

John Wesley's Common Thread

Vatican II's Legacy

October 19, 2014

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ON THE COVER

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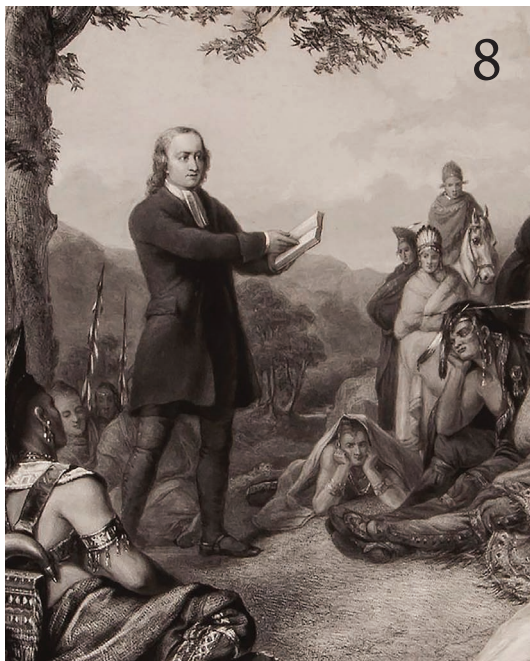
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We are grateful to St. George’s Church, Nashville [p. 27], and the dioceses of Fort Worth and Northern Indiana [p. 28], whose generous support helped make this issue possible.

Eight Professors Dismissed at GTS

Turmoil has engulfed General Theological Seminary as trustees say a majority of the faculty has quit. But the professors say they were merely on strike as they protested what they called, in an open letter to students, bullying behavior by the seminary's dean and president.

In a statement released September 30, General's Board of Trustees said it had accepted resignations from eight of the school's 11 faculty members. The seminary will seek replacements for the dismissed professors.

"The board came to this decision with heavy hearts," the statement said. "It has become clear that this is the best path forward in educating our students and shaping them into leaders of the church."

But the situation is far from resolved. The board left the door open for possible reinstatement of faculty interested in "reconsidering the resignation."

Tensions ramped up the week before when the eight professors announced they would no longer teach, attend meetings, or join community worship until the board addressed long-standing and pressing issues.

In a letter to students, they ac-

cused the Very Rev. Kurt H. Dunkle, dean and president, of making "colleagues and students feel bullied rather than empowered to contribute." He has created an "unsustainable" work environment, they said.

"Please know that we are not referring to off-hand remarks, or that we are overly concerned with 'political correctness,'" the eight wrote. "Rather we refer to a number of very serious incidents and patterns of behavior which have over time caused faculty, students, and staff to feel intimidated, profoundly disrespected, excluded, devalued, and helpless."

Dean Dunkle did not respond to requests for comment. The board said it is conducting an internal investigation of allegations against him, adding, "We encourage everyone to withhold any further judgment or comment."

All eight were present at an emotional afternoon meeting September 29 at St. Peter's Church in Manhattan, said the Rev. Jennifer Reddall, who attended the meeting. She said faculty told a supportive gathering of GTS students that they have formed a union and are not stepping down.



ENS photo

The Very Rev. Kurt H. Dunkle has pushed for a more businesslike environment at the seminary.

"They were shocked and grieving," said Reddall, a GTS alumna and rector of Church of the Epiphany in New York. "There were tears among the students. There were tears among the faculty."

Students greeted their professors with a standing ovation, Reddall said. They listened as faculty read aloud two of their collectively signed letters to the board and one response from the board.

The letters from faculty reportedly listed grievances adding up to a hostile work environment, including claims that Dunkle made racist, sexist, and anti-gay comments. They said he failed to honor academic confidences by discussing student evaluations in the refectory.

"They gave several specific examples," Reddall said, though she declined to repeat them. "The allegations they made were met by the student body with gasps and shock."

Turmoil at General comes one year into Dunkle's presidency, which has been marked by ambitions to make the seminary more efficient and to close what he has called an unsustainable budget deficit. Dunkle has been exploring how Episcopal seminaries can cut costs by sharing services. He's overseen a cutback in liturgical life at the seminary, with fewer gatherings

The Diocese of Massachusetts ordained and consecrated the Rev. Alan M. Gates as its 16th bishop on Sept. 13 during a service at the Agganis Arena at Boston University. Bishop Stephen T. Lane of the Diocese of Maine, president of Province I of the Episcopal Church, served as the chief consecrator. More than 4,000 participants and 27 bishops attended the service. A massed choir of 550-plus singers from nearly 75 parishes performed, along with a gospel choir, a brass ensemble, a steel-drum band, and a handbell choir. Gates, 56, former rector of St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Cleveland, Ohio, was elected bishop on April 5.

Matthew Cavanaugh photo



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for Eucharist. He's also leading an effort to make Master of Divinity candidates into 20-hour-a-week parish employees in their third year.

Dunkle came to General from a Florida parish, where he served as rector and used business-world methods to "increase the sales of Jesus Christ" and expand the church's membership. He's now pushing for a more businesslike environment at the seminary, and some of his most provocative ideas have big implications for faculty.

"Does tenure mean lifetime employment? I don't believe it would in the future," Dunkle told TLC in a June interview, touching on a sensitive issue for faculty everywhere. "I would be very surprised if that version of lifetime employment without consequence continues. We're just beginning to look at that, but everything is on the table — everything."

When faculty have tenure, they can lose their jobs only by resigning or by being dismissed for cause, which must be affirmed by a panel of peers at their institution, said Greg Scholtz, director of the Department of Academic Freedom, Tenure, and Governance at the American Association of University Professors. He said disputes about whether a faculty member has resigned have in the past triggered AAUP committee investigations.

"These investigation committee reports, since they tend to lay bare all, can be very embarrassing for an institution," Scholtz said. "Some institutions, we've found, are willing to work on resolutions with us for these problems in order to avoid an investigation and ultimate censure."

As of September 30, about half of General's classes were not meeting because of the faculty standoff, but the administration aimed to have all classes meeting again by the following week. General has about 100 students.

"Our location in the heart of New York City affords us access to a wide range of resources, and we shall be drawing upon those resources to address any needs created by these resignations," the board statement said.

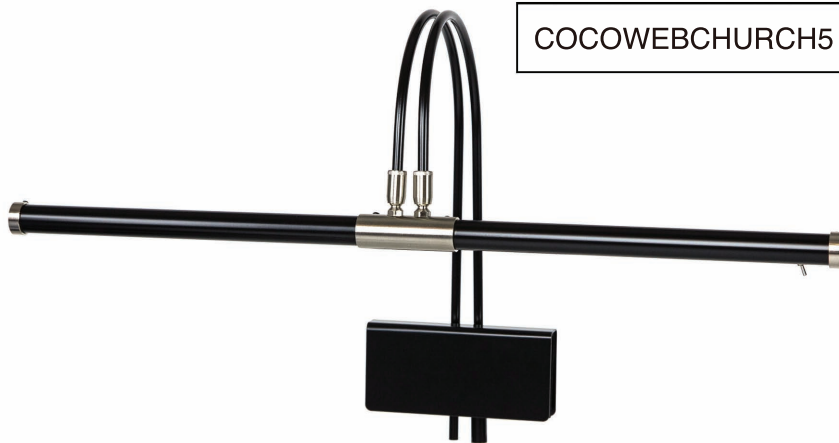
Meanwhile, others hope a resolu-

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The Very Rev. Dr. Graham M. Smith, Dean



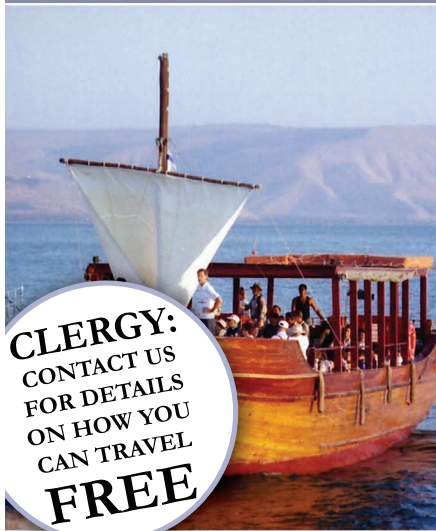
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Diocese of Maryland photo

The Rt. Rev. Heather Elizabeth Cook (right) receives the crozier from the Rt. Rev. Eugene Taylor Sutton, Bishop of Maryland, after her consecration by Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori. Cook was ordained and consecrated as suffragan bishop on September 6 at Church of the Redeemer in Baltimore. A student from St. Paul's School for Girls, Brooklandville, led the opening procession of the service with the school's flag. Cook graduated from St. Paul's School for Girls in 1974. She is the first woman to be elected a bishop in the Maryland diocese. She was elected on May 2 on the fourth ballot from a slate of four nominees.

