man and fiddler for the alt-country band *Old Crow Medicine Show*. But his father, James Jay Secor, was the founding headmaster of Episcopal School of Knoxville and Hunter McGuire School, which merged to become part of Stuart Hall School in Staunton, Va. Growing up, Ketch Secor attended schools founded and led by his father. Looking back now, he sees how people involved in the early years, including students, get to build an institution and shape its mission.

His sense of calling to be a founder came later. Whenever he wasn't touring with his band, Secor would



Photos courtesy of Episcopal School of Nashville

Gardening is part of learning at Episcopal School of Nashville.

make volunteer visits to Nashville's day care and aftercare programs, as well as schools where he'd play music, tell stories and get to know the kids. When his own children were born, they were zoned to attend a public school that was failing by state standards. Even though his children had alternatives among the city's private and charter schools, he felt called to forge a new type of opportunity in East Nashville. He envisioned an Episcopal school not only for his kids to attend, but also for children like those of the Eritrean taxi

driver who lived next door to his family and could not afford the city's high-priced private options.

As one of the newest of more than 1,180 Episcopal schools, ESN is this year notching milestones that founders hope are signs of long-term sustainability and enduring support for the vision. The school, which previously offered pre-K through fourth grade, has just added a fifth grade, and a new school bus is making its debut as well.

Also this year, ESN's operating budget crossed the \$1 million mark for

the first time. Now a \$1.2 million budget — projected to come from \$700,000 in fundraising and \$500,000 in tuition payments — goes to pay for a staff of 20, including full- and part-timers. It also supports a four-building mini-campus that consists of trailers and a new modular unit, all linked together off the ground by raised decking.

“We don’t call them trailers, because that’s not how you sell a quality education,” said Head of School Harrison Stuart. “We call them TLCs — our temporary learning centers.”

Since opening in 2016, ESN has been steadily expanding on the Woodland Street parking lot of St. Ann’s Episcopal Church, which leases space to the school but is not involved in running it. ESN started with 16 students, about half of whom had parents on the board or working in the administration.

ESN’s launch came after a multi-year discernment process, including an encouraging meeting that Secor had with Tennessee Bishop John Bauerschmidt. A needs analysis foresaw promising demand. Nashville was America’s largest metropolitan area without an Episcopal school before ESN put down roots. The school now draws kids whose parents grew up attending Episcopal schools in other areas or who see advantages for their own children in a small-classroom environment.

The Episcopal Diocese of Tennessee has supported the effort, in part by designating ESN a mission station. About 600 donors, including foundations and individuals, have contributed some \$3 million so far. The largest gift of \$300,000 came from St. George’s Church in Nashville, according to Stuart. Philanthropic giving has helped set the stage for keeping tuition low over the long term.

“We have an opportunity as a new school to fundamentally and strategically build a school around a low tuition,” Stuart said. “Our faculty make a competitive wage. They’re well-compensated. Our administrators aren’t. We’re low-end on the administrative end, and we’re also low on our facility costs. But if we can remain disciplined



Top: Head of School Harrison Stuart and Board Chair Ketch Secor with ESN’s new school bus. **Bottom:** Some of ESN’s 70 students take a break at during the school day.

and continue to close that [revenue vs. overhead] gap to get more tuition revenue in the door... then not only are we a successful Episcopal school start-up, but we are a model independent school for the future.”

Holding down tuition is the potentially the greatest challenge facing independent schools as a group, Stuart said. But local signs are promising. As ESN continues to grow, demand is growing as well. In younger grades, prospective students now go on a waiting list with hopes of receiving a slot at ESN. Parents have been willing to tally the benefits and not be deterred by either the school’s short track record or its temporary facilities.

“I would much rather my daughter sit in a modular and have a world-class teacher than to sit in a world-class building and have maybe a less-experienced, less-pedigreed teacher,” said Katherine Murrie, a parent and trustee whose six-year-old daughter attends first grade at ESN.

Looking ahead, ESN faces some big decisions. Secor and Murrie hope ESN will be able to keep opening new classrooms through eighth grade. That would allow graduates a direct stepping stone to high school.

Another question: where ultimately to locate? The school is negotiating with St. Ann’s and the City of Nashville with hopes of building a permanent facility on its current location. Whether a deal will be inked is not yet certain. But Secor hopes to build on a series of daring partnerships that have allowed ESN to get as far as it has on that site.

“The fruit of that letting down of the guard and opening up your heart to others is now 70 kids — 50 percent of them on scholarship, 37 percent of them children of color — in an abandoned parking lot that used to be a wig shop next to a Shoney’s, a four-lane interstate highway and a barbed-wire fence,” Secor said. “It’s just beautiful. Right where an Episcopal school needs to be.” □



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Charges Filed Against Bishop Love for Defying Marriage Resolution

By Kirk Petersen

Bishop of Albany William Love, the only bishop who has defied a mandate from the 2018 General Convention to allow Episcopal same-sex marriages to take place in all dioceses, now faces formal disciplinary charges that could result in penalties up to and including deposition from ministry.

The church announced September 18 that Love has been referred to a Hearing Panel that will conduct the equivalent of an ecclesiastic trial, open to the public, to determine whether Love has failed to “abide by the promises and vows made when ordained” or is guilty of “conduct unbecoming a member of the clergy.”

The referral was made by a three-person Reference Panel composed of Presiding Bishop Michael B. Curry; President of the Disciplinary Board for Bishops Cate Waynick, the retired Bishop of Indianapolis; and Bishop for Pastoral Development Todd Ousley.

Love said he looks forward to his day in court. In a letter posted on the diocesan website, he wrote:

“I greatly appreciate the Reference Panel’s decision to expedite the process by referring this matter directly to the Hearing Panel... Now that the Reference Panel has acted, canonical timelines will be put in place, ensuring that the remainder of the Title IV Process should move much more quickly.” Title IV is the church’s disciplinary canon.

Love was one of eight domestic bishops who had declined to permit same-sex marriages within their dioceses, as provided for in the 2015 General Convention resolution authorizing same-sex marriage ceremonies. After an emotional and protracted debate, the 2018 General Convention eliminated the bishop’s veto with Resolution B012, specifying that bishops who object to same-sex marriage must refer any such marriages within their dioceses to

another bishop. The seven other bishops have all made a variety of arrangements to comply with the resolution.

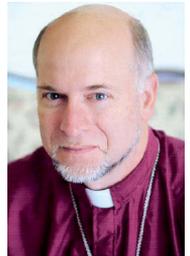
In a November 10, 2018 letter to the diocese, Love stated that after “agonized” consideration he concluded that the canons of the Diocese of Albany should outweigh the resolution of General Convention. “The marriage canon of the Diocese of Albany recognizes and upholds this traditional understanding of marriage, and as a result prohibits its clergy from officiating at or allowing any marriage to take place on any church property other than that between a man and woman. Thus, to carry out the dictates of B012 would be a direct violation of our own diocesan canons.”

On January 11, 2019, Curry issued a “Partial Restriction on Ministry” to Love, forbidding him from participating in any disciplinary process against any member of the clergy involving same-sex marriage. Love said he would abide by the restriction while appealing it.

The Title IV proceedings could continue for months or even years. Title IV is laid out in 40 densely worded pages of poorly organized and internally inconsistent prose. The text is so confusing that the church spent \$300,000 developing a website designed to take users through the process step by step. The website is titleiv.org.

The precedent of former Los Angeles Bishop J. Jon Bruno’s Hearing Panel gives some idea of what to expect. The panel heard three long days of public testimony in an overcrowded hotel conference room in Pasadena. The Title IV process is intended to be confidential, up until the point it is referred to a Hearing Panel.

Bruno eventually was suspended from ordained ministry for three years in August 2017 for his actions in a dis-



Love

pute with a church in his diocese. The suspension was stayed while he appealed, and he retired in December 2017 without missing a day as Bishop of Los Angeles. His suspension was upheld in January 2019.

Nancy Davidge, the public affairs officer for the Church, said no date has been set for Hearing Panel proceedings for Love. The canons prescribe a panel consisting of three bishops, a priest and a lay person. Members of the Hearing Panel will be:

- The Rt. Rev. Jennifer Brooke-Davidson, Episcopal Diocese of West Texas
 - The Rt. Rev. Herman (Holly) Hollerith IV, Resigned, Episcopal Diocese of Southern Virginia
 - The Rt. Rev. W. Nicholas Knisely, Episcopal Diocese of Rhode Island, Hearing Panel President
 - The Rev. Erik Larsen, Episcopal Diocese of Rhode Island
 - Ms. Melissa Perrin, Episcopal Diocese of Chicago
- Knisely, Hollerith and Larsen all served on Bruno's Hearing Panel.

The Bishop of Hurricane Irma Makes Appeals for Dorian Relief

By Kirk Petersen

When the Rt. Rev. Peter Eaton became the Bishop of Southeast Florida, he knew the job would involve leading a diocesan staff, ordaining new priests, and celebrating the Eucharist in every church in the diocese on a rotating basis.

He didn't know he'd be flying to a hurricane-ravaged country to deliver a satellite phone.

This is Eaton's fourth hurricane season as head of the Miami-based diocese, and for the third year out of four he is appealing for funds for hurricane relief. Two years ago, much of the worst damage was in his own diocese, after Hurricane Irma took direct aim at the fragile Florida Keys.

This year, Hurricane Dorian largely spared the diocese — and the entire United States. But it struck Grand

Bahama and the Abacos Islands as a Category 5 storm on September 1, and parked there for more than two days, causing catastrophic damage. At least 50 people were killed, probably many more, and 70,000 are homeless.

The Anglican Diocese of The Bahamas and The Turks and Caicos Islands is one of Southeast Florida's companion dioceses, and many members of Eaton's flock have strong ties to the island country and the rest of the Caribbean. Eaton himself spent much of his childhood in the Caribbean, as his father, a priest, taught at Codrington College in Barbados.

So this is personal.

On Friday, September 6, Eaton flew from Miami to Nassau, the largely undamaged Bahamian capital, which is separated by 90 miles of water to the southwest of the Abacos. He met there

(Continued on next page)



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Hurricane Irma

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with the Rt. Rev. Laish Zane Boyd, whose diocese includes churches on islands scattered around a patch of ocean larger than the state of California.

“I went last Friday to take a satellite phone that is bound for Green Turtle Cay,” Eaton told *TLC*. “A person that I know here in Florida has a lot of relationships in Green Turtle Cay ... and he wanted them to have a satellite phone so that they could communicate.” Green Turtle Cay (pronounced “key”) is one of the dozens of islands of the Abacos.

“I also took the bishop a check with some funds we have begun to raise here,” he said. The bishop’s appeal for the Bahamas began while the storm was still doing its worst. A parish in the diocese offered to match the first \$50,000 raised in the appeal, and Eaton said at mid-month that more than \$330,000 had been raised.

Eaton got on a flight home without leaving the Nassau airport, to avoid any disruption in the efforts to house and feed the refugees flooding into the city. He told Boyd, “I want to go with him when he’s able to enter the Abacos and Grand Bahama, so that I can be a support to him and see for myself and



Eaton



Bahamas Bishop Laish Zane Boyd (left), delivers a satellite phone to Joel Reckley of Saint Peter’s Anglican Church, Green Turtle Cay. Bishop Peter Eaton flew from Miami to Nassau to deliver the phone.

be a better witness for raising support here on the mainland.”

Episcopal Relief & Development has been coordinating efforts with several other dioceses through its U.S. Disaster Program, including Central Florida, South Carolina and Georgia. ER&D is also working with the Anglican Alliance, the relief & development agency of the Anglican Communion.

“Disasters have three phases: rescue, relief and recovery,” said Katie Mears, Senior Director for Episcopal Relief & Development’s US Disaster Program. In the Bahamas, people are still being rescued, and relief efforts will continue for months. Recovery will continue for years.

Eaton said the Florida Keys have not

entirely recovered from Hurricane Irma, which plowed into the Keys on September 10, 2017. The Florida Keys are a string of islands connected by a single highway, stretching 113 miles west and south of the tip of the state, into the Gulf of Mexico.

The Rev. Canon Debra Maconaghey, rector of St. Columba’s in Marathon then and now, has been living with Irma every day for the past two years. Her church escaped serious damage, but the surrounding town was devastated. Marathon is roughly in the center of the Keys, midway between Key Largo and Key West.

“If you actually get off the Overseas Highway and go down the street, there are some streets that look like the hurricane hit yesterday,” she said.

Maconaghey estimated that the Keys as a whole has recovered from about 75% of Irma’s damage. “But the Keys that were the hardest hit? Probably 50%, or maybe even less than that,” she said. “We have people from our parish still living in trailers in their driveways.”

“You have the physical damage, and then you have the psychological damage. You see that is still very close to the surface,” she said, adding that some people felt a need to evacuate ahead of Dorian.

Since the storm, boats have been traveling back and forth from the Keys to the Bahamas with supplies, Maconaghey said. “The general world was so gracious to the Keys. It was a miracle, the amount of help we received. We felt loved, and thought-about, and cared-for,” she said. “We’ve tried to respond in kind to the Bahamas.”



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Australian Diocese Agrees to Delay Same-Sex Marriages

By Mark Michael

Bishop John Parkes of Australia's Diocese of Wangaratta announced September 10 that he will suspend the authorization of same sex marriages, pending a ruling on the matter by the Anglican Church of Australia's Appellate Tribunal. Legislation permitting the marriages had been approved by wide margins at Wangaratta's Diocesan Synod two weeks earlier. The Most Rev. Philip Freier, Australia's primate, responded with an immediate appeal to the tribunal and a clear direction that no marriages should be celebrated until the matter was resolved.

