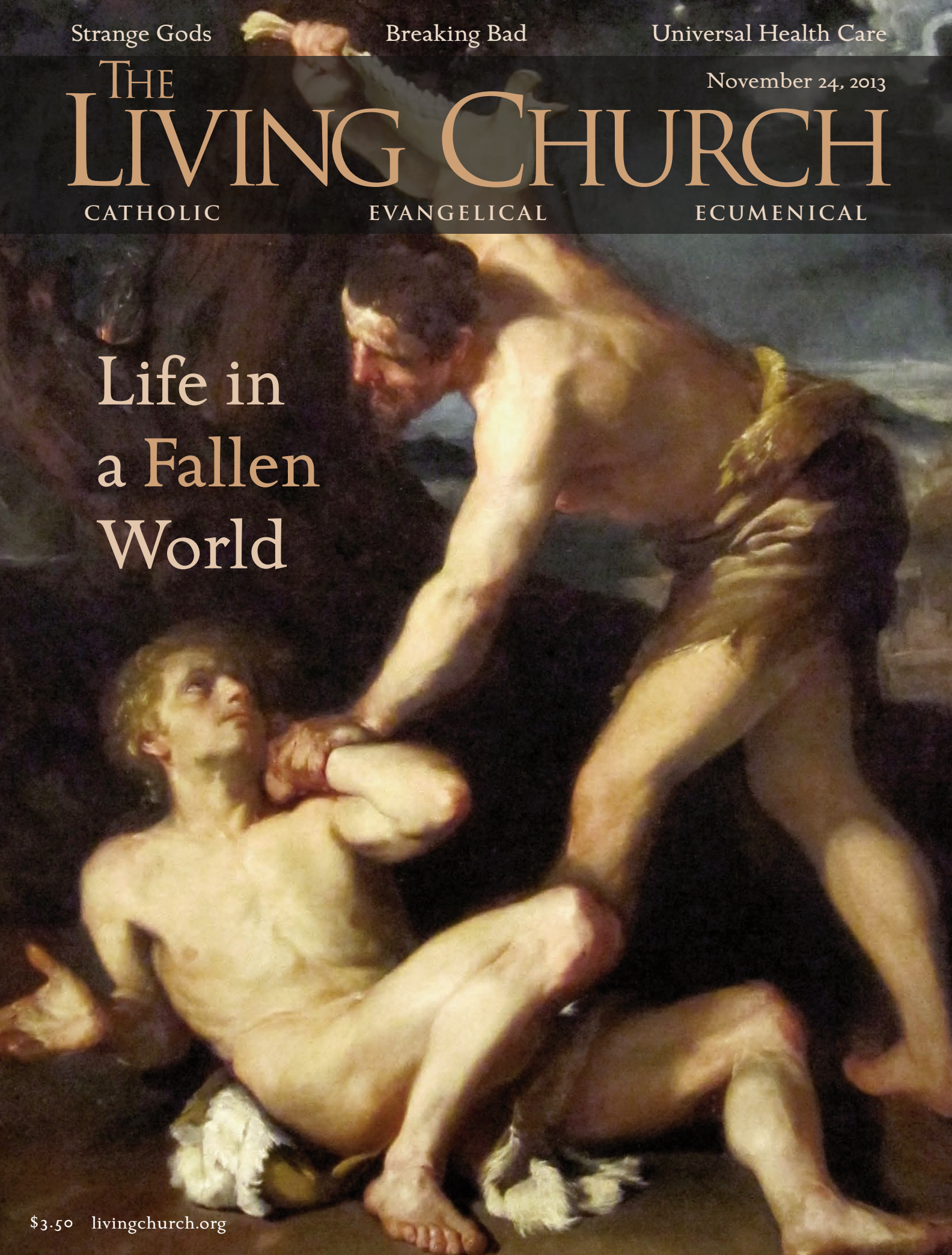
Strange Gods Breaking Bad Universal Health Care

The Living Church

November 24, 2013

CATHOLIC EVANGELICAL ECUMENICAL



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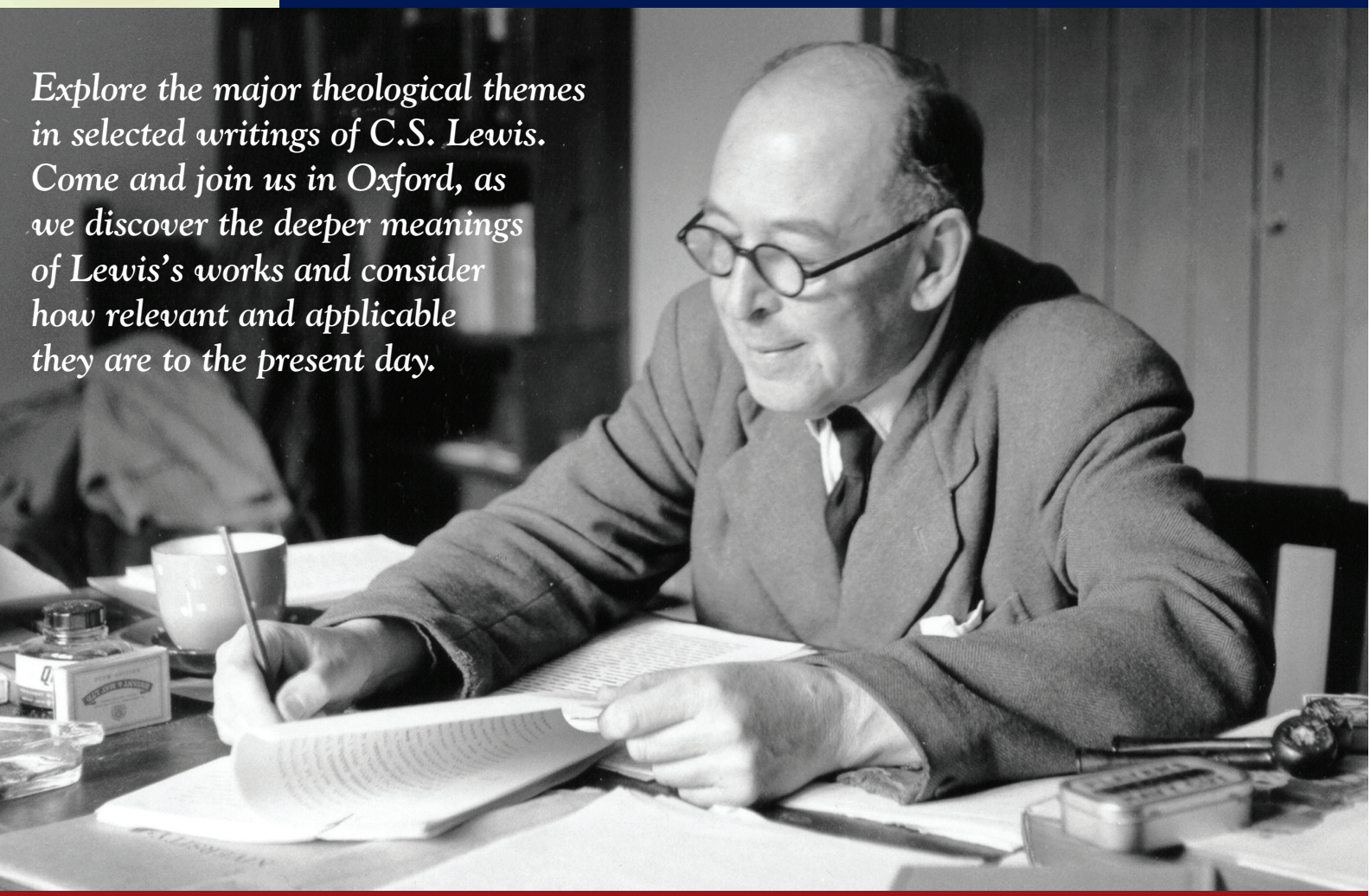

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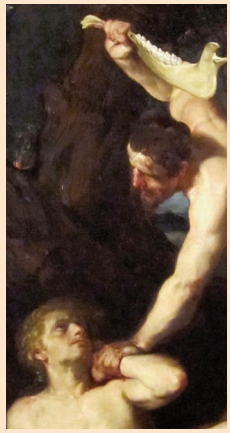
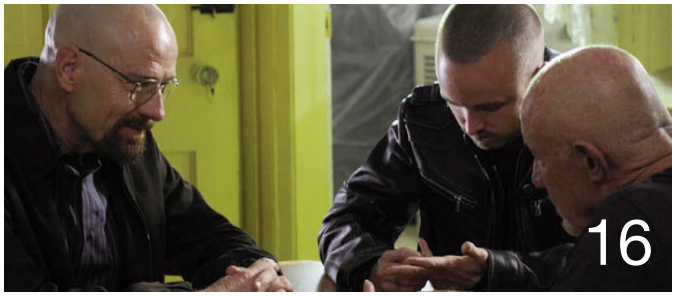
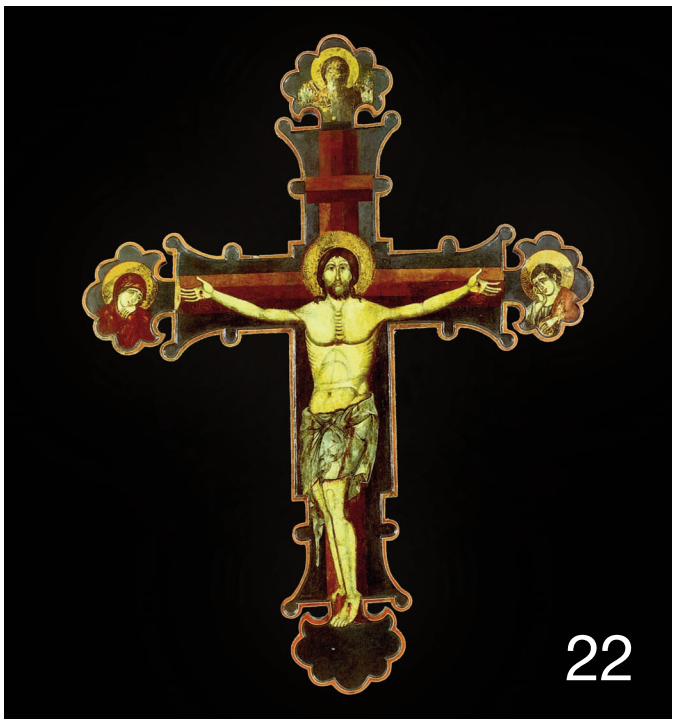
ON THE COVER

If God is good, how can there be evil? To many a modern mind, it is the great atheist "*gotcha!*" (see "Life in a Fallen World," p. 10).



