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May 22, 2016

The Living Church

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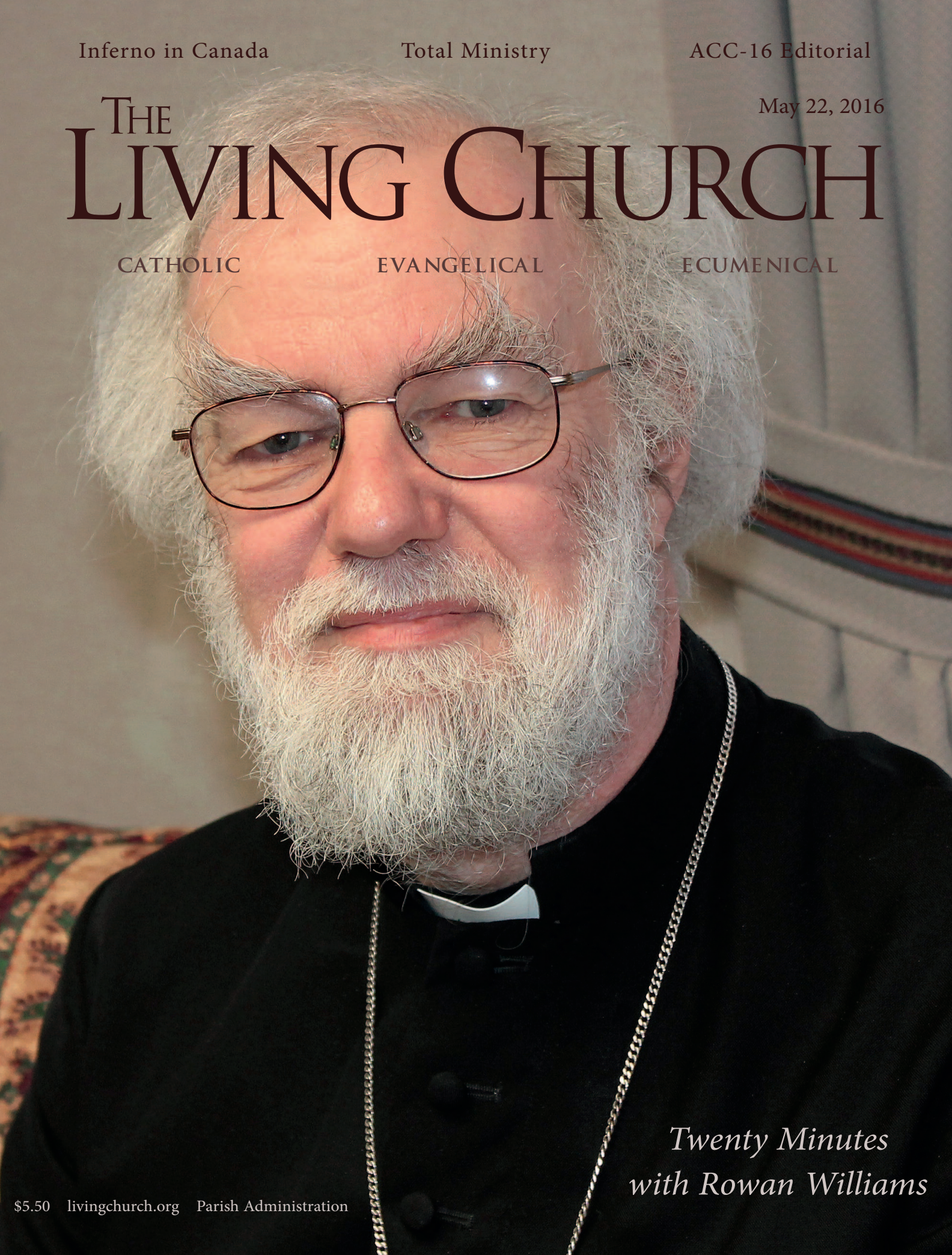

Twenty Minutes with Rowan Williams

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ON THE COVER

Rowan Williams: "When we exercise our humanity to the full — lovingly, unselfishly, in praise and glorification — the whole creation comes into order" (see "God's Truth will survive," p. 16).

Blake Sawicky photo

The Living Church

THIS ISSUE | May 22, 2016

Living Church Partners

We are grateful to St. Peter's Chuch, Kerrville, and Grace Church, Sheboygan [p. 39], Camp Allen in the Diocese of Texas and the Episcopal Church in Connecticut [p. 40], Jerusalem Peacebuilders [p. 41], and Trinity Wall Street [p. 43], whose generous support helped make this issue possible.

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

Fort McMurray: 'Life after Disaster'

As raging wildfire approached Fort McMurray, the Rev. Dane Neufeld told his six-year-old son that the Athabasca River might stop the fire from its march towards the city in northeast Alberta. But the fire progressed unimpeded, spreading across the river and forcing evacuation of the entire city.

"Daddy, you said fire couldn't cross the river," Anton said, "but it did" — even the waters of the mighty Athabasca.

The wildfire was jumping over rivers and highways and by May 4 had engulfed Fort McMurray, forcing the mandatory evacuation of almost 90,000 people from their homes, including Anton and his three younger siblings. It was the largest evacuation in the province's history.

REUTERS/Topher Seguin photo

A helicopter flies into thick smoke while battling the fires outside Fort McMurray on May 4.

An estimated 1,600 houses and other structures have been destroyed; no lives have been reported lost directly due to the fire. Two people died in a traffic accident fleeing the fire, one the teenage daughter of a firefighter. About 225 firefighters are working on the ground and in the air to battle the flames, and the province has declared a state of emergency and requested military aid. By May 6 the fire covered nearly 250,000 acres.

Neufeld, rector of All Saints Church in downtown Fort McMurray, joined by his wife and children, fled north for one night and then drove south to his parents' home in Calgary, stopping in Edmonton to comfort some parishioners who had lost everything.

Most evacuees fled south. The drive south to Edmonton, which normally takes four and a half hours, seemed endless as vehicles were trapped in gridlock and smoke. Many ran out of gas and were refueled by passing oil trucks. Good Samaritans from properties out of harm's way came with food and water for stranded motorists. Communities 30 miles south of Fort McMurray, which had set up shelters, eventually had to be evacuated as well.

"It's weird being in another city when your city is burning," Neufeld said. "Lots of people drove through horrific fires, scared for their lives."

Neufeld has been ordained just shy of two years, but he knows he has his work cut out for him.

So does the rector of St. Thomas, the other Anglican parish in Fort McMurray. The Rev. Christopher Tapera, his wife, and teenage daughter were among the 25,000 evacuees who fled north and took shelter in oil-worker camps. Most oil-sand operations shut down to accommodate them.

Tapera and his family arrived from Zimbabwe only four months ago. As with Neufeld, his parishioners are now scattered all over the province in three different dioceses, but both priests are trying to track down their flocks through phone, Facebook, and texting to make sure they are safe. The Diocese of Athabasca is helping through its website.

"There is life after disaster," Tapera said. "God is there for us. God will never leave us; he will make sure we overcome this."

About 200 other evacuees are housed in Wapasu Creek Lodge in Fort MacKay, and Tapera is helping those who want prayer and pastoral counseling. He also hopes to hold a service on Sunday.

Many of these northern evacuees likely will be flown south to Edmonton and Calgary in the next few days by the military and by mining operators who own private planes and airstrips. Fifty-car convoys are being organized by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police to travel down Hwy. 63 to Edmonton, thus avoiding the gridlock and panic of the first evacuation.

St. Augustine in Edmonton and St. James in Calgary have each been designated as "gathering" parishes, where displaced Fort McMurray residents may worship and reconnect with friends. Anglicans across the dioceses of Athabasca, Calgary, and Edmonton have opened their homes to family, friends, and even strangers. Diocesan offices are coordinating efforts to find volunteers and suitable accommodation.

The Primate's World Relief Fund (PWRDF), which usually directs

funds to overseas disasters, has sent $15,000 to parishes providing relief work in the Diocese of Edmonton as of May 5. The funds will help purchase basic supplies such as diapers, toiletries, and gas cards.

More funds are being raised daily online. The Canadian federal government has promised to match funds raised by the Red Cross. Nabu Gurung, PWRDF's development and human relief coordinator, will consult with colleagues in other relief organizations to see if the government will match their funds as well.

