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Adam Pajan plays the new organ at All Saints' Episcopal Church, Kauai, Hawaii (see page 22).

Photo courtesy of All Saints' Church



A Painful Divorce in Fort Worth

By Kirk Petersen

A long-simmering dispute between rival religious denominations in Fort Worth has escalated after a decisive court ruling.

Congregations have been forced out of the church buildings where they have worshiped for years. One of them stripped the church bare before turning over the keys — taking even the pews. The new management at another church launched a website that strongly echoes the look and feel of its predecessor, while making no mention of the change in ownership.

The conflict erupted in 2008, when Bishop of Fort Worth Jack Iker and a majority of the congregations in his diocese renounced their ties to the Episcopal Church (TEC), citing doctrinal differences. Four other dioceses took similar steps, before and after Fort Worth.

From 2008 until earlier this year, there were two entities operating under the name “Episcopal Diocese of Fort Worth.” One was associated with TEC, and the other was and is part of the Anglican Church in North America (ACNA). Both sides had a strong monetary incentive to claim the name, because all parties agreed that the “Episcopal Diocese of Fort Worth” owns church properties worth an estimated \$100 million.

The litigation began in 2009, when parties affiliated with TEC filed suit to recover property and assets from the ACNA parties. On February 22, after 12 years of wins and losses along the way, the TEC diocese lost its final appeal when the United States Supreme Court declined to hear the case. That left standing a 2020 ruling by the Texas Supreme Court that the ACNA diocese that left the Episcopal Church in 2008 was the continuing “Episcopal Diocese of Fort Worth.”



The Episcopal Diocese of Fort Worth (ACNA) photo St. Stephen's, Wichita Falls, as an Episcopal Church (left) and as it was turned over the Anglicans. | ACNA

In April, the TEC diocese changed its name to the Episcopal Church in North Texas (ECNT). Four of the dioceses's 16 congregations moved into temporary new homes, while a fifth congregation simply dispersed.

It's difficult to overstate the wrenching pain being felt by parishioners at the affected Fort Worth churches. The more common reason for a congregation to be forced out of a building is a gradual recognition that a dwindling membership can no longer afford to maintain the property. Even in cases like that, the closure of a church building — where generations of worshipers may have been baptized, confirmed, married, or interred in a columbarium — is often experienced as a tragedy on the same scale as a death in the family.

In Fort Worth, the pain is intensified because parishioners believe their church buildings have been stolen with the help of the courts. The homepage of one of the churches currently declares that “The congregation of St. Christopher Episcopal Church has moved to a new (temporary) location, because the Texas Supreme Court

unjustly awarded more than \$100 million of Episcopal Church property to people who left The Episcopal Church.”

The ACNA parties also have grievances. In papers filed with the Court of Appeals on April 26, attorneys for ACNA said that before some of the TEC parties vacated the buildings, “members and contractors began stripping, packing, and moving out all the personal property they could. Like the Grinch Who Stole Christmas, they removed altars, crosses, communion vessels, vestments, office furnishings, Bibles, library books, church music, software for the HVAC system, and every knife, fork, and spatula in the kitchen.”

The brief included photographs that appear to support the statement, and the ACNA diocese supplied additional photos to *TLC*. Before and after photos from St. Stephen's in Wichita Falls show a tidy worship space turned into a cavernous empty room. Among the items that appear to have been removed are approximately 20 pews, a large crucifix mounted on the wall, an organ or similar musical console, and

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an altar, pulpit, lectern, and baptismal font.

All Saints' in Fort Worth is the largest of the affected churches, with an average Sunday attendance before the pandemic of more than 400. Before and after pictures there show that the high altar was partly disassembled — stripped of its large, mounted crucifix, and of four wooden statues of saints.

Some disputed property was removed from all five of the churches affected, but not to the same extent as All Saints' and St. Stephen's.

The TEC congregations began scrambling to return items after District Court Judge John P. Chupp, the trial judge throughout the 12-year litigation, ordered April 20 that they must "immediately deliver, as required by the Final Judgment signed July 24, 2015, possession of all real and personal property, in existence at the time the original suit was filed on April 14, 2009, including all personal property necessary for the operations of the properties listed in the Final Judgment such as chalices, vestments, [B]ibles, and the like."

"Personal property" does not mean the same thing in legal terms as it does in common usage. In legal terms, personal property is all property other than "real" property — buildings and land, or real estate. So despite the word *personal*, the term actually applies to movable possessions owned by the church.

The TEC parties have appealed Judge Chupp's ruling to the Second Court of Appeals, arguing that the "Final Judgment" from 2015 — the ruling upheld by the Texas Supreme Court — did not actually discuss personal property. Personal property is discussed in a 2015 side agreement between the parties, and the parties disagree about whether that is enforceable as part of the ruling upheld by the Supreme Court.

On April 26, the Court of Appeals ruled there is "a serious question" that must be considered, and gave the parties deadlines in early May for filing briefs. Chupp's order has been stayed in the meantime.

The appeal is being driven largely by All Saints', an affluent parish that years

ago founded a school that is now a respected college preparatory school, with 1,000 students and a 147-acre campus four miles from the church. All Saints' Episcopal School is incorporated separately and is not part of the litigation. The TEC congregation at All Saints' Church began worshiping in the chapel at the school on May 2.

ACNA held its first service at All Saints' Episcopal Church on May 2, and the group's Facebook page shows that the altar has been reassembled. Enough property was returned to St. Stephen's to hold its first service. Three other church buildings were expected to open for services on May 16: St. Luke in the Meadow, St. Elizabeth and St. Christopher.

The ACNA management at All Saints' recently launched a website at asecfw.com that bears a striking resemblance to the TEC website at asecfw.org, which is also still active. TEC loyalists have complained on Facebook groups and elsewhere that ACNA is marketing itself deceptively. The ACNA site shows logos and images describing itself as "All Saints'

Episcopal Church," and does not acknowledge it is part of ACNA.

Suzanne Gill, director of communications for the ACNA diocese, denied any attempt to deceive, and said the website is still being developed.

She said the diocese plans to continue to call itself the Episcopal Diocese of Fort Worth, despite the confusion it will cause. "Our name was chosen at our founding convention, and any change would require ratification by two annual Conventions of the Diocese," she said, noting that there are other Christian entities with the word *Episcopal* in their name, such as the African Methodist-Episcopal Church and the Episcopal Church of Scotland.

The TEC diocese, on the other hand, is taking aggressive steps to clear up any confusion. Under the headline "Who We Are ... and Who Is Not Us," Communications Director Katie Sherrod explains:

"Please be aware that the group now using the name Episcopal Diocese of Fort Worth is not part of The Episcopal Church, but is instead part of a group

(Continued on next page)



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(Continued from previous page)

calling itself the Anglican Church in North America (ACNA). This group is not part of the Worldwide Anglican Communion. While some ACNA dioceses do ordain women, the ACNA diocese calling itself the Episcopal Diocese of Fort Worth does not. They are not welcoming of out LGBTQ people. They use a different prayer book. Their priests are not Episcopal priests.”

As in other dioceses where there have been protracted legal battles over property, there are wounds in Fort Worth that will take a long time to heal. Unfortunately, the wounding isn’t over.

A Different Model for Churches Changing Hands

By Kirk Petersen

In an era of bruising litigation over ownership of church properties, a prominent diocese and a church founded in 1698 are showing that amicable solutions are possible.

On April 29, Bishop Mariann Edgar Budde announced that the Diocese of Washington has sold Christ Church in Accokeek, Maryland, to the congregation that worships there — which has left the Episcopal Church (TEC).

Rector Brian Vander Wel told *TLC* by email that Christ Church “has been received as a congregation of the Diocese of the Mid-Atlantic in the Anglican Church in North America” (ACNA).

“The leadership and congregation of Christ Church feel it best to pursue their ministry outside of the Episcopal Church. While the leaders of the Diocese of Washington regret that decision, we honor it and have worked with Christ Church leaders toward mutually agreeable terms,” Budde said in the announcement.

The terms were not announced, and Budde and Vander Wel both declined to comment beyond their written statements.

The Rt. Rev. John Guernsey, bishop

of ACNA’s Diocese of the Mid-Atlantic, confirmed that Accokeek had joined his diocese. “The Rev. Brian Vander Wel and his people walked through their long process of negotiations with prayerfulness, faithfulness, and real, humble godliness,” he told *TLC*.

Accokeek is an unincorporated community of 10,000 people, situated along the Potomac River 15 miles south of the nation’s capital in an area first occupied by Native Americans four millennia ago. Christ Church began meeting in private homes in 1698, and its original structure was built a few years later. The current building was constructed in 1745.

Bishop Slates Continue Trend Toward Women

By Kirk Petersen

Three dioceses recently announced the candidates in their scheduled bishop elections: Iowa, Nevada, and Pittsburgh. One detail jumps out from a glance at the slates: Nine of the 10 original candidates are women. (Two male candidates were subsequently nominated by petition in Pittsburgh. There were no petition candidates in the other dioceses.)

The nominations continue a trend toward female bishops that has been accelerating in recent years.

TLC first took note of this phenomenon in 2018, when Correspondent G. Jeffrey MacDonald reported that through 2017, there had never been a bishop election in which all the candidates were women. In 2018, there were four such slates. After all the elections were held for the year, five women and five men had brand-new croziers. The 50 percent female cohort shattered the previous high-water mark of 20 percent female, way back in 1996.

In 2019, Mary Frances Schjonberg of Episcopal News Service published an extensively reported article on the flood of female bishops. At the time of her mid-year article, six of the eight bishops elected were women. Things balanced out a bit as the year progressed, leading to a full-year tally of

eight women and six men — 66 percent female.

The pandemic postponed several episcopal retirements and elections, so there were only five new bishops elected in 2020: two men and three women, or 60 percent female.

Thus far in 2021, only one new bishop has been chosen — a woman. The Rev. Canon Ruth M. Woodliff-Stanley was elected bishop diocesan in South Carolina on May 1, and she will be consecrated on October 2.

Statistics are interesting, but what matters most is the quality of the individual. Here's a look at the individual candidates:

Iowa

Three women have been nominated to be the X Bishop of Iowa. The election is scheduled for July 31, and consecration for December 18. The candidates selected by the nominating committee are:

- The Rev. Jennifer N. Andrews-Weckerly, rector, Hickory Neck Episcopal Church, Toano, Virginia
- The Rev. Betsey Monnot, priest in charge, St. Clement's Episcopal Church in Rancho Cordova, California; serves as a congregational consultant and retreat leader
- The Rev. Elizabeth Duff Popplewell, rector, St. Luke's Episcopal Church, Cedar Falls, Iowa

Nevada

Three women and a Native American man have been nominated to be the XI Bishop of Nevada. The election is scheduled for October 8, and consecration for March 2022. The candidates selected by the nominating committee are:

- The Rev. Elizabeth Bonforte Gardner, rector, St. Mark's, Alexandria, Virginia
- The Rev. Canon Holly Herring, canon precentor, Trinity Episcopal Cathedral, Phoenix
- The Rev. Julia McCray-Goldsmith, priest in charge, Trinity Episcopal Cathedral, San Jose, California
- The Rev. Canon Robert Two Bulls, missionary for Indian work and multicultural ministries, Diocese of Minnesota, and vicar of All Saints Indian Mission, Minneapolis

Pittsburgh

Three women initially were nominated to be the IX Bishop of Pittsburgh. Two men were added to the slate by petition. The election is scheduled for June 26, and consecration for November 13. The candidates selected by the nominating committee are:

- The Very Rev. Kim L. Coleman, rector, Trinity Episcopal Church, Arlington, Virginia
- The Rev. Dr. Ketlen A. Solak, rector, Brandywine Collaborative Min-

istries, Wilmington, Delaware

- The Rev. Diana L. Wilcox, rector, Christ Church in Bloomfield & Glen Ridge, Glen Ridge, New Jersey

The nominees by petition, pending completion of background checks, are:

- The Rev. Canon Scott A. Gunn, executive director, Forward Movement, Cincinnati
- The Rev. Jeffrey D. Murph, rector, St. Thomas Church, Oakmont, Pennsylvania

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Fletcher Sex Scandal Roils Evangelicals

By Kirk Petersen

Six months after a government-sponsored review accused the Church of England of having become “a place where abusers could hide,” additional revelations about sexual abuse by priests continue to haunt the church.

In 30 years as vicar of Emmanuel Church Wimbledon, the Rev. Jonathan Fletcher, now 78, is alleged to have engaged in naked beatings, swimming, and massages, as well as other sexual misconduct, and bullying and “spiritual abuse.” Fletcher, who played a prominent role in the conservative evangelical movement, was a leader of the since-closed Iwerne Camp, a Christian camp that catered to participants from top boarding schools. Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby worked at Iwerne as a young

man in the 1970s, but has said he knew nothing about any abuse.

Fletcher was not named in the 154-page IICSA report issued in October 2020, although some of his offenses were public knowledge well before the report. IICSA — the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse — did name other priests who had been accused or convicted of sexual abuse.

Emmanuel Church Wimbledon is a “proprietary chapel,” which in the Church of England refers to an Anglican church financially independent of the C of E. As vicar at Emmanuel, Fletcher was an Anglican priest but not an employee of the Church of England, and thus was not considered in the IICSA report.

