

Bible and Church

The Transfiguration

Zombie Theology

August 4, 2013

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*Grant that we may share
with her the glory of
your eternal kingdom.*

(Collect for the Feast of
St. Mary the Virgin, BCP, p. 243)



‘TLC is a *smart* publication,
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—The Rt. Rev. John Bauerschmidt,
Bishop of Tennessee

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ON THE COVER

Golden Virgin Mary
on Milan Dome, Italy

“Our Lady is no longer a figure who automatically divides [Christians]” (“With Mary on the Ecumenical Trail,” p. 15).



THE LIVING CHURCH

THIS ISSUE | August 4, 2013

NEWS

- 4 Liturgists Return to the Baptismal Font

CULTURES

- 10 A Brief Theology of Zombies
By William O. Daniel, Jr.
12 Meditation by the Pool By Charlie Ritch
Appearances By Betsy Childs

BOOKS

- 13 *The Transfiguration of Christ and Creation* by John Gatta
Review by Jesse Zink
14 *A Following Holy Life* edited by Kenneth Stevenson
Review by Benjamin M. Guyer
15 *Maiden, Mother and Queen* by Roger Greenacre
The Blessed Virgin Mary by Tim Perry
Review by Peter Doll
17 *Consecrated Spirits* by Felicity Leng
Review by Sister Mary Jean

CATHOLIC VOICES

FIRST IN A SERIES ON THE BIBLE IN THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH

- 18 Introduction By Robert MacSwain
19 A Welcome Breakthrough By Bolly Lapok
22 Answered Prayers in a Soaking Rain
By Douglas Taylor-Weiss

OTHER DEPARTMENTS

- 24 Letters
26 Sunday's Readings
28 People & Places



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Liturgists Return to the Baptismal Font

By Steve Waring

Members of Associated Parishes for Liturgy and Mission, which played a central role in bringing a deeper emphasis on baptism to the Book of Common Prayer (1979), met in Waukegan, Illinois, June 27-29 for “Stirring the Waters: Reclaiming the Missional, Subversive Character of Baptism,” a conference five years in the making.

Keynote speaker Benjamin M. Stewart, assistant professor of worship at the Lutheran School of Theology in Chicago, believes the next great liturgical change will occur at gravesides.

“Up until now, funerals have largely escaped the natural movements that have taken place in many other parts of the service,” he said. “I support working with clergy to make this a more joyful ceremony.”



Meyers

The Rev. Ruth Meyers of Church Divinity School of the Pacific, chairwoman of the Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music, called for using more contemporary, under-

standable language, perhaps for the Apostles’ Creed. She said that only proposals for same-sex blessings have drawn greater criticism than the idea of an alternate version of the Apostles’ Creed.

“I am not proposing elimination of the Apostles’ or Nicene Creed, but we also need a new means of helping people hear and express their Christian belief in a contemporary and understandable language,” she said. “This is a tacit acknowledgement that no single prayer or statement can convey the entirety of the Christian faith.”

The ideal time to teach the faith is during preparation for baptism, said

the Rev. Jay Koyle, president of the ALPM and the Diocese of Algoma’s congregational development officer. In his address, “The Rite Stuff: Stirring the Waters Before Baptism,” Koyle compared liturgy to line dancing, noting that both require mastery of a few steps before you can begin to add creative flourishes and embellishments.

“I believe in creativity in worship but not creativity for its own sake,” he said. “Liturgy should have ties to older texts. We are not seeking to throw out the baby with the bathwater.”

‘We Belong to God’

The Rt. Rev. Jeffrey Lee, Bishop of Chicago, described several personal moments during the past 20 years when he understood the importance of baptism.

“About 20 years ago I attended a conference in San Francisco called ‘Catechumenate.’ It attempted to discern the early Church’s emphasis on baptism,” he said. “I was set on fire and since then it has not gone out.”

Baptism is unique in its ability to transcend. “It is not a structure, program, or organization,” the bishop said. “It is a rite, a mysterious way of making life real.

“I do not think that the way we celebrate baptism should be in a minimalist way,” he said. “We need fonts in which we can drown, something that symbolizes the new life we receive from this washing. That is really what is most important.”

More than 30 percent of Americans younger than 30 have no experience with churches, and Bishop Lee believes baptism provides an important way of reaching them.

When he became Bishop of Chicago in 2008, Lee said, he hoped to spread baptismal preparation on a grand scale. So far the clearest expression of that hope is the diocese’s developing of a Chrism Mass.

Lee said that when he served in the Diocese of Olympia, based in Seattle, he was struck by how little influence Christianity retained in society. “Many of these people have deep spiritual longings, but they are not being met by the institutional church,” he said. “How can we create boundaries that are not barriers, but temptations?”

Christians should be fiercely committed to the central tenets of the faith and immersed in Scripture, he said. “We are the primary evidence of Christ’s resurrection,” Lee said. “Jesus died to eliminate the barrier between the altar and the sanctuary.”

Bishop Lee questions whether Communion of the unbaptized is an effective means of reaching unchurched people and said the practice hinders a bolder approach to baptism.

“The attitude of ‘Ya’ll come’ is a stark contrast to the young woman in Seattle who was so enthused after everyone in church had prayed for her during her baptism,” Lee said. “This is a conversation I would like to have with my colleagues in the House of Bishops.”

Lee mentioned an eight-year-old boy who was evangelized after his friend invited him to the Godly Play program at Holy Family Church in Fishers, Indiana, which Lee planted in 1990. In time Lee baptized the boy, but the service was filled with mistakes that left Lee flustered and upset with himself. But the boy went home and convinced his parents to join him at church.

“As Catholic Christians steeped in the Reformation, we believe that we belong to God,” he said. “I pin my hope that all this can come our way. These central matters cut across so many barriers.”

Rites Must Connect

The Rev. Louis Weil made a spirited defense of the baptismal emphasis in

the Book of Common Prayer (1979).

Weil said the most important change in the 1979 prayer book was its renewed emphasis on baptism, as a rite that enables Christians to recognize each other across theological and doctrinal divisions. "Theologically I find the prayer and the responses very convincing," he said of the baptismal rite.



Weil

Weil, professor emeritus of liturgics at Church Divinity School of the Pacific and a member of the Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music, has reflected for many years on the role of the presider at the Eucharist. In *Liturgical Sense: The Logic of Rite* (2013) Weil describes assisting a bishop at an ordination many years ago. During the eucharistic prayer the bishop made "an extremely elaborate pattern of gestures ... until finally the consecrated elements were lifted up and the people responded 'Amen.'" After the service, when Weil asked about the meaning behind the gestures, the bishop responded that he had celebrated that way for 25 years.

"In order to fulfill its purpose the liturgical rite must make a connection with the congregation," Weil said, adding that new liturgies must also be grounded in historical precedent.

"Generally speaking, clergy may be expected to know what is intended in the rite, but what is it that the people see?" he writes. "[W]hat the people see is sometimes quite different from what is intended."

During the liturgy the congregation is not merely observing a priest but fully participating, preparing for a life of worship and evangelism, he said.

"The problem is that a great many people do not understand the connection between baptism and the teaching of the faith," he said. "Let's not spend inordinate amounts of energy finding a whole new prayer

book. There is no perfect prayer.

"We need to be engaging people who are essentially already outside of the body. They are out of touch with knowledge about the Church, its prayers, traditions, and history. Sometimes missionary activities can take on nonreligious forms. There are also a lot of variations in the liturgy which can be welcoming to the seeker."

Steve Waring is a freelance writer in Milwaukee.

Face Time for the SCLM

The Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music held its only face-to-face 2013 meeting in Milwaukee June 24-26, and is discovering the limits of

online meetings. The commission keeps a blog of its discussions and tasks (bit.ly/SCLM-TEC).

"I'm not completely satisfied with the online meeting format for commissions," said the Rev. Ruth Meyers of the Church Divinity School of the Pacific. "It helps us keep accountable to one another for the work and move things along a bit. But it's not a complete substitute for face-to-face meetings. For example, the commission prays liturgical texts as it reviews them, and that's harder to do online. Online meetings give no space for the informal times that allow relationships to develop, and those relationships are very important in getting work done."

Other commission members have endured technical problems that prevented them from participating fully

(Continued on next page)

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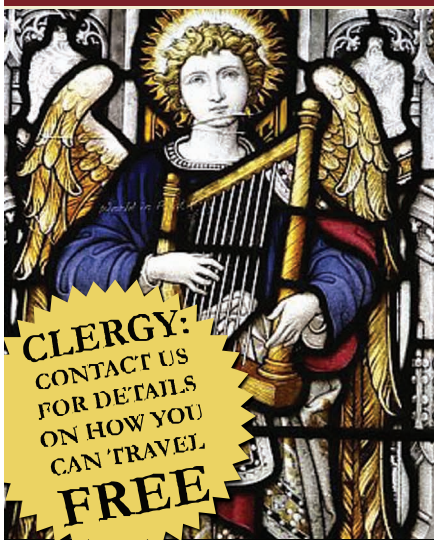


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Face Time for the SCLM

(Continued from previous page)

in the online meetings. The Rev. Louis Weil of CDSP said that during one online meeting he had no audio signal and during another he had an audio signal but no video.

