

January 3, 2010

Parish Administration Issue

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Faith Alive: An Affirming, Encouraging, Challenging, Rich Parish Family Reunion

Moved by the witness talks and an opportunity to share spontaneously, we came to a special appreciation of this prayer-driven weekend.

No less significant, the Saturday morning meetings in parishioners' homes gave us a time to connect in prayer and sharing experiences. We have already made plans that similar group activities will continue.

Based on follow-up remarks, it is evident that parishioners enjoyed a feeling of togetherness, of being "one in the Spirit." It was exciting to watch the weekend build on itself through the wonderful music program, the increasing sense of joy and the resulting phenomenal fellowship.

Possibly the most memorable to all was the way the parishioners came so humbly and naturally to the altar for prayer with the

From Manchester, MO

Excellent! The lay witnessing was centered in scripture and the prayer book, and sensitive to the needs of our congregation.

The team was spiritually and emotionally mature and conveyed a great love for the congregation of St. Luke's.

Our follow-up work includes moving forward with a men's ministry and a women's ministry. The congregation wants to expand the prayer and healing ministry, and there is more interest in Bible study.

*The Rev. William Luley, Rector
St. Luke's Episcopal Church
Jim Wolfe, Coordinator*

40 Years of Ministry

visiting team. Few dry eyes remained following this somber, but inspirational, part of the program. The impact of this simple service will be with us for a long time to come.

The faithful were strengthened, hearts were lifted and lives rededicated as Church of the Messiah truly experienced "Faith Alive."

Susan Ledbetter, Publicity/ Correspondence Chair, for The Rev. Jim Reed and Parish Leaders.

*Church of the Messiah, Fredericksburg, VA
Dick & Jan Condit, Coordinators*

Lay Witness Ministry Reaching Thousands; Men, Women, Teens Stand Ready to Serve

An estimated 9,000 men, women, teenagers and children will participate in some facet or all of a Faith Alive Weekend in 2010. The Weekend that they attend will enjoy the prayer covering of more than 6,000 nationwide.

Thousands of men and women, most personally touched through the ministry of Faith Alive, stand ready to serve on Faith Alive Weekends. They have stories of their spiritual journey which they are willing to share with others. And they are experienced in leading small groups on these weekends of renewal.

Hundreds of musicians throughout the country have served on Faith Alive teams and are eager to serve on upcoming Weekends. Guitar players, pianists, flutists, players of brass and reed instruments, and drummers have launched and affirmed these lay witness weekends through their gifts of music. Faith

From Kemp, TX

I was thrilled by the turnout – about 82 percent of our total membership, including several who don't attend regularly.

This was a wonderful opportunity to celebrate who we are and what we can be in the future.

The weekend was well organized; the witnessing relatable, touching different individuals.

*The Rev. Jerry Morriss, Rector
St. James on the Lake
Tom Kay, Coordinator*

Alive Weekends have also been blessed through gifted organ and choir music.

More than 35 wonderful, loving children's ministers are eager to lead the children's programs on these weekends, supported by experienced assistants.

More than 20 experienced youth leaders stand ready to serve on Faith Alive Weekends, from Alaska to Florida, California to the Midwest and New England, Canada and the Bahamas.

Thanks to a charitable trust that provides travel funds when needed, hundreds of teenagers have served on Faith Alive teams around the country, and are eager to share stories of their faith journey with junior high and senior high students.

If you are available to serve on Faith Alive Weekends and have not been invited in recent months, please contact the National Office so data can be updated.

Jesus' sacrificial death "a fully divine participation in humanity, a making-holy (which is what sacrifice means) of the meaning of his life, and all human life." Thus "The resurrection is sacramental fruit of sacrifice."

Bishop Frey, who was expelled from Guatemala by a military junta in 1971, said the church's work is not limited to social engagement.

"[E]vangelism is our primary calling," Bishop Frey said. "It would sell Jesus short to imply that he's simply an example for us to follow, or another one of the world's moral teachers. He's a doer — the one who acts with power to transform us from what we are to what we can become."

Differences of tone and language between Bishop Jefferts Schori, a usually dispassionate former oceanographer, and Bishop Frey, a former radio broadcaster and unabashed evangelical, were sometimes cathedral-sized. But so far as Frey himself could tell, there had been "a great deal of convergence between our presentations. We have the same basic theological concepts. We just address them in different forms." Responding to another question, he called his non-adversary's approach irenic. Small wonder that only the tiniest sparks flew — and that those that did fly never fell in dry grass.

Issues regnant in the life of the 21st century Episcopal Church arose only briefly. The Anglican Covenant went without mention by either bishop. Nor did either raise the matter of legal disputes in the church over title to the property of parishes and dioceses that have recently departed the Episcopal Church for other Anglican associations. "I pray for healing in our church — our wounded church," Bishop Frey said at one point.

On a question about the election of the Rev. Canon Mary Glasspool as a suffragan bishop for the Dio-

cese of Los Angeles, the presiding bishop declared that "prayer and discernment" are the church's tasks in deciding whether to confirm the bishop-elect, who lives in a same-sex partnership.

Bishop Jefferts Schori, speaking quietly, and more often than not in the language of the professional the-

ologian, called Jesus "the ultimate sacrament of God in human flesh." She likewise affirmed intimate images of him as elder brother and shepherd. She quoted some of orthodoxy's favorite sons, including Augustine, Irenaeus, and Athanasius, and she shifted delicately into

(Continued on next page)



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(DALLAS FORUM, from previous page)
semi-political mode.

Jesus, she said, was a healer — “unabashed in his willingness to share a meal with the down-and-out, the wealthy, quislings and collaborators, soldiers and priests. There was no priority at his table except hunger.” His “holy-making and healing work” was for the whole world, not just some.

Very quickly her remarks elided into an accounting of “familiar targets” who sometimes become scapegoats, meaning “Muslims and immigrants and gay people.”

She called the congregation to resist “the violent urge — to power, to control, to competition that deprives others of the goods of life.” With that resistance, the presiding bishop said, ought to come the challenge to discover “the green savior,”

whom we encounter in community as we “begin to discover our own interrelatedness with all that is.” Choose “the larger good,” she counseled, “rather than our own more narrowly competitive self-interest ... [C]hoose life, abundant life, rather than violence, on behalf of all creation.”

Bishop Frey took up the imperative with which he is best identified, namely, evangelism.

His rhetorical high point: “The church that doesn’t evangelize will be evangelized by the culture in which it finds itself.” The bishop chose not to venture further, leaving cultural matters generally in the presiding bishop’s grasp.

Bishop Jefferts Schori and Bishop Frey were part of a prestigious lecture series sponsored by St. Michael & All Angels. According to *The Dal-*

“The church that doesn’t evangelize will be evangelized by the culture in which it finds itself.”

Bishop Frey

las Morning News, six local priests had written to the Rt. Rev. James M. Stanton, Bishop of Dallas, asking him to bar the presiding bishop from speaking, due to what they called her attacks on the faith.

To the contrary, not only Bishop Stanton but also suffragan Bishop Paul E. Lambert, Canon to the Ordinary Neal Michell, and other diocesan staff occupied the first row on the Epistle side. The *News* quoted Bishop Stanton as calling the dialogue constructive. The host bishop shook hands courteously with both visiting bishops.

William Murchison, a veteran newspaper journalist, is the author of Mortal Follies (Encounter Books).

Upper South Carolina Elects Minnesota Priest

The Episcopal Diocese of Upper South Carolina has again elected a priest from the Upper Midwest as its next bishop.

Voting on Dec. 12, clergy and lay delegates elected the Rev. W. Andrew Waldo, rector of Trinity Episcopal Church in Excelsior, Minn., as the eighth bishop of the diocese. The Rt. Rev. Dorsey Henderson, seventh bishop of the diocese, was the dean of St. Paul’s Cathedral, Fond du Lac, Wis., when he was elected in 1995.

Delegates voted three times, but the first ballot was discarded



Fr. Waldo

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Needed to Elect 58 118

Burwell	4	20	2	3	1	0
Linder	39	31	35	33	25	22
Michell	14	52	20	61	22	76
Thompson	13	25	6	11	2	1
Waldo	36	72	51	103	64	129
Williams	8	31	2	24	2	6
Brown	0	1	0	0	-	-

* Ballot 1 was discarded

because of one illegal vote for a write-in candidate, the Rev. Robert L. Brown, rector of St. Matthew's Episcopal Church, Spartanburg, S.C. Fr. Waldo led in both orders on the next vote, and by the third vote he won handily.

Fr. Waldo has served previously as rector, St. Mark's Episcopal Church, LaGrange, Ga., 1990-94, and curate, Grace Episcopal Church,

Manchester, N.H., 1988-90.

In his biography prepared for the search process, Fr. Waldo described his congregation's openness to same-sex couples.

"I serve a congregation that encompasses a broad diversity of opinions on the blessing of same-gender relationships — from being firmly against such blessings for some members to its being a complete non-issue for other members," Fr. Waldo wrote. "Same-gender couples attend my parish and are fully integrated into community life and ministry. We have not however performed any same-gender blessings at Trinity Church because neither the vestry nor the larger parish community has come to one mind."

He also wrote, however, that he would not yet advise a rector in Upper South Carolina to proceed with a blessing for same-sex couples, "because our Church is not of

one mind on this issue we cannot act unilaterally, and I would not therefore sanction such blessings in the diocese until we have, through General Convention, reached a decision. Even if/when that time comes, I believe that a priest and the congregation he or she serves should have the pastoral freedom to address such changes constructively over time."