Cain Killing Abel (Gaetano Gandolfi, 1734-1802)





The Living Church

THIS ISSUE | November 24, 2013

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The Living Church is published by the Living Church Foundation. Our historic mission in the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion is to seek and serve the Catholic and evangelical faith of the one Church, to the end of visible Christian unity throughout the world.

Pentecostals on the Original-Blessing Trail

By Randall Balmer

Christ the King Church's presence in downtown Valdosta includes a coffee shop and theater.

Carl Tyson/Flickr photo

Well over two decades later, the event is still seared in my memory — the loud, insistent music, the energy, the expectation. The bishop had imposed a eucharistic fast on the catechumens, all 220 of them, in anticipation of their reception into the Episcopal Church. For most, it had been a long and unexpected journey from a perfectly respectable Assemblies of God congregation to the no man's land of nondenominationalism and finally to the bosom of what their pastor — not yet a priest — kept referring to as the historic Church.

As I wrote in *Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glory* 23 years ago, Stanley J. White, the Assemblies of God minister and then a postulant for the priesthood, had pushed the envelope any number of times since succeeding his father as pastor of Evangel Assembly of God. His devotional readings had led him to the Book of Common Prayer, among other sources of spirituality, and he had already grown weary of evangelicalism's endless quest for innovation. Some time after he initiated a liturgical procession — perhaps still the only instance in the century-long history of the Assemblies of God — some complaints alerted denominational authorities in Springfield, Missouri. White was quickly sacked, but, much to his surprise, a significant number of his congregants indicated their willingness to join him on his spiritual journey, wherever it might lead.

It led, finally, to the Episcopal Church and to that memorable Easter Sunday evening, 1990. The confirmands sought the structure and connectedness of historic Christianity, but they also had no intention of leaving their Pentecostal enthusiasm behind. The Rt. Rev. Harry Shipps, Bishop of Georgia, said that they did not have to, that in fact he welcomed their enthusiasm, though I don't know that he was quite prepared for that Easter Sunday evening. After the confirmands queued up before five bishops and all the confirmations were completed, the congregation erupted in ecstatic celebration.

When I caught up with Stan White in late September, our conversation turned almost immediately to that evening more than two decades earlier. "It's pretty hard to sustain something like that," he said. His smile was almost wistful. "We've gone through some changes. But we're in a good place."

Their setting has changed. About a decade ago, as the parishioners of Christ the King were considering moving from the boat showroom they had adapted into a church, they briefly considered buying property and constructing a building. They concluded, however, that a better use of resources, both financial and natural, would be to purchase a four-story building in downtown Valdosta, just across the street from the Lowndes County courthouse and the monument to Confederate soldiers.

The move was transformative, both for the parish and for downtown itself. The bottom floor, called Hildegard's, functions as a parish hall, including a glassed-in chapel with windows opening to the street. Hildegard's (named for the medieval mystic) is also a coffee house, bookstore, and improvisational theater; earlier that weekend, the parish had staged a performance of *The Laramie Project*. Following the move to the center city, Hildegard's quickly became a hive of activity, drawing students from nearby Valdosta State University and luring suburbanites downtown. The parish organized art walks, shops and restaurants moved in, and the tax base increased substantially with the

sale and refurbishing of nearby buildings.

The Sunday worship opened with "Morning Has Broken," accompanied by organ, trumpet, drums, guitar, bass, and piano. The enthusiasm was a bit more muted than what I recalled, but no less affecting. The space is warm, with hardwood floors, warehouse-style fixtures that emit a lambent light, and a brick wall behind the altar flanked by shutters. White's sermon touched on several themes, including the biblical notion of jubilee, the year after the seventh cycle of sabbatical years when debts are forgiven and servants freed. "I'm not sure there's any other gospel," White said. "That's the one we're authorized to preach."

During the announcements, White welcomed another gay couple as new members of Christ the King. The congregation ranged from suburban matrons and businessmen to college students and elderly folks, some of whom I recognized from my visit long ago. If I had not recognized Bennett Thagard by sight, I would have known him by his legendary bone-crushing handshake; Thagard and his wife, Patricia, live on a farm nearly 50 miles away, but they've been faithful members since the Assemblies of God days. Bob Elder and his wife, Linda, on the other hand, are relative newcomers. "We didn't think we'd find a place like this in Valdosta," he said.

White told me later that one of the challenges of ministry in a place like Valdosta, a mid-size city, was turnover. When people are promoted, he said, they move on to places like Atlanta and Jacksonville. In addition, the ranks of leadership in the parish have been depleted by the large number of priests — 15 or 16, by his count — who have been ordained from the parish and who now serve parishes elsewhere.

During the ten o'clock Sunday-school hour, White took me upstairs to a warren of classrooms. His assistant rector, the Rev. Galen Mirate, was conducting class next door, and White was teaching a series on

(Continued on next page)

Pentecostals on the Original-Blessing Trail

(Continued from previous page)

Matthew Fox's *Letters to Pope Francis*. Fox, whose name is associated with creation spirituality and its emphasis on Original Blessing, was silenced by Joseph Ratzinger for one year during the papacy of John Paul II, and he was expelled from the Dominican order in 1993.

"Why don't we pause and center," White asked rhetorically, "calm our bodies and slow down and rest our minds and open our hearts?" A dozen parishioners and a couple of visitors were seated in a circle. The pope's recent remarks about homosexuality, abortion, and contraception excited considerable interest within the group.

In his observations about Fox, White recounted that the theologian had run afoul of the Vatican because he declared that both John Paul II and Benedict XVI were essentially schismatic popes in that they circumvented the council of bishops. They silenced some liberation theologians and interpreted Vatican II (in which they both participated) differently from other leaders in the church.

Why is White so interested in these matters? "Most of the patron saints who have influenced me are Roman Catholic," he said, "so I love the Roman Catholic Church." He lamented the similarity between conservative evangelicals and conservative Roman Catholics on political matters.

What I did not know until my return to Valdosta was that my chapter all those years ago had sparked a flurry of interest in White and his congregation. He received letters and fielded phone calls both from Pentecostals and from evangelical Episcopalians around the country. The head of one group flew to Valdosta, promised to set White on a fast track to becoming bishop, and then promptly ran through a checklist of theological and ideological matters, including biblical inerrancy and matters that worry social conservatives. White protested: "That was the stuff we were trying to get away from" in joining the Episcopal Church. He told the suitors eager to enlist him in their causes: "We're not what you think we are."

White traces his interest in Fox and creation spirituality to those early days as a rector. He detected in Fox the same blend of mysticism and Pentecostal fervor that he sought to emulate, and Fox provided a vocabulary for White's theology and spirituality. White found that the "language to hold it together was the medieval mystics," especially Meister Eckhart, Hildegard of Bingen, and even Thomas Aquinas. Fox, he believes, "draws out the wisdom of ancient traditions."

White studied for a time with Fox in a doctoral program in Oakland, though he never completed his dissertation; the demands of a parish derailed that ambition. "I think being a parish priest is really quite monastic in many ways," he said. "There's been days when it's just been hard work."

White reported that the consecration of Gene Robinson in 2003 created nary a ripple at Christ the King. "So much of the culture is out in front of the Church," he said. "We're facing a major decline unless there's renewal." But White believes that the revitalization he seeks will not come from those who identify as part of the renewal; he worries, in fact, that the "renewal-type folks are pulling away from the richness and depth of the Episcopal Church." Renewal will come when Episcopalians, especially younger priests, find their prophetic voices. "You are a prophet," White tells postulants. "You're called to speak to the culture — not just knowledge about God but experience of God."

How comfortable is White with the

label *evangelical* these days? "I would consider myself an evangelical," he said, "because I really love Jesus." He regularly preaches strong repentance sermons, and many of them culminate in altar calls." He edits a page on Facebook under the title "Confessions of a Post-Evangelical Priest."

"I have a real appreciation for Holy Scripture, though not in the literalistic sense of my Baptist colleagues," he said. "I think we need to let it breathe." White paused and looked out the window. "The power of preaching the word is what keeps Christ the King alive," he added. "We have the experiential element, but the preaching promotes substance."

Randall Balmer, an Episcopal priest, is Mandel Family Professor in the Arts and Sciences and chair of the Religion Department at Dartmouth College. The 25th anniversary edition of his book Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glory: A Journey into the Evangelical Subculture in America *will be released next year.*

WCC Elects Bishop MacDonald


MacDonald

The 10th Assembly of the World Council of Churches elected eight new presidents, including the Rt. Rev. Mark MacDonald, National Indigenous Anglican Bishop in the Anglican Church of Canada, during a closed session Nov. 4. WCC presidents promote ecumenism and interpret the work of the council, especially in their respective regions. The presidents are ex-officio members of the WCC's central committee.

The eight WCC presidents are:

Africa: The Rev. Mary Anne Plaatjies van Huffel, Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa

Asia: The Rev. Sang Chang, Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea

Eastern Orthodox: H.B. John X, Patriarch of the Greek Orthodox Church of Antioch and All the East

Europe: Archbishop Anders Wejryd, Church of Sweden

Latin America and Caribbean: The Rev. Gloria Nohemy Ulloa Alvarado, Presbyterian Church in Colombia

North America: Bishop MacDonald

Oriental Orthodox: H.H. Karekin II, Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians

Pacific: The Rev. Dr Mele'ana Puloka, Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga

MacDonald became National Indigenous Anglican Bishop after serving as Bishop of Alaska and as an interim bishop in the Diocese of Navajoland. He is an alumnus of Wycliffe College, University of Toronto, has served as a priest in Mississauga, Ontario, and writes occasionally for The Living Church.

Adapted from ACNS

EYEWITNESS

Reflections on GAFCON 2013

The second Global Anglican Future Conference met in Nairobi from October 26, at the invitation of Archbishop Eliud Wabukala of Kenya, chairman of the GAFCON Primates' Council. It gathered at All Saints Cathedral and the impressive new conference centre (opened 2011) which forms part of the cathedral complex. At the first GAFCON in Jerusalem in 2008 there were 1,138 delegates from 19 provinces; in Nairobi this increased to 1,358 delegates from 27 provinces and over 40 countries. By far the largest contingent was Nigeria with 470 delegates, including 150 bishops. Second in size was Uganda with 176 delegates. There were 102 from the Church England (three from the Diocese of Europe), 19 from the Church of Ireland, only one from the Church in Wales, and zero from the Episcopal Church of Scotland.

This is one of the biggest dilemmas for GAFCON: although overwhelmingly evangelical, how serious is it about bringing Catholic Anglicans on board? The Nairobi communiqué welcomes "all our different traditions" (misleadingly caricatured as Evangelicals, Anglo-Catholics, and Charismatics) as committed to "a renewed Anglican orthodoxy."

