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August 17, 2014

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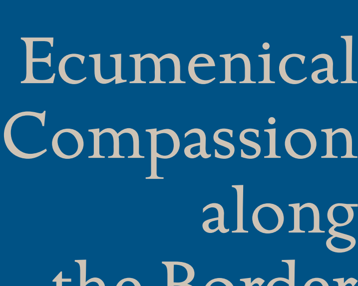

Ecumenical Compassion along the Border

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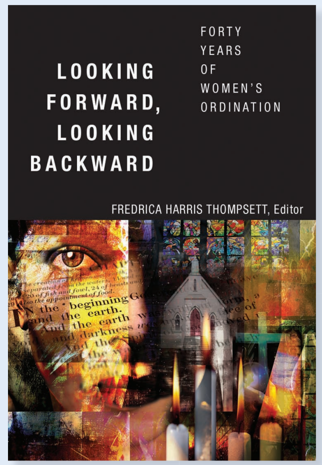

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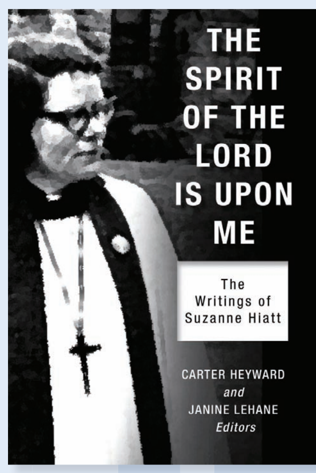

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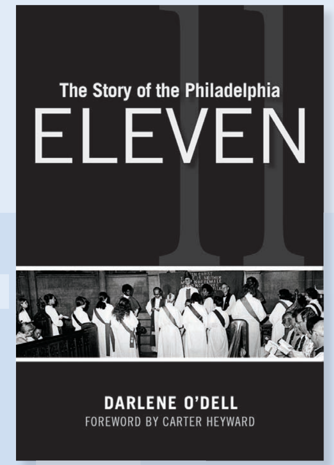

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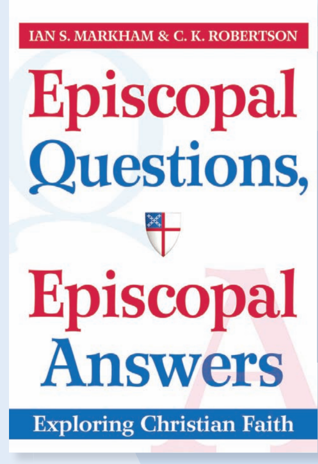

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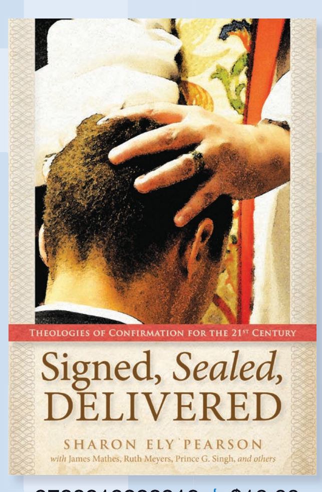

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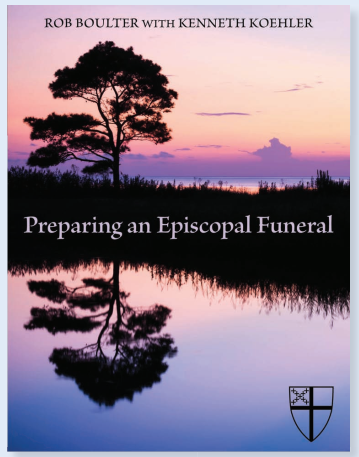

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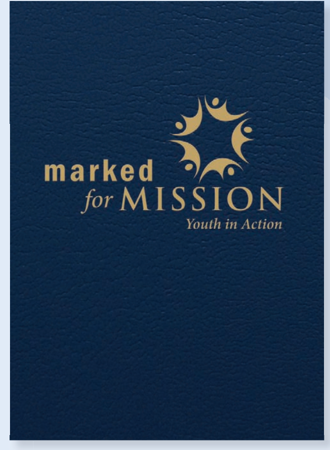

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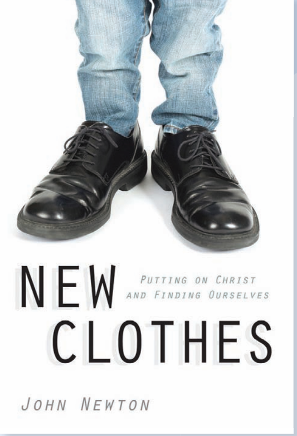

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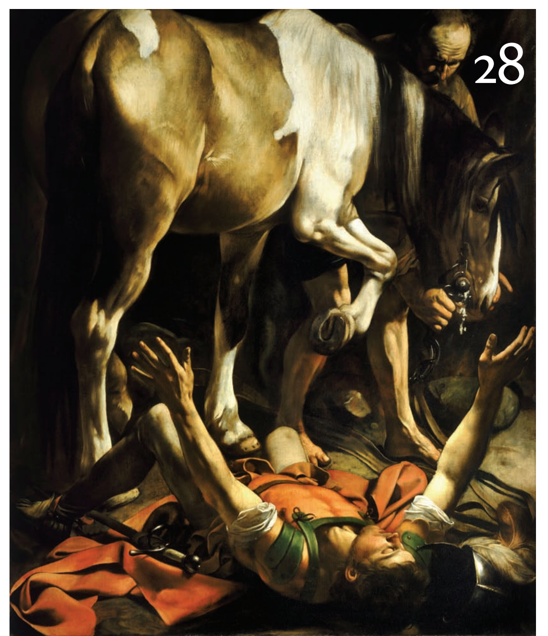
ON THE COVER

One of the many children who have come to the refugee center at Sacred Heart Roman Catholic Church in McAllen, Texas (see "Ecumenical Compassion Along the Border," p. 8).

Trish Motherall/Diocese of West Texas photo



THE LIVING CHURCH

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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.

Nuanced Celebration of the Philadelphia 11

Ragsdale

At the 40th anniversary of the Philadelphia 11's ordinations to the priesthood, ordained and lay women leaders celebrated the milestone, while also urging participants to be active in confronting other areas in which they felt injustice still prevailed. Their concerns included income disparities between ordained men and women, a lack of opportunities for women to advance as leaders, discrimination based on sexual identity, and racial inequities, which some speakers felt had been left unaddressed in the wake of the historic ordinations.

The daylong celebration on July 26 featured a symposium at Temple University and a Eucharist at the historic Church of the Advocate, site of the ordinations in 1974.

Although participants were mostly middle-aged and older, the event included a sprinkling of younger clergy, laypeople, and a few infants and toddlers. The gathering was billed as a celebration of the ministry of all women in the Church.

Giving the keynote address at the morning's symposium, retired Episcopal Divinity School historian and theologian Fredrica Harris Thompsett invited participants to turn to their neighbors and recall a personal "first" in their own lives.

"You intervene in history to make even more history," she said. "You look backward in order to move forward. … This celebration should not be honored by excluding others."

She challenged Episcopalians to focus on the centrality of baptism as the main prerequisite for ministry ("We all share the work of the healer, the teacher, the prophet"), to "claim our bodies as sacred vehicles of spiritual authority," and to address church authority by working to combat sexism and discrimination in clergy searches and substantially raise the number of women in the House of Bishops.

Harris Thompsett's address was followed by a panel of lay and ordained women, including the Rt. Rev. Carol Gallagher, clinical psychologist and deacon Pamela Nesbit, the Rev. Sandye Wilson, social worker and educator Nokomis Wood, and the Rev. Miguelina Howell, a native of the Dominican Republic who is vicar of Christ Church Cathedral in Hartford, Connecticut. The Very Rev. Katherine Ragsdale, dean and president of Episcopal Divinity School, moderated the panel.

Deacons are called to express a vocation common to everyone in baptism, as leaders of the *diakonia* or work of the Church, said Nesbit, who added that the reality of the diaconate "was sometimes a strange one." Acknowledging that relationships with priests, including her sister clergy, were not always comfortable, Nesbit said she was offering "a word of love and of challenge."

The "ordination that we all share is really the most important one," Wood said. She attended the service in 1974 as a neighbor and friend of the Rev. Suzanne Hiatt, who died in 2002. Wood was not jubilant at that service; instead, she feared that the civil rights struggle would be eclipsed by the debate on women in the priesthood. "The Episcopal Church was just beginning to talk about racial equity and racial justice," Wood said. "The conversation about women's ordination just allowed [the church] to put it back further."

Wilson echoed Wood's comments, saying she was "ordained in a very white church" in 1981. "It's still a very white church." Noting an "intersection of oppressions," she added: "Friends, we have to name these things, because if we don't name them we will repeat them."

While the occasion was a celebration of diversity, Ragsdale said, she also heard in the remarks made by panel participants "the infuriating reality of how far we still have to go."

The Rev. Elizabeth Eisenstadt Evans

Postcard from London

Synod Welcomes Women as Bishops

In an amazing turnaround from 20 months earlier, the Church of England's General Synod voted overwhelmingly for women bishops July 14. 351 of the 433-member synod voted for the measure. The vote signals closure of an often-acrimonious debate that has lingered for two decades.

In the House of Laity the vote was three-quarters in favour (152-45), compared to 132-74 in 2012.

Some observers think a speech in the final stages of the 2012 vote tipped balance and led to defeat of the measure. This time the final speaker, a blind member who is an evangelical from Bristol, the Rev. John Spence, seemed to tip it the other way.

Directing comments to evangelical opponents, he said: "Your faith is my faith, is all of our faith, and every one of us has a vital role to ensure that the searing vision of the risen Christ is taken out into this country. … I am confident that we can walk hand in hand, and return the risen Christ to his rightful place at the centre of this country, its conscience, and its culture." Spence won a standing ovation.

In greeting the result the Archbishop of Canterbury said: "Today marks the start of a great adventure of seeking mutual flourishing while still, in some cases, disagreeing. The challenge for us will be for the church to model good disagreement."

Fulcrum, the network of open evangelicals, said the decision "will strengthen the Church of England in its aim to spread the good news of Jesus to every corner of the country." Conservative evangelicals mostly remained opposed, but one of their number, Philip Giddings, the chairman of the House of Laity who was influential in defeating the measure in 2012, announced early in the debate that he would vote in favour.

Perhaps the most significant change has occurred among Catholic-minded members. The Catholic Group said it

Keith Blundy/Aegies Associates photo

General Synod meets in York.

was "pleased that the spirit of reconciliation continued to be displayed during the debate."

At the start of the day ordained women and supporters of the change — some dressed in pink ribbons and bow ties — queued for a seat in the public gallery to witness proceedings. Summer meetings of synod are residential and debates take place in York University's Assembly Hall.

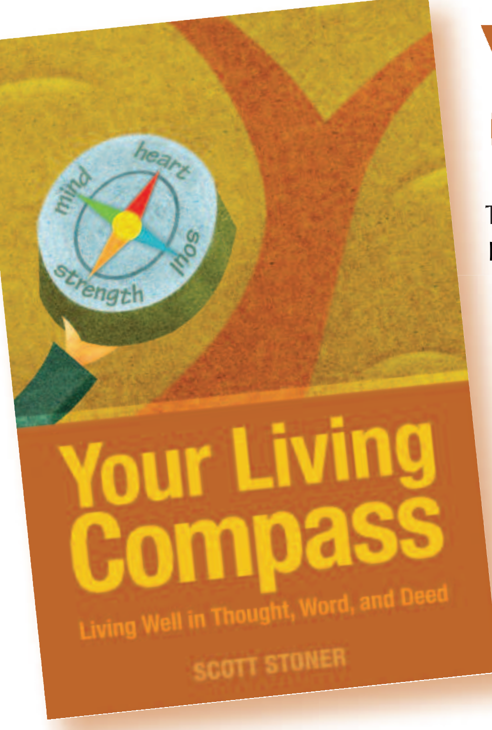
Behind the scenes, negotiations with the Catholic Group had satisfied its leadership "that the Church of England is committed to providing bishops and priests for our parishes enabling us to flourish in the life and structures of our Church." They were nevertheless "deeply concerned" about the implications of the vote for Church unity.

The debate had colourful moments. Jane Bisson, a lay member for Winchester, held up a black leather Bible and urged a no vote, predicting women bishops would cause a split in the church.

A telling intervention came from Adrian Vincent, a lay Anglo-Catholic member who voted against in 2012. "I shall be voting in favour today — by doing so, I am betraying what I believe, I am betraying those who trusted in me. I hope that the promised commitment to 'mutual flourishing' is not a commitment that will run out of steam in a few years."

Christina Rees, a longtime campaigner for women's ministry, broke down in tears as she responded to Vincent's intervention. Vincent made "a sacrificial decision today for the sake of the Church, he has shown his loyalty as an Anglican, and as a member of the Church of England," she said. "I was not prepared for what he said. It absolutely stunned me."

John Martin
TLC Correspondent



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From the Foreword, The Rt. Rev. Jeffrey Lee, Bishop of Chicago

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The combination of politics, patriarchy and power is a toxic force for many Muslim societies. The Qur'an is difficult to comprehend as it was not compiled chronologically. Add to this the fine line between culture and religion, which gets blurred in Muslim communities that are not literate in scripture or that lack a secular education. Change, urges Raza, has to come soon.

Raheel Raza is the President of the Council for Muslims Facing Tomorrow. A frequent speaker at the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva, Raza was featured in the award-winning documentary *Honor Diaries*.

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Hal Taussig is visiting Professor of New Testament at Union Theological Seminary in New York, an ordained United Methodist pastor and the editor of the award-winning *A New New Testament* (2013).

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Conflicts Halt EDS Review

Episcopal Divinity School eds.edu photo

Conflict at Episcopal Divinity School (EDS) has derailed a core piece of an incipient strategic review aimed at making the seminary sustainable for the long term.

A team of consultants canceled a governance assessment project in June in the wake of public protest from dissenting faculty, who said they were shut out of planning. The consultants' decision to withdraw leaves EDS unable to launch the review, which was supposed to lead to a new business model at the Cambridge, Massachusetts, school.

Faculty are "trying to unravel the consultation and delay our going forward," said the Very Rev. James Kowalski, chair of the EDS board of trustees and dean of the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York City. Consultants will not interview faculty and others this summer.

Those interviews were to be "the heart and soul of beginning seriously to engage the whole community and its various stakeholders in this question about sustainability," Dean Kowalski said. "What's our next step? We're not sure."