WYOMING

Four Nominees Remain

One nominee has withdrawn from the Episcopal Diocese of Wyoming's search for its ninth bishop, but four nominees remain. The diocese has set Dec. 21 as the deadline for nominees by petition.

The diocese announced on Dec. 12 that the Very Rev. Robert Neske,

(Continued on next page)

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news

(DALLAS FORUM, from previous page)

Dean of St. Mark's Pro-Cathedral in Hastings, Neb., had withdrawn his name.

The four nominees are:

- The Rev. Rebecca Brown, rector, St. Mark's Episcopal Church, Foxboro, Mass.

- The Very Rev. Canon F. Michael Perko, Ph.D., canon to the ordinary/ecclesiastical authority in the Episcopal Diocese of the Rio Grande.

- The Rev. Canon Dr. Clark Michael Sherman, rector, St. James Episcopal Church, Bozeman, Mont.

- The Rev. John Sheridan Smylie, rector, St. Mark's Episcopal Church, Casper, Wyo.

The diocese has distributed the four nominees' résumés, and it plans to release more detailed profile information after it announces any nominees by petition.



Prof. Arkes

professors at Amherst," Fr. Jackson said. "He not only remembered me, but he cited an example of an argument I used as a student."

Prof. Arkes, who is Jewish, has a long and deep involvement with the spiritual dimensions of ethical debates. *First Things*, the ecumenical journal founded by the late Richard John Neuhaus, took its name from a book by the professor.

Fr. Jackson said he thought of his former professor because of the same journal.

"I subscribe to *First Things*, and his encomium to Fr. Neuhaus really captured my imagination," Fr. Jackson said.

Fr. Jackson is especially impressed that his former teacher shows such a keen interest in, and understanding of, moral thinking by Christians.

"His academic ability to think things through to their first causes leads him to want to think this faith through as well," he said.

Fr. Jackson grew up without any religious faith or church involvement, and became a Christian in 1991, while living in Hawaii.

"I'm a late convert," Fr. Jackson said. "I didn't come to Christ until I was three years into practicing law. I was a litigator. I was worried about whether that was something I could do for the rest of my life."

Fr. Jackson said he had a sudden impression that he should attend a church. He remembered being taken to a Unitarian Universalist church as a child, so he visited such a church again. That left him unimpressed. A week later, he drove past St. Clement's, Honolulu. He attended church there at the next opportu-

Jewish Scholar Speaks in Phoenix

When an Episcopal priest in the northeastern suburbs of Phoenix seeks a speaker on the sanctity of human life, one who readily cites Pope John Paul II and Jean-Marie Cardinal Lustiger, who answers the call?

For the Rev. Phillip A. Jackson, rector of Christ Church of the Ascension, Paradise Valley, since 2007, the answer was Hadley Arkes, a professor of political science at Amherst College.

Prof. Arkes wrote about his lecture, "Lincoln, Obama and the Question of the Human Person," in a post for a weblog, *The Catholic Thing*.

Fr. Jackson, a native of Chicago, is a 1985 graduate of Amherst.

When Fr. Jackson called to ask his former professor to deliver a lecture at Christ Church, Prof. Arkes remembered him, although they had been out of touch since the late 1980s. "He was one of my favorite

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nity, and "I knew that I was home."
He was baptized in February 1992, and began attending Church Divinity School of the Pacific that fall.

The lecture by Prof. Arkes is part of a series in honor of the Rev. Dr. Dan Gerrard, rector of Christ Church from 1966 to 1988. Dr. Ephraim Radner will offer the next lecture in the series, "God Bless the Atheists: Faith and Anti-Faith Today," on Jan. 21.

Fr. Jackson said the lecture series, along with a concert series, represents an effort to create more cultural events in Paradise Valley.

"This particular part of Phoenix does not have a lot of public, civic culture going on," he said. "This is one of the most beautiful campuses in the Episcopal Church. We do hospitality really well."

Douglas LeBlanc

Liturgist: Recover the Daily Office

Making Holy Eucharist the central act of Sunday worship has also made that sacrament the central worship at most other gatherings of Episcopalians, said the Rev. Sister Jean Campbell, OSH.

"Every time we get together, we want to celebrate the Eucharist," she said. "Why?"

Sr. Campbell, a member of the Order of St. Helena since 1974, is rector of Trinity Church, Fishkill, N.Y., and a former member of the Standing Committee on Liturgy and Music. She spoke at Virginia Theological Seminary Dec. 10 on "Non-Eucharistic Worship Since 1979," part of the seminary's year-long series on "The Prayer Book at 30," which examines the legacy of The

Book of Common Prayer (1979).

"Recover[ing] the reality that prayer is not a Sunday-only event" is of prime importance for Christians' spiritual lives, Sr. Campbell said. "Daily prayer is ... not optional," but a part of "the normative life to which we are called."

As a way of making prayer more normative, Sr. Campbell advocated using Scripture in doxological as well as didactic ways. Didactically, we read Scripture because it is Scripture, rather than using it as the prayer of the Church. Doxologically, we ask God to act within us as we use Scripture as prayer. The two often work together, but the doxological needs to be recovered in our day "if we're truly going to be a biblical people," Sr. Campbell said.

One way to recover the doxologi-

(Continued on page 27)

Celebrate Episcopal Relief & Development Sunday During Lent

At the 2009 General Convention, Lent was officially designated as a time to encourage dioceses, congregations and individuals to remember and support the life-saving work of Episcopal Relief & Development. We invite all Episcopalians to join together on **February 21**, and **throughout the Lenten season**, to pray for those living in need and to dedicate a special offering in support of the agency's mission to assist people impacted by poverty and disease worldwide.

"**Healing ourselves and a hurting world**," the theme of this year's Lenten devotional, is a call for us to find the balance necessary in our lives to help others less fortunate than ourselves. These meditations, written by Sister Claire Joy of the Community of the Holy Spirit, will inspire, encourage and challenge us this Lenten season.

To order 2010 Lenten Meditations and related resources, call **1.800.903.5544** or visit www.er-d.org/lent.

Please plan ahead and place your order by **February 8, 2010**, to ensure delivery in time for Ash Wednesday.





Meals are served as part of a program called The Beacon at Christ Church Cathedral, Houston.

Christ Church Cathedral photo

Disarming for Ministry

By James Hamilton

The current security level is yellow (elevated). If you are planning to travel, the level is orange (high). “All Americans should continue to be vigilant,” warns the Department of Homeland Security. Take notice, survey and report. That is the official stance, a state of heightened awareness and preparedness. But where is the line between vigilance and suspicion? And how should churches balance a mandate of welcoming the broken stranger and maintaining a secure space for the vulnerable to worship?

Church buildings are not immune to theft, vandalism or hate crimes, and can be targets for predators — but Christ’s Church is also a place for redemption and renewal, a place specifically for outcasts and sinners. These matters move from theological quandary to practical application in one, very important, aspect of parish administration: church security. Should churches be on lock-down? What is the appropriate level of security for a church?

Three churches — St. John’s—Cartoogechaya in Franklin, N.C.; St. Alban’s Chapel & Episcopal University Center at Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge; and Christ Church Cathedral, Houston, Texas — have kept their focus on mission while addressing basic security issues.

“In this country, we tend to let fear dictate our

actions,” said the Rev. Debra Rice, rector of St. John’s, a congregation proud of its Smoky Mountain, Cherokee Nation, and open-door heritage. “That is not what Christ tells us to do. When your world is rocked, you still can’t let fear dictate your action.”

The congregation has indeed had its world rocked. On Nov. 1, St. John’s became one of ten churches attacked in a wave of vandalism and theft. It would be understandable if St. John’s had become wary and guarded after being violated.

Instead, the A-frame chapel, a snug space that Ms. Rice says fits 45 only “if we don’t breathe at the same time,” remains open around the clock, a place for prayer and reflection. The church installed a few

motion-detecting lights, but has changed little else in response to the crime.

The first act seemed to be only vandalism. “I came into the church and the front door to the parish hall/office complex was broken into,” Ms. Rice said. “That was the day after Halloween, so we thought it was a prank.”

Church members repaired the damage late that night. “The following morning, the senior warden told me that they had broken

in again,” Ms. Rice said. A few things were stolen, most notably the office computer with years of work and sensitive financial records. As the thieves moved the church’s vestments to search in the back of a closet, they draped the vestments neatly on chairs.

Ms. Rice considered the theft an opportunity to



St. John’s — Cartoogechaya, Franklin, N.C.

critique the congregation's ministry. "I told [the congregation], 'If this is someone who needs something, we have not been doing our job, people.'"

Sheriff's deputies spoke with church members about security upgrades, and they too stressed ways to "help these kids," referring to the suspected thieves. For this community, a small town with neighbors nearby to respond if another incident occurred, the deputies suggested rebuilding the church door, changing the locks (in case keys were stolen), and adding motion-detecting lights and motion-detecting "deer cameras." The congregation agreed to all but the last recommendation.

Soon after the incident, suspects were arrested and legal proceedings began. Leadership from all ten churches gathered to discuss what action to take against the suspected criminals. Compassion was a driving theme of the meeting. Ms. Rice, who has worked as a chaplain in correctional facilities, said she has worked with many offenders who have expressed relief after finally being arrested.