In 2012 General Convention charged the commission with five tasks:

- Gather responses about same-sex blessing rites and decide what revisions or additions to present to the next convention

- Gather responses on the 120 additional individuals approved for trial use by General Convention in 2009 and to make a final recommendation to the next General Convention in 2015 on their inclusion in *Holy Women, Holy Men*

- Identify resources that will help clergy and congregations address anti-Judaism

- Develop guidelines for deciding which translations of Scripture should be authorized for use in public worship (about a dozen translations are approved under Canon II.2)

- Revise the Book of Occasional Services

The 2012 General Convention approved a same-sex blessing rite for provisional use under the direction of the diocesan bishop, and commended the entirety of *I Will Bless You and You Will Be a Blessing*. To date 37 dioceses have responded to the commission. Not all of the bishops of the responding dioceses have authorized same-sex blessings. The Archives of the Episcopal Church maintains a complete list on behalf of the commission.

Meyers said she expects the standing commission will complete its work on same-sex blessings, the review of additional persons approved in 2009 for inclusion in *Holy Women, Holy Men*, and guidelines for approving biblical translations. Meyers said she expects an incomplete

progress report on revision of the Book of Occasional Services, which General Convention directed the commission to overhaul. Christian anti-Judaism is a long-term project, and Meyers said the commission would be “looking particularly at resources that will help clergy and congregations address the anti-Judaism that can be stirred by Scripture and liturgical texts.”

Steve Waring

General Synod Slogs Through

When the Church of England's General Synod descends on York for its summer sessions the tempo is much different from London meetings. Synod uses York University accommodation and that creates much more time for conversation. After hours the bars do a roaring trade. Members can easily nip out for air or to talk business while communing with the ducks and geese patrolling the lake that abuts the university's Assembly Hall.

Britain has experienced a perishingly cold spring and early summer, but a sudden heat wave left the Assembly Hall swelteringly hot. A surprising proportion of male members turned up wearing shorts, unconcerned at the display of their lilly-white legs.

Occasionally York Synod has experimented with small-group Bible studies, an activity not universally approved by members, as it is not strictly business. This time round the business managers devoted an entire Saturday to small groups (closed to the media and visitors) as Synod sought consensus on women in the episcopate.

This was the first meeting since last November's vote on women in the episcopate. Synod rules mean

“This is not about whether but about how.”
—Archbishop Justin Welby

there can be no shortcuts to enable a repeat vote. With serious differences in the church about the meaning of ministry there was a broad recognition that the usual Parliamentary procedures were unlikely to help.



Welby

In his first speech to Synod as Archbishop of Canterbury, the Most Rev. Justin Welby addressed the thorny topic: “This is not about whether but about how.”

Since the beginning of the year various national bodies, including the House of Bishops, have used facilitated conversations, an approach to which Welby brings considerable experience and expertise. The small-group sessions included a drama in which all members played a part. Reports from the groups are being circulated to the House of Bishops but

for now the documents remain under wraps.

Will it lead to Synod members changing their minds? Probably not. There are already signs that some opponents are digging in for a long battle. The conservative evangelical group Reform announced in June that it had appointed its first full-time officer with the job title of director. The new director is Mrs. Susie Leafe, who was a notable speaker against the measure voted down in November.

The sticking point is not the principle of women in the episcopate but of safeguards for those opposed. The House of Bishops brought forward a set of options but failed to persuade Synod to support legally binding safeguards. Synod told the House of Bishops, which will draft the new legislation, that the church giving its

assurance of safe space would be sufficient.

Reform and the Catholic Group say they will keep up the fight for adequate safeguards. The House of Bishops will bring reworked proposals to the next Synod sessions in November, but 2015 is the very earliest that a final decision will be possible. There remains the possibility that if Synod cannot deliver Parliament will step in, as MP Tony Baldry told Synod, repeating earlier warnings to that effect.

In other debates Synod approved a draft plan to amalgamate three dioceses in Yorkshire: Bradford, Ripon and Leeds, and Wakefield. The new diocese, to be known as West Yorkshire and the Dales, could be a reality by January 2014. Professor Michael Clarke, chairman of the dioceses’

(Continued on next page)



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General Synod Slogs Through

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commission that drafted the plan, said it was not a criticism of the existing dioceses. “However, they now face the major challenges of declining congregations, reduced numbers of clergy, weakened finances, pensions costs,” he said.

Synod managers headed off attempts to trigger a full-scale debate on homosexuality. Only two bishops were present on Monday in the House of Lords’ revision stage of same-sex marriage legislation. Archbishop Welby told the Synod that “the cultural and political ground is changing.”

A report into scandals involving ineffective safeguarding against child abuse in the Diocese of Chichester came with a public apology. “We cannot do anything other than own up to our failures,” said the Rt. Rev. Paul Butler, Bishop of Southwell and Nottingham and chairman of the church’s national safeguarding committee. “We were wrong. Our failures were sin just as much as the perpetrators sinned.”

The Synod welcomed Bishop Angaelos, leader of Britain’s Coptic Church, most of whose members are originally from Egypt. He drew attention to the serious civil unrest there, appearing to endorse the army’s takeover: “There is a difference between democracy and majority rule.”

John Martin, London

Montessori Helps St. Matthias

St. Matthias Episcopal Church in Summerton, South Carolina (pop. 1,000), was a mission congregation in decline during the early 2000s. Prospects for growth in this rural area seemed dim.

But average Sunday attendance has doubled to more than 80 and St.



Education pioneer Maria Montessori, between 1910 and 1915.

Library of Congress photo

Matthias has become a self-supporting parish for the first time since its founding in 1899.

The key, according to the Very Rev. David Thurlow, has been the development of a Montessori preschool, which draws young families to become involved in church life.

“We’re just a small little church,” said Dean Thurlow, who transferred from the Anglican Church of Canada and began his ministry at St. Matthias in 2001. “But through diocesan investment in the school, and other programs as well, we’ve been able to grow and be blessed.”

The education method founded by Maria Montessori (1870-1952) emphasizes creativity, experiential learning, and allowing children to learn at their own pace. The parish’s preschool, which will celebrate its 10th year in the fall, welcomes children ages 3 through 6.

The school admits 12 to 15 children at a time. It serves the entire community, but many students and their parents attend the church as well. Thurlow counts about 20 people — including parents, enrolled children, and alumni — who attend St. Matthias because of their con-

nections to the school.

Launching the school required investment commensurate with the bold vision of the congregation. The Diocese of South Carolina provided \$60,000 in seed funds.

“That leap of faith led to a growth in youth ministry and a growth in young [families] coming to the parish in a depressed county,” Thurlow said. The preschool is now self-supporting.

Space was tight, however, and it soon became clear that another leap of faith would be necessary. A capital campaign launched with \$200,000 from the diocese will pay for 5,000 square feet of additional space, including a new parish hall, Sunday-school rooms, and the preschool.

“We were like a potted plant that needed a bigger pot to accommodate our growing church,” Thurlow said.

The congregation has stepped up to underwrite the \$1 million building project. Parishioners have pledged more than \$510,000. As pledges have come in, the church has reduced its construction debt to about \$465,000.

“It was a big undertaking for a small little church,” Thurlow said. “Investing in the Montessori preschool and placing such a significant

emphasis on outreach to young children really has translated into healthy growth for the parish.”

*G. Jeffrey MacDonald
TLC Correspondent*

Bishop Rickel: Cursillo Liaison

Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori has appointed the Rt. Rev. Gregory Rickel, Bishop of Olympia, as liaison to National Episcopal Cursillo. He succeeds the Rt. Rev. Alan Scarfe, Bishop of Iowa, who has served since 2006.

Bishop Rickel attended Cursillo No. 41 in Arkansas and served as head spiritual director on two teams before accepting a call as rector of St. James Church in Austin, Texas. He has remained active in Cursillo since becoming Bishop of Olympia in September 2007.

“I am very honored to serve as Bishop Liaison for Cursillo in these upcoming years,” Bishop Rickel said.

“I give thanks for the ministry of Cursillo in deepening the faith and relationship of Episcopalians with God in Christ,” Bishop Jefferts Schori wrote in her appointment letter. “I made my Cursillo more than 20 years ago in Oregon and understand the importance of focusing one’s love of God as an agent of transformation in the world. I pray that Cursillo may continue to encourage and nurture faithful living as a disciple of Jesus.”

Priest: Choose Church Unity

The ecumenical movement of the past 100 years has been wildly successful in eliminating old tensions and rivalries, but such pervasive success can foster complacency, even in a time when a skeptical world needs to see more signs of God-given unity in action.

That combination of joy and con-

cern is a central motivator for the Rev. Callan Slipper, a Church of England priest and author of *Five Steps to Living Christian Unity*, due in September from New City Press.

“We are currently the victims of our past success,” Slipper tells TLC. “The new vision I would advocate is one where we see one another as truly belonging to one another.”

Slipper, 58, devotes his life to this vision. He lives with four other priests (three Roman Catholic and one Anglican) in a community of the Focolare Movement, an international project to foster Christian unity, and works as ecumenical facilitator for Churches Together in Hertfordshire.