Faculty members, who last year voted "no confidence" in seminary President Katherine Ragsdale, dealt a blow to the strategic review by posting a June 1 open letter to the EDS community on their Facebook page. In it, signatories said the "faculty was not consulted about our views about the consultants, nor were we part of the hiring discussion."

After reading the faculty's open letter, consultants concluded the faculty had "judged in advance our ability to conduct the process fairly and insightfully." In a June 10 letter, they announced their decision to withdraw.

"It seems likely that because the faculty has already taken their case against the board, the president, and us to the court of public opinion, they would circulate any criticisms of our conduct of the assessment and our findings just as widely," consultants Martha Horne and Barbara Wheeler wrote to the board's executive committee. "Our professional commitments would prevent any response from us, raising the possibility that the public and the press would be seriously misinformed about our work. That would be damaging to the school as well as to us."

Horne is the former dean and president of Virginia Theological Seminary. Wheeler is the former president of Auburn Theological Seminary and now conducts research under the auspices of the Association of Theological Schools.

The current debacle comes amid fallout from a moratorium on hiring for tenured faculty positions. Last year EDS trustees voted to fill a tenured position in church history, but reversed course in April as the search neared its conclusion. The position was revamped to be a contractual position at the same level of salary and benefits as a tenured position, but without tenured status. All hiring of tenured faculty is now on hold, pending a decision on whether to retain, eliminate, or reinterpret tenure for new EDS faculty after the strategic review.

In their open letter to the EDS community, faculty members encouraged readers not to be "distracted by ancillary issues of governance or tenure,"

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and instead critiqued the process.

"The faculty had asked several times to be part of the planning process, and our requests were rejected by the President and Dean," said the June 1 letter, which was signed by all EDS faculty and posted on Facebook. "The faculty was not consulted about our views about the consultants, nor were we part of the hiring discussion. To our knowledge, none of the three consultants identifies as a person of color."

Dean Kowalski said faculty members interviewed Horne and Wheeler on campus and raised no objections before the board's vote to hire them. EDS faculty members, including Kwok Pui Lan, liaison to the administration, did not respond to requests for comment. In a June 25 Facebook post, however, Professor Gale Yee took issue with Kowalski's understanding of events, including the consultant screening.

"The faculty had not been told that the consultants were being 'interviewed' at the Board meeting as the letter states," Yee wrote. "The consultants were simply introduced and spoke briefly."

Stakes are high for EDS, which has 72 students and a tradition of welcoming gays, lesbians, and liberation theology in its classrooms. The school is facing "soaring costs [and] declining full-time on-campus enrollment," Kowalski said.

The situation is not dire. EDS steadied its finances through a $33 million deal that included sale of property to Lesley University in 2010. But EDS still needs to reduce how much it takes annually from its $66 million endowment, according to Dean Ragsdale and Kowalski. EDS draws 7 percent from the endowment to cover operating costs; 5 percent or less would be considered sustainable.

The urgency for a strategic review at EDS, however, is driven by non-financial factors. "Of core concern is how best to fulfill EDS' mission in the 21st century and how to structure the seminary to do that work," Ragsdale said.

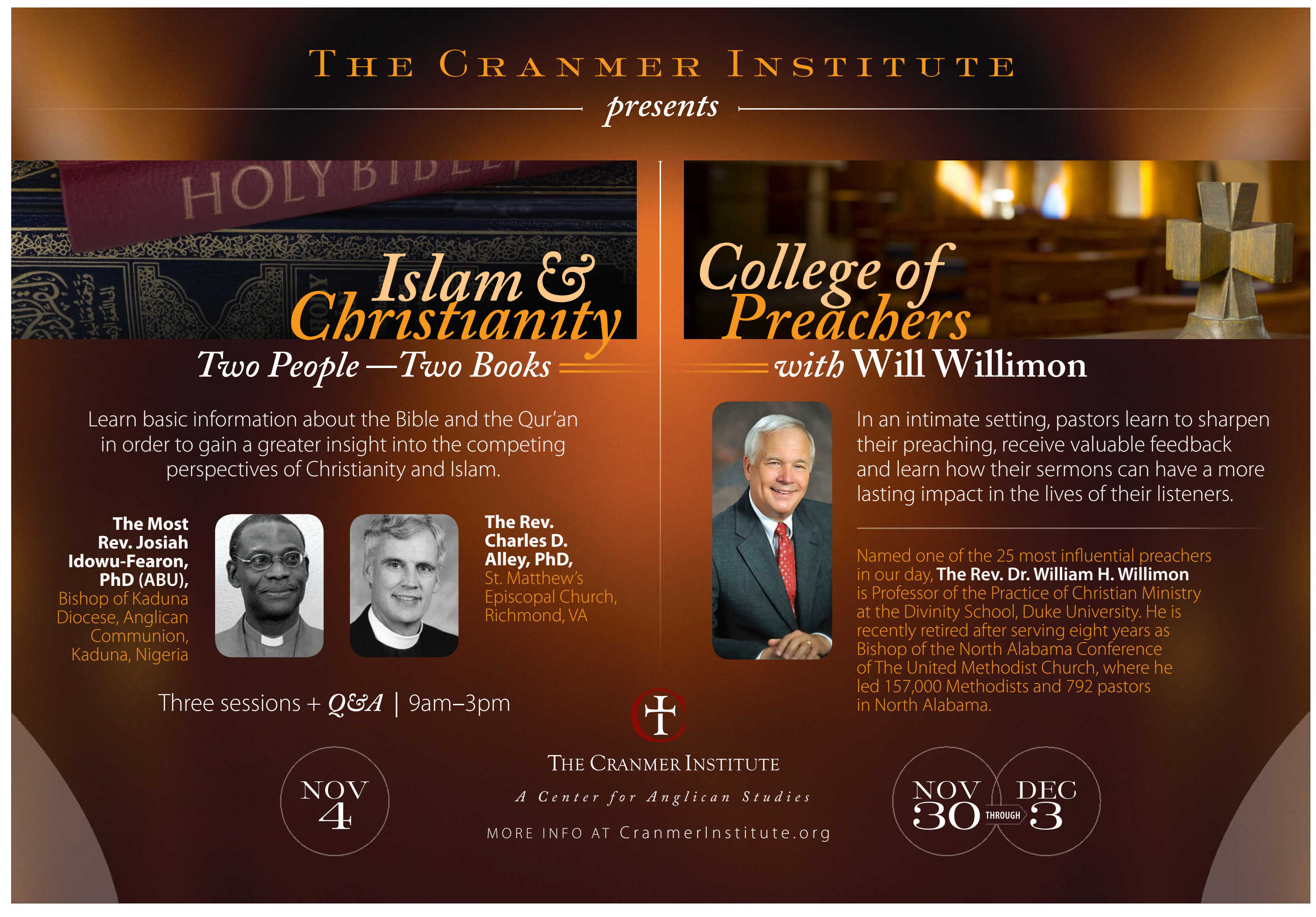
"The market is shrinking," she said in her May 8 State of the School address, as dioceses and congregations "don't have money to support people coming here." She described a need "to create a business model to embrace what we've always done *and* embrace new things."

Among the hot topics is whether EDS will offer new faculty tenure, which "generally boils down to a lifetime job," Ragsdale told TLC. The strategic review will consider, among other things, whether long-term contracts can preserve academic freedom for new faculty while giving the school more flexibility to adapt to changing times.

Most current EDS faculty members are expected to retire within the next five to six years. Hence now is the right time to take stock of hiring practices, Dean Ragsdale said, adding that she's not surprised the prospect of making systemic change has stirred up resistance.

No-confidence votes and resistance from faculty "are a dime a dozen,

(Continued on page 39)



Ecumenical Compassion along the Border

A patrol looks for immigrants next to the border wall. G. Jeffrey MacDonald photos

By G. Jeffrey MacDonald

Seventeen-year-old Alejandro and his mother, Nora, had no luggage or supplies when U.S. Border Patrol agents dropped them at a bus station in the border town of McAllen, Texas, on July 17. But at least the death threats were finally far away.

Ten days earlier, they had fled their home in Santa Ana, El Salvador. Three gangs had been trying to extort a large payment and recruit Alejandro, a top student with good looks and no desire to become a gangster.

That Alejandro's father is a Santa Ana detective did not help. He had tried unsuccessfully to prosecute a gang, whose members now have a bounty on his head. And their threats do not ring hollow. A gang recently killed one of Alejandro's friends, he said, and chopped his body into small pieces.

Sister Norma Pimentel with Rey Garcia, a logistics specialist for Catholic Charities of the Rio Grande Valley.

Nora said in Spanish: "The gangs told my son, 'We know where you go to school. We know what time you get out. We know where you go. Either you pay us and join our gang or we'll kill you.'"

The journey across Guatemala and Mexico cost them $8,000 in the hands of a coyote, or human smuggler, who delivered them to U.S. Border Patrol agents swamped by a massive recent influx of violence-scarred Central American immigrants. Then came a multi-day stay in a facility where detainees are packed shoulder-to-shoulder on floors, even in bathrooms, with no room to stretch out or lie down. By the time they're released, many are exhausted, hungry, and dehydrated, according to volunteers who interview them.

As the Border Patrol van pulled away, the mother-son pair had few options. They needed food, a shower, and a phone to call Los Angeles, where they would stay with Alejandro's brothers and make their quest for asylum. They spoke no English and had no contacts in southern Texas. They hoped someone would have mercy and help them.

Moments later, their prayers were answered. The help they needed was freely offered in Christ's name five blocks away at a rapidly assembled, church-run refugee center.

What they tasted there, besides cool water and stom-

At St. John's Church, McAllen, members of three congregations prepare travel kits for refugees.

ach-soothing soup, was the fruit of new ecumenical partnerships, born out of an unexpected crisis and now positioned for sustained outreach to the needy in months ahead.

"Everybody just came on their own, saying, 'We want to help, we want to volunteer,'" said Sister Norma Pimentel, executive director of Catholic Charities of the Rio Grande Valley, which runs the refugee center. "Episcopal, Presbyterian, Baptist, United Methodist — all of us are working together and taking responsibility for one aspect or another."

At Sacred Heart Catholic Church, a transformed parking lot and parish hall help weary immigrants regain strength as they wait, sometimes hours or a full day, for buses to depart for points north. Two air-conditioned tents provide quiet, partitioned space for as many as 100 to nap or sleep overnight on cots. One mobile unit provides showers; another allows for doctor visits. Inside, bilingual volunteers applaud each new arrival, then guide their guests through tidy stacks of donated clothing.

From early June through mid-July, nearly 4,000 immigrants — almost entirely mothers and children — received refreshment and their first warm welcome north of the border at Sacred Heart. Thousands more were blessed with similar ecumenical assistance at church-run refugee centers in the Texas cities of Brownsville, Laredo, and El Paso, as well as Artesia, New Mexico; Tucson and Phoenix; and Fontana, California.

These projects mark churches' collective response to a massive flow of children into the United States, some unaccompanied and some with one parent, from violence-scarred pockets of Central America. More than 52,000 have arrived since October, mostly from Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador, according to U.S. Customs and Border Protection.

The unaccompanied are kept in detention centers and then turned over to the Department of Health and Human Services. The thousands who arrive with a parent are released with a court date and given permission to live with relatives, at least temporarily, in the United States. That's how they end up at bus stations in border towns, with no belongings and lots of vulnerabilities.

For McAllen's Christians, tackling poverty- and immigration-related problems is part of daily life, but the scale of this year's sudden crisis has required an entirely new level of working together.

By late May, Border Patrol was picking up 100 to 200 children and mothers a day in McAllen and dropping them off by the dozen a week or so later at the bus station. Church leaders assessed needs and doled out tasks until each community had a specific, major role to play.

(Continued on next page)

Ecumenical Compassion along the Border

A pro-immigrant rally outside the Customs and Border Protection facility in McAllen. The rally began with interfaith worship.

(Continued from previous page)

Nora and Alejandro were direct beneficiaries of this ecumenism in action. Volunteers from an evangelical church found them at the bus station, where coyotes have been known to stalk and entice immigrants, and steered them to safety. At Sacred Heart, their soup was served by the Salvation Army. Cot linens were laundered by Calvary Baptist Church.

By the time mother and son left to catch their bus, they were no longer empty-handed. Nora held a satchel with toothpaste, shampoo, and other personal hygiene items. Alejandro carried a bright yellow backpack with water, crackers, and other snacks.

All they carried had been packed the night before in McAllen at St. John's Church. For an hour, members of three Diocese of West Texas congregations had set aside their political differences on whether undocumented immigrants fleeing violent conditions should be allowed to stay in the United States, focusing instead on the need at hand.

"It doesn't matter if you're conservative or if you're liberal on this issue," said the Rev. Jim Nelson, rector of St. John's. "There are children and people here that are hurting and need our help. End of story."

The human toll of this year's immigration surge is visible long before children arrive in the United States. Every time a freight train nicknamed *La Bestia* ("The Beast") leaves the Guatemala-Mexico border, more than 1,000 immigrants — mostly women and children — cling to its roof and sides for the perilous journey north. Some die en route, and some get kidnapped. One man broke down in tears in McAllen as he recalled being held for days with 50 other Hondurans.

"They could hear the girls in their group being raped, but there was nothing they could do," said Hermi Forshage, the refugee center volunteer who interviewed him. "His son was clearly traumatized by what happened."

Meanwhile tensions have been running visibly high on the Texas-Mexico border. On a 102-degree afternoon in July, Border Patrol vehicles crawled along the U.S. side of a steel border fence. A surveillance helicopter flew slowly over every winding turn in the Rio Grande River, while Border Patrol boats combed the banks below. Local police and a legion of state troopers lay in wait across the Texas border region. To drive 20 minutes along U.S. 83 was to pass dozens of official vehicles, all idling in low-profile spots where they might nab the next undocumented immigrant child and parent.

Yet on a Wednesday night at St. John's, no one needed prodding to prepare supplies for people like Nora and Alejandro, even though they had entered the United States without permission. "Packing parties" have become twice-a-week events at St. John's. This one had an air of urgency as the parish hall became a beehive of activity at the strike of 6 p.m.

More than 50 volunteers formed vigorous assembly lines that packed every available item. A youth group from St. Stephen's Church in Wimberley handled nonperishables and restocked boxes. A team from St. Peter & St. Paul's Church in Mission folded Spanish-language prayers and sealed them in plastic bags.

Laypeople from St. John's oversaw operations until

Immigrant children from Guatemala who came to the refugee center in McAllen with their mother.

the day's purchases, made with help from a $10,000 Episcopal Relief & Development grant and in-kind donations, gave out. The final tally: 1,707 kits, all packed and sealed in 35 minutes.