Instead, he became the subject of a separate 146-page report issued on March 23, 2021, by thirty-one:eight, an independent Christian safeguarding charity. The organization’s name refers to Proverbs 31:8, “Speak out for those who cannot speak, for the rights of all the destitute.”

The thirty-one:eight report focused also on the culture of Emmanuel Church Wimbledon and its influence within the conservative evangelical community, saying:

“The examination of cultural elements of ECW gives an insight into how abuse could occur and not be disclosed. ...

“ECW was and continues to be interconnected and have ongoing relationships with many organisations in the wider Conservative Evangelical (CE) constituency. An individual who holds a position of esteem in such networks holds a position of power, even if such power is not reflected in an official organisational position within the network.

“The Review evidenced that JF was a man of great charisma and of significant influence in this sphere. ... JF’s approval was prized and noted by many as essential for career progression in this constituency.

The “Independent Lessons-Learned Review Concerning Jonathan Fletcher and Emmanuel Church Wimbledon” called among other things for the resignations of unspecified leaders in the conservative evangelical community.

Also on March 23, four members of an “Independent Advisory Group” that worked with the review team simultaneously issued a separate lengthy report that some observers believe muddied the waters. The 3,300-word report, presented as a single web page, took a stronger stand against four named leaders in the conservative evangelical movement: “Right Revd Rod Thomas (of the Church of England), Revd William Taylor, Canon Vaughan Roberts (Chair of Proclamation Trust) and Revd Robin Weekes (of ECW [Emmanuel Church Wimbledon]).”

The report said they failed to act quickly enough when misconduct became apparent, and called on the four men to “explain their actions and open themselves up to scrutiny.”

Yet another complicated layer of information emerged May 11, when “a group of 7 survivors of Jonathan Fletcher” issued a 30-page open letter to the chair of the lessons-learned review. The unsigned letter praised the thirty-one:eight report, but excoriated the IAG document, which “has left us profoundly hurt and confused. It has left us dismayed and angry — because of the unjustified erosion of trust in leaders we know acted responsibly, promptly and kindly.”

Among other concerns, the survivors said of the four men named in the IAG report, “These are the men who exposed JF at personal cost, ended his ministry (when the Diocese of Southwark failed to) and provided care for us in our suffering. We thank God for them. We are deeply grieved by the way the IAG and the Twitter coalition have treated them.” Two of the men, Weekes and Roberts, stepped down in April from their positions within the Anglican evangelical Church Society.



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Ugandan Clerics Say Government Official Attacked Them

By Mark Michael

Musa Ecweru, Uganda's cabinet minister of relief and disaster preparedness, is accused of pulling a gun on an Anglican priest and two lay readers and beating them with a metal rod and canes on May 8 in the latest in a series of high-profile disputes over church land ownership.

Ecweru, 56, was in the company of his bodyguard Juma Odioppe when he came upon the Rev. Simon Peter Olato, Benjamin Otasuro, and Simon Peter Eriku planting cassava stems in a field beside St. John's Church in Wera, a small town in eastern Uganda. The three clerics serve churches in the region, and Ecweru, who represents the district in Uganda's parliament, lives nearby.

Olato, the parish priest at St. John's, told *The Daily Monitor* that Ecweru called the three clerics "idiots," and asked who authorized them to

plant the field that he says belongs to Wera Seed School, a nearby government-controlled school he helped establish.

"As we looked on in awe, [Ecweru] pulled a gun and grabbed a metallic rod from the hands of his bodyguard [and] began to sporadically beat us," he said. Olato says he went back to his car for canes and proceeded to attack the clerics for another ten minutes.

"I told the minister that I am the reverend for St. John's Church, Wera, planting cassava stems under the food security program which the diocese is implementing, but the minister didn't heed. The minister caught me by the head, dragged me to the ground, hit me several times at the waist."

When the clergy cried out for help, a confirmation class meeting in the church rushed out into the field and Ecweru cocked his gun. "It is then that he told his bodyguard: 'Let's go, leave these idiots,'" said Otasuro, the lector

for the church in the nearby village of Aten, who says he was left bleeding from the head after being struck by the cabinet minister.

South Carolina Elects Change Expert as Bishop

By Mark Michael

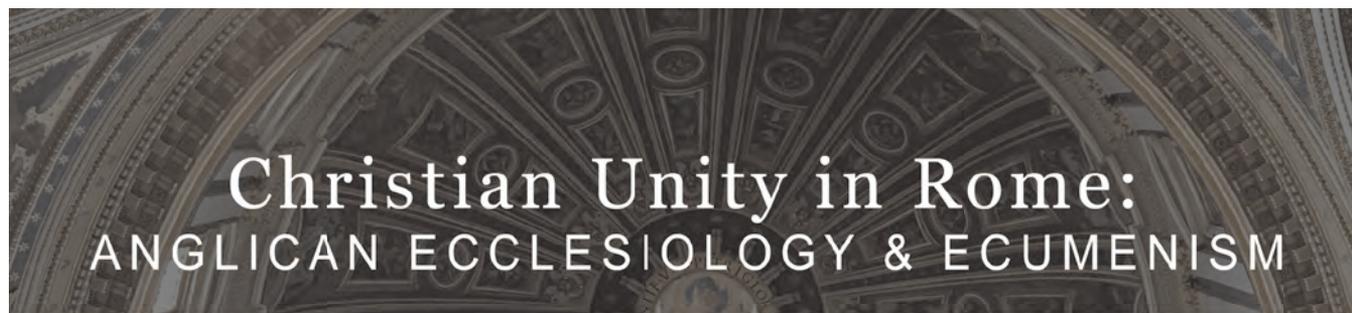
The Rev. Canon Ruth M. Woodliff-Stanley, an expert in strategic change, was elected on May 1 as the XV bishop of the Diocese of South Carolina, the first woman to serve in that role. Woodliff-Stanley, 58, was chosen on the second ballot from a field of five candidates.

Woodliff-Stanley's consecration on October 2 will mark the end of nearly a decade during which the diocese's Epis-



Woodliff-Stanley

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Episcopalians have been without a diocesan bishop, since South Carolina's XIV bishop, the Rt. Rev. Mark Lawrence, joined a majority of its parishes in leaving the Episcopal Church.

Bishop-elect Woodliff-Stanley joined the electing convention, which was held on Zoom, shortly after the election results were announced. "You have given a vision of what is possible," she told the delegates. "It's a vision I hope I can honor. ... Ours is the call to see the hearts of all the people of the world, beginning with one another."

She currently serves as canon for strategic change for the Dioceses of Northwestern Pennsylvania and Western New York, facilitating a process of resource-sharing initiated by the dioceses' shared bishop, the Rt. Rev. Sean Rowe. She is also the Episcopal Church Building Fund's senior vice president for strategic change.

As bishop, Woodliff-Stanley will lead about 7,500 Episcopalians, who are members of 31 churches in the eastern half of the state of South Carolina. Many of them are small "remnant" congregations of Episcopalian

loyalists. In the see city of Charleston, known to locals as "the Holy City," only a handful of the historically Episcopal churches are part of the diocese she will lead, most notably Grace Church Cathedral, a grand antebellum church elevated to that role in 2015. Its membership of nearly 2,000 counts for more than a quarter of the diocesan total.

Influential Sydney Diocese Elects Sri Lankan

By Mark Michael

The Very Rev. Kanishka Raffel, dean of Sydney's St. Andrew's Cathedral, was unanimously elected as the 12th Archbishop of Sydney by the diocese's synod on May 6. Raffel, a London-born Sri Lankan and a Buddhist convert to Christianity, will lead the vibrant conservative evangelical diocese, which has great power and influence in the GAFCON network.

"I'm humbled and somewhat daunted by the responsibility given me

by the Synod," Raffel told *Eternity News*, a Sydney-based Christian news network. "We believe that the Lord works through his people — both in making this decision and in enabling the archbishop to fulfil his role. Like every Christian, I gladly trust in Jesus."

Raffel, who has led Sydney's cathedral since 2016, was widely considered the favorite among the four candidates for the post, even though he was the only non-bishop on the slate. The website launched to promote his candidacy, introducingkr.org, focused on his deep commitment to evangelism and traditional teaching, as well as his skills at growing churches.

It also included endorsements of Raffel from prominent leaders within Australian Anglican evangelicalism, including Bishop Richard Condie of Tasmania, the leader of GAFCON Australia; and the Rev. Dr. Mark Thompson, principal of Moore Theological College.

Prior to his ministry at St. Andrew's Cathedral, Raffel was rector of St. Matthew's, Shenton Park, in Perth. There he oversaw a dramatic growth in the parish, and helped to plant five new congregations. He also attracted attention as a committed conservative in one of the Anglican Church of Australia's most liberal dioceses. "He was active as an evangelical leader in the Perth synod, where he often stood bravely for gospel truth," said introducingkr.org.

Sydney, Australia's largest city, is also its most ethnically diverse. Over 40 percent of its 2 million people, like the archbishop-elect, were born outside the country, and only a third of its inhabitants had both parents born in Australia.

Addressing the synod shortly after his election, Raffel said, "Globally, Anglican Christianity is ethnically diverse and our multiculturalism in Sydney mirrors that. I'm glad that our diocese reflects the changing ethnic makeup of our cities and values the participation of Australians of all back-

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grounds in our church life together. Our team of bishops is almost equal part Asian-background and Anglo. That is contemporary Australia.”

Raffel will likely play a significant role in the GAFCON network, which was led for many years by his one of his Sydney predecessors, Archbishop Peter Jensen. GAFCON’s initial formation emerged partly out of the strong links Sydney had cultivated over many generations with other evangelical Anglican dioceses, especially in Singapore and Malaysia.

Briefly

One of the five most-senior bishops in the Church of England is “stepping back” from his duties as **Bishop of Winchester** for a six-week period, in the face of a threatened no-confidence vote at the next diocesan synod, according to the *Church Times*. The Rt. Rev. Dr. Tim Dakin, 63, who has served as Bishop of Winchester since 2011, reportedly has been sparking discontent for years because of his management style. The *Church Times* reported that unidentified critics are unhappy with what they see as a “lack of pastoral care for clergy and the imposition of a particular approach to the Church’s ministry.”

An afternoon fire on May 18 destroyed the home of Rochester Bishop **Prince Singh**, who escaped safely after reportedly discovering the flames in his garage.

Singh, who lives in the suburban town of Perinton, New York, told Spectrum News that he was working from home and participating in a Zoom meeting when he heard a sound in his garage and went to check it out. “I opened the garage door and there was fire, so then I just closed the door, ran outside, called 911,” he said. “If I had not gone to see what was going on, I don’t think I’d have been that lucky.”

—David Paulsen, *ENS*



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Daring to Think About Church Growth

By Kirk Petersen

Over a year ago, we planned a series of stories about Episcopal congregations that were growing (*TLC*, March 22, 2020). We started with a top 10 list of fastest-growing churches, and with impeccable timing we posted it the same week that church services started closing for the pandemic.

Then it turned out that we hadn't really identified the 10 fastest-growing churches, because I misinterpreted the data. I slinked away, vowed never to do another top 10 list, and found a perverse sense of relief that I didn't have to think about church growth for a while.

Time has passed, the pandemic apparently is easing, churches are reopening, and we can dare to think about growth again. This is the first in a series of articles focusing on one of the fast-growing churches we identified a year ago.

St. Paul's Church, Prosper, Texas

When St. Paul's was planted as a new congregation in an elementary school in 2008, it began benefitting from perhaps the most potent driver of church growth: location in a rapidly growing area.

The population of the town of Prosper, at the far northern edge of the Dallas suburbs, grew 160 percent in the decade beginning with the 2010 census, and St. Paul's now has a building of its own. As we reported last year, St. Paul's average Sunday attendance grew from 121 to 226, or 87 percent, in the five years ending 2018. ASA was flat at 216 for 2019, while membership and pledge income increased. The Church Center asked congregations to report 2020 ASA for January through March 1 only, and that total was 213.



The Rev. Tom Smith, the vicar and only full-time employee, said the church now offers three Sunday services: Rite I without music at 8 a.m., and Rite II with music at 9 and 11. Pre-registration is required for the two later services, as capacity is limited to 50 percent, and masks are required.

Attendance has begun to bounce back, Smith said, bouncing around from 130 to 180 on recent Sundays, and hitting a high-water mark of 209 in early May. That was the Sunday when "we brought back consecrated wine, which the people haven't had in over a year. We did that with Baptist-style Communion cups," he said. "They were really happy about having both elements."

The church is in the Diocese of Dallas, and "We lost some people who were upset by being told by the bishop they had to wear masks," Smith said. "We gained other people who were glad that the bishop was doing it." They have two or three regular families who started attending because they "thought their own churches were playing too fast and loose." No St. Paul's members have died from COVID-19.

The church slashed its budget from about \$350,000 to \$275,000 for 2020, but donations have been running ahead of budget, and Smith says the budget may be re-evaluated in the summer. The building houses a popular preschool program with more than 100 children, which helps sustain the church financially.

Smith aims to reinforce "in any way possible why church, Communion, and hearing a sermon is important." The pandemic gave people a reason to fall away from church, but some are finding they cannot draw spiritual sustenance from Netflix.