Wondra Joins WCC Panel

The Rev. Ellen K. Wondra, research professor of theology and ethics at the Bexley Seabury Theological Seminary Federation, has been elected to the World Council of Churches' Standing Commission on Faith and Order for a term that will last until 2022.



Wondra

The Standing Commission on Faith and Order, described by the World Council of Churches as "a community of ecumenical leaders and theologians who for more than a cen-

tury have labored for the visible unity of Christ's Church through concentrated theological dialogue," comprises nearly 50 theologians and consultants and meets for one week every two years. Wondra's first meeting will be in June 2015.

"Ellen's passion for ecumenical dialogue has enlivened her career and the seminary she serves," said the Rev. Roger A. Ferlo, president of Bexley Seabury. "Her service on the Standing Commission on Faith and Order will be a boon to Bexley Seabury, the Episcopal Church, and our ecumenical partners across the globe."

GTS Dismisses Eight Professors

(Continued from previous page)

tion can be found to restore the protesting faculty members to classrooms at General.

"General is able to really uniquely form leaders for the world, to form

priests, and to form lay leaders," Reddall said. "It's going to lose that opportunity if everybody doesn't take a step back, take a breath, and say, 'Okay, let's find a different way.'"

G. Jeffrey MacDonald

PB Opens Door to Other Bishops

In a letter released September 23, Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori said she has not discerned a calling to stand for re-election to the office.

“I have resisted the assumption by some that presiding bishops can only be elected to serve one term, knowing the depth of relational work and learning that is involved in this ministry,” she wrote.

“I do not at present believe I should serve and lead in this ministry for another nine years,” she wrote. “I believe I can best serve this church by opening the door for other bishops to more freely discern their own vocation to this ministry. I also believe that I can offer this church stronger and clearer leadership in the coming year as we move toward that election and a whole-hearted engagement with necessary structural reforms.”



Jim Carrington/Diocese of Mississippi photo

The Rt. Rev. Brian Seage and his family, the Rev. Kyle Seage, and daughters Katie and Betsy, at the service where he was ordained and consecrated bishop coadjutor of the Diocese of Mississippi on September 27 at the Jackson Convention Complex. Bishop Seage will succeed the Rt. Rev. Duncan M. Gray, III, as the 10th bishop of Mississippi when Gray retires in February 2015. Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori was the chief consecrator. The Rt. Rev. J. Jon Bruno, Bishop of Los Angeles, was a co-consecrator at the service. Bruno was an influence when Seage was growing up in southern California.

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*Adapted from an address at a gathering of lay evangelists
— heirs of a noble missionary inheritance, who may yet
be signposts for its future — in the Diocese of Dallas.*



John Wesley preaching to the Indians in Georgia, 1736 English School 19th Century

‘All Thanks to the Lamb, Who Gives Us to Meet’

John Wesley and the Common Thread of Modern Anglican Mission

By George Sumner

The diversity of the Anglican Communion is breathtaking. Indeed, it is probably the second-widest global fellowship of churches. It encompasses the Arctic, equatorial Africa, the emerging cities of Asia, and the secret Anglicans of Iran. In the Church of Nigeria there are as many dioceses as the strong diocese in the United States has parishes. How Anglicanism came to be in all these places is a story far too long for an essay. Amid such diversity and breadth, could one hope to find a single, common lesson about mission in the Anglican way? My answer is *yes*, because a shared string of DNA runs through most of it.

First, however, let me offer some general observations on Christian mission. The resurrected Jesus says to his disciples in what is called the Great Commission: “go into all the world, teaching and making disciples of all nations.” Jesus is Lord, and so this idea ought to be basic to a Christian church. But actually mission, by which I mean the spreading of the gospel, especially across cultures, has been sporadic. In the early centuries it was mostly accomplished by individuals, along trade routes or by the example of martyrdom.

After Christianity became the established religion, monks, and later the mendicants, did the yeoman’s work, for example by helping bring the gospel to the British Isles. Not accidentally, communities devoted to the disciplined Christian life, and not the Church at large, were in the forefront. And little mission activity took place for long periods. For a millennium the Christians of western Europe were encircled by Islam, which limited the access and knowledge that make mission possible. For several more centuries too much energy was wasted in

struggles between Catholic and Protestant. With respect to the latter in particular, the record of mission activity is thin.

For English men and women the 18th century marked a time of enormous social and economic flux and dislocation. A global economy was emerging. Extreme poverty among working people led to social disruptions and harsh legal responses. The established Anglican church struggled with a certain complacency as well as compromise related to state control. By the early 19th century, with flagging clergy morale, some wondered how much longer the church could survive. In the midst of this, the movement of renewal called the evangelical revival took place. The key figure was John Wesley, an Anglican priest, preacher, and writer, along with his brother Charles. John Wesley remained in orders until his death, though, as we know, soon thereafter a new denomination, the Methodists, was formed, which in time took the American West by storm.

It is sometimes said that it takes a saint to put up with a saint. John Wesley was a prickly character. He was neurotic enough in his younger years to give himself a grade on his spiritual health by the quarter-hour. He set out to be a missionary to the native people of Georgia. He made little impression on them, though he did succeed in making a distinctly negative impression on the young woman with whom he fell in love. But on the voyage home the Moravians

he met introduced him to a more intense personal piety of the heart. It changed him, and he in turn changed the face of global Christianity.

Here is a thesis: that the dynamic “x-factor,” the key to the upsurge of Anglican mission in the modern era, and its common feature still today, may be found in the lineage of Wesleyanism. Wesley’s ministry had a shape that has been repeated and reappropriated over

(Continued on next page)



Revival in western Uganda in the 1930s

thegloriohamutamba.blogspot.com

'All Thanks to the Lamb, Who Gives Us to Meet'

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and over again. In mission, we are all Methodists now, at least in our root assumptions and many of our strategies. To understand what I mean, we need to consider the particular pattern of Methodist mission and ministry. It was focused on inwardness, conversion, the heart, and yet it was lived out in small groups, "class meetings," in which the converted held each other to account. In those groups members could confess their failings, be exhorted and encouraged by their peers, and pray for one another. The leaders and the impetus were lay.

The gospel has to be presented to all so as to be received freely in faith. It sounds simple, but with Wesley this reality came to the fore anew. Thus he felt impelled to go to those who had not heard. Shockingly for this time, he went to the openings of mines to preach to the miners at dawn. The sermons were in fact long, dry, and learned, and yet their effect was electric. His earnestness and willingness to go out to people were paramount.

Soon there were numerous converts, and as a result services were held in the open air, where they would sing. Methodism was in large measure a musical movement. Many of the hymns by the Wesley brothers were for devotions preparatory to Holy Communion, or as the congregation waited while the long lines went up for the sacrament. The movement was at once deeply evangelical and eucharistic. And it had spinoffs: lives of the converted changed, drinking was curtailed, family life improved, trades were learned, and money was saved. Social change and conversion were intertwined.

One may offer valid objections to the thesis. The Roman Catholics had their own mission societies with their own interest in the converted heart. Obviously Anglicans did not become Methodists — though I use *methodist* to refer not to a denomination but rather to a way of organizing and thinking about missionary activity. Again, one might note how, in many ways, fellow Protestant missionaries disagreed with Methodists about ordination, the sacraments, and predestination. If we focus more specifically on the Episcopal Church, we find the mission work of Bishop Jackson Kemper, an Anglo-Catholic rather than an evangelical, sent out not by a voluntary society but by the church itself.