The event drew people of varied minds on the politics of immigration. All three congregations have parishioners who want the new immigrants deported, participants said, and not all volunteers hope they will stay in the United States. Immigration is such a charged issue in this region that on-duty refugee center volunteers may not talk about it. The topic is banned from the premises.

Support for refugee relief efforts, however, is broad-based, according to the Rt. Rev. Gary Lillibridge, Bishop of West Texas. As of mid-July, the diocese had raised more than $30,000 (not including the ERD grant) for refugee relief efforts in McAllen and Laredo. About 90 percent had come from within the diocese, but the fundraising effort is becoming national in scope.

"This is a crisis right now at the border, but it is not a border issue," Bishop Lillibridge said. "It is a broader issue that affects what the whole country looks like and what the whole country acts like."

Meanwhile the situation's poignancy is inspiring once-hesitant churchgoers to become involved in outreach. For Beth Lindner Thaddeus, who joined St. John's this spring, the immigration crisis has prompted her first foray into mission with the congregation. She's become a packing-party regular.

"We might be the only Christians that they see," Thaddeus said. "I want them to see the church as something worthwhile and good that they might want to become a part of. … When they hear the word *Christian*, they might say, 'Oh yeah, those people were nice. They helped.'"

The crisis in McAllen has been so massive as to warrant a second layer of help from congregations 150 miles away in Laredo. They too have stepped up, despite having none of the infrastructure that is crucial in McAllen.

In early June, Customs and Border Protection officers identified a new problem: McAllen did not have enough buses to handle all the immigrants they were dropping off each day. Just like CBP, the private transportation system was overwhelmed. Agents started busing former detainees to terminals in Laredo and other border-region cities. Laredo residents began noticing this unusual practice and wondered what was going on.

"I saw a line of about 100 people waiting to use the phone at the bus station," said the Rev. Paul Harris, pastor of Laredo First United Methodist Church. "I thought, *What are all these people doing here?*"

New immigrants in Laredo had the same needs as those in McAllen: water, food, a place to rest and clean up. But unlike McAllen, the City of Laredo did not supply tents or other infrastructure for an impromptu refugee operation. Christians would need to handle the daily influx on their own. That would mean marshaling resources and cooperating on an unprecedented level.

Bethany House of Laredo, a nonprofit homeless shelter and soup kitchen with Roman Catholic roots, bore as much of the burden as it could. The number of daily meals surged from 130 to 230 virtually overnight. The number of towels laundered daily jumped from 40 to 150 as mothers and children got clean. But the hungry kept coming and needing more assistance than a maxed-out, no-vacancy shelter could alone provide. St. Peter the Apostle Church welcomed hundreds of new immigrants to community meals. Then a question arose: what about the Holding Institute, a former seminary turned adult education center, run by a mission group known as United Methodist Women? Could the institute adapt its space to become a refugee assistance center?

Board members quickly approved the plan, and soon the institute was managing every need as it arose. Twenty refugees slept one night in what had been a classroom a few days earlier. Meeting space filled with tables piled high with donated clothing. Six thousand hygiene kits arrived from the United Methodist Committee on Relief.

Holding's one-block campus became an oasis where tired immigrants could make calls, meet with friends, have a sandwich, and sit outside under the trees. None

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God's Word in Human Words

First Place, Student Essays in Christian Wisdom

The fifth annual Student Essays in Christian Wisdom competition attracted papers from a range of students at Anglican seminaries and university divinity schools. As ever, our judges evaluated the papers blindly, with no knowledge of the name or institutional affiliation of the author.

Lyndon Jost, a student at Wycliffe College in the University of Toronto, took the top prize with his paper, "God's Word in Human Words," which The Living Church is pleased to publish in this edition. The other winners were:

- Second place: Kevin Stewart Rose, Duke Divinity School: "Eating One's Fill and Throwing It Up: Food as Outpouring of Worldview in 14th and 18th Century Europe"
- Third place: John Zambenini, Duke Divinity School: "The hope we don't have and the hope we do: A reflection on Philippians and being alive today"

We are most grateful to the judges of this year's competition, who gave sacrificially of their time and wisdom:

- The Rev. Scott Gunn, executive director of Forward Movement
- The Rev. Yejide Peters, rector of All Saints, Briarcliff Manor, New York
- The Rt. Rev. Dabney Smith, Bishop of Southwest Florida

By Lyndon Jost

I was born and bred in a conservative evangelical family and church community whose understanding of history and science was informed by young-earth creationists like Kent "Dr. Dino" Hovin, and whose eschatology was informed by proto-*Left Behind* Christian rapture movies. The earth was incontestably 6,000 to 10,000 years old, and the only question we had left about the eschaton was "Pre-trib?" or "Post-trib?" If the Bible said it, we believed it, and that settled it — and there was always a way to prove it.

In our estimation, God had revealed the earth's geological secrets to the writer of Genesis 1, the word-by-word account of Peter's speech to the writer of Acts 2, and the play-by-play of the world's end to the writer of Revelation. The gospels gave exact historical and

chronological descriptions of Jesus' life, and could thus be harmonized seamlessly. In fact, to regard these gospels as anything less than "historical" (in the strict modern sense of the word) would be to undermine their divine nature and authority. Scripture was *God's* word, unfettered by humanity's limitedness.[1]

During my undergraduate studies in religion, however, I began to see in Scripture something unsettlingly different than what I had previously seen. As I became engrossed in the study of the gospels from a historical-critical perspective, I came to see that each gospel was a deeply culturally embedded writing. Each author had a distinct style, wrote with distinct purposes, and crafted his narrative in a way that suited these purposes. The authors did not transcend culture or history, but wrote in ways familiar to their social contexts, using the ideas, terms, and even philosophies of their day. At times these authors' accounts of Jesus' life would be at odds with one another. Initially, the humanness of these texts — with all of their particularities, inconsistencies, and creative liberties — posed a major problem to my understanding of these texts as Scripture. It all seemed far too human to be *God's* word — that is, until I began to realize that this is just how God's word has always come to humanity: *humanly*.

What I had functionally been ignorant of all these years was that the Bible was not only the divine word of God but also the human word of man. And while my church tradition worked hard to cling to the divine nature of Scripture (by clinging to a literalistic reading of it), it seemed to have lost touch with the humanity of Scripture — thereby diminishing Scripture's authority by using it to make claims that it could not (and should not) make or defend. It might be said that mine was a tradition of scriptural Docetists, who would read and treat Scripture as though it had come to us with the mere semblance of human authorship, but without any real humanity in the text. It was as though the contents of Scripture had bypassed all human faculties and, with the help of mere human hands, God had written divine revelation. However, because Scripture is a *human* book, God does not bypass the authors' human faculties, styles of writing, cultural-literary norms, or worldviews. Rather, God chooses to take particular human beings *as* human beings, and their writings *as* human writings, and make them instruments of his very own self-revelation. Indeed, Scripture is a distinctly human book, yet its humanness in no way diminishes the fact that it is the word of God.

Barth and Billings both suggest an incarnational understanding of Scripture, comparing it to Christ's dual nature.[2] For Barth, Scripture remains uncompromisingly fully human, even in its role as the word of God.[3] Much like Christ's humanity was not compromised by his deity — as he experienced real limitations (hunger, thirst, exhaustion, even death) — in a similar way Scripture's humanity need not be compromised in order to maintain its status and function as the word of God.

As with Christ, we must not try to purge Scripture

(Continued on next page)

God's Word in Human Words

First Place, Student Essays in Christian Wisdom

(Continued from previous page)

of its humanity but embrace it, just as God has embraced these human words, sanctified them, and spoken them as his very own — to be read and spoken in turn: in, to, and through the Church.

In the terminology and phraseology of George Hunsinger's "Beyond Literalism and Expressivism," we should say that the humanness of Scripture is present precisely in (1) its "mode of textual reference" (analogical) and (2) its "mode of literary representation" (legendary witness).[4]

1. While the literalist-inerrantist trend has been to claim that the "semantic force" of the text of Scripture is *univocal* (i.e., the words refer unambiguously to a particular referent), human words in fact never absolutely refer to their referent. Words are not that which they refer to. The word *table* is not a table, and is only useful insofar as it refers correctly to that which the speaker intends, and insofar as it is *understood* as that to which the speaker intends to refer. There will always be space between human words and their referents, and all the more when the referent is "wholly other," God himself.[5]

Nevertheless, while the assertive force of the scriptural text can never be absolute, especially regarding him who is wholly other, God did choose to claim and use this text in order that he might truly be revealed. In this sense, one can be assured that the words of Scripture, though they are distinctly human words hence not univocal in their reference, are certainly "analogical" for expressing to humankind who God truly is.[6] Thus, the humanness of Scripture is evident in its analogical "mode of textual reference."

2. Literalists tend also to guard against claims of the human finitude of Scripture by claiming the narrative force of the text to be "factual report." As mentioned above, one of the problems with this kind of facticity is that not all cultures have the same standards and expectations for what constitutes fact or history. For example, it is highly doubtful that the history-writers around the time of the New Testament era held to the

same standard of history-writing as today.[7] The modern reader, then, cannot approach the New Testament texts as factual reports in the same way that we understand factual reports today. Instead, as Barth insists, the "narrative force" of Scripture must be understood as "legendary witness."

But what does it mean to read Scripture as "legendary witness"? For Barth, it is to recognize the space between human history and human testimony. For him, there is no point in trying to locate divine revelation historically, since such history is ultimately impossible to recover and we can only presently access such revelation through the witness (or testimony) to such revelation.[8] To call this witness "legendary" is not to diminish the reality to which it testifies, but simply to recognize that the role of this witness has less (perhaps nothing) to do with recovering, or uncovering, a historical event, but has everything to do with testifying to revelation that is "utterly real."[9] In this view, the text of Scripture testifies truly to the event of revelation. But in what sense, then, might we deem the Scriptures true? Can the Scriptures, according to this view, be trustworthy in their historicity?

C. Stephen Evans suggests that the truthfulness of legendary witness has less to do with the text itself and more to do with the reader. In other words, our reading of the biblical text is not so much about our control of it, or what we can make of or do with it. Instead, it has more to do with the text's control on us, the readers. For Evans, the important thing is that the reader is left with an accurate view of the person, situation, or teaching conveyed. As long as the reader is left believing the truth about the person, situation, or teaching, it seems the written history is reliable.[10]

In all of these ways, the Word of God comes to us in the words of men, and the words of men given us in Scripture come to us as the very Word of God. Although Scripture might thus be said to be ordinary human writing, such humanness need not diminish the authority of Scripture any more than Christ's humanness diminishes his authority over all things. As Billings says:

> Just as God uses ordinary water in baptism, and bread and wine in the Lord's Supper, God sets aside ("makes holy") the words of Scripture. This divine choosing takes the creaturely into the triune work of God: through Scripture the Spirit works to bring the church into conformity with its head, Jesus Christ, who speaks as the Word of the Father.[11]

Lyndon Jost is a third-year Master of Divinity student at Wycliffe College, University of Toronto.

Notes

[1] In Vanhoozer's summary of Barth's view: "the miracle is not that the human authors spoke infallibly, but rather that God uses fallible human words to speak his infallible Word. … God, Barth says, is not ashamed to speak through the foolishness (1 Cor. 1:21) and fallibility (1 Cor. 1:25) of men. This is the 'impossible possibility' that must be accepted on faith." See Kevin J. Vanhoozer, "A Person of the Book? Barth on Biblical Authority and Interpretation," in *Karl Barth and Evangelical Theology: Convergences and Divergences*, ed. Sung Wook Chung (Baker, 2006), p. 42.

[2] As Billings says of the authorship of Scripture, "we need to think in an incarnational and Trinitarian way about this human act" (see J. Todd Billings, *The Word of God for the People of God: An Entryway to the Theological Interpretation of Scripture* [Eerdmans, 2010], p. 93).

[3] In Barth's view, "Holy Scripture is like the unity of God and man in Jesus Christ. It is neither divine only nor human only. Nor is it a mixture of the two nor a *tertium quid* between them. But in its own way and degree, it is very God and very man, that is, a witness of revelation which itself belongs to revelation." See Bruce L. McCormack, "The Being of Holy Scripture is in Becoming" in *Evangelicals and Scripture: Tradition, Authority and Hermeneutics*, ed. Vincent Bacote, Laura C. Miguelez, and Dennis L. Okholm (InterVarsity, 2004), p. 68.

[4] See Hunsinger, "Beyond Literalism and Expressivism: Karl Barth's Hermeneutical Realism," *Modern Theology* 3 (1987), p. 225 (in honor of Hans Frei's 65th birthday).

[5] MacCormack, p. 68.

[6] "The God who is wholly other and therefore wholly incomprehensible posits, in the event of self-revelation, an incomprehensible analogical relation between human word and divine referent" (Hunsinger, p. 220).

[7] "God's truth was not at our disposal, Barth urged, but our truth was at God's disposal. In God, who was the truth, all truth found its unity. When God selected certain metaphors, concepts, and words from our sphere and allowed them to correspond to the divine being, there was a sense in which God was not selecting something alien, but something which belonged originally and properly to God as the Creator" (Hunsinger, pp. 217-18).

[8] See Stephen C. Evans, "The Historical Reliability of John's Gospel: From What Perspective Should It Be Assessed?" in *The Gospel of John and Christian Theology*, ed. Richard Bauckham and Carl A. Mosser (Eerdmans, 2008), p. 95: "[In] a world without tape recorders or shorthand stenographers, it is understandable that historians of the period felt free to attribute to speakers discourses capturing the gist of what was said rather than being verbatim accounts. Similarly, if there was a general understanding during the period that historians had a degree of freedom to arrange their narratives so that events were sometimes grouped together from some thematic purpose rather than being related in a strict chronological sequence, then historians who follow this practice are not being deceitful or even inaccurate relative to contemporary standards."

[9] "Revelation is *in* history, but it is not *of* history. While the resurrection is a historical event, Barth distinguishes between the sheer occurrence of events and God's self-revelation in them" (Vanhoozer, p. 50).

[10] Vanhoozer, p. 49.

[11] Billings, p. 94.

Field Guides to the Future Church

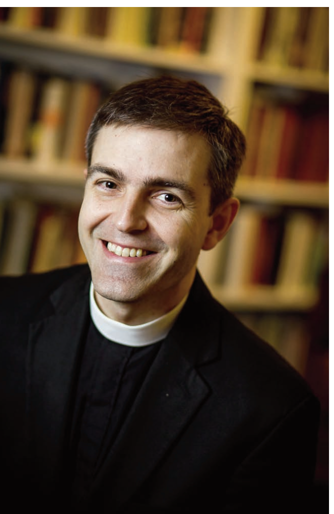
America's landscape for Christian ministry in the 21st century bears some resemblance to decommissioned farmland: it's becoming woodsier and wilder with each passing year. Middle-aged and young adults are far less likely than their parents to claim any religious affiliation, according to Pew Center research. Cultivating faith in this largely unchurched wilderness excites the entrepreneurial and mission-minded, and it requires pastoral skills that were not needed a generation ago. Who will teach the shepherds of tomorrow how to lead a new, enigmatic type of flock? And what will Episcopal seminarians learn from these pioneering educators?