But what does this mean in practice? Is it just a temporary alliance, co-belligerence against the common enemy of radical liberalism, or something more? The Jerusalem Declaration of 2008 famously affirms "justification by faith" (as did the Council of Trent) but not "justification by faith alone." Some Anglo-Catholics at Nairobi were unhappy that the public worship was not more catholic in flavor, but they saw only two viable options as they face an insecure future: GAFCON or the Ordinariate.

Another obvious area of theological diversity is GAFCON's attitude to the ordination and consecration of women. Contradictory viewpoints are encompassed by the movement. There was a good supply of women, some white, most black, in dog-collars, but few stood on the platform. Clergywomen from North America and Uganda led intercessions and read the Bible, but none preached or lectured. The Nairobi communiqué acknowledges these differences of opinion for the first time in GAFCON's history. Nevertheless, GAFCON will need to work harder to recruit and retain egalitarians if it is to enhance its appeal as a broad coalition.

Justin Welby has begun his archiepiscopate by seeking to build good personal friendships with Anglican leaders across the world. He preached in the Nairobi cathedral the day before the conference began, and sat down to lunch between Archbishop Wabukala and Archbishop Robert Duncan of the Anglican Church in North America. He also sent video greetings, saying he was "so thrilled" and "so glad" that GAFCON was taking place, because it was "essential." He exhorted delegates to be confident in the gospel and to pursue holiness in the midst of rapid cultural change, but also hinted that different contexts might require different responses. He emphasised the importance of Christian unity and called upon GAFCON to express disagreement "graciously but with powerful truth." It was a carefully worded greeting, if somewhat ambiguous, and met a muted response.

Several speakers offered stark diagnoses of the ills of the Anglican Communion. William Taylor hammered home the apostolic command when faced by false teaching: "Do not be partners with them" (Eph. 5:7). "If you sleepwalk into deception," he warned, "they will eat you up like a crocodile." The Rt. Rev. Miguel Ochoa, Bishop of Recife in Brazil, complained that Anglican liberals are all "talk, talk talk … listen, listen, listen, indaba, indaba." He said that "new wine cannot be placed in old wineskins," and that "too much caution — Anglican caution — is the reason why we are here." Surveying the English scene, the Rev. Paul Perkin, vicar of St. Mark's, Battersea Rise, spoke passionately about the great opportunities for church growth and the flourishing of gospel ministries. But he also lamented the tragedy when the world invades the church, especially its central institutions.

Wabukala

Russell Powell/GAFCON photo

Perkin asked, "How can faithful ministers submit to unfaithful leaders?" He suggested that in future the Church of England will need a mixed economy, with some evangelicals within the old structures and some working "beyond the structures." Wabukala similarly warned that there are powerful and well-funded institutions seeking to make sure Africa adopts the culture of the West. He acknowledged that some churches had been taken captive by the world, but urged GAFCON not to flinch because "we cannot stand by passively as the cross of Christ is attacked and denied." He added that "we're in a spiritual battle for the future, not just of Anglicanism, but of the entire Christian faith," and called on GAFCON to take decisive action.

This call to action was summarised in the Nairobi communiqué and commitments. These were drafted during the conference itself, not written in advance, with material provided from the nine mini-conference streams. The writing group was drawn from Kenya, Nigeria, Rwanda, the Southern Cone, Australia, England, and North America, and laboured day and night to produce the text. Their intention was not to redo the work of the first GAFCON,

(Continued on page 24)

Vatican Honors Prof. Burridge

The Rev. Richard Burridge, professor of biblical interpretation and dean of King's College, London, was one of two theologians to receive the Joseph Ratzinger Prize at the Vatican Oct. 26.

Pope Francis presented the awards to Burridge and to Christian Schaller, professor of theology and vice director of the Pope Benedict XVI institute of Regensburg, Germany.

Burridge was a Cecil Woods Visiting Fellow at Virginia Theological Seminary in the Spring of 2009. The Very Rev. Ian Markham, dean and president of VTS, wrote on the seminary weblog about witnessing the ceremony.

"I was honored to meet the Pope; he is an extraordinary man," Dean Markham wrote. "And it is delightful to see a good friend of the Seminary being the first non-Roman Catholic to be so honored. It is an appropriate accolade for the strength and depth of Anglican scholarship."

Markham elaborated on Burridge's insights: "When the entire New Testament world took the view that the Gospels were not biographies, it was this young scholar trained in the Classics who explained that this was wrong. The Gospels are Graeco-Roman biographies, which follows the conventions precisely. Graeco-Roman biographies are invitations to imitate the subject (both in terms of words and deeds) and admire the subject (especially in respect to his or her attitude to death). He has developed this theme in several books and articles, some of which were worked on while he stayed at Virginia Theological Seminary."

The award, given annually since 2011, honors scholars whose work demonstrates a meaningful contribution to theology in the spirit of the cardinal and pope emeritus.

In an interview with Catholic News Agency, Burridge discussed how his work has interacted with that of Pope Benedict XVI: "I have been working for the last 30 years on the literary character of the Gospels and in particular how they relate to the literary genre of Graeco-Roman biographies. And, obviously, Pope Emeritus Benedict wrote his biography of Jesus of Nazareth in which he has argued also that the key to interpreting the Gospels is through the portrait of Jesus, and I've demonstrated how you do that by looking at Graeco-Roman biographies."

Burridge added: "It is a huge honor. I'm so grateful to the Holy Father and to the Church for honoring my work in this way and the fact that it means that the way in which we read the Gospels across the world has changed now."

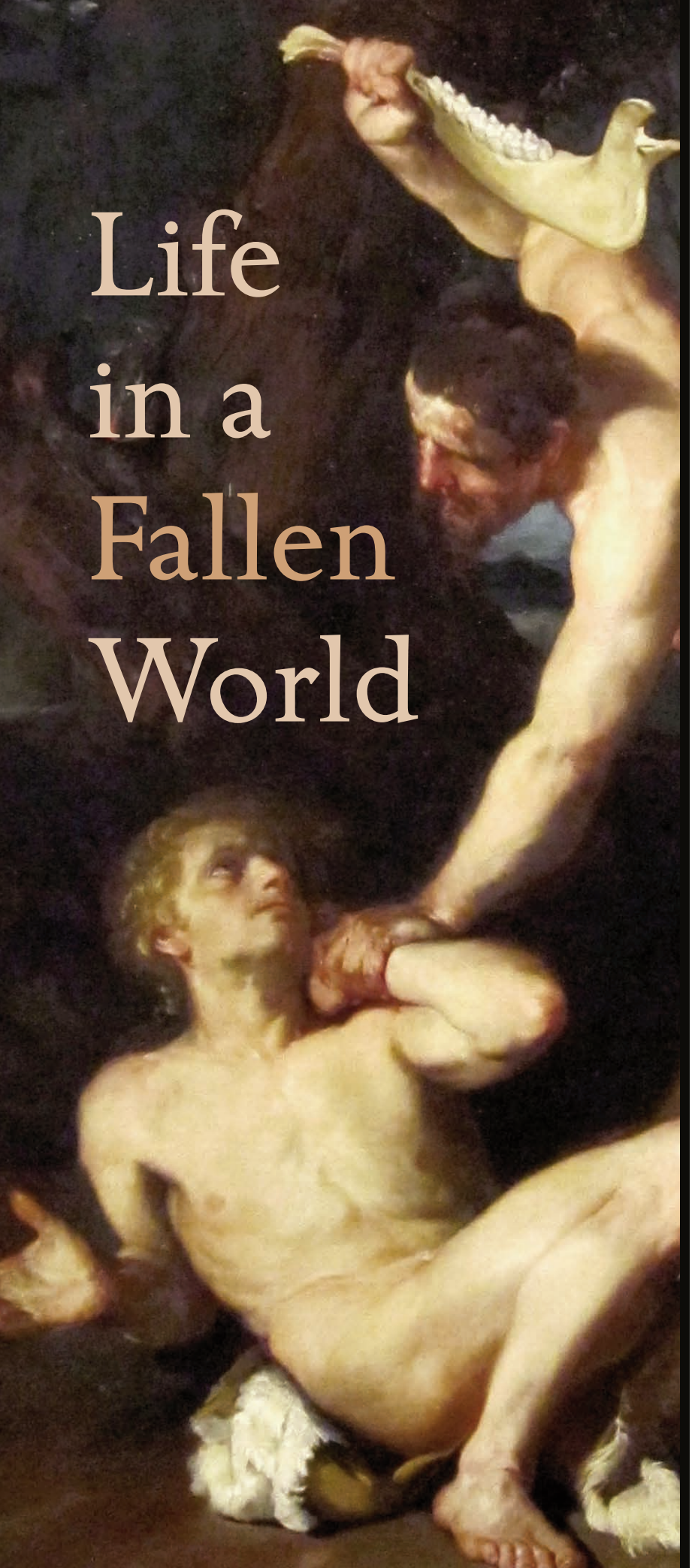
Is Cursillo Emergent?

The Cursillo movement, which turns 70 in 2014, is a natural home for people drawn to emergent faith, the Rt. Rev. Christopher Epting said during the annual conference of National Episcopal Cursillo. The conference met Oct. 24-27 in the Chicago suburb of Schaumburg.

"You and I are part of the 'emerging' church," said Epting, assisting bishop in the Diocese of Chicago. "We seek to go outside the doors of our churches — into our homes and neighborhoods, our classrooms and workplaces — to make friends, to be friends, and to bring our friends to Christ."

He added: "In an increasingly secular age, when the Church seems more and more on the margins, rather than at the center of things, it's surely right for us to focus on 'mission' rather than maintenance, and to see our role not so much trying to fill our pews by inviting people in but going out from the doors of our churches and meeting people where they are."

Cursillo leaders said during the conference that they want to expand the movement's reach among people in their 20s, 30s, and 40s. National Episcopal Cursillo's newly elected president is Dee Settlemeyer of Colorado. She succeeds Charles Hood of Arkansas.



Life in a Fallen World

Review by Daniel Muth

If God is good, how can there be evil? To many a modern mind, it is the great atheist "*gotcha!*" And certain presentations of the problem accordingly slouch toward the silly — the notion that a good and omnipotent deity must adjust weather patterns and tectonic plate shifts to account for human demographics, reassign viral and pathogenic physiology to ensure disease only afflicts the wicked, and, of course, make sure the bad guys' guns don't work. Serious objections are another matter. One cannot but grieve along with Charles Darwin at the loss of his beloved daughter, and consequent loss of Christian faith, which his scientific work had never even seriously shaken. The cry of souls in distress rings throughout Scripture — from Abraham's pleas on behalf of Sodom, to Job on the dung heap, through most of the psalms, to Christ on the cross.