The Wangaratta bishop had earlier announced an intention to officiate September 14 at the marriage of the diocese's archdeacon-emeritus, John Davis, to the Rev. Rob Whalley, a former California Episcopalian. Parkes had ordained Whalley to the diaconate in 2009. While Davis and Whalley's civil marriage has been sealed, a church marriage for the couple has been delayed indefinitely.

Davis and Whalley, who have been partners for twenty years, have been advocating strongly within the diocese for the change since 2017, when same sex marriage became legal in Australia. They told *The Australian Broadcasting Company* that that it was a "privilege" and an "honor to serve as the test case for the issue. "If the tribunal does come together and say there's nothing to see here," Davis said, "then this will be something of huge significance to every diocese across the country."

It is far from clear, though, that the Appellate Tribunal will sanction the Wangaratta decision. The body, which is composed of three bishops and four legal authorities, is summoned at the primate's direction to render judgment on matters that affect the whole church. Freier wrote to all the church's bishops about his decision, describing the Wangaratta legislation as "a significant matter for the national Church" that would "likely give rise to a question under the Constitution on which minds will differ." Freier had previ-

ously promised to take precisely this step if the Wangaratta legislation were approved.

The archbishop also told the bishops that he had written to Bishop Parkes and to Wangaratta's current archdeacon "asking that the service of blessing not be used while the Appellate Tribunal's reference is under consideration." Under the Australian church's canon law, diocesan bishops have the power to veto synodical legislation, and Archbishop Roger Herft exercised this power to quash similar legislation passed by Perth's diocesan synod in 2012 and 2013. Freier does not, however, have the same authority over the actions of other dioceses in his role as primate.

Parkes said he will abide by Freier's direction and will respect the final decision of the Appellate Tribunal. He told *The Australian Broadcasting Company*, "The convention is we respect the institution of the Church. The Primate has asked and we will honour his requests. Although, we won't wait forever."

In an interview with *The Border Times*, Parkes added, "We will give the appellate tribunal a chance to meet and consider and we will be actively involved in presenting our views before the tribunal. I can't for the life of me believe that we won't be able to bless people, but if not, some of us will have to consider our position very carefully."

It is unlikely that Parkes will have time left in his tenure as a bishop to respond to the tribunal's decision. At the conclusion of the diocesan synod, he began an extended leave given in recognition of his long service, and he will only briefly resume his duties in late December, when he will formally resign. If past precedent is a reliable guide, the tribunal will take many months to render a decision.

Attention is now likely to be shifted to a meeting of the Anglican Church of Australia's bishops that Freier has called for November 20 in Melbourne. That meeting will serve as a prelude to next year's special session of the church's General Synod, which had



been previously planned as a time for determining a way forward for the church on this highly contentious issue.

Parkes' willingness to back-track his earlier plans may allow the Australian church to continue with its previous agenda for a gradual process of discernment about the issue, guided by materials prepared by the church's Doctrine Commission and "to resist simple solutions or courses of action."

In a March 2018 agreement all of the church's bishops, including Parkes, had stated, "if we as a church are to change this doctrine to permit same-sex marriage, the appropriate mechanism is through the Constitution and Canons of the Anglican Church of Australia. Bishops should give leadership in demonstrating trust in this framework as the way to move forward together, recognizing that this will require care, patience, and generosity. The bishops commit to working together to manifest and maintain unity, as we together discern the truth."

Freier noted in his letter to the bishops that the General Synod would invite submissions for the tribunal's consideration from across the church on this issue. One of those is surely to come from the large and powerful Diocese of Sydney, a bastion of conservative evangelicalism, which has figured prominently in Anglican realignment movements since 2003.

Sydney's archbishop Glenn Davies strongly condemned the Wangaratta decision, saying in a statement, "The doctrine of our Church is not determined by 67 members of a regional synod in Victoria nor is it changed by what they may purport to authorise. Time and time again, the General

(Continued on next page)

Australia

(Continued from previous page)

Synod has affirmed the biblical view of marriage as the doctrine of our Church. To bless that which is contrary to Scripture cannot, therefore, be permissible under our church law.”

Davies also compared the Wangaratta decision to the Canadian Diocese of New Westminster’s 2003 decision to authorize same-sex blessings. He wrote, “It is now universally acknowledged that those events were the beginning of the ‘tear in the fabric of the Anglican Communion’ To claim the authority of our Church to carry out a service of blessing contrary to the biblical view of marriage and the doctrine of our Church will certainly fracture the Anglican Church of Australia.”

Sydney is the largest of the Australian church’s 22 dioceses. It has shown growth, even as the more rural dioceses, like Wangaratta, have consistently declined and aged. Bishop Parkes seems to assume that Australian Anglicanism will gradually follow the liberalizing trajectory of the wider culture on these issues. But as church statistician David Goodhew has pointed out, Sydney’s brand of Anglicanism seems poised to dominate the Aus-

tralian church’s future, as over half of Australian Anglican clergy under 40 serve in its churches.

VTS Breaks Ground in Funding Reparations

By Kirk Petersen

While the wheels of government slowly turn in the debate over reparations for slavery, Virginia Theological Seminary is taking matters into its own hands, becoming one of the first organizations of any kind to commit funds to reparations.

VTS announced September 5 it is creating a \$1.7 million endowment that will fund “activities and programs that promote justice and inclusion,” including “the particular needs of any descendants of enslaved persons that worked at the Seminary.”

“While the seminary itself didn’t own slaves, many of the early professors did,” said Curtis Prather, the seminary’s director of communications. “At least one of our buildings was built by slaves. ... We have recognized this over the years.”

“We wanted to make a significant start, and try to plant a seed to move in the direction of reparations,” said the Rev. Joseph Thompson, PhD, the director of the Office of Multicultural

Ministries, which will administer the fund. He said the fund is expected to generate about \$70,000 annually.

Prather and Thompson both spoke by phone with *TLC* from their offices in Aspinwall Hall, the main administration building — and the one building the seminary knows for certain was built by slaves, who were owned by the contractors.

The Alexandria-based seminary, the largest of 10 Episcopal seminaries in the United States, has been frank about its own history with slavery.

“Virginia Theological Seminary recognizes that enslaved persons worked on the campus, and that even after slavery ended, VTS participated in segregation. VTS recognizes that we must start to repair the material consequences of our sin in the past,” the announcement said.

In an October 2018 letter to the seminary community, the Very Rev. Ian S. Markham, Ph.D., dean and president of VTS, said that prior to Emancipation, the majority of faculty members owned slaves. “slavery is a deep evil — an evil that requires repentance and a commitment to radically different future. In these respects, we are committed to change,” he wrote.

With this announcement, VTS can claim a leadership status in the reparations movement.

Earlier this year, students at Georgetown University voted in essence to tax themselves, approving a student fee of \$27.20 per semester to fund reparations, generating about \$400,000 a year from a much larger institution. The amount was chosen because Georgetown sold 272 slaves in 1838.

Prather and Thompson said they did not know how VTS chose the figure of \$1.7 million for the VTS endowment. Last year, VTS had 188 students, according to the Association of Theological Schools, while Georgetown had about 18,000.

At the time of the Georgetown announcement, a Politico headline read, “This Could Be the First Slavery Reparations Policy in America.” Neither Thompson nor Prather were aware of any other institutions that had established a fund for reparations, although Thompson said he believed



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the Diocese of Maryland had done something along those lines.

At its 2016 annual convention, the Diocese of Maryland resolved to give “an amount equivalent to at least ten percent of the assets of its unrestricted investment funds to the diocesan chapter of the Union of Black Episcopalians (UBE) as an initial act of reparation.”

While students played a leading role in creating the reparation fund at Georgetown University, at VTS the discussion was driven by the seminary leadership. “It goes back at least to 2009, when our dean and president... Ian Markham, issued an apology on behalf of the seminary for having participated in slavery, and for racism going forward after the institution of slavery,” Thompson said.

VTS did not admit its first black students until 1951. In 1953, the school merged with the Bishop Payne Divinity School, an African-American facility 120 miles to the south in Petersburg, Virginia. Thompson said Bishop Payne was started in the late 1800s precisely because VTS and other seminaries would not admit African-Americans.

Former Massachusetts Rector Charged with Child Pornography

By Mark Michael

The Rev. Gregory Lisby, an Episcopal priest who was working as a kindergarten teacher, was arrested September 12 on charges of possessing child pornography. FBI agents raided the Worcester, Mass. rectory that Lisby shares with his husband, the Rev. Timothy Burger, after discovering numerous pornographic images and videos in a digital account believed to be in Lisby’s name. According to court documents, he was charged with one count of possession of child pornography, a crime that carries a maximum sentence of 20 years in federal prison.

Lisby was arraigned in federal court in Boston the next day, and federal prosecutors argued against releasing him, claiming that the priest would be a flight risk and a danger to the com-

munity. The judge concurred, and Lisby will be held at least until his next court appearance in late September.

The FBI acted on a December 2018 tip from Microsoft to launch its investigation, tracing a file of digital images back to an IP address at the rectory of St. Luke’s Episcopal Church in Worcester, Mass. According to court documents, they obtained a search warrant on Wednesday giving them permission to search and seize all electronic devices and digital files connected to Lisby. So far, they have uncovered at least 180 images and 15 videos on an iPad, which purportedly show boys aged 8 to 12 engaging in sex acts.

Lisby resigned from his job as a kindergarten teacher at the Morgan School in Holyoke, Mass. just hours after the FBI raid. In an email to an unidentified school official, he wrote, “Last night, I was accused of an awful crime that could put our Holyoke children in harms way.” He had only been working at the school since August. Lisby’s Linked-In profile indicated that he had worked as a preschool teacher, an instructional aid and a substitute teacher at a number of Worcester-area schools over the past year and a half. He had previously served churches in Massachusetts, New Jersey, and Rhode Island.

The Rt. Rev. Douglas Fisher, Bishop of Western Massachusetts broke the news of Lisby’s arrest in a pastoral letter sent to all congregations under his care. Fisher noted that he had suspended Lisby from his position as rector of All Saints Episcopal Church in Worcester in 2018 for “an inappropriate relationship with an adult that did not involve sexual contact.” He also

said that he was banning Lisby from all Episcopal Church property and that he would be subject to a canonical disciplinary investigation.

Fisher said of the diocesan investigation into Lisby’s previous wrongdoing, “nothing I discovered during the disciplinary process gave me any reason to believe he was a danger to children.” He added, “I have no reason to believe that children in our diocese have been victimized in this situation. Yet, I know that children whose images appear in pornography are heinously abused and violated by the adults who produce and consume it. This reality breaks my heart.”

Welby Consoles Persecuted Church

Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby completed a 10-day visit to Sri Lanka and India in early September, according to reports from *Anglican Communion News Service*. He began his time in South Asia with a time of prayer at one of the three Sri Lankan churches bombed by extremists last Easter Sunday. He also prostrated himself in humble atonement at an infamous massacre site in Northwestern India, offering an unqualified apology for one of the greatest atrocities of British colonial rule.

The archbishop visited St. Sebastian’s, a seaside Roman Catholic church, and knelt on the pockmarked site where the suicide bomber had detonated his explosives. Pointing to a nearby statue of the risen Christ

(Continued on next page)



We practice in Title IV of the Constitution and Canons of the Episcopal Church regarding accountability and ecclesiastic discipline, leading negotiations, advising and navigating charges against clergy related to canonical offenses.

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Welby

(Continued from previous page)

stained with the blood of the bombing victims, he said,

“When I see this statue, this image of Christ covered with the blood of the martyrs; I know by that the courage, your faith and your love. I see the true Christ. Not the Christ who is distant and clean but the Christ who is cov-

ered his own and our blood.”

ACNS’s Rachel Farmer reported that Welby laid a wreath of white roses at a plaque bearing the names of those killed in the bombing. He also praised the gracious restraint demonstrated by the nation’s Christian leaders in their response to the terrorist attack:

“To come before you, I am almost without words; for I can only say thank you to the Christians of Sri Lanka. We know that the Christ who on the cross said, ‘Father forgive,’

knows our anger, your pain, your sorrow. And we know that through his resurrection even that anger and sorrow and pain will be transformed in purity to hope.”

After meeting with church leaders in various places throughout North and South India, Welby made a highly-publicized visit to Jallianwala Bagh, where hundreds of unarmed protesters were killed by British troops in an infamous 1919 attack. The massacre was a crucial catalyst for unifying India in opposition to British rule, and the lack of a direct apology by British officials has been a longstanding grievance for many Indians. The archbishop had indicated that he would address the tragedy in its centenary year during the announcement of plans for his visit last month.

Welby reflected on the significance of the site in an interview with *The Times of India*, the nation’s main English-language daily, on the eve of the visit, saying:

“I wish to express shame and sorrow, for it is recognition of the horrible reality of what we, the British, did there, and there were doubtless believing Christians involved, in the British troops. Imperialism with its absolute power damages the society over which it rules; in fact, it damages everyone. Jallianwala Bagh is a classic example of the huge shame and damage done to our reputation and our history.”