To find out, G. Jeffrey MacDonald recently interviewed four on-the-rise professors at Episcopal Church seminaries. All are between the ages of 39 and 42. All draw deeply on Church history in their respective disciplines. And none are cradle Episcopalians: they have migrated along the religious landscape, like many of their students.

As these professors serve as guides to the past, they equip tomorrow's clergy with inspiration and practical models, often in corners where prior generations did not look. —Ed.

The Rev. Thomas N. Buchan III, 42

Associate professor of Church history
Nashotah House Theological Seminary


Buchan

Historian Thomas Buchan can relate to the Millennial generation's struggle to find its niche within Christianity. He was raised in what he calls a liberal American Baptist congregation, attended a fundamentalist grade school, and joined youth mission trips with charismatic groups before matriculating at Wheaton College, an evangelical flagship.

"When I got to Wheaton and heard this word *evangelicals*, I didn't really know what it meant, but I knew what they didn't like," said Buchan, the first in his family to attend college. "What they didn't like was fundamentalists, charismatics, and liberals. … And I had been kind of formed by all three of these things."

Buchan ultimately landed at Nashotah House, where only about half his students are Episcopalians. The rest are connected to either the Anglican Church in North America or Anglican provinces abroad.

Despite their varied affiliations, Buchan's students bring a common set of questions to the seminary. They wonder how to be effective leaders in times of declining attendance. They ask what good, if any, might come from edgy internal debates about scriptural interpretation, sexual ethics, and other hot-button issues.

"To the extent that people in the culture at large have a conception of historic Christianity, it's mostly in terms of negative stereotypes," Buchan said. "So a common question from my students is: *How can I present the story of Christianity to people who don't know anything about it?*"

When Buchan points them to the past for wisdom and guidance, he does so as both a pastor and a teacher. He serves as priest-in-charge at St. Anskar Church in Hartland, Wisconsin, where about 45 worship on an average Sunday. His pastoral manner comes to the fore in the classroom, too. He nudges students to be inspired by the past without sugarcoating it.

It's with a pastor's heart that Buchan offers a long-range perspective on today's stubborn fault lines within the Church. Remember the Council of Nicaea, he urges. Nearly six rambunctious decades of debate on trinitarian language crafted in A.D. 325 paved the way for the Council of Constantinople's confirmation of the Nicene Creed in 381. One lesson from that period: sometimes the Church needs what seems like an endless, debate-filled era in order to usher in clarity and new unity.

Great leaders of the past were not discouraged, Buchan reminds seminarians, even when all their cultural advantages seemed to be crumbling. Instead they grew creative. Pope Gregory the Great, who led the Church through hard times in the fifth century after Rome was sacked, relished the discovery of new roles, such as caring for a recently impoverished class of people.

"This is very much an age when the glories of Rome have dramatically diminished," Buchan said. "It's not what it was. And Gregory is a great example of someone who doesn't lose heart and finds a way to be a pastor, not just to people nearby but to people far away as well."

Andrew Irving, 41

Assistant professor of Church history
The General Theological Seminary

Irving

When Andrew Irving teaches history to his students, he sees the work as more than laying a foundation for their careers in church leadership. He regards it as spiritual formation.

The study of history requires honesty — admitting what we do not know — as well as humility and accountability. In this way, it becomes a formative, character-shaping discipline.

"Helping people confront the unknown, and become more and more honest in the face of the unknown … is, to me, a ministry," Irving said.

It's no small task for Irving to make today's stu-

(Continued on next page)

Field Guides to the Future Church

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dents accustomed to meeting a high, objective standard. They are often shocked if they receive a C, he says, because they believe a grade should reflect their substantial efforts. He informs them that effort alone is not enough; only when they reach high bars do they receive high marks.

In imparting this lesson, Irving aims to shape not only tomorrow's priests but also church culture. He says Anglican bishops, priests, deacons, and lay leaders need to help one another grow in Christ, but they are not held to meaningful standards for doing so. He laments how diocesan structures routinely will not intervene in congregational life unless a situation involves a lawsuit or an imminent financial collapse.

"There is a sort of extraordinary lack of accountability," Irving said. "That's really eating us alive."

Irving believes a seminary education that demands accountability at every stage can shape expectations and habits that could translate culturally over time into much-needed accountability.

Irving's zeal comes by way of New Zealand, where he grew up on a dairy farm. His mother was a devout teacher who brought him to Baptist and Presbyterian churches. Intrigued by worship and its continuity with tradition, he earned a master's in liturgy en route to a doctorate in history. His specialties include histories of doctrine, worship, and medieval Christendom.

Historical knowledge is power, in Irving's view, and should be used to advance God's purposes for the Church. Christians must be able to understand, in historical perspective, their choices and the decisions of the Church.

"The inability to do that, or to have a framework in which to do it or to participate in it, is gravely weakening for the strength of the body of Christ," Irving said. "And it makes you much more dependent, essentially, upon whatever the powerful people are saying at the moment."

Daniel Joslyn-Siemiatkoski, 41

Associate professor of Church history
Seminary of the Southwest

Daniel Joslyn-Siemiatkoski has found that students have very different needs and expectations than those of seminarians 10 or 15 years ago. One big example: today's students cannot expect to serve in full-time pastorates after graduation.

Joslyn-Siemiatkoski

"Many of our students are going through seminary with their bishops saying to them, 'You need to be bivocational. We don't have all the resources to support you in a full-time parish job. So what other skills do you need?'" Joslyn-Siemiatkoski said.

In this challenging environment, he sees seminarians grasping for models of how to be leaders when there is no long-established, steeped-in-tradition congregation around them. For that, they need to see how Christians have lived through the ages — in other cultures, as religious minorities, and as fledgling groups trying to blaze a faithful path.

They ask not only what Augustine of Hippo taught, but also how his contemporaries practiced their faith day-to-day. The answer might hold clues for how to live as 21st-century Christians.

"The discipline of Church history is moving a lot," Joslyn-Siemiatkoski said. "It's starting to ask those questions in really specific ways by looking at practices of Christianity historically, both pastoral practices and congregational practices."

Today's students routinely come to the Episcopal Church from another denomination, as Joslyn-Siemiatkoski did. Having been raised a charismatic and evangelical Methodist, he knows how a particular church's history takes on special significance for newcomers, who inherently bring a distinct set of urgent questions to their study.

"They want to know their story," Joslyn Siemiatkoski said. "They come out not feeling so much like critics of the Christian tradition, but as people who are faithfully aware of all of its complexity."

To be sure, those who studied Church history with Joslyn-Siemiatkoski at Church Divinity School of the Pacific, where he taught until this year, covered many of the same topics as seminarians of generations past. But they were also interested to dig into sidebar stories that might be uniquely instructive for today's ministry environment.

He observed, for instance, that many were inspired by the example of Russian monks who settled in Alaska in the 20th century, retained their ways of life, and planted what became vibrant Orthodox communities. He urged students to consider what it might entail for them to follow the monks' example and live as holy, inspiring people.

"It's going to take a lot of work and commitment on our own part to develop our practices and prayer, to be serious about spirituality and be transparent about it in ways that other people around us might see," he said. And students were drawn to that. "It was an attraction that was challenging them to grow spiritually in their own lives by looking at that historical example."

Donyelle McCray, 39

Instructor of homiletics and director of multicultural ministries Virginia Theological Seminary

Today's seminarians can often relate to non-church types since they have, in many cases, spent time on the margins of church life themselves. But they need training in how to proclaim Christ's message far and wide to growing numbers who do not natively speak church.

For that, they need to consult the work of preachers from the past, and not necessarily the most famous ones, according to Donyelle McCray.

"There are these just fantastic and amazing figures who barely register as preachers, but are doing proclamation," McCray said. "That's where a lot of the insight is for our current situation, where the nature of the Church is shifting and there are so many people who camp out on the fringes of the Church. How do you reach those people?"

As an instructor in homiletics, McCray aims to help liberate the authentic preaching voices of these Christians who can relate to outsiders. She helps them drink from the fountains of past preaching as they vie to find their niche and range.

In her classes, students read Julian of Norwich, a 14th-century English mystic who proclaimed the faith at great personal risk. They listen to audio meditations from Howard Thurman, a university chaplain and mentor to Martin Luther King, Jr. They consider sermons of Oscar Romero, the Archbishop of San Salvador who championed justice for the poor and was martyred while celebrating Mass.

McCray

Studying such preachers attunes students' ears to how scriptural texts can resonate with those who do not feel part of the Church establishment or the power structures of society. It's a homiletic project fit for an era marked by widespread distrust of institutions.

"What the fringe has is longing," McCray said. "They have desire — the desire for God, the desire to connect with other people — so the preacher has to be in touch with his or her own sense of longing for God."

McCray comes to the seminary faculty by a unique path. After graduating from Spellman College, she went to Harvard Law School with intentions of becoming a teacher. But her passion and curiosity led elsewhere: the study of Christian consolation as offered to the faithful in funeral sermons. Along the way, she migrated from the African Methodist Episcopal Church of her youth to the Episcopal Church, in which she discerned a calling to teach at the seminary level.

Lest the language of sermons and mysticism seem abstract, she makes sure students keep their theologies grounded in concrete experiences. Her "dislocated exegesis" assignments require that the discipline of unpacking scriptural meaning be done far away from a pastor's study. They do it instead in places where they wouldn't ordinarily hang out, such as on a city bus or at a Walmart.

"One student, Francie, went to Walmart and was able to see how one of the men serving at the checkout was the light," McCray said. "He was spreading all this joy and making God present in a Walmart. That's the language people speak."

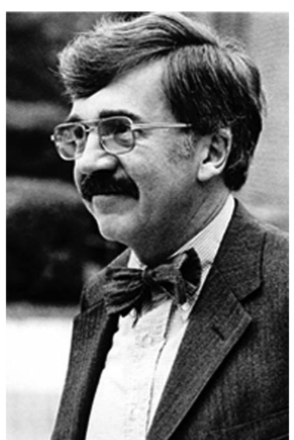
JOHN WOOLVERTON: Allergic to Pomposity

David L. Holmes gathers the recollections of colleagues and friends to create a living memory of an eminent historian of the Episcopal Church. —Ed.

Episcopal historian John Woolverton died on June 25 at his home in Cumberland, Maine. He was 88. A native of New York City, Woolverton graduated from the Groton School and Harvard College. Following service in World War II, he took an MDiv at Virginia Theological Seminary. After three years in parish ministry, he received a PhD in church history from Columbia University.

In 1950, Woolverton married Margaret Richardson, who subsequently played a leading role in promoting the study of women's history in the Episcopal Church. In 1958 he was called to the faculty of Virginia Theological Seminary. The Very Rev. Harry Krauss, former dean of the Cathedral of St. John in Providence, who occasionally babysat for the Woolvertons while a student at the seminary, described their home in Alexandria as a comfortable "delight," full of antiques and books.

Named in 1970 to the seminary's Kinsolving Chair of Christianity in America, Woolverton served as mentor to a generation of Episcopal clergy and scholars. "He was enormously well prepared and a very amusing lecturer," Dean Krauss said. "And he was very glad to have an active difference of opinion with students."



Woolverton as a young man and upon his retirment in 2007 as editor of *Anglican and Episcopal History*.

First photo courtesy of David L. Holmes
Second photo courtesy of the Historical Society of the Episcopal Church

Robert Prichard, who now holds the Kinsolving Chair, remembers that Woolverton championed the use of primary sources in the classroom. Prichard emphasized his predecessor's "amazing ability to track trends in scholarship in the Church at large." In Prichard's view, two convictions — that a historian needs to be aware of larger intellectual currents and that texts from the past have relevance today — provide a key to Woolverton's teaching and scholarship.

In 1981-82 Woolverton taught as a visiting professor at the College of William and Mary. One of his students there, James Comey, now director of the FBI, described him as among the "handful of people outside of one's family who have a profound impact on who you are and who you become."

Comey remembers Woolverton as an extraordinary teacher, but also as more than that. "For me," Comey said, "he became a trusted advisor and lifelong friend. His kindness, decency, wisdom, and humility were both an inspiration and a practical model. … More importantly, he taught me what it was to be a lifelong learner. He taught me that a person confident enough to be humble was someone who could connect with people of any age, any background."

In 1978, Woolverton became the fourth editor of the *Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church*. Denominational historical magazines tend to struggle, since the number of persons sufficiently interested in their denomination's history is ultimately small. "How far into the nave do our articles penetrate?" Woolverton asked in an early editorial. "How far into the rector's study?"

Insightful, imaginative, and scholarly, the new editor broadened the coverage of the journal. Overseeing its change of name to *Anglican and Episcopal History*, he expanded its breadth and depth. He

focused many issues on specific themes. He prodded his contributors to be aware of the larger intellectual currents that had influenced their subjects.

During his editorship, the number of articles on women, on African Americans and other groups, on parishes at worship, and on the 20th century markedly increased. By the time Woolverton retired in 2007, he had transformed the journal into a respected scholarly resource for worldwide Anglican history.

In 1983, Woolverton left Virginia Seminary to become rector of Trinity Church in Portland, Maine, a parish that had experienced division over the charismatic movement. In six years as rector he became, in the words of his assistant, the Rev. Katherine Grieb, "a real pastor of the people. He would go to their homes. He would go to the hospital. He was there for them."

Grieb, now Meade Professor in Biblical Interpretation at VTS, described Woolverton as a "splendid preacher." Lay member and former vestryman Merton Henry said the quality of the preaching during Woolverton's ministry inspired him and his wife not to miss church.

Each of Woolverton's sermons, he said, "was a major intellectual exercise tied to the Scripture readings for the day." Henry and others praised the high level at which the parish's adult education classes moved during the Woolverton-Grieb years.

In 1989, Woolverton retired from Trinity Church to concentrate on editing and writing. Its tensions were so healed that the parish was able to call a woman rector as his successor. "He did a great job of getting things on an even keel," Henry said.

Woolverton's schedule of classes, preaching, editing, correspondence, and parish work allowed little time for writing. In 1984, he published his authoritative *Colonial Anglicanism in North America*, but the bulk of his publishing occurred after he left Trinity Church.