All fair enough. But a background agreement on approach surrounds these foreground theological disputes. The new chapter of mission history that followed Wesleyan influence crossed liturgical parties and incorporated a common set of features:

- Lay leadership
- Going out to where people are
- Evangelistic gatherings
- Small groups
- Confession
- Converted hearts
- Singing

This pattern was key to both the success of the movement and its ability to replicate itself. Confession made it real, and singing made it enjoyable. The cells could undergo mitosis with minimal control or distraction from authorities higher up.

This all may seem obvious. Missionaries form societies, invite new Christians into cells, and send them out to witness with testimony and song. So what? But this is the point. We do not notice the influence of the evangelical revival on the mission scene, so complete was its transformation of a range of denominations. Its originators, and some of its seminal figures, happen to have been Anglican.

Two generations after the Wesleys, another wave of revival led to the creation of the Church Missionary Society. At first it focused on the evils of slavery in both east and west Africa, but soon they saw the need to care for the souls of those freed, and to employ them to evangelize the interior. The society's efforts led to the evangelization of east and west Africa, India, China, Persia, Australia, and the frozen north of Canada.

The history of the CMS helps us to answer an insistent question in our time: why should we impose this shape of the Christian life, originating in the British Isles, on the rest of the world?

The history of the CMS helps us to answer an insistent question in our time: why should we impose this shape of the Christian life, originating in the British Isles, on the rest of the world? In fact, this is not at all what happened in global Anglicanism.

Christians in many different places made the gospel their own. Two examples will suffice for now, though there are more.

The CMS brought its brand of evangelical Anglicanism, oriented to conversion and personal witness, to east Africa in the late 19th century. After some success the first third of the 20th century produced much nominal faith and moral struggle. Polygamy and reversion to pre-Christian practice were rampant. Suddenly, in the 1930s, a locally derived revival spread like wildfire. Racial tensions between missionary and east African were resolved by putting them “in the light” in small fellowship groups. The Holy Spirit gave the power to overcome backsliding. Those who received the message were the *balokole*, “the saved.” They met in groups, committed themselves to evangelistic work, and put off practices they associated with the old, compromised life such as smoking and drinking. They stressed the possibility of a new sanctification. It was as if they had formed a new brand of African Methodism, without ever having read the history.

There were also familiar problems, such as judgmentalism and threats to leave the Anglican fold, whose leadership seemed compromised. But in this case they stayed, with an attendant, inspiring power for the renewal of Anglicanism. The DNA of Wesley expressed itself newly and truly. And the subsequent, dramatic growth of Anglican churches in Africa would derive from the influence of this kind of CMS-derived piety.

Consider a second example. India proved a challenging site for evangelism, with the vast and imposing wall of Hinduism. Centuries earlier the Jesuits made a creative effort to dress Christianity in saffron among upper-caste Hindus, but it did not last. By the early 20th century evangelical Anglicans found some modest success going house-to-house as they offered the gospel to lower-caste Indians. An instance of this work was Samuel Azariah, who eventually became the first native Anglican bishop. He actually worked for the YMCA — in those days an energetic, ecumenically evangelical agency of witness worldwide. Converts would be taught the Bible and formed in small groups in precisely the framework we associate with the Methodist way.

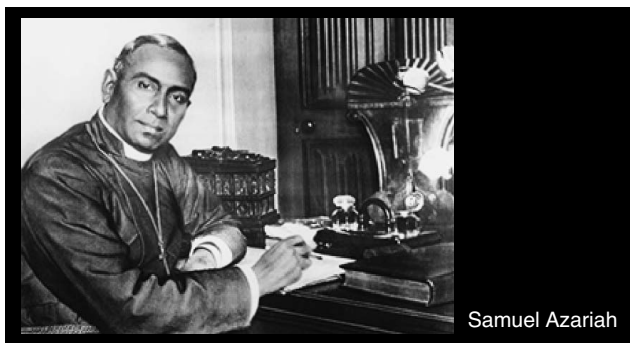
Was all this imposed, or authentically Indian? All one can say is that Azariah lived, spoke, and worked in a thoroughly Indian way, living humbly among his own people. The pattern proved perfectly adaptable to his circumstances, although Indian culture

One wonders if Total Ministry’s emphasis on the ordained has discouraged the alternative of a strong lay order of catechist evangelists.

was not modern or voluntarist in a Western sense. But the methods worked well in the initiation of a subculture to which people could freely join themselves. His diocese had grown tenfold, to 100,000 members, by the time of Indian independence.

In each case — in east Africa and in India — local leaders made the pattern their own, even as all, like Wesley, assumed worship according to the Book of Common Prayer. In fact, the Methodist model proved serviceable in various denominations, but for Anglicans it fit well into the more formal framework of the prayer book. Intimate fellowship complemented the formal liturgy, both in its ancient and Reformation roots.

Stepping back to consider the pattern once more, we see both that a variety of cultures appropriated it and that it particularly suited the modern age. In his study of contemporary Pentecostalism, *Tongues of Fire*, Anglican sociologist David Martin contends that this pattern marked the great inculturation of the Christian faith in the modern world.



In an epoch characterized by feeling, free association, and mobility, the Wesleyan model was especially apt: portable, conducive to cell mitosis, and less dependent on ecclesial superstructures. And yet it did not acquiesce to privatism, since it included the small group, the religious society, and the common prayer of the Church.

The pattern can also shed light on contemporary
(Continued on next page)

'All Thanks to the Lamb, Who Gives Us to Meet'

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trends and movements on the mission scene. The challenges of the Church today are not dissimilar to those faced by Wesley. A fundraiser friend recently characterized our demographics as “doom and doomer.” Younger inquirers are not “joiners” as their forebears were. We are dazzled by and wary of the rising tide of technology. We are riven by conflict. The globe is perched on our urban doorstep. The world economy writhes amid massive transition. We worry that we do not know our Bibles as we once did. Everyone wonders how to attract the spiritual-but-not-religious crowd, when we are not debating how big the “none” segment really is. The young in our post-industrial age long for the personal and intimate, but also for the traditional and rooted.

In such a context, the most successful ventures remain straightforwardly Wesleyan. Sociologist Robert Wuthnow entitled his book about small groups *I Come Away Stronger*. And so Alpha now has its own bishop, seminary, and international conferences. Its secret is a meal, a prayer, a joke, a Bible lesson; the dour Mr. Wesley had all that, without the joke. The heart of its power is the intimacy and accountability of the small group. To be sure, Alpha has its challenges, but Holy Trinity Brompton succeeds in leading people back to the assembly, the body of Christ gathered, and in encouraging groups to reproduce themselves.

Another encouraging trend may be seen in the continuing mass of evangelicals on the Canterbury trail, identified a generation ago by Robert Webber. Young people at Wheaton or Biola or Briarcrest are still drawn to the deep roots of liturgy and patristic theology, without sacrificing their commitment to the Scriptures and their entrepreneurial gifts in evangelism. At Wycliffe College in Toronto, new Anglicans from InterVarsity or Power to Change bring skills in mentoring and testimony that are quintessentially Wesleyan and greatly needed among Anglicans. Here is evangelistic purpose in catholic form: a force for renewal in our tradition and circumstance.

In other cases the Methodist roots may be harder to identify immediately. England has seen, in recent decades, an effort to come to terms with the rapid and pervasive secularization of society, as a result of which Christians have become a small minority whose beliefs and practices seem increasingly strange to their compadres. Evangelicals, in particular, in the Church of England have attempted to respond via what is called Fresh Expressions. Team members live in and seek to understand a neighbor-

hood, and eventually try to start a Bible study in a pub, or with skateboarders, or perhaps in a laundry. This low-key approach seeks to avoid scaring possible new Christians away. Going where people are and starting small groups is of course Wesleyan. But the program faces challenges. Leading new Christians back to the body as a whole is tricky. And some practitioners may misunderstand the movement as a technique that is free to drop its conversionist roots. Method without the converted heart and the orthodox mind is no longer truly Methodist.

