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20 Minutes with Wesley Hill

July 6, 2014

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ON THE COVER

“Through my photography I aim to show the lovely and the derelict, the dignity and the irony, the pain and the happiness of everyday life.” —Richard Hill (see “Street,” p. 20).

Acolyte (Richard Hill photo)

THIS ISSUE | July 6, 2014

NEWS

4 Ecumenical Parish Feels Clergy Crunch

FEATURES

10 God Moved the Mountain | By Grace Sears

14 TWENTY MINUTES WITH WESLEY HILL
Friendship in God’s Kingdom | By Katelyn Beaty

BOOKS

17 *Where the Conflict Really Lies • Mind and Cosmos*
Review by Daniel Muth

19 *The Complete Poems of Philip Larkin*
Review by Peter Eaton

CULTURES

20 Street: First in a Series | By Richard Hill

23 Knowledge • The Past | Verse by Ephraim Radner

OTHER DEPARTMENTS

24 Letters

25 People & Places

26 Sunday’s Readings



10



14



LIVING CHURCH Partners

We are grateful to the Episcopal Diocese of Albany [p. 27], St. John’s Church, Detroit [p. 28], and St. Matthew’s Church, Richmond [p. 28], whose generous support helped make this issue possible.

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.

Ecumenical Parish Feels Clergy Crunch

Church of the Holy Apostles, Virginia Beach, a home to Episcopalians and Roman Catholics for more than 36 years, needs an additional priest.

Health problems are preventing Raymond Barton, a retired priest of the Diocese of Richmond, from doing more than occasional supply work.

That situation prompted a May 7 letter from the diocese's bishop, Francis X. DiLorenzo.

"I must address the unfortunate reality that, despite our search efforts, we have not identified a suitable Catholic priest whose health or canonical standing will permit me to assign him to the Church of the Holy Apostles at this time," he wrote.

DiLorenzo recommended that parishioners under his care receive sacraments and pastoral care at Church of the Holy Spirit, Virginia Beach, "as long as no Catholic priest is available at Holy Apostles."

Members of Holy Apostles are

worried about the situation, according to Michael Cherwa, president of the parish vestry council.

"So far they haven't lost hope, although a couple of them are beginning to get worried," said Cherwa, a Roman Catholic who's married to an Episcopalian. "I told them, 'Don't lose hope now. We're here to stay, and we'll have a priest. It may not be this month, but we will have a priest. I just know God will send us one.'"

For many parishioners like the Cherwas, the ecumenical ministry of Holy Apostles is uniquely nourishing. It's the only place where they, as a couple from different Christian traditions, can worship together. During the liturgy, they're together almost the whole time, except when they approach different altars to receive the blessed sacrament.

Because the ministry is unique, mixed couples routinely travel anywhere from five to 20 miles to attend



Holy Apostles photo

Two altars at Holy Apostles, Virginia Beach.

Holy Apostles, passing other congregations that they could attend closer to home, said the Rev. Michael Ferguson, Episcopal co-pastor at Holy Apostles. Sustaining the ministry to both groups is vitally important, he said, not only as an ecumenical witness to Christ but also for pastoral care to mixed couples.

Ferguson said that no Roman Catholics, who comprise 60 percent of the congregation, have left since Bishop DiLorenzo wrote in May.

"They treasure what this church stands for and what the ministry is," he said. "And right now they're hanging in here because of that."

Members of Holy Apostles have been nonetheless distressed to hear that Bishop DiLorenzo has come up short in the search for a new priest, Ferguson said. The congregation needs a priest only for several minutes once a week and would welcome someone who currently serves in a mission or parish elsewhere, he said.

The underlying concern is that a shortage of priests might not be the only reason why no suitable priest has been found. The bigger fear: perhaps the diocese is not searching diligently enough.

Among bishops, "there is very little interest in encouraging a grassroots ecumenical effort unless it is, 'Okay, yeah, you can share a food pantry together, but don't think about wor-

Pope, Archbishop Check In

In their second meeting in 18 months Pope Francis and Archbishop Justin Welby renewed their commitment to the struggle against modern slavery and human trafficking. They both praised the Global Freedom Network (gfn2020.org) as an important force in the struggle.

Pope Francis and Archbishop Welby spoke about areas in conflict and how churches are called by Christ to act as peacemakers. They described their Christian passion for peacemaking in places torn apart by war, and pledged their commitment to act as agents of reconciliation and restorative justice.

They spoke of their appreciation of the work of the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission at its meeting in South Africa. The archbishop announced the launch of a website to support its work (iarccum.org).

Archbishop Welby was accompanied by Cardinal Vincent Nichols of Westminster and the Rev. Nicky Gumbel of Holy Trinity Brompton, the home church of the international Alpha Course. Welby praised Alpha as a demonstration of how Roman Catholics and Anglicans work together.

"Good theology is crucial to good church-building," Archbishop Welby said during a reception at the Anglican Centre in Rome, as quoted by Christopher Lamb of *The Tablet*. He added that the two churches must "get away from being quite comfortable with the fact we live separately, but find a way to work together."

shipping together in any sacramental way,” Ferguson said. “There’s nobody that I can see in the Catholic Church doing it anymore.”

Diana Sims Snider, director of communications for the Diocese of Richmond, disputed any notion that Bishop DiLorenzo is uncommitted to a Roman Catholic ministry at Holy Apostles. The constraining factor, she said, is the shortage of priests. More than half of the 146 parishes and missions in the diocese have no resident priest.

“The diocese is still committed” to its ministry at Holy Apostles, Snider said. She noted that the diocese continues to employ a pastoral administrator at the church: diocesan theologian Dominick D. Hankle, who teaches psychology at Regent University.

But priests are stretched thin, she said, and Bishop DiLorenzo wants to find someone who is called to a congregation that is not exclusively Roman Catholic. In the meantime, he has other pulpits to fill as well.

“I don’t want to say it’s not a priority” to assign a priest to Holy Apostles, Snider said, “but there are other priorities.”

Some are wary in part because the Vatican has in recent years questioned long-held liturgical practices at Holy Apostles. The Diocese of Richmond informed the parish’s co-pastors in December 2012 that, in response to Vatican concerns, they would need to stop saying eucharistic prayers together. They would have to develop a way to perform that part of the liturgy separately.

Cherwa said he does not believe the congregation is losing support from the diocese. He believes the bishop merely has other pressures he must address, and he recognizes that not just any priest can fill the role at Holy Apostles.

“It has to be somebody who is ecumenically minded, and there are a lot of Roman Catholic priests who really haven’t had much exposure to ecumenism,” Cherwa said. “I don’t think he just wants to dump somebody on us who’s going to not really be on our

(Continued on next page)



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The Holy Land

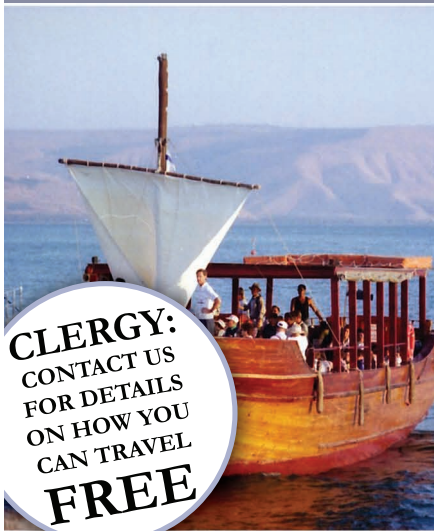
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Clergy Crunch

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team.”

For the time being, Roman Catholics are receiving the Eucharist weekly even though there is no priest on hand to serve them. When visiting priests preside, they consecrate extra hosts, which may then be distributed by lay members.

Congregants are actively trying to spread the word with hope of finding someone, perhaps an uncle who's retiring and might enjoy the Virginia climate, or a local who would not mind adding one more stop to his Sunday regimen.

“If you know of a Catholic priest who's ready to retire,” Ferguson said, “point him in our direction.”

G. Jeffrey MacDonald
TLC Correspondent

Pastoral Care in Death's Path

The first time the Rev. John W. Price encountered someone who described having a near-death experience was in 1970, just five years after his ordination as a priest. The account, given by a respected woman in his congregation, left him confused and upset, and he felt unable to provide pastoral care.

“Nothing prepared me for the person telling me about a near-death experience,” he said. More than 200 interviews later, Price has written *Revealing Heaven: The Christian Case for Near-Death Experiences* (2013).

“There are really only two religions: fear and love,” Price said. “God is loving and forgiving. Jesus is love incarnate.”

Price said he “first began to struggle with the idea of a loving God” while he attended Virginia Theological Seminary in the 1960s. The more he learned about near-death experiences, however, the more he found his faith strengthened. He also began

to realize the comfort and reassurance that sharing some of these experiences can bring to a dying person and bereaved loved ones.

“Often people near death are calmed when I tell them some of these stories,” he said. “I want clergy to know that this is real. God is real. Many clergy have parishioners who have had this experience. They don't want their rector to scoff at their most cherished, precious memories.”

As many as 15 million Americans have described firsthand near-death experiences, George Gallup and William Proctor wrote in *Adventures in Immortality* (McGraw-Hill, 1982). Some churches question the authenticity of these accounts when they imply universalist understandings of salvation.

For his book, Price kept extensive notes of a growing number of interviews for more than 40 years. By the time he began writing, Price said, he had interviewed 205 people who described having a near-death experience. His work significantly accelerated when he left full-time parish ministry after about 30 years to become a chaplain with the St. Luke's Episcopal Hospital in Houston. Since the book was published last year, Price said, he has interviewed another 67 people.