In 1995, he tapped previously unused primary sources to write *The Education of Phillips Brooks*, an engaging monograph on the formative years of

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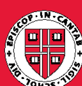

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Woolverton "loved to play the part of a gruff academic. But the smile on his face … would betray him every time."

—The Rev. Nina Pooley, rector of St. Bartholomew's Church, Yarmouth, Maine

(Continued from previous page)

the leading Episcopal preacher of the 19th century.

Ten years later he published *Robert H. Gardiner and the Reunification of Worldwide Christianity*, reading 11,000 letters of his subject to do so. Praised for its "rich historical context, skilled analysis, and convincing interpretations," it was the first biography of the layman who led an often reluctant Episcopal Church into the 20th-century ecumenical movement.

At the time of his death, Woolverton had completed *A Christian and a Democrat*. Not yet published, the study traces the New Deal not only to urgent economic and social needs but also to Franklin D. Roosevelt's Christian heritage and belief. One reader described the manuscript as "something rare — an intellectual history of a president intermingled with politics, biography, religion, and other topics."

In personal characteristics, Woolverton was kind, passionate, supportive, and faithful. "He loved to play the part of a gruff academic," said his rector, the Rev. Nina Pooley of St. Bartholomew's Church in Yarmouth, Maine. "But the smile on his face … would betray him every time."

He had a well-developed sense of humor and a mischievous side. Pooley recalled that Woolverton wrote a collect. "Lord Jesus Christ," it began, "as you chided the self-righteous, give us the gift of humor that we may know ourselves as you see us." Gil Birney, a former student, remembers Woolverton advising seminary students that "the best solution to doubt is an armful of selfless tasks."

If Woolverton was above all a teacher, he was also a churchman. Raised during the era of inter-party tensions, he represented — as Virginia Seminary long did — what one of his students described as "the old fashioned low-church position."

In Grieb's words, Woolverton's church style stemmed from an "allergy to pompous, pretentious rites and people. He didn't like the self-importance that infects some ecclesiastical life. He just wouldn't have it."

The Very Rev. William Stafford, his former colleague at VTS and an Anglo-Catholic, sees a link between Woolverton's allegiance to the theology and ecclesiology of Karl Barth and to low-church Anglicanism.

"Sovereign was his loyalty to the disrupting word of God in Jesus Christ," Dean Stafford said. "His dislike of Anglo-Catholicism with its hierarchy of clergy, seven sacraments, images, tropes, gestures, chants, and symbols was that he thought it both obscured that Word … and disempowered the laity, the people of God, the real church.

"John loved teaching, loved students, loved beauty, so long as beauty did not become a Pelagian means of ascent to God," Stafford said.

Many things mattered greatly to Woolverton. He was profoundly concerned with Christian theology. He took social justice seriously, as he did American politics. And in an interesting way, he tended to oppose (as prior generations of Virginia churchmen had) excessive worldliness on the part of Episcopalians.

In 1984, Virginia Theological Seminary awarded Woolverton the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity. The board's citation declared:

> For a quarter of a century you taught Church History at Virginia Seminary … inspiring generations of students with your learning, passion, and wit.
>
> In those twenty-five years, and since, you have shown us that your heart is in the Protestant Reformation, your scholarship in the Protestant Episcopal Church, your citizenship in this present protesting age, and your authority in the obedient Christ. …
>
> As a scholar, teacher … editor … and pastor, you exemplify the best in the tradition of this school.

Six weeks before his death, Woolverton was still running a mile every day in Maine. A statement attributed to several Anglican writers goes: "These evangelicals die well." John Woolverton died surrounded by Charles, Mary, Susan, and Arthur, his four children. "We sang hymns" in the final days, Arthur wrote. "We laughed, and we cried."

David L. Holmes is Walter G. Mason Professor of Religious Studies, Emeritus, at the College of William and Mary. His books include A Brief History of the Episcopal Church *and* The Faiths of the Postwar Presidents: From Truman to Obama.

AUGUSTINE, BISHOP OF HIPPO: AUGUST 28

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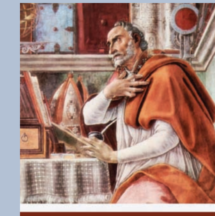
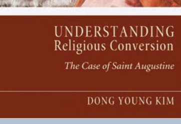
Saint Augustine in his Study by Sandro Botticelli

Understanding Religious Conversion

The Case of Saint Augustine

By **Dong Young Kim**. Wipf and Stock. Pp. 420. $46





Religious conversion seems so obvious as to need no explanation. Yet the concept often proves to be the most difficult to accept, understand, and integrate, and fertile ground for exploration. That is true for Dong Young Kim's two-part thesis. As he writes: "religious conversion is usually an evolving process in which many aspects of a person's life may be affected … and the study of religious conversion is enriched by an interdisciplinary approach, which examines coherently the personal and socio-cultural contexts of the convert and the religious dimension of conversion."

Kim quotes Lewis Rambo's description of conversion as "a process of religious change that takes place in a dynamic force field of people, events, ideologies, institutions, expectations, and orientations." Kim argues, as Ed Friedman would say, that conversion takes place in the midst of many emotional forces, all of which are being processed by the capacity of psychological and spiritual insight of the one seeking, or drawn to, a different life. Augustine's conversion "occurred while developing relationships with himself, others, and the divine. More specifically, it could happen in the complex contexts of his struggle to know himself and the divine, his interactions with others, his participation in the Christian community, his philosophical and cultural changes, and his deep encounter with God."

Kim critiques reductively psychological, sociological, anthropological, or theological views of religious conversion. All of these overlap within the complexity of any human life, hence conversion cannot be reduced to one aspect, even if the person who converts believes that to be true. Conversion includes the person's sense of internal dissonance, hunger for the divine, family background, trauma, theological beliefs, personal relationships, and the community of the recently converted.

As Kim writes: "the theme of Augustine's recreation of loving relationships with himself, others, and the divine guides us to recognize that one's conversion experience is not simply a 'once and for all event,' but an ongoing process of change in one's whole lifetime." This is a fascinating study of a great mystery of faith.

The Rev. Alvin C. Johnson
Alexandria, Virginia

Historic First Church, Bennington, Vermont

Robert Ford/iStock photos

Does Anyone Really Listen to Sermons?

Review by Robert W. Prichard

O.C. Edwards, Jr., former Seabury-Western president and professor emeritus of preaching, has put together a collection of essays about 19 examples of "Christian proclamation." His provocative subtitle presumes the answer to a question that has been the object of hearty debate since the American bicentennial. Does American Christianity shape American history? Does it have any effect at all?

Sidney E. Mead (1904-99) framed the debate about the effect of Christianity on American history with a similarly provocative 1967 essay in the journal *Church History*. Mead's article and the volume in which it was republished (*The Nation with the Soul of a Church*, Harper & Row, 1975) popularized G.K. Chesterton's quip about America that is also the source of O.C. Edwards's title (see the first chapter of Chesterton's *What I Saw in America*, Dodd, Mead, and Co., 1922). Mead answered the question of whether religious institutions shape American history in the negative. He suggested that America's religious institutions had little direct effect on the life of the nation because, rather than having one predominant religious body, America had "about three hundred collectively incoherent religious institutions whose claims tend to cancel each other out."

Yet precisely because of their incoherence, American religious institutions did have an indirect effect on the course of American history; their conflicting claims made it necessary for the secular government to take on religious functions, first "to adjudicate these differences" between churches, and then to fill the vacuum created by the inability of squabbling churches by offering the only "cosmopolitan, universal theology" available in the nation (Mead, p. 69). Mead then drew on the work of John E. Smylie to suggest the three basic elements of this universal civil religion: "the nation emerged as the primary agent of God's meaningful activity in history," became "the primary society in terms of which individual Americans discovered personal and group identity," and took on "a churchly function in becoming the community of righteousness" ("National Ethos and the Church," *Theology Today* 20 [1963]).

At about the same time, Alan Heimert provided a concrete example of the way in which the American secular government began to take on a quasi-religious function. In his *Religion and the American Mind, from the Great Awakening to the Revolution* (Harvard, 1966), Heimert suggested that part of the success in the American Revolution was due to the way in which American politicians drew on the religious language of the Great Awakening in creating support for the revolution.

Together Mead and Heimert provided a picture of American religion characterized by denominational impotence and political cooption of religious themes. The debate about their ideas has continued to reverberate ever since. Thomas Kidd's *God of Liberty* (Basic Books, 2010) and John Fea's *Was America Founded as a Christian Nation?* (Westminster John Knox, 2011) are recent examples of authors who part company on whether Heimert properly understood the relationship between the religious themes of the Great Awakening and the political themes of the American Revolution. Brad Gregory's *Unintended Reformation: How a Religious Revolution Secularized Society* (Belknap, 2012) is in one sense a restatement of Mead's argument on a larger canvas. He sees the fracturing of the church in multiple denominations as a consequence of the Reformation, and the resultant need of the civil government to adjudicate between competing religious groups as a problem not just of the United States but of Western civilization as a whole.

Edwards's subtitle suggests that he holds a clear position in this continuing debate — not only believing that Christian proclamation *does* shape history but offering examples to prove the case. Most of his examples are of sermons, but some are not, which is why he used *proclamation* in his subtitle (p. x).

Edwards's book does not, however, live up to the title. By the second page of the introduction, Edwards is already retreating from the subtitle's claim. The proclamations under discussion do not shape history alone or even "cause a basic shift in American

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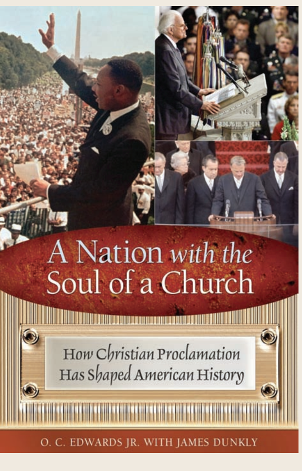
A Nation with the Soul of a Church

How Christian Proclamation Has Shaped American History

By **O.C. Edwards, Jr.,** with **James Dunkly.**

Praeger. Pp. 366. $58



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opinion," but play a more modest supporting role. Edwards suggests, for example, that Benjamin Palmer's sermon in support of Southern withdrawal from the Union "did not cause secession, but it was a catalyst that at least moved it along a little faster." Such orations do so by putting "into words the shape of" changes in society, providing people with "a vocabulary" to discuss such shifts. Preachers are "among those who have done" this naming of moments of change, but apparently they can claim no monopoly on that role (pp. x-xi).

Individual chapters contain their own qualified claims. Billy Sunday's sermon on alcohol cannot "claim the credit for the passage of the Eighteenth Amendment to the U. S. Constitution" (p. 180). The sermon in which Jeremiah A. Wright, Jr., called on God to damn America for racism did not affect the election in which his parishioner Barack Obama was engaged and did not cause "personal damage to Wright's ministry because he was in the process of retiring," but it may have affected his reputation (p. 319). In contrast, Edwards complains about the continuing vitality of the civil religious ideas of which Mead wrote. "Almost two-third of the American people continue to believe that 'the United States has a divinely ordained place in history.' … Americans should not say, 'My country right or wrong,' … We would serve God and our country better if we were more modest" (p. 323).

The essays on sermons and oration in the collection do not offer strong evidence that Christian oration changes American history. Rather, they constitute a kind of chain letter that spans the breadth of American history, as seen through a New England lens: half of the texts come from there, and the essays of those from elsewhere in the country often point to links to figures and to themes common among preachers in New England. The narrative line of the letters chiefly concerns the continuing revision in the Reformed-Calvinist tradition brought to New England by 17th-century Puritans. There are occasions in which questions of political importance — the Civil War, Prohibition, and civil rights — make an appearance, but in general the changes sought by these proclamations are more focused on right belief than shaping American history.

The narrative begins with John Winthrop (chapter 1) and his use of Calvinistic theological themes to prepare Puritan settlers bound for Massachusetts Bay. One of those settlers was clergyman John Cotton, and one of his supporters was Anne Hutchinson (chapter 2). Hutchinson was attracted to views criticized by Winthrop as antinomian (i.e., suggesting that a Christian believer is not bound to follow any moral code); in time many Puritans veered in the opposite direction — Arminianism (the belief that God elects to salvation those foreknown to be obedient). Jonathan Edwards (chapter 3) sought to quell this danger. Edwards was not entirely successful in his effort, however. Jonathan Mayhew (chapter 4) continued to push in an Arminian direction, a trend that culminated in the Unitarianism of William Ellery Channing (chapter 5) and the Transcendentalism of Ralph Waldo Emerson (chapter 6).

Benjamin Morgan Palmer (chapter 7) was a supporter of an Old School Calvinism that was opposed to the direction in which Mayhew, Channing, and Emerson had moved, but it was his identity as a South Carolinian that led him to support secession from the Union. His Amherst classmate Henry Ward Beecher (chapter 8) disagreed with him on two counts. He thought secession and slavery were wrong, and he abandoned Old School Presbyterianism and accepted some elements of modern critical scholarship. Russell H. Conwell (chapter 9) grew up hearing his mother read Beecher's anti-slavery sermons. He later became a leader in the institutional parish movement, an effort to create a congregation with organizations that met social as well as spiritual needs. Washington Gladden (chapter 10) shared a concern for the needs of the poor, but in the place of Conwell's prosperity approach his efforts led to the Social Gospel Movement's critique of the American economic system. Billy Sunday (chapter 11) focused on one particular social problem, alcoholism, and did so with a dramatic and colorful preaching style.

William B. Riley (chapter 12) of the World Conference on Christian Fundamentalism (1919) held theological views that "evolved from the conviction of the Puritan founders of New England" (p. 189). He defended those views from the modernist ideas of Harry Emerson Fosdick (chapter 13). Fosdick made use of the radio to communicate his message, a technique employed with success by Father Charles E. Coughlin (chapter 14). In contrast to Coughlin's aberrant political and racial views, Reinhold Niebuhr (chapter 15) offered a more sophisticated analysis of American political and religious life. Martin Luther King, Jr. (chapter 16), built on ideas shaped by Niebuhr. William Sloane Coffin, Jr. (chapter 17), preached in the prophetic

tradition that King exemplified, criticizing the war in Vietnam and calling for tolerance of homosexuality. Billy Graham (chapter 18) knew Riley and King, and had the preaching success of Sunday and political influence that Coughlin sought. The series ends with Wright and the 2008 presidential election.

This chain of sermons makes interesting reading, particularly if read at a slow pace and in combination with the texts. In most cases each chapter is a commentary on the ideas in the preceding one. One could easily use this text to structure a multi-week parish series on the history of preaching. The full texts are not included. The omission is not surprising; all authors and editors must make compromises with length. A consistent and accessible apparatus for pointing the reader to the texts would have been a welcome addition to this volume, however. As it is, readers are left to search the notes, the Web, and the library to find the texts.