"At the end of the service this week, I said to the people, 'You're going out into a hard and dangerous world.' You need food to sustain yourself. That's what Communion was. It was food to sustain you in a dangerous world. You needed this, and hopefully I'll see you next week, because you'll need it again."



The worship team at St. Aldate's Church, Oxford, England

staldates.org.uk

Learning from England: Lessons in Church Growth

By Jordan Hylden

What makes a church grow?

If the recent polling by Gallup is any indication, there are many church leaders asking that question these days who are not too sure of the answer. Since I was a teenager in youth group back in the late 1990s, church membership has dropped alarmingly: down from 70% to 47% today. That is a *lot* of decline in just 20 years. Savvier writers than I have debated what's behind it — highly publicized sex abuse scandals, historic shifts away from traditional Christian teaching on marriage and sexuality, and political polarization all surely have something to do with it. But whatever it is, church leaders today need to be very aware that complacency will not do. Those of us charged with leadership need to be active learners and prayerful penitents, seeking out what God is doing to renew his Church and humbly open to what God may also be doing to chasten and judge.

There are, of course, shelves full of books on church growth and leadership going back decades. I try to make it a habit to learn from these books, but some of them by now are a bit dated, and some could stand to be a bit more theologically and sacramentally grounded. That's why I recently read two books that seek to learn from church growth in England, where the secularizing trends that have picked up steam in the U.S. already happened decades ago, and where the Church of England gives myriad examples that are readily translatable to the sacramental worship of the Episcopal Church. If it's growing in the good old C of E, it's probably something we Episcopalians can learn from. Even better, the two books — *Learning from London* by Jason Fout, and *Northern Lights* by Jason Byassee — were written by scholar-pastors, trained as theologians and with a heart for the local church. I highly recommend both.

What then can we learn from the church in Old Blighty?

1. Do the basics well.

Byassee begins his book with a few observations that should surprise no one: “It seems to me the keys for growth are several: a clear and compelling mission, able and energetic leadership (preferably in place for a long period of time), a welcoming congregation engaged in mission, attention paid to discipleship and growth.”

There are many ways to do all of that, and his book, focused on church growth in the very secular region of northern England, tells the story of a wide variety of growing churches: conservative and contemporary evangelical, ancient cathedrals with high church traditional worship, and socially progressive churches heavily involved in social justice work. Both Byassee and Fout make clear that growth is not the exclusive preserve of one style of churchmanship over another. In that sense, there is no magic bullet: it's just not true that if you add screens and guitars, or choral Evensong for that matter, they will come!

It does however seem to be true that

a church that's clear and intentional about its mission does better than one that's fuzzy about what it believes or has a hard time focusing its collective efforts. The Diocese of London, Fout writes, expects its parishes to come up with outward-focused Mission Action Plans and to report back their self-assessment on how they're doing every year.

It also seems clear that growing churches tend to be ones with long-serving rectors or vicars. A constant churn of leadership puts the brakes on long-term growth, for obvious reasons. This isn't a new lesson for us, of course, but it does help in the C of E that clergy salaries are standardized churchwide: there's no leaving to seek better pay elsewhere, so perhaps less incentive to go. There are definite advantages to this arrangement, but it is unlikely that TEC will adopt it anytime soon. So long as we don't, any church will need to think about whether their clergy and staff are compensated in such a way that it's easy for their families to stick around, instead of easy for them to feel pressured to look elsewhere.

Being genuinely welcoming is easier said than done. Yes, we say on the sign that *The Episcopal Church Welcomes You*, but do we really? Fout makes the point that in many Episcopal congregations there are more graduate degrees than the general population has college degrees; for all of our talk about diversity, we tend to be a highly-educated, affluent bunch. As an established church, the C of E still has the sense that it's meant to be the church for everyone. Where it's growing, it's often because it's doing a good job at reaching out to average everyday people, not simply the highly educated few.

As our own Bishop Scott Benhase has recently noted, the bread-and-butter of church growth is about relationships: shaking the hands of newcomers, writing personal notes, telling people your “elevator speech” about why you love your church and inviting them to come, and so on. Part of Holy Trinity Brompton's explosive growth, Fout notes, came from a spiritual awakening that led them to grow in openness toward newcomers, really welcoming the stranger with warmth

and relational vulnerability. We Episcopalians have, I'm afraid, too often earned our “frozen chosen” tagline, perhaps fearing invading someone else's privacy or being pushy about our faith.

Attention paid to discipleship, surely, is critical: church must be a place where we're invited and enabled to grow in faith, in prayer, in holiness, in servant love. It's intriguing that the Alpha Course, which has been behind so much growth in England and worldwide, began its life as a course at HTB to teach the basics of the faith to new members.

The list of “basics” could be extended: communications, facilities, web presence, and the like. But if a church has long-serving dedicated leadership, a clear and compelling mission, and is a warm, welcoming community, it's got a lot going for it.

2. Center on the gospel of the risen and living Christ.

On theological grounds, of course, this is actually more “basic” than anything in the previous category. The growing churches surveyed by Fout and Byassee, though they come in all shapes and sizes, are connected by a clear sense that the beating heart of their life and mission is the living God, the gospel of grace, Christ's atoning sacrifice for our sins, the new life and transformation given to us in the power of the Holy Spirit.

The growing churches they look at tend to be places of prayer. They pray expecting that God heals diseases, changes lives, and transforms hearts. They seek God's will, in full expectation that God will show up and lead his church. They preach Christ crucified and risen. They tell people about the good news of salvation in Jesus as if their lives depended on it. They are places where people are not afraid to speak openly, from the heart, about what Jesus has done in their lives, and not afraid to share Jesus with others.

Sam Wells writes in his foreword that *Northern Lights* is actually “a book

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about the Holy Spirit. Not a Spirit who has self-isolated into tongues and healings, but one who constantly, relentlessly, astonishingly makes the risen Christ present where all seemed lost, forlorn, forsaken.” The same could be said of Fout’s book, which attempts to describe why the Diocese of London has experienced remarkable growth in the very same period that almost all Anglican dioceses in the West have experienced decline. A great part of the story, Fout writes, is simply “openness to God,” and an expectation that God is alive and acting through his Church right now. The churches Byassee and Fout write about tend not to have grown through increased professionalism or this or that program or technique. Instead, they’ve grown as they’ve listened intently and prayed fervently for God’s leading, and sought to follow where the Lord led.

In the follow-up to his post about relationships, Bishop Benhase makes a similar point, making clear that as basic as everything he said about relational ministry is, even more fundamental is the gospel of Jesus Christ. “The most critical point,” Benhase writes, is a ministry focused “on God’s grace imputed to sinners by Christ’s cross.” During his years recruiting in seminaries, Benhase relates how he made a practice of pretending to be an average Joe asking seminarians why he should join their church. Far too often, he writes, all they could come up with was something about great community, the music program, or active outreach — all of which he’d respond to by saying he didn’t need church for that. “I

waited patiently,” Benhase writes, “for some mention of how their church could meet my greatest need, namely, to be reconciled with God through Jesus by his cross. Never came.”

Perhaps the greatest thing we Episcopalians can learn from England is what many of the English learned years ago: when all of the other reasons people used to have to go to church fall away, the only good reason left is Jesus, his cross and our salvation. As it turns out, that is the only reason we’ve ever needed.

3. Churches that intend to grow tend to grow.

At the beginning of his research, Byassee assumed that it probably wasn’t all that important to growth for a church to be focused on growth as such. “Growth is something you get not by aiming at it,” he reasons initially, “but by aiming at something else. Aim at growth and you may get it, you may not, but it’s not the goal. The goal is faithfulness to Jesus Christ, a community’s life shaped around him, taking part in his redemption of the world. Clear and winsome devotion to that — alignment of a church’s budget and hiring and liturgy and attention around Jesus — will fascinate and draw others.”

By the end of his research, he decides that while he had been largely right, it also made a real difference to intentionally work to grow. Learning from the researcher David Goodhew, he comes to agree that “churches that intend to grow tend to grow,” as

Goodhew often notes. Growth is indeed something to aim for, as it focuses efforts on actually reaching out to the surrounding community in imaginative ways, instead of allowing collective energies to be internally-focused and then wondering why new people don’t show up. Like a diet, nearly any approach to church growth can work and usually will. The important thing is to try, to learn, and when some initiative inevitably fails, to try again.

Both writers emphasize that no single approach or program is a magic bullet, and that the important thing is to prayerfully seek out what God is calling you to do in your community with your church’s particular set of gifts. There is no one size fits all program to follow, except to be truly focused on Christ’s saving work, to pray as if you expect that God will show up, and to listen and obey the Spirit’s lead.

That said, there are a number of initiatives that God has used to renew congregations time and time again. First and foremost is the Alpha Course, which 24 million people have taken since it started in 1993 at Holy Trinity Brompton. Its creators point out that they never intended it to be an evangelism course, but that’s what it became: it was more of a discovery, they like to say, of what God was up to than any forethought on their part. In essence, Alpha walks through the basics of the faith in an 11-week series, with recorded talks over dinner followed by open-ended conversations. Hosts are there to be hospitable, but not to answer anyone’s questions: that’s left up to the Holy Spirit. Church members are asked to commit to prayer for those taking the course, especially during the Holy Spirit weekend, where inquirers are invited to pray for the Spirit to come into their lives. Many testify that these weekends are where they were met and transformed by Christ.

Messy Church is another C of E initiative that’s met wide acclaim, with some 500,000 attending Messy Church services each month in over twenty countries. Unlike Sunday School, which is designed for parents to drop



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off their kids and go, Messy Church is designed for parents and children to do together: skits, games, snacks, coloring, a kid-friendly lesson, and so on. Several clergy Byassee spoke with said that Messy Church is their best-

There is no one size fits all program to follow, except to be truly focused on Christ's saving work.

attended church service of any kind, including their regular Sunday morning worship! Fout relates a statistic told him by Bishop Nic Thorpe, that 40 percent of church growth in England is owed to Messy Church.

Messy Church is only one example of how growing churches in England have gotten creative about building bridges to their communities, serving felt needs, getting out and about instead of simply focusing on building a better Sunday morning experience. Fout and Byassee both describe a number of outward-focused ministries that seek to lower the threshold for getting involved in church, ways of opening the church up to the neighborhood and sending the church out into the neighborhood. Holy Trinity Brompton offers practically oriented courses on managing finances, marriage, and parenting. "Fresh Expressions" have popped up in thousands of places, praying and worshiping small communities that meet in coffee shops, pubs, homes, and more. Sam Wells, noticing the stream of people who attend St. Martin-in-the-Fields for noon weekday concerts, began offering theological meditations each Thursday on some piece of great sacred music performed by St. Martin's musicians. Now, instead of a poorly attended Thursday Eucharist, he has 250 people attending each week to encounter Christ both in word and the beauty of music.

What makes a church grow? There is much that can be said about this program or that initiative, much of it worthwhile. Finally, what makes a church grow is not any particular program, but the holy fire and passionate love that is behind all of the programs, initiatives, handshakes, and handwritten notes that God is using to



Holy Trinity Brompton, London

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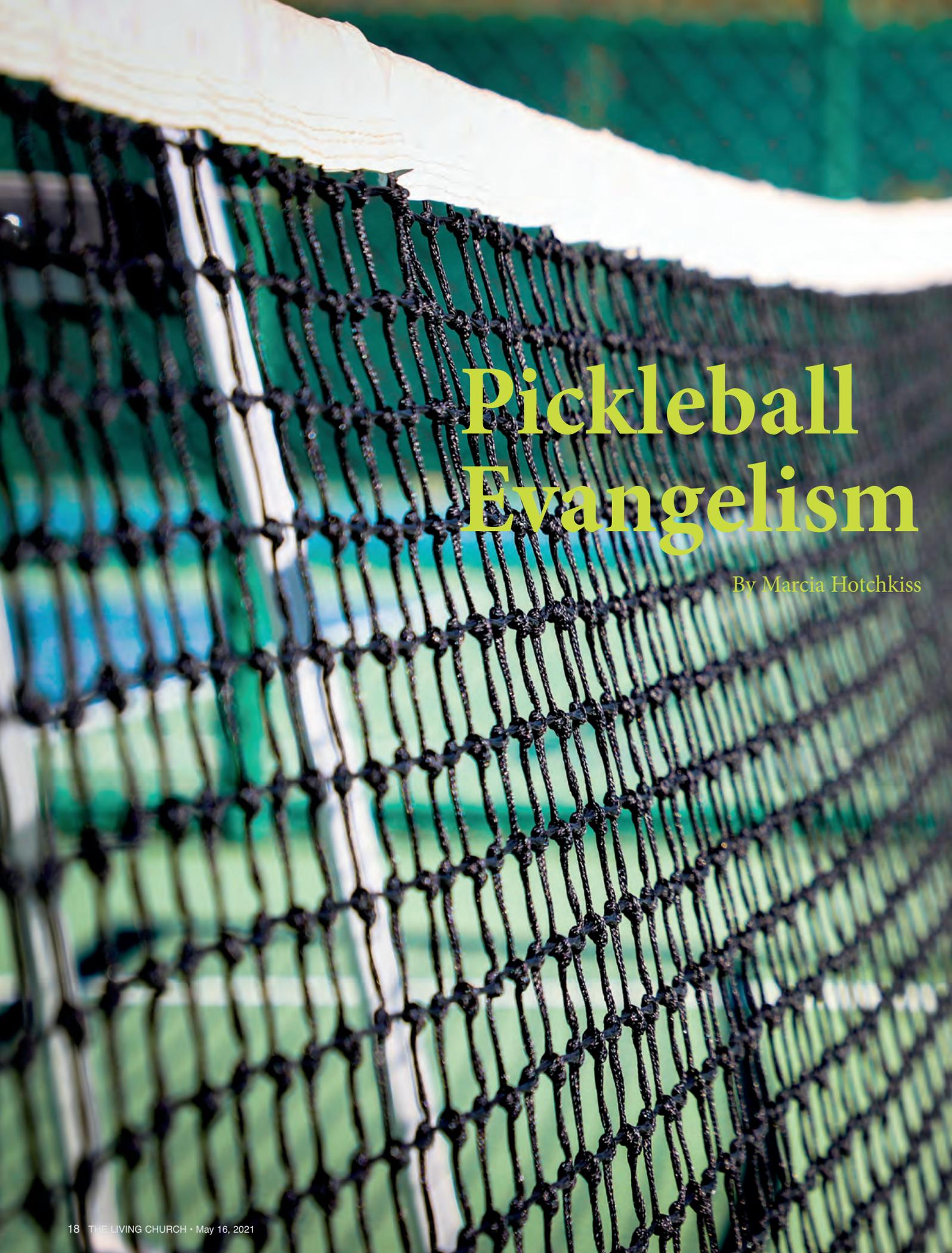
renew his Church. If there is a great, all-consuming conviction that the gospel of Jesus Christ is the pearl of great price, worth selling all that we have; if there is a great passion for introducing people to Jesus and a great love that sends us out into the mission fields to see lives transformed, then God's Church will grow.