The churches decided to press charges, looking to rehabilitation as a goal, but would not abandon the suspects. The plan was to work together to forge bonds with the individuals who had violated their security.

"You don't fight fire with fire," Rice said, "You fight fire with water." We have been trying to keep ourselves in the water."

She said the churches hope that no series of crimes will change the compassion and trust of their community, a medium-sized town with a small-town heart where "some people don't even lock their doors."

One Chapel's Tradition

The Rev. Drew Rollins, chaplain of St. Alban's Episcopal Chapel at Louisiana State University, is also proud of a longstanding tradition of open doors. Fr. Rollins has inherited the policy and knows that any attempt to change it would meet fierce opposition.

"It is a point of identity for this parish that the doors are open 24/7," Fr. Rollins said. "I have found prayer requests written to me; but, more often than not, I have found letters written to God."

Because of the chapel's location on a university campus, Fr. Rollins enjoys meeting former and cur-

rent students of all denominations and faiths who have used the chapel as a sanctuary during times of trouble.

"It means that on campus we are known as the church whose doors are always open," he said, "and even if students have no other impression of the Episcopal Church and me as a chaplain, they know who we are."

Fr. Rollins makes a few exceptions to the 24/7



St. Alban's Chapel photo

The doors are open 24/7 at St. Alban's Chapel at Louisiana State University.

rule. He has found that LSU home games are a time when drunken revelers like to misuse the chapel space, so he locks the doors then.

The space has been misused a few other times, with small acts of vandalism or vagrants using the church as a restroom. Fr. Rollins locks the doors for a few days after such incidents to deter further abuse of the space.

Fr. Rollins said that open doors would not be an option for most churches. "Part of why it works here, we are on a well-lit corner with a lot of student traffic," he said. "The LSU police are aware that we keep it open. There is also a couple that lives on site, so there is someone here all the time."

The altar is stripped of dressing, there are no vessels, and the ambry is empty. Fr. Rollins leaves a supply of Bibles in the back, in case anyone is prone to such a theft.

"Remarkably, there have been no safety incidents," Fr. Rollins said. "We have a piano in there, a very expensive piano, and so far we have had no problems," but only students who come in to play and to pray.

"The parish is really behind it," Fr. Rollins said. "It is not something that I have done. For a long time at

(Continued on next page)

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LSU this has been a tradition. The letterhead says, 'All are welcome here, our doors are open 24/7.'

Restoring Dignity

Christ Church Cathedral in Houston serves the fourth-largest American city, and takes its mandate of service very seriously. "We have been sitting on this spot for 170 years, committed to serving the poor," said the Very Rev. Joe Reynolds, dean of the cathedral.

Although it is not located in a residential neighborhood, the cathedral has neighbors: Houston's homeless population.

Through a program called The Beacon, Christ Church provides food, laundry services and showers. The cathedral also provides mental-health programs, legal aid and pro-



Christ Church Cathedral photo

Laundry services are included in The Beacon's ministry. "We believe that dignity is the first step in spiritual healing," says Dean Reynolds.

grams to reduce recidivism. "We are in the business of restoring human dignity," Dean Reynolds said. "We believe that dignity is the first step in spiritual healing."

Not all neighbors of the cathedral appreciate this work. Harry C. Arthur, a personal-injury attorney who owns and works from a building adjacent to the cathedral, has filed a lawsuit challenging the out-

reach programs.

"[Mr. Arthur] claims that it is a nuisance, saying street people use the streets to use the bathroom," Dean Reynolds said. "He says that the fact that these people jaywalk, dart in and out of traffic, is a safety hazard."

Even before the lawsuit, however, the cathedral took security very seriously. Off-duty police monitor safety concerns during The Beacon's operating hours, and during Sunday services.

"We do control access, so that anyone coming into the administration building has to go through a single door past a receptionist," Dean Reynolds said. "She has a 'panic button' if there are problems. We have strategically placed monitoring cameras that we can access through the computer network. To restrict access, we closed an entrance and rerouted some traffic."

The cathedral locks the nave, because it was hard to keep secure, but a chapel is open for worship during the week.

"We have found here that really focusing on mission has increased the vitality of our congregation," Dean Reynolds said. "It has added a sense of vision and a sense of purpose. I would not presume to tell any other community what to do. But, I would say that any church has to be related to the community it is in."

Bethlehem, Jerusalem, Nazareth, Galilee, the River Jordan.

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The Rev. James Hamilton is rector of Trinity, Farmington Hills, Mich.

Safe Haven

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be kept in good repair to ensure the physical safety of people — firm handrails, lighted steps, access to bathrooms, wheelchair access, safe equipment and fencing for children's play areas. Do doors lock properly? Who has keys? When the rector and vestry no longer know exactly who has access to the buildings, it is time to re-key all the locks, delicate task though that may be.

Many parishes in cities hire security guards to be on the street during their services. Whether or not that is possible or advisable in a parish, greeters who stand *outside* the church can give meaningful security to people as they arrive as well as send the clear message that this church welcomes the community outside its doors — certainly the gospel message we want to convey!

Sometimes, however, access to our open buildings is an opportunity for crime. A friend of mine, a Roman Catholic pastor of a large, historic parish in New Orleans, recently discovered that all the bottles of champagne for the reception after the dedication recital of the new organ had vanished. The parish hall had been kept open for bathroom access, so the thief was able to enter and take the champers during the recital. Now stolen champagne is not a serious problem, one might say (although no one from New Orleans would), but what of the person who might accidentally encounter the thief? Perhaps in such circumstances, volunteers stationed near a single unlocked door could prevent intruders as well as advise visitors looking for the loo.

Another common practice is that the rector or some diligent volunteer may work alone in the church with no one else nearby. In the 1990s, in the small city of Thibodaux, La., the rector, who was alone in his office during the day, was murdered by someone he admitted. Most women perhaps are more reluctant than a man to be alone in a building. But keeping the door locked and declining to allow a stranger in when there is no one to come to one's aid is, alas, a requirement for both sexes in a secure church. Even Father Timothy in the Mitford books had a secretary in the office next door when he was counseling the penitent thief who had been living in the attic, not to mention the formidable canine Barnabas at his side.

(Continued on next page)

By Jean McCurdy Meade

What is a secure church? The idea of sanctuary at the Lord's altar is found in the Old Testament; it is not only as a place where God dwells but also, oddly enough, a place where the fugitive can find protection and cannot be slain. That claim of sanctuary in a church persisted in Christianity well into the Middle Ages.

Although churches today are certainly not places of refuge from the civil law, we hope that they remain places of sanctuary and safety for everyone who comes to seek God, to pray, and to worship in community. Thus the good of openness to the world and the good of security for those within must always be balanced and weighed against each other.

Among the promises in the baptismal covenant is "to respect the dignity of every human being" (American BCP, p. 305). That implies that absolutely everyone is welcome to join us in the church for worship, fellowship, and study. Welcoming, however, does not mean we are naïve about the realities of crime in our neighborhoods; nor does it mean that there are no expectations and boundaries for behavior for those who are members of our parish. Striking a balance between security and welcome to strangers is always problematic; and setting and maintaining expectations for propriety and security for parishioners in their interaction with each other can be difficult.

The Physical Plant and Building Access

To start with the obvious: church buildings need to



(Continued from previous page)

Ministry to Children and Youth

We promise at the baptism of a child to do all in our power to support this child in her or his life in Christ (see BCP, p. 303). Being organized about church school and nursery care is as important to fulfilling that promise as a loving heart and “a way with kids.”



Volunteers or employees who keep the church nursery or teach Christian education classes need clear procedures and expectations, as do the parents. A sign-in sheet is a good idea, and parents

should know when they are to resume responsibility for their children, whether during or after the service.

One of my children was once left behind in the classroom all alone when the teachers took the other children outside to play. Because I could hear him calling from inside the church, I left the service and rescued him. They apologized; but one does not have to have a great imagination to think of the harm that can result from just failing to do the things which we ought to have done in the care of our children.

The church should also be secure enough to offer a haven for older youth to explore ideas that might push boundaries. Our leaders, therefore, must have the maturity and authority to allow some latitude within rules of safe behavior while insisting on respect for people's differences. Adults who have the confidence of youth of either sex must have effective training and supervision so as not to abuse or be abused as they minister to our young people.

Security Within and Without

Finally, we know that there can also be inappropriate behavior between clergy and parishioners, or between adult parishioners involved in church work. And there are also, right within our walls, temptations to theft, embezzlement, lying or false witness, and almost any of the frailties that flesh is heir to. All these things shatter the security of God's house. A secure church must strive to operate with neither too high nor too low a theology of human nature, whether we are considering respected members of our parish or the strangers at our gate whom we seek to welcome in Christ's name. Created in the image of God, redeemed by the blood of Christ, we remain sinners in constant need of repentance, amendment of life, and due diligence about our own safety.

The Very Rev. Dr. Jean McCurdy Meade is rector of Mount Olivet Church, New Orleans, La.



Welcoming the Homeless

THE CHURCH AS A SECURE PLACE FOR ALL

By Kenneth J.G. Semon

Several winters ago the local homeless shelter found it could not accommodate the increasing number of homeless men, women, and children. They asked for people in the religious community to meet with them and come up with some way to help. Twenty churches, the synagogue, the mosque, and several other groups each decided to take responsibility for one week. The homeless guests would meet in a central location and be taken to the place providing shelter for the week.