The title page and the dedication both bear witness to the role that James Warren Dunkly, lecturer in New Testament and theological librarian of the University of South, played as research associate in this project. Given that this book is the work of two men associated with important Episcopal educational institutions, it is surprising that no Episcopalian appears in the collection. Two works identified in the introduction as partial inspirations for the volume — *American Sermons: The Pilgrims to Martin Luther King, Jr.* (Library of America, 1999) and Larry Witham's *City Upon a Hill: How Sermons Changed the Course of American History* (HarperOne, 2007) — could have been used to fill that gap. *American Sermons* contains sermons by Samuel Johnson, Devereux Jarratt, Absalom Jones, and Phillips Brooks. Witham, who devotes attention to every author in Edwards's collection except for Wright, refers to Robert Hunt, Phillips Brooks, Stephen Elliott, James Madison, and Randolph McKim.

The absence of Episcopalians may explain the note in the conclusion about a projected sermon that was not included. Edwards had planned for an essay on a sermon delivered at Immanuel Church-on-the-Hill in Alexandria, Virginia, by assistant rector Patricia L. Merchant on the morning of President Ford's pardon of Richard Nixon. Edwards explained that he read an online account by a person claiming to be present in the congregation, with President Ford, when Merchant preached it. As Dunkly discovered, though, Ford heard no such sermon; his diaries show he attended another church on that Sunday.

Another persistent rumor has it that on the Sundays before Ford transferred his attendance to St. John's, Lafayette Square, he arrived for church in a helicopter that landed on the grounds of the Virginia Theological Seminary, where Immanuel Chapel was located. Presidential logs made it clear, however, that Ford traveled to church on those Sundays by car. What did happen, at least on the first Sunday after Ford became president, was that the rector returned from vacation to participate in a service at which Merchant had been scheduled as preacher, because the rector wanted to be the one to address the new president.

Does Christian proclamation shape American history? Perhaps, but this collection will not be the one to put an end to the continuing debate.

Robert W. Prichard is Arthur Lee Kinsolving Professor of Christianity in America and Instructor in Liturgy at Virginia Theological Seminary.

Conversion of Saul on the Way to Damascus by Caravaggio

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Introducing *Christian* Ethics

Review by Jordan Hylden

What makes Christian ethics Christian? Three recent introductions to Christian ethics provide us not only with helpful surveys of the field but also with thought-provoking material for reflection on the distinctiveness of Christian ethics.

Victor Austin, theologian-in-residence at St. Thomas Fifth Avenue, has given us with his *Christian Ethics: A Guide for the Perplexed* a pellucid and sharply argued book that lives up to its title splendidly. In seven brisk chapters and fewer than 150 pages, Austin manages not only to introduce his readers to Christian ethics but also to induct his readers into the practice of thinking ethically as Christians, by means of a rigorous Socratic method that provokes much profitable furrowing of the brow. In this, Austin's book is the work of an exemplary teacher.

His first chapter defends the notion of ethics as such, as an enterprise one may undertake rationally, rather than a non-intellectual zone marked off as "things I feel very strongly about deep inside me and/or happen to get from my culture." Austin ably parries objections that will come up in any parish discussion group or college classroom. The Christian faith, Austin contends, defends reason and holds that faith and reason are complementary, not opposites.

The second chapter is his most thought provoking, as it is an attempt to show that Christian ethics is both distinctive *and* universal, rather than one or the other. Austin draws upon Alasdair MacIntyre to contend that the intelligibility of an action requires fitting its description into a larger narrative account of the characters involved. Except as it fits within a description of my *character*, which itself fits within a *story* about who I am, my action of writing this review makes no sense. "Jordan is a bookish fellow who is working on a degree in theological ethics, so he is writing this review" makes sense as a human act; "Jordan enjoys sitting for hours and tapping on black plastic buttons, so he is doing so" does not.

But if ethics is to be Christian, it cannot simply be *my* story, but my story as it fits within the larger biblical narrative. This accounts for the distinctiveness of Christian ethics, but what of its universality? Is not the Christian story simply one among many? No, Austin says: for it claims that its Author entered into the story as a character, Jesus Christ. What it means to be human has been definitively shown us by Christ. Christian ethics is finally just ethics, the study of what it means to be flourishing human beings.

The rest of the book, while not less carefully crafted and substantive, is less original. Austin gives a lively overview of the standard ethical approaches (deontological, utilitarian, and teleological), and defends the teleological as the best account of the whole, insofar as it points toward the goal of human excellence in relation to God and relates virtues, rules, and duties to it. That task done, Austin moves on to give an account of the good for human beings and the virtues that help us attain it. There is, Austin assumes, a created human good found in living well with one another in society, and there is also a call to live forever as friends of God, in company with other such friends, that transforms what it means to be a creature. Austin clarifies without simplifying many issues along the way, such as the role of conscience, the relationship between the natural and theological virtues, friendship, and what it means to be a person.

Austin's book is notable as a sign of our ecumenical age, because in its great dependence upon Aquinas it could well have been marketed as an introduction to Catholic moral theology sans qualification. *The Christian Moral Life* is written by two Roman Catholic ethicists, Paul Wadell and Patricia Lamoureux, and manifests the return to the Bible that has so characterized the post-Vatican II years. Like Austin's book, it is finally a virtue-ethics approach, focused on the call to live as disciples of Christ. As it is much longer than Austin's book, its ten chapters cover a great deal of ground and its readers will find a clear and helpful introduction to the riches of Rome's moral tradition, grounded by attention to Scripture.

For Wadell and Lamoureux, the moral life begins with a call to respond to the gift of other good creatures that God has made, and the *Christian* moral life with a call by God to be Christ's disciples. Responding well to these gifts requires learning to see, and one of the gems of the book is the authors' discussion of the need for truthful *vision* for moral action, which requires taking off the self-deceptive lenses we sinners would rather wear.

With our eyes opened, what we see is the reign of

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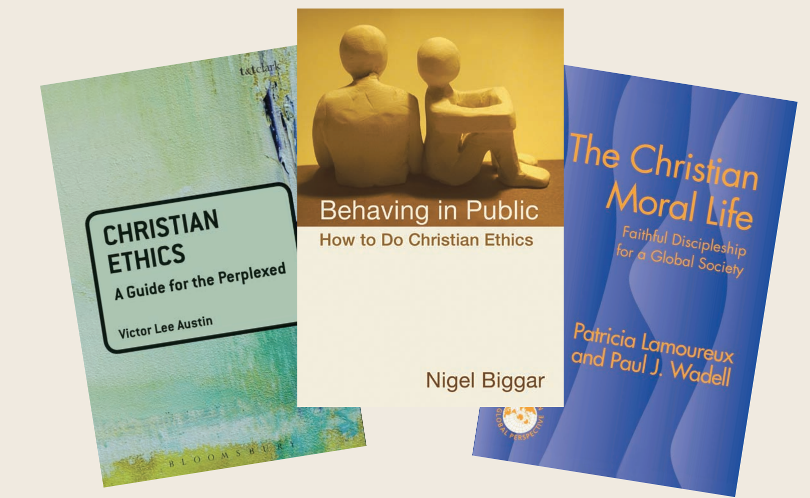

Christian Ethics
A Guide for the Perplexed
By **Victor Lee Austin**. Bloomsbury. Pp. 177. $19.95

The Christian Moral Life
Faithful Discipleship for a Global Society
By **Patricia Lamoureux** and **Paul Wadell**. Orbis. Pp. 306. $30

Behaving in Public
How to Do Christian Ethics
By **Nigel Biggar**. Eerdmans. Pp. 144. $16

(Continued from previous page)

God, an already-but-not-yet kingdom of "freedom, wholeness, liberation, and justice" for all, particularly for the poor and marginalized, inaugurated by God in Christ. But God's full reign will not come about by our own efforts: Wadell and Lamoureux quote the striking formulation of Herbert McCabe that "the gospel is not about being good; it is about being rescued. It is not about being safe; it is about being saved." Any treatment of Christian ethics that neglects this wisdom is mere moralism, yet Wadell and Lamoureux place God's grace first, only in relation to which can we tell the truth about our sin and bear it.

After a careful discussion of sin, the book moves on to virtues, understood as the strengths of character that enable us to grow into our *telos* as disciples of Christ and friends of God. Thankfully, such virtues are not fundamentally defined by *our* strength, but by the gift of the Holy Spirit who enables us to live Christ's life today. "The center of the Christian moral life," they write, "is not a theory or an ideal, but a person to be observed, followed, imitated, and truly taken to heart."

Chapters to follow treat conscience, love, the paschal mystery, the Holy Spirit and moral discernment, and public life. There is much wisdom here. Conscience is not the little voice in my heart; rather, we have a duty to form our consciences well by attending seriously to Church teaching and discerning moral truth alongside the whole body of Christ. Though love may begin with feelings, it must be ratified by choice; we are commanded to love no matter how we feel. Crucially, Christian ethics is no mere intellectual exercise, but wisdom comes from prayer and worship, as we grow in personal relationship with God and are led by the Holy Spirit to discern and act wisely in everyday life.

Though no introduction can cover everything, it surely was a choice to forgo substantive discussion of the natural law, and to discuss prudence, Christ-centered discipleship, and the gifts of the Spirit instead. Their assertion that for Aquinas "the evangelical Law of the Spirit favored freedom over law by reducing moral precepts to what is necessary for salvation" encourages a dichotomy between freedom and law that is best moved beyond. So too, one imagines that in a textbook designed largely for college students, some discussion of Catholic teaching on sexual ethics might be helpful, but Wadell and Lamoureux offer next to nothing.

There is a little illustration on the book's cover of a globe, around which runs the motto "theology in global perspective." Throughout the book, analogies are drawn between Christian ethics and elements of other faith traditions, such as Buddhist compassion. "Just as the Christian God feels compassion for the errors and sufferings of humankind, the Buddha experiences compassion for human suffering and offers a way through it," we are told. At certain points, such observations would seem to be in tension with the book's claim that the nature of the virtues is taken from their *telos*, which Christians confess is Jesus our Lord. It was not at every point clear that the claim of possessing "global perspective" avoided effacing genuine differences between religious traditions.

Behaving in Public is a deeply thought-provoking discussion of precisely what is and is not *different* about Christian ethics: not an introduction to the basics but an argument for how to construe the whole. The Anglican ethicist Nigel Biggar, who teaches at Oxford, has done his part to move us beyond what he calls "either a 'conservative' biblical and theological seriousness, which is shy of attending too closely to public policy; or 'liberal' engagement with public policy, which is theologically thin and bland." He takes aim at Stanley Hauerwas, arguing that we ought not allow our concern for the distinctiveness of Christian ethics to get in the way of what really matters — its *integrity* — for there will be many times when Christians and others find themselves saying the same things.

That said, Biggar agrees with Hauerwas and others under Karl Barth's influence that "ethics be governed by the *whole* story" of Scrip-

ture, "including those christological and eschatological parts of it that attest the salvific presence of God in history and its conclusion." But Biggar espouses a "Barthian Thomism" that emphasizes the substantive noun rather than the adjective, "in order to signal that the created order comes logically before its narrative, christological qualification."

This is a tightrope balancing act, in which inches matter. Biggar cannot agree with the school of Joseph Fuchs and Richard McCormick, which reacted against what they saw as an excessively theological ethic by asserting instead the "autonomy" of ethics with respect to theology. Against this line of thinking, Biggar asserts that the biblical witness "prescribes new norms of action, new duties of conduct … in the light of God's salvific action." As such it produces not only a natural ethic but a "salvific" ethic that commends particular practices of worship and the path of reconciling, compassionate, and patient forgiveness in the face of wrong.

Christians, then, may well find themselves reaching a "tense consensus" with others concerning temporal goods, and a certain agreement about justice, for the created goods we share in common with nonbelievers are in fact common goods. But Christians will "read" them differently as we tell a different story about the good of the whole, and we will tread a particular path through them that we understand to be God's way of salvation, led on by faith in the way of Christ and our hope that his kingdom will one day come.

There is much clear-thinking good sense in this book with which it is difficult to disagree. But inches do matter, and on at least one count Biggar appears off-balanced. As many do, Biggar worries that the ecclesiological turn in Christian ethics encouraged by Hauerwas can lead

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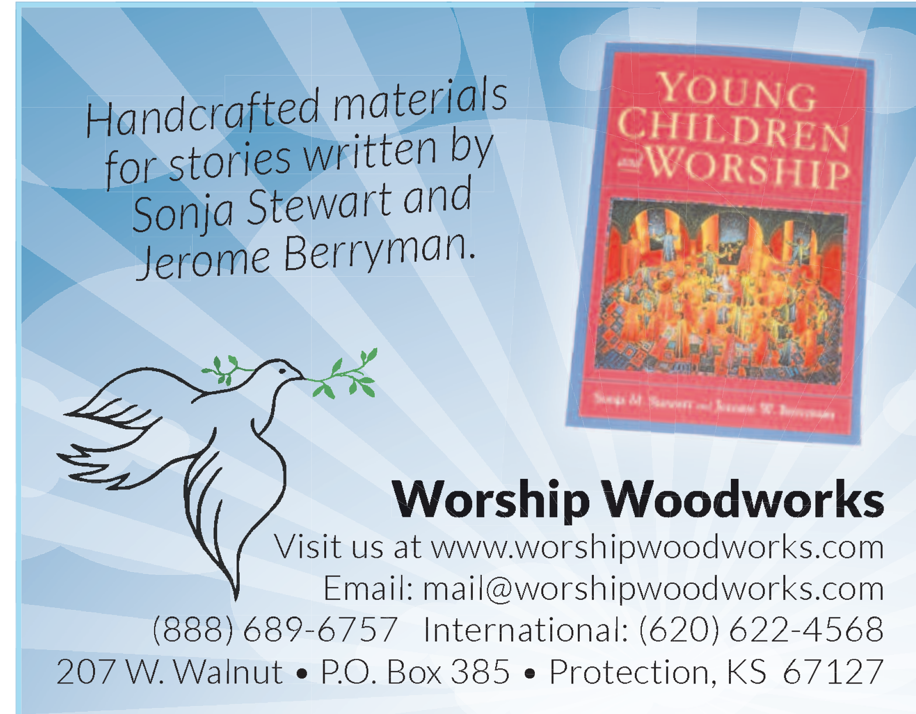

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—The Very Rev. George Sumner, principal and Helliwell Professor of World Mission at Wycliffe College, University of Toronto

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Introducing *Christian* Ethics

(Continued from previous page)

us to draw overly sharp boundaries between Church and world. Biggar points us to Barth's injunction that the Church must be ready to hear God's Word from outside of herself, which "implies that the confession and witness of Christian churches is not essential or necessary for the communication of God-in-Christ."