If we have lost our first love, and if our hearts have gone complacent and lukewarm, then the Lord will spew us

out of his mouth (Rev. 2:4; 3:16).

But the living God is alive and well in England, filling up old churches that 50 or 30 years ago had dwindled to almost nothing with new life and the fire of the Spirit. God's Spirit can breathe new life into our dry bones, too.

The Rev. Canon Dr. Jordan Hylden is canon theologian for the Diocese of Dallas and priest associate at St. Augustine's Episcopal Church in Dallas.



Pickleball Evangelism

By Marcia Hotchkiss

My husband and I began playing Pickleball (America's fastest-growing sport) with a diverse group two or three times a week during the pandemic. Because this activity was outdoors and people were socially distanced, it was safe and a great way to get much-needed exercise.

As is often the case, in short measure, we were outed as an Episcopal priest and "the preacher's wife" (their words). This led to some funny moments when Tom was designated "Father Badass" after his pickleball skills improved. And it also led to some honest conversations about our friends' struggles with religion and the church. These were often directed at me because I was "the safe one."

Two of the other women ended up coming to church with me a couple of weeks ago to hear Tom preach. They said that Good Shepherd Episcopal Church in Dallas was beautiful and they were moved by the music of the small choir (due to the lasting precautions) and the liturgy. The two even said they would like to come back. So far, relational evangelism was working.

Just one week later we were all back at the courts when one of these same friends became insistent that COVID was really not a problem and the vaccine caused more issues than the virus. Suddenly, I jumped in to refute her. I said that my cousin's healthy, robust 37-year-old son died of COVID last spring, and that in 2021, I believed in medical science. Of course, she came right back at me with her beliefs, and finally I had the good sense to reply, "Well let's just agree to disagree." Still, I felt some damage had been done.

I told my husband that evening that I was kicking myself for entering into this heated discussion. That prompted me to thinking about why I had felt the need to jump in at all. Was it my need to be right? Was it my tendency to play devil's advocate when someone takes an extreme position? Was it my arrogance that I know how others should lead their lives?

As I reflected on this, I had to honestly admit that it was probably some of all three. It made me think of Dr. Phil's words, "Would you rather have the relationship or would you rather be right?" But even more than that, it made me think of how that type of prescriptive condescension never draws people in. There was certainly no evidence of the fruits of the Spirit as described in Galatians 5: 22-23: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control."

It seems the pandemic has only made the toxic political and culture wars worse. It makes me sad that we Christians have all too often participated in this mud-slinging public dialogue. Is that really the face we want to show to the world? Will that bring anyone to Christ?

Bishop FitzSimons Allison used to say "original sin means that human nature is evenly distributed." Personally, I have found this to be true in my life. That's why sometimes I just want to be right, and I can't believe others don't appreciate my wisdom.

But then I remember Jesus. As Zach Williams sings,

Oh Lord help me be
A little more like mercy, a little more like grace
A little more like kindness, goodness, love, and faith
A little more like patience, a little more like peace
A little more like Jesus, a little less like me.

That is the best evangelism I know. Jesus is still attractive, even in the midst of conflict and hate. Oh Lord, help me be a little more like Jesus and a little less like me.

Marcia Hotchkiss is a spiritual director, speaker, and author who is a parishioner at Good Shepherd, Dallas, where her husband, Tom, is the vicar, and a cofounder of The Abbey on Lovers Lane.

Remembering a Broken Body

The 2021 Bampton Lectures:
“Four-Dimensional Eucharist”

By Jessica Martin

youtu.be/E2SG4TdAXBY

Review by Micah Latimer-Dennis

I spent the Sunday mornings of last year on both sides of a computer screen. Halfway through the year, I transitioned from watching worship to helping lead it. I was happy to make the switch. Serving in the altar party, I no longer had to wonder what it was I was doing.

The screen seemed less important on the other side. The cameras strapped to the pillars reminded me, sometimes, of the oddity of what was happening, but I found it far easier to feel I was worshiping when I was at church.

Occasionally, though, even on the recorded side of the screen the strangeness breaks through. In her recent Bampton lectures, Jessica Martin describes one such moment. Raising a consecrated host before a camera in an empty cathedral, she recalls thinking, “It’s come full circle — the year might as well be 1521. But the rood screen is an electronic one.” The resemblance to late Medieval practice is uncomfortable. Once again the laity could see but not eat the Bread. Proximity to the Sacrament was reserved for clergy.

It’s one of many illuminating and unsettling observations Martin gives in her lectures, collectively titled “Four-Dimensional Eucharist.” The talks explore Christianity’s central rite in the context of the COVID pandemic and the wider context of contemporary life. As her title suggests, she’s particularly interested in how the rift between life on and offline and, beneath it, between seeing the world as simply material and seeing it as open to something more, affect worship.

Perhaps it’s appropriate, then, that the first pair of lectures, “The Point of



The Rev. Canon Dr. Jessica Martin, delivers the Bampton Lectures in May.

Eucharist” and “Flat Eucharist: Schemes and Screens,” were given to an empty University Church in Oxford. Parts three and four, “The Eucharist as Theatre: Place and Space” and “The Eucharist in Time,” had an audience present alongside the digital livestream.

The lectures are four meditations on what it means to celebrate today the meal the Lord instituted. Each returns to the question I had to keep myself from asking last year before a screen: What are we doing when we celebrate the Eucharist? They proceed by observation and allusion more than argument.

Before her ordination to the priesthood and ministry in a multi-parish benefice, Martin taught English literature at Cambridge. She now serves as residentiary canon at Ely Cathedral. The lectures reflect the breadth of her experience. Poems by John Donne and Osip Mandelstam open two lectures, but contemporary culture comes in too — avant garde music, video games, and, more than once, Patricia Lockwood’s memoir, *Priestdaddy*. Though the range of references sometimes feels stretched, Martin’s use of cultural and sociological terms for a rite usually described in strictly theological lan-

guage is welcome.

The talks defy easy summary. But a strand running through all four is her worry about how the ritual works today. The community of sacramental Christians in the United Kingdom is shrinking, as it is in the United States and Canada. And those in this community are, like those outside it, subject to the same pervasive uncertainty about how matter and the immaterial interact.

Of course this uncertainty has roots in debates about the Eucharist, and the continued inability of Christians generally and Anglican Christians specifically to agree on what happens at the altar makes the rite ambiguous. And this has a direct consequence: “we have no idea how to catechize.”

Martin worries that the connection between word and meaning in eucharistic ritual today is broken. This isn’t to say that God doesn’t meet us at the table. But those who eat and drink (when they’re able to) at the Church’s feast come with a “split sensibility.” Arguments about the rite, and our ambivalence about the material world’s connection with the invisible, keep many from coming to communion undivided. Screens split in a different though analogous way: worship is

divided between those on and in front of a screen. To those outside the Church, the rite may be more readily accessible online, but its meaning is more obscure.

It's no surprise Martin doesn't offer a solution. She comes closest to a response in the fourth lecture. Earlier in the lectures, ritual is described as a door between matter and spirit. It exists, Martin says, "in the subjunctive mood." Bread may become God; the painful end of one man's life may become the hope of the rest of humanity.

In the final lecture, the focus shifts to time. Just as musicians use repetition to evoke endlessness, the repeated action of Holy Communion is the place where the present and the permanent meet, she says. The repeated enactment of Christ's sacrifice does more than show what once took place. In remembering his life, death, and resurrection, we are met by him. And in this remembering the gaps and holes and wounds of our own pasts are met too. What happened on the road to Emmaus keeps happening. Remembering the broken body changes those present.

As churches return to in-person worship, alongside questions about the logistics of worshiping safely will be questions about presence and absence. The recording equipment in many churches won't go away simply because the threat of contagion has. And of course the ambivalence many Christians feel about what words prayed over bread and wine can do won't go away either.

Listening to Martin's lectures half a world away, I found myself hoping that whatever shape worship takes, the cost of presence would be remembered. Too often this past year it has felt as if worship only worked when our separation was temporarily forgotten. When that separation is behind us, its cost should be remembered. Christ is present to us in the Sacrament because he was broken. As his body comes together again around the altar, I hope we remember the cost.

Micah is a transitional deacon in the Anglican Church of Canada. A native of Chicago, he lives in Toronto with his wife.

Diverse Bishops Honored at Wycliffe College Event

By Cole Hartin

Wycliffe College in Toronto awarded honorary degrees to an archbishop from the Global South and two Canadian bishops representing Anglicans in the Arctic and Anglicans of multicultural backgrounds in Canada at a ceremony held virtually on May 17. Wycliffe is an evangelical Anglican seminary on the campus of the University of Toronto. Along with six other theological colleges, it is part of the Toronto School of Theology.

The bishops receiving Doctor of Divinity honors were the Most Rev. Mouneer Anis, Archbishop of the Anglican Province of Alexandria and Bishop of Egypt; the Rt. Rev. Annie Ittoshat, Suffragan Bishop of the Arctic; and the Rt. Rev. Stephen Leung, Area Bishop of Asian and Multicultural Ministries of the Anglican Network in Canada.

Archbishop Anis offered the Convocation Address the following day on "The Vocation of the Minority Church in a Multicultural Context." He spoke about the distinct challenges for Christians who are minorities in both secular Western cultures, and in Eastern, predominantly Islamic, cultures.

"Both Churches in the East and the West are minorities facing challenging and sometimes hostile cultures in today's world," Anis said. He focused on the importance of the Church's mission, noting that it "it is not an option to be adopted or neglected, but a crucial vocation of the Church to be fulfilled so that the Church might be the living body of Christ."

Archbishop Anis spoke of the great growth occurring in regions of his see, including in the Horn of Africa, where in 2000 there were only seven churches, and now there are 140.

He emphasized that the success in the Middle East came through the Church fulfilling its mission through a

holistic vision of the Gospel, in which Christians are concerned not only for the spiritual welfare of their communities but for their physical well-being as well. He highlighted interfaith initiatives that aim for the common good in Egypt as examples of Christian witness

"When we tolerate the norms of society, they creep into the heart of the Church."

—Bishop Stephen Leung

in a challenging context.

Bishop Leung offered a response to Archbishop Anis's lecture, praising his emphasis on mission.

"If we allow the Holy Spirit to reign and meet us in mission, as the Holy Spirit did at Pentecost, God the Spirit will do the same great missional work today. Regardless of our small number, this is the promise God has given to us. God will use the minority to despise the majority."

Bishop Leung also noted the dangers that come from losing sight of the Church's distinctly Christian mission, pointing to schools and other institutions that have in effect ceded to secularism, though they may have been founded by Christians eager to proclaim the Gospel.

"When we tolerate the norms of society, they creep into the heart of the Church," he warned. Bishop Leung stressed making the Gospel intelligible to local cultures without muddling our

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priorities. He emphasized that the Church must “hold on to God’s call, to preach the Gospel and to build up [indigenous] converts as leaders of the Church.”

After Leung’s response, participants were invited to pose questions to the honorees.

The Rev. Dr. Ephraim Radner, professor of historical theology, moderated the discussion. Each bishop spoke at length in answer to a question about the unique challenges in both their

Eastern and Western contexts.

Bishop Ittoshat called the COVID-19 pandemic a “shaking” from God. “For the people of the North, there has always been this knowing there is a God,” she said. “We have always known there is that higher than ourselves. When COVID hit, there was a shake for everyone, a shake that he is God, that he is a God who is in control.”

