

September 19, 2010

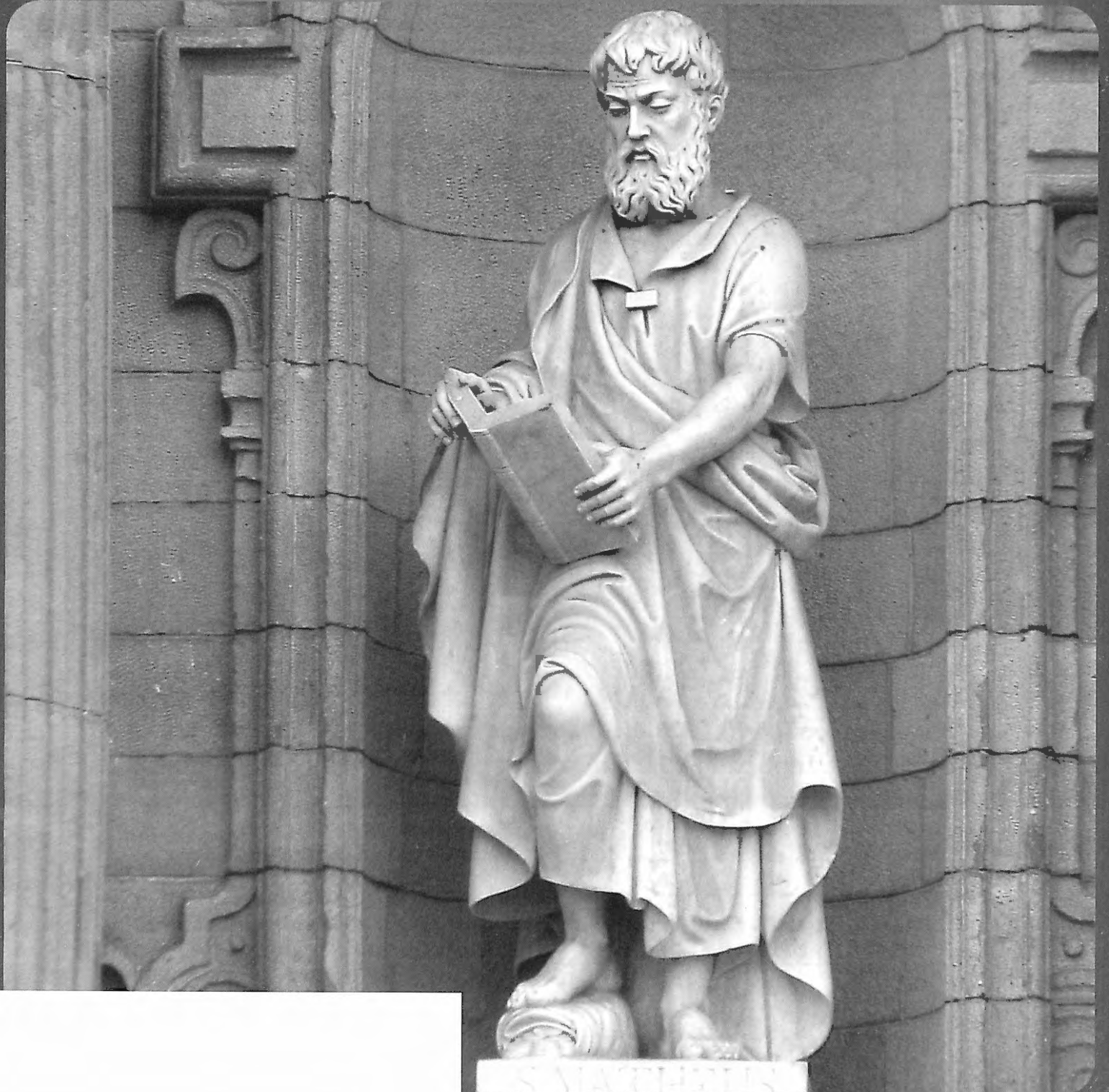
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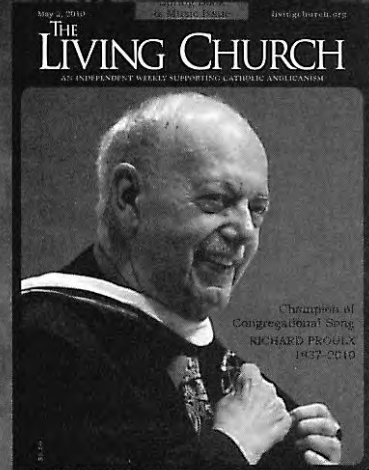
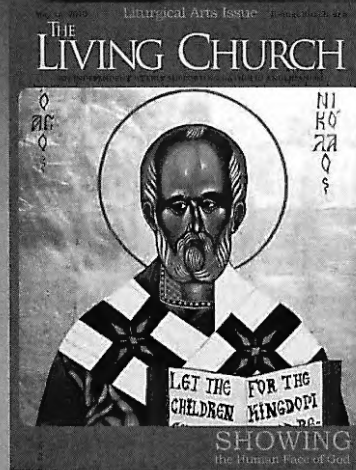
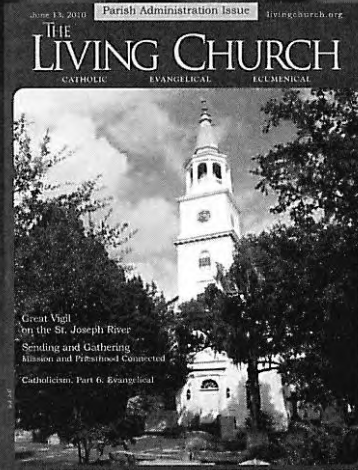
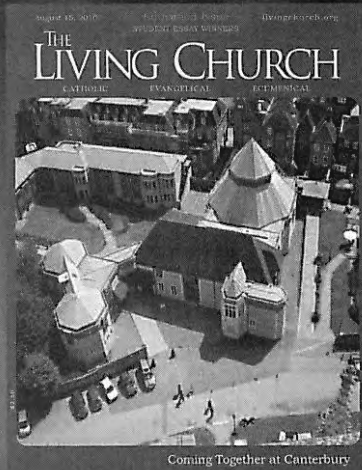
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Sculpture of St. Matthew at Lima Cathedral in Peru. (Creative Commons photo)