Many Christians have tried to make evil understandable as a part of God's great plan for creation. Dostoevsky demonstrated that matters would be far worse if it were. In a conversation with his brother Alyosha, Ivan Karamazov limns a

number of scenarios of people doing horrible things, mostly to children. If divine harmony is brought about through killing, he claims, then God is a moral monster and his order and harmony come at too steep a price. Ivan will have nothing to do with such a divine bully. And he is right. Can Christians make sense of, say, the brutal murder of children? Should they even try?

In his succinct if fairly bloodless *If God, Why Evil?* Norman Geisler, an apologetics professor at Veritas Evangelical Seminary, presents in encapsulated form many of the classic discussion points regarding the problem of evil. He deals with its nature, origin, persistence, purpose, and avoidability, the problem of physical evil, miracles and evil, and the problem of those who have never heard the gospel.

In each chapter, Geisler lays out the problem as a logical formulation. On the persistence of evil: (1) if God is all good, he *would* destroy evil; (2) if God is all powerful, he *could* destroy evil; (3) but evil is not destroyed; (4) therefore no such God exists. He then spends the chapter examining the veracity of each statement and applying corrections as he goes along: God intends to destroy evil but he cannot do so without destroying free choice. The significant correction, per Geisler, is that evil has not been overcome *yet*.

The approach has its obvious advantages. The chapters are admirably clear and succinct. Christians called upon to answer the typical prattle of the village (or dorm room) atheist will find it useful. An electronic copy would provide particularly quick and handy reference.

On the other hand, while Geisler is clearly a capable and experienced pastor and peppers his text with practical anecdotes, he suffers from the malady of most writers on the intellectual problem of theodicy: he fails to address the visceral response that suffering and evil provokes in Christian and secular hearts alike. On the whole, I would not hand his book to a grieving parent.

Even deeper problems inhere. In his opening chapter, Geisler rightly and vividly explains the Christian understanding of evil as privation. Yet later, in a chapter on the ways God might make use of evil (what C.S. Lewis referred to as God using simple evil to achieve a complex good, the crucifixion being the prime example), Geisler lists a number of options and yet curiously omits the most important reality: that in itself evil simply has no meaning. God can redeem its effects, but being pure negation, evil has no place in God's intentions for anyone or anything. To neglect to mention this is to leave the most significant fact about evil out of the discussion.

A somewhat deeper chord is struck by Terence Fretheim's *Creation Untamed*, which limits itself to the question of natural evil. Fretheim, Elva B. Lovell Professor of Old Testament at Luther Seminary, brings an Old Testament scholar's background and sensibility to the question, building his case mainly around the Genesis accounts of creation and the flood, and the book of Job.

His rich account of the Genesis creation stories begins by noting that though God's creation is *good* in that it corresponds with divine intention, it is not *perfect*. It is capable of improvement. God's original blessing/command to mankind to "fill the earth and subdue it," meaning to continue God's work of bringing order out of chaos, indicates that we still inhabit a chaotic, unfinished world.

The creation of Adam in the second story brings several of Fretheim's themes together: the use of pre-existing matter (i.e., the "dust of the ground" — Fretheim never denies *ex nihilo* creation, though he does alas underemphasize it), the incarnational mode of its accomplishment (God brings off his great work in a strikingly bodily, breathy way), and the expectation of divine imitation to include creativity (Adam evaluates the animals as God has evaluated him and his situation). The deeply Jewish notion of human beings becoming like God via imitation, particularly when contrasted with Eve's errant attempt to become like God via disobedience, is a theme strongly driven home throughout this part of the narrative, albeit more inferred than explicated.

God's creation is noted to be wild, risky, random and unfinished, yet nevertheless good. In the flood story, we are presented with the problematic picture of natural disaster as divine judgment. Fretheim makes clear that the snowballing sin being punished is social rather than idolatrous: people are sinning against one another rather than God. Though clearly less than eager to visit justice on humanity, God does so, while preserving a remnant. The story ends with a divine promise to limit his response to human evil.

Nature occupies center stage throughout much of the book of Job. His friends use nature to buttress their claims of Job's deserved suffering, while Job increasingly understands his damaged relationship with God as represented by an off-kilter created order. When

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Life in a Fallen World

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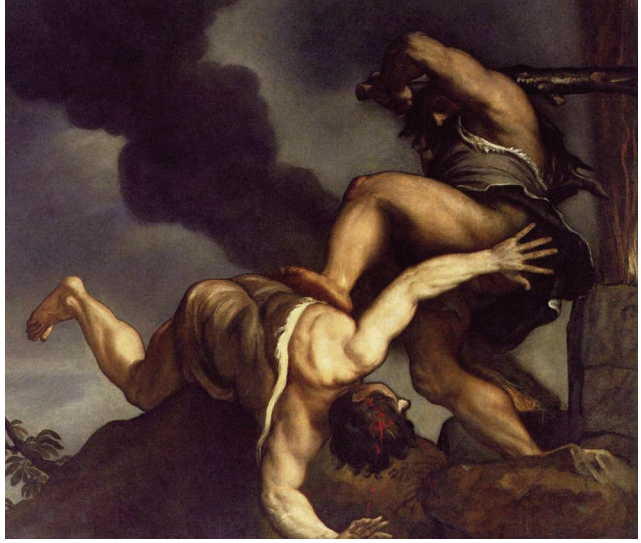
God speaks, it is out of the whirlwind and from that tempestuous place he brings Job to "where the wild things are." God has set limits, but wild things are what they are and he will not protect us from them. In the end, questions of whether suffering is deserved are beside the point. God has willed a dangerous created order, but within that order he offers us a deep relationship with him and with one another (Job must pray for his errant friends). The book ends with meditations on these final themes of suffering and prayer.

Perhaps because of the modesty of its ambitions and the quality of the writing, I'm inclined to say that Thomas G. Long's *What Shall We Say?* is the best book of this lot for the general reader. True to his discipline, Long, Bandy Professor of Preaching at Emory University's Candler School of Theology, limits himself to what ought to come from the Church's pulpits. It is not the most wide-ranging: Geisler covers more ground and Fretheim goes into more depth, though he limits himself to the Old Testament and to natural evil. But whereas Geisler is concerned with responding to attacks on the faith (and thus winds up in some problematic territory), Long focuses on propounding the faith.

He starts off with the 1755 Lisbon earthquake and tsunami, in which an age-old center of deep medieval piety was devastated in the midst of her All Saints celebrations, leaving untold thousands dead and believers and unbelievers alike scrambling for answers. It was the first major natural catastrophe of modern times and set a tone for the debate — Leibniz's rationalist theodicy vs. Voltaire's outraged skepticism — up to this day. We are all children of Lisbon.

The next couple of chapters, examining some things that have been said, begins with wise counsel from David Bentley Hart, whose book *The Doors of the Sea* gets my vote for the best treatment of the topic currently available: any theodicy that we would consider shamefully foolish and cruel to say to a man in the deepest pits of his grief *ought not be spoken at all*, ever, says Hart. The currently popular atheist position was laid out by J.L. Mackie in the 1950s, according to which the existence of evil means that God cannot be good and omnipotent. Christian philosopher Alvin Plantinga skewered the argument — beings that are both free and incapable of evil are logically impossible — however, Long notes, "clear logic sometimes makes for cold comfort."

He then examines several popular responses, all of



Cain and Abel (Titian, 1490-1576)

which are on to something but lack depth, thinks Long. Like Fretheim, he sees Job as pointing the way to a deeper understanding. And his treatment of Job, while similar to Fretheim's, is on the whole superior. After detailing the dispute to the point of God's appearance in the whirlwind, he presents the denouement as not just a restored relationship of creature to creator, but a restoration in terms of a vision of evil defeated, gathered up into the palm of the divine hand. God does not offer a counterbalancing *yes* to the *no* of fallen creation, but a consuming *yes* that points to the cross and transcends every *no*. God will not make death a friend or suffering an ally; he will "make all things new."

Long sums up the matter through the parable of the wheat and the tares, which he carefully examines in context. The workers question God ("did you not sow good seed?") and so remind us that questions about his goodness may be asked — indeed they ought to be asked and must not be seen as impious. God answers, "An enemy has done this." And so he has. The horrors of death, evil, sin, and the devil are never, and can never be, reconciled to God. He may make use of them, but in themselves they mean nothing to him — or to us. The parable ends with the eschaton. God will defeat evil; the promise suggested in Job and realized in Christ's resurrection will be universal.

There are, of course, other ways of looking at the matter. Jill McNish, a Jungian psychologist and Episcopal priest, attempts one. She starts her *Getting Real About God, Suffering, Sin and Evil* with the question of why politicians she does not like are allowed to do things of which she does not approve, in this case, the Iraq War, and concludes that the explanation lies in sin and evil. She rightly notes differences in the two concepts: the personal nature of sin is not the same as transcendent evil.

McNish wisely remains unflinching in the face of the problem of evil and the goodness of God. Without recourse to Scripture or Church tradition, however, she attempts to solve the problem by seeing God as encompassing both good and evil. The method leaves something to be desired — why work apart from the

Church's primary sources? — and creates an unresolvable tension between the wholly good Jesus and a God purportedly beyond good and evil.

McNish also objects to the doctrine of original sin without demonstrating a clear understanding of it. Here she might have turned to Ian McFarland's very fine *In Adam's Fall* — the best book of the lot overall.

McFarland, associate professor of systematic theology at Emory's Candler School of Theology, after noting the current unpopularity of original sin, begins with the biblical concepts of unintentional sin (participation in a complex web of relationships means harm will be done to others regardless of one's intentions), sin as external power (fallen humanity as "slaves of sin"), and sin as universal condition ("in sin did my mother conceive me"). From there, he examines modern attempts to reappropriate sin language, all unsuccessful in, as he emphasizes, "bringing together humanity's *radical responsibility for sin and radical powerlessness in the face of sin.*"

Following a careful history of the doctrine of original sin, he examines both Augustine's theory of the will in which willing follows desire, and Maximus the Confessor's careful separation of the will from human identity. Maximus contrasts the natural will (our desires for food and sleep) and the gnomic will (our ability to deliberate and decide under conditions of ignorance and doubt) and argues that willing is not the same as choosing. The gnomic will is not power over one's nature, since it cannot control the desires that drive it, but rather identifies the fact that one lives out one's nature as an agent or, as the Greek fathers said, a *hypostasis*: a person. The will is no more the whole of a person than his body, mind, or heart is. The "who-ness" of the individual is the *hypostasis*, or person. The will, like the nature, is part of a person's "what-ness."