"The Red Cross has not yet reached some of our parishes like Cold Lake that we are able to support," Gurung said. "The parishes of Lac La Biche and the Northern Lights have also been busy assisting evacuees."

While Anglican church buildings in Fort McMurray seem to be safe, the priests and their bishop know that rebuilding the lives of their parishioners could take years.

The Rt. Rev. Fraser Lawton, Bishop of Athabasca, served for 13 years at St. Thomas in the devastated city.

"We want to apply what we learned from the Slave Lake fire in 2011," he said. "Residents want to rush back, but it may not be safe. Some will need longer-term housing support. Rebuilding a community will take years, especially when much of the infrastructure is gone. It won't be the same. We want to take care of our parishioners and also reach out and offer spiritual care to others. Some will be suffering from PTSD. There will be mourning people will have to do. It is not a short-term thing; it may take decades."

Bishops all across Canada have contacted Bishop Lawton, many of them offering priests to help with pastoral care. He was touched to hear from the Rt. Rev. C. Franklin Brookhart, Jr., Bishop of Montana, who called to ask how he could help. "The wider church is there for us."

"God will provide," Tapera said. "We can learn from biblical history. Jerusalem was a beautiful city that was reduced to ashes by the Babylonians. But God helped the Israelites return and rebuild their city. God will use us and other people and organizations to rebuild our city too."

Sue Careless

Bishop Backs Same-sex Marriage

The Rt. Rev. Raphael Hess, Bishop of Saldanha Bay in the Anglican Church of Southern Africa, has declared his support for same-sex blessings. In a letter to diocesan clergy, Bishop Hess dissented from the February decision of Southern African bishops to reaffirm the Lambeth Conference's Resolution 1.10 (1998). He said a diocesan task force would prepare alternative legislation in support of same-sex marriage for the provincial synod in September.


Hess

Bishop Hess explained that in a series of meetings since the February bishops' synod, leaders throughout the diocese had "expressed commitment to work in and with the Anglican Church of Southern Africa to proclaim the good news that human sexuality is a complex and a splendid gift of God and that no one is excluded, from the reach of God's embrace, by any Gift of God's endowing."

A pastoral letter issued by Archbishop Thabo Makgoba said the bishops' synod had attempted to draw up guidelines for clergy who wanted to bless couples in same-sex relationships or to enter same-sex unions themselves. South Africa legalized same-sex marriage in 2006.

Drafting the guidelines proved impossible, Archbishop Makgoba said, when a group of bishops who represented a cross-section of views on the topic found that "the only agreement we reached is that we were not of one mind." A statement issued by the synod outlined a spectrum of views.

Bishop Hess counted himself among "those who believe that the

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Church should accept and support or bless monogamous covenanted relationships between homosexual people and that they may be ordained."

"In this instance," he said, "it is important that I declare to you all unequivocally where I stand on this matter."

Bishop Hess wrote that the Rev. Canon Mpho Tutu van Furth, an Episcopal priest and the daughter of the Most Rev. Desmond Tutu, is no longer licensed to officiate in the diocese.

The canon, director of the Desmond and Leah Tutu Legacy Foundation in Capetown, married Marceline van Furth in a civil ceremony in Oegstgeest, Netherlands, on December 30, 2015. Professor van Furth is the Desmond Tutu chair of medicine at Vrije University in the Netherlands. They plan to hold a second celebration this month at the wine estate of British tycoon Sir Richard Branson in Franschhoek, Western Cape, South Africa.

The canon was ordained in the Diocese of Western Massachusetts, served on the staff at Christ Church in Alexandria, Virginia, and was the director of the Tutu Center for Prayer and Pilgrimage in Alexandria. She remains canonically resident in the Diocese of Washington.

The board of the Desmond and Leah Tutu Legacy Foundation suspended the canon for several months earlier this year as it investigated whether her marriage constituted a "potential conflict of interest."

Professor van Furth is employed as the head of a Dutch institute that works closely with the foundation. Tutu van Furth returned to work in April, and foundation spokesman Don MacRobert said that "no impropriety was alleged, suspected, or discovered."

The canon's father has spoken out widely in support of same-sex marriage in recent years. Archbishop Tutu has announced that he plans to attend the South African celebration of his daughter's union.

The Rev. Mark Michael

Members of a Zimbabwean choir sing with verve on the final day of the Anglican Consultative Council's meeting. Anglican Archives/Flickr photo

Archbishop Welby: 'The Consequences Stand'

Though the Anglican Communion continues to face deep divisions, the Anglican Consultative Council closed its meeting April 19 with a resolve to walk together.

"Our conversations were enriching, not embattling," said the Rt. Rev. Jane Alexander, Bishop of Edmonton and an ACC delegate.

"I genuinely felt there was an outstanding graciousness and generosity shown on all sides," said the Most Rev. Richard Clarke, Archbishop of the Church of Ireland. "It was a real victory for the spirit of Anglicanism."

The conference, meeting under the theme "Intentional Discipleship in a World of Difference," drew together nearly 80 delegates from 34 of the Communion's 37 provinces for 12 days at the Cathedral of the Holy Cross. Delegates approved a series of resolutions setting new priorities for the Anglican Communion in discipleship training, deepening youth participation, and working to combat climate change.

The meeting in Lusaka convened amid disagreement about the Primates' Meeting in January. The primates outlined relational consequences for the Episcopal Church's decision to allow marital blessings for same-sex couples.

Some predicted that delegates from more liberal provinces would challenge this recommendation, especially by electing Episcopalians as members of the ACC's standing committee, in defiance of the primates' urging that Episcopalians "not be appointed or elected to an internal standing committee."

On April 8, the opening day of the conference, Archbishop Justin Welby reported to ACC delegates on the Primates' Meeting, urging them to work cooperatively with the primates for church unity. After Archbishop Welby's report, the Most Rev. Daniel Deng Bul of South Sudan spoke at length, urging delegates to indicate their support for the primates' decision to "keep the church together."

After further discussion in small groups, Canon Elizabeth Paver, the ACC's vice chairwoman, asked delegates to share their "affirmation of

our willingness as a body to walk together with the primates on these difficult issues" by applauding. Many delegates professed themselves confused about whether this gesture was a direct affirmation of the primates' decision or a general consent to the notion of cooperation.

A few days later, though, the Rt. Rev. Ian Douglas, who was attending his fourth ACC meeting as a representative of the Episcopal Church, said he would not stand for election as ACC chairman.

In an open letter to ACC delegates, Douglas said his decision was based on a desire to "best facilitate our walking together in unity as the Anglican Communion." The two other Episcopal Church delegates, the Rev. Gay Clark Jennings and Canon Rosalie Ballentine, decided not to stand for election as members of the ACC's standing committee.

The primates' decision did not return again to the ACC's attention until the penultimate day of the meeting, when delegates considered a motion proposed by Archbishop Deng Bul that said the ACC "receives the report" of the Primates' Meeting, and "affirms the commitment of the Primates of the Anglican Communion to walk together; and commits to continue to seek appropriate ways for the provinces of the Anglican Communion to walk together with each other and with the Primates and other Instruments of Communion."

Delegates approved the motion without protest or amendment as part of the consent agenda. In a subsequent press conference, Archbishop Welby said the ACC's decision to receive the report included an affirmation of the consequences for the Episcopal Church outlined by the primates. "The ACC received my report, which included those consequences," the archbishop said. "The consequences stand."

Six departing members of the ACC issued a statement May 6 that disputed Archbishop Welby's understanding.

"In receiving the Archbishop of Canterbury's formal report of the Primates' Gathering and Meeting, ACC16 neither endorsed nor affirmed the consequences contained in the Primates' Communiqué," they wrote. "There was no plenary discussion or decision with respect to the Primates' Communiqué. From our perspective there did not seem to be a common mind on the issue, other than the clear commitment to avoid further confrontation and division. ACC16 did welcome the call for the Instruments of Communion and the Provinces to continue to walk together as they discern the way forward. No consequences were imposed by the ACC and neither was the ACC asked to do so."

The Most Rev. Josiah Idowu-Fearon, the Anglican Communion's secretary general, said he was pleased and surprised by how easy it had been to secure approval from the ACC for the resolution.

"The surprising thing for me is the continuity between what the pri-

(Continued on page 38)

Missional Voices: Ministry on the Block

Clergy, seminarians, laypeople, and church leaders gathered at Virginia Theological Seminary April 15-16 for Missional Voices, a conference that encouraged innovative missions by the Episcopal Church. About 200 people attended, representing 38 states, 69 dioceses, and 11 seminaries.