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African Primates Pledge Support

Leaders of all but two Anglican provinces in Africa have pledged to work with both Communion Partners and the Anglican Church in North America.

That commitment came in a communiqué issued by the Primates of the Council of Anglican Provinces in Africa (CAPA) at the conclusion of the All-Africa Bishops' Conference. The conference met Aug. 23-29 in Entebbe, Uganda.

"We are committed to network with orthodox Anglicans around the world, including Communion Partners in the USA and the Anglican Church in North America, in holistic mission and evangelism," the primates wrote. "Our aim is to advance the Kingdom of God especially in unreached areas."

In the same communiqué, the primates pledged their commitment to live by the standards of the Windsor Report.

"In order to keep the ethos and tradition of the Anglican Communion in a credible way, it is obligatory of all provinces to observe the agreed decisions and recommendations of the Windsor Report and the various [communiqués] of the past three Primates Meetings, especially Dar es Salaam in 2007," they wrote. "We as Primates of CAPA and the Global South are committed to honor such recommendations."

The Episcopal Church has repeatedly criticized support for the ACNA, and its predecessor groups, as disregarding the boundaries of dioceses in the United States.

The Archbishop of Canterbury and the Rev. Canon Kenneth Kearon, secretary general of the Anglican Communion, have asked Archbishop Gregory Venables to explain

his providing provincial oversight to conservative bishops in the United States.

A letter attributed to the provinces of Central Africa and Southern Africa distanced those provinces from the primates' pledge, which the statement interpreted as an effort to replace the Episcopal Church.

Even this dissenting statement, however, included criticism of the Episcopal Church's recent choices in relation to other provinces of the Anglican Communion.

"We are mindful that the Anglican Communion is under severe strain because of certain actions taken by the Episcopal Church, TEC, by their ordination of openly gay bishops," the dissenting statement said. "TEC's recent action of consecrating an openly lesbian person as a bishop in the Diocese of Los Angeles against a moratorium in the Communion of consecrating openly gay bishops reflected a gross insensitivity to the feelings of the rest of the Communion."

The two provinces added: "We recognize that all the provinces and dioceses in Africa do not condone TEC's action. However, provinces differ in their relationships with TEC in light of their actions. Some provinces continue to value their historical partnerships with TEC and its organs. ... In pursuit of its objective to form a new 'province' in North America, ACNA has been successful in bringing together most of the splinter groups within the Anglican tradition. ... We do not support ACNA's position for legitimacy through the elimination of TEC."

A six-page conference statement included 26 commitments, some of

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which were observations. The churches' commitments included:

- realizing "the need for further improvement of the Covenant in order to be an effective tool for unity and mutual accountability";

- enhancing "lay participation in the ministry of the church";

- supporting "renewed engagement in global mission";

- "working with partners at all levels to ensure equal access to medical care, food security and promoting good health practices to prevent the major causes of death on the continent";

- demanding "the protection of our people, particularly our women and children, from human trafficking, sexual immorality, abuse and violence, and structural, cultural and domestic violence";

- contributing to "the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals by 2015";

- responding to HIV and AIDS by "reducing stigma, shame, denial, discrimination, inaction and 'misaction,' and by promoting moral practices such as abstinence and marital faithfulness as well as access and availability of treatment, voluntary testing and empowerment of communities, in addition to other public health measures";

- in response to harmful climate change, promoting "existing successful environmental conservation initiatives, including tree planting and bio gas schemes";

- calling on "international communities, particularly Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the African Union and the United Nations, to put more pressure on the National Congress Party and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement to hold a free, fair and peaceful referendum on the 9th of January and to respect the decision of the people of Southern Sudan as stipulated in the Comprehensive

(Continued on page 12)

Gifts of God

by Patricia Swift



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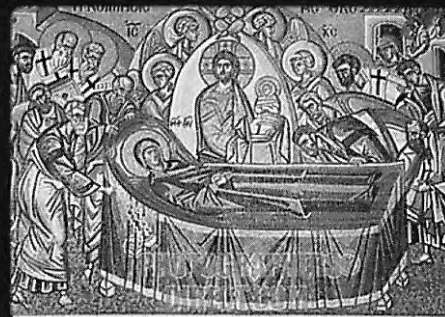
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Walter Kasper's Gift to the Church