Recall east Africa after *balokole* revival. The standard congregational minister was a lay leader, called either a “catechist” or an “evangelist.” What was once a minor order in the Church came to play a major role. Here too the Methodist precedent proved powerful, since Wesley himself was called the “patron and friend of the lay preacher.” The African lay evangelists had gone to Bible school where they were mentored and learned the outline of Scripture’s story. They were left under a baobab tree in a village and told to go door-to-door to gather and plant a church. Buildings were made simply of mud and stick. A youth choir and the Mothers’ Union were set in place, with fellowship groups for the converted. Ministers saw to their own material needs by farming like their congregants. The priest was more like an archdeacon, visiting every few months to oversee the work. He would also preside at the Eucharist, which was less frequent, and yet it was an occasion of spiritual excitement — a true feast day. All of this would have made Wesley’s heart glad.

We might usefully consider the Total Ministry movement (of which I was a part some years ago in Navajoland) in this light. It has sought to discern the ordained — usually non-stipendiary — from the congregation in each place. It has enabled many rural churches to survive, and laudably stressed complementary lay ministries. Yet one wonders if its emphasis on the ordained has discouraged the alternative of a strong lay order of catechist evangelists. If ours is a biblically illiterate generation, with a real need for ministry in the Methodist model, should not such an order of lay evangelists have a place of honor?

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

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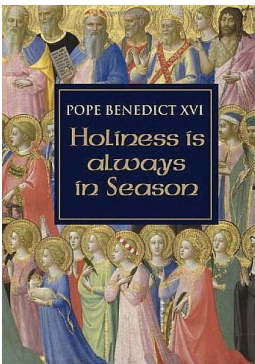
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FEAST OF ALL SAINTS: NOVEMBER 1



Holiness Is Always in Season

By **Pope Benedict XVI**. Translated and Edited by **Leonardo Sapienza**. Ignatius. Pp. 333. \$21.95

Review By Paul Hunter

Christianity, when most true to itself, is a religion of the particular and personal, receiving its character from the mystery of the Incarnation. Although it

is possible to describe a vague, cloudy image of the Christian life and sanctity in general, real saints, as opposed to their plaster counterparts, are distinct, surprising, and as quirky as the cast of a Wes Anderson film. Good examples of the “Lives of the Saints” genre revel in these surprises and quirks.

In his contribution to that genre, *Holiness Is Always in Season*, Benedict XVI compares the saints to flowers in a garden planted by God, “each unique in his own personality” (p. 13) and lovely in their variety. Overall, this book is an excellent resource. It is arranged according to the calendar year, providing a biographical sketch of many saints on their days, and introduced by a free-verse poem for All Saints Day. Although the primary purpose of the book is devotional, Benedict’s command of theology and history is evident throughout.

The emphasis falls on the variety of the saints, but a common theme unites them. One passage from the biography of the great Eastern theologian, Maximus the Confessor (d. 662), provides a theological key to the book: “The person who withdraws into himself ... is not completely free; he is freed by emerging from himself, it is in the ‘yes’ that he becomes free; and this is the drama of Gethsemane: not my will but yours. It is by transferring the human will to the divine will that the real person is born” (p. 194).

Paradoxically, it is this selflessness that gives the saints such vivid personalities. All gave themselves to God and received themselves back tenfold. Holiness, then, is per-

sonal but not individualistic or turned in on itself. Saints are not like action heroes, self-sufficient spiritual supermen who go it alone. Saints often seem to come in groups or even families, like Basil the Great and his brother Gregory of Nyssa, who were friends with Gregory of Nazianzen. Sanctity is formed in community. Probably the greatest value of reading these lives is sharing in the community of saints, and so being formed by their example.

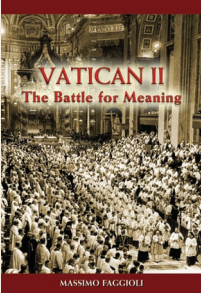
There are several flaws in the book. Being mainly culled from the pope’s Wednesday addresses, there is some irregularity of style, length, and emphasis. It is sometimes difficult to see what motivated the editor’s choice of particular saints to include, except perhaps that these were the talks available. In addition, since not every day of the calendar year is included, many readers probably will not find the book consistent enough for daily use as a devotional.

It offers, however, an excellent resource for clergy who wish to preach on the “Saint of the Day.” Benedict never merely recounts data, but tries to show how saints provide example and encouragement, even when they were known mainly for theological contributions. For example, his discussion of the life of Athanasius includes a lucid explanation of why the debates in and around the Council of Nicaea actually matter in basic spiritual life. Probably all preachers struggle to convey the importance of the more abstract theological disputes of Christian history, and resources like this are valuable. In the lives of the saints we see how doctrine becomes drama, as the eternal truths of the faith play out in the lives of the men and women who form our “great cloud of witnesses” (Heb. 12:1).

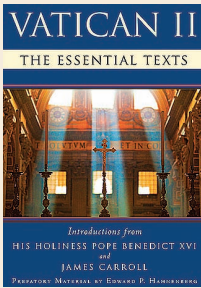
The Rev. Paul Hunter serves as canon for mission at the Episcopal Cathedral of All Saints, Albany.



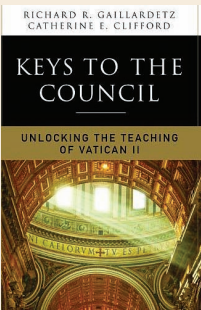
Vatican II
Did Anything Happen?
By **Joseph A. Komonchak**,
John O'Malley, **Neil J.**
Ormerod, and **Stephen**
Schloesser. Edited by **David**
G. Schultover. Bloomsbury.
Pp. 186. \$19.95.



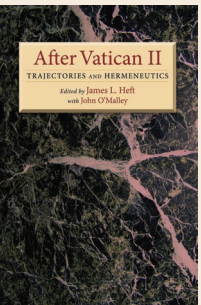
Vatican II
The Battle for Meaning
By **Massimo Faggioli**.
Paulist. Pp. 199. \$14.95



Vatican II
The Essential Texts
Edited by **Norman Tanner**.
Image. Pp. 373. \$16



Keys to
the Council
Unlocking the
Teaching of Vatican II
Edited by **Richard Gail-**
lardetz and **Catherine**
E. Clifford. Liturgical Press.
Pp. xix + 198. \$19.95



After
Vatican II
Trajectories and
Hermeneutics
Edited by **James L. Heft**
and **John O'Malley**.
Eerdmans. Pp. xxii + 194. \$40

BOOKS

Vatican II's Contested Legacy

Review by Paul Avis

The most momentous religious event of the 20th century was the Second Vatican Council. Its impact continues to reverberate into the 21st century and shows no sign of diminishing. Modern electronic communication has given the Council's impact an immediacy and universality that no council before it enjoyed. The pastoral style and thematic coherence of the Council's teaching has aided its dissemination and reception. The Council ran from 1962 to 1965; so now, in 2014, the commemorations are still in full swing. Commemorations? Perhaps "contestations" would be more apt. The real significance of the Council, the correct interpretation of its teaching, and therefore its legacy for the Roman Catholic Church today, has been disputed ever since.

(Continued on next page)

BOOKS

Vatican II's Contested Legacy

(Continued from previous page)

In 1959 Pope John XXIII astonished the world — and his own bishops and cardinals — when he announced that he would call an ecumenical council, the 20th according to the reckoning of Roman Catholic authorities, but the first for nearly a century. When it met, 2,400 bishops participated, together with about 500 theological advisers and (for the first time) about 50 observers from other Christian churches. Against all the odds, the outcome of the Council was to transform the Church. James Carroll writes in a foreword to *The Essential Texts*: “They were old men (average age sixty), temperamentally conservative, culturally detached. Men of contradiction, they were schooled in anachronism in how they thought, spoke, dressed and lived — yet they presided at a climax of modernity.... Rigidly orthodox, they took instruction from innovators they had silenced” (p. 14).