For Ittoshat, the pandemic was reminder to the Northern people of their faith’s importance.

Dr. Radner asked each bishop to

express their dream from God for the Church.

“I dream that the Church would become strong and focused more on the mission of Christ and engaged more with the society,” Anis said. “This is the dream I have, to see the Church really loving the majority, not loving because of a hidden agenda, but loving because Jesus loved everybody.”

The Rev. Dr. Cole Hartin is assistant curate of St. Luke’s, Saint John, New Brunswick.



All Saints’ Episcopal Church, Kauai, Hawaii, dedicated a new pipe organ on May 16, the only church on the island with a pipe organ. The organ is unique in having the stops translated into the Hawaiian language, including one for a conch shell (middle of bottom row in photo above). Gold leafing was applied to the facade by volunteer artists from the congregation. The pipes are a combination of new and reused from the former organ. The number of pipes was increased fourfold. The project had been in the works for the better part of a decade and the cost was \$500,000, with no debt remaining. The church’s original pipe organ was installed in 1925. Visit allsaintskauai.org to learn more and see other photos.

Photo courtesy of All Saints’ Episcopal Church



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‘The Hybrid Church’: What Is It? Part 1



By Neva Rae Fox
Correspondent

When pandemic restrictions were thrust upon all areas of life, many in the Episcopal Church transferred to an online alternative for worshiping in order to maintain connections and spirituality.

But now that restrictions are being lifted, three overriding questions arise: Will churches return solely to in-person worship? Or will churches opt for online only? Or will a hybrid emerge that captures the essence of church and fills many needs?

The hybrid church uses both online and in-person worship.

An examination of hybrid church evokes various, albeit fundamentally similar, attitudes.

“Hybrid as a blended model is the way I am looking at it going forward,” said Bishop DeDe Duncan-Probe of the *Diocese of Central New York*. “Some people in a place and some people who are tuning in.”

“My definition of a good hybrid would be livestreaming the services, then you bring Communion to people in one way or another, and for things — programs or Bible study — have people able to phone in,” said the Rev. Hannah

Armidon, a supply priest in the Diocese of Springfield.

“Hybrid church is inclusive church,” said the Rev. Tim Schenck of St. John the Evangelist in Hingham, Massachusetts. “Not only can we connect in our own community with those who cannot be there for whatever reason — illness, vacation, homebound — there are so many reasons to embrace hybrid worship.”

Many look at hybrid worship as a form of evangelism. Duncan-Probe is one of them. “Hybrid, evangelism, inclusivity. Zoom allows for greater reach and greater evangelism.”

“One of the gifts of the pandemic is that it taught us new ways to evangelize,” agreed Bishop Andy Doyle of the Diocese of Texas.

Doyle, the author of *Embodied Liturgy: Virtual Reality and Liturgical Theology in Conversation*, added, “Hybrid can be a form of evangelism, but evangelism is meant to bring people into the church. Bible study online — yes. Book study online — yes. It’s not Eucharist.”

“Hybrid can be a form of evangelism,” Armidon agreed. “Bible study is evangelism — that’s the place where you can ask all the questions. That’s a good way of using the online presence without sacrificing the community. I

think it’s more like church shopping, which I think is dangerous.”

She added, “I think it could end up fracturing communities. It can be isolating. People’s lives are a mess right now. I think the online provides flexibility. But for the sacraments and those acts of communal worship, that’s the biggest danger, of losing that.”

For some, hybrid is the future.

“Our digital presence matters more now than ever,” said Canon Mike Orr of the Diocese of Colorado. We’ve spent the last 14 months connecting online with worshipers, and that experience has been transformational. We’ve been forced to think beyond our walls in a new digital space, for worship, for spiritual formation, and for community engagement, and it has worked. We’ve grown in new ways and experienced community like never before.”

The Rev. David Peters of St. Joan of Arc in Pflugerville, Texas, considers online and social media critically important now more than ever. “It’s the nature of the reality today,” he said. “I think it always will be.”

As a church planter, Peters “was always looking for ways to connect with people. Hybrid works if you focus on both groups — those who show up in person, those who show up online.”

He first turned to the social media platform TikTok solely to meet his neighbors. Now, he has 89,000 followers on TikTok.

“TikTok loves novelty,” Peters said. “I was the first Episcopal priest who was more liturgical on TikTok. I got the little spotlight in the beginning. Not much anymore. That’s how the viral world works.”

During the pandemic, Washington National Cathedral has experienced an upsurge of online followers across the country creating a robust community. “We are fostering a community,” said Kevin Eckstrom, chief communications officer. “There is a defined online community that has been built.”

He added, “I think hybrid is here to stay. It might look different — it might shrink or contract, but those people are there. We plan to be there for them. They are part of our cathedral universe. Whether they come once a week or once a month or once a year, they are our community.”

“We have learned to live into the national part of National Cathedral.”

Orr said hybrid is an opportunity for new ministries, citing “online ushers and greeters, engaging people in chat, preparing the technology.”

“Hybrid is really important,” Schenck said. “Absolutely there is a place in the Episcopal Church for hybrid.”

Schenck wrote *Hybrid Church: A Way Forward for Church Leaders*. “During the pandemic, there were challenges, but we got creative and experienced community and God in some very life-giving ways.”

Schenck reckoned that this may be a turning point. “This is it,” he said. “We need to embrace it. It’s not that traditional worship is getting thrown out. It’s getting blended. This is a huge opportunity for us as the church. We can’t go back to the way it’s always been and pretend that this pandemic didn’t happen.”

He added, “We met and worshiped with people from all sorts of ZIP Codes.

Virtual parishioners are real parishioners. They can be part of their community. Hybrid broadens the scope of ‘Who is my community?’”

Calling online ministry “the ultimate church shopping experience,” Schenck

added, “The world has changed. With digitally integrated ministry, we are really trying to integrate the ministry between the brick and mortar, and online.”

“The blessing of this pandemic time is that we’ve had to figure out how to be church outside our buildings,” said Bishop Kym Lucas of Colorado. “More congregations have begun using technology like Zoom and social media to host not only worship but also for spiritual formation and community engagements. I suspect more people have heard of, and engaged with, the Episcopal Church in the last year than in the last 10 years and I hope that we continue reaching out with our message of love, mercy, and justice.”

Bishop Pierre Whalon chairs the House of Bishops’ Ecclesiology Committee and presented “Questions for a Strange Time” for conversation. In it, he addressed the 1918 pandemic in which “50 to 75 million people died in that year, including two of my great-aunts. Thank God COVID-19 is nothing like that! But they did not have the internet then, obviously, and the ready availability of that technology now has led to creative and effective ways to stay connected to each other and God.”

But Hybrid also raises many concerns for some church leaders.

“When we digitize, we have cut the gospel off at the knees,” Armidon said. “It’s a tool, but it can’t be the only means of worship or community.”

The Rev. James R. Rickenbaker, assistant rector at Aquia Church in Stafford, Virginia said, “Hybrid church fosters a consumer approach to church. You can watch one church one Sunday and another church the next, all from the comfort of your couch.”

Rickenbaker said that the online and in-person “do not need to be the same” and he feels strongly that “the online option should be less attractive than the in-person.”

“I don’t think we need to be fostering online community,” Rickenbaker said. “I think it’s a good thing for this time, because it has helped people to be in community.”

However, Rickenbaker named concerns. “First and foremost, we are losing the sacraments. We are losing

a sense of embodied worship. Being together to worship the one true God — that’s what we are called to be. And that’s what we are called to do. In-person should be normative. We get the sacraments. We get to worship God. And there is something formative about the liturgy that should not be missed.”

While he supports online Morning and Evening Prayer, Rickenbaker said, “If we can funnel people from online virtual worship to in-person worship, that’s the goal. I don’t foresee online worship as a goal. It should be a means to a purpose to have people in-person.”

The Rev. John Mason Lock of Trinity in Red Bank, New Jersey, doesn’t believe watching worship virtually fulfills spiritual needs. “We’re not just consumers when we go to church,” Lock said. “We are engaged.”

He added, “On the other hand I can see why people would want to continue virtually. I think there will be a lot of pushing to retain it. It does have advantages.”

As there are concerns, there are also hopes for hybrid.

“My hope that we will listen to the Spirit,” Duncan-Probe said. “That we will listen and allow God to transform the Church. The real interest is in people knowing Jesus and finding God. That we make disciples.”

“My hope is that people remain,” Lock said. “We are redirected to come back together not only as a Church but as a community of Christian people, in a renewed faith.”

“We live in an in-between time,” Doyle said. “We see the internet as a great massive disrupter in society, that has a huge influence on us. A part of what’s happening is an embellishment — we still see it as a thing, but in 50 years it won’t be separate. The way our lives and bodies are meshed with technology, it will be an appendage.”

He added, “I think we need to see this as an opportunity to grow and stretch. We should not be afraid of it, but we need to be wary of those things that may be damaging to others. This is an opportunity to open doors to a place where people have a feeling of safety and a way to navigate. A safe place.”

“We need to ask questions now, for the future.”

Spiritual Disciplines for a Digital Age — An Interview with Dr. Sara Schumacher

Sara Schumacher is the author of Reimagining the Spiritual Disciplines for a Digital Age, and a dean, tutor, and lecturer in theology and the arts at St. Mellitus College in London. On a recent episode of The Living Church podcast, she discussed the spiritual disciplines with Amber Noel. Here are excerpts of that conversation.

What is a spiritual discipline? What are the primary goals of a spiritual discipline?

The spiritual disciplines put us into the way of the Spirit. They are the practices, handed down through the tradition of the Church, found in Scripture, that Christians have participated in and practiced individually and corporately, to be conformed into the image and likeness of Christ.

How are the spiritual disciplines most apt to be frustrated in our age?

The first thing that comes to mind is attention — attention to God. The distraction of digital technology, and the fact that our attention is the commodity of digital technology, that app developers need it in order to make money, is a particular challenge. Our attention to God has always been under threat.

In your booklet, you focus on three spiritual disciplines: solitude, simplicity, and Sabbath. After a year of being in and out of lockdown, how is solitude different from loneliness or isolation?

Solitude is about creating space, and I think it's also about creating time. What it means is that when you create that space, that space is then able to be filled with the presence of the Spirit as the other disciplines are practiced. And that's where I've come to learn the difference between solitude and loneliness. For me, loneliness feels like an empty space. There's this space around you, but it's an emptiness.

I ended up four months on my own in lockdown because both of my flatmates ended up stuck in their respective countries of origin. And there were times of solitude, but by the grace of God I didn't feel loneliness. There was a quality to my solitude, there was a fullness to my solitude, and it was like I wasn't alone. This is why people can be lonely even when they're surrounded by other people. The loneliness is there because there's a diminished quality to the relationships even with those that are around. And there's something in solitude, as that space is created, as we commune with God, in which we know we're not alone.

So how does this specifically relate to digital technology, in the life of the Church as well as in the lives of individual Christians?

When we practice solitude as individuals — if in solitude we become attentive to God, attentive to ourselves — we then become attentive to others, which is where the individual then turns to the building up of the body of Christ. We are called to care for one another, to love our brothers and sisters. The corresponding outworking of practicing solitude as an individual leads us to loving and caring and responding attentively, carefully, and wisely to those God has put around us. But then that affects how we live in the world, because we also then become attentive to “Who is my neighbor?” Because I am letting my mind and heart be conformed into Christlikeness, it starts with an individual practice, but then ends in having ecclesial and missional implications.

Do we need to impose disciplines or fasts on ourselves, like a cleanse, when it comes to the use of digital technologies in worship these days? Like one service a month, where we don't stream, for example? One service a month we might worship “the old fashioned way,” and for those who

can't come, we'll feel that loss, we'll pray for them, but we will practice a kind of solitude, camera-free?

I think that's a really interesting idea. It made me think that the one place I've experienced a collective solitude, not so much from cameras but from our phones, is the cinema. There's an advert at the beginning of the film that says something like, "Please switch off your phones, and enter into the wonderful world of the cinema." And people obey. Clearly, we are capable of collective solitude. And when we come together to worship God, we are collectively coming into his presence. And surely that is worthy of switching our phones off and being fully attentive and present to him and to each other. But yet we don't seem to have either the courage to do that, or, dare I say, the imagination, to believe that what we're going to experience in that space is worthy of such action. I think a collective commitment is something really interesting to explore.

What does a life lived simply look like, in terms of spiritual discipline?

Simplicity is about learning to let go. It's letting go so that we can grasp onto that which is most important. "Seek

first the kingdom of God, and all these things will be added unto you." I think that verse is marking what the life of simplicity is. It forces us to interrogate: "What am I paying attention to? What am I holding to? What has become an inordinate attachment or addiction? What has been put into the place where God should be?" Simplicity starts with the interrogation of ourselves and what has taken hold. It is that seeking first, from which actions follow.

Simplicity is probably one of these things that might look very different in practice for different types of people. For some people, depending on where they are, a simple life in relation to technology actually may include quite a lot of use of it. For other people, simplicity may be minimal use, depending on what tempts them to seek that which is not God's kingdom. Solitude is that "container discipline" that creates space, that helps me do that discerning work of what has become an addiction, what is deforming me.