In his five steps, Slipper urges Christians to ponder why the quest for visible unity is urgent and to press beyond common assumptions and practices.

At stake, at least in part, is whether non-believers will see something in Christian relationships that reveals a different, higher way of working and being together. Too often, Slipper argues, they do not see robust love or collaboration among a cross-section of Christians. Therefore they are not convinced there’s anything transformative or divine in the Christian life.

“Our words are not backed up with facts,” Slipper says. “We are not so much describing things that we know about at firsthand as trying to convince people of a set of ideas, a story. It does not surprise me that the parts of the Christian body where there is a sense of a living encounter with Jesus, a life touched by the power of the Spirit, are the ones that are growing the fastest.”

Slipper prescribes a path in which Christians discern the need for visible unity and presume God-given unity as a starting point rather than a distant goal.

“Deliberately choose to love one another,” Slipper writes in *Five Steps*. “That deliberate choice makes the



Slipper

difference. It brings about a completely new state of affairs. We no longer solve the problems in order to become united, we are united

in order to solve the problems.”

Loving one another is both a means and an end in Slipper’s formulation. It involves working humbly across denominational lines in day-to-day mission. It affirms common reliance on the crucified Christ as the bedrock for righteousness and ministry in his name.

The journey together is its own reward, he suggests, because it captures Jesus’ prayer that “That they may be one, as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become completely one” (John 17:22-23).

*G. Jeffrey MacDonald
TLC Correspondent*

Ordinariate Broadens Work

The Personal Ordinariate of the Chair of St. Peter now has the pope’s blessing to evangelize and receive nominal Roman Catholics who were baptized but never completed the sacraments of initiation (confirmation and receiving the Eucharist).

Pope Francis approved this significant revision to the Ordinariate’s norms on May 31, and Ordinariate leaders in the United States and the United Kingdom disclosed it in July. The change does not allow Roman Catholics to join the Ordinariate “for purely subjective motives or personal preference.”

“I certainly welcome this development, which further establishes our place in the work of the new evangelization,” said Msgr. Jeffrey Steenson, U.S. Ordinary. “Particularly in North America, with large percentages of ‘unchurched’ peoples, it is inevitable that we will encounter those who have no formal ecclesial relationships but who are seekers of truth. The Great Commission thus becomes more and more the heart of our work.”

A Brief Theology of ZOMBIES

By William O. Daniel, Jr.

Our world is fascinated with zombies. From revisionist writings in adult literature like *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* to children's books such as *Zombieland*, from television dramas of *The Walking Dead* to major motion pictures like the recent *World War Z*, as well as quasi-zombies — Boggans — in children's films like *Epic*, not to mention the plethora of zombie video games like *Call of Duty: Black Ops II*, our society is captivated by the undead. What drives this zombie-filled imagination? What is its philosophical and theological import? Perhaps it is just good science fiction. Maybe it is the fear of chemical warfare, concerns of which flood our commercial media and public broadcasts. But why has this new genre of literature and film so mightily fixed our gaze upon the printed page and illuminated screens? Are we all worried about rampant cannibalism, being devoured by insatiable creatures, stoppable only by a “deadly” blow to the head? Or have we simply run out of other good reasons to give Brat Pitt a heroic leading role?

The film and television industries reveal a number of things about modern society. There is a tendency to think that film and media show us where we are heading, and while this is true, it is crucial to understand that these message-mediums are communicating a reality already present. These artistic mediums communicate more than their directors, screenwriters, and actors could ever fully grasp. All art is the result of a particular gaze. In *Phenomenology of Perception*, Maurice Merleau-Ponty describes this gaze as the habit by which we relate to social space. Dramatists and playwrights communicate a world that is inseparable from their

entrenchment in a *habitus* — a subconscious bodily comportment that conditions a particular way of perceiving the world. Filmmakers are no less conditioned and culturally *effected*. Within this socially constructed space, the artist, by making manifest her own socially constructed gaze or *habitus*, reveals also to audiences the manner of their own social conditioning. In this sense, the artist carries more than herself along with her in her art; she carries all the social forces at work on her body, which is never other than herself but always more than she is.

Seeing our formative *habitus* through the lens of the zombie imaginary can help us trace the sources of our socially reified bodies. According to *World War Z*'s depiction of zombies, they do not infect the sick, but are like lice. Many think that lice get in the hair of dirty children; but lice want clean, well-washed hair that is not oily and neglected. Zombies likewise seek a healthy host. If you are terminal there is no reason to seek you out. (While this may seem a bit farfetched, remember that we're talking about zombies.)

It is tempting to think of zombies as simply another literary or cinematic category, or something else for teenagers to shoot and kill on a video screen. Zombies are not indifferent, however; they are not merely benign objects of entertainment. Rather, they tell us something about ourselves, especially regarding conditioned human action and reason.

The new fascination with zombies, I believe, has to do with our own body consciousness, a visceral awareness that we are infected with a social disease. It is not viral, according to *World War Z*; there is no single, locatable source. Rather, it is all around us, penetrating us by our

habits of living — the desperate attempts to avoid, or at least delay, death. The portrayal of this affectedness or infection in *The Walking Dead* shows that everyone is already a zombie in potency, a notable difference from *World War Z*, which presents the human as a potential host but not as a host in *esse*. Each portrayal imparts an understanding of original sin. In *The Walking Dead* humans are sinners at their core, whereas in *World War Z* humans are inherently good, or at least a *tabula rasa*. Each reveals human nature as interwoven with the fabric of a communal *habitus*.

The immediate biblical analogy of host capacity is the story of the Gadarene swine in Luke's Gospel, which become host to the demonic forces (8:27-33). The character Stepan Trofimovitch is plagued by this story of the swine in Dostoevsky's novel *The Possessed*. But as he nears death Stepan finally realizes the meaning of the Gospel passage. "That's exactly like our Russia," he says. "Those devils that came out of the sick man and entered the swine. They are all the sores, all the foul contagions, all the impurities, all the devils great and small that have multiplied in that great invalid, our beloved Russia They beg to enter the swine; and indeed maybe they have entered into them already! They are we." *We* are the swine, the potential zombie hosts; indeed, we may already be zombies.

The zombie bite does not, however, require our succumbing to the venom. "If your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away; it is better for you to lose one of your members than for the whole of your body to go into hell" (Matt. 5:30). Gerry Lane (Brad Pitt) saves a soldier in *World War Z* by doing just that — cutting off her zombie-bitten hand so that the venom does not spread and send her into the abyss along with the other swine-zombies. Though maimed, she lives to see Brad Pitt save the world.

The zombie world of feasting on human beings, transforming them into infectious villains — into the image created by the beast of modern politics and economics — to the end of insatiable consumption, is only undone or

redeemed by the gift of friendship, the establishment of communities habituated by self-denial and forgiveness. What this new zombie era appears to be groping for, and stammering to articulate, is a vision of human society conditioned by grace. The alternative *habitus* to that of the undead is nothing other than the liturgy of Holy Eucharist — the resurrected, whereby the human is befriended by God and provided the means necessary to cultivate this life with others.

"At baptism you were wetted with water," says Augustine. "Then the Holy Spirit came into you like the fire that bakes the dough. *Be then what you see and receive what you are*" (*Sermon 57*). We are becoming what we see — that upon which our gaze is cast. ■

The Rev. William O. Daniel, Jr., is chaplain and professor of religion at St. James School, Hagerstown, Maryland, where he lives with Amanda, his wife, and their two children.



Appearances

It goes to show you that
Appearances can be deceiving.
Little Mary, with her proud way
And her homely eyes,
Was the last we'd expect to
Bring that sort of news
To her mother.
She was even so sly
She tried to hide it,
Staying with her cousin
Until her mother called her home,
Not knowing she
Would break her heart.
But that's the way of things,
And it just goes to show you,
Appearances can be deceiving.

Betsy Childs

Meditation by the Pool

The memory of this place will do no good
When suffering comes to lay its claim.
All that survives in prison cells,
With scowling guards, and babbling solitude
Is hope.

Can hope permit a sabbath smooth repose?
If now I silence her
With meat and soft linen
Will she speak when my wine is vinegar,
My bread stale,
And my bedding dirt?

Does faith live in leisure? It must.
Our Lord is Sabbath King
Now, as when he walked
And found no hole or nest:
His burden light.

Here, too, is the work
Of sabbath Spirit,
As in my time of trial.
There I see refining
With spiritual eyes. Now I rest
By faith.

Charlie Ritch

Transfiguration and Transformation

Review by Jesse Zink

“Mankind must be led to the Christian faith not as a panacea of progress,” wrote Michael Ramsey in *The Glory of God*, “nor as an otherworldly solution unrelated to history, but as a Gospel of Transfiguration. Such a Gospel both transcends the world and speaks to the immediate here-and-now.”