The Church of the Holy Faith is a downtown parish with a fairly steady stream of homeless people in the neighborhood. As rector, I met with the staff and vestry to seek their opinions on hosting the shelter. Though there were significant questions about security and safety for our guests, for the parish, and for the neighborhood, both groups were in favor of helping. We also met with our early childhood center staff to discuss the possible security and safety issues for the young children. Since our homeless guests would be leaving an hour before the center opened, the center staff decided, again, in the interest of helping people in need, to give their consent. We checked liability issues with our insurance company, which was very helpful and supportive.

We have an “exclusive” resort across the street, several bed-and-breakfast places nearby, as well as several shops and offices in the neighborhood. We met with each of those groups and, though at first reluctant, they decided not to stand in the way. The vestry, after further discussion and concern about

building security and potential disruption to the neighborhood, agreed to open the doors to the needs of the homeless people.

After welcoming the guests, we asked them not to assemble in our parking lot or in the neighborhood before we opened the doors and not to stay around after they left in the morning. Grateful to have a warm dinner and breakfast, as well as a warm and safe place to stay, they happily complied.

Last year we found a building to house what has become the Interfaith Community Shelter. All went well at this location as we served over 650 guests and provided over 10,000 "bed nights." The city was able to help the various communities provide funding for our night staff and building lease. The groups were diverse: the local mosque and one of the synagogues were both very active. A group of humanists held their service at the shelter and then cleaned the building every Sunday. More than 20 faith communities participated and came to experience both a sense of common responsibility in caring for those less fortunate and a spirit of common mission and cooperation.

This year the Interfaith Community Shelter Group was delayed at the last minute in securing a building and two of the downtown parishes volunteered to shelter the homeless population: Holy Faith took the men and the First Presbyterian Church took the women. We had more than 30 men each night at Holy Faith and decided to use the parish hall for dinner and sleeping arrangements. Again, the vestry, though concerned because the parish hall, sacristy, and church are in the same building, on the basis of

past experience decided to open its doors, believing that human need far outweighed worries about parish property. When we consulted with the resort across the street about using our building as a temporary shelter, the resort responded by providing blankets for our guests. St. Bede's, the other Episcopal church in town, was most generous in providing sleeping bags and mats.

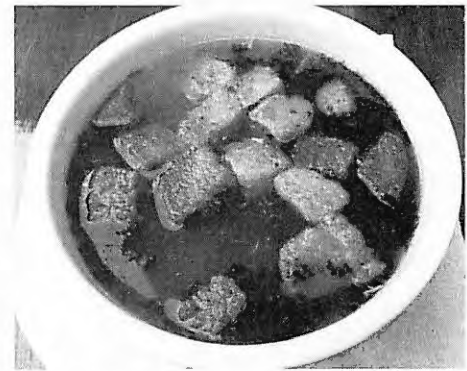
Now in a central location, each week one of the faith communities takes charge of supplying volunteers to prepare and serve the meals, assists in checking in our guests, storing their bags, and helping in the operation of the shelter. More than 500 people have volunteered to assist in the operation of the shelter and most have come to a new understanding of how homeless people are no different than most

other people. A percentage of the homeless have emotional and drug and alcohol problems; but that is true of the general population as well.

One night I said to one of our guests, "God bless you." The man responded, "God blesses me every day. I am blessed. Tonight he has given me a warm, home-cooked dinner, friendly people, and a warm place to sleep." One of our volunteers, interviewed on the local radio station, said, "When I leave the shelter and go to my home I give thanks to God. The people I have met in the shelter are no different from me, except they have nothing and I have so very much. The least I can do is give of my time and energy to help them. I know that tomorrow, for reasons outside of my control, I might be on the street."

When we began this endeavor, we were concerned about our property, our liability insurance, and our safety. Now we have many people dedicated to helping the homeless people whom they have learned are much like themselves. And when approaching one of the homeless people on the street, instead of backing off in fear we now greet them with a smile.

The Rev. Kenneth J.G. Semon is rector of Church of the Holy Faith, Santa Fe, N.M.



Thomas Castelazo photo (CC_BY_SA)



Let The Elders Unlock the Doors

HANGING AROUND THE CHURCH CAN BE A REAL MINISTRY

By Richard Kew

At present I am doing Sunday duty at St. Mary and All Saints' Church, Willingham, just outside Cambridge, England. Willingham is a pretty little town on the edge of the Fens. The present church building dates back a thousand years and is decorated by exquisite wall paintings, many of which already were old when Columbus sailed the ocean blue.

In the last few months it has become necessary to keep the church locked because someone was going in and defecating. So, for the first time in a millennium the people of Willingham are without daily access to their place of worship. The culture has changed, and church buildings are now a target. Churches are locked because of vandals, thieves, those who would desecrate them, and those ready to burn the place to the ground.

Having served parishes in Tennessee, New York, and Massachusetts, as well as having preached, celebrated, and spoken in churches all over North America during the last three decades, I have seen all sorts of responses to this problem. The message that a locked church door gives is not a good one — it seems as if we are saying to outsiders that they are not welcome, they are not wanted, or that they don't belong in set-

What is to prevent parishes from commissioning elder mission teams who will take responsibility for being in church for a certain number of hours each day?

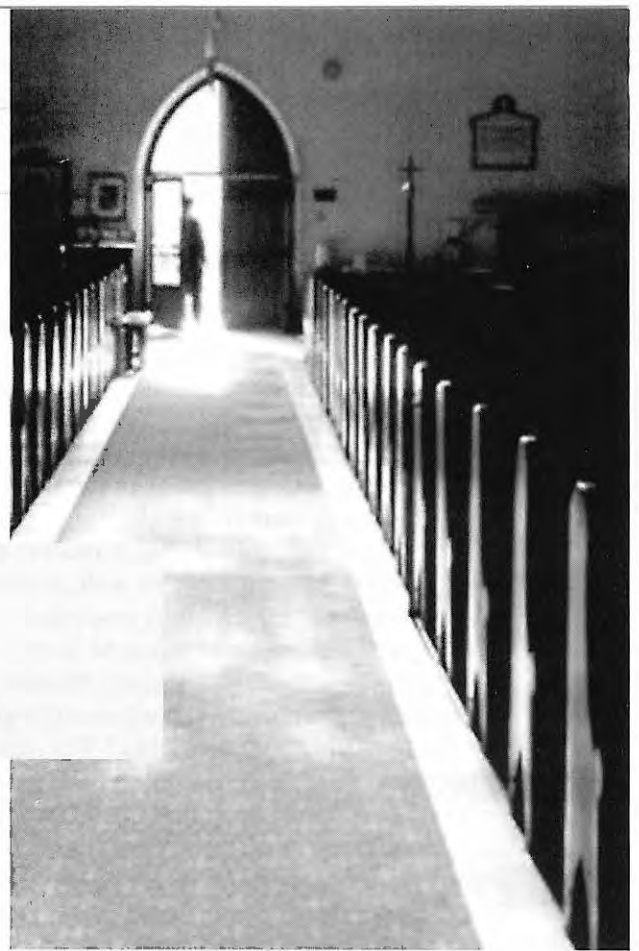
tings like this. Set in the midst of an increasingly secular society, sacred places now declare themselves off limits due to the actions of those who would steal or misuse, coupled with the resulting comeback of the insurance companies.

All this is happening at a time when there is within our culture a deepening yearning after God and an active spiritual life. When individuals might be tempted

to slip in and begin a pilgrimage of grace, the Christian church is forced to bar its doors to outsiders at those very times of the day when they might crave a few moments of silence in the presence of the Christ they may not know, but toward whom they are feeling their way.

In days gone by there was a greater respect for consecrated space, and there were more likely to be sextons and parishioners around the place to keep an eye on things. We could go to the lengths of installing closed circuit cameras, but is it really appropriate to spy on people when they bring themselves into this place of refuge and the presence of the Lord God Almighty? Besides, is there any reason to expect that equipment of this kind would escape the vandals' destructive compulsion?

While knowing perfectly well why we do it, locked doors send out a negative message about the church and its mission. Sam Shoemaker, one of the giants of



the Episcopal Church in the last century, used to say it was his job to stand in the doorway, one foot in the church and one out, welcoming the outsider in. Shoemaker's sentiments are right. The challenge facing us in a different age is how to do this. Locked doors say the wrong thing, intimating that the wonderful message of Jesus and his resurrection is not for sharing but for keeping to ourselves.

I wonder whether keeping the church doors open, at least during daylight hours, is something that the growing numbers of seniors might make their mission. I have become conscious of friends and contemporaries retiring, and immediately being transferred from the "useful" to the "of limited use" column in society's (and sometimes the church's) ledger book. I have the good fortune of being a sixty-something with a challenging ministry, but my oldest friend from childhood, a former school principal, who fills up his days volunteering and cultivating his garden, yearns for a lot more when it comes to serving Jesus Christ. He is definitely not an "old dear" who needs taking care of!

What is to prevent parishes from commissioning elder mission teams who will take responsibility for being in church for a certain number of hours each day? There are Daily Offices to be said, prayers to be prayed, cleaning and maintenance work that needs to be done, or just the opportunity to sit and ponder in the presence of the living God, while being there when visitors appear.

Anna, the prophetess, was there in the Temple when the Holy Family visited with their child, Jesus, to give the appropriate thanks and sacrifices. She was eighty-four, a widow, and seemed to haunt the place. Who knows how she used those hours, but clearly she was in communion with the God who guided her to the

Christ child; she then began to point him out to all those visiting Jerusalem (Luke 2:36-40). She is a good example for those of us who are older and still have the physical, mental, and spiritual resources to serve the Lord. There really is a ministry that might be called hanging about in church!