Organized by VTS students, the conference attracted missional leaders from across the country, including the Rev. Canon Stephanie Spellers, canon to the presiding bishop for evangelism and reconciliation and a faculty member at General Theological Seminary.

"Anybody watching us should see God's mission in all that we are and all that we do," Spellers said. "There's a reason everyone is talking about a Jesus movement in the Episcopal Church. Do you feel the movement? And are you ready to say yes?"

Spellers, author of *The Episcopal Way*, stressed that mission may not be across the ocean but across the street. She defined missional ministry as crossing boundaries — of building and place, money, assembly, day of the week, rules and rubrics — to be part of God's mission to love the world into wholeness.

Part of Anglicanism's charge in becoming missional, Spellers added, includes letting go of its attachment to the vestiges of the British Empire.

"This is especially true when we relate to different cultures around us. This has been our story, but those days are over," she said. "We need to practice being humble and being open and vulnerable."

While founding partners of Missional Voices include institutional members of the Episcopal Church — VTS, the Diocese of Virginia, the Diocese of Washington, and the Diocese of Texas, and the Episcopal Evangelism Society — missions, speakers, and participants came from humble, local places.

Participants in Missional Voices take notes during a session. Curtis Prather/VTS photo

The conference featured various local missions, including:

• Southside Abbey in Chattanooga, Tennessee, which meets in borrowed space in an art gallery; two-thirds of its members are homeless

• LaundryLove, which uses Laundromats in California and other states to help people with financial and logistical hardships wash their clothes and find spiritual and social support

• Fresh Expressions/Praxis Communities in the Diocese of Southern Ohio, which supports sustainable, supportive networks still connected to the established church

• The Abbey, a combination coffee shop and church founded as a partnership between the Diocese of Alabama and St. Luke's Church in Birmingham

Speakers emphasized that community-embedded ministries deepen their own faith.

"We're trying to make a seamless garment of mission and service," the Rev. Robert Leopold, missioner of Southside Abbey, told TLC.

He stressed that he learns at least as much from his mission's members as they learn from him. "They have to depend on God for every meal every time," he said. "I feel like I'm being formed as I am forming."

Leopold received a lesson in how his ministry is spreading Jesus' message of forgiveness when one of his parishioners, who sleeps under a bridge, was beaten by other homeless men who stole his few belongings. At Southside Abbey, Leopold asked the beaten man who his assailants were. "I felt like a papa bear and wanted to defend him," the pastor said. But the beaten homeless man declined to name his attackers, who were at Southside Abbey at the time. He told Leopold, "They need Jesus, too."

"This is the modern-day foot washing," said Christian Kassoff, a coach for LaundryLove. "It's not symbolism, it's real-world."

When Kassoff first entered the Episcopal Church, he wondered why it was not doing more as an army of good. He said his eyes were opened to the transformative spiritual benefits of LaundryLove, which now has more than 200 registered ministries,

when a homeless man said to him, "If I had clean clothes I think people would treat me like a human being."

Kassoff has seen LaundryLove expand to provide home-cooked meals, haircuts, groceries, and some social services. He now fields calls about LaundryLove from Episcopal churches across the country. "It's about being a good neighbor; it's about loving your neighbor," he said.

The Rev. Jane Gerdsen, missioner for Fresh Expressions/Praxis Communities, said she was inspired by a man in Ohio who had survived the genocide in Rwanda. He knocked on her door one day and subsequently took her into the homes of people she did not know and introduced her. Noting that mission happens when God breaks in and introduces strangers, she said, "It was literally like a new world for me. … Perhaps the greatest need is for a baptism of the imagination about forms of church."

Like the missions and ministries featured at the conference, Missional Voices grew from a humble, nontraditional beginning: a conversation between VTS students Alan Bentrup and Christian Anderson. The students started discussing the spiritual power of innovative, nontraditional ministries last summer. This interest, along with their wide-ranging discussions on changes in the Episcopal Church, blossomed into Missional Voices. The conference soon followed.

"VTS has recognized a need for further formation around missional endeavors and is working hard to provide that," said Bentrup, who graduates in May with a concentration in new mission practices. "I think it says something positive about VTS and our formation here that this was the place where this conference began. This school recognized students who had an interest in this are and was supportive in helping to launch a new endeavor."

The Rt. Rev. Katharine Jefferts Schori, 26th presiding bishop, served as chaplain. Asked what she hopes to see emerge from the conference, Bishop Jefferts Schori said: "That what they're thinking about and talking about might infect the wider church to the glory of God."

Spellers

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Conference participants said they were there to learn, grow, and be inspired.

"I'm here to see how the Spirit is moving in the church and the world. … I'm here to get energized," said Julia Khan, a student at Union Theological Seminary.

Steve Lane, a student at Bexley Seabury Seminary, said he had been inspired by a course and a book by Spellers and hoped to start a mission church in the Diocese of Buffalo.

The Very Rev. Mark Strobel, dean of Gethsemane Cathedral in Fargo, North Dakota, said, "There is a need for congregations in our diocese to engage with their communities. They can't assume that people will find them." He said that the churches of Fargo, which on any given night has 600-800 homeless people, see part of their missional calling as providing emergency shelter in the area's bitter winters.

"We're trying to become more missional in the Diocese of Vermont," said Jonathan Chaffee, a retired public housing specialist who worships at St. Paul's Church in White River Junction. "I'm on a committee trying to figure this out."

Chaffee sought ways to involve local churches in missional work. "I thought I might get some tips," he said.

The Rev. Lauren R. Stanley is priest-in-charge of eight congregations through Rosebud Episcopal Mission in South Dakota.

"We try to provide hope," she said. "There's not a lot of trust that hope is possible. … We actually live mission every day, because that's the only way you survive on a [reservation]."

Stanley said she attended the conference to "gain an expanded understanding that mission is the purpose of our lives."

A 2017 Missional Voices is being planned for April 21-22 at VTS. One of the invited keynote speakers is Brian McLaren, author of *Finding Our Way Again*.

Peggy Eastman

Dauu

A Lost Boy No More

"Somebody who doesn't know Jesus can accept doing violence," said the Rev. John Chol Daau of South Sudan during an address and discussion at the Institute on Religion & Democracy April 20 in Washington, D.C.

For that reason, his top priority is to empower trained Christian leaders in his country, an area that has been battered by jihad, civil war, violence, and murder for decades. Daau, an Anglican priest in the Episcopal Church of South Sudan and Sudan, is a former "Lost Boy of Sudan," a term used by aid workers for boys displaced or orphaned during the second Sudanese Civil War (1983-2005).

Anglican leaders in the West must understand the urgency of his appeal, Daau said: "Discipleship is needed; training is needed." He stressed that both contributions and missionaries would help South Sudan, which gained its independence on July 9, 2011, become a strong, stable nation with Christian values.

Daau was one of an estimated 20,000 boys of the Dinka and Nuer ethnic groups who fled into the forests of rural southern Sudan and

survived the harrowing trek through Ethiopia into refugee camps in Kenya. Living in the forest, an estimated initial group of 60,000 children went without food and water for days, drinking their own urine and eating plants and roots. Some died from eating poisonous roots. Many of this original group perished before they reached Kenya. Daau recounts this journey in *God's Refugee*, which he wrote with Lilly Sanders Ubbens.

"We would run carrying nothing but our Bibles," he said. "We would run carrying nothing but our crosses."

Asked by TLC what sustained him during his journey, Daau said, "We knew that any day we could die. We were very clear that life with Jesus was the most important thing." Hope from the gospel message of life everlasting sustained him through the threats of anxiety, exhaustion, and starvation.

Ordained in 2004 in Kenya, he studied at Daystar University in Nairobi, and subsequently at Trinity School of Ministry. Today he is part of the archbishop's task force to bring healing, forgiveness, and reconciliation in South Sudan. He founded the Good Shepherd Foundation in South Sudan, which includes Good Shepherd Academy for children ages 3-14, Good Shepherd College and Seminary, and Good Shepherd Leadership Training Center. He also founded *The Christian Times*, the first Christian newspaper in South Sudan.

Conflict in Sudan between the northern region, which is primarily Muslim, and the southern region, which is primarily Christian, has raged for decades. Today South Sudan has one of the weakest economies in the world, with soaring prices for food and fuel. Only 27 percent of its people can read or write (illiteracy is higher among women) and the mortality rate is high, with few people living beyond age 50.