Ecumenism as the Work of All Christians

By Kristin Colberg

In July, Cardinal Walter Kasper announced his retirement as president of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, a role he has held since 2001. Kasper's career has been marked by many highlights, but perhaps his greatest achievement was in bringing renewed hope and momentum to ecumenism. In what may be the most difficult and contentious job in the Vatican, Kasper has earned the respect of leaders across the ecclesial and theological spectrum. "Working with Cardinal Kasper in recent years on so many matters of ecumenical concern has been an inestimable privilege," the Archbishop of Canterbury said upon hearing of Kasper's retirement. "Anglicans have always been made welcome by Cardinal Kasper in Rome. We have felt ourselves to be received as brothers and sisters in a common faith and mission, notwithstanding the many challenges that arise for ecumenical dialogues in our day. He will be greatly missed by his many friends in the Anglican Communion, not least myself."

Kasper's commitment to ecumenism is rooted in his understanding that the task of theology is to "render an account of the Christian hope to every human being" (cf. 1 Pet. 3:15). For him, this task means that the Christian community must focus on its ability to communicate the good news effectively. Kasper observes that the relationship between the Church and the modern world is strained by a perceived abyss separating one's experience of faith and one's experience of the world. It seems as if the Church is increasingly unable or unwilling to answer the questions posed most urgently by modern men and women. Kasper argues that the Church must work to present its identity in a clear and unambiguous manner. In other words, the Church needs to demonstrate to the world that

it offers something unique and essential.

To achieve the goal of speaking meaningfully today, Kasper reasons, the Church must engage in two related tasks: the first is internal to the Christian community (*ad intra*), while the second regards the Church's external ministry to the world (*ad extra*). The Church's internal task is to understand Jesus Christ and itself more deeply. Kasper argues that the Church encounters problems in proclamation because it does not understand its own beliefs clearly enough (*ad intra*) to express them convincingly (*ad extra*). To show the significance of its message in the 21st century, the Church must look inward to better comprehend its own tradition and commitments. On this point Kasper writes:

The present crisis facing Christianity in the West does not touch merely on some peripheral concerns; ... We are dealing here primarily with a crisis of relevance. We hear daily that dogmatic teachings and, even more, the moral rules of the Church no longer reach a large segment of believers. They appear to offer answers to questions which are no longer being asked. Nonetheless, the crisis of relevance represents merely the superficial side of the problem. It has long since led to a much deeper identity crisis within the churches. The question is no longer *how* the Church will be able to reach the modern, secularized world; rather, the question is *what* constitutes Christianity as such. What can Christianity, *must* Christianity, say to the modern world? Does it have something of its own to say, something unmistakable? ("Nature, Grace and Culture: On the Meaning of Secularization," *Catholicism and Secularization in America: Essays on Nature, Grace and Culture*, p. 32)

Therefore, to succeed in its mission, the Christian



Cardinal Kasper: Divisions indicate a lack of Christian self-understanding

community must continue to look introspectively, to deepen its appreciation of the mystery which constitutes its own identity. In order to know *how* to address the modern world effectively it must have a clearer understanding of *what* it is trying to convey.

The second task the Church must face if it hopes to communicate its message convincingly is the nature of its ministry to the world (*ad extra*). To succeed in its mission of proclaiming the good news, the Church must strive to understand its historical setting and take seriously the commitments and mindset of the secular world and other religious communities. Christians who strive to convey the hope that is within them must not only explore the content of that hope but also engage the questions, challenges and self-understanding of those to whom they intend to communicate it. For the good news to be received, it must be presented in a way that is intelligible to modern men and women and that resonates with their deepest concerns.

Kasper has always been clear that there is no fixed order to these two tasks; it is not the case that the Church always starts with reflection *ad intra* and then moves *ad extra*. In fact, he readily acknowledges that the opposite is often true in that Christians' experiences in the world — beyond the Church itself — frequently bring the greatest opportunities to inform their identity. Thus, the Church's efforts *ad intra* and *ad extra* are always mutually edifying in the manner of an upward spiral: the greater the Church's self-understanding, the more it can speak convincingly to those outside of the Church, and the more that Christians encounter Christ's Spirit beyond

the Church, the more they can understand their own faith, up and up the spiral.

Kasper's sense of the need to give an account of the Christian hope and the inherent *ad intra* and *ad extra* dimensions of this task fuel his passion for ecumenism. Because the body of Christ is one, the divisions among Christians represent an extreme manifestation of a lack of Christian self-understanding. The absence of Christian unity inhibits the Church from presenting itself coherently in the contemporary context. If Christians do not know their own beliefs well enough to come to agreement on questions such as the nature of sacraments, the validity of orders, and the character of ecclesial authority, how, Kasper asks, can they articulate their identity in exchanges with the world and with non-Christians?