Maybe there won't be too many visitors at first, but if the doors are open people will gradually find their way in, and who knows what will serendipitously develop? On that shocking morning of 9/11 we unlocked and flung open the doors

of our church on the main street of a Tennessee town. Members of the congregation, stunned and hurting, drifted in, but so did others we had never seen before. That agonizing day may have been unique, but every other day there are people with other joys, anxieties, or sorrows that they wish to lay before God. Where better than an empty church to find solace, grace, comfort, and Christ?

The Rev. Richard Kew is development director at Ridley Hall, Cambridge.



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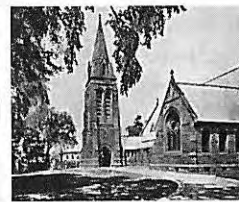
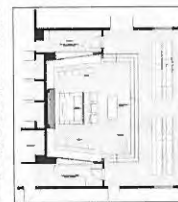
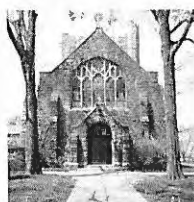
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guest column

Washing Blood Off the Stones

COME NOW, LORD JESUS

By W. Nicholas Knisely

Last night, as I came back to the Cathedral for Bible study after grabbing some dinner, I saw the street in front of the courtyard and nave filled with police cars, fire trucks and an ambulance. My first thought was that someone was using incense in the nave again and we'd managed to set off the smoke detectors. (Some of our staff clergy *really* like incense.)

I went into the nave first to make sure everything was OK there. A small group was rehearsing for the "Our Lady of Guadalupe" pageant. They had noticed the flashing lights but had no idea what they were about.

I went outside to the street and saw the police and medics gathered together under a small balcony and staircase that gives ground access to our second-floor auditorium in the Cathedral House. They were strapping

a man onto a gurney and moving him into an ambulance. I waited for someone to notice me. No one did. So I moved closer. No one paid any attention. Finally I sort of shouted: "Hello? Can someone tell me what's happening?"

An officer said, "Sure." A man had tried to kill himself by jumping off the balcony. He hadn't succeeded. All he appeared to have done was to break his leg, though there was plenty of blood. He had been standing on the corner an hour earlier threatening to take his life. A homeless vet saw him and called the police. The man was taken into custody and placed under observation. Somehow he managed to leave protective custody, came back to get his things (stashed on the balcony), and jumped.

The balcony is only one story high. I guess he thought it would do. The police told me that he was very drunk. My wife, a former EMT, told me that she's seen this sort of thing before. People try to jump and land head first, but it's very hard to land on your head when you jump off a building. Apparently you rotate as you fall.

I went back to talk with the various groups in the building who were, by this time, looking anxiously out the windows into the courtyard.

While I had been outside, a homeless teenager had

come in and gone upstairs. I found him sitting at my desk using the computer. He said he was thirsty and tired and wanted a glass of water. He also complimented me on my Macintosh. He told me his name was Benjamin David. I got him water and walked downstairs with him. I invited him to sit in the art gallery, to use the bathrooms if he needed to, and to rest for a while. As soon as I had turned to go back up the stairs, he ducked into the elevator to head back up to the office level. I met him at the next landing as the door opened (it's a slow elevator) and walked back down to the gallery with him. A parishioner was there and offered to sit with Benjamin David for a bit, but that didn't last very long and he wandered back out into the darkness.

The officer came to find me and asked me to help her wash up the blood on the sidewalk. We got a bucket, filled it with soapy water, carried it together outside and did what we could.

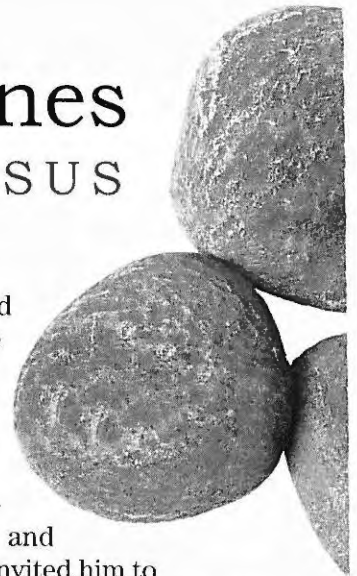
I don't know if the man who jumped is going to recover. I don't know where Benjamin David went. We prayed for them at Bible study, and we talked a bit about urban church ministry. There are a number of retired clergy who attend the Cathedral and who often attend my Bible study classes. They all had a story to share. Bleak ones.

There's probably more than a century of history doing ministry in the room. They had a lot of stories. I have a number of my own stretching back over the four congregations I've served. It's sad to recognize that in the end we almost always end up just washing the blood off the stones.

There are a number of extraordinary programs for homeless people a few blocks from the Cathedral. They do more good for people on the street than any other program I've ever witnessed. They've asked us to do what we can to get people to come down to their facility. There's shelter there. Food too. Dental care, ID issuers, job banks, and 12 step meetings. But whenever I try to send folks

The balcony
is only one
story high.

I guess
he thought
it would do.



Editorial

Essential Questions

Elsewhere in this issue, William Murchison reports on a joint appearance by Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori and the Rt. Rev. William C. Frey, a stalwart of the evangelical stream within the Episcopal Church. Fewer sparks emerged from that meeting than many Episcopalians may have expected or even desired.

We thank both bishops for agreeing to this public discussion. In a time when bonds of affection are strained between individual Episcopalians, and between Episcopalians and other Anglicans, such talks from the heart are essential.

The two questions addressed by the bishops — “Who Is Christ for Me?” and “Who Is Christ for the World?” — are at the center of the gospel. How we respond to these questions is intimate and personal, to be sure. Nevertheless, these questions are so essential to our identity as Christians that we should have a ready answer to anyone asking them (1 Peter 3:15), including our Lord at the Final Judgment (Matt. 7:21-23).

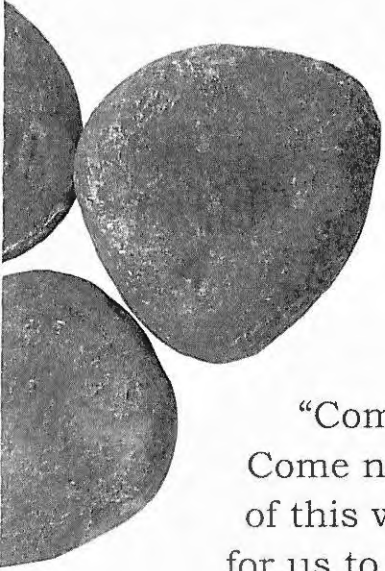
We are thankful for two bishops who consider it part of their Christian vocation to answer these questions in a public forum. We are thankful as

These questions are so essential to our identity as Christians that we should have a ready answer to anyone asking them.

well for the vision of the Rev. Robert Dannals, rector of St. Michael & All Angels, Dallas, who organized this forum and invited his mutual friends to be the featured speakers. If such discussions occurred with greater frequency within provinces, dioceses, or parishes, Episcopalians might find that they admire newly discovered qualities in each other.

This is not to say Episcopalians ultimately agree on every important question about Jesus, or about the other two persons of the Holy Trinity. It does mean that when we entertain assumptions about “other” Episcopalians — we need to err on the side of charity and humility.

The Episcopalian kneeling near us at our parish, or irritating us at diocesan convention (or on the pages of a weblog), may well have more to say about Jesus Christ than we have allowed ourselves to imagine.



“Come Lord Jesus.
Come now. The problems
of this world are too great
for us to try to manage
without you.”

down there, they won't go. They don't like it.

They don't like it because they have to be sober and “clean” to enter. I understand why people who are living on the street feel they need to take refuge in alcohol, and drugs, but it's going to kill them. And we can't make them stop. Outlawing drugs hasn't stopped them. Outlawing booze didn't either. There are other demons they're hiding from with the drugs and alcohol and those demons are so frightening that the users will do anything to find a moment of respite. And there are so many people hiding from their demons that they overwhelm the system.

Because they won't stop, they can't accept the real help they need. They won't walk the two or three blocks more it would take for them to be able to start the process of reclaiming their lives. They don't like the shelter because they'll have to face their demons again without the armor they think drugs or alcohol provide.

And we're left washing their blood off the stones. Watching people walk back out into the darkness, driven out by their demons.

In Advent we pray for Jesus to come. I'm praying this now without reservation. No more crossing of my fingers: “Come Lord Jesus, as soon as you can, but maybe tarry a little because I want to see what happens next.” Now it's “Come Lord Jesus. Come now. The problems of this world are too great for us to try to manage without you. Come quickly. We'll keep washing and working while we wait, but please don't tarry.”

Maranatha.

The Very Rev. W. Nicholas Knisely is dean of Trinity Cathedral, Phoenix.

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Taking the New Atheism to Task

Reason, Faith, and Revolution

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By **Terry Eagleton**. Yale University Press. Pp. xii + 185. \$25. ISBN 978-0300151794.

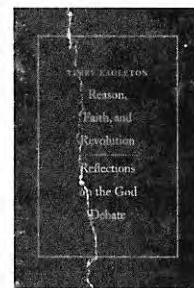
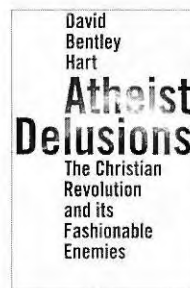
Atheist Delusions

The Christian Revolution and Its Fashionable Enemies

By **David Bentley Hart**. Yale University Press. Pp. xiv + 253. \$28. ISBN 978-0300111903.