"A lot of people are armed; a lot of people are getting guns," he said.

But Daau is encouraged by his trust in Jesus. He said that at his birth his uncle, a Christian leader in his village of Baping, had prophesied the infant would be *Chol Makeyn*, "a true compensator for his people."

"There is a lot of hope for us in South Sudan," Daau said. He noted that the government recently bought a number of tractors to distribute across the country to jump-start farming. "To me, that means a lot."

He is hopeful that people displaced from their villages will return to their homes and resume farming, helping South Sudan become a more stable country with sustainable sources of food.

Peggy Eastman

TLC Wins 7 Awards

THE LIVING CHURCH won seven awards from the Associated Church Press (ACP) and the Evangelical Press Association (EPA), professional organizations of ecumenical church communicators that recognize achievement in Christian reporting, editing, marketing, and design. Both organizations announced the awards at their annual conventions in April.

"Stopping Human Traffic," written by G. Jeffrey MacDonald, received the ACP's Award of Excellence among long-format magazine feature articles. MacDonald's article profiled several Episcopal and Anglican organizations working to reduce human trafficking and help build new lives for victims of trafficking.

MacDonald won first place from the EPA among personality articles for "Go to Galilee," an in-depth profile of Presiding Bishop Michael Curry.

The other awards include:

- "Drawing Hope from Pope Francis," "Pope Buoys Environmentalists," "Anticipation for Pope Francis," "Destination: Papal Mass," all by MacDonald (third place, article series, EPA)
- "Gospel as Counter-narrative" MacDonald's interview with the Archbishop of Canterbury (fourth place, interview, EPA)
- "The Mantel Version," a review of the PBS series *Wolf Hall* by John Martin (honorable mention, ACP)

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- "Self-Control: The Neglected Fruit of the Spirit" by the Rt. Rev. Matthew A. Gunter (fourth place, biblical exposition, EPA)

Bishop Jefferts Schori Will Join CDSP

Former Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori has been appointed the third St. Margaret's Visiting Professor of Women in Ministry at Church Divinity School of the Pacific, the Very Rev. W. Mark Richardson, the seminary's dean and president, announced April 21.

Jefferts Schori, who has a doctorate in oceanography, will teach a course in the fall semester on the role of religious leaders in public conversation about issues including scientific discovery, technological development, artistic creativity, and public policy.

"We'll consider how to encourage constructive and elevated public dialogue that is at once civil and earnest, evangelical and thoughtfully critical, and energetically focused on a vision of the beloved community, God's peaceable kindom of all creation," she said.

Jefferts Schori received her Master of Divinity from CDSP in 1994.

Bishop Andrews to Lead Wycliffe

The Rt. Rev. Stephen Andrews, Bishop of Algoma in Ontario since 2009, has been appointed 10th principal of Wycliffe College at the University of Toronto.

Bishop Andrews has worked in ministry, theological scholarship, and higher education for more than 30 years. He earned his Master of Divinity at Wycliffe College and holds a Doctor of Philosophy from Cambridge University.

"I am honored to be associated with one of North America's premier theological colleges," Andrews said. "And I am grateful for the chance to work with such an outstanding board, faculty, and staff in a mission to serve the Church by preparing leaders who are godly, learned, and able."

"I have a heart for theological education and a deep desire to see the Church grow in godly discipleship," he added. "My ambition is to see Wycliffe play a vital role in promoting and resourcing these things at a time when, both locally and globally, the Church needs leaders capable of making Christ real to a spiritually hungry and confused world. Under my watch, I pray that the college will live up to its calling to be a 'seminary' — a place of planting, nurture, growth, rootedness, reproduction, and formation — as it undertakes the work of scholarship both within and for the Church."

Bishop Andrews serves on the Living Church Foundation.

Global News

Edited by John Martin

Alpha Reboots: Alpha, which has reached 29 million people in 170 countries, has been revamped for the digital age. Alpha began in 1977 as a 10-week basic Christianity course at Holy Trinity Brompton (HTB) in London's West End. When the Rev. Nicky Gumbel took over its development in 1991 there were just four courses running. He refined it and it began to be taken up beyond HTB.

The revamped Alpha takes the form of documentary-style films replacing straight-to-camera talks. The Alpha film series, funded by donations from across the world, is presented by Church of England clergyman Toby Flint and CBBC TV presenter Gemma Hunt. In all, 16 films deal with such topics as Jesus' identity, how people can have faith, and the meaning of prayer. There are stories and interviews from around the world, including Canada, Hong Kong, and Chile.

Contributors include adventurer

Bear Grylls, Cardinal Christoph Schönborn of Vienna, and Jose Henriquez Gonzalez, one of 33 miners trapped for 69 days at the San Jose mine in Chile.

There are plans to release versions in Spanish, Arabic, Mandarin, and Hindi layer this year. The course has become more ecumenical, being hosted in Anglican, Presbyterian, Lutheran, Baptist, Pentecostal, Orthodox, Roman Catholic, and new British churches.

Says Tricia Neill, president of Alpha International: "The new Alpha Film Series has the potential to reach millions worldwide with the message of God's transforming love and grace."

Parliament vs. Islamic State: British MPs have voted unanimously to identify Islamic State violence against ethnic and religious minorities in Syria and Iraq as genocide, reports the Thompson Reuters agency. MPs are urging the government to do more to bring the terrorists to justice.

Before this vote the U.K. government has been reluctant to so describe violence perpetrated by Islamic State, claiming it was a matter for an international court. Under the statutes governing the International Criminal Court, it must be asked to act.

The parliamentary motion also called on the British government to ask the U.N. Security Council immediately to give the International Criminal Court jurisdiction over the issue "so that perpetrators can be brought to justice."

"It is about doing justice and about seeing justice being done," said MP Fiona Bruce, who moved the motion.

Praying for Evangelism: The archbishops of Canterbury and York are inviting churches in England to pray for the evangelization of the nation in the week leading up to Pentecost. In a letter sent to every priest in the Church of England, they say they want "to see a great wave of prayer across our land" between May 8 and 15.

The archbishops wrote: "At the heart of our prayers will be words Jesus taught us — 'Thy kingdom come,

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Global News

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thy will be done.' It is impossible to overstate the transforming power of the Lord's Prayer. It is a prayer that is reassuring enough to be on the lips of the dying and yet dangerous enough to be banned in cinemas. It is famous enough to be spoken each day by billions in hundreds of languages and yet intimate enough to draw us ever closer into friendship with Jesus Christ. It is simple enough to be memorized by small children and yet profound enough to sustain a whole lifetime of prayer."

Church, Shares, and Climate Change: Churches are learning how to use their power as shareholders. Oil giant ExxonMobil has been forced to hear a motion regarding climate change at its May 12 Annual General Meeting. Prime movers in the action are the Church Commissioners for England and Thomas P. DiNapoli as a trustee of New York's state retirement fund.

The resolution asks ExxonMobil to disclose how resilient its portfolio and strategy would be if policy measures decreased global warming by 2 degrees, as agreed in Paris last December. Up to 30 institutional shareholders with more than $6 trillion of assets under management have declared that they will support the proposal.

Last month ExxonMobil tried to have the motion struck down by the Securities and Exchange Commission. Its major peers in the oil industry, BP and Shell, have already agreed to similar climate-change motions.

The Church Commissioners manage the funds of the Church of England: £6.7 billion in a diverse portfolio that includes shares, real estate, and alternative investment strategies. The current return on investments is over 5 percent.

"We are delighted with the scale of support this resolution has received so far," said Edward Mason, head of responsible investment for the Church Commissioners. He added that the development was "part of a wider trend following the Paris agreement."

Two Churches, One Site

The Rev. Jason Poling, an evangelical pastor, is also a priest of the Diocese of Maryland.

As spring arrives in Maryland, the Episcopal faithful are testing the soil to see if a new type of church plant can take root in a diocese that has not raised up a new congregation in more than 30 years.

When St. Hilda's Church in Catonsville launched its first services on Maundy Thursday (March 24), it was not alone on the former site of St. Timothy's Church, which left in 2013 to become a Roman Catholic parish.

St. Hilda's will share both its facility and its vicar, the Rev. Jason Poling, with New Hope Community Church, an independent evangelical congregation that Poling founded in 2003. The unique arrangement aims to give St. Hilda's a running start by leveraging the know-how and infrastructure of New Hope, which draws 60 adults and 40 children on an average Sunday.