Price enjoys talking with clergy who are skeptical of near-death experiences. He is eager to clear up a misconception that every near-death experience is blissful. Price said he has interviewed 18 people, including Christians and those of other faiths, whose experiences disturbed them. Price thinks many more churchgoers have undergone disturbing near-death experiences than are reported.

“I imagine that fewer people would want to admit that they'd been a terrible person, especially to a member



Price

of the clergy,” he said.

Price said he owes his current position, as pastoral associate at Palmer Memorial Church in Houston, at least in part to his familiarity with near-death experiences. After accepting the call to become chaplain at St. Luke’s, Price said, he and his wife began worshiping at Palmer Memorial on Sunday mornings. Price was on call when one parishioner was rushed to St. Luke’s.

“He died three times in the ambulance on the way to the hospital,” Price said. When Price saw him at St. Luke’s, the man was still partially sedated and had a tube down his throat. When Price asked about several aspects of near-death experiences, the man nodded vigorously.

“Shortly afterward I went on a six-week driving vacation,” Price said. “When I got back, he had been transferred to another area and been given sedatives, which affected his short-term memory. The experience was lost.”

When Price retired from St. Luke’s,

he accepted an offer to join the staff at Palmer Memorial.

Those who have reported near-death experiences often notice lasting effects, Price said. “People are usually much calmer and more empathetic. It’s like 30 years of therapy.”

Recalling Heaven has given Price a higher profile and he has begun to offer seminars and workshops for clergy.

“In a way I am an evangelist for this,” he said. “I have been preaching about it for 15 years now.”

Steve Waring

Keeping Faith with Cities

“Don’t abandon the city,” pleaded the Very Rev. Justin Alan Lindstrom, dean of St. Paul’s Cathedral in Oklahoma City, in a closing sermon at the annual North American Cathedral Deans’ conference.

This year the conference met May 2-

4 at the newly restored Trinity Cathedral in Miami. Lindstrom told of how downtown Oklahoma City had 33 churches when Timothy McVeigh bombed the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in 1995. All but three churches have remained.

“Thank God, St. Paul’s is one of them,” Lindstrom said. “That’s where the cathedral needs to be.”

Cathedral deans traveled from as far away as Alberta, Honolulu, and Jerusalem to attend the conference.

The Very Rev. John Downey, dean of the Cathedral of St. Paul in Erie, Pennsylvania, and co-chairman of the conference, said the annual gathering has occurred since the early 1950s, when the Very Rev. Francis B. Sayre, Jr., invited his colleagues to Washington National Cathedral. Then the Very Rev. James Pike, dean of the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, invited the group to New York.

“The Cathedral idea is relatively young in the Episcopal Church,” for-

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Diocese of Southeast Florida photo
Cathedral deans have supper in the center aisle of Trinity Cathedral, Miami.

Keeping Faith

(Continued from previous page)

mer TLC editor David Kalvelage wrote in *Cathedrals of the Episcopal Church in the USA* (1993).

Ground was broken for the Cathedral of our Merciful Saviour in Faribault, Minnesota, in 1862. St. Paul's in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, was designated a cathedral in 1876. On the East Coast, ground was broken for the Cathedral of the Incarnation in Garden City in 1877.

Most cathedrals in the United States began as parish churches in the center city. Such was the case with Trinity, financed by Julia Tuttle Miami, the mother of Miami, who invited Henry Flagler to expand his railroad to Dade County. Trinity was designated as a cathedral by the Rt. Rev. James Duncan.

When the Very Rev. Douglas McCaleb became Trinity's dean on Advent Sunday 2005 he inherited an 80-year-old downtown edifice that had been ravaged by four hurricanes in

the previous two years.

Like their British forerunners, Kalvelage says, American cathedrals offer diverse ministry, including daily prayer and Eucharist, pilgrimage, hospitality, the arts, ecumenism, and ministry for the surrounding community.

These themes emerged in the presentations and panel discussions of the gathering.

The Rev. Patrick Malloy, professor of liturgics at General Theological Seminary who has worked as a licensed general contractor, reflected on the ministry of the cathedral as a tool of evangelism and a "visual proclamation of the Gospel." "Cathedrals reflect who we are and what we believe," he said. "We are just this side of a renewed Anglo-Catholic movement."

The Rev. Bob Libby

Healing and Goat's Milk

Women veterans who become homeless have friends at Zion Church in Avon, New York. The small congregation offers the veterans a home in its former rectory, and a chance to learn skills in creating beauty supplies.

Since November 2010, the parish has provided transitional housing at Zion House for up to six women at a time. They may stay for as long as two years, though most leave sooner for permanent housing.

"It's helping them learn how to navigate difficulties," said the Rev. Kelly Ayer, an Army veteran who serves both as rector of Zion Church and executive director of Zion House. More than 40 women, ranging in age from 25 to 61, have lived in the facility.

Zion House aims to meet a long-term need for women who suffered sexual trauma in the military and eventually found themselves homeless. As long as they abide by house rules, including no drug-taking on the premises, Zion House can be a home base while they get back on their feet.

The project has drawn some high-profile attention. U.S. Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY) visited in February as she highlighted projects aimed at helping women who serve or have

completed service in the military.

On any given night, 58,000 veterans are homeless, according to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. While women comprise just a fraction of that whole, they are a growing fraction. The number of homeless women vets jumped by 140 percent, from 1,380 to 3,328, between 2006 and 2010, according to a Government Accountability Office analysis of U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs data.

The Rev. Mark Stiegler was serving as a part-time VA hospital chaplain and rector of Zion Church when the idea for Zion House took root in 2006. He saw a glaring problem: homeless male veterans could find transitional housing, but nowhere in America did the equivalent exist for female veterans.

Back at the church, Stiegler proposed converting the rectory to transitional housing. In 2010, the VA provided a \$96,000 grant for the renovation, while another \$50,000 came from donations.

Today's \$150,000 budget for Zion House comes from a combination of VA funding, donations, and sales of Boadicea Spa Products, which residents manufacture from goat milk. This sum covers salaries for the director and a case manager, as well as building maintenance and other expenses.

For women to create stable lives after homelessness, Ayer said, they need to hone practical skills for both home and work. Women at Zion House who do not have jobs work 10 hours a week for Boadicea. That work meets a VA grant requirement, reduces their rent costs, and helps them develop routines at a feasible pace.

"They need a little bit more grace in their work environment than a secular job could afford," Ayer said. "If they're missing work because they have a crazy number of appointments, that's not going to be a big deal for us. If they're having a bad day and just need to go back to their room, they won't get terminated for that."

Involvement in congregational life is not required of Zion House residents, but it can help with healing, Ayer said. Currently three residents



New York Consecration

The Rt. Rev. Allen K. Shin was consecrated as Bishop Suffragan of New York on May 17 at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine. The chief consecrator was Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori, and the preacher was her predecessor, the Rt. Rev. Frank T. Griswold III. Bishop Shin greeted the diocese with his wife, Clara, at his side.

participate in an icon-making class that Ayer leads, and two sing in the church choir.

Those vying to escape homelessness find Zion House can be a much-needed oasis. That was the case for Maggie, a 50-year-old who served as a private in the Army. After being discharged, she worked as a livery driver and was attacked. The experience left her too shaken to return to work. Soon she was broke, homeless, and living at a shelter in which drugs and alcohol were rampant.

“I was really having a hard time with it because I wanted my own place,” Maggie said.

When shelter staff learned Maggie was a veteran, they helped her apply

for residency at Zion House. There she made connections with the VA, and learned she would qualify for tuition assistance. In December she completed an associate’s degree in substance-abuse counseling.

All told, Maggie spent only eight months at Zion House, but they turned out to be critical for setting her life back on track. She shows her gratitude by volunteering at the church. This summer, for instance, she’s restoring the old oak doors at the entryway.

“I do whatever I can possibly do,” Maggie said. “I’m very grateful.”

*G. Jeffrey MacDonald
TLC Correspondent*



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Bishop Swenson Dies at 86

The Rt. Rev. Daniel L. Swenson, eighth bishop of Vermont, died May 24. He was 86. A native of Oklahoma City, he was a graduate of the University of Minnesota and the Minnesota Tutorial Program. He was ordained deacon in 1960 and priest in 1961.

Swenson served parishes in several Minnesota cities: Minnetonka Beach, Wayzata, Virginia, Eveleth, Faribault, and White Bear Lake. He was elected Bishop of Virginia in 1986 and served until 1993. After retiring he served as assisting bishop with the Rt. Rev. James L. Jelinek for 13 years.

He is survived by daughters Martha Swenson and Sara Shuford; a son, Daniel Swenson; 10 grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.

Bishop McAllister Dies at 91

The Rt. Rev. Gerald N. McAllister, third bishop of Oklahoma, died June 10. He was 91.

The Rt. Rev. Dr. Edward J. Konieczny, Bishop of Oklahoma since 2007, announced McAllister’s death in a message to members of the diocese.

McAllister served as bishop from 1977 to 1989. A native of San Antonio, he was an alumnus of the University of Texas and Virginia Theological Seminary. He served in congregations at Raymondville, Corpus Christi, and Victoria, all in Texas, before becoming canon to the Bishop of West Texas, where he served from 1963 to 1967.

In 1967, Fr. McAllister was celebrant at the White House wedding of Lynda Bird Johnson, daughter of the late President, to Marine Capt. Charles Robb.

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The garbage dump before reforms.
Photos courtesy of Paroquia do Agua Viva



God Moved the Mountain

By Grace Sears

“I tell you the truth, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move.”