The will, then, is in an ontologically odd category. It is constitutive of human nature; and, because human beings are creatures of God, the will must be irreducably good, however damaged. At the same time, the will is the locus of human agency without being the *source* of human personhood. Reviewing the implications, McFarland argues that Christ may well have assumed a fallen nature and yet, because his hypostasis is that of the second person of the Trinity with a divinized will, he is without sin. For Christ, fallenness and sinfulness are not the same. For us, by contrast, fallen nature at least potentially implies a disordered will, hence our personhood becomes congenitally sinful.

Such a view presents a radical challenge to our latter-day consumerist culture, which conflates desire with identity, making it hard to imagine doing without what we want.

What, then, is God's answer to our questions about the problem of evil? The same as his answer to any of our truly difficult questions, an invitation: "Come and follow me." And a reminder: "An enemy has done this." Death, evil, and sin have no inherent meaning. None of these will be redeemed, for redemption consists precisely in their defeat.

In the end, the Christian gospel does not concern itself with explaining God's enemies, but with the Easter promise of life after death, thence salvation. The Lord *will* make all things new; and the first fruits may already be tasted. "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you." "Amen. Come Lord Jesus."

Daniel Muth, principal nuclear engineer for Constellation Energy, is secretary of the Living Church Foundation's board of directors.

If God, Why Evil?
A New Way to Think About the Question
By **Norman L. Geisler**. Bethany House.
Pp. 176. $14.99

Creation Untamed
The Bible, God, and Natural Disasters
By **Terence E. Fretheim**. Baker Academic.
Pp. 160. $19.99

What Shall We Say?
Evil, Suffering and the Crisis of Faith
By **Thomas G. Long**. Eerdmans.
Pp. 158. $25

Getting Real About God, Suffering, Sin and Evil
A Pastor Rethinks the Age-Old Problem
By **Jill L. McNish**. University Press of America.
Pp. 170. $27.95

In Adam's Fall
A Meditation on the Christian Doctrine of Original Sin
By **Ian A. McFarland**. Wiley Blackwell.
Pp. 238. $124.95

BOOKS

Everyday Idolatry

Review by Jonathan Kanary

The Mosaic law denounces worship of other gods. The prophets castigate idolatry, and psalmists worship the true God by exposing the empty promises of false ones. Yet violation of the Decalogue's command has never lost its popularity — not least among God's people. We may not think of ourselves as idolaters. But lack of awareness is no adequate assurance that other deities haven't set up shop in our lives.

Elizabeth Scalia (known to the internet as "The Anchoress") started looking for these everyday idols surrounding her, and she found plenty. In *Strange Gods,* she offers a sort of prolonged meditation from one idol addict (the author) to another (the reader). The goal is to provide real-life assistance in identifying, understanding, and resisting the innumerable "strange gods" all of us sacrifice to within the high places of our own hearts.

One of Scalia's key premises is that "ideas lead to idols," a concept she attributes to St. Gregory of Nyssa. Another is that idols are mostly, at some

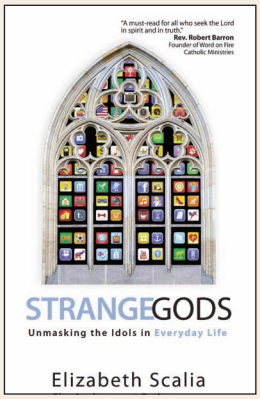
level, about self-worship. "We humans create gods so reflective and shiny that they keep us looking at ourselves," or what we want to believe about ourselves and our reality. Although she elaborates on several particular idols, and mentions many more, almost all trace back to this same source. "I" is the first idol.

As someone who has made her name as a blogger, Scalia is particularly effective addressing the idolatry of technology, especially the internet. With wit and verve, she exposes and deflates the illusions we embrace through the web. Yes, technology has its uses; she notes the tremendous opportunity it has offered for the Church. But as St. Augustine said, we humans have profoundly restless hearts, and "the Internet exploits that restlessness like nothing else yet invented." It easily aids self-obsession. And so many of its sweet serpentine whisperings about the person I can be (electronically) are lies. Perhaps Scalia sees this all the more clearly because, as she admits, she is powerfully drawn and often (self-)deceived by this "strange god."

Another particular target is ideology. Just as ideas become idols, she says, "ideologies lead to super idols." Not that commitments are bad! But where "engagement" gives grace, "enthrallment" makes blind. My own understanding, perspective, beliefs, and commitments take on divine authority, and my hatred or derision toward the obstinately unenlightened gains the comfortable assurance of divine approval. She quotes Anne Lamott: "You can safely assume you've created God in your own image when it turns out that God hates all the same people you do."

It is no answer, Scalia says, to fall back on a smirking cynicism, further entrenching self-idolatry and buttressing it with deep spite for all those nasty ideologues. Nor is there a solution in relativism, which drains significant words like *love* of any real content, or in militant secularism, which redefines them. We are commanded not to allow any strange idol to stand *between* us and God; we also must not try to go *beyond* him. There is no escape from idolatry if we accept the terms of the super idols, whatever battle standard we want to raise. All sides in such battles far too easily make themselves devotees of "the cult of the social virtues," and purchase belonging and a false sense of "love" at the expense of the love that is true.

What, then, is the answer? Although Scalia acknowledges many ways that our acts of worship can themselves become idols, she suggests that the liturgy, prayed faithfully, can take our attention away from our idolatrous self-love and back toward God. She quotes Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger: "The blessing of the liturgy is that it wipes out self." In her final chapter she describes the experience of a weekday Mass: her own wandering and wicked thoughts, but also the faithfulness and goodness of God that shines through, the love that keeps calling to her. The answer to idolatry is a God who speaks, who sheds his blood to win us, and who insists on our whole love — not because he needs it, but because we do.



Strange Gods
Unmasking the Idols in Everyday Life
By **Elizabeth Scalia**.
Ave Maria.
Pp. 192. $14.95

Strange Gods is Scalia's first book, and in some ways it shows. There is some slight disorganization, an occasional tendency to wander and lose the thread of thought. Perhaps this naturally results from the media shift from blog to book. But on the whole it is enjoyable and worthwhile: not so much an idol identification toolkit, or a resistance manual, as one woman's reflections on how she sees idolatry at work in her own life and the lives of those around her.

Scalia admits that writing this book temporarily became an all-consuming idol for her; so easily do we place anything and everything between ourselves and God. It is a striking confession. And that is what this book chiefly offers the reader: an opportunity to be struck, as we journey alongside the author, by our own all-too-frequent slide into idolatry; to see our own idols in the stories she tells, and to be called back from these "strange gods" to the only true God of love and deliverance, the God of the Exodus and the Cross.

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Breaking Not So Bad

Review by George Sumner

Hamartiology: a new medical speciality? No, actually the doctrine of sin — hardly a household word, in the culture or in the Church. And yet we are more interested in the topic than we suppose. Think of our culture's fascination with addiction, with eradicating unjust structures, with leaders flawed and fallen. Or think how the great new fact of our time, the internet, links us all, and is at the same time clogged with degrading pornography. We are working on an anonymous hamartiology without knowing it! Surely the hoopla around the recently completed TV series *Breaking Bad* is Exhibit A (still available through various digital outlets; see goo.gl/Vw5otZ).

Articles on the show used to start with a spoiler alert. I will assume this is no longer necessary, now that the show has completed its narrative arc. At its most basic level, the show was about a talented high school chemistry teacher named Walter White, who, when he is diagnosed with terminal cancer and in desperate need of money for his family, decides to cook up a batch of meth, an act which commences a yearlong descent into hell. The lesson of this Walter Mitty turned stone-cold killer is this: take an ordinary person, with garden-variety pride and resentment, place him in a sufficiently stressful and tempting situation, and he could do something terrible. We could do something terrible, in just the wrong time and place. That is in fact what the doctrine of sin is saying about each of us.

So far this is a fairly standard account of the show, but I want to reflect on how the show ended, for it contains some confirmations and some surprises. In the Bible the archetypal sins are idolatry (making a thing into a god for us) and pride (thereby making a god of ourselves). Walter thinks he can break a little bad, fix his situation, and then extricate himself, but of course he is gradually conformed to what he pursues. In the final episode Walter admits that he actually loved the life of a criminal and was good at it. He took great pride in his work. Sin, in good Augustinian fashion, is distorted

love and corrupted worship.

Outside of the Bible, surely the most eloquent account of human dignity and misery, of power and flaw, is Greek tragedy. When Walter is finally apprehended, and his stalwart cop brother-in-law Hank vindicated, at the very moment when you see in the distance the dust of the approaching furies, in the form of a neo-Nazi gang, the show achieves a Sophoclean moment.

Then the final two episodes remain. Many expected the fireworks of Walter finally getting what was so egregiously coming to him. This assumption was fortified by the show's creator, Vince Gilligan, saying in interviews that he needed to live in a world in which evil had consequences, in which there was a hell for those who inflicted torture on others. In fact what we get is different. Alone in hiding, Walter realizes his money is useless without the others he loves. He realizes his rationalizations were a sham. He takes the blame on the phone to release his estranged wife from hard consequences. He kills the bad guys, shields his flawed partner, and provides deftly for his son. He himself is granted to die surrounded by his idolatrous love, his meth lab equipment. If this is tragedy, then it is *Oedipus at Colonus*, in which the scarred old sinner finds a measure of peace. I fear that some interpret this ending as Gilligan pulling his punch, as a turning away from his cry for justice.

But we as Christians know better. The consequences the author seeks are real, but their distribution cannot be read off of the present world as we see it. A cursory survey of the Psalms, followed by Job without its ending, will provide confirmation. What we see is not the last word. Furthermore, the bearing of the consequences of evil has to take into account that glorious displacement on another victim, the dying Jesus. He does not appear on this tableau. But Gilligan's desire is an eloquent expression of the human heart wrestling with sin and evil. The artful raising of hamartiological issues, and the unsettlingly gentle end of Walter, bespeak an interest in such questions in our culture. For this, and for the show, we are grateful.

The Rev. George Sumner is principal and Helliwell Professor of World Mission at Wycliffe College, University of Toronto.

Ursula Coyote/AMC photos

Health Insurance in America, part 2:

Moral, Theological, and Practical Concerns

By Daniel A. Westberg

Many Americans regard health-care reform as an issue promoted by liberals and progressives, when it should be seen as an issue of the common good transcending politics, much as good universities, an effective transportation network, and solid national defense are too important to be attached to a particular political philosophy or party. My primary criticism of Obamacare is that even if it achieves its aims (which looks increasingly doubtful), around 7 or 8 percent of the population (up to 30 million or so) will still lack medical insurance. We need to press on to truly universal access to health care, in which each citizen has appropriate medical care available and does not have to worry about a heavy financial burden.