One recalls that Saul of Tarsus was knocked flat on the road to Damascus by Jesus, who bore sovereign witness to himself. But so that our Lord's witness could become intelligible, Saul was led by the hand to the home of Ananias and to the disciples in that place, only after which he began to proclaim in the synagogues that Jesus is Lord. Perhaps there are clarifications to be made as to what precisely is not "essential or necessary" for "communication" in this sequence, even if distinctions of priority are wanted. But the communal practices of the Church, particularly her Word and sacraments, are not adventitious to our Lord's witness to himself.

Taken together, these three books embody much of the remarkable body of thought and witness that is the tradition of Christian ethics. Christian ethics cannot simply be ethics for anyone, if by that we mean that the salvific action of God in Christ and our prayer that his kingdom will come leaves ethics as it is. Disciples of Jesus are followers of his way, and we are told this is a way of reconciling, suffering love — not against our created natures but to save them from loss, and even to lift them further up. We will not soon get to the bottom of what this means, but these three books do far more to illuminate than to confuse, and should be widely read.

The Rev. Jordan Hylden is a doctoral candidate in theology and ethics at Duke University Divinity School and a board member of the Living Church Foundation.

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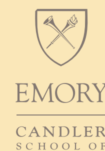
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The Holy Spirit Moves in the Academy

Review by Philip Harrold

Mike Higton cautiously advises his readers to think *theologically* about higher education and, in turn, the common good of contemporary society. As an academic theologian who has served at some of the most prestigious universities in the United Kingdom, Higton is happy to report that there is still a place in the "hugely complex conversational ecology" of these elite institutions to practice Christian discipleship. And since the modern university is an "intense" locus of public reasoning, virtuous participation in its life provides opportunities for deployment of the Christian scholar in the wider social arena. Higton envisions a Christian presence that models intellectual virtue and sociality as it engages in the debate about the *good*, that is, "the nature of the society and the forms of individual life at which we can and should be aiming" (p. 226).

Higton knows that this proposal is a risky one, but one that he has "decided to run" with multiple lines of argument. He makes his case by unpacking the themes of virtue, sociality, and the common good historically (part I) and theologically (part II). The history lessons from the universities of Paris in the 12th and 13th centuries, and Berlin, Oxford, and Dublin in the 19th, serve as windows to the major turning points in higher education.

At Paris a flourishing of corporate spiritual discipline formed and sustained a vibrant ethos of inquiry, with an openness to judgment and being judged. At Berlin, advocates of rigorous scholarship under the label of *Wissenschaft* pieced together a new sociality of reason that displaced the traditional authority of a "fractious and cacophonous" church in favor of the "ideally harmonious and unified political community" of the secular nation state.

At the Oxford and Dublin universities of John Henry Newman's day, the division that he perceived between intellect and religion created, inadvertently, an autonomous space for the intellect. From Paris to Dublin we see, in effect, a shift from the mutuality of learning and virtue toward fragmentation and pragmatism, with a consequent "thinning of the shared moral discourses that hold society together."

The second part of Higton's book presents a series of constructive proposals for regaining what has been lost: the end of all learning as "the peaceable kingdom — the flourishing of all God's creatures together." If the university is to regain its orderedness towards this good, it must restore true or "free" sociality, which means inclusion of particular religious traditions and their varied capacities of holding learning and virtue together.

At the University of Paris, it was assumed that the good ordering of a scholar's life required humility, piety, and peace realized in a community of mutual exchange, disputation, and compunction. The university — then, and perhaps now — can be virtuous, sociable, good, and negotiable, and Higton devotes a chapter to each of these attributes, explaining how both Christian theologians and secular theorists can work toward them in mutually beneficial ways.

In the case of virtue, for example, mediating analogies across the theological and philosophical spectrum can be found when learning involves not merely the satisfying of desire "but desire's redirection and expansion." And so, the Christian disciple who opens her life to judgment can participate in the work of the university, the ever deepening life in Christ drawing her into wider conversations and new voices "waiting on the edges" of her perception.

When this community-forming sociality is informed by the overall purpose and public import of learning, the disciple can fully participate in the argument about the common good of the university and its wider contributions to creaturely flourishing. This does not necessarily require

A Theology of Higher Education
By **Mike Higton**. Oxford. Pp. 296. $45

her to insist that everyone agree to a Christian vision of the good, but it does mean that she will work vigorously toward the kind of serious, socially inclusive, religious and secular exchange that invites articulation of that vision.

Higton's call for the practice of this sort of Christian discipleship in the context of the secular and religiously plural modern university is clear and compelling. Each chapter achieves its stated purpose with artful prose and practical illustration, and the two-part structure of the book provides the sort of thick description that the reader needs to both understand the complexity of this institutional context and find places to stand and pathways to follow in the pursuit of its peculiar *good*.

There are delightful discoveries along the way, and some deserve special mention here. Intellectual historians will appreciate the nuance and, at times, irony in Higton's account of the life and *habitus* of each of the universities examined in the first part of the book. He demonstrates how the "triumph of free enquiry" at the University of Paris and its pedagogy of *lectio* and *meditation* were complimentary, not antithetical. We learn how Friedrich Schleiermacher contributed to the social life of the University of Berlin even as he insisted that *Wissenschaft* needed the nation-state — a relationship that continues to be fraught with ambiguity. Higton even provides one of the most penetrating criticisms that can be found in the literature concerning John Henry Newman's misapplication of the nature-and-grace distinction to university curricula.

But most rewarding — indeed, most remarkable in its usefulness to a wide range of readers, academic or otherwise — is the book's chapter on "an Anglican theology of learning." Higton's proposal becomes unabashedly Anglican in this account of the faith and knowledge relationship. Yet, he wears this identity humbly: "Here, I am simply writing as someone who participates in a particular modern Anglican liturgy Sunday by Sunday, and who has been trying to understand … what sense it makes to move from that church context to sit in my university office from Monday to Friday — and to do so as someone who believes that the liturgy in which he participates on Sundays dramatizes the deepest context within which his university life is carried on" (p. 145).

Central Sorbonne Building, Paris Wikimedia Commons

Higton then describes how the Anglican eucharistic liturgy invites us to know God, to realize the fulfillment that he has for us as we gather together in the Body of Christ, and to attain such wisdom and delight that we can experience the presence and activity of the Spirit well beyond the Church — yes, even in the modern university.

Philip Harrold is associate professor of Church history at Trinity School for Ministry.

CATHOLIC VOICES

Teaching with Power and Love

By Zachary Guiliano

Rekindle the gift of God that is within you through the laying on of my hands; for God did not give us a spirit of cowardice, but rather a spirit of power and of love and of self-discipline.

—2 Timothy 1:6-7

These words of the Apostle Paul must resound in the ears of those who have taken on the responsibility of teaching in the Church. For we have all received the gift of the Spirit for the proclamation of the "mystery hidden for the ages but now revealed to his saints" (Col. 1:26). We received it in our baptism, in our confirmation, and — for some — in our ordination, but we must stir up this gift, fan it into flame, not let it lie buried within us, a talent of no profit to the Master.

For those who have been called to teaching, "we should not think it is sufficient for our salvation" if we shirk our duties in a time of theological malaise; it is not enough if we come up simply to the level of an "untaught crowd" (Bede, *Homily* 1.20). Make no mistake: the teachers of the Church will be judged for this turn. God has sent his teachers as watchmen for the house of Israel, and if they do not speak, he will hold them responsible (Ezek. 3:17-21). But have we not failed, either to speak up or to speak well? Have we not abandoned theological conversation with our brethren or conducted it with darkened hearts?

Some do not speak up. They have lost the confidence that God can change and guide the hearts of the Church's members through conversation and persuasion. But surely the God who brings life from death, who quickens to repentance those "dead in trespasses and sins" (Eph. 2:1), can move the hearts of his people.

But some do not speak well, and for them a different admonition is needed, the one offered by James that "not many should become teachers" (3:1). Teachers are held to a higher standard of speaking, and they must learn carefulness of speech. Why?

"The tongue is a fire. That world of unrighteousness, the tongue, is placed among our members, staining the whole body, setting on fire the wheel of generation and itself set on fire by hell" (James 3:5-6).

There is personal peril for the teacher caught up in anger and foul speech. But there is also peril for the Church. Teachers are set in the Church as those who must speak the oracles of God, set indeed as the tongue among the many members of Christ. Yet some have cursed their brethren, allowing the whole Church to be stained by their viciousness, rather than blessing God and inspiring it with the gift of the healthful Spirit.

Worse yet, both those who refuse to speak and those who speak with malice no doubt believe that they are guided by God in doing so. Listen to Gregory the Great:

> [But] that one ... certainly is not filled with the Holy Spirit who either in the calmness of his meekness abandons the fervor of his zeal, or in the fervor of his zeal loses the virtue of meekness. We may perhaps explain this matter better if we appeal to the pedagogy of Paul, who recommended different kinds of preaching aids to two of his disciples .... When admonishing Timothy, he says: "Reprove, entreat, rebuke in all patience and doctrine." But when admonishing Titus, he says: "These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority." (*Pastoral Rule*, 3.16)

To teach properly, then, requires a delicate balancing act: a turn neither to the left nor to the right; a careful following of the narrow path that leads to life, not the broad way that leads to destruction. For graceless human beings, this is an impossible task: no one can tame the tongue, and no one is sufficient for the task of the teacher. But with God, all things are possible. We can learn to speak again to each other in the presence of the God who is *generous* with his gifts. The hellish fire staining the Body of Christ, staining *our* church, *our* communion, can be countered by the Spirit's purging flame. "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God" (James 1:5). "For the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without a trace of partiality or hypocrisy" (James 3:18).

Fight fire with fire. Rekindle the gift of God; pray for the Spirit's fiery wisdom. And then speak up in all authority and speak well in all patience, not shrinking back in cowardice but teaching with power, self-discipline, and love.

Zachary Guiliano is a doctoral candidate in history at St. John's College, Cambridge, and editor of TLC's weblog, Covenant.

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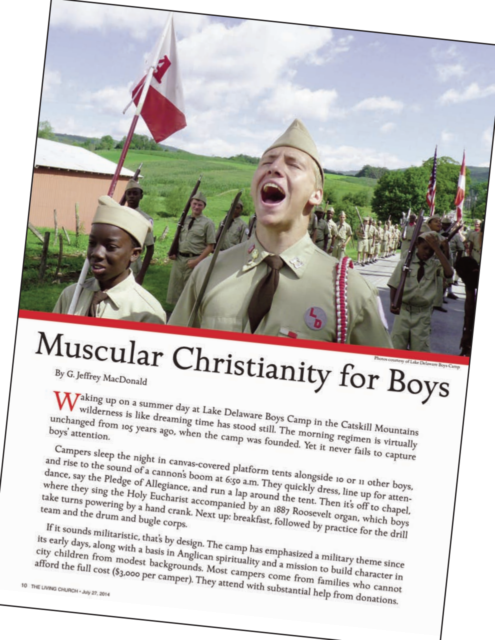
Character and Guns

I am writing to express my shock and deep sadness at the picture on the cover of The Living Church [TLC, July 27]. I could not believe that a Christian magazine that seeks to promote the nurture of faith formation would have a picture of boys with guns as the front cover and as the lead picture for the article.

What message is communicated when, at the same time we are trying to combat the rampant gun violence in our society, we show this kind of photo as an example of character formation? I am sure that Lake Delaware Boys Camp offers many positive, faith-nurturing activities, but with so much violence in our culture, to have a "camp" with guns, particularly for boys for whom many come from violent neighborhoods, seems to be anything but faith formation.

The Rev. Susan Copley
Christ Church & San Marcos
Tarrytown, New York

Camp director James H. Adams replies:
Referring to Lake Delaware Boys Camp as "a camp with guns" is not accurate. There are, in fact, absolutely no firearms of any kind at Lake Delaware Boys Camp. The camp has always had a drum and bugle corps and drill team, which performs and competes in town parades and county fairs in the area. The wooden parade rifles in the picture of our boys performing at a Catskill Community festival are the same that are carried and twirled by school marching bands around the country.


Photos courtesy of Lake Delaware Boys Camp

Muscular Christianity for Boys

By G. Jeffrey MacDonald

Waking up on a summer day at Lake Delaware Boys Camp in the Catskill Mountains wilderness is like dreaming time has stood still. The morning regimen is virtually unchanged from 105 years ago, when the camp was founded. Yet it never fails to capture boys' attention.

Campers sleep the night in canvas-covered platform tents alongside 10 or 11 other boys, and rise to the sound of a cannon's boom at 6:50 a.m. They quickly dress, line up for attendance, say the Pledge of Allegiance, and run a lap around the tent. Then it's off to chapel, where they sing the Holy Eucharist accompanied by an 1887 Roosevelt organ, which boys take turns powering by a hand crank. Next up: breakfast, followed by practice for the drill team and the drum and bugle corps.

If it sounds militaristic, that's by design. The camp has emphasized a military theme since its early days, along with a basis in Anglican spirituality and a mission to build character in city children from modest backgrounds. Most campers come from families who cannot afford the full cost ($3,000 per camper). They attend with substantial help from donations.

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The mission of LDBC, since its founding in 1909, is to build the physical, intellectual, and spiritual values of the campers. Personal growth occurs on our athletic fields and courts in a pristine Catskill forest where our campers experience joy and wonder for God's creation, and especially in the camp chapel, where each day begins with a sung Eucharist.

We have found that providing a safe, nurturing, challenging, and structured Christian community has allowed a diverse group of boys to thrive together. Through a network of partnerships, many of our campers are placed with scholarships at excellent preparatory schools and on to highly respected colleges and universities. Throughout its century of serving boys, a number of priestly vocations have been formed in the camp chapel, including my own.

People from LDBC have always had difficulty describing LDBC in words. That is because so much of it is Spirit. I invite the Rev. Susan Copley, and others interested, to visit LDBC, and experience it firsthand. One thing that will not be found is any gun.

Lawsuits Averted in Northwest

The Diocese of Olympia and two Anglican churches that left the Episcopal Church in 2004 have reached an amicable settlement that returns all property to the diocese and allows all parties to continue their ministries.

St. Charles Anglican Church, Poulsbo, and Grace by the Sea, Oak Harbor, placed themselves under the authority of the Rt. Rev. Robinson Cavalcanti of Recife, Brazil, after leaving the Episcopal Church.