One school of thought has emphasised the continuity of Vatican II with all that went before, especially Vatican I (1870-71), which solemnly defined universal papal jurisdiction and papal infallibility. For these conservative popes, bishops, and theologians, Vatican II changed little: it simply applied traditional teaching to modern circumstances. It was not a revolution, hardly even a watershed. “Business as usual” was and is their motto. They will not allow the outworking of Vatican II to interfere with the business of running the church from the centre, namely, the papal *magisterium* (in practice, the Roman Curia). The scholarly flagship of the conservative cause has been the journal *Communio*, founded in 1972 by Joseph Ratzinger, Hans Urs von Balthasar, and Henri de Lubac.

These conservative interpreters have looked to Popes John Paul II and Benedict XVI to prevent change. In 1985 John Paul II convened an Extraordinary Assembly of the College of Bishops to take stock of the harvest of Vatican II. The official report of the Synod emphasised the continuity of the Council with all that had gone before. It insisted that the Council was “a legitimate and valid expression and interpretation of the deposit of faith as it is found in Sacred Scripture and in the living tradition of the Church.” It condemned any attempt to play the “letter” against the “spirit” of the Council. The report insisted that “The Church is one and the same throughout all the councils” (*The Battle for Meaning*, pp. 12-13). In other words, no change.

As Benedict had said,
true reform involves
both continuity
and discontinuity.
But where to put
the emphasis remains
hotly debated.

In 2000 John Paul II warned: “To read the Council as if it marked a break with the past, while in fact it placed itself in the line of the faith of all times, is decidedly unacceptable” (*Did Anything Happen?* p. 54). Nevertheless, John Paul II spoke more warmly of Vatican II than did his successor, Benedict XVI, and notably embraced its affirmation of human rights and its openness to other world faiths. In his Encyclical *Ut Unum Sint* (“That they may be one”) of 1995, John Paul took up the Council’s cordial approach to other Christian traditions and even pushed it slightly further.

Between 1988 and 2001 a five-volume History of Vatican II was produced under the editorship of Giuseppe Alberigo in Bologna (English translation edited by Joseph Komonchak [Orbis, 1995-2006]). By tracing the chequered career of the teaching documents, it enabled scholars to see the Council in full historical and political perspective as never before. Rather like modern biblical scholarship, the History of Vatican II brought out the contingent, human element in the emergence of the texts, including the elements of compromise and ambiguity in the drafting. For this reason it became an object of suspicion to conservatives and was unjustly attacked for liberal bias.

There have been diehard reactionaries within the church who have completely rejected the Council, seeing it as the epitome of all the heresies of the ages and therefore without legitimacy or authority. To some of them, like the late Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre, that was a reason to take schismatic action that led to his excommunication, although Benedict XVI sought to woo back his followers in the Society of St. Pius X.

The younger Joseph Ratzinger took a different view of the Council to the Ratzinger who was prefect of the Congregation for the Faith and then pope. He saw it as a radical event, a watershed. “It was undoubtedly a rupture,” he said in 1966 after the Council, which he had attended as a theological adviser (*peritus*), “but a rupture within a fundamentally common intention” (*The Battle for Meaning*, p. 136). And in 1985 Ratzinger anticipated a renewal of the Council’s impact through discovering the true “spirit” of the Council beneath the texts.

However, in an address to the Roman Curia in 2005 Benedict XVI rejected what he called “a hermeneutic [method of interpretation] of discontinuity and rupture” and advocated instead “a hermeneutic of reform and renewal.” The Church grows and develops in time, yet always remains essentially the same. Benedict deplored appeals to “the spirit of the Council” that aimed to set up a trajectory of interpretation that would trump the texts. He called for “a dynamic of fidelity” and invoked what Pope John XXIII had said at the opening of the Council: traditional teaching would be brought into relation with modern thought and its research methods, without being changed in the process.

Benedict interpreted Pope John’s subtle statement on that occasion (“The substance of the ancient doctrine of the deposit of faith is one thing, and the way in which it is presented is another”) to mean that the Church’s “meaning and the message” are always the same (*The Essential Texts*, p. 6). Benedict went on to accept that the worldview of the 17th- and 18th-century Enlightenment, which was hostile to the idea of divine revelation, had given way to a new openness on the part of modern science. This fresh context also opened the possibility of a new partnership between church and state and a new attitude to other religions, especially Judaism. Benedict concluded: “It is precisely in this combination of continuity and discontinuity at different levels that the very nature of true reform consists.” His boldest gesture of affirmation was to describe the effect of the Council as a “process of innovation in continuity.” Benedict could not deny that the Council had “reviewed or even corrected certain historical decisions,” but he insisted that, in so doing, it had “actually preserved and deepened her inmost nature and true identity.”

As is widely acknowledged, Benedict’s stewardship of the See of Peter was marked in large part by caution and defensiveness. Change was to be feared. He

will be remembered, as far as his teaching is concerned, more for his stern condemnation of modern liberal ideology, culture, and morals than for his edifying, indeed inspiring, theological encyclicals. As far as Ratzinger-Benedict was concerned, since the student riots across Europe in 1968 the West had been going to moral and intellectual rack and ruin. But in that address of 1962 to the Council, John XXIII had taken to task those gloomy souls for whom “the modern world is nothing but betrayal and ruin . . . prophets of doom who are forever forecasting calamity.” Last November, in his apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, Pope Francis deplored the “disillusioned pessimism” that “stifles boldness and zeal” and adopts a “sour” attitude to life. If Benedict XVI represented a recurrence of suspicion and fear, a return of the repressed, Francis embodies the humanity, joy, and optimism of John XXIII — “good Pope John” *redivivus*.

For other Roman Catholics, however, the Second Vatican Council changed everything. It brought the church into the modern world. It threw off the insularity, defensiveness — even paranoia — that had characterized that church since the 18th century, the era of the Enlightenment and the French Revolution, the lowest ebb of the church’s fortunes until today. It adopted a pastoral tone — not hectoring but inviting, not condemning but persuading: the first Council in history to do so since the Council of Jerusalem in Acts 15. It pronounced no anathemas. It opened the windows of the Church to fresh hope and renewed energies. The two watchwords — one Italian, one French — of its approach were *aggiornamento* (coming up to date, modernizing) and *ressourcement* (drawing on the neglected riches of ancient tradition, the writings of the early Fathers). The theological flagship of the progressive tendency in the interpretation of Vatican II is the journal *Concilium* (which first appeared in 1965), associated with Hans Küng, Yves Congar, Karl Rahner, and Edward Schillebeeckx.

In particular, Vatican II reversed the traditional rejection of religious liberty, emphasising freedom of conscience. It modified the traditional stance on the relation of church and state (that the state should be subordinate to the church), drawing on the American democratic, pluralistic experience (Rome had condemned “Americanism” in 1889). The Council recognised aspects of divine revelation in other major religions. It committed the Roman Catholic Church to the

(Continued on next page)

Vatican II's Contested Legacy

(Continued from previous page)

ecumenical movement, which had previously been off limits. It spoke in a friendly way to other Christians, recognising the elements of truth and grace in their churches. It revitalized liturgical worship, affirming that all the faithful participate in, and indeed celebrate corporately, the liturgy, especially the Eucharist. It set the Scriptures centre stage in worship and teaching and encouraged the faithful to study them.

Vatican II galvanized the church and made other Christians look Romeward with fresh eyes. Some were bowled over and converted. For progressives Vatican II changed a great deal. It was about reform and renewal — themes on which the Council had spoken in uncanny echoes of 16th-century Reformers. As Benedict had said, true reform involves both continuity and discontinuity. But where to put the emphasis remains hotly debated. As O'Malley puts it, to insist exclusively on continuity “is to blind oneself to the discontinuities, which is to blind oneself to

Keys to the Council is the best introduction to the doctrinal legacy of Vatican II that I have come across.

change of any kind. And if there is no change, nothing happened” (*Did Anything Happen?* p. 56). To deny change is to negate history and if we do that we let tradition go (p. 58). In the 1840s John Henry Newman spelt out the fact of development — the development of doctrine, no less: an idea that, while vehemently resisted by the church at the time, allowed Newman to convert in 1845. It would be perverse to deny that development in the Church takes place; the crucial challenge is to find the criteria, or “tests” (as Newman called them), of authentic development, the kind that enable the Church to respond to the demands of mission while remaining faithful to the gospel.