"Who better to put in to plant a denominational start-up than somebody who's already done it someplace?" said the Rev. Canon Daniel Webster, canon for evangelism and ministry development in the Diocese of Maryland.

This experiment in church planting traces to the relationship between the Rt. Rev. Eugene Sutton, Bishop of Maryland, and Poling, who met Sutton at an Easter vigil in 2010. At the time, Poling mentioned how he had a strong interest in ecumenism and the Anglican tradition. The two stayed in conversation, wondering if God might someday open a door for mutual ministry.

Such a door began to swing open in 2013 when St. Timothy's left its former home. Bishop Sutton told Poling about his hopes for a new church on the site and broached the prospect of involving Poling and New Hope. Poling regards himself as an "unreconstructed evangelical" with more conservative beliefs than those of many Episcopalians, but he felt welcomed in the Episcopal Church nonetheless.

"It was an intriguing idea," Poling said, "the idea that we could link arms and the diocese and our little church could work together to do something useful in building the kingdom together without either of us compromising on who we are."

Poling

In 2014, Sutton and Poling made a decision: the diocese would send Poling to General Theological Seminary for a one-year, Master of Sacred Theology degree that would teach him Anglican background, plus liturgical and polity training that he would need. He graduated in 2015, ready to be a priest and plant an Episcopal church alongside New Hope.

"In the Episcopal Church, it's not part of our current ethos to plant churches," Webster said. "You find, in several places, bishops reaching out to former evangelicals, former nondenominational pastors or members, and sending them off to seminary. That's where I think the Episcopal Church is going to find the evangelism part that has been missing for nearly a century."

By sharing a priest and facility with New Hope, St. Hilda's will not have to build its operations from scratch. New Hope's praise band, for instance, will play contemporary music not only for its 9:30 service but also for St. Hilda's Rite II Eucharist at 11. The congregations are ready for everything from youth ministry to coffee and donuts. Poling will preach the same sermon at the 9:30 and 11 am services, as well as at St. Hilda's Rite I Eucharist at 8 a.m.

"Our goal is for the two congregations to partner in ministry as much as we can," Poling said.

How New Hope and St. Hilda's will work together in specific ministries remains to be worked out. But hopes are high for them to collaborate in local mission outreach, Bible study and other areas.

"This is really an ecclesiological experiment," Poling said.

G. Jeffrey MacDonald

On his time as a bishop: "Standing in front of a congregation, confirmation candidates of 12 or 13 years old, or — for goodness sake — doing a religious assembly in an elementary school, then you discover what you know and you don't."

Blake Sawicky photos

— Twenty Minutes with Rowan Williams —

'God's Truth Will Survive'

The Rt. Rev. Rowan Douglas Williams, Baron Williams of Oystermouth in the City and County of Swansea, has served as master of Magdalene College at the University of Cambridge since 2013. He was Archbishop of Canterbury from 2002 to 2012. The Rev. Andrew Petiprin interviewed Baron Williams in Miami, where he preached at the institution of the Rt. Rev. Peter Eaton as Bishop of Southeast Florida.

You have a new book out called *Meeting God in Paul*.
Well, like a number of my other recent little books, it's really based on a series of lectures given at Canterbury Cathedral in Holy Week. Part of my discipline in Canterbury was to give a series of public talks every Holy Week on some subject central to the faith and invite anybody and everybody to come. So I did, I think it was the last year, a brief introduction to Paul. And I was tempted originally to call it *Paul, But Don't Panic*, because people have very strange ideas about St. Paul. They think that he's the man who sent Christianity off on the wrong track, that he's the man who invented the idea that sex is bad for you, that he hated women. You know, everything.

And I wanted to give a very brief orientation to what I think matters about Paul. So I began with a little survey of his social world: a very, very stratified, very divided world, in which you were either an insider or an outsider. You were either a citizen or a slave (not quite as stark as that). And Paul is saying, "What if there were a completely different kind of human community centered around Jesus Christ in which everybody was a citizen, especially the ones who are the outsiders of the present order?" So at the beginning of 1 Corinthians he reminds his audience (not many of them were real insiders, not many of them had status) and in the great little letter to Philemon, he is talking about how belonging together in the body of Christ doesn't immediately abolish but does override that traditional gulf between the owner and the owned. And although it takes a long time for the Church to catch up, that eventually deals with the problem of slavery centuries later. So, that's where I start, and then looking at how particularly the events around Jesus' death and resurrection, the belief in being in Jesus and his Spirit being in you, reshapes the whole sense of human life. So, it's a ridiculously short book, because my great friend Tom Wright has of course just written a book on Paul, which is about 30,000 pages longer. I'm a bit embarrassed, but you know, somebody's got to do a bit of boiling down.

In the introduction you wrote that Paul "was exploring a new country — as fertile, beautiful, exhilarating, above all as real and tangible in its working, as any that a sixteenth-century sailor might have run across in his voyages of discovery." I loved your book of lectures on Lewis and the Chronicles of Narnia, and I got the same sense. You rehabilitated Lewis by reminding us to come into a world that he is creating that gives us the sense of what it feels like to belong to God.
Yes, that's right. I think what we always have to be striving for in communicating the faith is that sense of being in a world, in a whole environment; so not just something where we tick off the propositions, but something which changes the light on everything. And the image I've used again and again and again, boringly often, is the light changing on a landscape. Everything looks different. And when we tie ourselves down to this or that bit of agenda within the Church, we always rather risk that sense of the new creation, the great scope of the new creation. And that's why for the Lewis book the phrase that kept coming back to me was a phrase he uses about "a mouthwash for the imagination," about a whole imagination, a whole vision rinsed by something cleansing and refreshing.

I gather you have a book coming out on Augustine. He's someone else who needs perhaps a bit of rehabilitating.
And fortunately it is happening, because in the last 15 years scholarly study of Augustine has flourished in the most amazing way, and much more, I think, attentively in respect of what he actually says than before. Again, Augustine has been blamed for everything that has gone wrong with Western Christianity. And the only answer is "Well, read him. Read him." And what's extraordinary about Augustine is the number of registers in which he works. He can give you highly complex conceptual analysis in his book *On the Trinity*, he can give you this impassioned, poetic autobiography in the *Confessions*, and the sermons, which are colloquial, direct, and jokey and — even one passage in one of the sermons where he says, literally, "It's getting a bit smelly in here. I must have been preaching for a long time." It's a Mediterranean church with the crowd packed in, people sweating profusely — and it's that human diversity of his voice that fascinates me.

He was doing this incredible theology while a country bishop.
While a country bishop, exactly. Every morning he's got to go to his tribunal and he's got to sort out what we would now, I suppose, regard as legal aid cases. You know, poor people coming to get the bishop's judgment on various things. He's got to keep up this vast correspondence, some of it with very problematic political figures, as well as other bishops. He organizes the life of his own little religious community and is in effect the superior of a small monastery. He travels, sometimes at risk. We know of at least one incident where he narrowly avoided an ambush that could have

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been fatal. And in the middle of all that, he writes *De Trinitate*. How?

Have you found yourself identifying with him? It seems to me you have a similar ministry.
It's kind of you to say so. I'm well down on the foothills of that immense mountain where Augustine is near the top. But there are things I recognize in common. I recognize, I suppose, the need to go on trying to bridge that potential gap between theologizing and communicating at the level of any and every congregation. It was one of the things that was one of the great graces for me about being a bishop. Having been a university teacher and seminary teacher for quite a lot of my ministry — of course I've always done parochial work as well — but suddenly when I became a bishop, every week I would be in a different congregation trying to make theological sense to them, and I felt it was one of those not entirely welcome graces that pushed me to think harder. Because philosophers are quite right: if you understand it, you ought to be able to express it. If you can't understand it, then either it is inexpressible, which is fine (say that, come clean), or you haven't really understood it. You're bluffing. So, standing in front of a congregation, confirmation candidates of 12 or 13 years old, or — for goodness sake — doing a religious assembly in an elementary school, then you discover what you know and you don't.

So it makes you a better theologian?
I think it does at the end of the day. It really does. You just have to go on asking, *Well, why does this matter now? How does it matter?* And here are people on the edge of new commitments, especially young people, new discoveries. Why should it matter to them?