Imagine that you are at faculty high table at either Oxford or Cambridge. An excellent meal has been consumed, accompanied by wine, dessert has been served and the port has been brought out. One of the distinguished scientists on the faculty, a biologist, begins to hold forth on his popular book promoting materialistic atheism as the only possible position for an intelligent don. He is seconded by his guest, a well-known ex-Marxist journalist and political commentator, who has written a book on the same subject. Together they make witty, withering and scornful attacks on religious belief in general and Christianity in particular. The biologist is Richard Dawkins and his book is *The God Delusion*. The journalist is Christopher Hitchens and his book is *God Is Not Great*.

Between them they are getting some "hear, hear" from the assembly and have got some of the junior members doubled over in mirth. Suddenly the senior professor of literary criticism wades in and focuses the spotlight of his massive erudition and theoretical sophistication on what it soon becomes clear is the astonishing philosophical, theological and historical ignorance of Dawkins and his guest. The professor is Terry Eagleton, and as he goes on you suspect that he might be slightly tipsy because his rant is so far ranging and stream of consciousness. But you listen with fascination because the rhetoric has lightning flashes of wit which com-

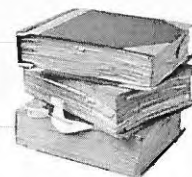


pletely leave the other side eclipsed. As an American guest you must, of course, sit through long, rambling anti-American asides about Bush and neoconservatives, but that is the price of learned British company.

Such is the experience of reading Terry Eagleton's Terry Lectures given at Yale. They are entertaining, in places scintillating, raise important political and theological issues, give striking cultural analysis and at their most promising subside into very witty but self-indulgent rhetoric. They read more like high table than lecture and, in the end, this is for the worse.

Eagleton has his own critique of Christianity, which is that it has not been faithful to its revolutionary identification with the poor, its own commitment to the dispossession of power and privilege. But he has absolute contempt for the sophomoric liberal secularism of the pair he puts in their place by addressing them as "Ditchkins."

There are two main elements to Eagleton's critique of the new atheism. Firstly, he accuses the new atheists of getting their rejection of theology "on the cheap" by critiquing a parody of traditional theology



based on half-understood Sunday School stereotypes. Eagleton accuses “Ditchkins” of thinking of God in crudely anthropomorphic terms and being culpably ignorant of the sophisticated way in which Thomist theology, for instance, has handled the relationship between God and creation, including the relationship between science and religion which “Ditchkins” has gotten hopelessly confused. Secondly, Eagleton shows himself a more serious sort of ex-Marxist than “Ditchkins” and demonstrates how embedded in market economy capitalism is their pathet-

Eagleton ends his critique by painting “Ditchkins” as the enemies of human progress.

ic belief in the myth of progress under the benign reign of reason.

Eagleton rightly brings the pair up short for having a lot to say about the Inquisition and nothing to say about the Holocaust and Hiroshima. He also challenges liberal secularists to see that the championing of a technical, instrumentalist reason which is unmoored from any transcendent moral vision produces a kind of cultural destruction which spawns fundamentalism in both the East and the West.

Eagleton thinks that the only competitors for a credible transcendent moral vision in our time are a chastened version of socialism or a non-violent liberation theological reading of the Bible. He ends his critique by painting “Ditchkins” as the enemies of human progress — as what Marx would call objectively counter-revolutionary — rather than as they like to see themselves, namely, leftist progressives. Coming from one member of the British academic Left to fellow travelers, this has got to hurt.

Returning to our high table: Eagleton has finished his rant, and all are

silent for a moment, reminded of the peril of venturing too far afield from one’s own specialty. Then, another voice begins to speak: an American guest, Orthodox theologian David Bentley Hart. The wit is every bit as sharp as Eagleton’s. This American is completely up to the genre of no holds barred debate but he is in con-

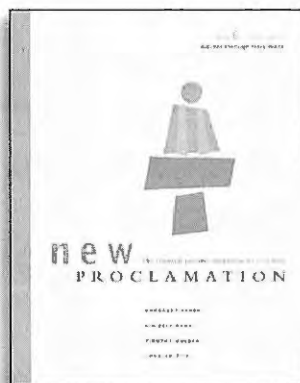
trol of his argument, proceeds with luminous lucidity and a command of historical detail that quickly earns respect from the learned assembly.

The previous three have said a lot about history in a fast and loose sort of way. “Ditchkins” has painted the

(Continued on next page)

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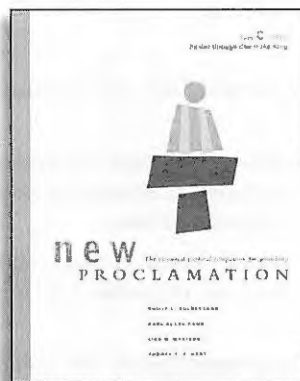
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books

(ATHEISM, from previous page)

history of Christianity in particular as a history of superstition and oppression. Eagleton has not challenged them much on that score, there being so much low hanging fruit in other areas.

Hart's thesis, in turn, is a show stopper. The triumph of Christianity over the world of late Roman antiquity represents such a vast transformation of civilization and culture that it is the only event truly worthy to be called a revolution. All subsequent Western history can be understood as the drama of this revolution and the counter-revolutionary reaction to it.

The new atheism is thus the most recent reaction to "a truly massive and epochal revision of humanity's prevailing vision of reality, so pervasive in its influence and so vast in its consequences as actually to have created a new conception of the world, of history, of human nature, of time and of the moral good ... more ennobling in its moral power than any other movement of spirit, will, imagination, aspiration, or accomplishment in the history of the West" (xi).

Mythical Narrative

Hart believes the immensity of this revolution and its humanizing power has been obscured by a historical myth which has become dominant among Western intelligentsia. He calls this myth the grand narrative of modernity. This mythical narrative traces the triumph of critical reason over irrational faith and the emergence of the modern and tolerant secular state. This secular state takes a form that elevates either individualism or collectivism as the unquestioned ethical norm.

The narrative is kept up with the repetition of wildly inaccurate readings of history that Hart takes apart with meticulous attention to detail. For example, he documents that the Inquisition, far from unleashing a



period of witch-hunting on the European continent, persistently and patiently put a lid on popular hysteria and saved numberless persons accused of witchcraft from mob violence. The hoary boogie man of the Inquisition was clearly a rational brake on a superstitious and magic-thinking populous.

Hart brilliantly deconstructs the story of an Age of Faith followed by an Age of Reason and shows instead that, as the West has lost its grip on its founding revolution, it has at the same time lost its grip on anything but the most instrumental and calculating use of reason.

He shows how modern science would not have been possible without the inheritance of the Christian worldview, and "that chief among the accomplishments of modern culture have been a massive retreat to superstition and the gestation of especially pitiless forms of nihilism; and that by comparison to the Christian revolution it succeeded, modernity is little more than an aftereffect, or even counterrevolution — a reactionary flight back toward a comfortable, but dehumanizing, mental and moral servitude to elemental nature" (xii).

Eagleton paints "Ditchkins" as counter-revolutionary in the Marxist sense. Hart offers a more profound definition of revolution and thus an even more poignant description of these unwitting counter-revolutionaries. They are paving the way for the eclipse of the religion of "the God-man, who summons human beings to become created gods through charity," and the return of the "man-god" who worships will and power and practices a religion that "will always kill and then call it justice, or compassion, or sad necessity" (239).

Both of these books are an intellectual adventure and a treat for those who love language and wit and real argument. Both show up very quickly the new atheism for its

setting up and knocking down of strawmen. Both provide a sobering analysis of challenges facing Western culture as it loses confidence in its own deepest values in the midst of a life or death contest with a metaphysically committed opponent. Either of these books could be given as bibliotherapy to a cultured despiser of religion. Hart's book is

more likely to create a sense of loss and mourning, and consequently of spiritual joy. Of the two, Hart's is the one more likely to be read again and again.

(The Rev. Dr.) Leander S. Harding
Trinity School for Ministry
Ambridge, Pa.




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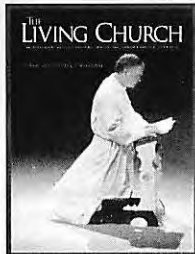
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New Year's Resources

SONGS IN WAITING: Spiritual Reflections on Christ's Birth. By Paul-Gordon Chandler. Morehouse. Pp. 108. \$20. ISBN 978-0-8192-2360-9.

An Episcopal priest who was raised in Senegal offers meditations on four songs that center on Jesus' birth: the Magnificat, Benedictus, Gloria, and Nunc Dimittis. Each reflection places the canticle in its historical Middle Eastern context, then considers its implications for our own lives. Liturgical artist Daniel Bonnell's contributions beautifully illustrate the heart of each song.

THROUGH THE CHURCH YEAR: Reflections for Feasts and Seasons. By Francis D. Kelly. Ave Maria Press. Pp. 192. \$13.95. ISBN 978-1-59471-174-9.