We need to be constantly reviewing and discerning our use of technology. It's very easy to slip into a duplicitous life. You can curate your life online, and you can quite easily deceive yourself.

Let's talk about Sabbath. Sabbath is intentionally taking the space which God commands, and which our bodies demand, stopping, accepting our limitations, to reorient toward God, love God, and enjoy creation and other people. What risks to Sabbath have you seen, in relation to digital technology, over the course of the pandemic? And what returns to Sabbath have you seen?

The main risk to Sabbath in the pandemic was particularly related to technology, which very quickly became our only — or main — way out of our physical spaces — to work, to connect with friends and family, to be entertained. If Sabbath is about resting, accepting limitations, handing over control, the pandemic made it harder to believe that there was goodness in that resting, that there was something there in that resting. For so many people so much was being lost. And technology was the one thing to hold on to from normal life that we had all of a sudden stripped away.

John Donne Redone

Review by Timothy Jones

Over the years, I've dabbled in John Donne's key works. At least in theory, I've had a soft spot for this poet-preacher-priest of 17th-century England, a contemporary of Shakespeare. My year of Anglican studies two decades ago at the University of the South (Sewanee) made me aware of the drama of his life: fame as a secular romantic poet, his ruined career and imprisonment for marrying young Anne Moore, tenure later as a renowned London cathedral dean. I could vaguely recall, too, the challenges of ministry he faced in plague-ridden times, and during his battle with disease, which all now seems especially relevant.

But even in the course taught by Professor Bob Hughes on the history and literature of spirituality, even with a week of my Sewanee class devoted solely to Donne, I found his *Devotions upon Emergent Occasions* tough sledding. I dutifully read the excerpts found in the Paulist Press Classics of Western Spirituality volume on Donne, our text. I sought out the passages in the *Devotions* that helped make Donne one of the most quoted of the English divines: "For whom the bell tolls," for instance, written as Donne faced down a potentially fatal illness (it turned out not to be bubonic plague, as first feared, but a form of typhus). Or perhaps best known of all, "no man is an island, entire of itself; every [one] is part of continent," forever immortalizing his gift for finding the apropos phrase while challenging the apropos phrase while challenging self-isolating individualism.

But truly stick with the work? I confess I didn't get far.

Philip Yancey, critically hailed and widely published author, was not afflicted with my easily deterred ways. Not only has he long been a fan, but

Yancey turned to Donne with renewed zeal when he realized how Donne, almost 400 years ago, could shed brilliant light and pathos on our time's pandemic languishing.

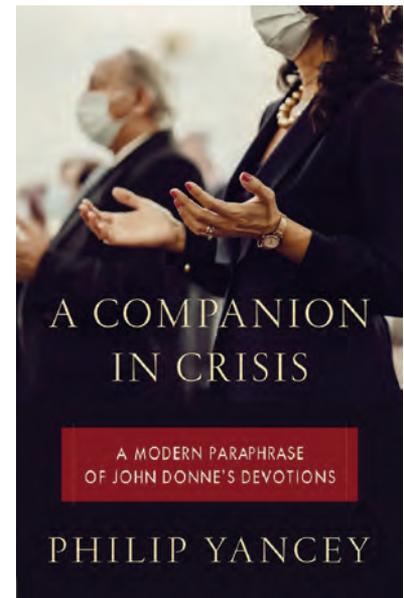
Yancey noted a pattern in his friends that was puzzlingly similar to mine. "Over the years," Yancey writes in the introduction to his new publishing project, "I have bought copies of *Devotions* and given them to friends. 'Did you read it?' I've asked time and again, only to get a sheepish reply such as 'I tried, really, but just couldn't past the language and old-fashioned syntax.'"

Undaunted, Yancey writes, "In an act of either daring or folly, I decided to attempt a modern paraphrase of this classic work."

How glad we can be that he did. Yancey, still going strong in a career that has seen 15 million books in print, published in over 50 languages worldwide, has both the veteran writer's gravitas and a journalist's sensitivity to simpler expression. Many of his books have circled back to his nagging questions about finding God in suffering, so it's no surprise that Yancey would have pursued Donne, nor a surprise that Yancey offers insight on living and dying well, to say nothing of capturing Donne's insight on weathering disease.

I therefore found *A Companion in Crisis* a warmly accessible rendering of Donne's pained and fervent account of a month's confinement to his bed, never knowing when a dawning day might be his last.

Yancey is quick to clarify that he's been "brutally selective in slashing anything that required explanations: archaic science or Greek mythology or even obscure Bible passages." This volume serves best as an aid to prayer and careful reflection or as an inviting introduction rather than a scholarly work.



A Companion in Crisis

A Modern Paraphrase
of John Donne's Devotions

By Philip Yancey

Illumify Media Global, pp. 160, \$14.95

I am grateful for Yancey's accomplishment: An introduction and a few chapters before and after Donne's 23 Devotions give compelling perspective and help the reader make connections to our ordeals and pandemic disruptions. The arrangement also rounds up the chapters to 30, making this slim, inviting volume suitable for a month of daily readings with Donne.

With Yancey's adapting of phrases and trimming away of antiquated turns of expression, I've been able to grasp more surely the raw intensity of Donne's prayers, the struggles and protests of his soul, and ultimately the radiant steadiness of the Renaissance cleric's abiding faith.

The Rev. Timothy Jones, former dean of Trinity Episcopal Cathedral in Columbia, South Carolina, is rector of St. John's Episcopal Church in Halifax, Virginia. He is the author of more than a dozen books on prayer and the spiritual life, including The Art of Prayer: A Simple Guide to Conversation with God, and he blogs at revtimothyjones.com.

Market and Moral Reasoning

Review by James W. Murphy

Integration is the main theme of a helpful new book, *Money Matters: Faith, Life and Wealth* by R. Paul Stevens and Clive Lim. This short book will be a useful new tool for personal reflection as well as for stimulating conversations about reconciling the benefits and challenges of wealth and the dangers that an obsessive love of money creates.

Using numerous biblical and historical references, Stevens and Lim encourage a healthy and integrated view of money, wealth, and the abundance of God's grace. Unlike many other spirituality-focused texts that tend to denigrate secular success, Stevens and Lim encourage a broader, biblical view of wealth, through honest personal storytelling and insights on the history of currency, capitalism, and changing Christian perspectives on wealth through the ages.

Their personal reflections on wealth and money are quite intriguing because of their very different cultural histories. Clive grew up poor in Singapore, followed by substantial but hard-fought business success, as compared to Paul's very comfortable childhood in Canada. The authors' stories will move readers to reflect on their relationship with money and the successes or failures in their work lives. Their book also provides an interesting historical perspective on changing attitudes toward wealth, including how ancient temples, including Jerusalem's, served as nexuses for wealth to show God's glory and as places for the redistribution of resources to those in need.

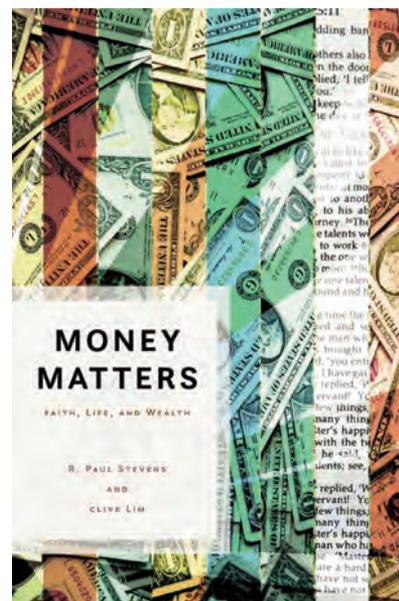
The authors argue for an integrated attitude toward wealth as an opportunity to benefit society without its self-serving near deification in the secular world. The authors also elaborate on the false integration found in the pros-

perity gospel. Others may find Chapter 9 a revelation on how the positivism of postwar American society provided the perfect breeding ground for its growth. The authors do a good job discussing the recurring Christian prejudice against secular work as opposed to *holier* activities.

As someone who has sought to integrate spiritual grounding into in my work roles, I appreciated their reminders that Christ typically grounded his parables in daily work and tasks, to be more meaningful and to join the secular and sacred. As Lim writes in Chapter 5, *market reasoning is not complete without moral reasoning*. Stevens and Lim seek to stimulate honest reflection and conversation on the place of money in our lives and the importance of finding holiness in everyday experiences, in place of a faulty and dangerous dualism.

The love of money, not its possession or accumulation, is what endangers one's soul. Their Chapter 6 recommends a very biblical *shrewdness*, that wealth is meant to be a grace from God and therefore a tool to care for others and enhance community well-being, not simply for self-serving hoarding.

I would certainly agree with Lim and Stevens that gracious capitalism, and the scientific innovations that market-based economies encourage, have improved the human condition throughout the world. However, this book will likely not convince every church leader of the societal benefits of individual wealth. No economic system is perfect, and the authors admit capitalism's potential down sides, especially the risk of the *commodification* of nearly everything and the radical income disparities of the 21st century. I also regret that it's not specifically discussed, but their insights on the duty of wealth for improving the lives of others



Money Matters Faith, Life and Wealth

By R. Paul Stevens and Clive Lim
Eerdmans, pp. 199, \$19.99

could encourage socially responsible investing, corporate stewardship and stockholder engagements with companies.

For most readers, the book's study questions will be a very useful exercise for encouraging more honest personal reflection and beneficial conversations about money within congregations. Their questions encourage important discussion on how we often segregate our work and spiritual lives from more integrated moral choices. Whether we are statistically wealthy or not, this book encourages its readers to listen to God's call to weave holiness into every part of our lives.

James W. Murphy is managing program director for stewardship resources and operations at the Episcopal Church Foundation and the managing editor of Faithful Investing: The Power of Decisive Action and Incremental Change.

Everything Is Not Okay

Review by Stewart Clem

You might not guess from the title of Graham Tomlin's *Why Being Yourself Is a Bad Idea and Other Countercultural Notions* that it has anything to do with Christianity. This was possibly a deliberate choice by the author, who is the Bishop of Kensington in London.

But make no mistake: this is a book that's not only written from a Christian perspective — Christianity *is* the subject matter. This slim volume is, in fact, a cleverly disguised book of apologetics. Granted, it's not the how to beat your atheist neighbor in an argument sort of apologetics, but rather it offers an *apologia*, a defense, of the Christian faith for the skeptical or inquisitive reader.

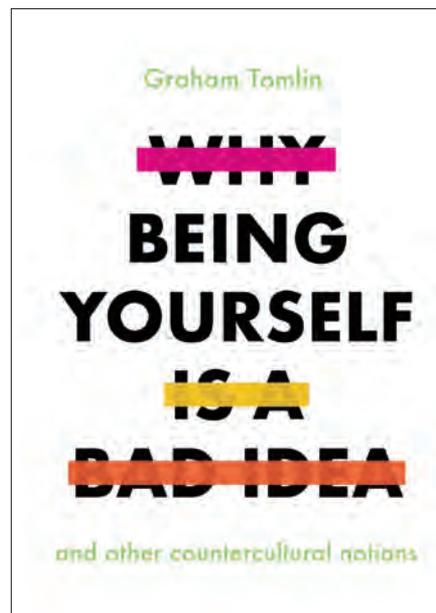
It belongs to that venerable legacy charted by C.S. Lewis's *Mere Christianity* and N.T. Wright's *Simply Christian*. One feature that sets Tomlin's book apart is that it is unabashedly of the moment. For example, it describes the profound effects of social media on our lives, and there are more than a handful of references to the COVID-19 pandemic. Given that the pandemic has drastically slowed all channels of publication and distribution, the publisher must have worked fiercely to get

this book in print as quickly as possible.

The book opens with a rather brilliant deconstruction of one of our Western culture's most sacred precepts: "be yourself." There are countless variations of this mantra, which has become so platitudinous that it is almost meaningless. The specific iteration Tomlin has in his sights is the claim that authenticity provides a guaranteed path to freedom.

In other words, as long as you are following your heart's desires, and as long as you are not merely trying to meet the expectations of other people, you will find happiness. Tomlin dismantles these false promises of authenticity and self-acceptance by showing that they set us on a path that ultimately leads to nowhere.

The truth, Tomlin explains, is that even when we finally tune out all the haters, when we gain the confidence to accept who we really are and discover our true selves, we will still have that nagging feeling that everything is not okay. And the reason for that feeling is the simple fact that *everything is not okay*. What he describes is what St. Augustine discovered many centuries ago: our hearts are restless until we rest in God. We are seeking something beyond ourselves, even if we can't



Why Being Yourself Is a Bad Idea

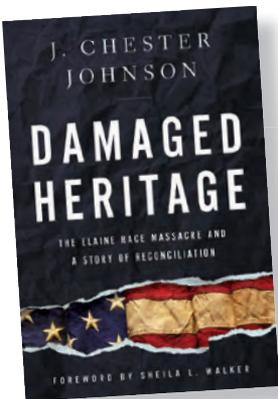
and Other Countercultural Notions

By Graham Tomlin

SPCK, pp. 192, \$15

articulate what that something is.