Thus, ecumenical dialogue is critical not only to heal the fragmentation in the body of Christ, but also to advance the Church's overall mission. Coming to a deeper understanding of this central *ad intra* question is critical for the Church to speak meaningfully on all fronts — to the faithful, to the secular realm, and to non-Christians.

The urgent ecumenical work that is required today, according to Kasper, should first and finally take the form of "spiritual ecumenism." It is Jesus' *prayer* to the Father that they may all be one (John 17:21). Thus, Jesus himself indicates that Christian unity is not something that can be manufactured or achieved purely through hard work; rather it is a gift of God's work in the Holy Spirit. Accordingly, ecumenical dialogue cannot be seen as an academic exercise or as only the work of theologians and leaders. When ecumenism is reduced solely to such efforts it becomes often overly technical and overly concerned with issues of authority and, as such, alienated from the concerns of everyday Christians. Similarly, ecumenism cannot be seen as a form of "activism" in which groups host endless symposia, meetings, sessions, projects, and events in order to *achieve* Christian unity. Ecumenism must be spiritual in that it must be rooted in the prayer and practice of the people of God. On this Kasper explains:

We should look again to Jesus' prayer "that they all be one," which points to the very heart of a healthy ecumenism: spiritual ecumenism and ecumenical spirituality. This means first of all

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prayer, for we cannot "make" or organize Church unity; unity is a gift of God's Spirit, which alone can open hearts to conversion and reconciliation. And there is no ecumenism without conversion and renewal, no ecumenism without the purification of memories and without forgiveness. Spiritual ecumenism means further common reading of the Bible, exchange of spiritual experiences, collaboration in serving the poor, the sick, the outcast, the suffering of all kinds ("A Vision of Christian Unity for the Next Generation," *The Tablet*, May 24, 2003).

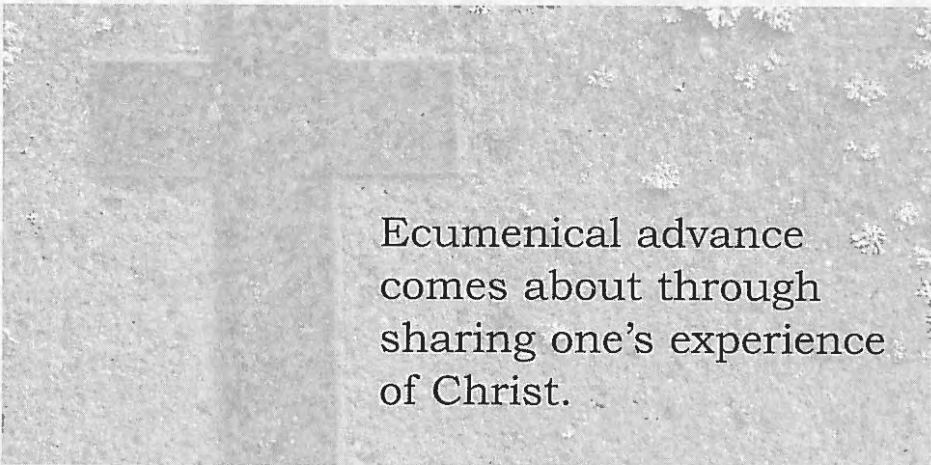
Given the nature of ecumenism, Kasper sees it as the work of all Christians, for "when it comes to prayer, all are experts, or, rather, all should be experts." Ultimately, ecumenical advance comes about through sharing one's experience and, particularly, one's experience of Christ. Thus, all Christians must seek to share the hope that is within them, by translating that hope into meaningful actions and into the language of everyday experience.

Kasper's views on the task of theology and proper approach to Christian unity reflect his sense that the Church is a *living tradition* rooted in the spirit of Christ that makes all things new. Once, when asked about an especially difficult set of conversations with a particular delegation, Kasper replied: "Dialogue with them is not easy," but "do we want a living tradition or a petrified one?" To witness to a living tradition means that Christians must engage in difficult conversations, be open to rethinking elements of the tradition, and refuse to become too comfortable with our own understanding.

The Church is not a museum which holds a collection of fixed teachings, one stacked upon the next; it is a living tradition which seeks to express the inexpressible and thus must continually seek new and more adequate articulations. Among the considerable gifts that Kasper brings to the ecumenical table is his firm belief that the Holy Spirit is ever guiding the Church and keeps it at once rooted in the tradition and perennially new and renewed. This belief gives him the courage to enter into dialogues, even challenging ones, knowing that the Spirit will ultimately guide all those involved. It allows him to see conversations with "the other" not as a threat but as an opportunity to know Christ more deeply. Finally, it allows him to recognize that the work of ecumenism must be that of dynamic exchange if we are

to fulfill Christ's prayer for unity. On this point Kasper writes:

How do we reach this vision? Not by imposition of one vision on the other, not by suppression but by fraternal exchange of gifts. Each church has her richness, which she does not have only for herself but which she should share with all others. This does not entail meeting on the lowest common denominator; ecumenism does not mean relativism and indifferentism with respect to one's own tradition. Ecumenism is not counter-signed by loss but by mutual enrichment, the authentic understanding of which is not that we convert to the other church but that all convert to Christ; and in him, who is our unity and our peace, we shall truly be one. Thus we do not advocate an ecumenism of return. Ecumenism is not a way back; it is a way ahead in the future.