You wrote an essay that I have really appreciated on Augustine's Christology for a festschrift for Brian Daley. Are you exploring that further?
Well, the essay is in there, actually. It's a collection of essays which I've put together, and then I've written some connecting passages for. I've been writing bits and pieces on Augustine for the best part of 30 years, and it seemed the time to try and knock them into some sort of shape.

But, of course, a lot has moved on in scholarship, so what I've done is to include a dozen or so of these essays and then write a little essay in between to say, "This is why people thought the preceding essay was wrong. Or this is what somebody else has now said about it, and this is how I connect to the next one." So, it moves from looking at the *Confessions*, Augustine's sense of the self, Augustine's creation of the idea of a self, the role of memory, the role of a particular kind of historical self-awareness, moving then into what he says about creation, about evil, trying to disentangle some of the confusions and distortions that there have been of his thinking, reflecting on his Christology certainly, and the enormous importance for his doctrine of Christ of his reading of the Psalms. I remember reading Augustine on the Psalms in my middle 20s, I suppose, when I was first teaching the history of Christian spirituality, and being completely bowled over by the Psalm sermons. Because, and they are at times a bit rambling, but the golden thread is the sense that the Psalms are spoken by Christ. They are spoken by the head on behalf of the body.

So the outpourings of praise, the outpourings of protest, all of these are Christ taking real human language to himself — as it were, saying to the whole human race, "Whatever you're feeling, whatever you want to say, I will say it for you to God the Father. And by saying it for you to God the Father, I'll open the doors for it to be healed and ordered." That hangs together the whole of that tremendous series of discourses, so I've got a bit about that. And then some slightly complicated stuff about the Trinity, trying again to disentangle, and a final more recent essay on what Augustine means by love. Because, again, I feel not everybody has quite got what that's about. I took up a recent critical account of Augustine on love and tried to say a bit.

You write that Wisdom is the underlying engine of the two natures of Christ. You are in the midst of giving a series of lectures right now that seem to be about Christology. It seemed you were making a similar point about Aquinas as well.
Well, interesting you should spot that, because I think that is what I am after in this series. What might we now mean by calling Christ the Wisdom of God? And part of the answer — not the whole thing, but part of it, I think — is Christ is the model creature, just as he is the perfect creator. In Jesus Christ, everything that creation is meant to be and do is somehow drawn together, as Paul says in Colossians, "in him all things hold together." And that's the underlying theme of these lectures. And that's why — and I've been trying to argue this with Aquinas but also with Calvin, who is a brilliant, brilliant Christological thinker — that's why

Andrew Petiprin: "Have you found yourself identifying with Augustine?"
Rowan Williams: "I'm well down on the foothills of that immense mountain where Augustine is near the top."

there's no competition between being divine and being human. This to me is the key for so much.

When I was a lad [laughs], when I was first doing theology, there were so many theologians saying, "Well, you know, classical Christian doctrine is all about a contradiction. You can't be God and human." And the more I looked at it, the more it seemed to me this was a complete misreading of what Tradition was claiming, which is not that in this human individual there are two comparable kinds of being going on at once, but that in this human being that kind of Being which is the maker of all things, and therefore not at all competing for space with anything he had created, is suffusing and soaking through the particular human — the human particularity — that is Jesus, and, as it were, welling up from within, because the Wisdom of God is that which sustains the whole world. And the Wisdom of God so comes to a head, comes to a focus in the life and death and resurrection of Jesus, that it releases something for the whole creation (Rom. 8). When it is released in Christ something is released in us as the Spirit is given. The trap is sprung. The chains of sin and self-destruction fall away, and we become able in relation to Christ to exercise our humanity to the full. When we exercise our humanity to the full — lovingly, unselfishly, in praise and glorification — the whole creation comes into order.

In the essay you used the expression "embrace our creatureliness." Is that what you're getting at?

Yes, because of course part of being sprung from the trap is sprung from the trap of the illusion that we are really God. And Jesus, I think, says if you want to be divine, stop wanting to be divine. If you want to have the joy and the liberty that is God's, then don't think of it (Phil. 2) as something to be snatched at, something to be grabbed from the clinging hands of a resentful God who doesn't want to give it to you. Be human. That's how you get to be in tune with the divine. If you think, "I must struggle to be divine. I must struggle to be in control of everything, to be immortal, to be invulnerable, I must do it by trampling down my humanity," that's completely the opposite of what the New Testa-

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ment says. And unfortunately that kind of spirit is rampant in much of our culture.

Something like orthodox Christology translates into better human flourishing than any other alternative.
Well, surprise, surprise! If what we say in the Nicene Creed happens to be true, then the universe is like that. And if we believe other things, we're just pushing against the grain of reality.

Your essay "Incarnation and the Renewal of Christian Community" seems to have bled into so much of what you've done, so much of Anglican theology, really: the Windsor Report, the Covenant. Has the moment passed for that, or is that still something that we can champion and be excited about?
I hope we can. I think writing that essay was a very good instance of being careful what you say because God might hold you to it. I wrote an essay on bishops' ministry years ago, long before I was a bishop, and the Lord had his revenge.

So you wrote that and God made you try to put it into action.
"Hmm … that's interesting. Now let's see you do it." Yes, I suppose what I'm after here is something like this. Occasionally people say, "You must be some kind of relativist." And I'm a bit surprised by that, because I've never thought of myself as that. And I believe that the truth is the truth. The universe is the way it is and God is the way God is. But that's very different, I think, from saying, "And we can sort that out, you know, the two of us here and now for good, and let everybody else know."

I think what we see in the New Testament is at least two features which ought to make us pause when thinking about the Church. One is, rather basically, there are four Gospels. No one evangelist's perspective on Christ tells you everything. Matthew needs Mark. Mark needs Luke. They all need John. And that great Synoptics and John contrast is quite a significant theological gulf in a way. And we've, in the last hundred years, I suppose, discovered more and more how much the particular theology of each evangelist shapes the storytelling. And sometimes that's led to, you know, Jesus Seminar stuff, where all these writers in the New Testament have completely different theologies. I don't think it's that at all. I think it's that the communities evolving around the liturgical recollection of Jesus in those first decades are growing communities, curious communities. They want to understand more. And therefore they are hospitable to quite a wide variety of texts used alongside each other, as if recognizing that any one won't get all of it.

Now, there are points certainly in the second Christian century where what we would now call the Catholic Church generally says, "Actually, you know, there are some texts that are eroding our common language, not building it up." You have the sifting process of getting rid of the Gospel of Philip or the Revelations of Bartholomew, saying at the end of the day, that's not what we're talking about. But what's remarkable is this process by which so much stays in! Think how tempting it must have been in the second century to say, "Let's just have one Gospel." And you have, in fact, the *Diatessaron* of Tatian as an attempt to say, "Here's the one text." But the wisdom of the body of Christ generally says, "You know, we need more." So that's one dimension: the four Gospels. This is a figure we see from different perspectives; and at the end of John's Gospel, if I try to write down everything, the world wouldn't hold it.

And then you have Paul, struggling with his fractious, diverse, and rebellious communities, and exercising discipline at times (you know, the man living with his stepmother: you know what to do about that). But short of that, you have this extraordinary discussion both in Romans and 1 Corinthians about food laws and practices. And Paul is saying, "I'm sure you're very convinced. Fine. Now then, how is your behavior actually going to make the other person more of an adult and free child of God? There's your agenda." As if to say, if you've got it all right on your own terms, that's only the beginning in the life of the Church; because the flourishing, the well-being of that other disciple, is your business. And without that other disciple, you will actually not be the disciple you're meant to be.

So, I think both the perspectival issue about a vision in the Gospels and the issue about relation in Paul — those are ways into thinking about what I've sometimes summarized in the old phrase "the whole Church knows the whole Truth," which doesn't at all, I think, reduce to the idea that every view is as valid as every other view or there's no reason for churches to be divided. It just gives us, I think, the big picture in which we're trying to make churches look less divided and feel less oppositional. And it's work. You know, it's real labor, and grueling and crushing labor sometimes.

You wrote a short piece in the *Evening Standard* defending the Lord's Prayer ad. Do you think that that was a meaningful moment in the public square to champion faith?