Readers might suspect that the book has a generational slant, and indeed it does. While Bishop Tomlin belongs to the Baby Boomer generation, the concerns of this book—as well as its tone—seem most clearly oriented toward Millennial and Gen Z readers. Thankfully, I didn't detect any pandering or any cringe-inducing "How do you do, fellow kids?" pleas, but the writing speaks most clearly to those who are still trying to find their bearings and figure out what kind of person they want to be. This is evident not only in the frequent references to social media and pop culture, but also in Tomlin's (correct) assumption that the younger generation, especially in the United States and the United Kingdom, is increasingly unchurched and uninformed about the actual teachings of Christianity.



"Only a poet can see this clearly, be this honest, and still hope this much."
— Douglas A. Blackmon, Winner of the Pulitzer Prize

"Johnson has laid the healing tools in our hands, and left instructions. This is how it starts."
— Cornelius Eady, Finalist for the Pulitzer Prize

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While many of the questions are perennial and have been tackled by countless theologians and apologists already, *Why Being Yourself Is a Bad Idea* is unique because it speaks in a contemporary idiom that affirms what is good about contemporary culture while also pointing out what is missing and what it gets wrong. For example, in the chapter “Why Justice Matters and Why We Don’t Really Want It” Tomlin explains that our sin, our propensity toward evil, cannot be ignored if we really want to talk about fixing the world’s problems. There are spiritual realities at play that can never be addressed adequately by social engineering alone.

Similarly, in the chapter “Why Freedom Is Not What You Think It Is,” Tomlin dismantles the widespread notion that the absence of coercion is the essence of freedom. If freedom ultimately means that I am not bound by any obligations or responsibilities to others, then solitude is the pinnacle of human existence. But this clearly flies in the face of our social nature, which inherently longs for community and belonging. To be truly free, Tomlin argues, is to be given the ability to live as we were created to be: to be in fellowship with others and to be oriented toward something beyond ourselves.

The rhetorical purpose of these chapters is to reorient the reader’s mind toward a fundamental truth about reality, namely, that each of us experiences a fundamental longing for transcendence. “Being yourself” is a dead end, because it can only turn us inward when we need to turn outward. This setup allows Tomlin to introduce Christianity as a narrative that is primarily about the reconciliation of God and humanity, and he does this very delicately, without delving into minutiae or controversial topics. His presentation of the faith is winsome and devoid of the smugness and triumphalism that so often turns people away from Christianity.

There are almost no new ideas in this book, but that is not a criticism. In

fact, it’s probably one of the book’s greatest strengths. It was not written for theologians or spiritually mature Christians. Nor was it written for those with serious philosophical objections to Christianity who have thought and read a great deal about their objections. It was written for the millions of people who know little about the Christian faith (or who *think* they know about it, but don’t) and need to hear the *evangelion*—the ‘good news’ of the Gospel—afresh.

And while clergy are not the primary readership, I would still recommend it as a source of helpful preaching and teaching illustrations. Tomlin has a real gift for explaining

complex ideas with simplicity and clarity, and church leaders would do well to emulate his communication style.

It’s fitting that this volume is published by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge. The SPCK is the oldest Anglican mission agency in the world, and Tomlin’s book embodies that mission. It’s a timely and (as the title suggests) countercultural book, and I hope it is read widely.

The Rev. Dr. Stewart Clem is assistant professor of moral theology at Aquinas Institute of Theology and priest associate at the Church of St. Michael & St. George in St. Louis.

Probing Ethical Questions on Race

Review by Richard J. Jones

Current as the antiracism course *This is Sacred Ground*, yet reminiscent of the old Seabury Series middle-school *Stories of Christian Courage*, here is a bundle of probing ethical discussion questions for today, anchored in details of the 1950s and ’60s desegregation struggle in the southside Virginia county seat town of Martinsville.

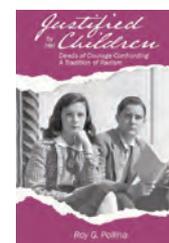
We meet Francis T. West, a successful businessman who marshaled other laymen to resist the bishop and clergy bent on integrating the new conference center. The irritant for racial justice is a 29-year-old priest, a wrestler who drives a turquoise Thunderbird and stirs the youth to love life and listen to God.

Leading this Episcopal congregation is a segregationist justice of the Virginia Supreme Court who, “with no less than the kindest regards and Christian concern for our Negro brethren,” deplors the Church’s intruding into so serious and politically explosive a “sociological problem.”

Out of 84 total, here is one example of the discussion questions the author offers: “Doctrine can be defined as belief based on higher authority such

as Scripture or ancient Church tradition, while policy can be defined as adopted principles of action. Was racial integration a matter of doctrine or policy?”

Pollina has demonstrated to me that



Justified by Her Children

Deeds of Courage
Confronting
a Tradition of Racism

By Roy G. Pollina.

Mariner Media, pp. 269, \$14.95

opening the pages of a scrupulously documented parish history can expose one’s own troubling cognitive dissonances and one’s comfortable lazy thinking.

Pollina cautions: “The best discussion questions are the ones that are generated spontaneously from the material. This Discussion Guide exists only as a prompt. The questions are not intended to be the first, only, or best question for yourself or your group.”

The Rev. Dr. Richard J. Jones is emeritus professor of mission and world religions at Virginia Theological Seminary.

PEOPLE & PLACES

Appointments

The Rev. **Jennifer Allen** is missionary in the Diocese of Kansas.

The Rev. **Paul Anderson** is interim rector of Trinity, Demopolis, Ala.

The Ven. **Stannard Baker** is the Diocese of Vermont's archdeacon for deacon formation.

The Rev. **John Bullock** is assistant priest at Grace Cathedral, Topeka, Kan.

The Rev. **Whitney Burton** is rector of Good Shepherd, Dunedin, Fla.

The Rev. Dn. **Cindy Campos** is parish deacon at St. Andrew's by the Lake, Lake Elsinore, and St. Thomas, Temecula, Calif.

The Rev. **Benjamin Capps** is interim rector of St. Andrew's, Glenmoore, Pa.

The Rev. **Cliff Carr** is supply priest at Trinity, Easton, Pa.

The Rev. **Gerald DeWayne Cope** is rector of St. Athanasius, Brunswick, Ga.

The Rev. **Cooper Conway** is interim priest in charge of Caroline Church of Brookhaven, Setauket, N.Y.

The Rev. **Angela M. Cortiñas** is associate rector of St. David's, Austin, Texas.

The Rev. **Andrew Cooley** is interim rector of St. Mary's, Lakewood, Wash.

The Rev. **Philip Craig** is rector of St. James, Wilmington, N.C.

The Rev. **Shay Craig** is vicar of St. Michael's, Hays, Kan.

The Rev. **Sidnie Crawford** is assisting priest at Christ, Stroudsburg, Pa.

The Rev. **James Detrich** is rector of St. John's, Norman, Okla.

The Rev. **John Davis** is parish deacon at Epiphany, Clarks Summit, and St. Peter's, Tunkhannock, Pa.

The Rev. **John F. Dwyer** is vice president and chief operating officer of Church Divinity School of the Pacific, Berkeley, Calif.

The Rev. Dr. **Beth M. Echols** is priest in charge of St. Benedict's, Lacey, Wash.

The Rev. **Heather B. Erickson** is associate priest at St. John's, Ross, Calif.

The Rev. **Lorenzo Galuszka** is rector of St. Barnabas, Denton, Texas.

The Rev. **Jenifer C. Gamber** is missionary for the Diocese of Washington's School for Christian Faith and Leadership.

The Rev. **Emily Garcia** is assistant rector of Our Redeemer, Lexington, Mass.

The Rev. **Sarah Ginolfi** is priest in charge of Trinity, Rutland, Vt.

The Rev. **Chris Golding** is chaplain at Seabury Hall, Makawao, Hawaii.

The Rev. Canon **Hillary Greer** is the Diocese of Pennsylvania's canon for education and renewal.

The Rev. Dr. **Andrew Grosso** is associate rector for worship and liturgy at St. Michael and All Angels, Dallas.

Sara Gunter is the Diocese of Spokane's canon for youth and family ministries.

The Rev. **Diana V. Gustafson** is assistant rector of St. Margaret's, Washington, D.C.

The Rev. **Timothy Hannon** is rector of Christ, Manlius, N.Y.

The Rev. **Dan Hinkle** is interim rector of

Holy Nativity, Rockledge, Pa.

The Rev. **Lisa Ann Hoffman** is rector of Christ Church, Toms River, N.J.

The Rev. **Al Holland** is interim rector of St. George St. Barnabas, Philadelphia.

The Rev. **Ed Hunt** is rector of Holy Trinity, Onancock, Va.

The Rev. Canon **Alan James** is interim canon missionary of the Diocese of Western Michigan's Southern Region.

The Rev. Canon Dr. **Anne-Marie Jeffery** is the Diocese of Washington's canon for congregational vitality.

The Rev. **Arthur Jones** is assistant priest at Redeemer, Sayre, Pa.

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Mississippi: **Jenny Michelle Newnan**, **Rebecca Marie Smith**

Montana: **Heidi Jones-Magee** (parish deacon, St. Paul's, Virginia City, and Trinity, Jeffers, Mont.)

New York: **Mary Ellen Barber**, **Megan Paige Miller**, **Heather Kathleen Sisk**

North Carolina: **Joseph Mark Dzegan**, **Kristin Nicole Edrington**, **Maureen Carol Flak**, **Pamela Rich Haynesto**

Pittsburgh: **Brandon Cooper**

Springfield: **Mark Klammer**, **David Knox**

Utah: **Suzanne Miller**

Western Louisiana: **Rita Jefferson**

Western Massachusetts: **Rachel (Jac) Essing** (pastoral associate, Lawrence House Service Corps, South Hadley, Mass.), **Peter Feldman-Mahan**, **Anna Woofenden**

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Western North Carolina: **Kevin Wayne Todd** (priest in charge, St. Paul's, Edneyville, N.C.)

Receptions

Priesthood

New Jersey: The Rev. **Marcel Tabone** (from the Roman Catholic Church)

Retirement

The Rev. **J.D. Brown** as rector of Holy Trinity, Garland, Texas.

The Rev. **Rebecca Crise** as rector of St. Mark's, Paw Paw, Mich.

The Rev. **Hugh Dickenson** as associate rector of St. Mark's, Grand Rapids, Mich.

The Rev. Dr. **Valerie Fargo** as director of the Diocese of Eastern Michigan's Coppage-Gordon School for Ministry.

The Rev. **Mike Fedewa** as rector of St. Paul's, Muskegon, Mich.

The Rev. **Maria Tjelveit** as rector of Mediator, Allentown, Pa.

Secularizations

Holy Cross, Dallas, Texas

Saint Mary's Chapel, the University of Georgia, Athens

Deaths

The Rev. Dr. **Frazier Washington Allie Jr.**, a native Virginian who served as rector of parishes in all three Virginia dioceses, died May 15 at 90.

A native of Greene County, Allie served in the U.S. Navy during the Korean War, and attended the University of Richmond on the G.I. Bill. After several years of work with DuPont, he entered Virginia Theological Seminary to train for the priesthood.

Orained in 1961, Allie served Virginia churches for all 35 years of his ministry, with the exception of a two-year term assisting the hymn writer and liturgical scholar F. Bland Tucker at Christ Church in Savannah, Georgia. He was rector of Wicomico Parish in Virginia's Northern Neck; Grace Church, Cismont, in the Piedmont; and Emmanuel, Staunton, in the Shenandoah Valley. In Central Virginia, he served the PAC Cure, a group of three linked churches in Powhatan, Amelia, and Cartersville; as well as Johns Memorial Church in Farmville, from which he retired in 1996.

Alongside his parish ministry, Allie taught ethics at two Episcopal high schools, Stuart Hall in Staunton and St. Anne's in Charlottesville. He also cofounded a men's discussion group in Charlottesville called TAS (Thesis-Antithesis-Synthesis).

He is survived by his wife, Carolyn, their three daughters, and five grandchildren.

(Continued on next page)

We Know Not How

The prophet Ezekiel, ministering during the 70-year Babylonian Captivity, speaks often of hope for a return to the land of Israel and the restoration of a legitimate king in the Davidic line. His hope is not merely for the Jews, but for all people, and so he highlights the universal blessing of Israel promised to Abraham and anticipates the catholic scope of the Church. Using the image of a small twig pruned from a cedar tree, he promises great and generous growth. To be clear, he is speaking of Israel, the Church, and all members of the Church.

"I myself will take a sprig from the lofty top of a cedar tree; I will set it out. I will break off a tender one from the topmost of your twigs; I myself will plant it on a high and lofty mountain" (Exod. 17:22). "I myself." God will do this; God will prune and plant and provide for growth. "On the mountain height of Israel I will plant it, in order that it may produce boughs and bear fruit, and become a noble cedar. Under it every kind of bird will live; in the shade of its branches will nest the winged creatures of every kind" (Ezek. 17:23).

Hearing the promise of the prophet Ezekiel, we inevitably recall the words of Jesus: "I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing. ... My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples" (John 15:5, 8).