—Matthew 17:20, NIV

Ian and Simea Meldrum will never forget their first impressions of an unregulated garbage dump outside of Olinda, Brazil, on October 16, 1993. “It was horrible,” Simea said. Her husband added: “The smell, the smoke, the flies — you can’t imagine.” Dirty children who lived on the dump were malnourished and some adults who came out of their flimsy shacks had respiratory problems. How could the Presbyterian pastor who asked Simea to join in an outreach to residents of the dump have dreamed that a church might be formed here?

Simea, a native of Brazil, was serving as youth minister at an Anglican church in Olinda founded by Ian, a Briton who came to Brazil through the South American Missionary Society. She had brought the youth group to an event initiated by another pastor who planned to distribute food and clothes on World Food Day to about 50 families who lived on the dump. When Simea’s group arrived that Sunday afternoon, a Presbyterian lay leader asked her to take charge of the event because the pastor who invited her had gone to England, where he had accepted a scholarship.

The recycling plant today has a truck and equipment to help process garbage.



I'm trapped, Simea thought. I don't want to be here. But then she heard God speak: "Take off your sandals — the place where you are standing is holy ground." It was not what she wanted to hear. And yet in faith she stepped barefoot onto the rubbish and claimed it for the kingdom of God. She says she cried a lot that afternoon. She believed God was giving her that horrible place, although she wanted to turn and run.

Twenty years later, the putrid mountain of garbage is covered and fenced, and many of its former inhabitants have decent housing and paying jobs. As the stench, hazards, and flies have decreased, a miasma of corruption and indifference that pervaded the city also has diminished — not only in Olinda, but in similar communities throughout Brazil.

That October Simea struggled with her call. What did God want of her? She had three young children. She was already in active ministry, and her husband not only had responsibility for the church where they were co-pastors but supervised four other churches in Olinda and worked with additional social-outreach ministries. Their family schedule was hard enough to manage without adding another ministry, especially one without a budget. And what could one woman do? The whole city — police, city government, churches — ignored that reeking landscape. After much prayer, she decided to visit the rubbish heap once a month.

Simea had never seen such poverty. Her life in Brazil had been sheltered: her parents had raised her in a Baptist church and sent her to good schools. Yet even as a young girl she had gone out with mission teams in her church to work with children in the poorer areas of the city. When she was 13 a visiting evangelist singled her out and said "Come on up." She thought he would rebuke her for not sitting still, but instead he told her, "God has a plan for you. You will tell the story of what God has done all over the world."

Conditions on the dump looked hopeless. For about a year Simea kept up monthly visits, getting to know residents, watching how they rushed toward arriving trucks to sort through fresh loads of garbage. They collected paper, plastic, and other recyclables that they could sell in the city, and scavenged any kind of food or clothing they could use themselves. Children started collecting trash at an early age instead of going to school. Mothers typically had children by several different fathers. Violence and death were so common the children were hardened to it. They would react to a death by saying, "Never mind, tomorrow it will be you." Boys wanted to become criminals, and girls sought men to support them, but none of them seemed to have any love. Simea wept over their heartlessness.

Nevertheless, in the course of that first year, she gathered some women from the dump into a prayer group,

and held a monthly Sunday School for the children, with help from her church. "God was holding me there," she says. A local TV station donated 40 to 50 parcels of food each month. She gained residents' trust — and contracted hepatitis, which her doctor thought did not exist in Olinda. When she asked the city government why it was not doing anything about the conditions on the rubbish heap, officials answered: "It's too complicated."

Then in 1994 one of the women confided that the last batch of meat some had scavenged for food included a woman's breast. Even residents of the dump found that shocking. The next Sunday Simea told her congregation what she had heard. Some journalists were present, and reported it on local TV.

Suddenly Simea was not the only person visiting the garbage dump. First local reporters, then national and international news agencies came; CNN sent images of the Olinda garbage dump around the world. Headlines referred to CANNIBALISM IN BRAZIL. News teams documented trucks dumping black bags of medical waste, including used syringes, and asked why officials had not prosecuted the perpetrators. Olinda's outraged mayor blamed "that woman" for the horrendous publicity.

Alerted by the scandal, UNICEF in-

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Ian and Simea Meldrum



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vestigated across the country, documenting open dumps where children were scavenging in more than 5,000 Brazilian municipalities. The public outcry moved Brazil's government to place the children in schools. Policing dumps and creating landfills became a national issue.

Amid the furor, the Meldrums formed Paroquia do Agua Viva (the Church of Living Water) next to the dump in Olinda. In some cases residents had emerged from generations of misery and had never imagined anything better. With assistance from other churches, the church opened a nursery to take care of small children

Agua Viva as a parish.

Olinda's government finally mustered the political will to do something about its garbage dump. Leaders wanted to close the dump. At Agua Viva, that plan was greeted with dismay. At least the families living there eked out a living from recycling and had shelters, however inadequate. If they were evicted without means of support they would starve. The Meldrums protested, to little effect, until the Archbishop of Canterbury came to Olinda.

In planning his 1999 visit to Brazil, the Most Rev. George Carey announced he wanted to do two things: see a soccer game and visit "the church at the rubbish tip." He stopped

ment recognized its responsibilities; eventually it offered housing to 120 families who had been living on the dump. It began supervising garbage collection, disposal, and recycling.

Of course, as Ian points out, "it's easier to take people out of the dump than to take the dump out of the people." A few families sold their new homes to gain money for drugs and alcohol, and wound up worse off than before. Yet many found a new way to live through the ministry of Agua Viva, though it took years for deep change to take hold. At first church members were largely dependent on others, but with training they began to move away from dependency and develop self-esteem and responsibility. By this time, Simea says, "I had accepted that this was my place."

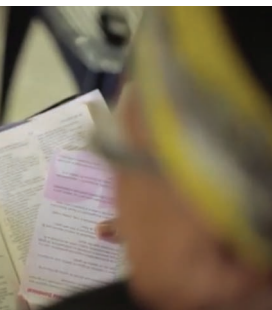
Other visitors followed in the wake of the Archbishop of Canterbury. One man who came with a group from the United States in 2004 asked if the church wanted a bigger building. Since quarters were cramped, church members said *yes*. The next month he shipped them a prefabricated building, and later a second one. Others brought special skills and ministries. A clinic provided health care. A youth worker started a dance and drama group with three teenagers that rapidly became a key means of discipleship and growth. One of the Meldrums' sons developed the skills to shoot videos of Agua Viva's work. Another son, still in university, has acquired IT skills and helps multiple ministries.

The Meldrums are pleased that at Agua Viva's annual assembly this

Olinda is transformed.

during the day. A supper club for children met twice a week. Parents attended a literacy class, as well as classes in practical skills such as sewing. In the next four years, Mennonites provided two social workers who organized an association of the garbage pickers and trained them, so they could get better prices for the materials they sold, and to qualify as paid garbage collectors for the city. In 1997 the Rt. Rev. Clovis Erly Rodrigues received the first confirmation class at Agua Viva. In 2000, after 40 were confirmed, the Anglican/Episcopal Church of Brazil recognized

in Recife, about five miles away from Olinda, and met with diocesan clergy at the pro cathedral. Simea Meldrum was present, and made a request of Archbishop Carey: Please tell the mayor of Olinda that the families on the rubbish dump should receive jobs and housing, instead of simply being kicked out. Archbishop Carey not only sent a letter to the mayor but also copied it to the President of Brazil. Then he visited Agua Viva. His presence brought increased respect and attention to the church and the Meldrums' ministry there, so their concerns were heard. The city govern-



Images from a documentary prepared for Agua Viva

March the candidates elected to the church council were all from the first generation of children who had come up through the church. Some of them are now attending college. In the past two decades the lives of those children have been transformed. Some of their parents now work in construction and bring home good paychecks. In following Jesus they have broken out of the cycle of poverty, substance

abuse, and misery and know they belong to the family of God. Their neighborhood may not be free of violence, but neither is it ruled by gangs or ignored by the police.

Olinda is transformed. In 1993 it was strictly a bedroom community for Recife, five miles away. Medical care, shops, restaurants, and jobs were almost all in Recife, and Olinda's economy was depressed. Simea says God

gave her a great love for the city, and she asked other pastors in a ministerial association to pray against the darkness and depression in Olinda. Centuries ago things had been different; in researching the city's history they realized that in an earlier time the relationship between the two cities had been reversed, with Olinda as the center of commerce and culture. But a fire destroyed much of Olinda, and a journalist at the time wrote, "Olinda will be eternally in debt to Recife."

Now shops and restaurants have sprung up and the city has its own hospital. The corruption that had been endemic in city government — fed by illegal dumping, among other practices — has receded. A population that once survived by scavenging and criminal activity now contributes to the town's economy and cleanliness instead of trashing it. The rubbish dump that routinely made its inhabitants sick in body and soul was closed in 2010, by federal law.

Brazil changed as well. The 2010 law closed Olinda's open dump and similar dumps throughout the country. The revelations in the UNICEF survey spurred government efforts to meet the needs of poor children throughout Brazil, particularly in nutrition and education. Parents now receive direct payments for their children, making extreme malnutrition rare.

Grace Sears is an advisor to the Order of the Daughters of the King and former editor of its magazine, The Royal Cross.



A baptism at Agua Viva. "God was holding me there," Simea says of her call to Olinda.