The archbishop visited the spot on Wednesday, accompanied by a large group of Indian church leaders and pilgrims. He lay prostrate on the ground for a time before the monument commemorating the event, and then addressed the crowd, saying:

“Coming here arouses a sense of profound shame at what happened in this place. It is one of a number of deep stains on British history. The pain and grief that has transcended the generations since must never be dismissed or denied. ... We have a great responsibility to not just lament this horrific massacre, but most importantly to learn from it in a way that changes our actions. ... The past must be learned from so nothing like this ever happens again.”

‘GOD WILLS FELLOWSHIP’:

LAMBETH CONFERENCE 1920 AND THE ECUMENICAL VOCATION OF ANGLICANISM

OCT 2–3, 2019 | LAMBETH PALACE, LONDON

Meeting in the aftermath of the Great War, the bishops who convened at Lambeth Palace in 1920 felt themselves ‘drawn by a Power greater than themselves to a general agreement’ regarding a new approach to Christian unity.



In preparation for the next Lambeth Conference, this conference will review the legacy of 1920 and ask what the ecumenical vocation of Anglicanism might be today.

The colloquium will be preceded by a seminar at Lambeth Palace on Wednesday 2nd October for students of Anglican theology, including seminarians, and bishops and other clergy of the Anglican Communion.



FEATURED SPEAKERS

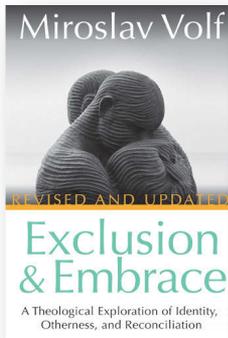
Speakers include: *Ephraim Radner, Charlotte Methuen, John Bauerschmidt, Michael Root, Jeremy Worthen, Jamie Hawkey, Christopher Wells, Jeremiah Yang, Hannah Matis, Joseph Kindera, Jane Williams, Christopher Cocksworth, and Mark MacDonald.*

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Resources that challenge scholars, students, pastors, church leaders, and life-long learners to faithful scholarship and transformative practices.



NEW! *Exclusion and Embrace, Revised and Updated*

Miroslav Volf

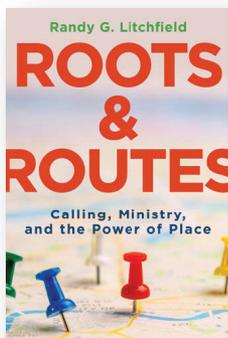
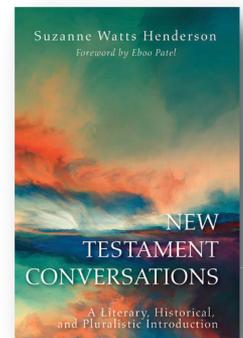
Otherness, the simple fact of being different in some way, has come to be defined as in and of itself evil. Author Miroslav Volf contends that if the healing word of the gospel is to be heard today, Christian theology must find ways of speaking that address the hatred of the other. Reaching back to the New Testament metaphor of salvation as reconciliation, Volf proposes the idea of embrace as a theological response to the problem of exclusion. In the book's first edition, Volf analyzed the civil war and "ethnic cleansing" in the former Yugoslavia. He readily found other examples of cultural, ethnic, and racial conflict to illustrate his points. Given the epidemic of terror and massive refugee suffering throughout the world that has transpired in recent years, Volf revised *Exclusion and Embrace* to account for the evolving dynamics of inter-ethnic and international strife.

Miroslav Volf is Professor of Theology at Yale Divinity School and Director of the Yale Center for Faith and Culture.

NEW! *New Testament Conversations: A Literary, Historical, and Pluralistic Introduction*

Students today bring to the study of the New Testament an increasing sense that its message, while dominant in the Western world for millennia, is now just one voice among many religious and philosophical options. In this book, students encounter the New Testament in relation to the wider landscape of sacred traditions—both ancient and contemporary. The New Testament emerges as a lively conversation partner in the human quest for meaning and purpose.

Suzanne Watts Henderson is Professor of Philosophy and Religion and Dean of the Belk Chapel at Queens University of Charlotte.



Roots and Routes: Calling, Ministry, and the Power of Place

Randy G. Litchfield

This fresh look at the perennial question of vocation combines theological reflection on the development of personal spiritual identity with a thoughtful look at the significant dimension of place – how the realities of our contexts call for particular responses to vocation in specific times and places. It helps readers claim a rich vocational imagination for recognizing God's ongoing call to partnership in the specific, concrete locales of ministry.

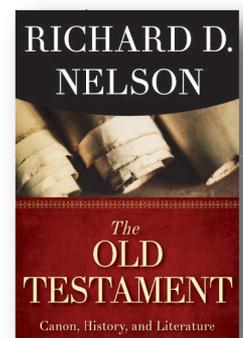
Randy G. Litchfield is Professor of Christian Education at Methodist Theological School in Ohio.

The Old Testament: Canon, History, and Literature

Richard D. Nelson

This book is a comprehensive introduction to the Old Testament designed to equip readers with the knowledge and skills needed to read, interpret, and benefit from the Old Testament in their own context. Using scholarly consensus and current research with numerous examples, this book helps prepare students for advanced courses related to exegesis, individual books, and special topics.

Richard D. Nelson is professor emeritus of Biblical Hebrew and Old Testament Interpretation at Perkins School of Theology, Southern Methodist University.



Order of Naucratus Nets Big Catch for the Needy

By Mark Michael

Christian Baron and Rod Clark believe the Holy Spirit was up to something good one hot Texas night when they cracked open cold beers and kicked back on the porch. The two were then students at the Seminary of the Southwest in Austin, and had been invited to go on a wild pig hunt the next day. “In Texas, the pigs are a nuisance,” Baron explained. “Ranchers just throw them to the buzzards.” That just didn’t sit right with Baron and Clark, who called up Episcopal Migration Ministries to see if they would be willing to take the game and distribute it to people in their care.

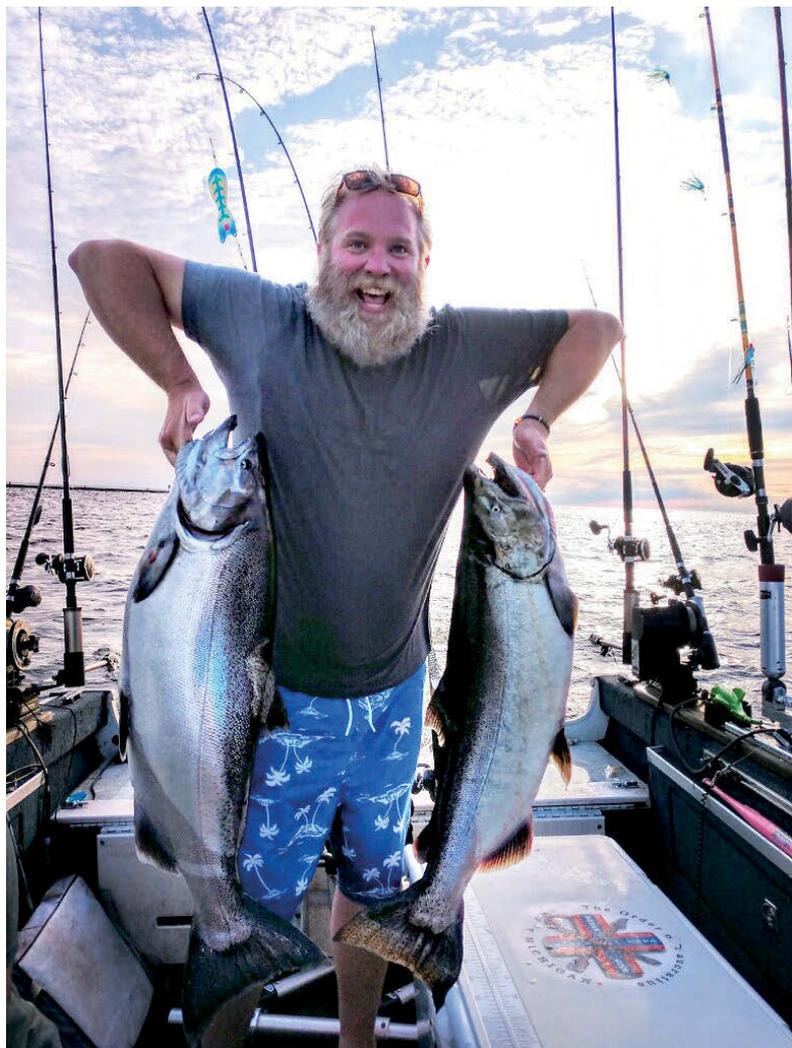
They didn’t get any pigs that day. But a year later, in 2014, when both were serving as curates in small towns — Baron in Holland, Mich. and Clark in Harlingen, Texas — they returned to the old idea. This time, they decided to involve some outdoors-loving congregants in starting a new ministry to feed the hungry with fresh fish and game.

Five years later, the Order of Naucratus has six local chapters in Texas and two in Michigan, and Clark and Baron feel they are barely started. Collectively the ministries are distributing tens of thousands of pounds of fresh, wild-harvested fish and venison to food pantries and soup kitchens in their local communities

The group is named for a fourth-century hermit from Asia Minor, the brother of Sts. Basil the Great, Gregory of Nyssa and Macrina. St. Naucratus left his life as an acclaimed public orator to live in solitude in the wilderness. A talented hunter and angler, he fed the poor of the region from what he caught and killed, and met his own death on a fishing expedition.

Members of the order commit to a rule of life, which includes commitment to prayer, conservation of natural resources and “giving a significant share of their harvest to those who are hungry.” In the Michigan chapters by Baron the focus is mostly on angling, especially on processing fish donated by participants in big fishing tournaments on Lake Michigan (though the highway patrol asks for their help in butchering roadkill deer). The Texas chapters founded by Clark have a broader scope of action, including multi-day fishing and hunting retreats, hunting safety training for kids, and a weekly feeding ministry that serves both asylum seekers and border patrol agents in Mission, Tex., the border town where he now serves.

Baron spoke to *TLC* the day after the Order had finished its work at the Big Red Classic fishing tournament in Holland, Mich. For four days in a row, volunteers had turned up to skin and filet 10 120-gallon coolers of salmon and trout donated by tournament participants. Baron estimated the



Christian Baron, cofounder of the Order of Naucratus

total haul at 10,000 pounds of “God-grown protein.” The tournament participants, he said, were delighted to be able to share their catch with the needy, and he’s gotten pretty handy with a knife, and claims he can now process a fresh-caught fish in three minutes flat.

Baron said that most of his crew are not actually members of St. Philip’s, the congregation he serves with his wife in Beulah, Mich., but his fishing buddies. That doesn’t concern him so much, though. “Anglers like to give back, to use their gifts for something good. Any time that a human being can use their gifts and talents to reach out and help others, that is close enough to the Church’s mission for me.”

Local people are really grateful to receive the fresh catch, which conjures up memories of happier times for many of them. “They say, ‘I grew up eating fish, my parents fished.’ But to catch salmon nowadays you need to have a boat and equipment. I hate to say it, but it’s a rich person’s sport. Most people can’t afford it at \$12 a pound in the store.”

Deer hunting is a larger focus for the Texas chapters that Clark has set up, in a part of the country where it is a valued part of the culture. When Clark was serving at St. Alban’s Church in Harlingen, Texas, they actually butchered dozens

of deer in the church kitchen before hauling it off to local food pantries. They now work with Trinity Oaks, a local nonprofit that processes the venison for them. Naucratus volunteers help to distribute it to local organizations—15,000 pounds of wild game last year.

Clark also hosts multi-day hunting and fishing retreats a few times a year. Each begins with teaching about hunting and fishing as part of God's care of creation, in a system "that requires the taking of life for all life to prosper and flourish." Clark said he often analogizes hunting to the fourfold pattern of the Eucharistic prayer. "Take, bless, break, and give. That's also what we do when we hunt and fish, when we do it right. The unique part of that, for us, is the blessing."

His retreats include daily times for prayer (using cards made to fit in a hunting license holder). The groups enjoy a few days in the field, and fellowship around the campfire at night. All the fish and deer they harvest are donated back to those in need. Each retreat closes with an outdoor Eucharist. Clark even has a camo stole

Both Baron and Clark are excited about the way that the Order of Naucratus helps the church to connect with a segment of the population that doesn't always feel at home in the Episcopal Church. "Part of the dream was . . . the Episcopal Church often didn't look like us, guys from rural areas, who grew up hunting and fishing, spending time outdoors. A lot of the folks in this church have not done these things. It's not that

we want to fill the pews with fishermen, but that would be pretty nice."

Clark's current parish, St. Peter and St. Paul, in Mission, Texas, is located just outside McAllen, one of the busiest crossing spots along the U. S.-Mexico border. His Order of Naucratus chapter is serving people on both sides of this contentious issue with venison breakfast sausage from the deer they harvest on their retreats. They fry up enough of it to make 600-800 breakfast tacos every Tuesday morning, and take them to distribute to asylum seekers at a local detention center. A few times a year they also prepare big breakfasts for border patrol staff, who have a command center nearby.

The order does face some challenges. Baron is working to help draft a local ordinance that would make it clear that fish are also covered under a Michigan law that allows the donation of home-processed donated game. He's also had to contend with a few vegetarian naysayers among his fellow clerics online, who claim "that no endeavor to kill animals will ever be a ministry in God's Church."