Ecumenical advance comes about through sharing one's experience of Christ.

Ecumenism is an expression of a pilgrim Church, of the People of God, which in its journey is guided, inspired and supported by the Spirit, which guides us in the whole truth (John 16, 13).

As witnesses to a living tradition, we must see ecumenism as a vibrant and continuing process where, through honest engagement, we come to understand Christ and ourselves more deeply.

Certainly, Kasper's leadership will be greatly missed. He has worked diligently, listened carefully, and modeled the prayerful spirit which is necessary to advance the hope that "they might all be one." May his legacy be a more profound openness to examining ourselves and engaging the world in ways which allow us *together* to give a convincing account of the hope that is within us.

Dr. Kristin Colberg is assistant chair of the University of Notre Dame's department of theology.



Defining Evangelism

I was drawn into the Rev. Tony Clavier's article about the understanding of Eucharist as worship and not evangelism [TLC, Aug. 29]. I think Fr. Clavier's views about the language of worship are of particular interest.

I embrace his point and would take it straight to the question of Rite I vs. Rite II worship. I think renewed vigor and use of our Rite I liturgies, if properly supported by thorough teaching ("in winsome manner"), will enhance our worship as a work of the people in union with the Church. I don't mean to turn the argument around and suggest the Eucharist should be used for evangelism. But I wonder if greater evangelism won't occur as a byproduct.

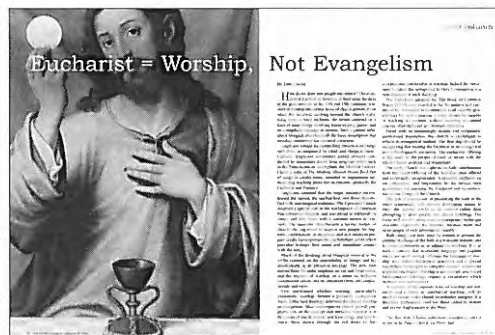
I'm reminded of an article by Dr. Michael Foley, professor of patristics at Baylor University, who writes:

There has never been a tradition of the vernacular in Christian liturgy, if by "vernacular" you mean the language we speak on the street. Many of the earliest Masses were offered in a language the congregation could understand, but not in the language that could be heard in the marketplace. Before a native language was used in divine worship, it was first "sacralized" — its syntax and diction were gingerly modified, archaisms were deliberately re-introduced and even new rhythmic meters and cadences were invented. All of this was done in order to produce a distinctive mode of communication, one that was separate from garden-variety vernacular speech and capable of relaying the unique mysteries of the Gospel ("The Language of Prayer," *The Wall Street Journal*, June 23, 2006).

Thus, if English is to convey sacred mysteries, there should be a "sacred English."

Our former Anglican (now Roman Catholic) Father Alvin Kimel wrote in an essay called "Re-Enchanting the Mass: How beauty affects belief":

The people of God will not be spiritually and theologically transformed by impoverished language. As author Madeleine L'Engle avers, "Where language is weak, theology is weakened." I would also add, when we ener-



vate the language of faith, flat-souled believers are the result.

If we would encourage the people of God to believe fully in the presence of the risen and glorified Christ in the Eucharist, then our celebration of the liturgy must witness to this presence with grace, beauty, loveliness, and mystery (*The Adoremus Bulletin*, Dec. 2005-Jan. 2006).

If we see a decline in numbers because of our Rite I use, it is not for distaste of the sacred vernacular or an image of stodginess, but rather a lack of education and understanding about what the sacred vernacular is. If the ancient Christians changed the language from the streets, then so should we. With appropriate education and understanding as to why it's

done, then use of a sacred English in our worship is earnest and its beauty will, indeed, enhance belief.

*Andrew Bradford
Dallas, Texas*

Fr. Clavier asks, "How do we draw new people into the church?" So doing, he defines evangelism narrowly. Is not evangelism drawing people into Jesus' mission to make the world more loving and more just?

"Follow me" is the basic text for evangelism. It is about joining Jesus' mission in deed and word. Joining the church is part of joining the mission — not the primary goal of evangelism.

John Stott, a leading evangelical of the last generation, found Matthew 28:19-20 too institutional. For Stott, Jesus' "greater" commission is "As the Father has sent me, I send you ... receive the Holy Spirit" (John 20:21-22). For him, it points to Christian mission as service (no structures or attitudes of dominance) and incarnational (being with others and being vulnerable).

Whatever opens people to consider joining Jesus' mission is the beginning of evangelism. Evangelism is completed in baptism with its basic commitment to join Jesus' mission. If worship is one of the ways people are drawn to consider joining Jesus' mission, let it be so.

*(The Rev.) A. Wayne Schwab
Plattsburgh, N.Y.*

Neglected Administrators

Once again, I picked up a Parish Administration Issue [TLC, Sept. 12] looking for some article on parish administrators — some recognition of the vital part we play in the life of the parish, the catchall of skills we must have, and the sometimes grueling work we face — like Christmas,

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Lent, Holy Week, and the beginning of the program year.