In December 2006, the diocese and the two churches signed a covenant that provided for seven-and-a-half years in which no action would be taken regarding property. The agreement also provided time for the worldwide Anglican Communion to address its divisions on sexuality.

The two Anglican parishes appeared as *amici curiae* in a failed petition to the U.S. Supreme Court regarding the property of other congregations, but otherwise the parties avoided court involvement.

During the period of the covenant, St. Charles Church remained in a building that now returns to the Diocese of Olympia. St. Stephen's Episcopal Church and Grace by the Sea Church shared property in Oak Harbor. St. Stephen's will remain there.

Alex Tucker photo

St. Mary's Church, Coupeville

St. Charles Anglican now worships in a community building in Poulsbo. The Archdiocese of Seattle has welcomed Grace by the Sea for worship at its linked parishes of St. Mary's Church, Coupeville, and St. Augustine's Church, Oak Harbor.

June 30 marked the end of the covenant — and a peaceful resolution of these property disputes.

Mammana Assists in Ecumenism

Richard Mammana, Jr., founder of Project Canterbury and a member of the Living Church Foundation's board of directors, has been named associate for ecumenical and interreligious ministries of the Episcopal Church.

The Rev. Margaret R. Rose, deputy for ecumenical and interfaith collaboration, said Mammana will serve as staff liaison for the Episcopal Church's ecumenical dialogue with Roman Catholics, Presbyterians, United Methodists, the Lutheran and Moravian coordinating committees, and the Concordat panel of the Philippine Independent Church. His duties will also include ensuring that archival and current ecumenical documents are easily available as well as networking with diocesan ecumenical and interreligious officers.

In 1999, Mammana founded Project Canterbury (anglicanhistory.org), a large online archive of out of print Anglican-Episcopal historical resources and related academic content. He joined the staff of Anglicans Online in 2001. He has written for many publications, including essays and reviews in *Anglican Theological Review*, *Anglican and Episcopal History*, *Sobornost*, and The Living Church.

Conflicts Halt EDS Review

(Continued from page 7)

pretty much since the 1980s," she said. "It's just a way of doing business, especially for places that are facing the need to potentially make significant change. It goes with the territory."

G. Jeffrey MacDonald
TLC Correspondent

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Ecumenical Compassion along the Border

(Continued from page 11)

wanted to stay indoors after more than a week in crowded detention, said Rebecca Solloa, executive director of Catholic Social Services of Laredo, which now has a facility at the Holding Institute.

Even as migration slowed for a week in mid-July, volunteers kept helping. One afternoon, a team from Save the Children and La Iglesia Bautista Santa Fe in Laredo hauled gravel and prepared space for a playground. Members of Christ Church in Laredo raised money and pitched in as well, especially during the early crush.

"There was a mother trying to look for clothes and holding a baby at the same time," said Christ Church member Kathie Alexander. "I said, 'Well, let me hold the baby. You look for the clothes.' Another little baby was crying. It just broke my heart, so I ended up getting some toys for them to play with. You just end up going where you need to be."

No level of effort could equip the immigrants entirely for challenges ahead. During a TLC reporter's visit, a Honduran woman left Laredo's bus station with a man, possibly a coyote, Solloa said. Another woman was kidnapped earlier in the month by a coyote at the McAllen bus terminal and held for ransom.

Yet Laredo has nonetheless met countless needs of immigrants and has forged new bonds. By late June, a group of faith organizations and nonprofits had formed the Laredo Humanitarian Relief Team, which meets regularly to coordinate efforts. Now former acquaintances are working partners with a common cause.

"They were our partners before, whether they were cleaning cafeterias, serving meals, or donating items for Bethany House, but we weren't all hanging out and having lunch together the way we are now," said Beatriz Saldana, director of operations for Bethany House. "It's going to help us all be stronger and reach out to each other more easily since we now know each other on a personal basis."

The new relationships even span the border with Mexico. When the crisis peaked, Pastor Jaser Davila of Iglesia Metodista Apocento Alto in Nuevo Laredo brought volunteers from his congregation across the international bridge regularly to help at the Holding Institute. It was the first time the Laredo and Nuevo Laredo Methodist communities had worked together on a project.

Even when the tide of immigrants slowed in mid-July, Mexican Methodists returned to visit their new friends, who one night offered three cases of self-heating meals. The need had shifted south. Women and children from Central America were now piling up on the Mexican side in Nuevo Laredo, waiting for a chance to cross into the United States, he said. Members of Pastor Davila's team accepted, saying they would hand out the meals to hungry families on Nuevo Laredo's streets later that night.

"The infrastructure isn't in place yet, but the goal is for us to raise the resources and have something similar to this operation in Nuevo Laredo," Davila said in Spanish as his crew paid a visit to Holding. "We'll keep learning from each other."

In the United States, relief projects are expected to continue for at least six more months with the continued immigration wave. And more efforts could be forthcoming from the strengthened ties among area Christians.

Clergy have been among the first civilians invited to make regular visits to detention facilities housing unaccompanied minors. Once inside, they can monitor conditions and advocate for unaccompanied children, according to John-Michael Torres, a community organizer in McAllen. Faith leaders might also borrow a page from past eras and advocate in courtrooms for undocumented children and families who cannot afford legal representation, according to Harlan York, an immigration attorney in Newark, New Jersey.

Looking ahead, the Diocese of Arizona is exploring how people of faith might provide foster care for unaccompanied immigrant children. And the Diocese of Guatemala is circulating a letter from the Rev. Nancy Springer, assistant rector at St. John's in McAllen, in which she cautions families not to send children to the United States, where they face an uncertain fate and potential abuse in the foster care system.

Whether new relationships from this summer's relief projects will blossom into further care for immigrants or other types of local outreach remains to be seen. What's certain is that new partnerships among Christians are in place and energized for action. And participants plan to keep the momentum going.

"In the long-haul witness of this, we have to continually hold up the human-being factor," Bishop Lillibridge said. "This isn't going to be a short-term problem. Whether a person is going to be allowed to stay here or be sent back to their country, compassion needs to override all of these considerations."

TLC Correspondent G. Jeffrey MacDonald is an independent journalist and author of Thieves in the Temple: The Christian Church and the Selling of the American Soul.

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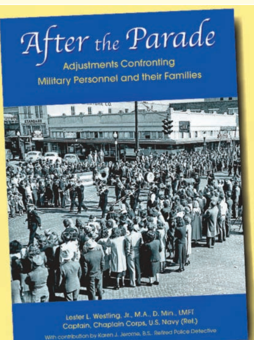

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First reading and psalm: Gen. 45:1-15 • Ps. 133
Alternate: Isa. 56:1, 6-8 • Ps. 67 • Rom. 11:1-2a, 29-32 • Matt. 15:(10-20), 21-28

Responsible Parents

In a rare moment of agreement between postmodern feminism and premodern Christian exegetes, it seems generally agreed that Jesus, in his interaction with a Canaanite woman in Matthew 15, calls her a "dog." The more reverent exegetes say he does it to make a point. Feminist commentators criticize our Lord for following the bigotries of his era. Others simply hang their heads in embarrassment, wonder why this reading makes it into the lectionary regularly while more important ones are neglected, and decide to preach on the epistle.

What is a generous reading of this vignette, one in which our Lord is not culpable for even a fatigued slip of the tongue? Jesus used agricultural metaphors to speak to an agricultural society, fishing metaphors to speak to fishermen, and even metaphors from the slave-master relationship to speak of justice in a society riddled with social injustice. And he is not slow to choose metaphors from women's experiences to proclaim the gospel.

We can believe that he exercised no less care in this choice. Jesus, expressing divine empathy, chooses a parenting metaphor. "Would it be responsible parenting," he asks, "for a mother to take her children's food and give it to the family pet? Would you do such a thing to your own daughter?" The point has more to do with resources and responsibility than with the woman's race or sex. We could replace the reference to canines with any other method of food disposal — a cat, an incinerator, a wastebasket — and the metaphor would still hold its meaning. But replace *children* with anything else, denoting any less responsibility on the part of the parent, and the image fails to meet the purpose Jesus declares for it: "I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel." Jesus is thinking about his missionary priorities, especially since he has taken his disciples out of bounds, as it were, in pursuit of solitude. The parenting image he uses also has to do with these priorities: a parent's primary mission is not to the animals, but to the children. Responsible parents have to make hard choices.

Because this is a parenting metaphor, not a question of the woman's status as a human being, her response makes sense: the pets are part of the family, too, even if in a secondary way. She does not quibble with Jesus' decision to keep closely to his priorities. But she recognizes — as does the centurion whose servant Jesus heals — that because of who Jesus is, this is not a question of limited resources. Even a crumb's worth of healing from Jesus will mean the world to her and her child. Her faith to see beyond the veil of Jesus' appearance to who he is as Messiah places this woman in the category of precursor to the Gentile Church, the community justified by grace through faith, not by birth or the works of the law. In this way, she receives the fruit of Jesus' mission, in the form of healing.

Look It Up

Compare this story with that of the centurion in Matthew 8, and his response to the Greeks in John 12.

Think About It

Romans 11 invites further exploration of Jesus' mission in relation to the Jew/Gentile dynamic.

SUNDAY'S READINGS | 11 Pentecost, August 24

First reading and psalm: Ex. 1:8-2:10 • Ps. 124

Alternate: Isa. 51:1-6 • Ps. 138 • Rom. 12:1-8 • Matt. 16:13-20

A Living Sacrifice

There is something grotesque about the image St. Paul uses in Romans 12:1: a living sacrifice. Paul uses three adjectives to describe the sacrifice he is talking about: *living*, *holy*, and *acceptable*. A sacrifice is acceptable to God when we offer it in a spirit of pure devotion and obedience. A sacrifice becomes holy as it is offered. Ultimate holiness requires the ultimate offering: to be completely consumed in flame. The problematic adjective is *living*. A sacrifice is living when — well, that just does not happen in the levitical code. The first step in a sacrifice is always to slaughter the animal. By definition, a sacrifice on the altar never consists of a living being.

So what does it mean to offer our bodies as living sacrifices? Paul's image is conditioned by the experience of a person offering sacrifice at the Temple. We may imagine the slaughtered animal burning on the altar, being made holy by death and fire, and the living physical body of the worshiper standing by. A Christian is to identify not with the living worshiper but with the burning sacrifice: our bodies are like that of a sheep, goat, ox, or bird, fleetingly glimpsed through writhing yellow flames — yet somehow also still alive.

A Christian is to understand the physical body as already having been offered, slaughtered, and kindled — in short, as already belonging to God in holiness. Whether we will it is irrelevant: our bodies belong to him who bought them with his own bodily sacrifice. We live a post-redemption existence. We have been bought, redeemed, and made God's own. This past-tense understanding is fundamental to Paul's ethical method: how then ought we to live? What God has done for us and in us demands a certain character of embodied life in a physical world. We cannot conform to the sinful world around us but must be transformed in our bodily, physical, worldly existence as it expresses the spiritual truth of redemption. Christian bodies cannot play host to sinful activities because they have already been taken for holy use and are being consumed.

A living sacrifice is one that is not yet wholly consumed. It has not yet surrendered to the flames of suffering that are designed to carry it to heaven. The only remaining task of a living sacrifice is to die fully. As we offer our bodies as living sacrifices, our one remaining spiritual task is to die to self and live to God. All our physical, worldly, embodied existence continues only to serve this holy process. As Paul says of himself, twice (Phil. 2:17 and 2 Tim. 4:6), we should pray to be poured out as a drink offering.

Look It Up

Charles Spurgeon, in his sermon "Jesus Known by Personal Revelation" (1888), says of today's Gospel: "Error is multiform. Truth is one. A thousand lies will live together and tolerate each other. … A thousand false gods will stand together in the Pantheon. But if the ark of the true God enters Dagon's temple, Dagon must come down on his face and be dashed to pieces."

Think About It

How might Peter's confession provide an opportunity to offer ourselves as a living sacrifice?

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SUNDAY'S READINGS | 12 Pentecost, August 31

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Alternate: Jer. 15:15-21 • Ps. 26:1-8 • Rom. 12:9-21 • Matt. 16:21-28

Counting Profits

In Matthew, Jesus speaks of the spiritual life in terms of profit: what does it profit anyone to gain the whole world and yet lose the soul? While this challenge has certainly inspired philanthropists and almsgivers throughout the centuries, Jesus aimed at more than setting up a foundation or tossing a few coins to a homeless person. The spiritual profit here is far more than personal fulfillment or responsible citizenship. It is the reward of a martyr, the life found when life is lost in Christ's service. It is the part of a person that cannot be exchanged for money or goods, and is developed through self-renunciation and perseverance in the way of the cross.

The profit of the soul should motivate Christians to be faithful during our earthly life. But, as any investment manager will say, human nature is much more inclined to respond to short-term profits and stimuli than to pursue long-term returns. Grasping the profit of the soul is just as difficult. There is no get-rich-quick scheme in the spiritual life. No profit comes unless it is by denying ourselves, taking up the cross, and following faithfully over time.

St. Paul's list of ethical examples in Romans presents us with a series of "What does it profit?" situations, each illustrative of Jesus' point. What does it profit to hate what is evil and cling to what is good? It might make simplistic moral sense, but when you ask about the return in worldly terms, compromise is more normal. Obedience could cost everything.

What does it profit to contribute to the needs of the saints or extend hospitality? In worldly terms, these are bottomless money pits. Any needy person can invoke religion and access our pocketbooks. Houseguests might overstay their welcome. Must not our welcoming have a limit? What does it profit us to welcome unconditionally with open-ended hospitality?

What does it profit to bless those who curse us and leave revenge to God? This might be a nice Sunday School concept, but what about that person who cheated us out of thousands of dollars? What about a coworker who seems to exist for no other reason than to make our life difficult? What about that fellow Anglican who fought us in court? What does it profit us to leave off these conflicts, to "suffer ourselves rather to be defrauded"?

Jesus' question about profit leads us away from thinking of the Christian life as a system of rules to follow and focuses our eyes on real value. What constitutes profit? How will we measure success in the kingdom of God? Are we radically willing to pursue the profit of the soul to the renunciation of self and world?

Look It Up

Maimonides, the medieval Jewish philosopher, conceived of charitable giving as eight steps on the Golden Ladder of Charity. What might it mean to apply his insights to each of St. Paul's exhortations?

Think About It

Consider your spiritual autobiography. If it were graphed like the long-term performance of a financial security, when has your spiritual "stock" been profitable to the kingdom? When has it been less than profitable?

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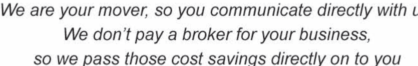

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