This is the point of departure for *The Transfiguration of Christ and Creation*. Seeking to understand the implications of such a “Gospel of Transfiguration,” John Gatta traces the ways in which the event has been interpreted, depicted, and understood through 2,000 years of Christian history. He ranges widely, from a mosaic at St. Catherine’s Monastery at Mount Sinai to music of Olivier Messiaen, poems of T.S. Eliot and Pierre Teilhard de Chardin to writers ranging from patristic theologians to more recent figures like J.R.R. Tolkien, Annie Dillard, and Wendell Berry. Gatta, dean of college and professor of English at the University of the South, is erudite and assured in his treatment of these sources. Frequently returning to Teilhard, the Jesuit priest-scientist whose work was restricted by the church during his lifetime, he finds

in him a “mystically integrative vision of spirituality and science [that] is sorely needed by a post-industrial society that yearns to recover contact with the living soul” (p. 36).

As the diversity of these sources indicates, it is the theme of Transfiguration, rather than the biblical accounts directly, that is at the heart of the book. Gatta sees Transfiguration’s importance as it teaches us something new about Jesus and his glory, involves human beings in the process of transfiguration, and encourages us to “consider how a cosmic Christ also illuminates the nonhuman, material order of being” (p. xx), that is, all of creation.

This last area is the richest vein for Gatta. Noting that August 6 is both the traditional commemoration of the Transfiguration as well as the date of its “heartrending parody” in the bombing of Hiroshima, he argues that the Transfiguration provides the surest footing for the Church’s environmental activism. While he is concerned about environmental degradation, he fears the Church’s current activity on this issue is in danger of reducing it to “lit-

tle more than a technically incompetent adjunct of the Sierra Club” (p. 73). By rooting its environmental theology in the Transfiguration, the Church could move beyond a well-meaning but limited focus on “stewardship” and respond to looming environmental catastrophe in “more integrally liturgical, contemplative, and doxological terms, befitting her authentic charism as the Church” (p. 73). August 6, he argues persuasively, should be seen as a Christian counterpart to Earth Day.

The Transfiguration cannot be the preserve of mystics alone, but rather has profound consequences for life once we descend from the mountain. Gatta considers Desmond Tutu’s anti-apartheid activism and self-described “spirituality of transformation.” It was Tutu’s conviction — formed in prayer and contemplation — that with God no situation is “untransfigurable” that provided the grounding for his prophetic work. Our apprehension of the glory of God leads us into action in God’s world.

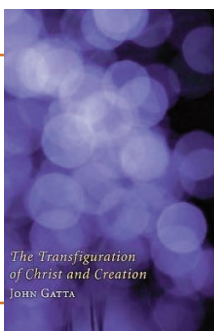
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Transfiguration of the Lord, St. Mark’s Church, Florence

The Transfiguration of Christ and Creation

By John Gatta. Wipf & Stock. Pp. 144. \$19



The Transfiguration of Christ and Creation
JOHN GATTA

(Continued from previous page)

Gatta, it is clear, is transfixed by the Transfiguration. A concluding chapter includes sample materials for devotional reflections linked to the theme.

But if Transfiguration is as all-encompassing a concept as Gatta claims, one is left wondering just what is not included. Where do its implications end? But that must be

the point: by pointing repeatedly to the ways in which Transfiguration has been a theme of Christian art, theology, and spirituality throughout the history of the Church, Gatta reminds us of the transformation and conversion that is at the heart of what it means to be a follower of Christ. The Christian faith cannot be reduced merely to mental assent or a prescription for individual rules

and particular courses of action. Rather, it is a transforming process that is at once mystical and profound in the way it brings us face to face with the beauty, majesty, and glory of God in Christ.

The Rev. Jesse Zink, a priest in the Diocese of Western Massachusetts, is a doctoral student in African Christianity at Cambridge University.

AUGUST 13: Jeremy Taylor, Bishop of Down, Connor, and Dromore

'Open Code' Sexual Ethics

Review by Benjamin M. Guyer

This volume is the last work of the late Rt. Rev. Kenneth Stevenson, Bishop of Portsmouth in the Church of England and a justly celebrated liturgical scholar. Yet *A Following Holy Life: Jeremy Taylor and His Writings* is, despite some strengths, a misstep for the Canterbury Studies in Spiritual Theology (CSST) series. Compiled and edited while Stevenson was losing his battle with leukemia, the introductory essay to *A Following Holy Life* misrepresents Taylor by portraying him as a forerunner of modern-day "liberal catholicism." Because Stevenson notes Taylor's advocacy of "a thoughtful liberality, which didn't avoid difficult questions" (p. iv), I will maintain this same spirit of searching critique in what follows.

Let us begin with the book's several strengths. The selections in this volume offer a generous sampling from Taylor's sermons, devotional and liturgical writings, and theological treatises. Stevenson takes these from the Heber-Eden edition of Taylor's *Works*, the authoritative critical edition of

Taylor's writings. Each excerpt is followed with a reference to the volume and page numbers of the excerpts, which is especially useful for further research. The excerpts tend to be rather short. Some might quibble with this, but as an *introduction* to Taylor, such a method is fine and perhaps even preferable.

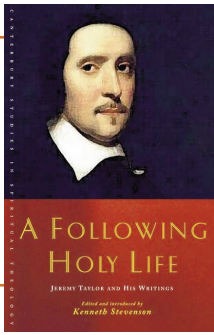
Other elements of the book are equally solid. Stevenson offers readers a chronology of Taylor's works, complete with volume and page references to the Heber-Eden edition. Those already familiar with the 17th century will find this helpful, and those who desire to learn more will find themselves equipped with a helpful guide for charting both the immediate context and the broad development of Taylor's thought. The select bibliography is equally helpful. It directs readers to a number of sources, both primary and secondary, which are relevant to understanding Taylor's life and times. In sum, the selections are judicious, and the critical apparatus is informative without being obtrusive.

Regrettably, Stevenson's introduc-

tion illustrates how a church party distorts the past by subsuming it to its own identity. Partisans and activists rarely make good historians and this volume is no exception.

Stevenson dwells on human sexuality and he projects his own views back upon Taylor. In the preface, Stevenson writes that the 17th century was "an age of both bawdiness and repression that could benefit from what [Taylor] wrote about sex as something to be enjoyed responsibly" (p. iv). The psychoanalytic language of sexual repression is not a little dated, and the undefined appeal to responsible enjoyment is curiously modern — and not reflective of 17th-century English society.

Other value-laden anachronisms follow. Taylor is praised for writing about marital intercourse "without any of the Augustinian baggage," but Stevenson does not explain what this "baggage" is and where it might be found. Stevenson then speculates that Taylor's sexual ethics might have "upset the more conventional minds of his time" (p. 7) but again offers no evidence to support his proposal. Fi-



A Following Holy Life

Jeremy Taylor and His Writings

Edited by **Kenneth Stevenson**.

Canterbury Press Norwich. Pp. iv + 220. \$29.99, paper

AUGUST 15: Saint Mary the Virgin,
Mother of Our Lord Jesus Christ

With Mary on the Ecumenical Trail

By Peter Doll

These volumes on the Blessed Virgin Mary are a testament to the sea change in the understanding of Mary in the Church in the last generation. I use the capital C deliberately, for Our Lady is no longer a figure who automatically divides Roman Catholics, Oriental and Orthodox Christians, and a minority of Anglicans from Christians of the other churches of the Reformation.

The collection of sermons and essays by the late Roger Greenacre, distinguished ecumenist, liturgist, and canon of Chichester Cathedral, is a testament to one of those who helped that transition happen, and it is redolent of that profoundly committed but consciously embattled generation of Anglo-Catholics who were determined to ensure that Mary should have an honored place in the public liturgies and teaching of the Church of England. Of Perry and Kendall's book, it is enough for the moment to register that the co-authors being an evangelical Anglican priest and a Jesuit priest and its being published by the distinguished evangelical house of Eerdmans are not a cause of surprise.

Greenacre was fortunate enough to be caught up in the ferment of the

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nally, Stevenson complains about “the traditional Western nervousness about reproductive fluids and when it is the right time and when it is not” (p. 22) — again, without further explanation. There is a lot of sex in this introduction, and yet Taylor's writings deal with sexuality very little.

As Stevenson continues, we are told that Taylor “can best be described for his own times as ‘Laudian’ and ‘Latitudinarian,’ or what would nowadays be described as ‘liberal catholic’” (p. 16). In truth, historians have long since discredited the term “Latitudinarian” as a viable descriptor for 17th-century churchmanship. Yet standard “liberal catholic” rhetoric follows. Taylor is described as “uncomfortable” and, rather predictably, as “prophetic.” Stevenson concludes that “those who have tried to combine the love of tradition and an openness to new questions have not always been easy to live with. But they have frequently stood the test of time” (p. 16). Curiously, Stevenson never tells us how Taylor described himself in his own context.

The polemical upshot comes when Stevenson claims that Taylor's “Discourse on the Nature and Offices of Friendship” was actually a covert endorsement of homosexuality. After noting that this work was dedicated to Katherine Philips, one of the greatest Anglo-Welsh poets of the 17th century, Stevenson bluntly claims that Philips was “known to be a lesbian” (p. 26). This is a considerable misstatement. The entry on Philips in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* notes that some contemporary scholars have debated whether Philips should be considered a lesbian poet. The entry then states, however, that

Philips's poetry was emphatically not sexual. No less importantly, no one in the 17th century accused Philips of homosexuality or adultery (she was married).