Monsignor Francis Kelly offers a helpful introduction to the seasons, solemnities and feasts of the liturgical year, a structure that "presents to us anew the mystery of Christ in all its fullness so that each aspect may be worshiped and give to us its unique grace." Historical background is provided for each feast and season, followed by a meditative exploration of the themes and scripture assigned. Drawing from classical spirituality and contemporary theologians, this concise guide will be valuable in newcomers' classes, for adult and young adult education forums, and to reinforce private devotion throughout the year.

LIVING THE CHRISTIAN YEAR: Time to Inhabit the Story of God. By Bobby Gross. InterVarsity Press. Pp. 280. \$17. ISBN 978-0-8308-3520-1.

Bobby Gross's book comes with no expectation of familiarity with the concept of liturgical time, and he offers helpful background for readers who are newcomers to a church year calendar. This devotional intersects with the liturgical seasons in a general way — Advent, Christmas and Epiphany being the "season of light," for example — and then specif-

ically through the Revised Common Lectionary readings for each Sunday. Introductory reflections focus on approaching God, presenting oneself to God, and inviting God's presence. The "Listening to God" section includes detailed meditations and thought questions for each of the scripture lessons, and "Responding to God" offers a concluding prayer. A substantial, scripture-based approach to private devotion that is a useful tool for lectio divina.

SIGNS & SEASONS: A Guide for Your Christian Journey. By Graham Kings. Canterbury Press Norwich. Pp. 73. \$16.32. ISBN 978-1-85311-897-5.

The Bishop of Sherborne in the Church of England, a founder of the Fulcrum evangelical network, and a patron bishop at the Covenant online community, Dr. Graham Kings offers a guide to the church year for those who are newcomers to "churchspeak" and who may be baffled by the church's calendar. He weaves in scripture and history with contemporary events, personal experience, original poetry and visual art as he connects the seasons with the deeper theological questions of everyday life, e.g., Easter: "Is there anything more to life than this?" Bishop Kings's book is likely to appeal to adults seeking an intellectually rigorous and creative engagement with the meaning and importance of the church's annual cycle.

ANCIENT CHRISTIAN DEVOTIONAL: A Year of Weekly Readings. Thomas C. Oden, general editor; Cindy Crosby, editor. InterVarsity Press. Pp. 296. \$18. ISBN 978-0-8308-3528-7.

Having worked together previously on lectionary year A, editors Crosby and Oden again tap the 29-volume *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture* to offer brief reflections from the writings of the early Church fathers on the lessons for each Sunday of the year. Opening

and closing prayers, also from the fathers, help illuminate the theme of the week's lessons. A handy resource for preachers, but valuable, too, for anyone interested in introducing the wisdom of these spiritual giants to their reflection on scripture.

Preaching from Memory to Hope

By **Thomas G. Long**, Westminster John Knox. Pp. xv + 152. \$19.95. ISBN: 978-0-664-23422-5.

The five essays in this collection from one of America's finest teachers of preaching address reasons why contemporary American sermons often fail to start with memory and conclude with hope.

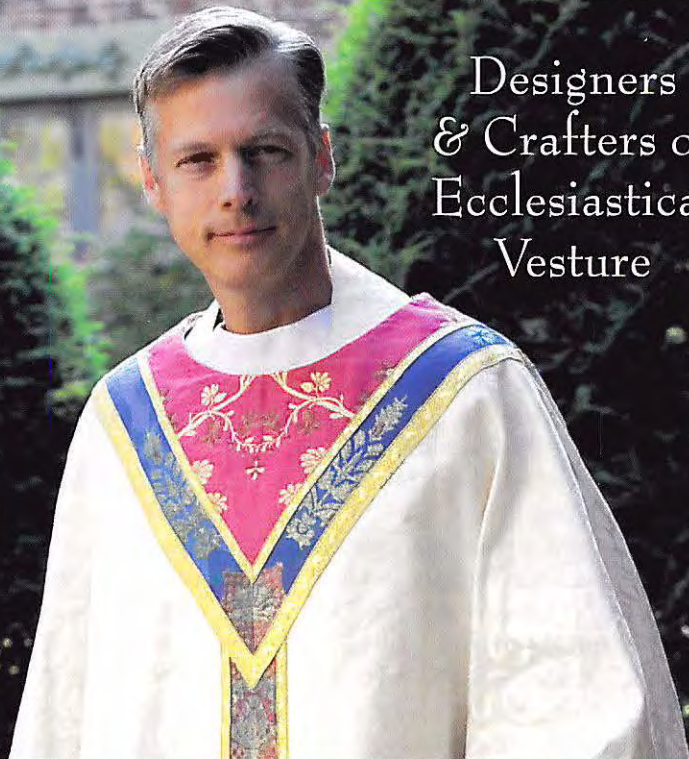
Narrative preaching has dominated the field for a half century and remains essential, but is frequently practiced in ways that fail to communicate the gospel. Many sermons are loaded with conventional wisdom about personal problems, but do not testify to a God active in this world and able to disrupt our lives. Gnosticism, which the author defines carefully, flourishes in numerous pulpits and pews, but must not be confused with the Christian message.

Long points to Marcus Borg as a prominent example of contemporary gnosticism and gently dismisses him as one more scripture scholar who portrays Jesus as a reflection of his own concerns.

The final essay addresses eschatology and proclamation. Here as elsewhere in this collection, Long not only exposes problems but recommends remedies: "Like the risen Christ himself, preaching is a word from God's future embarrassingly and disturbingly thrust into the present, announcing the freedom in a time of captivity, the gift of peace to a world of conflict, and joy even as the lamenting continues."

*(The Rev.) Charles Hoffacker
Washington, D.C.*

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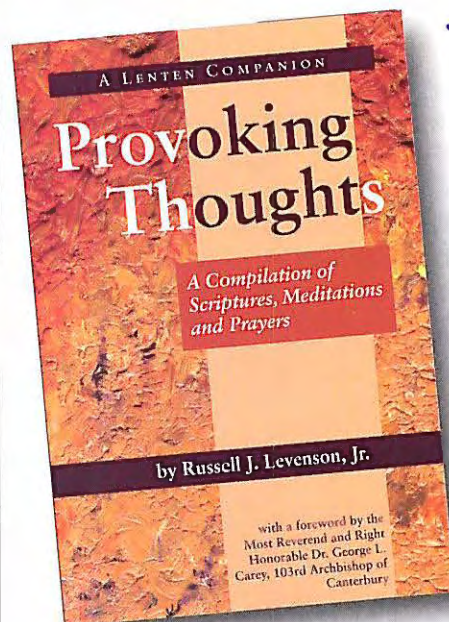


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103rd Archbishop of Canterbury*

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'Now' Connects 'Before' and 'After'

"The God of gods will reveal himself" (Psalm 84:7b).

BCP and RCL: Jer. 31:7-14; Psalm 84 or 84:1-8; Eph. 1:3-6,15-19a; Matt. 2:13-15,19-23 or Luke 2:41-52 or Matt. 2:1-12

A "Second Sunday after Christmas Day" will occur only about four years out of seven. It is to be regretted that these lessons are read less often than they might, for they are rich with a variety of meaning.

Jeremiah exults over the faithful remnant that has survived the exile of the people of God, now returning to their homeland. As in other places in the prophets, it is described how the faithful will be brought back from captivity. Especially comforting is the promise that this delivery will occur; for, as God says, "I am a father to Israel." The psalm presents one of the most peace-filled, comfortable images in the psalter — the image of a sparrow nesting her young by the altar of God, completely free from danger. This image is followed by a description of

the people of God as pilgrims refreshed with rainwater and climbing to the heights where God reveals himself to them.

The lesson from Ephesians rhapsodizes over the faithful who, now in Christ, have been "chosen" and "destined in love" to be the children of God. For the gospel lesson there are three passages to select from: the flight into Egypt, the finding of Jesus in the Temple at the age of 12, and the coming of the magi to Jerusalem and Bethlehem. Each of the lessons draws us back from the "results" of salvation described in the first lessons to a stage in Jesus' life after his birth but before the beginning of his public ministry.

In the lessons from Matthew we see uncompromising, death-dealing opposition to the newborn. The lesson from

Luke shows Jesus' transition from childhood to adulthood in an event that is the first great sign that he is conscious of his Messiahship; this lesson is especially valuable since it is the only passage anywhere in Scripture that shows Jesus as a boy. In this narrative Jesus makes his way to the temple in a critical step toward his eventual revelation to the people as the Messiah. The teachers of the law he engages and his parents who find him are both caused to wonder about him, for their world has been stretched by their encounter with Jesus.

In all three gospels we catch a glimpse of Jesus' ministry as it is after he is born but before he is publicly manifested. In these incidents, described with minimal detail, we can see anticipation of the future.

Look It Up

Compare the images in Psalm 84 to those in Psalm 23 — both of idyllic beauty, comfort, and hope. Note especially Psalm 84:5 and Psalm 23:2 and 4. Why are these two psalms among the most beloved of the Psalter?

Think About It

Consider how the lessons point toward the future by showing what happened after Jesus was born, but before he begins his public ministry. Even in these years, he is pursued by death, manifested to Israel, and sought by Gentiles.

Next Sunday **The First Sunday After The Epiphany (Year C), January 10, 2010**

BCP: Isaiah 42:1-9; Psalm 89:1-29 or 89:20-29; Acts 10:34-38; Luke 3:15-16,21-22

RCL: Isaiah 43:1-7; Psalm 29; Acts 8:14-17; Luke 3:15-17, 21-22

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(DAILY OFFICE, from page 9)

cal is to *sing* Scripture in communal settings. Sr. Campbell lamented the lack of communal, sung liturgical prayer as a “great void.” She noted the challenges this would prove to small parishes in particular.