Yes, I think so. Getting this right is almost impossible, and I don't think I've got a very good record on that. Frankly, I haven't always judged it at all well. But certainly in the U.K. there is enough residual awareness of Christian faith to make it worth building on from time to time. And challenging a narrative that can so easily get a grip: a narrative that faith is either dying or bad for you or irrelevant or all of those. One thing that fascinates me really is how some secularists will vehemently say faith is the most terrible, appalling, anti-human thing imaginable, it's got to be crushed and excluded as much as possible — and it's dying out! Well, if it's dying out, then just relax and let it happen.

It seemed to me what you were saying in the *Evening Standard* piece was that everything else — all of the other advertisements at the cinema — are seeking to shape you in some particular way. And so why in the world shouldn't Christians offer some alternative and leave it to the market to decide?

Alas, that has something to do with this excessive sensitivity to giving offense these days. Now, I'm actually very concerned about offensive language. I think we are in many ways more careless and more uncivil in society than we were a while ago, yet I think if we allow that always to determine things we just view people as somehow unintelligent and unfree. So yes, I did want in that little piece to say that in the public square all sorts of forces, all kinds of people are competing for your loyalty and your attention, competing for your desires. If you say the only desires, intentions, and attentions that matter are about motorbikes and hairspray, you're saying something very distinctive and actually rather depressing about the human world. What if there were more important things to argue about? And that's why I've sometimes said that what I'd like to see in public is what I call "argumentative pluralism": not just mutual tolerance, but engagement, civil engagement, a real, careful, thoughtful, respectful engagement, so that I don't want to see privilege and dominance for a religious worldview in the public square but I do want to see what visibility there is for it. I had a very interesting conversation many years ago with Cardinal Christoph Schönborn, Archbishop of Vienna — a wonderful theologian, and not only a wonderful theologian but a delightful and very godly man — and that's the formula we both finally agreed on: that what we were concerned about was simply visibility of the Christian faith in the marketplace.

Now that you're back in the academy full time, do you find that the discourse has shifted there as well? Here in the States we've had several high-profile things blow up over the last couple of years that are rooted in this very question of whether we are actually intolerant of a public discourse that is potentially dangerous but may be really good and life-giving.

Yes, I have some concern, not so much for how the law works (I think in Britain the law actually, in spite of what some say, protects religion effectively), but there's a sort of professional culture which is more and more jumpy about this. And I've seen it in attitudes, for example, towards health-care chaplaincy and in some universities (not in ours, fortunately) to student chaplaincy. And I quoted in that little *Evening Standard* piece a story told to me by one of my friends, that university chaplains had been told not to express any opinions. And that sort of hyper-anxious, bureaucratic narrowness has taken over a good deal more of professional life than I'd like.

That being said, I find talking to young people — my own students and others — about faith no more difficult than it was 30 years ago. You can take less for granted in some ways, but equally that means that some of what you want to say about faith will come across as fresh. People won't yet know what to disagree with. And I do quite a bit of speaking to schools — sixth forms, high-school groups, and so on — and always find there's a serious and thoughtful engagement and willingness to argue responsibly. So I don't despair. I think the Church in our country is in for a difficult time. We are in some areas more at odds with the culture than we used to be. Numerically and financially we're not ideally where we'd like to be. And yet, the sheer figure of congregation after congregation at the parochial level makes me feel that the future is not to be despaired of — quite apart from the theological conviction, which is that God's truth will survive.

The Rev. Andrew Petiprin is rector of St. Mary of the Angels Church in Orlando, Florida.

Total Ministry: Not a Total Answer

By Mark Michael

It only took a week or two of Mr. Holder's European history class for me to see that this teacher was something special. His fast-paced lectures traced coherent threads through jumbles of names and dates. He was a master of the telling quotation and the witty aside. He even arrived to class in costume a few times. I was entranced, convinced of some deep kinship with this man, as he was connected to so much that was most important to me. And that was before I learned he was a priest.

He came to class one day in a black suit and clerical collar. He would be leaving after lunch, he explained. One of his parishioners had died, and he needed to officiate at the funeral. Aha! A priest. So that was why we had spent two whole days on the English Reformation. He served at St. Luke's in Brownsville, he explained, and some of the others nodded, knowing more than me. It was a little church in a little place, and he had been serving there for 16 years, since just after I was born.

A priest and a history teacher — why not? Or a priest and a newspaper columnist? A priest and a congressman, even?

I was quite impressed. I had been telling people I wanted to be a pastor for about a decade by then, and I never really thought about combining this vocation with one of my other passions. A priest and a history teacher — why not? Or a priest and a newspaper columnist? A priest and a congressman, even? I guess I knew that St. Paul had worked a trade alongside all his preaching and pastoral work. But I had never encountered a living example before.

Years later I reconnected with the man I now instinctively call "Fr. Holder" (High Church clergymen find honorifics impossible to discard). We worked alongside each other, fellow priests and history teachers, at an Episcopal boarding school only a few miles from where he had first introduced me to the English Reformation. I found him extremely helpful as a colleague, and I have come to cherish him as a dear friend.

Last spring he retired after 36 years as vicar of St. Luke's, leaving the common life of the congregation there, on the whole, in a better place than when he started in 1979. It's still a small congregation, but one does not look for enormous crowds in one of the three churches in Brownsville, a village of only 94 souls. The congregation has a core of committed lay leaders. They are engaged in a number of important charitable works. Their parish house is pretty much Brownsville's community center. It only took them a month or two to find a new permanent priest.

I gave him a call last week to ask how he was enjoying retirement. It turns out his life still had plenty of room for Sunday duties and a community college lectureship; multitasking was a habit not easily set aside.

Bivocational ministry like Fr. Holder's is widely touted as our future model in the Episcopal Church. Last year's groundbreaking report by the Task Force for Reimagining the Episcopal Church encouraged exploration of "diverse ways for ordained clergy to make a living inside and outside the Church" as part of its plan for "restructuring the church for spiritual encounter" (Resolution A001). My hope for my conversation with Fr.

How Father Holder, my history teacher, helped me appreciate bivocational priests.

Holder was that he could tell me a little more about how this actually works, for the bivocational leader and for the congregation. Could the experience he shared with St. Luke's be replicated in other places, or was it unique, dependent on unusual local circumstances?

Fr. Holder began by talking about the joy he had found in the many opportunities for pastoral care and spiritual witness as part of his work as a public school teacher. Colleagues came to ask him for help with their marriages or for prayers in sickness. When a student died tragically, people would seek him out first, and he had officiated a few of those sad high-school gym funerals. A Roman Catholic mother once thanked him for explaining the doctrine of transubstantiation to her daughter. Despite a dozen years in catechism class, she had never paid attention to sacramental theology until she needed to know it for a history test. Once, the principal came down the hallway, asking Fr. Holder if he had "that black thing" (his clerical shirt) in his closet. A belligerent drunk, a former Catholic schoolboy, was refusing to leave the property until he had seen both the principal *and* the priest.

Fr. Holder also believed that the limitations his secular work imposed helped lay people to emerge as leaders and to deepen their understanding of ministry as a shared vocation.

Fr. Holder also believed that the limitations his secular work imposed helped lay people to emerge as leaders and to deepen their understanding of ministry as a shared vocation. "It empowered people who would have said, 'I would like to do that, but I don't want to get in the clergy's way.'" He spoke of a woman who had been visiting the elderly at nursing homes for years and who was so pleased to receive training as a pastoral visitor. It helped her see she was doing her work for the Lord, and she was still at it, going to see "the old people," when she died at 104.

Fr. Holder began his priestly ministry as part of a Total Ministry team, a group of people who had trained together for four years, using a model imported to Western Maryland's rural parishes from the Diocese of Alaska. To serve three parishes of "the Washington County Mission," two lay people were trained and ordained as priests, but each congregation also had a Christian formation director, an outreach minister, a parish administrator, a liturgy director, and a pastoral care visitation team. While a few of those trained 34 years ago are still engaged in the work, new parishioners were incorporated, and new leaders trained. As he said to me, "The church got to be stronger because people took ownership of their ministry. People began to understand who to see about tasks. I don't know that St. Luke's would have survived if we hadn't diversified the ministry."

The congregation at St. Luke's was probably better equipped to receive the new model because it had grown dissatisfied with the old system, a strained "yoke" with another distant congregation, which shared a series of minimally paid short-term vicars. Having lacked consistent clerical leadership for generations, the congregation had relied on lay initiative for a long time. St. Luke's was

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Total Ministry: Not a Total Answer

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also used to Morning Prayer on Sundays, led by lay readers twice a month. When the old lay readers (Fr. Holder one of them) became the new priests, the change was both familiar and new, an opportunity for a long-desired weekly Eucharist. Transitional vicars — seminary-trained clergy sent in by the diocese to work alongside Fr. Holder and his fellow new priests while "working themselves out of a job" — helped ease the way into the new model.