Nonetheless, he is confident that “Taylor was well aware of the homosexual underworld that existed in seventeenth-century England, and wanted to take a ‘pastoral’ approach to it rather than the more usual censorious one of his time” (p. 26). Taylor thus “wrote in open code ... about another form of love” (p. 27). As a historian, I wonder: how does Stevenson know that Taylor wrote in *any* kind of code, let alone an “open” one? Here again, he does not tell us. Philips's sexuality is a point of minor debate within contemporary academic literature. By failing to note this, Stevenson misses the historical context of Taylor's own writings. The title of Taylor's “Discourse” actually indicates the influence of two works by the Roman author Cicero: *De Officiis* (*On Duties*, but translated in the 17th century as *On Offices*) and *De Amicitia* (*On Friendship*).

In 2010 (TLC, April 18), I wrote a glowing review essay on the CSST series. I described these books as “the most exciting development in Anglican publishing today.” I still believe this; attractively produced and moderately priced, CSST offers interested readers an excellent introduction to a number of classic Anglican authors.

Kenneth Stevenson did some other, much better academic work in his lifetime. May he rest in peace and rise in glory.

Benjamin M. Guyer is a doctoral student in British history at the University of Kansas.

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early days of Vatican II; he was one of the Archbishop of Canterbury's priest-students at the University of Louvain, where he was taught by theologians working in the preparatory commissions for the Council. As Chaplain of St. George's, Paris, he deepened his acquaintance with the French church, of which he became the leading English interpreter. His greatest work was in encouraging Anglican-Roman Catholic ecumenical relations.

To help continental Roman Catholics understand Anglicans, he was often called on to speak about the place of Mary in the Anglican tradition. His contributions on this subject are outstanding for his respect for the breadth of theological traditions in the Church of England, for his careful and insightful biblical exegesis, and for his honesty. He never tried to paint a rosier picture than reality justified for the sake of winning friends. His exploration of the work of Mark Frank, the little-known Caroline divine, reflects the balance, seriousness, and integrity that underlay Greenacre's own theological sensibilities: his sorrow that Mary had been allowed to become the focus of controversy and division; his sensitivity to the differing convictions of fellow Christians; his belief that all churches are called to conversion for the sake of confessing with one voice the faith

of the Scriptures and the creeds.

Greenacre was understandably disappointed that in recent years the progress made toward unity between Roman Catholics and Anglicans had stalled, and occasionally a note of bitterness would creep into his sermons and addresses. Nevertheless, he remained profoundly loyal to his Anglican identity, and it was his great joy and reward not only that the new Church of England liturgies in *Common Worship* should provide full and rich resources for celebrating the place of Our Blessed Lady in the economy of salvation but also that the ARCIC report *Mary: Grace and Hope in Christ* provides a strong basis for ensuring that Mary might no longer divide but unite the churches.

Perry and Kendall's book could not have been written without all the critical groundwork that Greenacre and his colleagues did in the last 50 years, and yet this book seems to live in a different world, to breathe a different air. In Greenacre's work we are conscious of the Reformation battles, of the centuries of painful suspicion and mistrust, of hard-won mutual understanding, as well as of the joy of discoveries and friendships made. For Perry and Kendall, the doors have already opened and the discussion started.

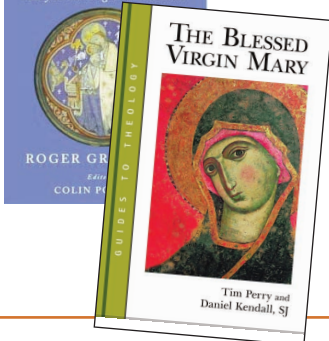


The great central fact of *The Blessed Virgin Mary* is the evangelical re-discovery of the Fathers, the joyful excitement of returning *ad fontes*, building on the foundation of that great evangelical Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. Writing first of all for an evangelical audience, they defend their chief focus on the patristic testimony on Mary: "The Fathers are the heritage of the undivided Church. They teach all Christians, in both method and content, how to wrestle with the primary data of the Church's teaching, Holy Scripture." Kendall and Perry cogently reveal how the biblical writings about Mary form a coherent basis for the doctrinal emphases about her that emerge subsequently and rightly insist that the Fathers brought Western Mariology to its mature form. Whatever medieval and modern developments take place, the fundamental shape of Marian theology remains unaltered.

The authors provide a solid, informed, and sympathetic introduction to Mariology, surveying theologians and dogmatic teaching from the early Church right up to the present day, including the dogmatic definitions of the

MAIDEN, MOTHER & QUEEN

Mary in the Anglican Tradition



Maiden, Mother and Queen

Mary in the Anglican Tradition

By Roger Greenacre. Edited by Colin Podmore.

Canterbury Press Norwich. Pp. 224. \$40

The Blessed Virgin Mary

By Tim Perry and Daniel Kendall, SJ. Eerdmans. Pp. 124. \$18

St. Teresa to Joan Chittister

Immaculate Conception and the Assumption. The section on the early reformers is surprisingly thin given, as Greenacre pointed out, some “impressive and astonishing” passages are to be found in the works of Luther, Zwingli, Bullinger, and Calvin. Karl Barth and Robert Jenson broke the Protestant silence on Mary, insisting that, as Perry puts it, “our own theological traditions have failed to speak where Scripture does.” They write: “To recover a theologically and spiritually rich doctrine of the person of Christ is, inevitably, to recover Mary. Just as in the Gospel of Matthew, the Mother and her Child come together. Or they do not come.”

Perry and Kendall acknowledge that they will not heal the Reformation divide in one easy step. Even if some evangelicals have rediscovered Mary and the Fathers, by no means all have. Nevertheless there is an impressive confidence to this book, as there is to the Ancient Christian Commentary series, for evangelicals are discovering a new way to be inspired by Scripture, to recover a crucial dimension of the biblical imagination. Theirs is a confidence that is sorely needed in our ecumenical winter, and their spirit is eerily reminiscent of some earlier Anglican evangelicals — Wilberforce, Newman, Manning, and others — who also responded enthusiastically to their rediscovery of the Catholic tradition and made an indelible impact on Anglican churches.

At a time when we have a new Bishop of Rome, when the Roman Catholic Church is reeling from continuing disclosures about child abuse, and all churches are struggling to come to terms with challenges posed by same-sex marriage legislation, churches are rediscovering their mutual dependence and

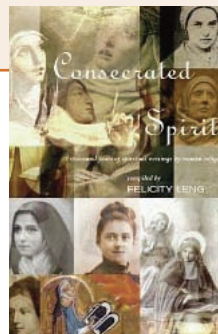
A major purpose of this anthology is stated as a desire to record “the longing of religious women of the past for self-expression and celebration, and for social, political and sexual emancipation appropriate to their individual and communal spiritual purpose.” That might seem a rather odd motive for a religious vocation, but it does suggest quite a diversity of topics and approaches. Indeed, that is what the collection offers. The women here, most vowed “religious” in the technical sense, range from the sixth century, through the Middle Ages, down to several who are still living. Brief biographical notes are included, which help to set the writers in their various worlds.

The selections are grouped under six rather broad headings, from “Visionaries, Mystics, and Contemplatives” to “Community, Politics, and Solidarity.” Some familiar names are here, from St. Teresa, St. Clare, and Dame Julian to Mother Teresa and Sister Joan Chittister, along with many lesser-known women. Not surprisingly, the editor identifies a num-

ber of them as feminists or proto-feminists. Some especially striking passages include St. Bernadette’s account of her visions at Lourdes, letters from Galileo’s daughter to her father, and an account from Mère Marie de l’Incarnation of the hardships of the early French settlements in Québec. Sister Sandra Schneiders writes at some length on “Why We Stayed,” speaking for Roman Catholic religious who did *not* share in the great exodus of the 1960s and 1970s.

With such a range of writers and topics, the collection seems to lack any unifying ideas or themes. The other side of this, of course, is that there’s something for almost anyone. I would have found it more interesting and useful if the biographies were printed with the selections, to provide context, rather than as an appendix. Also, longer selections by somewhat fewer writers might have provided more depth to the collection.

*Sister Mary Jean, CSM
Greenwich, New York*



Consecrated Spirits

A Thousand Years of Spiritual Writing by Women Religious

Compiled by **Felicity Leng**.

Canterbury Press Norwich. Pp. xvii + 269. \$18.95

the importance of working together for common goals. The hard-won achievements of Greenacre and others in ecumenical dialogue have not been wasted, even if organic unity still seems far off. They laid a foundation, ready to be built upon. Now that evangelicals are recovering

the riches of the catholic tradition as their forebears in the Oxford Movement did, that can only help to bring the great day of the Lord closer to hand.

The Rev. Canon Peter Doll is canon librarian of Norwich Cathedral.

— CATHOLIC VOICES —

The HOLY BIBLE

Introduction to a series on *The Bible in the Life of the Church*

By Robert MacSwain

In the Autumn of 2009 the Very Rev. William Stafford asked me to participate in the Anglican Communion's Bible in the Life of the Church project. His request followed an inquiry from the Rev. Canon Kenneth Kearon, secretary general of the Anglican Communion, on whether our seminary would act as the base for the North American region of the project. If so, Sewanee would then nominate a faculty member who could serve as a member of the project's steering committee and coordinate the regional group's investigations.