“Can we develop ways of singing Scripture that are easily accessible for a small parish?” she said. “The task these days is to learn how to ritualize,” which requires a priest to determine how a particular community prays and to help it grow in prayer. She commended simple music and training in prayer to help meet this goal.

This work does not belong to priests alone. Sr. Campbell implored parents not to be afraid to “teach children [their] prayer language,” including sung Scripture. The Sanctus, she said, is easier to understand

than some nursery rhymes.

As an example of a service that uses Scripture doxologically in a large parish, Sr. Campbell cited Sun-

Sr. Campbell implored parents not to be afraid to “teach children [their] prayer language,” including sung Scripture.

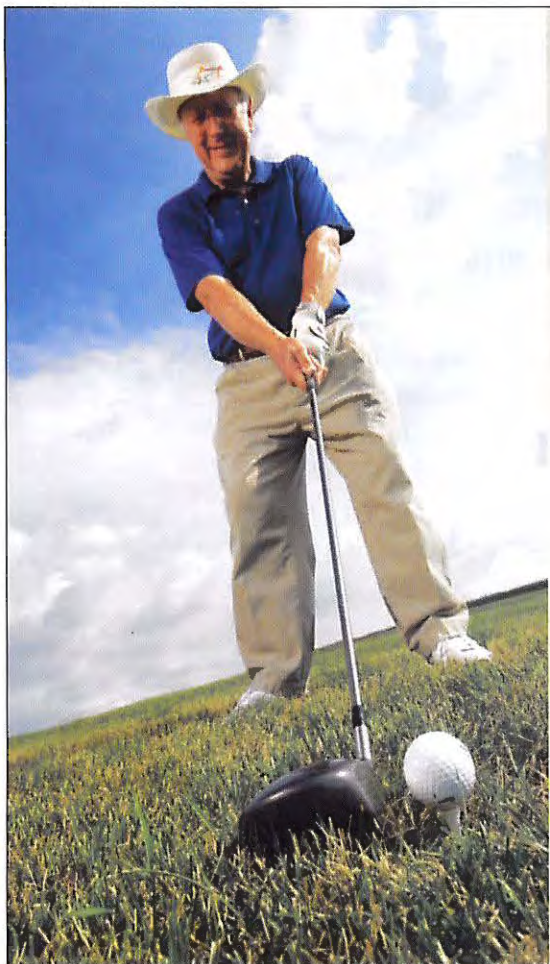
day-evening Compline at St. Mark’s Cathedral in Seattle, Wash. “People are invited into a sacred space ... and it becomes for a large number of people an icon, a doorway to the divine,” she said.

Robert Hallock launched that serv-

ice at the cathedral in the 1950s, and it has been influential in the Episcopal Church’s recovery of Compline since then. Today, nearly 500 people, most between the ages of 18 and 25, attend St. Mark’s celebration of Compline. Sr. Campbell credited the service’s success to the lack of expectations that people feel when they attend the service. There is no bulletin, and the choir does all the singing.

Sr. Campbell also recommended offering occasional services that have the power to “proclaim the gospel in very modern ways to us.” As an example, she again cited St. Mark’s, which in the early 1990s used a service of lessons and carols for reflections on the horrors of war. During the service, a lector read accounts of various bombings, from Dresden to Nagasaki. The service

(Continued on next page)



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(DAILY OFFICE, from previous page)

concluded with the first chapter of the Gospel of John and the first chapter of John's first epistle.

Sr. Campbell praised that service for helping people connect with the gospel, which requires "enormous creativity." Such creativity should include helping people feel something tangibly during a service, possibly through healing prayer and anointing with oil.

Because both the Book of Common Prayer and the Daily Office are available online, "I think ... that more people will be praying the Daily Office privately," Sr. Campbell said.

She added that a ripple effect sometimes occurs when a parish observes the Daily Offices. People who are not part of the parish sometimes notice and join the congrega-



Sr. Campbell: the recovery of the "constant prayer of the Church" as a normative part of Christian living will contribute to the Church's catholicity.

tion. Further, "there are times in our lives when there is no private prayer," such as when God seems distant, she said. "That's when the discipline of communal prayer ... gives us voice."

Sr. Campbell said the recovery of the "constant prayer of the Church" as a normative part of Christian living will contribute to the Church's catholicity, since it is "a very participation and act in the life of the Triune God." She credited Dr. Robert Taft, SJ,

author of *Liturgy of the Hours East and West*, with the thought that communal prayer involves joining with the Church throughout the ages in "the inestimable privilege of glorifying the Almighty God."

She also told THE LIVING CHURCH that prayer is at "the heart" of healing divisions within the church.

Ralph Webb

Archbishop to Deliver Schmemmann Lecture

St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary of Yonkers, N.Y., has invited the Archbishop of Canterbury to deliver the annual Father Alexander Schmemmann Memorial Lecture on Jan. 30.

Archbishop Rowan Williams will speak on "Theology and the Contemplative Calling: The Image of

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Humanity in the Philokalia” beginning at 12:30 p.m.

“Many Orthodox Christians may be unaware of Rowan Williams’s research and contribution to the field of Orthodox theology, but he was a pioneer in this field, with outstanding breadth and depth,” said the Very Rev. Dr. John Behr, dean of St. Vladimir’s, who was examined for his doctoral degree at Oxford University by then-professor Williams.

“The archbishop is a patron of The Fellowship of Saints Alban and Sergius, a society of Eastern and Western Christians that held a major conference on our campus in 2008,” said the Very Rev. Dr. Chad Hatfield, chancellor and CEO of the seminary. “And we welcome his presence as a person who supports the continued dialogue of the society’s members.”

St. Vladimir’s and Nashotah House Theological Seminary held a joint three-day conference, “In the Footsteps of Tikhon and Grafton,” at Nashotah House in October. As that conference concluded, Dr. Hatfield and the Very Rev. Dr. Robert Munday of Nashotah House signed a covenant that commits their seminaries to “continued prayer, fellowship and ecumenical cooperation.”

The archbishop’s visit will coincide with his speaking at the Trinity Institute’s 2010 Conference, “Building an Ethical Economy: Theology and the Marketplace.”

BRIEFLY...

Episcopal Peace Fellowship has joined the critics of President Obama’s Nobel Peace Prize acceptance speech. The pacifist organization objects to the escalation of troops in the Afghanistan war, and to the president’s invocation of just-war theory. “EPF believes that intensified hostilities undermine the function of international law in the struggle against terrorism and generate a cycle of violence, chaos and evil that is antithetical to the teachings and example of Jesus,” said a statement from the EPF executive committee.

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The Rev. **Arthur Callahan** is rector of St. Cyrian's, 919 S John Redditt Dr., Lufkin, TX 75904.

The Rev. **Susan Claytor** is rector of All Saints', 310 Elm Ave. and Valley Rd., Hershey, PA 17033.

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A native of Medina, OH, he was a graduate of Davis & Elkins College, Elkins, WV. Following 10 years in business, he attended Seabury-Western Theological Seminary and was ordained deacon and priest in 1979. He began his ministry at the Ottawa parish, and during his tenure Christ Church joined with three other Episcopal churches — St. Paul's, LaSalle; Christ Church, Streator; and St. Andrew's Chapel, Farm Ridge — to form the LaSalle County Episcopal Ministry. He served as the cluster's senior pastor and as dean of the Kankakee Deanery (Diocese of Chicago). In 2000 he became rector of Trinity, Mineral Point, WI, where he served until his retirement in 2005. He lived in Bayfield, WI, in retirement and served a number of area churches, including St. Andrew's Church, Ashland, this past summer. He is survived by his wife, Claire; a son, Robert Way Fliess, of Bayfield; and a brother, Robert, of Ohio.

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Humanity in the Philokalia" beginning at 12:30 p.m.

"Many Orthodox Christians may be unaware of Rowan Williams's research and contribution to the field of Orthodox theology, but he was a pioneer in this field, with outstanding breadth and depth," said the Very Rev. Dr. John Behr, dean of St. Vladimir's, who was examined for his doctoral degree at Oxford University by then-professor Williams.

"The archbishop is a patron of The Fellowship of Saints Alban and Sergius, a society of Eastern and Western Christians that held a major conference on our campus in 2008," said the Very Rev. Dr. Chad Hatfield, chancellor and CEO of the seminary. "And we welcome his presence as a person who supports the continued dialogue of the society's members."

St. Vladimir's and Nashotah House Theological Seminary held a joint three-day conference, "In the Footsteps of Tikhon and Grafton," at Nashotah House in October. As that conference concluded, Dr. Hatfield and the Very Rev. Dr. Robert Munday of Nashotah House signed a covenant that commits their seminaries to "continued prayer, fellowship and ecumenical cooperation."

The archbishop's visit will coincide with his speaking at the Trinity Institute's 2010 Conference, "Building an Ethical Economy: Theology and the Marketplace."

BRIEFLY...

Episcopal Peace Fellowship has joined the critics of President Obama's Nobel Peace Prize acceptance speech. The pacifist organization objects to the escalation of troops in the Afghanistan war, and to the president's invocation of just-war theory. "EPF believes that intensified hostilities undermine the function of international law in the struggle against terrorism and generate a cycle of violence, chaos and evil that is antithetical to the teachings and example of Jesus," said a statement from the EPF executive committee.

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