With shrinking congregations and so many already overcommitted parishioners, churches can no longer assume that they have, within their congregation, someone who is qualified (or has the time) to be a treasurer, or financial secretary, or newsletter editor, or buildings and grounds manager, or publicist, or someone to hold a grieving parishioner's hand while simultaneously desperately trying to locate the also overcommitted priest. We tend to have to pick up the task if there is no one else to take it.

Most of us work hard, we work long hours, and we almost always work for less than we might be able to get on the open market. We have to love what we do, and truly care about the church and the people we serve, or we wouldn't do it. It is never just a job — for many of us it is a sacred responsibility, a ministry. We are the sacristan of the office, the scribe of the copy machine, the canon of the office computer, the servant of the servants of God (with apologies to the pope).

Please, give us some actual coverage in your next Parish Administration Issue!

*Donna Veale
Parish Administrator
St. Luke's Church
St. Albans, Vt.*

Blessed Bishop Grafton

I wanted to comment on the fine article by Richard Mammana about Bishop Grafton [TLC, Aug. 22]. As the archivist and historiographer of the Diocese of New York I have felt for some time that the richness of our heritage gets far too little coverage in the church media. It is articles like this one that do it justice. Thank you and please keep them coming.

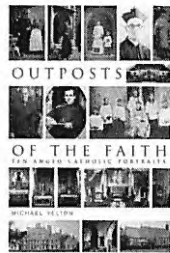
*Wayne H. Kempton
New York, N.Y.*

Outposts of the Faith

Anglo-Catholicism in Some Rural Parishes

By **Michael Yelton**. Canterbury Press Norwich.

Pp. 255. \$12.99, softcover. ISBN 978-1-85311-985-9.



Among the most prominent popular images of Anglo-Catholic history is the Ritualist inner-city slum priest, working in cramped, urban parishes where angels — or at least another breed of clergy — fear to tread. There is truth behind

this image, especially in the lives of famous figures like Charles Fuge Lowder, Alexander Heriot Mackonochie, Arthur Henry Stanton, and Lincoln Wainwright in England.

The commitment of these priests to long-term urban ministry was among the strongest factors to win public English support and sympathy for Anglo-Catholicism.

Not so well known is the strong but often less visible tradition of Anglo-Catholicism in rural English churches, explored by Michael Yelton through ten parish-examples in his new *Outposts of the Faith*. Yelton focuses on his own selection of parishes, admitting that it is not his “intention to draw profound, or indeed any, conclusions from what is an unrepresentative selection.” He nevertheless draws on his own vast store of knowledge, along with oral history interviews, contemporary periodicals, and architectural investigations, to paint a detailed and sometimes frustrating account of Anglo-Catholic life in these parishes during a very eventful 20th century.

In each chapter, we meet strong personalities on every side of church controversies. Some of the most memorable in Yelton's account are Maurice Child (1884-1950), a priest “as criticized by some as he was admired by oth-

ers”; Athelstan Riley (1858-1945), the lay hymn-writer and major patron of church art who is still famous as the writer of *Ye Watchers and Ye Holy Ones*; Gambier Lowe (1865-1933), whose eccentric biography alone makes the book worthwhile; and a handful of figures like Frank Hawker Kingdon, who was appointed to his rural parish in 1888 and died in office in 1958, aged 98. A common element in each chapter is the importance of improving church buildings; many of the major parishes and figures in the book had strong connections to prominent architects Ninian Comper (1864-1960) and Martin Travers (1886-1948).

Outposts of the Faith is an important successor to two of Michael Yelton's other recent books, *Anglican Papalism: An Illustrated History 1900-1960* (2005) and *Alfred Hope Patten and the Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham* (2006). Like Colin Stephenson's *Merrily on High*, all three books provide personal views of a sometimes surprisingly recent and confident Catholic Anglicanism, by no means perfect, but full of good humor, intelligence, devotion, vision, energy, and sincerity.

The strength of conviction shown by laypeople and clergy in the rural parishes described in *Outposts*, and the richness of the surviving anecdotes about them, makes it natural to wish that there were similar books by such able writers about corollary periods and figures in the recent history of the Episcopal Church.

*Richard J. Mammana, Jr.
New Haven, Conn.*

Scandalous Servant?

"God our Savior ... desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. 2:3,4)

BCP: Amos 8:4-7 (8-12); Psalm 138; 1 Tim. 2:1-8; Luke 16:1-13

RCL: Jer. 8:18-9:1; Psalm 79:1-9 or Amos 8:4-7; Psalm 113; 1 Tim. 2:1-7; Luke 16:1-13

It's been called the most baffling of Jesus' parables, this tale of the unjust steward. Some New Testament scholars suggest that Luke himself didn't know what to make of it. Thus he tacked on to the end of it the assorted and rather contradictory sayings from Jesus about money. Like spare keys in a junk drawer they were all laying about. Surely one must fit.

Perhaps Luke is right, and Jesus really is trying to say something about money. Certainly, many devote themselves to it with a breathtaking passion. Mammon is a god well served, and wisely too. Like the greedy merchants of our Old Testament lesson, many can think of nothing but its claims on their

life. Religion, recreation, honesty, self-respect — all must be sacrificed on its altar. "When will the sabbath be over," they ask, "that we may sell grain?" — and they fail to see a bit of irony or pathos in the question. Would that God was served so carefully, so wisely. If we managed his affairs with the same "shrewd dealing," think how many more friends there would be to greet us in the age to come.