Canon Kearon sent similar invitations to theological institutions or individuals in Australia, East Africa, South Africa, and the United Kingdom. Cuba, South Sudan, the Philippines, and Hong Kong were eventually included as well. The steering committee met three times — twice in England and once in South Africa — and the members of the North American Regional Group met twice in Sewanee to share the findings from their locations. After three years of study (2009-12), the final report — *Deep Engagement, Fresh Discovery* — was presented to Anglican Consultative Council 15 in New Zealand (the names of the steering committee and members of the regional groups appear on pages 66-68).

My understanding was always that the primary goal of the project was descriptive rather than normative. While the final report does conclude with some suggestions on how Anglicans *should* approach the interpretation of Scripture, its main interest is in how Anglicans *do in fact* approach that interpretation. We wanted to find out what Anglicans around the world had in common regarding this enterprise, and how they differed. We were also interested in discovering the latent or implicit assumptions that we brought to the study of the sacred text in our respective regions.

To this end, we engaged in two case studies during this three-year period. One focused on the Anglican Communion's fifth Mark of Mission ("To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth"), while the other focused on the fourth Mark of Mission ("To seek to transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and to pursue peace and reconciliation"). The case studies considered passages drawn from the Old Testament, Apocrypha, and New Testament, with accompanying questions. Members of each regional group were asked to coordinate these Bible studies in their respective locations (parishes, chaplaincies, seminaries, etc.) and to record not so much the substantive issues discussed (ecological or gender justice, for example) but rather the extent to which looking at these specific issues within the chosen biblical texts revealed hermeneutical commitments.

After assembling and discussing all of these studies from around the world, the steering committee attempted to find both common threads and distinctive emphases. *Deep Engagement, Fresh Discovery* consists of our assessment of the project's results, as well as links to a wealth of documentary evidence, including official Anglican Communion statements on the authority and interpretation of Scripture. We also offer ten themes that we believe are characteristic of contemporary Anglican interpretation of the Bible (p. 41), and seven principles that gesture toward more normative proposals to guide this essential enterprise (p. 42).

It remains to be seen how this project and report will be received by the Communion. I thus welcome this public engagement by THE LIVING CHURCH and hope that others will follow its example, both in North America and around the world.

The Rev. Robert MacSwain is assistant professor of theology and Christian ethics at the University of the South's School of Theology.

A Welcome Breakthrough

By Bolly Lapok

The Bible in the Life of the Church has come at a significant period in the history of the Anglican Communion. The Church faces deep and divisive issues, which can create tension within, if not split, provinces, dioceses, and even church communities. At the same time, secularisation, particularly in the Western Hemisphere, threatens the authority and standing of the Church. Both of these hinder our sense of unity and commonality within the Communion, and undermine our confidence at the point of mission.

At the heart of our differences and difficulties lies the problem we face in interpreting the Bible, which should be our common starting point in discipleship (Article VI: "The Bible contains all things necessary to salvation"). For, as the Archbishop of Canterbury reminds us in his foreword to the report, Bible study is not just about pursuing scholarship and seeking moral guidance. It also needs to be undertaken to answer our need to be "judged and restored." Because the majority of our people only meet the Bible through the lectionary readings at Sunday worship, the ACC's stimulating exploration of Bible study amongst Anglicans and its potential value provides challenging material for the future.

The project had five aims. The group set out to explore how Anglicans actually use the Bible, by setting up a network of regional, facilitated groups to study two major issues (Statements 4 and 5 of the Anglican Communion's Five Marks of Mission), using a selection of set texts. The reports from these groups would, they hoped, provide empirical evidence of the way in which regions engage with and interpret the

(Continued from previous page)

Bible, and allow the distillation of some working principles for Anglican hermeneutics. The report includes resource materials for Bible study for all levels of Christian education, a review of the Bible in the history of the Church, and research into how Anglicans understand the Bible. Adding a guide to significant literature on this topic, the report's aim is to stimulate further and deeper engagement with the Bible in the wider Church. The project's findings, arising from this ambitious, worldwide programme, do not surprise, but are significant for those eager to further the unity of the Church and strengthen its capacity for mission across the world.

The breadth of the project is impressive. The worldwide regional groups were charged to bring together a diverse group for biblical study, not the like-minded, and their reports make interesting reading. Whilst some found a ready echo in the Malaysian experience, the forum's synthesis provides a challenging and helpful platform for common future action. One would expect clear evidence of biblical engagement of churches across the Communion, but it is the challenging evidence for the value of deeper exploration that is valuable. Regional groups acknowledged the value of exploring issues not usually put under the biblical microscope, experiencing sections of Scripture not encountered before, and seeing familiar texts associated with the unfamiliar and the enormous stimulus of participating in communal study in a diverse group of participants. Such conclusions clearly endorse the project's methodology but they should also challenge dioceses, encouraging them to be confident in suggesting the centrality of Bible study in community life and guiding them in providing a suitable and creative structure for it. The resources provided by the report will be a useful guide for those who take up this challenge. There are, however, a number of significant findings that need to be heeded.

The regional reports point to a remarkable diversity in the way churches engage with and interpret the Bible, underline the very different contexts from which the Bible is approached, and show the sig-

nificance of the different experiences brought to the group by participants. The diversity of approach was clearly the result of bringing together those from different traditions. It is, then, clear that the success of the group and the value of the discussion relies on openness in the group, a willingness to share resources and value the views of others, and, above all, good facilitation. Equally, however, the report warns us that we must have the right expectations about the outcome of such work. The value, as the group from Aotearoa, New Zealand, and Polynesia puts it, is not so much in changing the views of participants as in increasing respect for one another. Our unity, this group concluded, is only as good as "our ability to engage with our differences."

The report places great emphasis on understanding the context of passages of Scripture and the personal and corporate contexts of the participants. In Malaysian society the recognition of the context in which we explore the Bible together is vital. There is

**The Bible has always been
at the centre of church life,
even if at times its interpretation
has been divisive.**

a world of difference between those who come to the text in what the African Group calls "the primal context" and those who gather in the United Kingdom or North America. Further, the Malaysian context, in which our church seeks to further the kingdom and at the same time coexist with the strong presence of other faiths while being dominated by aggressive Islamisation, is different from that of a Western church working in an increasingly secular society in which the pursuit of equality and the importance of personal rights prevails. The church that seeks to promote unity and commonality between provinces may be helped by structured Bible study not just in regional groups but even with more widely drawn participants.

Perhaps this is a challenge for the next stage of the Lambeth 1988 overseas partnerships, which have already made such a strong contribution to our appreciation of a worldwide church united in mission.

These conclusions are important for those leaders who, realising the value of communal Bible study, aim to strengthen the unity and witness of the Church and give disciples confidence to speak out in wider society. There may never be a single Anglican, let alone Christian, position and voice, but an increased sensitivity to informed personal and local views must surely strengthen the work of the kingdom. However, even this aim may be difficult to achieve because, as the report highlights, a number of gaps make our study together more difficult.

Two gaps that speak particularly to the Malaysian situation are the gap between the academy and the pew and that between the use of particular passages or verses and the wider witness of the Bible. The shared experience of meeting the text is all-important. Although “academic” input can hinder this engagement, a sensitive academic input is necessary if the Word of God is to be released from the text. Achieving this balanced sensitivity will be difficult enough in areas with a developed “Western” theology, but equally difficult for younger churches, where an imposed and much-valued, but not enculturated, theology is dominant. Similarly, for reasons of churchmanship or from limited study of the Bible, it may be difficult to be open to new understandings, which can arise in structured study such as that envisaged by the report. The provision of good facilitators for groups is vital, the report suggests, in recognising these gaps and minimising their hindrance.

We should be grateful that the ACC has sharpened our focus on a very significant issue facing the Church. The Bible has always been at the centre of church life, even if at times its interpretation has been divisive. It is surely to be hoped that the leaders of the Anglican Communion may feel not only challenged by the report but also encouraged to incorporate study of the Bible into their strategy for mission, and that in devising a strategic Bible study programme they will be guided by this perceptive analysis of the pitfalls and of the best practice which this long overdue report provides. ■

The Most Rev. Datuk Bolly Lapok is Archbishop of the Anglican Church of the Province of South East Asia and Bishop of Kuching.



Answered Prayers in a Soaking Rain

By Douglas Taylor-Weiss

I live in Auburn, New York, and on June 6 a local education foundation planned an event to honor four new inductees to its Alumni Hall of Distinction. One of the inductees was Amy Dacey (Auburn High School, 1989), executive director of EMILY's List, one of the country's most powerful Political Action Committees.

EMILY's List is devoted to electing "pro-choice" candidates only. And I knew that, in today's politics, that means opposing any laws restricting abortion (including those that forbid killing a child who is already half-emerged from her mother). And it means taxpayer grants to Planned Parenthood, a nationwide outfit making millions upon millions of dollars killing unborn babies.