Vatican II remains unfinished business in the sense that, in some key areas, it has not been followed through; its implementation has been aborted. Hermann Pottmeyer describes Vatican II as “a building site.” Four great supporting columns for a renewed Church and a renewed theology of the Church have

been erected: the idea of the Church as “the people of God”; the idea of the Church as the sacrament of the Kingdom of God in the world; the doctrine of the collegiality of the episcopate; and the openness to dialogue with separated Christian traditions. But, argues Pottmeyer, the great dome that should rest on the four pillars has never been built. The pillars still await the dome that would draw them into a unity (*The Battle for Meaning*, p. 124). The Christian world waits in prayerful expectation to see how far Pope Francis will be able to complete the unfinished business of Vatican II.

The Council has also had an enormous impact on Anglicanism, especially on the Anglican understanding of the Church, its liturgy, ministry, mission, and approach to Christian unity. By opening Rome to ecumenical dialogue it made the work of the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC) possible. With a few bumps along the road, ARCIC has achieved significant convergence in several areas that previously separated our two traditions: eucharistic theology, ministry and ordination, justification, ecclesiology, and authority. In the spirit of ARCIC, Anglicans and Roman Catholics have come together locally in many practical ways, and their bishops have held conversations in various parts of the world under the aegis of a parallel but more recent body, the International Anglican-Roman Catholic Commission for Unity and Mission. A debate about the legacy and significance of Vatican II that may appear at first sight to be a purely internal issue for Roman Catholics is actually vitally important to Anglicans.

So what resources will enable us to understand what Vatican II had to say and what we can learn from it? The texts that the Council produced are available in English, Latin, and many other languages at is.gd/VaticanII. There are several English translations of the documents published in book form, including those by Walter Abbott, SJ (1966), and the generally superior edition by Austin Flannery, OP (1975, with subsequent revisions). The standard, authoritative translation is now that edited by Norman Tanner, SJ, *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils* (Georgetown University Press, 1990), in two volumes with Latin and English facing each other on each page. But most of us are grateful for some guidance in choosing and understanding what to read. Tanner's *Vatican II: The Essential Texts* has interesting introductory essays by Benedict XVI and James Carroll, as well as brief prefaces to each document. It is a handy size for car-

rying around and dipping into, but it contains only six of the 16 documents produced by the Council.

Much more helpful to someone wanting to get to grips with the riches of Vatican II is the well-named *Keys to the Council: Unlocking the Teaching of Vatican II* by Richard R. Gaillardetz and Catherine E. Clifford. These gifted authors provide beautifully clear, exceptionally edifying expositions of the central texts, especially in sacramental theology, though not the full texts themselves. It is the best introduction to the doctrinal legacy of Vatican II that I have come across and would be an excellent resource for group study.

Two titles take us to the heart of the contested legacy of Vatican II. Faggioli's *Vatican II: The Battle for Meaning* discusses the "reception" of the Council. While the author's personal commitment to the progressive or liberal interpretation is apparent, he deals fairly with other views. Considering that English is not the author's first language, it is very readable. John O'Malley's *Vatican II: Did Anything Happen?* is on the whole a more polemical, combative contribution to the contest for the patrimony of the Council. It is suitable for readers who are already versed in the key texts and familiar with ecclesiastical politics. Alongside these, a more academic collection, Heft and O'Malley's *After Vatican II*, discusses a range of issues in the wake of the Council, including moral theology, "New Catholic Movements," and the attitude to other faiths, especially Judaism.

The Rev. Paul Avis is honorary professor of theology at the University of Exeter, editor-in-chief of the journal Ecclesiology, and a chaplain to HM Queen Elizabeth II.

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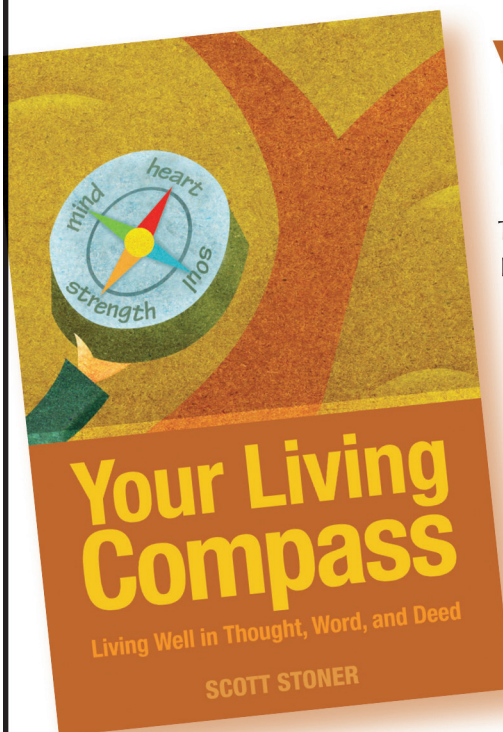
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From the Foreword, The Rt. Rev. Jeffrey Lee, Bishop of Chicago



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Photos courtesy of Fox/Searchlight Pictures

CULTURES

A Priest Forever

Review by Leonard Freeman

“I first tasted semen when I was seven years old” is an opening line that tells you *Calvary* will not be a family film. Fr. James (Brendan Gleeson) hears these words through the grate of the confessional, telling a story of degradation and hurt, bitterness and revenge. For years as a young boy, the speaker tells him, he was raped by priests, and now he has come for his revenge, but with a twist. To kill a good priest, an innocent one, will make a statement, and Fr. James is to be that one. “I’m goin’ ta kill ya, b’cause you’re innocent. ... Sunday a week, let’s say, I’ll meet you down a’ the beach there.”

Who is it? Who-will-have-done-it is one level of the film *Calvary*. The cuckolded butcher who plays chess with his wife’s African lover? The bitter pub owner? The semi-closeted gay police inspector? The male prostitute who makes fun of his time with the “bishops”? The seen-it-all debauched captain of industry whose wife and family have left him?

But deeper here lies a story about the hard trials and direct faithful life of a village priest whose vocation has come to disrepute from the sins of those who have gone before him.

As the title *Calvary* suggests, we are looking at the suffering and potential sacrifice of an innocent victim for the sins of others. How will this week end for Fr. James? And will it make a difference?

The voice did not offer contrition or repentance, Fr. James tells his bishop. He may even recognize the voice. But he has no proof and does not want to further victimize. And so we walk through an intimate week with this priest, like Jesus on his way to Jerusalem aware of the threat about him, yet hard and clear in his work of trying to be an intervention of God's love into the lives of his parishioners.

In the day-to-day events that follow, the death threat almost seems to disappear. This is a hard-scrabble Irish town, bleak, with sores out for all to see, whose parishioners come to Mass — *for what?* is an unspoken question. These are lives so very ruined, or in hurt, yet not seeming to really want redemption.

It is a mental picture that many an ordained person, working in tough circumstances amid a culture that seems to have lost respect for, or faith in, the Church, may well recognize.

How we as a church have fallen in public regard is encapsulated in a scene in which Fr. James chats with a young girl on her way down to the shore. Her father drives up, yanks her into his car, and yells, "What did you say to my daughter?" as if the cassock alone is proof of child molestation.

Brendan Gleeson, perhaps best known as Professor "Mad Eye" Moody in the Harry Potter films, is brilliant as the massive bear of a man who has his own hauntings. A widower, he came to his vocation late in life. It is a wound that still haunts his grown daughter, who along the way has tried to commit suicide. "Ah, ya made the classic mistake," the local atheist doctor chides her, "cutting across and not down."

There is a moment when Fr. James seems to have given up on his people and will leave in the face of their increasing hostility. Why should he risk death for such ingrates? On the stairs to the airplane out, he is called back by the experience



Calvary

Fox/Searchlight Pictures

Directed by John Michael McDonagh

of a woman whose young husband has just been killed. Yet she affirms the love of God: "We had a very good life together. We loved each other very much. And [his death] is not unfair. That just happened. A good many people don't live good lives, don't know love. ... I feel sorry for them."

He and we go back for the final confrontation on that beach, which comes hard.

And yet at film's close we see perhaps the touch of something — forgiveness, grace? — in another confrontation, and a hinted smile, affirming quietly that the lives of innocent victims and forgiveness may indeed make a difference.