Friendship in God's Kingdom



Photos courtesy of Trinity School for Ministry

TWENTY MINUTES WITH WESLEY HILL

By Katelyn Beaty

Author, blogger, and scholar Wesley Hill and I first met at a conference in Chicago in 2010, through the introduction of a mutual friend. Hill was there to speak on the themes of his first book, *Washed and Waiting: Reflections on Christian Faithfulness and Homosexuality*. Since then, Hill has completed his Ph.D. at Durham University, accepted a professorship in New Testament studies at Trinity School for Ministry in Ambridge, Pennsylvania, and begun *Spiritual Friendship*, a timely group blog dedicated to offering a positive vision of celibacy for gay and lesbian orthodox Christians. This spring, as we were emailing back and forth about his new column for *Christianity Today*, we also exchanged a few messages about his work and vocation.

In your first column for *Christianity Today*, you noted that George Herbert helped guide you into the Anglican tradition. How exactly did that happen?

I was raised Southern Baptist and have been a believing Christian since childhood. But for several years during college and afterward, I felt I was still looking for the right ecclesial home. My first exposure to the Anglican tradition was when I attended a Maundy Thursday service during my freshman year of college. I was simultaneously put off by what felt, at that time, like excessive formality, and attracted to what seemed like a form of worship with integrity, mystery, and depth. Eventually I was confirmed in the Church of England, by then-Bishop of Durham Justin Welby. By that time, I had developed theological reasons for becoming Anglican — reasons that had to do with Anglicanism's identity as "catholic" and "reformed." But initially, Anglicanism represented more of a sensibility than a theology. It nurtured in me something I didn't initially have or want: a taste for beauty in liturgy and church art, and an inclination toward theological reticence and reverence.

What thinkers of the Church, present or past, are you most excited about?

I'm very interested in the work that a celibate lesbian Roman Catholic named Eve Tushnet is doing. Her first book is coming out this fall from Ave Maria Press (*Gay and Catholic: Accepting My Sexuality, Finding Community, Living My Faith*). I've been reading Eve's blog for years, and I think she's one of the sharpest cultural critics around, in addition to being one of our most provocative and helpful Christian voices on the theology of friendship. Along the same lines, I'm so proud of thinkers and writers that Ron Belgau and I have assembled for *Spiritual Friendship*. People like Melinda Selmys and Joshua Gonnerman and Aaron Taylor — all celibate gay Roman Catholics — are doing some of the most exciting work on sexual ethics, pastoral theology, and cultural criticism that I'm aware of.

I continue to be excited by some of the theologians who got me interested in theology in the first place — Karl

Barth, John Webster, and Rowan Williams. (His *Being Christian* is as lovely an introduction to Christian faith as I've ever read.) I was talking with a friend recently about our mutual admiration for Bonhoeffer's prison letters, and he said that for him the key is Bonhoeffer's absolute Christ-centeredness coupled with an utter lack of sentimental piety or a world-denying retreat mentality. That pretty much sums up the kind of Christian thinker I'm drawn to. There's that line from Flannery O'Connor about distrusting the pious language of the faithful, especially when it issues from her mouth, but taking refuge instead in the historic language of the Church's liturgy and theology, albeit always trying to refresh and reinvigorate that language. I resonate with that, and I look for theologians who embody that ambition.



You've spent a lot of time thinking about friendship. What about the topic draws you?

I became interested in the topic because of my concern for the flourishing of gay people in the Church. As someone who is gay, and who holds to the Church's traditional view — that marriage is a covenant between a man and a woman ordered toward the bearing and raising of children — I am committed to celibacy. And I've gotten to know many others who are in my shoes, which means

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that I've become interested in how we might learn to practice a healthy and fruitful celibacy.

C.S. Lewis notes that we in the modern world don't pay nearly as much attention to friendship as we do to romantic love, but Scripture and the Christian tradition challenge us on that point. You can't read someone like Aelred of Rievaulx or Bonhoeffer and not conclude that friendship is just as honorable, and worthy of time and energy, as marriage and family. Friendship, too, can be a site of sacrifice and devotion, a place where we give and receive genuine love. And for me, that opens up fresh ways of thinking about celibacy. Outside of a monastic context, as someone who lives and works as an ordinary member of an Anglican parish, I am still called, precisely as a celibate man, to make binding commitments and promises to my fellow Christians.

What does friendship reveal about the gospel and redeemed humanity that marriage cannot?

There's a great line in one of Oliver O'Donovan's books, where he's talking about the future resurrection and kingdom of Christ. He says: "Humanity in the presence of God will know a community in which the fidelity of love which marriage makes possible will be extended beyond the limits of marriage." In other words, one of the good things about marriage now is that it enables two people to make promises to each other and practice the kind of love that doesn't give up when the going gets tough. It enables fidelity. But, you can't practice that kind of faithful love with everyone. You're bound to your spouse, and you don't love anyone else with the same kind of fidelity. That's where things will change in the eschatological kingdom of God. Marriage as we know it will fade away, as Jesus tells us in Matthew 22. But the kind of love that marriage pointed to will be the experience of *everyone* in God's new creation. And that, it seems to me, is what friendship reminds us of here and now.

In friendship, we can make promises and pursue intimate fellowship with many people, not just one. And in that sense, friendship provides a foretaste of the universal community we'll enjoy in God's kingdom. Roman Catholic writer Ronald Rolheiser says that in friendship the central organ of love is the human heart, not the genitals — which means that friendship is a form of love that's open to *all* of us, married or single.

Because of your writing as a gay Christian who is committed to celibacy, it seems you are increasingly asked to chime in on LGBTQ issues in public debate. How does this role sit with you?

In so many ways, I'm grateful that I've been given a platform to talk about these matters. What my friends and I are trying to say at *Spiritual Friendship* — about how the Church has to have a clear "yes" to speak to gay peo-



ple, not just a "no" — is something I don't hear a lot of other Christians discussing in depth. So I'm grateful that I've been given a chance to articulate that message.

But I would add that I'm wary of being held up as a poster boy for the "traditional" Christian view of marriage and sexual ethics. In the first place, my story is simply one person's story and shouldn't be considered *the* pattern to which a Christian who experiences same-sex attraction must conform. I don't want to give gay Christians the impression that they all have to speak or behave like me if they want to be faithful to the traditional Christian teaching.

Second, I want to be heard in the Church as someone who poses *hard* questions for the traditional view of marriage and celibacy. I embrace that teaching (and that's why I'm celibate), but I also want the freedom to say I'm still working to understand it and see its beauty and rationale and *live* it in a healthy, life-enhancing way. I have a long way to go. Often I feel I need the Church's help in understanding the traditional teaching and following it. It's hard to be put in the role of public defender of that teaching when sometimes what I really need is someone who can defend it for me!

I frequently see photos on social media of you traveling to visit friends. Do you have a favorite place to travel? Anywhere you've never been to but that remains on your bucket list?

I spent four years living in England for graduate school at Durham. I was part of a wonderful church in Durham, and I have many dear friends who are still there, including my godson, Samuel, who's turning 3 this summer. So, as often as I can, I like to travel back to England. And there are still places in the U.K. I'm dying to visit: Iona, George Herbert's church near Salisbury, Sarah Losh's church in Cumbria, the beaches in Cornwall, and a lot of other places. I've also never been to the Holy Land, and that's pretty much number one on my bucket list.

Katelyn Beaty is managing editor of Christianity Today.

Naturalism Brought Low

Review by Daniel Muth

All too many of us have been taught to think that science has proven the truth of atheist naturalism. Since we live in a demythologized world shorn of sprites, daemons, fairies, and dryads, it follows that we remove from our worldview God or indeed transcendence in any form. The scientific endeavor's methodological agnosticism easily morphs into a much more dubious methodological and ultimately philosophical atheism. While neither of these is necessarily invalid, neither is in the least scientific.

Alvin Plantinga is one of the most important Christian analytic philosophers alive. In *Where the Conflict Really Lies*, he makes his case that there is superficial conflict but deep concord between science and theism, and superficial concord but deep conflict between science and naturalism. He is not necessarily arguing a specifically Christian case, but for a transcendent God, without specifying what transcendence consists of beyond God's being the creator of the universe, as well as all powerful, all knowing, and all good.

He starts with modern popular atheism, from 18th- and 19th-century propagandists to the so-called New Atheists, authors of recent best-selling

rejections of theism, and dispatches their claims of direct conflict between science and theism with relative ease. There's nothing scientific about the metaphysical proposition that evolution is unguided. Approaches of these sorts are shown to prove far less than is usually claimed.

Plantinga limns and evaluates the debate regarding the possibility of miracles. An impressive array of writers, many of them theists, maintain that divine miracles undermine God's moral integrity and creation's free will, introducing a divine split personality wherein God maintains the laws of nature and at the same time breaks them. Plantinga argues that this approach suffers from a lack of clarity in that the line of demarcation between divine intervention in and divine sustenance of creation is hardly a bright one. After noting that quantum mechanics neither confirms nor denies the possibility of miracles, he concludes that there is no conflict between science and theism.

Having dealt with *apparent* conflict, Plantinga moves on to what he considers areas of *superficial* conflict. Evolutionary psychology posits that human behavior is shaped purely by Darwinian forces. This particular approach, though adept at understanding the content and causes of pornog-

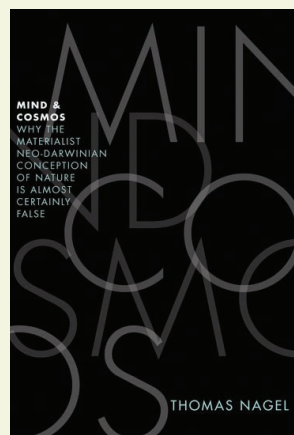
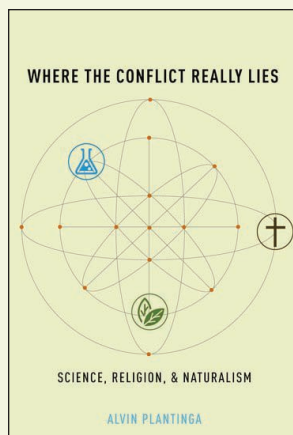
raphy and war, stumbles more than a bit when trying to explain Bach or Cezanne and is hopelessly out of its element on Mother Teresa.