Generally, though, the two are delighted to be part of a ministry that is touching many lives in authentic, culturally-rooted ways, and they would love to see it expand to new places. Clark explained, "Men will say, 'I feel closer to God out in the woods or out on the water than I do sitting in a pew. Let's make this a ministry, something that draws you closer to God and to your neighbors.'" □

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‘In Him All Things Hold Together’

A Theological Meditation for Aspiring Christian Universities

By Robert J. Dean

A theological meditation shared with the faculty of Providence University College at the opening faculty meeting of the current academic year. This essay first appeared on Covenant, the weblog of THE LIVING CHURCH, on September 16.

Our family returned to Manitoba this past Sunday night after spending a few weeks visiting friends and family in Southern Ontario. Since my wife tends to get carsick when she is a passenger on long drives, she prefers to do the majority of the driving. The result is that in between doling out snacks and attempting to arbitrate ongoing territorial disputes in the back seat, I had a lot of time to read over the course of our forty plus hours in the car. Arthur Holmes’s book, *The Idea of a Christian College*, was the unofficial fifth member of our family as we travelled through Minnesota and Wisconsin a few weeks ago on our way to Ontario. Holmes taught philosophy for many years at Wheaton College and was an influential contributor to many conversations surrounding Christian higher education.

Near the beginning of the book, Holmes lays out his understanding of the challenge facing Christian educators. He writes: “We face a generation of students for whom morality has lost its moorings, for whom education has lost its attraction. Add to this the economic crunch on small colleges and it becomes overwhelmingly obvious that we need to get down to basics, to the underlying and central reason for existing at all. Otherwise the student and the college may both lapse in ‘bad faith’ into

faceless anonymity of people and places without distinctive meaning and become mere statistics in the educational almanac” (4).

Holmes then goes on to sketch out some of the traps that Christian universities get caught in as they attempt to distinguish themselves from other institutions. They may draw attention to their smaller class sizes, to the personal care that professors exhibit for students, to the social and extracurricular benefits of attending the institution. These are certainly all good things in and of themselves that add value to the student experience, but they are not what sets apart a Christian university. Rather, Holmes argues, the distinction of the Christian university “should be an education that cultivates the creative and active integration of faith and learning, of faith and culture” (6).

Throughout history, Christians have debated how to integrate faith and learning. The textbooks often present two figures from the second century as representatives of the opposing poles of the debate. The first is Justin Martyr, a philosopher who was converted to the Christian faith. His writing represents one of the earliest attempts to place Christianity on an equal footing with the Greek philosophy of antiquity that characterized the educated elite in the Hellenistic world. Justin is known as the father of the apologists and his outlook is perhaps best encapsulated by his saying, “whatever things were rightly said among all men are property of us Christians” (*Second Apology*, 13.4). Justin leaned into the truth of Colossians 1:15-17: “Jesus is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation; for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers — all things

have been created through him and for him. He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together.”

If Justin represents the conviction that the Christian faith and the best of pagan learning are allies, the figure who is often depicted as standing across the aisle from him is the lawyer turned theologian, Tertullian of Carthage. Tertullian was concerned that the integration of Greek philosophy into Christian learning opened the door to all sorts of heretical misconstruals of the Christian faith. In a celebrated rhetorical barb, he once asked, “What does Athens have to do with Jerusalem? What does the Academy have to do with the Church?” (*Prescription Against Heretics*, 1.7). If Justin was a Colossians 1 kind of fellow, then perhaps we could say that Tertullian found his hermeneutical home in Colossians 2:8: “See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the universe, and not according to Christ.” Christopher Seitz paraphrases the danger that Paul is warning about with the following terse formulation: “In sum, it is intellectual idolatry.”

It is these two figures, Justin and Tertullian, who are often called upon to represent these two opposing positions on the question of the integration of faith and learning. However, as is often the case, the reality of the situation is much more complicated and nuanced than what is presented in the textbooks. While Tertullian could pose the question, “What does Athens have to do with Jerusalem?” he did not just go around quoting Bible verses. Rather, he drew on his training in rhetoric, philosophy, and law to coin close to one thousand brand new theological terms. Some of which, like *Trinity*, remain with us to this day. On the other hand, Justin was no mere cultural conformist. After all, he was not born with the surname “Martyr”! Justin was beheaded for refusing to sacrifice to the gods in obedience to the Emperor. He clearly knew that there was a limit to what could be appropriated from the culture for the sake of Christ.

For that matter, neither was the author of Colossians intellectually divided. Chapter 1, verses 15-17 and chapter 2, verse 8, are, after all, part of the same letter. In between them, we find these verses at the beginning of chapter 2: “For I want you to know how much I am struggling for you, and for those in Laodicea, and for all who have not seen me face to face. I want their hearts to be encouraged and united in love, so that they may have all the riches of assured understanding and have the knowledge of God’s mystery, that is, Christ himself, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.”

I think this is an important passage for us, because, on the one hand it reaffirms the assertion of the first chapter of Colossians that everything hangs together in Christ. It was this conception of the coherence of all truth in the person of Christ that led to the founding of the first universities in the Middle Ages. And it is this conviction that stands in stark relief to the fragmentation that has come to characterize the modern, secular univer-

sity, where departments and disciplines wage intramural skirmishes for dollars and acolytes, but there is no shared conception of how everything fits together. Clark Kerr, a former president of the University of California, coined the term “multiversity” to describe the state of these contemporary institutions of higher education.

Without any unifying conception of how the disciplines fit together or what purpose they serve, the modern secular university has become driven by pragmatic concerns and fallen captive to the agendas of the demanding taskmasters of the nation state and the globalized economy, with a pinch of the virtue-signaling of identity politics thrown in for good measure.

So Colossians then presents us with a vision of the unity of reality in the person of Christ. But the truth of the cosmos is not given to us in Christ in the form of an encyclopedia that can be immediately downloaded from the school network. Christ truly is the key that unlocks the mystery of creation, but, we are told, all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are “hidden” in him. In other words, figuring out how reality coheres in the image of the invisible God requires the ongoing work of intellectual discovery and communal discernment. It is the work of a community because no one person, or for that matter no one discipline, holds a monopoly on the truth. Rather it is Christ who holds a monopoly on the disciplines. The work of discernment to which we are called necessitates interdisciplinary conversation, requiring humility, patience, stepping out of our comfort zones, and perhaps even transgressing the imaginaries imposed by disciplines that have been forged apart from the knowledge of Christ.

The call to realize our identity as a Christian university is a great challenge, but it is also liberating, because it means that we don’t need to compete with the publicly-funded, provincial universities. This is good news, because we simply do not have the economic, infrastructural, and even personal resources to do the public research university thing better than they do it. But — and here’s where I’ve saved my most audacious claim for last — in the person of Christ and in the powerful presence of the Spirit who leads God’s people into all truth, we do have the potential to become something that public, secular universities cannot be: a university in the true sense of the word, united in the *uni veritas*, the one or whole truth that holds together in the living Christ.

There’s no doubt this is quite the adventure. The ascent is challenging and the air gets thinner the further you go. But if we can make it to the summit, think of the view!

May God bless you in the coming academic year.

Robert J. Dean (Th.D., Wycliffe College & University of Toronto) is Associate Professor of Theology and Ethics at Providence Theological Seminary in Otterburne, Manitoba. He is an ordained minister in the Presbyterian Church in Canada. Robert is the author of several books, the most recent being a collaboration with Stanley Hauerwas entitled Minding the Web.

2019 Winners

TLC's tenth annual Student Essays in Christian Wisdom competition garnered a breadth of submissions from students at nine different seminaries and theological colleges across the United States and Canada.

We are pleased to publish in this issue the essay that took first place: "Desire, Discontent, and Identity in the *Totus Christus*: A Synthetic Use of Sarah Coakley and Rowan Williams" by Jonathan Jameson. Jameson wrote his essay while studying for the Master of Theological Studies at Nashotah House Theological Seminary. Since graduating from Nashotah last spring, he is continuing his studies at the Montreal Diocesan



Tuttle



Bourne

Theological Seminary-McGill University. Jameson is also an aspirant for holy orders in the Diocese of Central Florida and a musician.

Second place went to Eric Tuttle (Princeton Theological Seminary, now completing an Anglican year at General Theological Seminary as a postulant from the Diocese of New Jersey) for his essay "Richard Hooker and the Historic Episcopate." Third place went to Amanda Bourne (a senior at Virginia Theological Seminary and candidate for holy orders in the Diocese of Virginia) for her essay "Sarah Coakley, the Trinity, and the Kenotic Vulnerability of Language."

Thanks to our judges, who, as always, read the essays blindly: Dr. Grace Sears (The Order of the Daughters of the King), Dr. Muthuraj Swamy (Cambridge Centre for Christianity Worldwide), and TLC's Fr. Mark Michael and Dr. Christopher Wells.

DESIRE, DISCONTENT, AND IDENTITY IN THE *TOTUS CHRISTUS*:

A Synthetic Use of Sarah Coakley and Rowan Williams

By Jonathan Jameson

Both Church and culture seem perplexed by desire and what it says about us as human beings. Amidst the increasing freedom to identify with our desires, there remains the perpetual problem of insatiety, coupled with the increasing isolation of a digitalized age. Our cultural and religious impulses become blurred as we seek always a little more, in our hopes that we might finally quiet our ontological restlessness. Our understanding of desire, to be genuine, must be complexified — not by making it more obscure, but by showing its relation to an endless End.

In this essay, I will briefly explore how the works of Sarah Coakley and Rowan Williams might inform our understanding of desire and its relation to God. While Coakley and Williams highlight different aspects of this relation, they are agreed in identifying God as *the end of desire*.

Sexual Desire Part I

Desire certainly cannot be reduced to sex, but there is something about sex that makes it necessary to any discussion of the topic of desire. Williams, in his essay "The Body's Grace," writes,

Thinking about sexuality in its fullest implications involves thinking about entering into a sense of oneself *beyond* the customary imagined barrier between the "inner" and the "outer," the private and the shared. We are led into the knowledge that our identity is being made in the relations of bodies, not by the private exercise of will or fantasy: we belong with and to each other, not to our "private" selves (as Paul said of mutual sexual commitment), and yet are not instruments for each other's gratification.ⁱ

In this sense, the most basic reality of our sexuality is that it reveals the dimensions and limits of the self. Our

sexual desire frustrates our attempts at dualistic compartmentalization and we are naggingly reminded in our urges that the cultural pressure towards autonomy cannot lead to happiness and human flourishing.

In exploring desire, a Christian must also deal with the theological reality of the fall, and the resulting disorder that has followed. There is a theological rule that is important here: something can only be as bad as its corollary goodness, as evil is only a twisting of the good. A squirrel may steal your trash but will not become Mussolini.ⁱⁱ It seems to be at least partially because of this principle that the Christian Church has been concerned to guard sexuality — in its capacity for good and evil — with such attention.ⁱⁱⁱ The problem that has arisen in much of modern Christian sexual morality is that the rules have often been retained without articulating the context. Disorder, instead of being a fallen reality that *all* must deal with, has often become a tool for the demonization and oppression of those outside the bounds of accepted sexual practice.



Jameson

I have no space here for an argument over whether those bounds need to be kept or loosened. Instead, I feel that a more pressing concern is to broaden our acknowledgement of the disorder *within ourselves*. Just because one has been married within the traditional bounds of the Church does not mean that their fallen disorder has been resolved or finally healed — marriage does not offer a “premature closure” to our desiring selves.^{iv} And the effects of ignoring this reality, far from being sanctioned by God, can be deeply destructive (rape within marriage being one glaringly horrific example). As Coakley urges, we must commit to a lifelong process of *askesis* when it comes to our desires, in whatever state we find ourselves in.^v While much more could be said about disorder, we must also deal with what Coakley calls the “precious clue” that lies within our sexual desire.

Sexual Desire Part II

One emphasis in Coakley is to broaden our understanding of erotic desire. She elucidates the reductionist stance as such:

When people talk about ‘sex’ and ‘sexuality’ today, they often presume that the first and obvious point of reference is sexual intercourse or other genital acts... The presumption, then, that *physiological* desires and urges are basic and fundamental in the sexual realm; and to this is often added a second presumption: that unsatisfied (physical) sexual desire is a necessarily harmful and ‘unnatural’ state.^{vi}

To this she adds that the popular fear of unsatisfied physical desire and the suggestion of its practical “impossibility,” often accredited to a certain Freudianism, is not quite where Freud himself ended up. Even he admitted that to live in social harmony we must all accept a certain “sublimation” of our physical urges — the alternative is chaos.^{vii}

But Coakley pushes beyond this and attributes a teleology to our sexual desire. It is, she suggests, our desire for God that is “basic,” while sex is the “precious clue that tugs at

the heart, reminding the human soul — however dimly — of its created source.”^{viii} Within this framework we might better situate singleness and celibacy — most profoundly that of Jesus. The Church has declared that in Jesus there is a *full* humanity, not a spiritualized or sterilized humanity. Therefore, we may assume that sexual desire was not foreign to the humanity of Jesus. The difference is not that of capacity or makeup, but of proper order. Jesus’ singleness was not a condemnation of physical intimacy or sexuality; instead, in Christ we see the perfect union of desire with God. In this case, to move from a complete and total union to a sort of exclusive sub-union would be regressive, if not impossible.^{ix}

The tendency to be squeamish about the physical realities of Jesus’ life expose our latent dualistic neuroses. In conversations that I have had about the connection between our desire for God and sexual desire, one thing I’ve noticed is that though people may be willing to attribute a vague teleology to our sexual desire, the sexual act seems to lie outside of this. The grunting and tangling of naked bodies is seemingly at odds with how we imagine “pure” desire. While I am not trying to suggest, as some have attempted, that sexual activity is some essential path towards union with God, I would argue that it is *not* these bodily realities that led Jesus to a life of singleness. In Jesus, the fullness of divinity and the fullness of humanity dwelt together, and that was not at odds with basic human acts like eating and excreting.^x We do not need to hide from our bodies to be holy. The meeting of skin with skin and the offering of oneself to the other can be a genuine *signum*.^{xi} In this light, Jesus’ singleness was not a repudiation of bodily reality, but simply an inability to retreat from *res* to *signum*.