A prophetic film in the best sense, *Calvary* speaks to a dark reality for churches today, raising along the way many of the most troublesome questions of faith, while affirming the truth of God's grace at work amid even the darkest of moments.

The Rev. Leonard Freeman, former director of communications for Trinity Wall Street and Washington National Cathedral, has written film reviews for more than 40 years.



CATHOLIC VOICES

Healing, Hope, Reconciliation

By Josiah Idowu-Fearon and Tom Furrer

For the past 22 years the Anglican Diocese of Kaduna, Nigeria, and Trinity Church in Tariffville, Connecticut, have engaged in a mission partnership. Since 2002 we have run a full-time, year-round medical clinic in a rural part of Kaduna. Trinity Church has raised funds for staff salaries and Kaduna has administered the clinic's daily operation of the clinic.



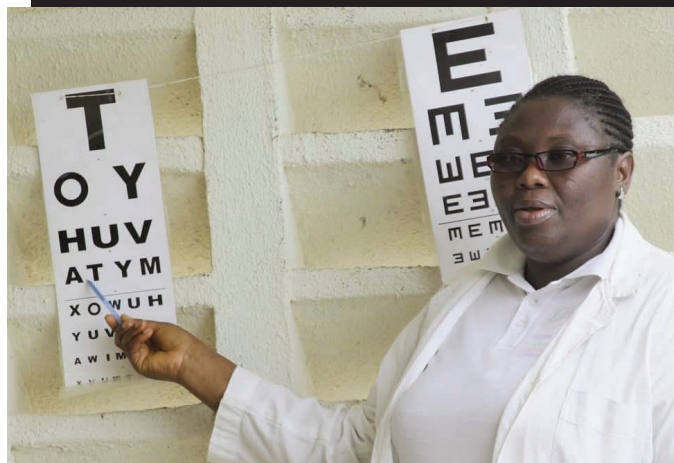
We have helped more than 100,000 people with medical care. In addition to the year-round clinic, we have conducted an annual joint mission between the Diocese of Kaduna and Trinity Church. Team members from Connecticut have joined with team members from Kaduna to provide health care, evangelism, and prayer to thousands of underserved rural poor people. We are building a second clinic in another poor rural area of the diocese. When it is completed, we hope to reach twice as many people every year with decent and affordable medical care offered in Jesus' name. In each of our medical mission activities we couple our mission of mercy with a mission of evangelism and church planting.

We see healing on a number of levels. On our most recent mission, a woman who was unable to walk was carried to the chapel for prayers. After the prayers, she walked out on her own two legs without assistance. Others receive prayer and counsel for marriage and family matters. Others are counseled for behavior-based problems that affect their health, such as alcoholism, drug addiction, and promiscuity. Still others receive prayers for deliverance from spiritual oppression. We strive to minister to the whole person and the whole family. Healing remains a sign of the kingdom of God breaking into the web of human disease, sin, hurt, and hatred.

There are strong antagonisms between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria. Kaduna, along with other northern cities, has been a flash point for interreligious violence in the past 20 years. On each medical mission we try to offer an alternative religious narrative to the one that has dominated news coverage in recent years. Just a few short miles from our annual locale are the ruins of both churches and mosques that have been burned down in religious riots. Entire neighborhoods, formerly inhabited by Christians or Muslims, have been destroyed. The need for religious reconciliation is not an abstract ideal. It is a life-and-death reality.

We pray intentionally that God will send us many Muslims to receive medical care. We want to show by words, gestures, and actions that it is possible for Christians to treat Muslims with respect

(Continued on next page)





CATHOLIC VOICES

Healing, Hope, Reconciliation

(Continued from previous page)

and love. With each passing year, we have seen this prayer answered more abundantly. In our most recent mission, approximately a third (2,000) of our patients were Muslim men, women, and children. They were treated with respect and love. Many of them made a point of thanking our staff members for their care and respect.

A Muslim businessman in Kaduna has made a sizable donation to the expenses for the mission. For the second year in a row, Muslim doctors, medical students, and one dentist worked alongside our Christian team members. On the final day of our mission we enjoyed a celebration dinner, and handed out certificates of service to all who volunteered their time.

We remain aware of the continuing problems in the Anglican Communion of the past decade. We do not wish to minimize the challenges presented by differences on doctrine and the subsequent fractures that have occurred. But we choose to live by this theme: “Focus on the Mission — Not on the Mess.” While not blind to the mess, we refuse to be defined or derailed by it. We have been determined to hold together for the sake of our common witness to the world-changing gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. And we have seen much good fruit borne from this determination to work together. We have learned to love one another more deeply through this partnership. We believe that the Lord of the Church has called us to work for reconciliation in this way. This approach has borne much good fruit for the kingdom of God.

The primary focus of our medical mission outreach is to express Jesus’ love to others in tangible ways. Through medical services, prayers for and welcome of our patients, and by respect, we strive to proclaim the love of Jesus. We share Jesus both with those who know and love him and with those who do not.

The Most Rev. Josiah Idowu-Fearon is Bishop of Kaduna and former Archbishop of Kaduna Province. The Ven. Tom Furrer is Archdeacon of the Diocese of Kaduna and rector of Trinity Church in Tariffville.



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

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

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

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

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First reading and psalm: Exod. 33:12-23 • Ps. 99

Alternate: Isa. 45:1-7 • Ps. 96:1-9, (10-13) • 1 Thess. 1:1-10 • Matt. 22:15-22

The Things That Are God's

A delegation of Herodians and Pharisees approaches Jesus and poses this question: Is it lawful to pay the tax to Caesar or not? The poll tax was required of all persons aged 12 to 65 and payable in the amount of a denarius, roughly a day's wage. The most widely circulated denarius bore the image of the emperor Tiberius, with this inscription: "Tiberius Caesar, august son of the divine Augustus, most high priest."

The Pharisees regarded such coins as idolatrous because of the image and the inscription. They usually arranged for someone else to pay the tax for them, so that they would not have to handle such a blasphemous object. But the Herodians, allies of King Herod who owed his position to the Romans, almost certainly supported the tax.

The question is a trap. If Jesus opposes paying the tax, he makes himself vulnerable to charges of sedition. If he supports paying the tax, he loses face among the people, for whom such taxes symbolize Roman occupation and oppression.

After implicitly pointing out that just as coins stamped with Caesar's image belong to Caesar, so human beings stamped with God's image belong to God, Jesus sidesteps the trap: "Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's." With these words, he does not so much solve the problem as define its terms. As Christians we acknowledge duties both to Caesar and to God. Our perennial challenge is to understand, distinguish, and fulfill these duties appropriately.

If we let *Caesar* stand as shorthand for the state and political authority, then we clearly have duties to Caesar. A basic tenet of classical Christian political thought is that the institutions of government are a gift of God for the common good. So we render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's by obeying the laws, paying our taxes,

voting in elections, serving on juries, and otherwise exercising the virtues of good citizenship.

We render to God the things that are God's when we fulfill the promises and vows of our baptism: by participating in worship on Sundays and holy days, saying our prayers daily, giving generously of our substance for the support of the Church, and, in the words of the prayer book, offering ourselves, our souls and bodies, as a living sacrifice of praise.

We have duties to both God and Caesar. Indeed, part of our duty to God is to fulfill our legitimate duties to Caesar. But God's authority alone is absolute. On those rare occasions when the demands of Caesar come into conflict with the laws of God, then obedience to God always takes precedence.

Church history bears this out. From the beginning, the Church has honored political authority as instituted by God. But when Roman emperors demanded to be worshiped as divine, the early Christian martyrs went to the lions first. Down through the centuries, such Christians as Thomas Becket, Thomas More, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, and Martin Luther King, Jr., have defied political authority in the name of the God to whom all political authority is ultimately accountable.

Today's Gospel challenges us to reflect on our duties in both the sacred and secular realms. Discerning how to fulfill these duties in new situations requires prudence, wisdom, and sustained prayer for God's guidance and strength.

Look It Up

For a scriptural instance of civil disobedience, read Daniel 3, with special attention to verses 16-18.