Ultimately, evolutionary psychology emphasizes survival rather than development of true beliefs. Since no Christian can accept these claims, Plantinga describes an actual conflict. Likewise with biblical criticism, many versions of which come to materialist conclusions that Christians must reject.

Plantinga distinguishes two types of scientific methodological naturalism: the *weak* version passively leaves transcendent or supernatural forces out of consideration, while the *strong* version actively denies them. If a weak methodological naturalism is assumed, then theists can accept evolutionary psychology and biblical criticism as valid disciplines while acknowledging some troubling aspects of both. The conflict is real, but superficial.

Plantinga then makes the case for deep concord between theism and science. He starts by setting aside a couple of intriguing but insufficient developments. Too much is often made of modern physicists' observations regarding fine tuning of the universe. Its support of theism depends on one's assumptions regarding the antecedent

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Where the Conflict Really Lies

Science, Religion, and Naturalism

By **Alvin Plantinga**. Oxford. Pp. 376. \$27.95

Mind and Cosmos

Why the Materialist Neo-Darwinian Conception of Nature is Almost Certainly False

By **Thomas Nagel**. Oxford. Pp. 144. \$24.95

Naturalism Brought Low

(Continued from previous page)

probability of theism versus atheism.

Likewise, the Intelligent Design movement — the shabby treatment of which by most of the scientific community is as deplorable as it is inexcusable — provides a form of discourse (rather than a set of arguments). It presents epistemic situations to which the rational responses are entirely consonant with theism, though the extent of the consonance is difficult to determine.

The fuller concord lies in the historical reality of science's deep roots in the western Christian tradition itself. Modern science was made possible, and then fostered, nourished, and promoted, by late medieval Christendom; it is a fact that it developed nowhere else. Plantinga examines the (easily overlooked) extent to which theistic religion gives pre-scientific peoples reason to expect that their cognitive capacities will match physical reality in such a way that science will be possible.

He closes the book by noting that false beliefs do not necessarily hamper evolutionary success — antelope would survive just as well by fleeing from tigers because they are orange as because of their predatory skills — and thus there is no reason to conclude that evolution has handed us trustworthy cognitive faculties (as opposed to sensory perceptions). However, the beliefs that comprise evolutionary naturalism are entirely products of their owners' cognitive faculties, which these beliefs have now thrown into doubt. Without a reliable correspondence between cognition and truth, science becomes impossible. Thus, Plantinga claims, there is superficial conflict but deep concord between theistic religion and science, and superficial concord but deep conflict between naturalism and science.

Thomas Nagel is not a believer and carries no particular brief for the-

ism, but he argues, as the subtitle to *Mind and Cosmos* puts it, that “The Materialist Neo-Darwinian Conception of Nature is Almost Certainly False.” His key holding is that materialist reductionism cannot explain consciousness, which it can only account for as a wildly unlikely accident. In this regard, he acknowledges a debt to the Intelligent Design movement and, like Plantinga, rightly decries its viciously unfair treatment in orthodox scientific circles.

Referring to reductionist extensions of Darwinism as a triumph of theory over common sense, he notes that the materialist account of mind as reducible to matter leaves consciousness unexplained. Reducing love, loyalty, and ambition to a set of electrochemical impulses in the brain falls ridiculously far short of explanation and treats subjective mental experience, including the experiences that make up the scientist's endeavors, as unreal and ultimately unreliable. Thus, like Plantinga, Nagel concludes that materialist neo-Darwinism undermines the scientific worldview on which it seeks to build.

In constructing an alternative, Nagel presents himself with an admittedly difficult problem: to provide an anti-reductionist account of remarkable things (the mind) such that they are not wildly unlikely, while retaining the scientific aspiration of a single natural order unified on the basis of common elements and principles. Acknowledging that much is still unknown, he posits a nontheistic teleology as the most likely explanatory principle. The details are fuzzy (he is trying to point in a direction, not birth a fully formed theory), but he calls for an understanding that holds mind and consciousness as the inevitable results, rather than the unlikely side effects, of whatever process produced the natural world. That is, the unfolding of evolution must not be considered limited to physical phenomena only but must be moving

in a direction that makes consciousness likely if not inevitable.

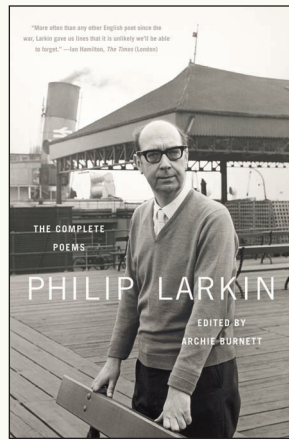
In positing a teleological purposiveness to evolutionary forces, Nagel is not claiming to believe in God. He rejects theism because he sees it — not unfairly given many of its current manifestations — as positing direction purely from outside the natural order. If naturalism relies too much on chance, theism, as Nagel sees it, relies too much on miracle.

This is a worthy challenge. If God's creative activity is primarily a matter of redirecting nature from the outside to produce what could not otherwise have come into being, it is entirely fair to reject him as a Gnostic demiurge who makes the natural order as arbitrary as atheist neo-Darwinism makes consciousness. And neither the flaccidly emotive “god concept” of liberalism nor the mechanical and anthropomorphized semi-deity of literalism is immune.

The Christian response to Nagel demands a regrasping both of God as transcendent creator — hence unchangeable, impassible, simple, eternal, etc. — and as mysteriously incarnate. The latter is not just the logically necessary prelude to atonement and the solution for human sin but an essential part of God's relation to his created order, which is fulfilled, not violated, by his entry into it.

A Christianity that properly understands both creation and Incarnation, and remembers itself as the greatest engine of scientific curiosity in human history, may be properly undaunted by evidence of evolution, and uncowed by atheistic bullyragging. Christ is the Truth. Accordingly, his revelation may bring us into deep concord with the veracities of the world he created and redeemed.

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



The Complete Poems
Philip Larkin
 Edited by **Archie Burnett**.
 Farrar, Strauss and Giroux.
 Pp. xxx + 729. \$40

The Librarian-Poet

Review by Peter Eaton

Like a number of his fellow poets of the second half of the 20th century, among them T.S. Elliot, W.H. Auden, John Betjeman, and R.S. Thomas, Philip Larkin has enjoyed a following among Anglicans. If his following has been, perhaps, rather smaller than the corps of the devotees of the others, it has been no less faithful.

The editor of this volume, Archie Burnett, has already given us two masterful editions of the collected poems and the letters of the scholar and poet A.E. Housman, and had these been his only books, his place in the annals of the scholarship of English literature would have been secure. To these he has now added this fine edition with a commentary on Larkin's poems, and he has, thereby, given both to those who love Larkin already, as well as to those who have yet to read him, the best help for which they could ask. Burnett's commentary is full and detailed, and in this he is often helped by Larkin himself, who used to speak and write about his own work.

Many a university chaplain has begun the first sermon of the academic year by quoting (with a sensitive change to "muck" of the second word of the first line) Larkin's Housmanesque poem "This Be The Verse," to the gasping delight of first-year undergraduates, who never thought a priest would know such a poem, let alone repeat it in church, just as they were beginning their symbolic, and often real, separation from their parents by going off to college.

Larkin was born in 1922, published his first volume of verse in 1945, and in 1955, after a series of short-term jobs, was appointed University Librarian at Hull, a post he held until his death 30 years later. His was no sinecure, and he made a remarkable contribution to library science during his career. Three major collections of poetry followed the first at rough intervals of

a decade between 1955 and 1974, and he also wrote fiction and essays. He was well recognized during his lifetime and received numerous awards, culminating in being made a Companion of Honour by the Queen. He refused the appointment of poet laureate after Betjeman's death in 1984.

Opinion of Larkin has waxed and waned over the years. Although appreciation of his poetry remains high, his personal life and opinions have been the subject of much scrutiny and criticism since his death. Although romantically involved with women throughout his life, he never married. Once again we are brought face to face with the mystery between an artist and art.

If Larkin is less churchy than, for example, Betjeman, and less theological than Eliot, he does nonetheless capture a sense of the holy, and the human impulse to something bigger than ourselves, as he shows in a poem from his collection *The Less Deceived* called "Church Going":

A serious house on serious earth it is,
 In whose blent air all our compulsions meet,
 Are recognized, and robed as destinies.
 And that much better never can be obsolete,
 Since someone will forever be surprising
 A hunger in himself to be more serious,
 And gravitating with it to this ground,
 Which, once he heard, was proper to grow wise in,
 If only that so many dead lie round.

May all our churches be "serious houses on serious earth," perhaps aided by Larkin's splendid verse.

The Very Rev. Peter Eaton is dean of St. John's Cathedral, Denver.