My purpose here is to fashion a line of argument for universal access to health care that would meet many conservative objections and be based on widely shared moral principles. We begin with some clear biblical and theological mandates.

Care for the sick. The task of the Church to bring the gospel to all the world has incorporated a secondary mission of physical and mental healing since Jesus commissioned the 70 to preach the kingdom of heaven and to "heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, cast out demons" (Matt. 10:7-8). The worldwide mission of the Church in the last two centuries has, along with preaching and forming congregations, invariably brought medical practitioners, the foundation of hospitals, and clinics and programs to train local personnel.

Care for each member. The uniqueness and importance of every person, each individual member of a family, or group, or society as a whole, is a key Christian contribution to civilization (see Oliver O'Donovan's profound treatment of "Who is a Person?" in *Begotten or Made?*). In Luke 15, the parables of Jesus progress from the lost sheep (one of a hundred), to the lost coin (one of ten), and then to the lost son (one of two). Restoring the lost individual is vital, even for one person out of a large crowd: each one matters. The health of the larger body depends on the well-being of each member, a key principle articulated many times by St. Paul, as in 1 Corinthians 12:25-26, which urges "that there be no dissension in the body, but the members may have the same care for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it."

Care for the helpless. The parable of the Good Samaritan makes it clear that those in need, even if from a different social group, have a claim on our neighborly care. This is especially true for those who have no one else to care for them, such as the disabled, those without families, and victims of serious accidents and disasters. Christians, more so than adherents of other faiths, have put an emphasis on extending concern and care for the weakest members of society, the poor, and vulnerable.

Jean Vanier, founder of the ministry known as L'Arche, is a good example of the Christian focus on the weak, the forgotten, and excluded. As Vanier wrote in *Befriending the Stranger*: "The vision of God is to go down the social ladder to take the lowest place in order to be with the weak and the broken. Then God rises up with them to build a new humanity which does not forget or exclude anyone." Many have pointed out that a good measure of the moral quality of any society is the care it devotes to its weakest and most vulnerable members.

The promotion of life. The encyclical *Evangelium vitae* of John Paul II addressed abortion in the context of a comprehensive "gospel of life," incorporating people at the end of life, reluctance to resort to capital punishment, and other areas where a Christian view of life needs to transform culture's compromise with evil and death.

Karl Barth, writing on the doctrine of creation in the third volume of his *Church Dogmatics*, provides an even more extensive reflection on what "respect for life" should mean for Christians, including responsibility for the standard of living conditions generally. The principle *mens sana in corpore sano* (a healthy mind in a healthy body) should be understood in the wider sense of a healthy society overall. This means that we must see to it that the benefits of medicine and health are "made available for all, or at least as many as possible." Barth applies Paul's teaching to public health: "When one person is ill, the whole of society is really ill in all its members. In the battle against sickness the final human word cannot be isolation but only fellowship."

I have sketched a line of biblical and theological reasoning about care for victims of illness and suffering that points clearly to the need for Christians to support the provision of a safety net such that every member of our society should have the guarantee of medical care for accident or illness without the additional burden of financial stress. But let us note the ambiguity of Barth's qualifying "or at least as many as possible," with respect to the hope for universal coverage. How many are possible in an American context?

We don't really require sociologists or political philosophers to tell us that societies must organize to satisfy certain needs to support human life: food, clothing, water and sanitation, shelter, and energy for heating and cooking form a basic foundation. It is possible to survive in cramped quarters and on a meager diet, as resilient survivors of disasters and wars show (like our own ancestors a century or two ago). But there is no denying the correlation between the worldwide rise in life expectancy in the last century with wider availability of cheaper food and clothing, water for drinking, irrigation and sanitation, and health care and education. These things are necessary for human beings to flourish.

Many liberals (including some evangelicals and Catholics) argue that access to health care should be seen as a human right, along with the rights to food, clothing, unemployment or disability insurance, and so on, which are spelled out in the U.N.'s Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Although I strongly support universal health care, I share with many conservatives a skepticism about the language

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Moral, Theological, and Practical Concerns

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of rights as the best framework for promoting it, for several reasons. First, rights should be based in an ability and responsibility to meet those rights. There is something illogical about asserting abstract rights in a very primitive or disorganized society. Second, rights are not the same as desires. Some couples mistakenly assert their "right to a biological child," which can then become a claim on society for IVF or artificial reproduction treatments. Third, unqualified rights discourse tends toward the promotion of a culture of entitlement, so that society is thought of as simply obliged to provide people with jobs, schooling, and comfortable living standards.

My argument is more pragmatic. Government involvement will vary according to the type of need, local resources, the extent of free market function, and so on. Clothing, for example, does not need to be replaced often, prices are low, and perfectly adequate used clothing is readily available through charitable organizations. Here no government involvement is needed. Food, however, is needed daily, and the poor, especially those with families, often need help with groceries if unexpected expenses arise; purchasing food cannot be postponed the way some other bills can. Many churches and organizations offer soup kitchens and food banks, but these function as supplements, occasional sources to tide a family over for a few days. Thus volunteer efforts are insufficient, and many people in the United States require government assistance for their food budget. No doubt there is some abuse of these programs, but even if some clever mechanism could eliminate all such cases, people without incomes sufficient to pay for consistent, balanced meals would remain (as would the need for better jobs and better distribution of income).

All developed countries have a system of universal education (at least through age 15), and all such countries, apart from the United States, provide universal access to health care. The analogy between education and health care is helpful for us to consider, both in the similarities and differences. Since World War I, education has been compulsory in America, with major government involvement, at least on the level of local communities. Health care is expensive, but so is education: the average cost per pupil in the United States is around $11,000 per year, and is most often funded by property tax, so that a family with four children could easily be costing taxpayers more than half a million dollars for their K-12 education.

In the early days some Americans made arguments against compulsory universal education similar to the arguments we hear today about health-care reform: there is too much government interference; not all students need to go to school, so should not be compelled; and society should not interfere with private arrangements already in place and working well. But apart from some Amish communities that felt an 18th-century rudimentary education was adequate for them, there has been little complaint about universal compulsory education, mainly because it is self-evident that both the individual and society benefit a great deal from this training. Employers need trained workers, a democratic society needs an informed citizenry, people need skills and training to earn money, and, not least, everybody benefits from facility in language, opening windows to the worlds of math, science, history, and the arts.

> Health is a self-evident good, with clear benefits for both the individual and the whole of society.

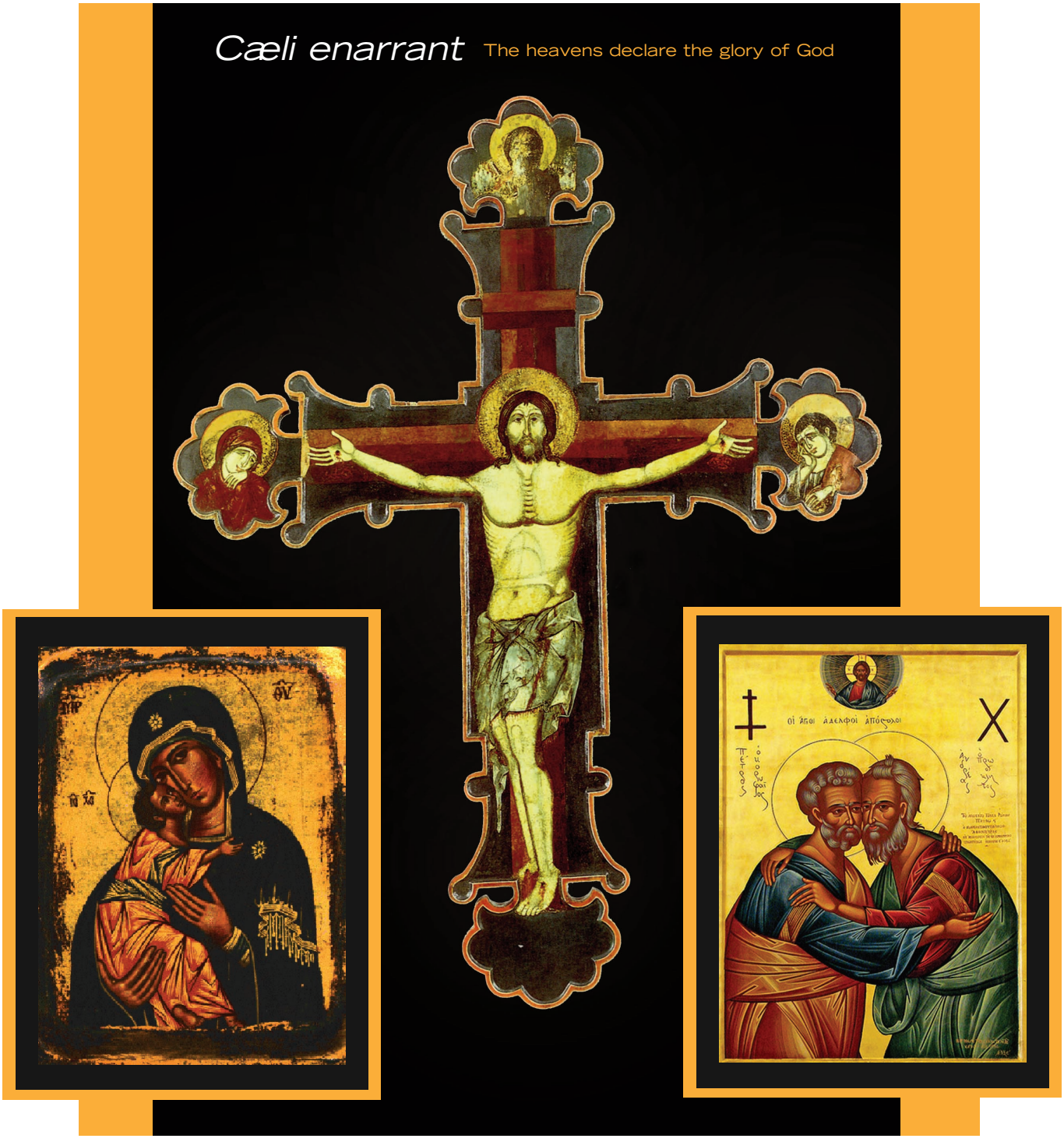
Similarly, health is a self-evident good, with clear benefits for both the individual and the whole of society. Indeed, the link between the individual and society is even more direct, in some ways, in the case of health than in the case of education. If people become sick, they may infect the wider society, especially where communicable diseases are a threat. Employees who cannot show up for work because of illness, especially a chronic untreated condition, represent lost productivity. This places the need for access to health care — for preventive medicine and not just for emergency care — close to the foundational level with water, sanitation, nourishment, and the basic sustenance of daily life. Universal health care brings many advantages, including assurance of coverage when moving or changing jobs and when unemployed; coverage for all family members, whatever age or health condition; and prenatal care for expectant mothers.