So I decided to protest by standing outside the reception with a sign. Actually, I agonized for a month about whether to stand outside with a sign. Protesting is not for me. The last time I could remember doing it was for that giant anti-nuclear war protest in Manhattan in 1982. I am very unstable in confrontations; I tend to lose my head and bumble, or I feel my heart racing and shut down. I decided this would require prayer.

I prayed for guidance: was God really calling me to this? I prayed for calm, to keep that heart rate down. I prayed about what to put on the sign. A first phrase came to me in a flash while I exercised, but the second part took longer. Harsher versions of the message using the words *shame* and *blame* popped up. Finally I settled on ABORTION IS KILLING US THANKS TO EMILY'S LIST. At the last minute I added another line: DEFEND THE INNOCENTS.

But something still wasn't right. In the final days. I realized that I needed to pray for Amy Dacey, for pregnant mothers wondering how to survive, and for the unborn themselves. Those endless and circular debates about whether prayers change things at some point need to simply give way to prayer itself. If you love God, you pray. If you merely believe in God and love others, you pray, even if you can't describe how prayer operates.

A common fallback in the debates is that prayer, while not altering God's plans, does change us. This treats prayer as a kind of self-talk therapy. Well, yes, I was unexpectedly calm standing there with my sign. My heart didn't race and I was able to smile and greet others as they greeted me, but what impressed me even more was the civility and kindness of the Auburn crowd.

It is not always easy to pass by a protester, who might shout, confront, or worse. Those in strong disagreement with my message might themselves experience the increased heart rate, or sheer outrage. But everyone who passed by was civil. Some looked ahead and minded their own business; many quietly smiled or nodded their heads. Others greeted me heartily, and a few shared their sympathy with my cause.

It was raining that night and two men offered me umbrellas, which I declined. I wasn't sure how I'd hold one with my rather heavy sign. But one fellow

wouldn't take no for an answer. After going into the function, he came back out, walked again to his car, and provided me with an umbrella that he told me to keep. It turned out I could hold it without difficulty. As soon as I opened it, a soaking rain began. It felt like a sign from heaven: God was answering my prayer.

Two engaged me in longer conversations. One man wanted to talk about the demographic collapse in the West and of all the "Marines, scientists, doctors" who were never born and are not around to contribute to society. I myself wondered how EMILY'S

A common fallback in the debates is that prayer, while not altering God's plans, does change us.

List, which purports to be concerned with electing more women to office, could simultaneously encourage the sacrifice of so many unborn girls, any number of whom might someday serve in Congress.

A woman asked me whether I was "with a church." I told her that I belonged to a church. She further asked its name and location. I gather she wanted to know that I was a local resident and not some outside agitator. She was polite.

I was moved by one woman's passing comments: "I agree with you but I love Amy Dacey." I couldn't have asked for a better moment. Love was exactly what I wanted to promote: love for babies, love for our community, love for one another even when we cannot see the truth together.

We pray even when we wonder what it does. We anguish over confronting our neighbors with unpleasant truths. We try to figure out what love means, concretely. And life has surprises, like my pleasant discovery that Auburn is a swell place to wage a protest. ■

The Rev. Douglas Taylor-Weiss is rector of the Church of SS. Peter & John, Auburn, New York.

Consult Kevin Sharpe

W. Brown Patterson believes that Benjamin Guyer's *Beauty of Holiness* "exaggerates the degree to which the reign of Charles I from 1629 to 1640 was a time of peace and harmony" [TLC, April 14]. Study of Kevin Sharpe's magisterial *Personal Rule of Charles I* (1992) will bear up Mr. Guyer's point.

By way of disclosure: with the December 2013 issue of *SKCM News* Mr. Guyer will assume its editorship, which I have held since 1988.

Mark A. Wuonola
Society of King Charles the Martyr
Waltham, Massachusetts

Sorting Mother Dioceses

Bishop Epting writes [TLC, June 9] that the Diocese of Quincy was "formed out of the 'mother diocese' of Chicago." It was actually formed out of the Diocese of Illinois, which split three ways in 1877 to form the dioceses of Illinois (renamed Chicago in 1884), Quincy, and Springfield. The only other such split was when the Diocese of South Florida divided in 1969 to form the dioceses of Central, Southeast, and Southwest Florida. The Diocese of Tennessee decided to split three ways, but did so in two stages.

The Rev. Lawrence N. Crumb
Eugene, Oregon

Another Meyer Admirer

I was delightfully amazed to read the editor's column on Joyce Meyer [TLC, June 9], whom my wife introduced to me several years ago. I have grown to appreciate her more and more with each passing year. Heretofore I had erroneously imagined that my wife and I might be her only Anglican *aficionados*.

Perhaps TLC could organize a forum wherein orthodox members of the historic churches and interested Pentecostals such as Mrs. Meyer could come together to learn from each other and build up the body of Christ.

The Rev. Kenneth D. Aldrich
Huntington, Pennsylvania

Dionysius Mainstreamed

After reading G. Willcox Brown's "Jesus Breaks the Dionysian Cycle" [TLC, June 9], I thought, *He writes what I was hoping to say*. Fr. Brown's social and scholarly analysis illuminates and fleshes out thoughts that have been gestating in my mind since I journeyed to Burning Man in 2010, and again when I reflected recently on Christian mission in the context of Dionysian social realities [TLC, March 31].

I can no longer regard wild art happenings and other "social fringe" activities as particularly marginal: the spiritual leitmotif of such gatherings can be felt at mainstream sporting events as well as in contemporary currents of thought, including libertine approach to human sexuality.

The beauty of Fr. Brown's insight, however, does not lie primarily in opposing Christianity to hedonism, but in the way and perspective from which he does so: he does not sermonize on debauchery, but reckons with human society as inevitably cultic despite contemporary delusions of transcending humanity's religious past.

Having spent much of the last decade reading the newspaper in the midst of thoroughly "de"- and "un"-churched workmates, I strongly recommend Fr. Brown's choice of subject matter for Christian reflection and apologetic: the possibility that there is something sacrificial going on in recent acts of mass murder can startle us — both within and without the Church — into a new appreciation of Gospel Truths.

Jon Carlson
Minneapolis

Is Windsor Alive?

Mark McCall's response [TLC, July 4] to my "Why Provinces Matter" is welcome and makes several perceptive points, but he overstates the significance of the report of the Windsor Continuation Group. The 2009 meeting of the Anglican Consultative Council did "affirm" the report's recommendations, but directed the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Secretary General, and the Standing Committee to implement the report's recommendations "as appropriate" (ACC Res. 14.09).

That these entities have done little in regard to this report should be an indication that *The Windsor Report* has not been received to the degree that McCall asserts. “Provisionality” may be a useful concept for thinking about the position South Carolina now finds itself in, but to assert that it is a tool that is “on the shelf” overstates the case.

McCall repeats the claim that the diocese in South Carolina is reverting to its status prior to its accession to the constitution of the Episcopal Church. Yet this takes no account of the fact, noted in my original article, that South Carolina did not have a bishop until 1795, after its accession to the church’s constitution and ten years after its creation. The diocese only received a bishop through the wider church.

If South Carolina wants to revert to this pre-accession state, history seems to indicate that it must do so without a bishop — which would leave it in a dubiously Anglican position, provisional or not.

*The Rev. Jesse Zink
Emmanuel College
Cambridge*

Mark McCall responds:

Overstated? It is hardly persuasive to speculate that one instrument’s including the phrase “as appropriate” in its resolution approving the entire continuation group report implies some unspoken reservation about the concept described in my essay — especially when the primates had already quoted the specific recommendation on this subject in full, given it their unanimous support, and asked the archbishop to implement it expeditiously.

But what if Mr. Zink is correct and the Communion leadership subsequently concluded this concept is not appropriate? If a concept for dealing with bodies estranged from the Episcopal Church approved by all the Communion’s instruments only four years ago is so soon subverted this has much more to say about the credibility of the Communion and its instruments than it does about the situation in South Carolina.

It is true South Carolina did not have a bishop prior to joining with others to found the Episcopal Church in 1789. It did not want one: it even objected to the draft general constitution if it required “the establishment of a bishop in South Carolina.” But in 1789 three of the other founding state churches already had bishops who had been consecrated by other Anglican churches. South Carolina could have had one as well if it had wanted. This is actually a good model for the current provisional season.



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Executive Director and Editor Christopher Wells
cwells@livingchurch.org • Ext. 1240

Managing Editor John Schuessler
john@livingchurch.org • Ext. 1241

Associate Editor Douglas LeBlanc
doug@livingchurch.org • Ext. 1242

Graphic Artist Amy Grau
amy@livingchurch.org • Ext. 1245

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Phone: 414-276-5420
Fax: 414-276-7483
E-mail: tlc@livingchurch.org
www.livingchurch.org

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In search of worldly wisdom, one finds this, and not far from home: “It is an unhappy business that God has given to human beings to be busy with” (Eccl. 1:13). “So I turned and gave my heart up to despair” (2:20). As I waited for coffee only thirty minutes before writing these words, a beautiful young woman greeted me. As she was served at the counter before me, I couldn’t help but notice her hands, which fit her pained gait.