Dignity

Street

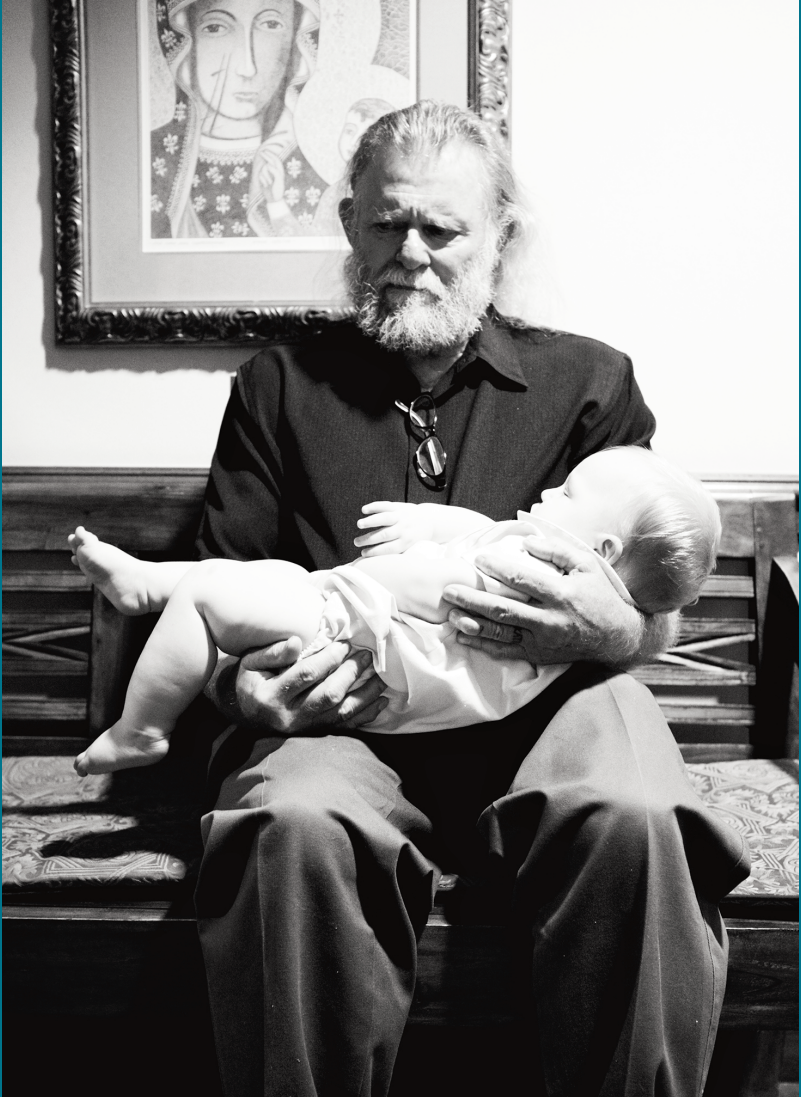
FIRST IN A SERIES

I live a typical middle-class life in a big city. I'm a husband, father, and a worker. Through my photography I aim to show the lovely and the derelict, the dignity and the irony, the pain and the happiness of everyday life; the people and moments that are easily forgotten, missed, and dismissed. We ourselves are these people.

Richard Hill
Dallas, Texas



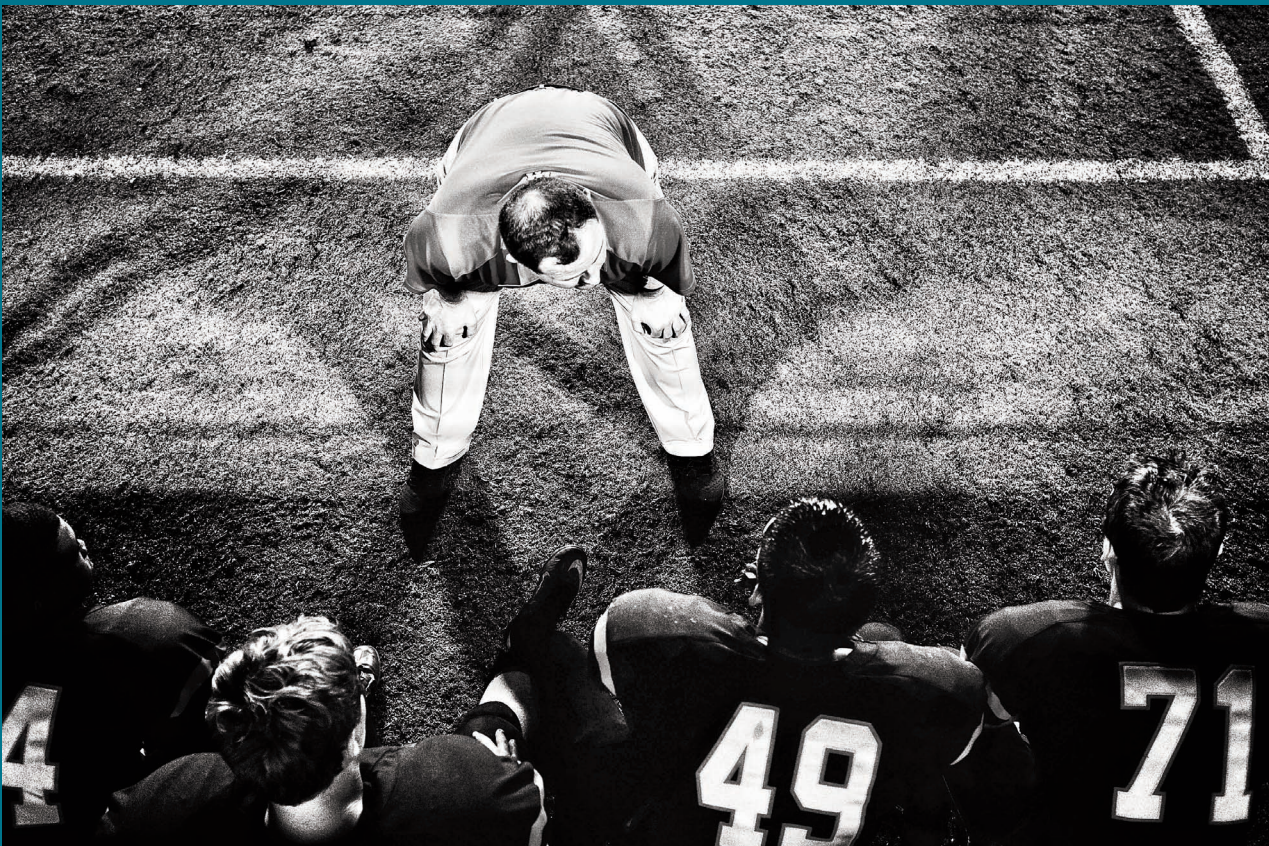
Sassy Diva



Welcome to the Newly Baptized



Spinning, Laughing, Dancing



4th and I

IMAGE

Street



Carpenter Apocalypse



Against His Better Judgment



Fur and Flurry



Settled In



Step Aside



Bus Stop Cowboy



Technology Wins

W

S

R

W

V

By Ephraim Radner

Knowledge

I wanted to tell you something before you left
but fell asleep, so it never happened.

I have wracked my mind to recall
but it disappeared in a dream.

We were climbing a hill, in long grass
with small oaks dotting the edges

A white moth fluttered up into the wind,
and light clouds were dissolving,
opening to a deep blue beyond.

The faint outline of the moon drifted above,
like a backdoor opening to some dark ocean.
Everything I know is there.

The Past

Yesterday is done, and who knows why?

And yet tomorrow is how yesterday will fly
and take her wing. Tomorrow too is done,

for by the bell of yesterday is long since rung.

What are these ears for but to hear the sounds,
the chords made by the two, entwined and bound,
criss-crossing, planted, hung, the joke of Greek,
where Jews fall down, the endless wailing of the weak?



Open Doors Save a Parish

GOOD SHEPHERD, EAST CHICAGO

By G. Jeffrey MacDonald

The end seemed near in the early 2000s for Church of the Good Shepherd, an Anglo-Catholic congregation in economically depressed East Chicago, Indiana. The only ones in church on an average weekend were about 20 white, aging suburbanites who heard the Benediction as their cue to leave the city. When those loyalists passed on, it seemed, the church would close.

Now those faithful worshippers are mostly gone, but Good Shepherd is far from finished. Weekend attendance has climbed 90 percent to about 100. Weekdays bring in several dozen, too, for Morning and Evening Prayer (except on Mondays). And most stay for lunch, too—another daily ministry of the church that will not quit.

A True Oxford Son

As one who grew up in the old years of Anglo-Catholic Chicago at Church of the Ascension, I appreciated the inspiring article on Canon Cecil Phelps's ministry [TLC, June 15]. I will be among those who send him a note and a check.

His approach to parish ministry is what my Anglo-Catholic urban and inner-city mentors in Chicago effected with great success, even while many of their more broad-church colleagues perceived them as "peculiar" at best, "antiquarian" at worse.

Canon Phelps, in adhering to the beauty of Rite One, demonstrates that even the poorest of the poor with minimal education can respond to the spiritual depth and majesty of the Elizabethan Rite; he does not dumb down the Mass and is clearly a tough and loving shepherd. He is a true son of the Oxford Movement.

*The Rev. Steven M. Giovangelo
Diocese of Indianapolis*

What Makes Nations Great?

"Trend-spotting with Philip Jenkins" [TLC, June 15] was most interesting, especially when compared with another survey of the best countries in the world (*Newsweek*, Aug. 23/30, 2010).