Discontent and Sacramental Hope

Leaning on Augustine, Williams takes on modern discontent and offers it something quite shocking: the “dead Christ.”^{xii} To us moderns, living lives characterized by habitual consumption, seemingly convinced that we are

“almost there” when it comes to fulfillment and satisfaction, this is paradoxically shown as *hope*. To the “power of positive thinking” and the false hope that we might find ourselves if we only had a little *more* — more money, fame, success, sex, holiness — Williams reminds us that we must not rush out of the tomb, for whatever we “make” of ourselves is not finally true. We must wait for the “unsettling absence” that pervades our search for both pleasure and rest. And there, in that “erotic absence,” God shows himself to be “the meaning that is not said or embodied in any of the meanings of the material world.”^{xiii}

In this somewhat severe reconstruction of desire, we are invited to relinquish control, to find ourselves as inescapably *contingent* creatures. Once in relationship, we can begin to make sense of what *sin* might be: a turning in on ourselves, out of relationship with God and our neighbor, obscuring the telos of our desire. In this disorder, we are moving towards an unmaking of ourselves. This twisted desire becomes a means of endlessly consuming — others, ideas, spirituality, food, sex, and so on. Here we lose any capacity to truly love. Williams writes, “We enslave ourselves to objects of desire that pretend to a finality and all-embracingness that they cannot have.”^{xiv}

Instead, Williams reminds us of Augustine’s call to love *humaniter*, or humanly. And part of that process is properly “using” the other; not bestowing upon them the impossible demand of being God, of being a *final* end. In excusing our friends and lovers from *being God*, we are in turn able to enjoy them in their “finite otherness” that is a *signum* of the endless beauty of the Ultimate Other.

Identity and the *Totus Christus*

It’s easy in our culture of “identity politics” and social media to take a self-satisfied, critical view of our age’s present confusion over the self. It may be true to acknowledge the commodification of pre-packaged “identities” sold as “individualism” or the potential damage that a “digitalized” life

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Student Essay

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might wreak on actual interpersonal relations, but a simple naming of these problems does not get to the core of the issue. As Augustine shows us, it is not an exclusively postmodern problem to be perplexed by oneself. The problem lies not in these cultural side effects, but in the assumption that we might finally make sense of ourselves, by ourselves.

Here is where one comes to the unavoidable necessity of grace. As Williams notes, we cannot make the links that make sense of our lives.^{xvi} We cannot rectify the absolute incomprehensibility of the “bizarre and ambiguous” in the story of who we are. Any attempt to autonomously “finalize” an identity is, to put it bluntly, *doomed*. Doomed, first because of our relation to time,^{xvii} and finally because of our ineradicably relational nature. Our identity is dependent on a relational contingency — both with others and with God, the final identifier. Maybe the discussion over nature and grace — high or low

anthropology — is missing this deeper, yet simpler reality of a *contingent anthropology*. Here we see that grace is the mechanism used by the “divine reader” to patch together our otherwise incomprehensible lives, to “name” us.^{xviii} And this “patching” is not finally a making of a “whole” autonomous person; instead, it is a patching together of our lives with one another’s lives into a greater whole, in which we are a part — a joining to a new “body,” yet without a blurring of our uniqueness. This true “body” that offers a dynamic (yet unfinished) “wholeness” is, of course, the body of Christ, the *totus Christus*.^{xix}

In our submission to a “body” that is ours, yet not exclusively so, we can disabuse ourselves of the fantasy that we might be able to establish a final “satisfying” identity as an “individual.” Instead, we are free to offer the whole of who we are to God, and in God to one another, knowing that, as Coakley suggests, we are in for a “long haul” of personal, even erotic, purification — not an eradication of our desiring selves, but a lifelong transfiguration of desire that makes possible a growth into

“infinite delight.”^{xx}

Likewise, for a Church that is ever-tempted to make its “home” in the power structures of politics and the nation-state, we are reminded that we are not invited to “settle in” in any final way; and for a society that is becoming continually more isolated, we are instead invited to participate in the inescapably *corporate* journey into God’s endlessness.

ⁱ Rowan Williams, “The Body’s Grace,” in *Theology and Sexuality: Classic and Contemporary Readings*, ed. Eugene F. Rogers (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2002), 317.

ⁱⁱ Victor Lee Austin has a clever exposition on the similarities and differences between good apples, good socks, and good people in *Christian Ethics: A Guide for the Perplexed* (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2012), 67-69.

ⁱⁱⁱ There were, of course, cultural and familial concerns as well.

^{iv} Rowan Williams, *On Augustine* (London: Bloomsbury, 2016), 47.

^v Sarah Coakley, *God, Sexuality, and the Self: An Essay on the Trinity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 11.

^{vi} Coakley, *God, Sexuality, and the Self*, 7.

^{vii} *Ibid.*, 8.

^{viii} *Ibid.*, 10.

^{ix} It would be interesting to compare this to Jesus’ practice of feasting with people. Here, the desire of hunger is seen to not necessitate exclusivity. This practice, of course, has been realized in the perpetual action of the Church in the mass.

^x See Paul Ramsey, *One Flesh: A Christian View of Sex Within, Outside and Before Marriage* (Bramcote, Notts.: Grove Books, 1977), 14-16, for a thoughtful reflection on Yeats’ declaration that “love hath pitched his mansion in the place of excrement.”

^{xi} I admit though that this is using Augustine’s understanding of *res* and *signum* in a clearly modern way. Augustine would have never considered even marital sex, in itself, a sacramental sign. It was using an “evil” well. Though he resists attributing evil to the body, he holds that the will is disordered to the point that one cannot have sex without an element of concupiscence. See Augustine, *Marriage and Desire*, Book I, 7.8 and *Against Julian*, Book III, 9.18.

^{xii} Williams, *On Augustine*, 13.

^{xiii} *Ibid.*, 9.

^{xiv} Williams, *On Augustine*, 201.

^{xv} *Ibid.*, 5-6.

^{xvi} *Ibid.*, 5.

^{xvii} A favorite theme of Augustine’s. See *Confessions*, Book XI.

^{xviii} Williams, *On Augustine*, 5.

^{xix} Williams offers a detailed exposition on Augustine’s understanding of the relation of the Eternal Word to Jesus and to his Body, or the “triple identity of the Word,” in *Christ the Heart of Creation* (London: Bloomsbury Continuum, 2018), 70-83.

^{xx} Coakley, *God, Sexuality, and the Self*, 11.



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The Homely Hours: Feast for the Domestic Church

By Susanna Cover

The practice of liturgical living — extending the observance of seasons, feasts, and fasts into the domestic calendar — began to intrigue me when my first daughter was a baby. I wondered how to raise her in the faith, and also found myself, as a tired parent, yearning for a renewed spiritual life.

Classic books, such as Mary Reed Newland's *The Year and Our Children*, and recent websites, such as CatholicAllYear.com, inspired me with Candlemas-themed recipes and coloring pages, or tips on backyard bonfires for St. John the Baptist. But I struggled to find resources tailored to the Anglican tradition, and wearied of obscure Marian novenas and even more obscure Italian Counter-Reformation saints' days paired with unfamiliar songs and liturgical language.

How pleasing, at long last, to discover an Anglican resource: *The Homely Hours*. The website (thedomelyhours.com) presents a lovely collection of materials for the domestic church, focused specifically on supporting morning and evening prayer according to the Book of Common Prayer.

Amanda McGill, a mother of two young children, along with a few friends, began the site to share liturgical living ideas with her parish,



St. Lucy Traditions and Prayers

The Homely Hours photos

Christ the King Anglican Church (REC) in Dayton, Ohio. *The Homely Hours* has grown in four years to offer a feast of free tools for family spirituality in the Anglican tradition, often beautifully illustrated by *The Homely Hours* artists, Bley Hack and Michelle Abernathy.

It features a variety of “printables”; prayer cards for the offices of morning and evening prayer, expanded booklets for Lent and Easter seasons, as well as the weekly collects for the entire year. Additional resources include liturgies for various feasts for home or small group use, a decorative banner for Rogation Days, a crown to assemble for St. Lucy's Day, and a gorgeous watercolor church year calendar imagined as a circle of images from nature (which I immediately printed for my own home).

For each week of the year, a blog post highlights the Sunday collect and short biographies of saints whose feasts are celebrated that week. Quotations by greats of Anglican spirituality, guest posts, and links to outside articles all encourage family devotional life. I also appreciated suggestions for music from traditional English hymnody and sacred music.

The simple Daily Office printables are perhaps the core offering of *The Homely Hours*. These are excerpted from the “Forms of Prayer to be used in Families” (BCP 1928), which come

with graceful practicality in both short and even shorter forms (what I, as a mother of three, imagine as the “Abbreviated Rite of Morning Prayer while the Toddler Crayons the Wall”). These cards are portable and easily memorized, facilitating prayer during a commute or while waiting in line. They invite a tiny pause in the fluster of a day to turn towards the One who made these days in the first place and numbers each of ours.

When Archbishop Cranmer adapted the monastic hours of prayer for parishes and families, he reiterated that even busy laity can shape their lives by Kingdom time, that waking and sleeping and laboring can be attuned to God, that faithful daily prayer can grow into habits of holiness.

Perhaps the sacredness of time was still the prevailing perspective in Cranmer's early modern Europe, when church bells punctuated agricultural labor. It is a radical concept today. Our time is unavoidably bent around business hours and media cycles, while holidays seem mere occasions for sales events. *The Homely Hours* draws our attention back to this great inheritance of ecclesial time-telling. It reminds us that Cranmer's little book and all its subsequent versions which shape our corporate worship are also intended to assist families and individuals in structuring our daily and yearly cycles

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BCP family prayer

Homely Hours

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with prayer and Scripture.

When I asked her for advice for newcomers to liturgical living, McGill suggested starting by “slowly incorporating short rhythms of evening and morning prayer in your home.” Celebration of other components of the church year “can slowly, sustainably grow out of that practice.” Drawing on our rich Anglican devotional tradition, *The Homely Hours* provides both inspiration and practical tools to cultivate our faith as the essential pattern of everyday life.

Here’s the asterisk. *The Homely Hours* site uses the Book of Common Prayer belonging to the Reformed Episcopal Church. I had to look it up: essentially this is the 1928 BCP, so the language of the offices is functionally Rite I 1979, while the schedule of the collects differs from other BCP versions. This disjunct may not matter to an individual at all, but those inspired by *The Homely Hours* but



Rogation flags

wanting a concise Daily Office in modern language might turn to something like *Hour by Hour* (Forward Movement).

Many parishes print the weekly collect in their bulletin, including mine, but until I saw *The Homely Hours*’ collect printables, it didn’t occur to me to bring the bulletin home for prayer throughout the week. Some resources on the website I want to use

despite prayer book differences, just because they’re so lovely and well-designed, but in reality most of the site transcends ecclesial divisions entirely and is applicable to anyone desiring to pray with the rich language and spirituality of the Anglican tradition.

Susanna Quaille Cover, a priest’s wife and homeschooling mother of three, lives in Wauwatosa, Wisconsin.

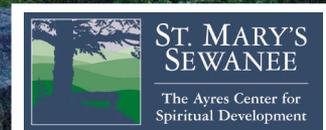
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Crafts are a big part of Messy Church at Epiphany Church in Newport, N.H.

Aaron Jenkyn photo

God Knows We're Messy, and That's OK

By G. Jeffrey MacDonald

Something extraordinary is happening at Epiphany Episcopal Church in Newport, N.H. (pop. 6,500). Once a month like clockwork, since early this year, worship attendance jumps from 20 to nearly 40. Swelling the crowd are people who have no church background. They sidle up next to folks who quit going to church long ago. Approximately half of these once-a-month worshippers are children.

What draws them is Messy Church, a format that's as casual and disarming

as its name suggests. Begun 15 years ago in the United Kingdom, it's now helping mainline Protestant congregations in the United States reach demographic groups they haven't seen in years, sometimes decades.

The Newport gathering happens at this mission church's regular worship time, Saturdays at 5 p.m., which lets families have all day Saturday and Sunday for other things. It begins with 45 minutes of playful creativity, including games and art projects for all to try, and ends with a community meal. In between comes a 20-minute eucharistic liturgy that ties prior activ-

ities to a biblical story and encourages chatter on the path to deeper understanding.

"Communion is noisy," said Aaron Jenkyn, lay missionary at Epiphany. "People are talking during Communion. They're talking during the eucharistic prayer, asking each other questions. These kids have just this really beautiful way of sharing what they understand it to be with remarkable accuracy with each other. And it's just this really beautiful experience."

Emerging in this setting is a new church community unto itself, one

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Messy Church

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where regular churchgoers and neophytes bond informally around the teachings and spirit of Jesus. It builds on the congregation's deep relationships in the community through outreach programs, which have enhanced trust over time. Now the gathering format feels right, not awkward or anxiety-provoking, for many who want connections with God for themselves and their kids but had not found them in traditional church settings.