To be sure, the needs and benefits of education are

equally apportioned in that everybody goes to school and at least has the opportunity for schooling. By contrast, in the case of health care, some have conditions extremely expensive to treat, while others are healthy and fortunate enough not to need much medical care. But accidents and fatal conditions can strike any of us at any time. And the Christian call to provide for each member of society in need, especially the most vulnerable and helpless, is inescapable.

Some readers may agree with my line of argument to this point, but draw a line at any further government interference or control. But universal access to health care in America could, like education, remain decentralized and implemented on a local level. And insurance and funding, hospitals and their infrastructure, and doctors and other medical personnel might be public or private. To this extent, I have not made an argument in defense of the particulars of the Affordable Care Act as currently designed, and much of what I have said tilts in the direction of an argument for substantive revisions of the ACA. The United States needs, however — not least in light of our strong Christian tradition — to commit itself to providing universal access to health care. We should not settle for lesser compromises. This will require more careful investigation, thoughtful discussion, and especially sustained moral education, than we have managed to date.

The Rev. Daniel A. Westberg is professor of ethics and moral theology at Nashotah House Theological Seminary and is preparing a book on the moral and practical arguments in favor of universal health care.



Trinitarian palimpsest

I've grown attached to reading one of the final sentences of Scripture from the end of Morning Prayer, St. Paul's "Grace" of 2 Corinthians 13:14, through the lens of three images on the wall of my apartment, apportioning its triune blessing among them. And then, as a further "prayer for the principal gifts of the Three Persons" (Marion Hatchett, *Commentary on the American Prayer Book*, p. 132), I mark each iconographic station with a post-Office Hail Mary, in a palimpsest of sorts on Paul. Herewith a brief reflection on the exercise, with iconic aids.

Meditate on the Church as the Bride of Christ, defined by self-giving through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ

Paul's initial phrase features the second divine person, Jesus Christ, and so I start there, but I reflect on his sonship, pointing back to the Father. The works of the Trinity are indivisible (*opera trinitatis indivisa sunt*), meaning that each person is involved in every action of the other. How better to depict the loving character of the Father than in the giving of his Son?

Hail Mary, full of grace, we say: a grace given to her by the boy in her arms, who is grace incarnated; and a grace given by the Father, who offers his Son for the redeeming of the world, starting with his mother. Christ as given, and obedient, is born of a woman; Mary, gracious and obedient, is made fit to serve as *Mother of God*. St. James conveniently connects the dots: "Every generous act of giving, with every perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the Father of lights. … In fulfillment of his own purpose he gave us birth by the word of truth, so that we would become a kind of first fruits of his creatures" (1:17-18).

Meditate on this original picture of the fruitful humility of God's love, as the most extraordinary fact of history. See the archetype of restored humanity in the embrace of Redeemed and Redeemer, Mother cradling Child. See the sanctification of motherhood and fatherhood as they are conformed to the incarnate Word of truth. See the likening of all children to the divine Child who bids them come to him.

May we be fruitful and multiply! May many sons and daughters accept the gift of divine filiation by serving, in turn, as fathers and mothers, yielding a great harvest of faithfulness. May all families answer the call to holiness in God's grace, issuing in childlike discipleship.

Holy Mary, pray for us.

Love of God

If God's love, in St. Paul's phrase from 2 Corinthians, is already introduced in the icon of the incarnate Son of the Father and his Blessed Mother, it is developed in the solitary figure of the passion. Lest a theology of glory creep in, shorn of repentance and conversion — Incarnation merely, as it were, with which simply to bless but not curse the world, the flesh, and the devil — the cross stands as a deepening engagement of God's love in the mode of justice. After creation comes recreation; after Fall, forgiveness and reconciliation; after *the hour of our death*, and the hours of our death, one after another, spanning a day and "every day!" (1 Cor. 15:31): after these sacrifices, offered with willing spirit and good humor, marked as the momentary afflictions they are, comes new life, disclosed by the Day of fire (see 1 Cor. 3:13). This is another word of truth, uttered in gracious judgment "so that we may not be condemned along with the world" (1 Cor. 11:32; cf. 1:18).

Gaze with Mary at her Son on the cross: *The Lord is with you*. Surrender with them, in joyful freedom, as Paul describes: "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me" (Gal. 2:19-20). Simeon's prophetic word to Mary — "a sword will pierce your own soul too" (Luke 2:35) — is fulfilled as a call to reordered love of self and others, following God's initiative. In place of debilitating pride, self-justification, deceit, manipulation, ambition, greed, hatred, envy, and jealousy, install simple vulnerability: "Love one another" (John 13:34). Forgive the murderer, within and without.

Fellowship of the Holy Spirit

In this way the community of the gospel is placed on display, for "by this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:35). A new temple of the Spirit is called out and gathered, on the way to glory.

See Sts. Peter and Andrew embrace, enacting the longed-for unity of West and East, through which the Church will breathe again with both her lungs. In humility each counts the needs of the other as more important than his own, sharing "the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord" (Phil. 2:2; cf. 2:3). The world is astonished: "Are you going to wash my feet?" (John 13:6). Pray for the courage of leaders to use their God-given authority "for building up and not for tearing down" (2 Cor. 13:10).

Meditate on the Church as the Bride of Christ, defined by self-giving through the power of the Holy Spirit. Pray for the full visible unity of all Christians in a single eucharistic communion, sharing a common faith and order. Pray for a civilization of love, commemorated in the benediction of mutual submission of our Lady and Lord: *blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb Jesus.*

Blessed indeed, and a blessing — sweet and delightful to the taste! Savor it. And pray *that we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.*

Christopher Wells

Reflections on GAFCON 2013

(Continued from page 8)

and the chairman of the drafters, Bishop John Guernsey, called the Jerusalem Declaration "a once in a generation document."

What was now needed, he explained, was for GAFCON to put its shoulder to the wheel. The draft was read to the conference on the last afternoon; provincial groups then had one rushed hour to suggest revisions, before the text was tweaked overnight, and the final version was presented the next morning, some delegates already having left for the airport. But the auditorium was full, and when the communiqué and commitments were read they received a standing ovation and extended enthusiastic applause. It was a moving moment. Before the Rt. Rev. Peter Jensen could speak in his role as GAFCON secretary, Africans broke out spontaneously into Tukutendereza Yesu ("We praise you Jesus"), the anthem of the East African revival. The communiqué and commitments were formally endorsed with the acclamation "Amen! Hallelujah!" Some of the North American delegates at the back were heard to call out, "No!" — but their voices were drowned out by the evangelical majority.

The Nairobi communiqué sketches out GAFCON's evolving structures in the next phase of its development. To date it has operated on a shoestring and relied on personal friendships and energetic individuals. Wabukala likened being chairman of GAFCON to leading "an amorphous something." Now there will be an executive committee, a board of trustees, and regional liaison officers to coordinate the work of provincial groups, plus a call for financial support (perhaps to the detriment of the Anglican Consultative Council). GAFCON also affirmed the intention of the Anglican Mission in England to appoint a general secretary, initially to support isolated congregations who feel pushed out by the Church of England and excluded from the Anglican family, but also in a proactive attempt to be ready if the worst should happen even in England.

But GAFCON structures are not the key issue. There are three other major questions facing the movement that need to be answered in the next few years. First, in what sense can it claim to be a truly "global" movement within Anglicanism? The Fellowship of Confessing Anglicans (FCA) has now been rebranded the Global Fellowship of Confessing Anglicans (GFCA).

Wabukala announced in his presidential address that "the world has come to Kenya." But had it? There was an obvious lack of Asian faces in Nairobi. For example, only one Pakistani delegate was present, a church planter trained at Moore College in Sydney. Visa restrictions notwithstanding, this representation is not good enough. What about the booming Anglican churches in China and Singapore, or Arab Anglicans from North Africa and the Middle East? A clash of style and personality between the African primates and the Most Rev. Mouneer Anis (Bishop of Egypt) and the Rt. Rev. John Chew (former Archbishop of South East Asia) has restricted GAFCON's reach. If it is to flourish as a truly global renewal movement within the Anglican Communion, more provinces must catch the vision and come on board.

Second, in what sense do the GAFCON bishops represent their congregations? What voice will GAFCON give to the millions of lay people under its umbrella? The East African revival was predominantly a lay movement, and stress was laid on this in the conference presentations, calling the laity to take a lead in evangelism and discipleship. But the very next morning a behemothian procession entered the cathedral, ranks of bishops and archbishops in their flowing convocation robes. They sat separately from the clergy and laity, were the first to receive communion, and then gathered for their own photograph on the lawn (in imitation of the classic Lambeth Conference photographs).

Throughout the week, purple shirts and right reverends were everywhere to be seen. The irony could not be missed. Of the 1,358 delegates, 331

were bishops (including 30 archbishops), 482 clergy and 545 laity — but the number of bishops was a key GAFCON headline. While emphasising lay leadership, and trying to break free from old hierarchical models, GAFCON remains bishop heavy. It is a political game, in recognition that these numbers count at Lambeth and in the councils of the church. When in England or Australia many evangelicals have scant regard for bishops, as if Anglicanism could manage perfectly well without them; but their attitude mysteriously changes when they reach East Africa, where they enthusiastically embrace the episcopate as of key significance for the mission and purity of the church. How will lay voices be heard?

Third, the participants in Nairobi committed "to meet again at the next GAFCON." Perhaps GAFCON will be summoned in 2018 to Sydney or Recife? There is unlikely to be a Lambeth Conference that year to distract from it. But from where will future GAFCON leadership arise? The grandfathers of the movement were in attendance at Nairobi — former primates Peter Akinola of Nigeria, Emmanuel Kolini of Rwanda, and Benjamin Nzimbi of Kenya — who have passed on the baton to the current generation. But the baton soon needs to be passed on again. Peter Jensen is now a retired septuagenarian and promised he would not be organizing the next GAFCON. The primates' other Western advisers are likewise elderly statesmen who cannot continue forever. It is probably to the younger African leaders that GAFCON will need to look next as the movement's momentum continues to shift away from Britain and North America. GAFCON needs a truly global reach, full lay participation, and an emerging younger leadership. On these three questions the future viability and vitality of the movement depends.

The Rev. Andrew Atherstone was part of the UK delegation to GAFCON, representing the Latimer Trust, an Anglican evangelical research institute. This report is adapted from a longer essay published at fulcrum-anglican.org.uk.