Another key may fit even better. In Luke's gospel, debts and sins often go together. Jesus, in his kingdom prayer, bade his followers to ask God "forgive us our debts" (11:4) — and to extend the same generosity to others — "seventy times seven" (17:4).

Perhaps Jesus himself is the scandalous servant, playing fast and loose with the Master's account book. The Pharisees balked at his open display of mercy. He welcomed the most unsavory of followers, and raced ahead of the customary process for repentance and forgiveness. In short, as William Murdoch has written, this parable is a tale of the "roguery of grace." Jesus absolved debts that could never be paid. His kingdom is for everybody — short sales left and right. This Messiah never saw a friend he didn't like. What the Pharisees miss is that the Son is just like that scandalous Father of his, who, as St. Paul tells us, desires "that all should be saved and come to know the truth."

Look It Up

Read Leviticus 25 and Luke 4:19. If Jesus understood his kingdom as the beginning of an age of jubilee, what might this mean for the forgiveness of debts in this parable?

Think About It

In interpreting this parable, St. Augustine wrote: "We can understand that we have to give alms and that we must not really pick and choose to whom we give them, because we are unable to sift through people's hearts." Is his advice reflected in your approach to giving?

Next Sunday **The Eighteenth Sunday After Pentecost (Proper 21C), September 26, 2010**

BCP: Amos 6:1-7; Psalm 146 or 146:4-9; 1 Tim. 6:11-19; Luke 16:19-31

RCL: Jer. 32:1-3a, 6-15; Psalm 91:1-6, 14-16 or Amos 6:1a, 4-7; Psalm 146; 1 Tim. 6:6-19; Luke 16:19-31

THE LIVING CHURCH

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PRIMATES

(Continued from page 5)

Peace Agreement”;

- expressing “deep concern over the continued sexual violence against women and children by armed groups operating in the Eastern Congo” and calling on United Nations forces “to do more in protecting civilians and assist the government in stabilizing the region.”

A Filmmaker’s Journey into a Cathedral’s Future

For filmmaker Martin Doblmeier, there’s a temptation involved with the Washington National Cathedral: “You sort of romanticize the [cathedral’s] past.”

Doblmeier’s film *Washington National Cathedral: A New Century, a New Calling* (2008) helps resist that tendency. It was recently awarded a regional Emmy Award by the National Academy of Arts and Sciences’ National Capital/Chesapeake Bay Chapter.

Doblmeier may be unknown as a filmmaker to the majority of Americans, but his work has garnered the attention and admiration of film critics. From his first film, *The Heart Has its Reasons* (1985), to his latest, *The Adventists* (2010), Doblmeier has made documentaries focusing on religious concerns. The filmmaker’s own Journey Films, founded in 1983, has released 25 films, many of which have appeared on national public television.

Made between 2006 and 2008, *Washington National Cathedral* was conceived during lunchtime conversations Doblmeier had with Greg Rixon, the cathedral’s former director of public affairs. The two friends brainstormed ideas on how to observe the cathedral’s centenary in 2007.

Washington National Cathedral opens with author James Moore



Journey Films photo

Filmmaker Martin Doblmeier (left) interviews cathedral dean Samuel T. Lloyd III during production of *Washington National Cathedral: A New Century, A New Calling*.

quoting the Roman Catholic writer G.K. Chesterton as saying that America has “the soul of a church.” The rest of the interview with Moore did not make the final cut, but Chesterton’s remark grabbed Doblmeier because it “connects the idea of America, the American experience, [with] those who believe” that God works in daily life.

“To say something about the connection between God and country” was a goal, Doblmeier told *THE LIVING CHURCH*. In the film, archival footage of the first cathedral stone being planted in 1907 illustrates the intersection of America’s story with Judeo-Christian faith.

“I think that what’s really interesting is that the [cathedral] founders were thinking of white, Anglo-Saxon Protestant worship,” Doblmeier said. By contrast, the cathedral’s worship now is more influenced by America’s greater racial and ethnic diversity, and religious pluralism.

“We’re going to be a house of prayer for all people,” the Rt. Rev. Eugene Sutton, Bishop of Maryland, says in the film. (At the time, Sutton was the cathedral’s canon pastor and director of the Cathedral Center for Prayer and Pilgrimage.) “That definition of ‘all people’ has expanded.”

The evolving identity of the cathedral — from a house where Christians of diverse traditions worship together to a house where people of diverse religions engage in dialogue and, to some extent, worship together — is complemented thematically in *Washington National Cathedral* by an emphasis on the cathedral’s reconciliation work. Doblmeier has studied reconciliation in many of his films, perhaps most notably *The Power of Forgiveness* (2008).

“I do believe that if you think this country of ours does not need reconciliation, you’re not paying attention,” he said. “We’ve become an

angry country, and it's no longer acceptable."