It's a familiar dynamic in Messy Church settings popping up around the country. Lindsey Goodyear had grown up attending church but had drifted away when she and her husband moved to Huntington Beach, Calif., with their sons, now aged four and seven. At first, she didn't respond to invitations offered through her sons' church-based preschool at Community United Methodist Church in Huntington Beach.

"I was hesitant because I thought we'd be shamed for not having a church," Goodyear said in an email. "Messy Church is giving those of us who don't have a church a place we can call home. It's a great reminder that God knows we're messy, and that's OK."

Messy Church began in the Church of England in 2004 at the initiative of a clergy spouse named Lucy Moore, who wondered why so many were walking by her Plymouth congregation on Sunday mornings but not coming in.

After querying the wider community and taking responses to heart, Moore pioneered the Messy Church tradition of convening at more convenient times, sometimes on a weeknight when not having to cook dinner is a big help, or late afternoon on Saturday. The movement has now grown to include 2,800 Messy Church congregations in England. On Aug. 30, the Church of England announced a grant of 100,000 pounds to study the deepening of discipleship in Messy Church congregations. It's been expanding as far away as Croatia and China and in settings as diverse as prisons and nursing homes.

In the U.S., Messy Church is growing fastest among United Methodists, followed by Episcopalians and then other mainline Protestants. According to the national network Messy Church USA, 23 Episcopal congregations are registered as official Messy Church hosts, though some might be doing Messy without having registered.

"A lot of the Episcopal churches that I talk to have a priest who traveled to England, found out about Messy Church and then went on to do it here," said Roberta Egli, executive director of Messy Church USA.

Nationwide, 142 congregations are registered as Messy Church sites, up from 97 at the end of 2018. One-day regional training events are up too, from four last year to 11 this year, as prospective leaders flock to learn the art of hosting Messy Church. In trainings, leaders learn best practices for welcoming those who have little or no church experience.

"If they haven't been to church in several generations, they are coming from a place of learning to know that they are loved," Egli said. "To learn that they belong to a God of love, and to find a place to belong there, is a big step for them."

Expressions of Messy Church can vary to a degree, but five core values give it a recognizable coherence in every setting. Each Messy Church environment emphasizes creativity, hospitality, and celebration while making sure all ages can participate and everything is Christ-centered. Hands-on activities typically revolve

around a biblical theme for the day. Science demonstrations, which might illustrate a theme or shed light on God's creation, tend to be as popular as the arts and crafts.

New data corroborate anecdotes about Messy Church making inroads with hard-to-reach populations. A February report from the evangelistic group Church Army found that in England, 60 percent of Messy Church attendees say they haven't recently engaged in any form of church. What's more, Messy Church congregations are now, on average, larger than traditional Church of England congregations.

In the Episcopal Church, Messy Church can vary a lot from one cultural context to the next. Whether the atmosphere is Bible Belt or the largely secular Northeast, for instance, can make a big difference.

In Fairfax Station, Va., at St. Peter's in the Woods, Messy Church offers a change of pace for families that normally attend youth programming on Sundays. Once a month, about 50 people turn out instead for Messy Church on a Saturday evening, and Sunday youth programs aren't offered that weekend. Kids ask why they can't have Messy Church every week, said the Rev. Susan Hartzell, rector.

"The kids who maybe would not robe up on a Sunday morning and be an acolyte were excited to carry the candles and carry the cross down our little Messy Church center aisle on Saturday night," Hartzell said. "It's a chance for younger ones to experience it."

At Epiphany in New Hampshire, Messy Church is also a big hit with

To learn more about Messy Church, visit: <https://messychurchusa.org/>

To find congregations that are doing Messy Church, visit: <https://messychurchusa.org/directory/>

Monthly webinar introductions to Messy Church are offered here: <https://messychurchusa.org/what-is-messy-church-monthly-zoom-webinar/>

To find a one-day Messy Church training event in your area, visit: <https://messychurchusa.org/upcoming-regional-training-events>



Messy Communion: One child teaches another how to receive the sacrament at Epiphany Church, Newport, N.H.

Aaron Jenkyn photo

children, though for different reasons.

“They love the activities, the stories, the Eucharist, and the friendships and relationships (across generations) that are formed during their time together,” Jenkyn said in a follow-up email. “In my experience, it is the kids who can’t wait to come back, who are asking for Messy Church more often, who are dragging their parents along.”

Messy Church also helps newcomers at Epiphany understand terminology, symbols and other elements that seldom if ever get explained in traditional settings. Hands-on activities might deliver an introduction to the meanings of liturgical colors, for instance.

And the experimenting continues, even in regions where churchgoing is still common. At St. David’s Church in Ashburn, Va., piloting Messy Church convinced organizers to have it in the narthex in order to be as inviting and nonthreatening as possible. Normally about 30 turn out, but that number dropped to eight in July, which told them that summer might not be conducive to Messy Church, at least in Ashburn. Another discovery: with little ones on hand, worship time is

best kept to 15 minutes or less.

“It’s doing exactly what Messy Church is intended to do: it’s bringing people who haven’t been churchied,” said Maureen Carey, lay pastoral assistant at St. David’s and a board member at Messy Church USA. “We’ve had people from the community, and we’ve had people who come to our preschool and then they come back for Messy Church.”

As Messy Church proves magnetic for hard-to-reach populations, leaders are reflecting on why it’s gaining traction and what it will take to scale it up.

“Parents want their kids to have a moral framework,” Jenkyn said. “They are drawn to a Christian value system.”

For congregations eager to explore what Messy Church could mean for their outreach, veterans have a few suggestions:

Don’t consider it a stepping stone to “real” church on Sunday mornings. Affirm that it’s a legitimate gathering of its own, a place where the Word is preached, sacraments are administered, relationships take on a Kingdom quality and disciples of Jesus Christ are made.

Visit a congregation that’s already

doing Messy Church and witness the event in action. That’s how Hartzell came to appreciate the importance of making sure parents of young children know they don’t have to plan and execute Messy Church themselves. By simply showing up to enjoy what others have designed for them to experience, it remains spiritually refreshing for them and their children.

Teams and planning are crucial. Egli suggests six months of lead time before putting on a Messy Church event. Two or more volunteers might prepare dinner. Another small group plans activities, and a priest organizes worship. That way volunteers keep it fun and nobody gets burned out.

Putting on Messy Church might be a hefty undertaking, but practitioners are heartened by the results. According to Church Army’s “Playfully Serious” report from February, more than 80 percent of Messy Church leaders say they’ve seen at least a few people’s lives have been changed as a result of attending Messy Church. If that’s a central reason why congregations gather in the first place, then these newer, messier ones are already delivering on the promise.

Salutary Surprises about the Sacraments

By Mac Stewart

At the heart of the Christian faith is the doctrine of grace. It is not surprising, therefore, that “disagreement over the means of grace has been a recurring theme throughout church history” (1). In this valuable textbook of Christian sacramental theologies, editors Justin Holcomb and David Johnson provide a highly serviceable introduction and map to different approaches to the means of grace by key representatives of a sizable range of Christian theological traditions.

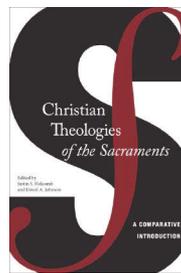
After an introduction by the editors that provides the reader with a general orientation to the major questions in sacramental theology, the book divides its survey into three main historical periods: patristic (early church) and medieval, Reformation and Counter-Reformation, and modern (eighteenth to twenty-first centuries). Each section begins with a general overview of the historical period — the main trends in sacramental catechesis and explication, key flashpoints of controversy, etc. — and proceeds with a series of chapters by various theologians on some major figures or theological movements in that particular era.

These chapters are generally quite useful as basic introductions to the important highlights of a given figure’s approach to the sacraments. So, for example, Thomas Humphries helpfully frames his treatment of Augustine’s theology of the sacraments around the observation that “Augustine means more by *sacramentum* than we usually mean by ‘sacrament’” (43). Old Testament events, for instance, could be referred to as sacraments, and in general Augustine’s view was shaped by the close linguistic connection between *sacramentum* and *mysterium*: sacraments, broadly, are what “connect us to

the mystery of salvation in love” (44).

Each chapter provides a nice biographical introduction to the figure under discussion and a short conclusion summarizing the main themes of the figure’s sacramental theology, as well as fairly thorough endnotes referring to both primary and secondary texts, making each chapter useful as either a quick and handy reference or as a point of entry into deeper and more specific study. The selection of figures and movements to be treated is also generally effective, and in most cases they are covered by one of their foremost contemporary interpreters: Matthew Levering on Aquinas, Richard Cross on Duns Scotus (St. Bonaventure is surprisingly absent), and Ashley Null on Thomas Cranmer. The third part of the book, on modern approaches to the sacraments, also includes chapters on the significance of feminist and liberation theologies for ongoing reflection on the means of grace in the Christian community and beyond.

The book does produce some salutary surprises. The chapter on the Catholic Counter-Reformation (by Donald S. Prudlo) gives a compelling defense of the Council of Trent and the Tridentine Catholic Church, not as a rigid and reactionary ossification of medieval excesses but as a movement that was able to “distill and solidify fifteen hundred years of Catholic teaching and practice,” to stabilize a careening Church by entrusting it to competent leaders, and to provide a liturgical and doctrinal basis upon which the arts and devotional life could richly flourish in subsequent centuries. But the chapter on Friedrich Schleiermacher is no less surprising, where Paul T. Nimmo quotes the whipping boy of 21st century orthodox Christians, Catholic and Protestant alike, as saying that “our Christianity should be



Christian Theologies of the Sacraments

A Comparative Introduction

Justin S. Holcomb and David A. Johnson, editors.

NYU Press. Pp. 416. \$89/30.

the same as that of the apostles,” and, “the establishment and renewal of the communion of life with Christ must come from the church and be traced back to its actions” (298).

The editors explicitly refrain from identifying this book as a work of dogmatic or systematic theology. It is rather an investigation of the history of Christian thought on the sacraments by looking at major figures in the tradition. They do hint in the introduction at an underlying normative thesis, suggesting that the differences in sacramental theologies on display in the book should be read not as a sign of the inherent contentiousness within Christian tradition but rather as an indication that “each moment, era, and epoch raises different questions about the nature, efficacy, and purpose of sacraments” (3).

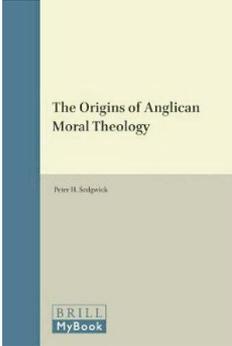
But while many authors in the book rightly caution against “anachronism” (e.g., expecting to find a developed “theology of sacraments” in Basil or Augustine), it would be no less of a mistake to avoid questions about how ultimately either to synthesize or choose between the divergent strands of sacramental theologies in the tradition. That is not to expect such a job from a book like this; only to suggest that this useful resource ought to be seen as providing tools for further work. It is fine to map the terrain of the tradition and, as the editors say, “let the contours speak for themselves” (2). But the simple pious believer who just wants to know what the Church teaches about the sacraments will eventually need someone to tell her which route on the map to follow.

Fr. Mac Stewart is studying for a doctorate in historical theology at the Catholic University of America..

Returning to Sources, Widening Horizons

Review by Simon Cuff

This book is a thoroughly Anglican attempt to trace the contours of Anglican moral theology. Peter Sedgwick focuses on the period 1530 to 1690, which he argues is the key formative period in Anglican moral theology.



The Origins of Anglican Moral Theology

By Peter H. Sedgwick
Brill, pp. 427. \$79.

As he regularly reminds us, many or all of these theologians would not have used the terms *Anglican* or *moral theology* for their work. Both terms are contested. This book arises in part from a perennial question, *what does it mean to be an Anglican*, which Sedgwick faced “with a vengeance” when he became principal of an Anglican theological college. It aims to help the reader explore the challenge posed by the question, especially in the light of the break with Rome and amid competing Reformation theologies.

The same is true for the term *moral theology*. Sedgwick argues there “is no one, or single, tradition of moral theology in either the Anglican or Roman Catholic Church” (p. 1). *Ethics* is perhaps the more familiar term for the material Sedgwick explores. He notes this is especially true within Protestant circles in which ethics is “concerned with defining concepts of right and wrong, obligation, intention and the nature of a moral act” (p. 13).

Sedgwick prefers the term *moral theology* because it consistently connects its conclusions with this wider theological task. He notes that moral theology “must always be part of the overall enterprise of theology” (pp. 13-

14). From this starting point, he describes what might constitute *Anglican* moral theology.

The book’s opening chapter is dedicated to this task. This section is influenced throughout by Alasdair MacIntyre’s concept of a tradition of moral inquiry. Sedgwick argues there is such a tradition of Anglican moral enquiry. He identifies some of the contours of this tradition: “an Anglican *habitus*, which is about pastoral accommodation to the realities of the society and culture in which it is set” (p. 9); it is “pastoral rather than juridical” (p. 11); eschews immutable norms (p. 18); and demonstrates “a development of ideas that are a matter of shared argument” (p. 18).

Throughout this book the reader is reminded that it is not only the conclusions reached that make up Anglican moral thinking, but the process by which such conclusions are reached. Ever since the break with Rome, the Anglican tradition has been a constant process of “shared argument,” sometimes bitter but always attempting to discern the will of God for his Church between myriad ecclesial voices, Catholic and Reformed.