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SUNDAY'S READINGS | Last Sunday after Pentecost, Nov. 24

First reading and psalm: Jer. 23:1-6 • Cant. 4 or 16
Alternate: Ps. 46 • Col. 1:11-20 • Luke 23:33-43

Christ the King

The prophet speaks the word of the Lord: "I myself will gather the remnant of my flock out of the lands where I have driven them, and I will bring them back to their fold, and they will be fruitful and multiply. … I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land" (Jer. 23:3,5). Christ the King has come, and in the dangerous shepherding of his people he espies on every side the power that holds them captive. To rule he must set them free. To reign he must confront the devil and all his infecting legions.

Jesus sees unclean spirits as the agency of disease, destructive compulsion, and madness. We see the matter differently, turning to the science of our doctors and therapists. But even the doctor and therapist will admit that business is good because human beings are remarkably adept in the cause of self-destruction. "The good which I would do, I do not do. And the evil which I would not do, I do." In this regard, nothing has changed. Hostile powers are at work in us no matter how we explain them, and we are far less in control than we would like to believe. Indeed, "we have no power in ourselves to help ourselves" (BCP, p. 218). Our situation is that desperate.

"Oh God, make speed to save us!" would be the empty utterance of a lost soul but for the miraculous truth that there is a God ready to hear, ready to save. God comes in the person of Jesus Christ to defeat sin, the flesh, and the devil, a trinity but one horrific substance. The target is *evil itself*, but the cause of the invasion is love. In all his life and ministry, and preeminently in his suffering and death on the cross, Jesus Christ is breaking the grip of the enemy. Even as he is ridiculed and tortured he prays, "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing" (Luke 23:34).

In a sense, of course, they know exactly what they are doing, carrying out the orders of legitimate authority, but they cannot know that they are acting against the Lord of all life, nor can they know that in mounting the cross Jesus inaugurates a decisive victory. Languishing, he is a torrent of love. In Jesus, humanity is delivered from the gloom of sin, the bonds of death and hell are broken, and wickedness is put to flight. In his resurrection, innocence is restored, and joy, peace, and concord are brought forth (Exsultet).

Jesus Christ "has rescued us from the power of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of his beloved Son" (Col. 1:13). The good news is that we have been *transferred from one kingdom to another*, a kingdom altogether different in which God is the king and shepherd of his people. In the kingdom of the Son, God is pleased to "reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross" (Col. 1:20).

The Christian is not merely associated with Jesus by allegiance; the Christian is mystically and truly wedded to the life of the one who has reconciled all things in himself. Thus, the Christian has all things: all things ordered in Christ to their proper and glorious end. Believing this, we endure all things with patience, "giving thanks to the Father, who has enabled us to share in the inheritance of the saints in the light" (Col. 1:11-12).

Look It Up

Read Canticle 16 (BCP, p. 92). Freedom requires a mighty Savior.

Think About It

The problem with self-help: it does not work.

Isa. 2:1-5 • Ps. 122 • Rom. 13:11-14 • Matt. 24:36-44

The Ascent

"About that day and hour no one knows … but only the Father" (Matt. 24:36). It is a day like other days spent in the normal business of eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage. And if in the course of many days the flesh is given to every itching desire, the days will seem heavy, plodding, erratic, and oppressive, without purpose. Another day. Another day. A death march, really; a slow burnout toward vast emptiness. Something like this must be in the mind of that young person about whom I often read, who, tortured by the mind's suffering, strikes a fatal blow to his or her own life.

Contemplating the brevity of life has its place, but loving death is the deadly sickness of those asleep to life's wonder. Boredom is a lifeless rest without refreshment. Wake up! Keep awake! "You know what time it is, how it is *now* the moment for you to wake from sleep" (Rom. 13:11). Christ wakes you, pounding with explosive power against the crossed bars of Hades. Christ raises you, forgives you, and clothes you with light and grace. Christ has come and is coming and will come, and since you do not know the day of his appearing, expect it always. The day is near. Get up, look up, and behold the wonder of the Lord and the Lord's Day. This is not just another day. It is new and fresh and sparkling, it is the evolving earth and the sweeping sky, beauties unimaginable at every turn. Tear off the garments of night, and wear the light armor of day, living honorably among the sons and daughters of God. As we walk with opened eyes and unstopped ears and with legs like the gazelle, the world opens and speaks. One day tells its tale to another. One night imparts knowledge to another.

Since the Lord is coming, let us go where the Lord will arrive. And yet we know that the Lord has arrived, his appearing announcing that he will ever appear: obscurely and truly in the Spirit, dramatically and conclusively at the close of the age. The Lord is coming, so let us go where he will arrive. The Lord Jesus is the Son of the Living God, the King of Glory, the Sun of Righteousness, the Author of Life. He is no less a great mountain, the highest of the mountains. He speaks: "Come to me. Ascend. Climb. Shape your swords into walking sticks and make pickaxes from your bloody spears. Stream with all the nations up the highest mountain. Go with God to God. Rest now and then, but not for long. Press on. Go to the Lord of life." Hear the Word. "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord" (Isa. 2:3)! "Come to me all who labor and are heavy laden" (Matt. 11:28). "Come, labor on. Who dares stand idle" (Hymnal, 541).

Step by step, under the burden of daily obligations delivered by the hand of providence, we yet go up and up to the mountain of God. And each step is itself a summit. We are there and we are going there. Christ is in us fully, and yet there is more that he will teach, and new paths he will show. We press on with effort fueled by the high-efficiency food of grace. We are going light, ultralight. A rhythm runs through the body and makes the ascent an exuberant joy.

Stand now at the summit, your feet on the bedrock of Christ. The world is yours.

Look It Up

Read Ps. 122. Peace and quietness.

Think About It

"We need nothing but open eyes to be ravished like the Cherubims" (Thomas Traherne, "First Century," 37 in *Centuries of Meditations*).

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PEOPLE & PLACES

Deaths

The Rev. **James Anderson Carpenter**, a subdean and professor of systematic theology at General Theological Seminary for 30 years, died Oct. 17 at Brandon Wilde Assisted Living Center in Augusta, GA. He was 85.

Born in Kings Mountain, NC, he was a graduate of Wofford College and Duke University, completed a PhD at Cambridge University. He was ordained deacon in 1952 and priest in 1963. He helped establish St. Timothy's Church in Alexandria, LA, before moving to General Seminary in 1963.

He was director and professor emeritus of General's Center for Jewish-Christian Studies and Relations (1986-94) and served on the Presiding Bishop's Advisory Committee on Jewish-Christian Relations (1988-94).

He was author of *Gore: A Study in Liberal Catholic Thought* and *Nature and Grace: Toward an Integral Perspective*. He edited *Jews and Christians in Dialogue: Suggestions for Dialogue*.

His is survived by sons Mark Dunbar Carpenter of Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, and James Anderson Carpenter, Jr. of Mendharn, NJ; and foster son Andrew C. Brown of London.

The Rev. **George E. Home, Jr.**, an International Harvester dealer for two decades before becoming a priest, died Aug. 12 in Fishers, IN. He was 99.

Born in San Diego, he was a graduate of Wabash College and University of the South's School of Theology. He was ordained deacon in 1960 and priest in 1965. He served as rector of four parishes in the Diocese of Atlanta: St. Peter's, Rome (1960-65); Good Shepherd, Covington (1965-69); St. Dunstan's, Atlanta (1969-79); and Transfiguration, Rome (1979-85).

Fr. Home is survived by his wife, Jane; a daughter, Virginia Home Cubellis, of Indianapolis; two sons, George E. Home III of Carmichael, CA, and David Home Calabasas, CA; and six grandchildren.

The Rev. **Denise Pariseau Mantell**, a pastoral volunteer at Ground Zero after the terrorist strikes of 9/11, died July 23. She was 67.

Born in New York City, she was a graduate of the City University of New York and General Theological Seminary. She was ordained deacon and priest in 1985. She was associate rector, St. Paul's, Morris Plains, NJ (1985-88); rector, Our Merciful Savior, Penns Grove, NJ (1988-99); and rector, Trinity Church, Matawan, NJ (1999-2008).

At Ground Zero in 2001, she provided pastoral care and support at St. Paul's Chapel on West Broadway and served with a mobile morgue. She later developed lung cancer.

She is survived by her former husband, Bob Mantell; a daughter, Kim Carlson; and grandchildren Alex and Matthew Carlson.

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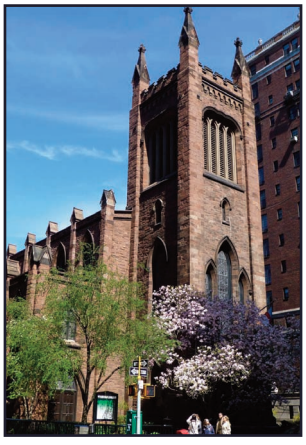

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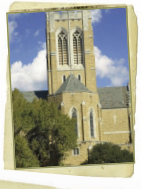

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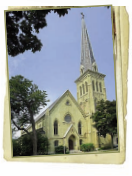

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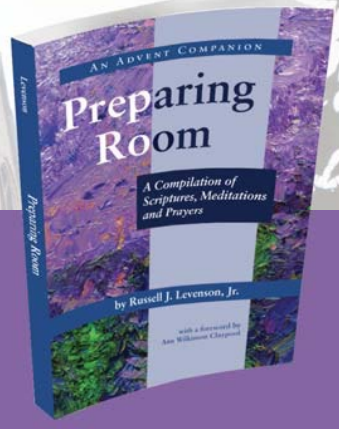

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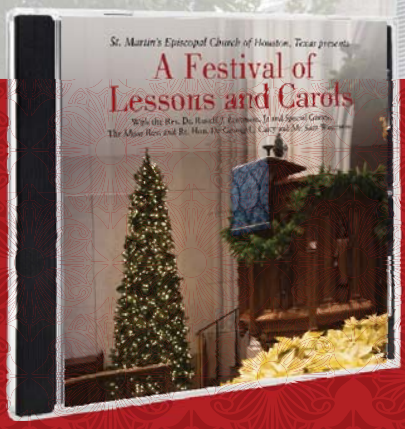

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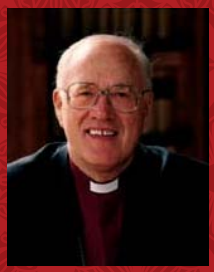

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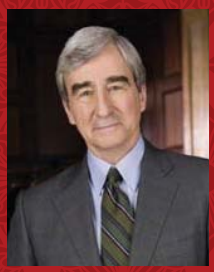

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