Regarding divisions among Christians in the Anglican Communion, he added, "Christ was not here to divide us but to bring us together." Reconciliation is "a way for people of faith to actively transform the world, and that's what I believe we're called to do."

Does Doblmeier see a calling in his filmmaking work?

"I am convinced that there was some hand of God" in becoming a filmmaker, Doblmeier said. "Throughout my whole life I have attempted to find out and communicate what God is doing. I feel that I'm called to this."

Still, the call that Doblmeier senses is to show through media what he calls "the workings of God." Journey Films shares this same main purpose, and film is the medium that Doblmeier currently uses, but radio also could fulfill it. "What drove me was not to be a great filmmaker," but rather to tell stories of God's work, he said.

Doblmeier's interest in faith is extensive. "I read everything I can get my hands on" regarding religion, he said. He majored in religious studies at Providence College in Rhode Island. One of his great hopes is that "at some level our films are being used as part of the religious studies programs" at institutions of higher education, particularly since so many teenagers prefer films and television over books.

His influences "draw less from filmmakers and more from the religious." His heroes include St. Francis of Assisi, Billy Graham, Cesar Chavez, and Mother Teresa. In 1981, self-professedly young and naïve but ambitious enough to start *Reel-to-Reel*, a weekly radio program on religion, he wrote to the Missionaries of Charity, Mother Teresa's order, describing his new venture. They invited him to come to India and granted him an interview with the venerable nun soon after she was awarded the Nobel Prize.

He is proudest of his films that still move people. *Bonhoeffer* (2003) was released theatrically and "really opened up a lot of new doors for us." That film, *The Power of Forgiveness*, and *The Adventists* are currently on the Amazon bestseller list for religious films, and so comprise his top three. As for the future, Journey Films is working on a script for a

major motion picture and has developed a concept for a television series.

Doblmeier approaches each film by conducting copious research. "I never ever leave it up to chance." While he finds such preparation essential, "if I don't leave the door open to seeing the hand of God, I'm not doing my job."

Ralph Webb



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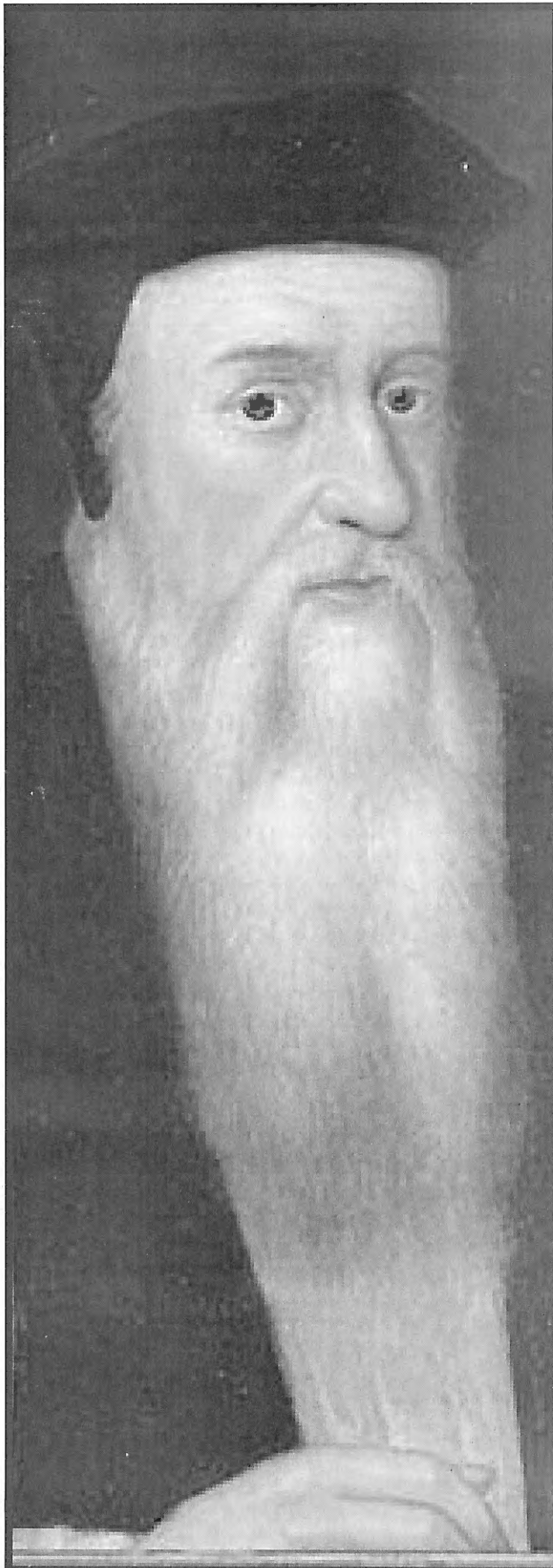
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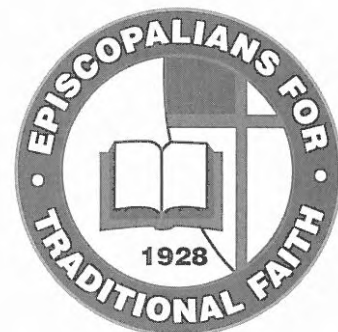
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