Among Jenkins's nine countries projected to have the most Christians by 2050, only the United States (10th best) is ranked among the top 44, but the nine he predicts will have no religion at all by 2100 go from second-best in *Newsweek's* survey (Switzerland) to 32nd (Estonia). All nine of these "losers" are historically Christian — no Muslim, Buddhist, or Hindu nations among them. And of this group only two (both small) are Roman Catholic (Austria and Ireland), one is an Orthodox/Catholic mixture (Estonia), and the other six are Protestant/Catholic amalgams (no predominantly Orthodox nations here).

And the United States' uniqueness here must be qualified.

Although it was ranked as No. 2 in quality of life (after Germany) and economic dynamism (after Singapore), it did not even make the top 10 in the other two factors *Newsweek* used — education and health. Even as quality of life goes, in every rating I can remember, major cities in the United States were assessed lower in this category than their West European and "white Commonwealth" counterparts. So, along with the quality of the other largest-Christian-by-2050 grouping, Christians again seem to be consigned to less-than-desirable environments. (Jenkins makes the point that Christians, both historically and today, have been city people.)

What experience I've had tends to confirm both surveys. I've been to all of Jenkins's largest-by-2050 nations except the Congo and Uganda and all but Ireland in his dead-by-2100 category (including disappointing Christian participation in the Old Catholic "Vatican" of Utrecht). I've also been to just over two-thirds of the 100 countries surveyed by *Newsweek*, including the two "best" (Finland and Switzerland) and two "worst" (Nigeria and Burkina Faso), and can understand his rankings (but I witnessed spectacular attendance at the Anglican cathedral in Lagos).

Two other facts support Jenkins's predictions. China is so large that even five percent of its population would be 68 million (though hardly enough to make it a Christian nation). In the other category, Estonia is one of the least religious nations in the world, with only 14 percent professing any faith.

*Wallace Spaulding
Arlington, Virginia*

NEWS | June 15, 2014

Trend-spotting with Philip Jenkins



Philip Jenkins speaks on the future of faith in the world during a panel discussion.

Has there been a geographic shift in Christianity globally?
Philip Jenkins spoke on "Christianity in the World Today" on the July 15 episode of *Religion & Ethics: The Faith Institute*. He noted that the center of gravity for Christianity has shifted from the West to the East. He predicted that by 2050, the number of Christians in the West will decline, while the number in the East will increase significantly.

Why are there so many Christians in the West?
Jenkins noted that the West has a long history of Christianity, and that the culture and institutions of the West are deeply rooted in Christian values. He also noted that the West has a high level of religious freedom, which has allowed Christianity to flourish.

What obstacles could stop the growth of Christianity in Africa?
Jenkins noted that Africa has a large and growing Christian population, but that there are several obstacles that could slow its growth. These include poverty, lack of education, and political instability.

What role do women play in the African church?
Jenkins noted that women play a significant role in the African church, particularly in the areas of education and social services. He also noted that women are often the primary providers of spiritual care in their communities.

What is the most exciting event in the world?
Jenkins noted that the most exciting event in the world is the growth of Christianity in the Global South, particularly in Africa and Latin America. He also noted that the increasing number of Christians in the West is a significant trend.

PEOPLE & PLACES

Deaths

The Rev. **Ashmun Norris Brown**, who served as legal counsel in the investigation of the Apollo 1 disaster in 1967, died April 12. He was 83.

Born in Yakima, WA, Brown was a graduate of Boston University, the University of Michigan, and Graduate Theological Foundation. He was ordained deacon in 1984 and priest in 1991. He served parishes in the dioceses of Central Gulf Coast, Central Florida, and Southwest Florida.

Before his ordination, Brown served as an attorney with the Federal Aviation Agency and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration. In the wake of the Apollo 1 fire, which killed three astronauts, NASA convened a review board to determine the causes and report to Congress. He was also general counsel for the University of Central Florida from 1982 to 1994.

He married Rita Lucille Rodda in May 1981, and they had five children.

The Rev. **Gary Edward Caldwell**, who translated the Book of Common Prayer into Icelandic while serving in the U.S. Army, died April 22 in Mt. Pleasant, IA. He was 82.

Born in Mt. Pleasant, he was a graduate of Iowa Wesleyan College and General Theological Seminary. He was ordained deacon and priest in 1960.

After finishing his college degree he joined the Army in 1953 from Ft. Des Moines. He served as a clerk in the 28th Army Base Post Office in Germany and was honorably discharged as a Private First Class in 1955. He was an Army Reservist for eight years. From 1962 to 1982 he served in the Virgin Islands and the West Indies. He later served churches in Iowa and the Diocese of Quincy.

He is survived by a sister-in-law, Diane Caldwell; nephews Ed and Scott Caldwell; and five great-nieces and great-nephews.

The Rev. **James Alexander "Jim" Clarke**, the catalyst for forming St. Mary's Church, East Point, as a Hispanic congregation of the Diocese of Atlanta, died April 6. He was 76.

Born in Atlanta, he was an alumnus of George State University and the University of the South's School of Theology. He was ordained deacon in 1967 and priest in 1968.

He is survived by his wife, Carolyn Tuck Clarke; daughters Janet Johnson and Elizabeth Duke; sons James Clarke and Michael Clarke; stepdaughter Jackie Arthur; stepsons Robbie Smith and Warren Smith; brother Tom and Clarke; and 13 grandchildren.

The Rev. **John Thornley Docker, Jr.**, formerly the Episcopal Church Center's

staff officer for education and ministry, died April 13 in Hamilton, Ontario. He was 76.

Born in Reading, PA, he was a graduate of Lehigh University, General Theological Seminary, and Bexley Hall. He was ordained deacon in 1963 and priest in 1964.

While working at the church center from 1982 to 1998, Docker wrote the books *Fluffing the Tangled Skein* and *Toward a Totally Ministering Church*. He also worked for the dioceses of Bethlehem and Central Pennsylvania, and served parishes in New York and Pennsylvania.

He retired to Canada in 1998. Fr. Docker had recently celebrated the 50th anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood by the Rt. Rev. Frederick Warnecke, fifth Bishop of Bethlehem.

He is survived by Georgie Dawson Docker, his wife of 45 years; sons Sean and Robert Docker; grandchildren Nathan and Isabella; and sisters Mary Binder, Patti Docker-Ford, and Barbara Geiger.

Peter Hallock, organist and choirmaster at St. Mark's Cathedral, Seattle, from 1951 to 1991, died April 27. He was 89.

He was the founding director of the Compilene Choir at St. Mark's, and led the cathedral's Sunday night services from 1956 to 2009.

After serving in the Pacific during World War II, he pursued organ studies at the University of Washington, followed by studies at Britain's Royal School of Church Music, where he was the first American choral scholar at Canterbury Cathedral. He went on to compose more than 200 pieces.

He is survived by his sisters Barbara Hallock of Kent, WA, and Matilda Ann Milbank of Los Altos, CA, and nieces, nephews, and their children.

The Rev. **William Alan King**, a founder of Lydecker Manor senior housing corporation in Maywood, NJ, died April 17. He was 81.

Born in Glen Ridge, NJ, King was a graduate of Rutgers University, Drew University, and General Theological Seminary. He was ordained deacon and priest in 1958. He served churches in Florida, Louisiana, Michigan, and New Jersey, and was a bishop's deputy for Asian ministry in the Diocese of Newark.

Fr. King is survived by Audrey King, his wife of 56 years; daughters Mary Beth, Kathryn, and Margaret; a son, John; and four grandchildren.

The Rev. **George D. Kontos**, a graduate of the Shalem Institute who traveled the nation teaching Christian formation, died February 1. He was 70.

A native of Waycross, GA, he was also a

graduate of the University of Georgia and General Theological Seminary. He was ordained deacon in 1968 and priest in 1969. He served churches in Florida, Georgia, and Louisiana for more than 45 years. In Baton Rouge he helped develop the St. James Center for Spiritual Formation, where he served for 12 years.

Fr. Kontos is survived by his wife, Theresa; daughters Elizabeth Hightower and Tassie Sheridan, both of Tallahassee, FL; a son, Jimmy Kontos of St. Petersburg, FL; three granddaughters; and a grandson.

The Rev. **Theodore W. Lewis**, a U.S. Navy veteran of World War II, died April 19 in Littleton, MA. He was 87.

Born in Sherrill, NY, he was a graduate of Hamilton College, General Theological Seminary, the University of Maine, and Boston University. He was ordained deacon and priest in 1953. Pursuing dual vocations as a priest and licensed psychologist, he served churches in Maine, Massachusetts, New York, and Texas.

He is survived by his wife of 25 years, Jo Ann Carrington, of Littleton, MA; a son, Michael A. Lewis of San Diego; a daughter, Katherine E. Lewis, of Fayetteville, NY; two grandsons; and two sisters.

The Rev. **Oscar Warren Swensen**, a former artillery instructor at the United States Military Academy (West Point), died April 3 in Maine. He was 82.

Born in Arlington, MA, he was a graduate of Harvard University and Episcopal Divinity School. He was ordained deacon and priest in 1959. He was rector of Calvary Church in Danvers, MA, 1968-93.

He is survived by Constance Swensen, his wife of 55 years; daughters Kristen Hicks, Bara Sargent, and Sonje Swensen; 10 grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

The Rev. **George Dibrell Young, Jr.**, a U.S. Army veteran who fought in Europe during World War II, died March 28 in Chattanooga, TN. He was 89. His son George Young III is Bishop of East Tennessee.

Born in St. Augustine, FL, Young was a graduate of the University of the South and General Theological Seminary. He was ordained deacon and priest in 1952.