The exiled children of Israel and, more expansively, the exiled children of Eve will grow under the watchful eye of the risen Gardener (John 20:15). The Psalmist expands the theme. "The righteous flourish like the palm tree, and grow like a cedar in Lebanon. They are planted in the house of the Lord; they flourish in the courts of our God. In old age they still produce fruit; they are always green and full of sap" (Ps. 92:12-14). Loving us to the end,

the risen Lord promises prosperity in good works and virtue even to old age.

Just as we do well to meditate occasionally on death, we may profit from a consideration of advancing old age. It is not uncommon to hear of an "aging church" and an "aging society," along with attendant anxieties about survival. There is another and better way to consider this. "The old age of the church," says St. Augustine, "will be white [gray] with good works, but it shall not decay through death" (Sermon on Ps. 92). The gray hair of an old person may be a testimony to a long life of fruit-bearing, which not even death can end. Do we not grow in grace forever and ever? The Church is ever ancient, ever new.

God plants and provides, gives growth in ways hidden from view. "The kingdom of God," says Jesus, "is as if a someone would scatter seed on the ground, and would sleep and rise night and day, and the seed would sprout and grow, he does not know how. The earth produces of itself, first the stalk, then the head, then the full grain in the head" (Mark 4:26-28).

God plants the seed; God prunes the twig; God gives the growth. But God's working is largely hidden. We know not how. We know our obligations and our bounden duty, we know our joys and our sorrow, we know our triumphs and devastation. But below the surface of what we know, providence pulsates hidden growth and goodness.

Look It Up

2 Corinthians 5:16

Think About It

A new creation sprouts from the tree of the cross.

PEOPLE & PLACES

(Continued from previous page)

The Rev. **Elborn E. Mendenhall**, who combined a career in public health with decades of rural ministry in Mississippi and Kansas, died January 28 at 92.

Mendenhall was born in Garden City, Kansas, and grew up in Dodge City. He graduated from Kansas State University with a degree in chemical engineering, and then enlisted in the U.S. Air Force, earning a degree in public health at Harvard during his five years of military service.



He answered a call to the priesthood, and after training for the ministry at General Seminary, he was ordained in 1960. He began his ministry with a curacy at Grace Church in Utica, N.Y., and was the rector of Cincinnati's Holy Trinity Church for four years. He served Mississippi parishes for four years before moving back to Kansas in 1970.

He worked for many decades as an engineer for the State Department of Health and Environment in Kansas, and served congregations in Blue Rapids, Iola, and Yates Center. Grace Cathedral in Topeka recognized him last February for his long and faithful service to the churches of the Diocese of Kansas.

Mendenhall was also an enthusiastic photographer and genealogist, and a lifetime member of the Sons of the American Revolution. A devoted fan of Kansas State Wildcats, Mendenhall was a season ticket holder for basketball and football for over 40 years. He is survived by his wife, Burney, three children, a stepson, and ten grandchildren.

The Rev. Dr. **Charles Leon Wood**, who served as a military chaplain for nearly 60 years, died April 15 in Southern Pines, North Carolina, at 93.

He was born in Rahway, New Jersey, and was raised in Atlantic City. He was a veteran of World War II, serving as a radio operator for the 20th Air Force. After his discharge, he began an extensive series of studies in education and divinity, which included degrees from Rutgers University, General Seminary, and Philadelphia Divinity School, as well as diplomas from several military institutes.

He was ordained in 1954, and served congregations in New Jersey, including as rector of St. John the Baptist in Linden for nine years, and of Holy Trinity in Ocean City for 13 years. His final post was as rector of the Church of the Transfiguration in Indian River, Michigan, though he assisted in several parishes during his retirement in North Carolina.

Wood was a chaplain with the New Jersey National Guard and with the Civil Air Patrol for decades, and taught at Glassboro State College and Durham Technical School. He is survived by Nancy, his wife of 64 years, as well as two children, four grandchildren, six great-grandchildren, and one great-great-grandchild.

SUNDAY'S READINGS | 4 Pentecost, June 20

Track 1: 1 Sam. 17: [1a, 4-11, 19-23], 32-49 or 1 Samuel 17:57-18:5, 10-16

Ps. 9:9-20 or 133 • 2 Cor. 6:1-13 • Mark 4:35-41

Track 2: Job 38:1-11 • Ps. 107:1-3, 23-32 • 2 Cor. 6:1-13 • Mark 4:35-41

Peril and Hope

Keeep awake! This warning about “the master’s return” at an unknown hour captures something of what it is like to read the Bible carefully. Without constant attention and care, one will likely fall for easy solutions, especially when those solutions have supporting Scriptures. Consider the following while holding in mind the terrible, heartbreaking, and soul-crushing tragedies a person may suffer. “No testing has overtaken you that is not common to everyone. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tested beyond your strength, but with the testing he will also provide the way out so that you may be able to endure it” (1 Cor. 10:13).

It is not uncommon, however, for people to suffer unbearable burdens and feel there is no way out. We may assert that Jesus is the Way, but his way includes suffering and death, blood and gasping breath, wounds and a pierced heart. Sometimes we do well to say little, resist easy answers we give primarily for our own comfort, which may add to the suffering of others. Silence, listening, companionship, practical aid, and a few tender words may be the only honest answer to human anguish.

In the world of the Bible, God is present before the storm, in the storm, and after the storm. Yes, this is perplexing.

The Bible offers hope, a conviction, a yearning for divine help amid human life as it is, both beautiful and terrible. “Some went down to the sea in ships, doing business on the mighty waters; they saw the deeds of the Lord, his wondrous works in the deep. For he commanded and raised the stormy wind, which lifted up the waves of the sea. They mounted up to heaven, they went down to the depths; their courage melted away in their calamity” (Ps. 107:23-26).

God is mysteriously the cause of the

wind, the waves, and peril. God also hears the cries of human beings and comes with help. “Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble, and he brought them out from their distress; he made the storm be still, and the waves of the sea were hushed” (Ps. 107:28-29). Again, this is a hope, a conviction, a yearning that God will not leave us without comfort and protection.

The Son of the living God rests while a storm rages. “On that day, when evening had come, Jesus said to them, ‘Let us go across to the other side.’ And leaving the crowd behind, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. Other boats were with him. A great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that the boat was already being swamped. But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they woke him up and said to him, ‘Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?’ He woke up and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, ‘Peace! Be still!’ Then the wind ceased, and there was a dead calm” (Mark 4:35-39). “He made the storm be still, and the waves of the sea were hushed” (Ps. 107:29). That is our hope.

Do we have faith? Perhaps not. After all, sometimes the waves crash in, fill the boat, and threaten peril. Sometimes, like the Egyptians, we sink into the depths like a stone. If we have faith, we have it as a gift. As St. Augustine says in *Confessions*, “My faith invokes you, O Lord, *which you have given to me, which you have breathed into me through the humanity of your Son, and the ministry of your preacher.*”

Look It Up

Mark 4:26-27

Think About It

God is our help, but we know not how.

Health and Salvation

When we tell a story about something in the past of special significance or meaning, we often describe it in the present tense. In this way, we pull a story into the present and make it feel like it is happening now. For instance, “I’m picking out my wedding dress.” “We’re driving to the south rim of the Grand Canyon.” “Sitting in the waiting room, I see the doctor walk in.”

In a sense, this is how we approach all Scripture, reading so that the efficacy, force, and virtue of a past event leap into the present. And this most certainly is the key to the liturgy, which is never a mere recollection of the past, but the past touching the present in manifold and powerful ways. Everything God did, he does.

The story of the healing of the woman with an issue of blood and the story of the raising of Jairus’s daughter are told with a generous dose of “present participles” and verbs in the “present tense.” This gives the story immediacy and urgency and thrusts it with great force into the present so that we hear it as our story.

We begin with the woman who was suffering from hemorrhages for 12 years. She endures much under many physicians, spends all the money she has, gets no better, but instead grows worse. Then, hearing about Jesus as he passes by, she pushes her way into the crowd. If we imagine the crowd gathered around Jesus as a symbol of the Church, we may see her coming into the holy community whose head is Christ. Like Moses, who saw the back of God, but not his face, the woman approaches Jesus from behind, believing that if she touches his garment, she will be healed. Then the miracle: (1) healing, (2) shared knowledge/communion with Christ, (3) the glory of the searching face of Christ.

When we say that Jesus healed a sick woman, we recall that Jesus has healed and is healing all of us even if, like the risen Lord, we still have wounds in our

flesh. Healing is a mystery. Even as we are still suffering in some ways, we know that we have pressed our way into the Church, we have drawn close to Christ, we have touched his garment, and we have known in our bodies that he has touched our lives. It is not merely that we “feel” something. We feel and know. The woman “knew in her body.” And there is another kind of knowledge. “Jesus immediately *having known within himself* that power had gone out from him, turned around in the crowd” (Mark 5:30; literal translation). Jesus and the woman know each other, and that knowledge reaches even the body. Jesus then searches for her, she comes to him and confesses. She is looking at Jesus, and Jesus is looking at her, and she beholds the glory of his face.

Healing is a sign of resurrection.

We move from sign to reality in the raising of Jairus’s little daughter. Jairus reports that she is “at the end,” near death. Like the woman with the issue of blood, all earthly hope has been exhausted. Jesus follows Jairus but is interrupted by the woman. When Jesus finally arrives at Jairus’s home, the child is dead. Reading or hearing this story, one is struck by the words “at the end” and “your daughter is dead.” On the purely natural level, these words are trustworthy and final. All we go down to the dust.

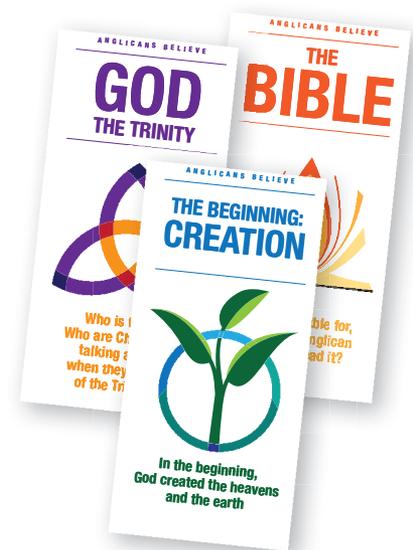
The resurrection of the little girl happens *within* the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who is the life of the world.

Look It Up

John 14:19

Think About It

Because I live, you also will live.



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SUNDAY'S READINGS | 5 Pentecost, July 4

Track 1: 2 Sam. 5:1-5, 9-10 • Ps. 48 • 2 Cor. 12:2-10 • Mark 6:1-13

Track 2: Ezek. 2:1-5 • Ps. 123 • 2 Cor. 12:2-10 • Mark 6:1-13

New Sight and a Wound

Like the prophet Ezekiel, Jesus Christ is anointed with the Holy Spirit, set upon his feet, and sent to "a nation of rebels," a people "impudent and stubborn" (Ezek. 2:3-4). The Psalmist, in a sense, speaks of Christ who faces "scorn," "the scorn of those who are ease," "the contempt of the proud" (Ps. 123:4-5).

From his saving cross, Jesus endured verbal abuse and jeering. "And those who passed by derided him, wagging their heads, and saying, 'Aha! You who would destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself, and come down from the cross!'" (Mark 15:29-30).

The rejection of Jesus is a judgment upon humanity. "And this is the judgment, that the light came into the world, and people loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil" (John 3:19). This judgment, however, is not beyond mercy. "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it" (John 1:5). Sin may blind us to the light, but it cannot extinguish the light. Indeed, baptism, which is both a cleansing from sin and incorporation into Christ by the Spirit, has justly been called *illumination*. The new humanity created by Christ sees in a new way. "From now on," says St. Paul, "we regard no one from a human point of view, even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, ... we know him no longer in that way" (2 Cor. 5:16).

Christ has come. Do we see him with the eyes of faith? Christ has sent his messengers. Do we see them with the eyes of faith? Christ has sent us as his ambassadors. Are we seen and received with the eyes and ears of faith? O ye of little faith. Have you no faith? Christ is still being rejected not only in every instance that human dignity is denied and crushed but also in ways more tempered, a kind of reasoned dismissal.

"He left that place and came to his

hometown, and his disciples followed him. On the sabbath, he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were astonished. They said, "Where did this man get all this? What is this wisdom that has been given to him? What deeds of power are being done by his hands!" (Mark 6:1-2). The astonishment of the crowd and its recognition of the wisdom and power of Jesus is an occasion for faith, but faith does not come. "Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary and the brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon, and are not his sisters here with us? And they took offense at him" (Mark 6:3). He is one of us. How special can he be?

A similar dismissal, born of too much familiarity, can infect the life of the Church. We have heard it all before. How special can it be? We may treat with scorn our most treasured gift, Jesus Christ, who has come for the life and salvation of the world. We grow cool and complacent, tepid and analytical. We pick at the "Jesus of history" and are pleased with doubts and dubious reconstructions. And, sadly, this lack of faith may impede the work of Christ. Rejected by his own, Jesus "could do no deed of power there" (Mark 6:5a). The grace of God does not operate by force and violence.

There is yet hope in human weakness and divine love. "He laid his hand on a few sick people and healed them" (Mark 6:5b). In a sense, there is a sickness we need, a thorn in the flesh that keeps us from being elated. When I am weak, then I am strong.

Look It Up

Psalm 123:1

Think About It

Behold him with faith and adoration.

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