Think About It

What are some contemporary issues in which duties to "Caesar" might come into conflict with duties to God?

The Lord Said to My Lord

For the past five weeks, the Gospel readings have been taken from that part of St. Matthew's Gospel where Jesus is in the Temple following his triumphal entry into Jerusalem. The chief priests and elders of the people, Sadducees and Pharisees, have been asking him difficult questions designed to trip him up, and he has risen to the challenge with a series of memorable parables and sayings.

Today, this game of back and forth reaches its climax as one of the Pharisees, a lawyer, asks Jesus: "Which is the greatest commandment in the Torah?" It was a fairly common question among the rabbis of the time: which of the hundreds of commandments best sums up and interprets the meaning of them all?

In response, Jesus offers a perfectly acceptable and praiseworthy answer, joining two texts of the Torah: the first from Deuteronomy 6:5, known as the *Shema* and recited daily by pious Jews, and the second from Leviticus 19:18. Anglicans know these words as the Summary of the Law.

Jesus does not stop there, but puts a question of his own to the Pharisees: if the Messiah is the Son of David, then how is it that David calls him *Lord*? Since David is the putative author of the psalms, how can he refer to his own descendant as "My Lord" since the ancestor is always greater than the descendant? Jesus is not denying that the Messiah is the Son of David, but rather suggesting that he's also much more — more, indeed, than the Pharisees are able to grasp.

We have a powerful reversal. The Pharisees start out questioning Jesus in order to put him to the test only to find themselves questioned and put to the test. This reversal reflects and symbolizes a crucial turning point in the Christian life.

So many people seem to approach God, Christianity, and the Church much as the Pharisees approached

Jesus: with their own agendas, standards, expectations, and ideas of right and wrong. They attempt to judge God, Christianity, and the Church according to the supposedly more enlightened criteria and standards of today's culture: How well do the traditional teachings of the Church measure up to the contemporary canons of political correctness and inclusivity?

A key moment in the lifelong process of Christian conversion occurs when we experience the paradox that even as we question God, God is questioning us. Even as we evaluate Christianity, Christianity is evaluating us. Even as we judge the Church's tradition, the Church's tradition is judging us. Indeed, the criteria and standards that we employ to call the tradition into question are themselves called into question by the tradition.

At this moment of realization, we can do one of two things. We can walk away from the whole encounter, like the Pharisees in today's Gospel, and not dare ask any more questions. Or we can abandon our illusions of independence and superiority, and surrender ourselves into the hands of the living God. We can invite him to take charge of our lives, in the confidence that in his own good time he will form in us minds and hearts capable of right questions, evaluations, and judgments.

Look It Up

Read the essay "God in the Dock" by C.S. Lewis.

Think About It

After walking around a famous European art museum, a brash young tourist remarked to the guard at the door: "Well, I don't think much of your Old Masters!" The guard replied, "It's not the Masters who are on trial here."



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Appointments

The Rev. **Aimee Eye-Delevett** is rector of All Saints', 83 Eucalyptus Ln., Santa Barbara, CA 93108.

The Rev. **Sanford H. Goff, Jr.**, is associate at St. Mark's, 3395 Burns Rd., Palm Beach Gardens, FL 33410.

The Rev. **Ann Kidder** is priest-in-charge of St. Christopher's, 7601 Old Mill Rd., Gates Mills, OH 44040.

The Rev. **Aaron Perkins**, is the deacon formation coordinator for the Diocese of Maine, 143 State St., Portland, ME 04101.

The Rev. **Neil Tadken** is rector of St. Luke's, 122 S California Ave., Monrovia, CA 91016.

The Rev. **Mitch Tollett** is rector of St. Francis', 3232 Jan Ave., Tyler, TX 75701.

Deaths

The Rev. **William M. Baxter**, who preached for the newly inaugurated President Lyndon B. Johnson in November 1963, died Aug. 20. He was 90.

Born in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada, Baxter was a graduate of Amherst College and Virginia Theological Seminary. He was ordained deacon and priest in 1951.

Baxter was rector of St. Mark's Church, Capitol Hill, when the Secret Service informed him only hours after the new president's emergency inauguration that President Johnson wanted to worship at Fr. Baxter's parish.

"We forget that our government is man-made and therefore perishable," Fr. Baxter preached only days after President John F. Kennedy's assassination. He promised prayers that God would give the new president "the courage and the humility to exercise the powerful responsibilities" that had fallen upon him.

He served as a lecturer at Virginia Theological Seminary (1958-66) and Berkeley Divinity School at Yale (1963). Before his time at St. Mark's he was rector of St. Michael and St. George Church, St. Louis.

Fr. Baxter is survived by Jean, his wife of 67 years; sons Graeme and Gary Baxter of Washington, DC; daughters Rebecca Owen of Scarborough, NY, and Anne Baxter of New York City; seven grandchildren; and two great-granddaughters.

The Rev. **Vernella Alford Brown**, who was a social worker for 20 years before being ordained in 1987, died Aug. 27. She was 87.

As a bilingual Priest she served La Divina Providencia of Hartford, CT, Church of the Ascension of New Haven, St. Martin's of Hartford, St. Stephen's of Bloomfield and All Saints of Meriden.

She is survived by daughters Jeanella

Bentley and Almira Ball; son Enrique Perez Brown Sr.; and eight grandchildren.

The Rev. **Joseph A. Howell**, rector of St. Mark's Church, Grand Rapids, MI, for 22 years and a steady presence in a support group for bereaved parents, died Aug. 30. He was 85.

Born in Scottsville, KY, he was a graduate of DePaul University and Seabury-Western Theological Seminary. He was ordained deacon and priest in 1954. He served St. Mark's from 1971 to 1993.

He helped found the Grand Rapids Area Chapter of Compassionate Friends and attended its monthly meetings for many years. For 10 years he was a panel member on a radio show, *Soundings*.

Fr. Howell is survived by his wife of 32 years, Jeanne; sons, Joseph A. Howell, Jr., and the Rev. Charles Howell; a daughter, Lisa Campos; a stepdaughter, Meredith Soddy; four grandchildren; three step-grandchildren; four step-great-grandchildren; and a brother, David.

The Rev. **Eugene F. Todd**, longtime rector of St. Mark's Church in Cheyenne, WY, died Aug. 23. He was 86.

A native of Sheridan, WY, he was a graduate of the University of Denver, the University of South Dakota, and the Iliff School of Theology. He was ordained deacon in 1961 and priest in 1962.

Fr. Todd was rector of St. Mark's from 1965 to 1992. The parish named him rector emeritus in 2001. He wrote two books of family history — *Recollections of a Piney Creek Rancher* (1967) and *The Todd Legacy* (1985) — and *Tales and Irreverencies of a Country Parson* (1997).

He is survived by his wife, Rosemary; their children Lorilee, Barry, Sheridan, Mary, Rebecca, and Kimberley; 15 grandchildren; 10 great-grandchildren; and his first wife, Shirley Hughes.

The Rev. **Edwin Philip Wittenburg**, who worked in hospitals for most of his ordained ministry, died Sept. 2 in St. Paul, MN. He was 92.

Born in Mukwonago, WI, he was a graduate of Carroll College, Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary, and Nashotah House, and took advanced training in clinical pastoral education. He was ordained deacon in 1957 and priesthood in 1958. He was a member of the American Protestant Chaplains Association, the Order of St. Luke, and Episcopal Chaplains and Counselors.

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PRIEST RETREAT: "RE-KINDLE the gift of God that is within you through the laying on of my hands" (2 Tim 1:6). The Diocese of Albany warmly invites all priests to a rekindling Retreat at Christ the King (CtK-center.org). 600 acres of peaceful woodlands, pastures, oratory, chapels, convent, library. TUES afternoon, Nov 18 through FRI afternoon, Nov 21. Blend of Silence, talking, listening to God, music, Daily Offices, Eucharist, optional Healing Service, holy hour, option for Reconciliation and/or spiritual direction. Private room. Cost is only \$295 thanks to a donation from a sponsor. Questions and Registration, write Fr Bob Haskell, rhaskell@albanydiocese.org.

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