Later chapters explore the background and sources of moral theology in the nascent Church of England from the New Testament to the medieval period. These chapters, especially chapter four on Abelard and Aquinas, are vital to allow the reader to see the points of continuity and discontinuity between medieval moral theology and its Anglican successor. Sedgwick maintains that “any discussion of Anglican moral theology must turn to its roots. This involves a close reading of Aquinas” (p. 85).

We are reminded that in Anglican moral theology, the Renaissance and Reformation principle of *ad fontes* when applied to the Anglican moral tradition today means not only considering our biblical inheritance for the sources of Anglican moral theology

but the medieval legacy from which the early Anglican tradition evolved, reacted to, and developed: “the crucial point is that despite the separation at the Reformation, there remained within the Church of England theologians aware of the past heritage of moral theology, even if they developed it in ways that could only be described as Reformed” (p. 184).

Subsequent chapters explore the moral theologies of William Perkins, Richard Hooker, and the Caroline theologians, culminating in a chapter on the moral theology of Jeremy Taylor. These are the heart of Sedgwick’s volume. In each case themes of conscience, reason, free will, and the relationship between human and divine agency are explored and unpacked. A picture emerges in this period of an Anglicanism that begins to develop a more positive anthropology and account of human nature against the backdrop of a thoroughly Reformed starting point. This trajectory we see continuing within the pastoral theology that Sedgwick earlier identified as characterizing Anglican moral theology.

At the start of the work, Sedgwick notes that a number of people had suggested there was a great need for this book (p. 1). This is certainly true. The last century has seen a revolution in moral thinking in almost every area of life. This is true not only of liberal and progressive voices but also, as Sedgwick notes, within conservative circles: “There has been a rethinking of views on morality — even, I would argue, amongst conservative theologians, for the re-articulation of a traditional position is not necessarily a repetition of the views that were held in past decades or centuries” (p.43).

Amid continuing and bitter debates across the Anglican Communion, as the Anglican moral tradition continues to be a contested space, this book plays an important role. Returning to the sources of our moral tradition may

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help us overcome divides of particular conclusions and attempt instead to build a broader theological framework by which to live the Christian life. This book is a vital contribution to the task, and an invitation to widen our horizons of moral theology with the help of our Anglican forebears as the shared argument of Anglican moral theology continues in this new phase of its life.

Simon Cuff is a lecturer and tutor in theology at St. Mellitus College in London.

Our Place in a Vast and Possibly Life-Filled Universe

Review by Andrew Davison

Olli-Pekka Vainio writes about cosmology, but not primarily in a scientific or flat facts-of-the-matter sense. Rather, he is interested in how our sense of what cosmos is like informs our sense of our place in

it. “Even when people agree about some fact,” he writes, “they may still give different meanings to it.”

The first three chapters offer a survey of cosmology in the ancient world (including the Old Testament, Plato and Aristotle), and among early Christian writers, followed by a discussion of the impact of the work of Galileo, Newton and Darwin. The early Christian material offers useful perspectives on interpretation of Genesis 1, often far more creative and insightful than we might expect today. The three scientists feature for the sake of investigating how — and, indeed, whether — their ground-breaking work disrupted Christian thought.

Another trio of chapters considers the vastness of the cosmos and what that means for our sense of human value. Vainio underlines the important point that whether or not people thought there could be “other worlds” rested to a large degree on how they defined “world” in the first place. The discussion of human uniqueness threads through much of the book. Here, Vainio is right, I think, to stress that the size of the universe, and Earth’s position within it, is not particularly significant when it comes to judging human significance.

Vainio’s style is usually relatively light and accessible. Here and there, however, fondness for the norms and approaches of analytic philosophy disrupts that. Propositions are labelled with acronyms, and arguments set out in ordered lists. This sometimes clarifies the argument, but it can also make the prose hard going. To my mind, it also courts the tendency in “analytic theology” to treat God, and what we might awkwardly call “God’s motivations,” as something we can capture straightforwardly in human propositions.

Chapter seven tackles “God and Being.” The theme may strike some

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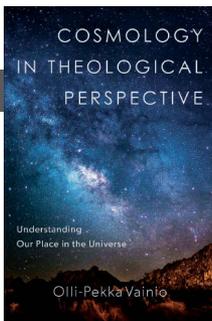
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Cosmology in Theological Perspective

Understanding Our Place in the Universe

By Olli-Pekka Vainio

readers as an outlier, but it repays attention here. The presenting provocation comes from the story of the cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin, and a saying attached to him, likely spuriously, that he had been into space and God was not there to be seen. In response, Vainio considers what it means for God not to be a thing-among-things. That is all the more significant when it comes to theological reactions to the sort of cosmology generally offered by contemporary physics. There, the theologian has always to point out that the dependence of the universe upon God (precisely as not one more thing-among-things, or cause-among-causes) is prior to any question of origination that physics may be able to present to us. Fascinating as those themes might be, this chapter will likely move too rapidly for many readers, galloping through some technically challenging material.

The eighth chapter returns to whether or not human beings are “unique,” approached this time in terms of the *imago dei*, or image of God. Vainio presents a couple of prominent accounts, namely that the image relates to certain human features (perhaps also found in extra-terrestrial life), such as intelligence, or that it derives from being called or addressed by God.

I wondered, however, whether those two options are quite so clear cut. It may not make much sense to suppose that God could call or address simply any creature in that way, and thereby confer the “image” upon it. It would matter that a human being, or other intelligent life, can receive that address,

or answer the call, whereas a stone cannot. This is a theologically bustling chapter, but I would have liked to have seen an even more forthright statement that the *imago dei* is not competitive. I would be no less in the image of God if that also turns out to be true of residents of the moon Europa, or indeed also to be true of dolphins.

The penultimate chapter addresses the question as to whether we should expect multiple incarnations across the cosmos. As a discussion of whether that would be necessary, the chapter does a good job. However (as I have written elsewhere), the question about *necessity* misses as much as it addresses. It strikes me as just as important to ask what the Incarnation teaches us about the character of God, and of divine dealings with creatures, and to ask whether that could give us a sense of why, or whether, it would be *suitable* or *fitting* for incarnation to be the means deployed also elsewhere.

The final chapter is worked out in dialogue with C. S. Lewis, who has been an inspiration for Vainio across the book. Its theme, the relation between reason and imagination, is fascinating and important. A little more might have been offered, however, to join it up to the rest of the work.

On the subject of life elsewhere in the universe, mention might also be made of the collection *Astrotheology*, edited by Ted Peters among others, published last year by Cascade. Alongside that collection, Vainio’s *Cosmology in Theological Context* stands as a thought-provoking contribution to the relatively small body of work on the place of human beings in a vast, and possibly life-filled, universe.

Andrew Davison is the Starbridge Lecturer in Theology and Natural Sciences at the University of Cambridge, Fellow and Dean of Chapel at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, and Canon Philosopher of St. Albans Cathedral. His book Astrobiology and Christian Doctrine will be published next year.

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Christian Education as Conversion

Education, teaching: *doctrina* in Latin, as in Saint Augustine's most-influential manual on all things revealed and discursive, *De doctrina Christiana*, translated recently as *Teaching Christianity*. Augustine's book, completed in the year 426, set the curriculum for all western seminary education for a millennium — a premodern bestseller, still unstintingly studied. Saint Thomas Aquinas's *Summa* of theology provided, 850 years on, a commentary on Augustine, taking *doctrina* in much the same sense. *Sacred doctrine*, said Aquinas, begins with God's own revelation of himself as necessary for human salvation, and takes up Scripture as the singular, essential guide into these mysteries, which center on the triune God. God's initiative is basic. For this reason, theology approaches *all things* from his perspective and all Christian belief and faithful response are built upon his Word.

Call this the evangelical basis of Christian education, as a lively pursuit of God himself: faith (and hope and love) seeking understanding, with an emphasis on the means of grace as God's instruments of formation. In other words, we are called to continual *conversion*. "O Lord, open thou our lips. / And our mouth shall show forth thy praise," that is, more fully: *O God, give me your own distinct word to speak and understand again today, and by your grace transform me, making me fit for your purpose*. Whether we be students, teachers, stay-at-home moms, bankers, baristas, or bishops, all Christians must seek God daily in order to hear and know his will. Presuming the irreplaceable norm of corporate worship on Sundays, the next critical building blocks are structured prayer with Scripture (the Daily Office) and times of personal devotion, in which we seek to hear and obey God's word for us now. In this broad sense of Christian education — seeking to "be transformed by the renewing of [our] minds, so that

[we] may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect" (Rom. 12:2) — I'd like to share something of my own continuing meditation on three "stations" of prayer, about which I wrote several years ago (bit.ly/2lVWs6C): an icon of Saint Mary and Jesus, a crucifix, and an icon of Saints Peter and Andrew.

The icon of Mary and Jesus, known as the Sweet Kissing or Loving Kindness icon (*Panagia Glykophilousa*), depicts our infant Lord seated on the lap of his mother in a warm embrace. Mary is called *God-bearer* because she gave birth to — thence weaned and trained up — the God-man, and here we also see her as Seat of Wisdom, for behold: Wisdom incarnate rests upon her! They delight in one another, and one can imagine her amazement and joy.

What does the image communicate? God's glorious goodness, generosity, and power — "infinitely more" than anything Mary, or any human actor, could even have thought to "ask or imagine" much less engineer (Eph. 3:20). God's grace given fully and freely; indeed, the face — faces — of God's salvation, redeemer and redeemed.

Praying with this image of Mary and Jesus inspires gratitude in the reality of God's love for us personally. Christian prayer would have us ask God to act in our lives and then trust that he will do so. To be sure, God claims us by baptism, and we receive him in the Eucharist, which is a regular and reliable miracle. But do we believe that we are becoming like him, being "conformed" to his image (Rom. 8:29), and do we fully trust his power to change our hearts and circumstances? Whether our temptation is to fear and anxiety, prideful self-reliance, or both by turns, meditating on Mary the Mother of God reorients our mind and heart on God's amazing grace *for us*, in our lives. "The Almighty has done great things for me, and holy is his

Name" (Lk. 1:49). Christian conversion is planted here in the gift of God's "sweet kissing," out of which soil true obedience and discipleship, rooted in tender humility and gentle surrender, true *freedom*, may grow.

This is the pattern of each of our lives as God would have them, revealed in our infant Savior resting happily on the lap of his mother who is also our mother and sister. Gazing gratefully at them, we may ask God to fill us with virtue, and to speak his word of call again *this* day, according to his plans, knowing that he will supply all we need. We may thank God for the mystery of our salvation given in his Son, and pray that we may be given a Mary-like patience to watch and wait for miracles.

Next, consider our Lord on the Cross. God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, and it is our privilege "not only to believe in him, but also to suffer for his sake" (Phil. 1:29). This is the grace of cruciformity, from which may grow another aspect of humility, the dying of our plans and pretensions. When people say, "it's not about you," they are observing that the world does not revolve around us. That is important to grasp, if elementary. More profoundly, contemplating our call to imitate the crucified Lord and to discipline every thought and desire by his great love (see Phil. 3:10-11), we see that *our own lives* are also not about us, because we are not our own. "I die every day," says Paul (1 Cor. 15:31), that is, *I continually give my life back to the Lord and pray, "thy kingdom come, thy will be done."* The curriculum of conversion is theocentric because, having found new life in Christ, each day can only revolve around him and his will.

As we prepare for our day and work after God's Word, we must hold ourselves accountable to the high standard of Christ on the cross. Falling into the earth and dying, a single grain of wheat bears much fruit (John 12:24). The

more we concentrate here and ask to be made like him, the more we will speak and behave soberly, not seeking to impress others, and abandon our pride and fear, which flourish in the sewer of self-focus. More than that, in the power of Christ crucified we will manage the greatest works of our lives, called and equipped supernaturally. With the discipline of the cross comes freedom from distraction. Clear headed, we can speak honest and direct words to ourselves and others with compassion and love — the *truth*, fulfilled and offered in Christ. We can keep busy in the right way, recognizing that “the days are evil” (Eph. 5:16) — full of opportunities for stumbling into ambition, competitiveness, greed, envy: all that contradicts the fruit of the Spirit.

Finally, turn to the icon of the Holy Apostolic Brothers, depicting Saints Peter and Andrew embracing under the watchful gaze of the resurrected Lord. Given by Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras to Pope Paul VI to commemorate their historic meeting in 1964, the icon imagines the visible reunion of the one Church, West and East, and the sacrifices that will make it possible. The Lord mercifully sends us out two by two “to every town and place where he himself intended to go” (Luke 10:1), the vast *Catholica* of the known world, and sets us within a beloved community of brothers and sisters *in* him (see Philemon 1:20). Here we may find rightly ordered Christian love in common pursuit of union with God (see Augustine, *DDC* I 37).

If Christ’s Incarnation and passion form the sacramental substance and ever-present reality of our life in him, the hope of resurrection, including the healing and resurrection of the Church for all to see, presents the evangelical *horizon* of our work, looking *up* to Christ who goes before. All Christian action must build up the single communion of his body. We are not lone rangers or free agents but servants and slaves (2 Tim. 2:24; Gal. 5:13). The call is to unite and not divide, to forgive, and to seek Christ’s own reconciliation

(Eph. 2). The grace is God’s having gone before, placing our work, our life, and our loves in his Son, who will transform them.