“Hello, Father,” she said, and then told me her name and suddenly I remembered her and her long struggle since childhood with rheumatoid arthritis. Telling me about her family, she mentioned bladder cancer and a chemo port, a wheelchair and home modifications, and how people carry on, and how God is good. How good is God in allowing all this anguish? I thought our coffeehouse theology pleasant but predictably weak until she told me that there isn’t just God. As if telling a secret with flashing eyes, she told me what I am supposed to know: “There is another power.” For that reason, being in the grip of the enemy, all is chasing after the wind. To be human is to be frail.

The riddles of Ecclesiastes and the raving of Job have made it all the way to holy writ. So there is no simple answer. There is, however, the mystery of love. I noticed a woman’s contorted hands, and then she greeted me and told her tale of personal and family suffering. Listening, I took something, and not by stealth, but freely as it was given, and this too when I visit my daughter, or sit with my wife, or, as happened yesterday, I anointed a seven-year-old with the oil of the catechumens in preparation for her baptism. I took love. It was free and fell into my hands.

I know anguish. I know this cup. I despise every despairing drop of it, and yet beyond all comprehending, I

know love too. It is the one font I find always full and always fresh.

Drinking all coolness and listening, I hear, “Yet it was I who taught Ephraim to walk, I took them up in my arms; but they did not know that I healed them. I led them with cords of human kindness, with bands of love. I was to them like those who lift infants to their cheeks. I bent down to them and fed them” (Hos. 11:3-4). I hear these haunting words of love and I have reason to reject them, but God being my helper, I don’t. There is, I believe, a compassion that grows warm and tender (Hos. 11:8b).

So what are we to do with a despair that speaks of death? Let it be what it is — death — but only if we have first anchored our lives in deathless life. “Put to death, therefore, whatever in you is earthly” (Col. 3:5); “you have stripped off the old self with its practices and have clothed yourselves with the new self” (9-10). This begins, continues, and ends in God until “Christ is all in all” (3:11).

Christ is the key, the center, the end of all human history (*Gaudium et Spes*). He is too the ground of all beauty, the means by which, in grace, we bear what we must, suffering in and with him even as we rise with him.

Look It Up

Read Ps. 107. Ponder these things, especially distress (vs. 6) and broken bars (vs. 16).

Think About It

Jesus loved his disciples to the end. One has to mine both hard truth and truthful metaphors to say this: suffered, died, buried, broke the gates, appeared, spoke, cooked, commissioned, filled the heavens. Beauty.

Perfect Sacrifice

The madness of Sodom and Gomorrah is first named in Genesis as sexual abuse and inhospitality, although in subsequent texts these ancient cities near the Dead Sea become a general symbol for evil and the threat of impending judgment. The prophet names these cities “you rulers of Sodom” and “you people of Gomorrah!” to identify an evil at the center of *religious practice* (Isa. 1:10). The prophet’s raging iconoclasm is not, however, a wholesale rejection of solemn assemblies, processions, prostrations, and sacrifice. The matter is simply this: *they are mixed with iniquity* (Isa. 1:13).

Thus the whole business of religion becomes vile and putrid, an offense to God for its wanton disregard for human good. God groans: “I have had enough of burnt offering of rams and the fat of fed beasts” (Isa. 1:11). “Your new moons and your appointed festivals *my soul hates*” (1:14). “Your hands are full of blood. Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean; ... learn to do good; seek justice, rescue the oppressed, defend the orphan, plead for the widow” (Isa. 1:15b-17). There is yet time. Coming to the altar with hatred toward your neighbor? Go home. Will what God wills first, and then dare to eat the bread of angels and sip the wine of all newness.

To get our religion right, it is a good practice to return often to original promises. Abram, our ancient father, waited for a son, although his body and that of his beloved wife were, to use the too-honest words of the Epistle to the Hebrews, “as good as dead” (11:12). Thus the promise was, from a human point of view, impossible. Against the evidence of this impossibility, God stretches out the firmament splattered with nighttime stars and calls Abram to look up. So shall his descendants be. In the sheer force of this promise, he went seeking a homeland, awaiting a child. In

time, Abraham would see the promises of God, but always as if appearing in the distance, always waiting, always in faith. Thus waiting, he went about the business of living in the company of the people he was called to lead and love. The daily round and the common task greeted even the God-possessed patriarchs. Ever looking for a homeland, wandering Abraham became the father of a nation called to “seek justice, rescue the oppressed, defend the orphan, plead for the widow.” Here is a religion irrevocably tied to human good.

What is owed to God and what is owed to humanity finds its perfect fulfillment in the God-man, Jesus Christ our Lord. He is a sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for every human sin, flaw, and injury. He is the pure Lamb that protects the doorpost, the delivering presence that guards against the angel of death. He is in his person a summation of all the blood poured out upon all the altars on all the high and holy places. He is the beginning and the end of this outpouring. And never is there a moment when his self-offering is severed from his humanity.

Looking to God, he need not look away from his brothers and sisters. Indeed, in his person he carries a “human nature,” which, however abstract the phrase may seem, is an attempt to gather up the tactile truth not of a few but of every human being. He is the one who calls out to and fulfills our true humanity. He says, “Open the door to me as soon as I come” (Luke 12:36). He comes “to give you the kingdom” (Luke 12:32).

Look It Up

Read Ps. 50:7. Take heart when God bears witness against you.

Think About It

Your better self isn’t yourself. It is Christ in you.



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The Rev. **Charles Hawkins** preist-in-charge of St. John's, 705 Rayburn Ave., Ocean Springs, MS 39564.

The Rev. **Charles LaFond** is canon steward of St. John's Cathedral, 1350 Washington St., Denver, CO 80203.

The Rev. **Erik W. Larsen** is rector of St. Columba's, The Berkeley Memorial Chapel, 55 Vaucluse Ave., Middletown, RI 02842.

The Rev. **Jay MacLeod** is rector of St. Andrew's, 52 Gould Rd., New London, NH 03257.

The Rev. **S. Rebecca Michelfelder** is rector during the transition at St. Martin's, 1510 E 7th St., Charlotte, NC 28204.

The Rev. **Matthew Oprendek** is priest-in-charge of Christ Church, 33 Jefferson Ave., Garden City, NY 11530.

The Rev. **Anne Williamson** is associate at St. John's, 101 Chapel St, Portsmouth, NH 03801.

Deaths

The Rev. **Van S. Bird** of Atlanta, a priest for 61 years, died March 6. He was 88. Born in Waycross, GA, he was a gradu-

ate of Fort Valley State University, Seabury-Western Theological Seminary, St. Augustine's College, Canterbury, and Temple University. He was ordained deacon and priest in 1951.

Fr. Bird was an assistant professor of sociology at LaSalle University, Philadelphia, for 20 years. In his retirement he was an associate at St. Paul's Church, Atlanta, and an adjunct professor in sociology at Morehouse College.

He served as curate of the African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas, Philadelphia, 1951-53; vicar, Holy Trinity Church, Baltimore, 1953-64; vicar, St. Andrew's Church, Charlotte Amalie, VI, 1964-66; rector, St. Bartholomew's Church, Philadelphia, 1968-75; and rector, St. Simon the Cyrenian Church, Philadelphia, 1984-90. From 1975 to 1984 he led the Diocese of Philadelphia's Office of Social Concerns and Church and Community Relationships.

He is survived by Eva Bird, his wife of 66 years, three children, eight grandchildren, and nine great-grandchildren.

The Rev. **John Fowlow Tulk**, who served multiple churches in the American West and Midwest, died Jan. 26 in

Savage, MN. He was 78.

Born in New York City, he was a graduate of Trinity College and General Theological Seminary. He was ordained deacon and priest in 1959.

He served as vicar at four Idaho churches in 1959-69: Trinity Church, Gooding; Trinity Church, Buhl; Christ Church, Shoshone; and Calvary Church, Jerome. Fr. Tulk was dean of the Diocese of Idaho's Central Rural Deanery, 1966-68, and chairman of the diocesan liturgical commission, 1969-73. He was rector of Trinity Church, Pocatello, 1970-80; rector, St. Andrew's Church, Ft. Scott, KS, 1981-84; and vicar, St. Helen's Church, Wadena, MN, 1984-87. He was a member of Associated Parishes for Liturgy and Mission, Episcopal Peace Fellowship, and Rural Workers Fellowship.

Fr. Tulk is survived by Sylvia Stone Tulk, his wife of 45 years; sons Reginald, Stephen, and Ian; five grandchildren; a great-grandchild; and a sister, Amy Harland.

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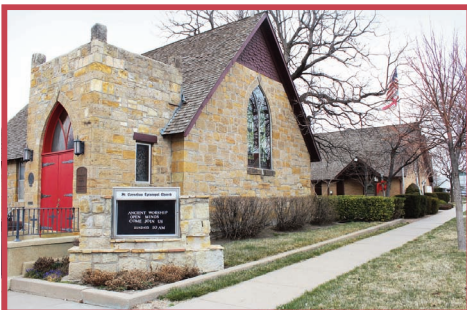
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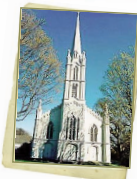
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