He served several cures in Florida: St. Mary's, Madison; St. James, Perry; Church of Our Saviour, Mandarin; Jacksonville Episcopal High School; and All Saints Church, Jacksonville.

In addition to Bishop Young, he is survived by a son, David; a daughter, Virginia; 10 grandchildren; and seven great-grandchildren.

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THE LIVING CHURCH is published 22 times per year, dated Sunday, by the Living Church Foundation, Inc., at 816 E. Juneau Ave., Milwaukee, WI 53202. Periodicals postage paid at Milwaukee, WI, and at additional mailing offices.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES: \$55 for one year; \$95 for two years.
Canadian postage an additional \$10 per year;
Mexico and all other foreign, an additional \$63 per year.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to THE LIVING CHURCH, P.O. Box 510705, Milwaukee, WI 53203-0121. Subscribers, when submitting address changes, should please allow 3-4 weeks for change to take effect.

THE LIVING CHURCH (ISSN 0024-5240) is published by THE LIVING CHURCH FOUNDATION, INC., a non-profit organization serving the Church. All gifts to the Foundation are tax-deductible.

MANUSCRIPTS AND PHOTOGRAPHS: THE LIVING CHURCH cannot assume responsibility for the return of photos or manuscripts.

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First reading and psalm: Gen. 24:34-38, 42-49, 58-67 • Ps. 45:11-18 or Song 2:8-13

Alternate: Zech. 9:9-12 • Ps. 145:8-15 • Rom. 7:15-25a • Matt. 11:16-19, 25-30

Paradoxical Parables

These readings present a series of paradoxes. A servant enjoys direct access to his master's God. A man on a donkey overcomes chariots and warhorses. That donkey man turns out to be a king who conquers by dismantling, not enlarging, his army. St. Paul desires to do right, but a stronger, sinful will cohabitates within him. Abstemious John has a demon but joyful Jesus is accused of gluttony. The truths of God hide from the wise but are revealed to babes. A burden is not a burden but a refreshment.

A paradox seems absurd but, upon investigation, proves true. How do these paradoxes turn out to be true upon closer examination?

The servant of Abraham successfully approaches God in part because his master believes. The benefits of belief apply to the whole household. But more profoundly, Yahweh is everyone's God: servant or master, slave or free, male or female, Jew or Greek. And he delights to reveal himself to those who seek him.

The donkey conquers horse and chariot not by physical strength or beauty but by faithful service to the one who rules. The values of the kingdom of heaven confound those of the world: "His delight is not in the strength of the horse ... but the Lord takes pleasure in those who fear him, in those who hope in his steadfast love" (Ps. 147:10a, 11 ESV).

The king wins his kingdom, but not by worldly means. In this passage, nothing other than the king's command is mentioned as the means by which he wins the kingdom. Authority inheres in this royal person, when seen as Christ, in a way with which modern democratic cultures are quite uncomfortable. The spoken word, when spoken from such a one, requires no military threat or diplomatic deal to accomplish his purpose. This one coming on the donkey does not merely serve as king:

he is King. Ruling is his essence.

St. Paul's good self is held captive by his sinful will, which has embedded itself like an unwelcome guest in his soul. Many comedic movies have used the trope of the annoying guest whose will is stronger than that of the host, but in our souls the situation takes on deadly earnestness. A willing host of sin soon becomes the unwilling slave of sin, and only a higher power can set things right.

Jesus' frustration is palpable: to those for whom his self-revelation is unwelcome, nothing is good enough. Thus the wise, whose conversion might win thousands, are bypassed, and the revelation of the Father comes to babes not yet able even to speak the revelation to others. It is far better for us to receive the word of God thus innocently and to grow into the practice of it than as a spiritual celebrity never to be touched in one's innermost self with the saving knowledge of Christ.

Jesus calls each of us to ministry, but not because he needs our competence. As a young ox hitched with an older, more experienced one learns the business of plowing, so also the yoke of kingdom work shared with Jesus becomes a light one, even a refreshment, because the competence belongs entirely to him.

Look It Up

How might St. Paul's dilemma be illustrated in your favorite movie scene about an unwelcome guest?

Think About It

Jesus' paradoxes reveal that motivation is more powerful than evidence for his hearers. How is this true both within and outside of the Church today?

The Gospel's Germination Rate

Seed corn on modern farms comes with a clearly marked germination rate: a measure of how many seeds will begin to grow if planted, and what proportion of the seeds might be duds. In the parable of the sower, Jesus explains three situations in which the seed of the Word does not produce a successful spiritual plant, along with one situation in which it does produce fruit. This has tempted Christians to believe that evangelism might be expected normally to yield only a 25 percent success rate. As comforting as this statistic can be to those who have labored long in their mission field but have yet to see fruit, it is neither the point of the parable nor an accurate understanding of ancient farming methods.

Sowing in Jesus' day was done not in the long, neat rows that grace modern farms, but by hand-scattering. In unpracticed hands much seed would be lost, but experienced hand-sowers became very efficient. Farming then, as now, consisted largely of managing scarcity: too much seed out of bounds meant a diminished harvest. Jesus' audience probably would have known that seed was generally thrown in the tended field where it belonged. Yet with the inevitable inefficiency of hand-scattering, some seed would fall outside the prepared area: on a footpath, or in a rocky spot, or among the weeds of a fallow field next door. It is of these seeds that our Lord speaks, explaining why those whose souls are like the outlying areas should fail to produce spiritual fruit despite the life potential in the Word that falls on all ears.

As a sower's intention was to keep the seed to the prepared ground, we can see that God tends and cares for his own in the same way. The spiritual nourishment we receive from God normally falls upon souls prepared first by the diligence of the

Sower and his laborers and continually maintained in fertility by careful attention to Holy Scripture, corporate worship, sacraments, private prayer, and spiritual discipline. In such souls the Word of God inevitably takes root and produces fruit. The gospel's germination rate is really very high when it falls where it belongs. Jesus challenges us to be sure we are a field well cultivated, and to help the Church be the same.

But because the sower is God, a "hard man who reaps where he did not sow," no spiritual fruitfulness goes ungathered. Evangelism is not about managing scarcity but bestowing spiritual abundance. God freely loves and calls even to the packed-hard, rocky, and weedy souls, so that if there is any possibility at all of fruitfulness, it will be found and developed. While the germination rate among these souls may never be high, God is hopeful and never turns away the person who turns to him. He sends laborers into the field to find a breakthrough for the abused, wounded soul; to dig up the stony obstructions that keep us from following Christ; and gently to awaken a soul languishing from its own neglect. Such were all of us until the Lord of the harvest began to tend us. All labor in God's field leads to a harvest, and any harvest is worth the labor.

Look It Up

John Chrysostom, in the second book of his treatise *On the Priesthood*, discusses the difficulty of tending souls.

Think About It

In Jesus' parable, weeds represent worldly values and wealth. To what extent must the tended ground of the Christian soul be free of these spiritual weeds?



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SUNDAY'S READINGS | 6 Pentecost, July 20

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Alternate: Wis. 12:13, 16-19 or Isa. 44:6-8 • Ps. 86:11-17 • Rom. 8:12-25 • Matt. 13:24-30, 36-43

Collect the Weeds First

The parable of the weedy field illustrates the fallacy of thinking Jesus' parables are completely allegorical, and therefore expecting them to contain very little direct information about last things. In this case, Jesus is systematic about explaining the allegory, but he also interprets his allegory and thereby gives direct information about the end of the age.

Because the attempt to mine chronological information about the second coming from allegorical parables is usually associated with dispensationalism, it is ironic that the chronology of this parable undermines dispensationalist ideas of the rapture. Where we think of the rapture as the pulling of the righteous to the presence of God while the wicked are left on Earth, here Jesus tells us, both in the allegory and in the interpretation, that the gathering is essentially a cleanup operation: a removal of all causes of sin and all evildoers. The weeds are collected first.

Dispensational concerns aside, it is clear from this parable that reaching "the glory about to be revealed in us" consists of two movements: the gathering of evil toward destruction, and the gathering of good toward eternal life. The good is not to be gathered until after the evil has been purged. Consider what even this temporal world would be like if all causes of sin and all evildoers were removed. The operation would not be as simple as taking out the trash: what causes one person to sin might not affect another. The causes of sin are internal to the human soul: "every man is tempted when he is drawn away by his own lusts and enticed" (James 1:14). For the angels to complete their mission requires widespread soul surgery, and woe to the soul that chooses not to enter the hereafter without its vices intact.

Consider also the gathering of good. In our world the treasures of the kingdom of God are often overlooked. Real sanctity may be found, but it rarely makes headlines. As we suffer with Jesus so that we may be glorified with him, much of that suffering takes place in isolation — internally, individually, visible only to a select few, if they have the spiritual eyes to see it. If all the heroism, all the loyalty, all the holiness, all the prayers of the people of God now living were gathered together into one community, what beauty would be there!

The angels' twofold mission at the coming of Christ is really the mop-up phase. That same work is already going on in our souls. The Spirit of God, as we keep in step with him, is daily performing soul surgery on us, removing from us all causes of sin and evildoing, teaching us to put to death the deeds of the flesh. This must be done first. Thereafter, the good that we become may be gathered and built into a holy temple of living stones to the glory of God.

Look It Up

In Matt. 24:40-41, evil is swept away, as in the flood of Noah. To be "taken" (the Greek word means to be seized, lifted up, and swept away) is bad; to be "left" is to be the righteous who remain standing after the purge.

Think About It

No matter how we define causes of sin and evil deeds, God's perspective on those questions will ultimately become visible. There is an end coming for all theological uncertainty.

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