Lord Jesus, be born in me again today, and show me your wonderful plans. Help me hold every

thought and word accountable to your cross. And make me a steadfast servant of your Church, where I may both give and receive encouragement. In all things, increase my faith, hope, and love, according to your word. Amen.

—Christopher Wells

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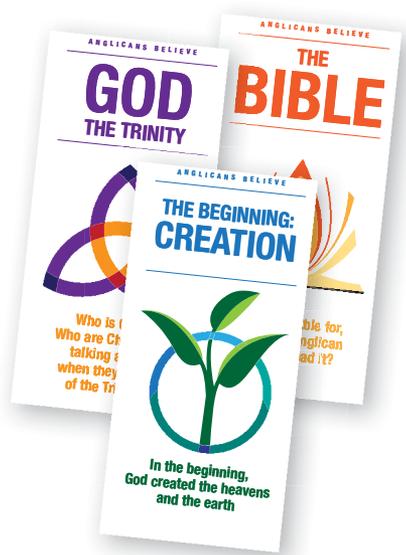
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The Rev. Canon **Bill Cavanaugh** is an honorary canon of the Diocese of Dallas.

The Rev. **Annette Chappell** is interim rector of Holy Trinity, Essex, Md.

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The Rev. **Nicholas Cho** is rector of Holy Spirit, Nashville, Tenn.

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The Rev. **Laura Di Panfilo** is assistant rector of St. Paul's, Mount Lebanon, Pa.

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Deaths



The Rev. **Alison Cheek**, the first female priest to publicly celebrate the Eucharist in the Episcopal Church, died September 1, aged 92.

Born near Adelaide, Australia, she moved to the Washington, D.C. area with her husband in 1957. After serving as a lay minister at several churches in the D.C. region, she became one of the first women to graduate from Virginia Theological Seminary. She was ordained as a deacon in 1972, and while on a retreat, Cheek said she heard God saying to her, "I want you to be my priest." She said later, "It was a powerful experience. It's why I never thought of giving up."

Two years later, Cheek was one of the Philadelphia Eleven, ordained at the Church of the Advocate on July 29, 1974, two years before the Episcopal Church authorized the ordination of women to the priesthood. She celebrated the Eucharist at Washington's Church of St. Stephen and the Incarnation, where she served as an assistant priest, on November 10, 1974, in what The Washington Post described as "a service that ranged from solemn prayer to joyous hugs and bursts of spontaneous applause." Cheek was named one of twelve Women of the Year by *Time Magazine* in 1975, appearing on the magazine's iconic cover in clerical dress.

She worked for many years as a counselor, and was Episcopal Divinity School's director of studies in feminist liberation theology from 1989-1995. She retired first to Maine, where she taught at a retreat center, and later to North Carolina. A friend, the Rev. Elizabeth Kaeton said of her in a Facebook post, "She was a wonderful teacher and role model for the women for whom she helped make possible the actualization of their priestly vocation in The Episcopal Church. When her story is told, it will be said that we once walked among giants." She is survived by four children and six of her "sisters" among the Philadelphia Eleven, one of whom was with her as she died.



Richard Parkins, who led Episcopal Migration Ministries (EMM) for fourteen years and was a key advocate for links between the Episcopal Church and the Episcopal Church of South Sudan, died September 1 in Washington, D. C.

A graduate of the University of Pennsylvania, Parkins worked for decades in refugee resettlement. He was operations director of the U. S. Department of Health and Human Service's Office of Refugee Resettlement from its establishment by the Refugee Act in 1980

until 1995. The Office of Refugee Resettlement provides grants to authorized non-profit agencies who resettle refugees who are granted asylum from persecution and human trafficking, or who are victims of war or torture. Episcopal Migration Ministries is one of nine organizations authorized to resettle refugees in the United States. Parkins became director of EMM in 1995.

Parkins became involved in assisting refugees in Sudan in the late 1990s, when a decades-long civil war began escalating, displacing millions. In 2005, Parkins helped found the American Friends of the Episcopal Church of Sudan, an organization devoted to advocating for peace and justice in South Sudan, sharing information about the church's needs there, and facilitating partnerships between Episcopal parishes, dioceses and organizations and the Sudanese church. He became executive director of the organization when he left his post at Episcopal Migration Ministries in 2009.

Russell Randle, a member of the Episcopal Task Force on Dialogue with South Sudanese Diaspora, said of Parkins, "His work for over a decade for AFRECS showed what a big difference one talented and dedicated Christian can make for peace, for the relief of many thousands, and for the hope of an entire province of the church when hope has often been in very short supply."

The Most Rev. Justin Badi Arama, primate of the Episcopal Church of South Sudan, visited Parkins in the hospital shortly before his death, praying with him for over an hour.

The Rev. **S. Lester Ralph**, who gained national acclaim for his reforming work as mayor of Somerville, Mass. in the 1970s, died August 20 at his home in Reading, Mass.



He was a graduate of Virginia Theological Seminary and Boston University Law School. Ralph was serving as rector of Christ Church in Somerville and was a political unknown when he toppled the incumbent mayor in the small city outside Boston in a 1969 election.

Somerville was then deep in debt, with crumbling schools and poorly maintained roads. His obituary in *The Boston Globe* described him as "a much-needed reformer in an age of rampant corruption." He opened city hall to investigative reporters from the *Globe* in 1971. The newspaper's reports exposed rampant use of no-bid contracts and kickbacks under several former mayors, and the series of stories they published won a Pulitzer Prize.

Under Ralph's leadership, the city built multiple new schools and transformed the public park system, and he helped bring the Red Line commuter train to the city. He was reelected to four successive terms, and Somerville was awarded the All-America City Award in 1972. Throughout his political career, Ralph served as rector of Somerville's Episcopal church. He is survived by his wife, Joyce, three children and seven grandchildren.



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THE LIVING CHURCH is published 20 times per year, dated Sunday, by the Living Church Foundation, Inc., at 816 E. Juneau Ave., Milwaukee, WI 53202. Periodicals postage paid at Milwaukee, WI, and at additional mailing offices.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES: \$55 for one year; \$95 for two years.

Canadian postage an additional \$10 per year;

Mexico and all other foreign, an additional \$63 per year.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to THE LIVING CHURCH, P.O. Box 510705, Milwaukee, WI 53203-0121. Subscribers, when submitting address changes, should please allow 3-4 weeks for change to take effect.

THE LIVING CHURCH (ISSN 0024-5240) is published by THE LIVING CHURCH FOUNDATION, INC., a non-profit organization serving the Church. All gifts to the Foundation are tax-deductible.

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The Faith of Jesus Christ

“So you also, when you have done all that you were ordered to do, say, ‘We are worthless slaves; we have done only what we ought to have done!’” (Luke 17:10). This phrase and the preceding parable about the master and his servant illustrates “faith” as the act of fulfilling one’s duty without expectation of special gain or recognition. This sort of faithfulness makes no special claim on God. The sentences about faith “the size of a mustard seed” having the power to uproot a mulberry tree show the power of faith to accomplish an extraordinary (though useless) movement of a tree from land to sea. Such faith leaves a mulberry tree floating on the water! The background of all this is the disciples asking the Lord to “increase our faith.” Much is implied in the word “our.”

The disciples want a faith that could rightly claim something, but Jesus prohibits such a claim. As if conceding to their request, he promises something, but something absurd, the power to transplant a mulberry tree from soil to sea. Faith as a human work — that is, faith as something of our “own” — can make no claim upon the grace of God in Christ, nor can it accomplish anything of real use. There are other legitimate ways to read these verses quite differently, of course, but given the widespread misunderstanding that faith is something of our own, typically thought of as an intense emotional response or intellectual ascent or wonder-working, it is important to say in the strongest possible terms that such faith is worthless and useless. We do not feel or think or work our way to God.

Faith is not something we do, nor is it something we have. Faith is first and foremost the gift of God. Faith is love. Faith is the love of God poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit. While there are many references in the New Testament to faith “in Jesus Christ,” it is unfortunate that St. Paul’s actual use of

“faith of Jesus Christ” is usually translated as the former. In Romans, Galatians, and Philippians, St. Paul speaks of the faith or faithfulness of Jesus Christ toward us. (Rom. 3:22; Gal 2:16; 20; Phil. 3:9) “Not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but one that comes through *the faith of Christ*, the righteousness of God based on faith” (Phil. 3:9).

Even more striking is the well-known passage in Galatians in which St. Paul seems to disappear into the very life and gift of Christ. “It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by the *faith of the Son of God*, who loved me and gave himself for me” (Gal. 2:20). Jesus Christ has done this. Christ gave himself for us and poured his life-giving Spirit into our hearts.

In a sense, living in Christ, living from the faith of Christ is to be a temple of Christ. Christ is within. Christ is the bone of my bone, and the flesh of my flesh. I recognize myself in Christ but precisely as another and new self, a self that was put to death and raised in union with Christ. “It is Christ who lives in me.” From this, fruits of holiness follow, but even these are gifts of God, and among those gifts nothing is more important than gratitude.

“The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning, *great is your faithfulness*” (Lam. 3:22-23).

Look It Up

Read Psalm 37:7.

Think About It

Leave aside emotional strain and cognitive noise. Wait and listen as the Gift arrives.

Jer. 29:1, 4-7 [II Kgs. 5:1-3, 7-15c]; Ps. 66:1-11 [Ps. 111]; II Tim. 2:8-15; Luke 17:11-19

New Life in Exile

Loss and sorrow return to the mind in waves of grief and burning tears. “By the waters of Babylon we sat down and wept, when we remembered you, O Zion. As for our harps, we hung them up on the trees in the midst of that land” (Ps. 137:2). Defeated and embittered, exiles from the holy land were abused yet further by their captors. “For those who led us away captive asked us for a song, and our oppressors called for mirth; ‘Sing us one of the songs of Zion.’ How shall we sing the LORD’S song upon an alien soil?” (Ps. 137:1-4) And Jesus wept too, and his tear came not only from his eyes, but from the wounds of his flesh and the anguish of his soul. He was in the world, and the world was made through him, and the world bound him and led him away in sorrow and unto death.

There are ways to cope and adjust. Through the prophet Jeremiah, the Lord speaks, “to all the exiles whom I have sent into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon; ‘Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat what they produce. Take wives and have sons and daughters; take wives for your sons, and give your daughters in marriage, that they may bear sons and daughters; multiply there, and do not decrease. But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare” (Jer. 29:4-7). This strategy will not dissolve all sorrow, but it provides a way to go on, and even to find a measure of happiness in the midst of trial.

This pattern is well known in scripture and verified often in personal experience. “For you, O God, have proved us; you have tried us just as silver is tried. You brought us into the snare; you laid heavy burdens upon our backs. You let our enemies ride over our heads; we went through fire and water; but you brought us out into a place of refreshment” (Ps. 66: 9-11).

Words of hope are worth repeating: “You brought us out into a place of refreshment.” Trial, death, and resurrection are the pattern of Christian life, a theo-drama at work moment by moment as every sacred mystery of Christ repeats itself and unfolds in the life of disciples. “If we have died with him, we will also live with him; if we endure, we will also reign with him” (II Pet. 2:11-12).

There is a time to hang up our harps. There is a time to weep. There is also a time to make our home in an alien land. We are in the world, but we are not, after all, of it. We are called to live in “reverent fear during the time of [our] exile” (I Pet. 1:17). “Beloved, I urge you as aliens and exiles to abstain from the desires of the flesh that wage war against the soul” (I Pet. 2:11). As resident aliens in this valley of tears, we make our way in hope.

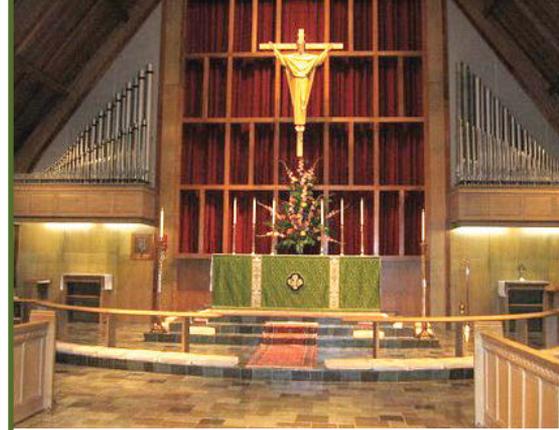
But there is more than endurance in the race that is set before us. Sinful, sick, and alien, our cries do not go unheard. There is One who heals and forgives. Jesus Christ heals by his life and word. Made new in him, we have the possibility of giving praise and expressing gratitude. We can be “this foreigner,” a person who has endured much, found wholeness in Christ, and returned to give thanks and praise.

Look It Up

Read Luke 17:15-16.

Think About It

Be the resident alien who gives praise and thanks, prostrating before the feet of Jesus.



Upholding Worship and Theology

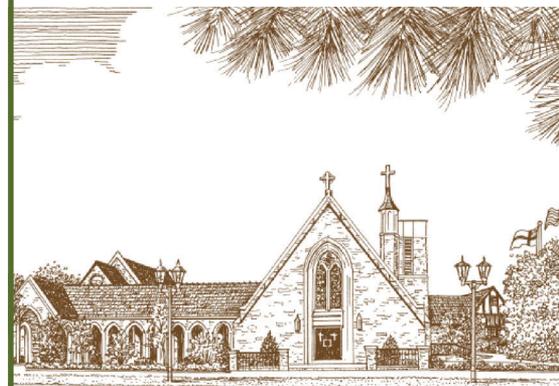
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