Even with such extensive training and deep commitment, the new model did bring tensions. Some people found it difficult to accept a minister without seminary training as a "real priest," though this prejudice, Fr. Holder noted, was much stronger among the diocesan clergy than the laity. It also proved difficult to sustain for the long term. When Fr. Holder's covicar reached the mandatory retirement age of 72, his own responsibility doubled, and in time he received a small stipend from the congregation in recognition of his increased commitment. The shared ministry model did not fare so well in the two other parishes of the Washington County Mission, which reverted to part-time seminary-trained clergy in about a decade. The model required intensive diocesan support and local buy-in, and was not replicated again for more than 20 years, in a neighboring rural county. Fr. Holder's successor at St. Luke's was part of this second class of locally trained Total Ministry clerics.

Clearly the model Fr. Holder and the people of St. Luke's have lived for more than three decades is an inspiring pattern for how Total Ministry can be done very well. Fr. Holder's willingness to live a call to two different vocations deepened his own witness for Christ, and the model of shared ministry raised up new gifts and deepened commitments among the people of the congregation.

But after an hour's pleasant conversation, I was reminded many times of how difficult this model must be to replicate, and how much of a paradigm shift it would represent for many of the struggling "pastoral sized" congregations I have known. Total Ministry worked well for Fr. Holder because his secular employers supported his clerical vocation, because he did not assume any seminary debt, and because he had a clear sense of call and was carefully trained by talented teachers (his instructor went on to write scores of books on congregational development). Total Ministry worked well at St. Luke's because the congregation was so isolated and had a static population, because there was already little dependence on clerical leadership and there was excitement about trying something new, and (not least) because Fr. Holder was a particularly holy man who served them faithfully for half his lifetime. And the whole system was enabled by massive diocesan investment, intensive training programs, and people who made promises and remained faithful to them for decades. The Washington County Mission was an exciting enterprise, part of the new adventure of shared ministry in the aftermath of Vatican II and the new prayer book. Forward Movement published a book about it. It was a pilot project for the church of the future.

Planning for future ministry will require real discernment, careful assessment of the opportunities and challenges of each local congregation and the wider community it serves.

I'm not sure it's a plan for the 100-member suburban congregation of already over-committed people, or the aging downtown parish whose Victorian endowment is slowly draining away. It might be far more difficult for seminary-trained priests to be hired for secular jobs in an age when public trust in the clergy has so sharply declined. Are dioceses ready to commit substantial resources to "marginal congregations"? Do we really have the imagination to see beyond the consistent narrative of decline, to imagine this kind of model as something more than life support?

With God, we know, all things are possible. But not every bright and beautiful idea is the way of the future. People like Fr. Holder have a great deal to teach us as we face an approaching crisis in the ministry of the Episcopal Church. But I'm not sure their experience is as helpful as many have suggested. I left our chat uplifted, but more certain than ever that there is no clear out-of-the-box plan for the future. Planning for future ministry will require real discernment, careful assessment of the opportunities and challenges of each local congregation and the wider community it serves. It will require clergy who are willing to be flexible and to make sacrifices, seeking innovative ways to witness and exercise pastoral care. Above all, it will require us to trust less in methods and more in the guiding hand of God. As I'm sure someone as holy as Fr. Holder would be quick to say, there is no safer and more faithful place to be.

The Rev. Mark Michael is interim rector of St. Timothy's Church in Herndon, Virginia.

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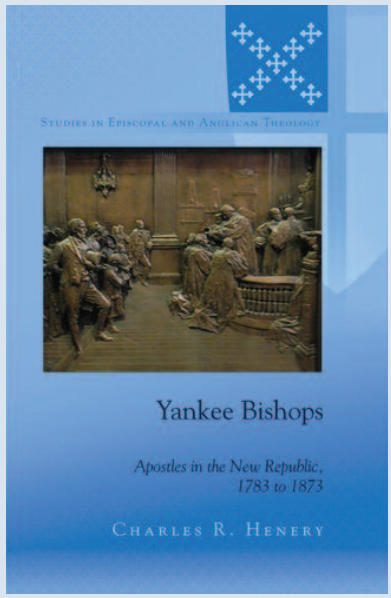
The Episcopal Church's Founders

Review by John C. Bauerschmidt

Someone investigating the early history of the Episcopal Church might reasonably conclude that its most remarkable aspect is not the emergence of an Anglican form of episcopacy adapted for service in the post-colonial period (our "unique polity" as it is sometimes called), but rather that episcopacy was retained at all in the new United States. For more than 150 years there were no bishops of the Church of England resident in North America. The Bishop of London provided oversight at a distance; limited assistance with resources was afforded not by bishops but by missionary societies (albeit with episcopal patrons) and by the Crown. The vestry system of oversight was developed during this period largely in the vacuum of episcopal leadership. A church with ordered worship and governance but without episcopal order was quite imaginable. What's amazing in retrospect is not that the General Convention now has two houses but that bishops are even a part of it.

This inheritance is perhaps a tribute to the deep reflection on episcopacy done by Anglicans in the 17th century; also perhaps an outcome of the practical experience of Anglican ordinands from the colonies as they made the long journey to England to receive holy orders from its bishops. They had at least that much exposure to episcopal oversight and experience of episcopal order. The early leaders of the church, like William White, Samuel Seabury, and others, assured that there would be bishops, and it was the work of this generation and those that followed that determined what sort of bishops they would be.

Charles Henery's fine new work, *Yankee Bishops*, covers the period that saw the consecration of the first 100 bishops of the Episcopal Church. The sobriquet "yankee" does not refer to a particular geographic region but rather to the American bishops as a whole, north and south, as they were called by their British observers. Henery analyzes the background and family connections and churchmanship alliances of these men, members of an exclusive "club" as he calls them; he also details the images of the episcopal order that inspired their work. The bishop as spiritual father, as pastor of pastors, and as chief evangelist: all figure in his account. In a concluding chapter Henery touches on the institutional commitments of bishops during this time, including educational and charitable endeavors as well as the early development of the cathedral system.



Yankee Bishops
Apostles in the New Republic, 1783 to 1873
By **Charles R. Henery**
Peter Lang Publishers
Pp. 351. $93.95

Henery also identifies aspects of his subject that he does not cover: the legislative work of the bishops in General Convention and their relationship as a house to the House of Deputies; the subject of episcopal collegiality; and the influence of the controversies between churchmanship parties on episcopal elections and other activities. Including them would have meant producing a work of unmanageable length. I take the mention to be Henery's way of stimulating further scholarship in the next generation, since the subjects mentioned are of topical concern in our own day.

The foundational argument made by this work is that Episcopalians looked quite deliberately to primitive models as they established episcopacy in their

The foundational argument made by this work is that Episcopalians looked quite deliberately to primitive models as they established episcopacy in their own context.

own context. From White to John Henry Hobart, from Alexander Viets Griswold to Stephen Elliot: all emphasized the apostolic and primitive character of the episcopal order. As William Meade of Virginia put it, "there is one sentiment among us on this subject" (p. 3). Even the "low church" evangelical bishop Charles McIlvaine of Ohio preached on apostolic succession in terms of continuity of commission from the apostolic age into the present. Henery suggests that the restoration of primitive ideals in the life of the church, rooted in the Holy Scriptures and in the writings of the period closest to New Testament times, was formative not only for self-consciously "restorationist" groups but for Episcopalians as well.

In reading *Yankee Bishops*, I was often struck by the continuity between these early days and our own in the work of a bishop. William White expressed regret "that in the minds of many, there is the supposition, that a bishop should always be engaged in visitations" (p. 196). The very formidable challenges of travel and visitation in this period have arguably become less in our own day, though the relative ease of transport has perhaps only encouraged bishops now to travel farther and further. The burden of correspondence is another continuity. William DeLancey of Western New York claimed to have written 300 letters in a three-month period: a pretty impressive accomplishment given the rigorous schedule of engagements, often between distant points. Email and social media today give additional scope to bishops, but the theme is the same.

At times this continuity is quite pointed. The struggle of the bishops to secure pastors for their congregations, and to raise the funds necessary for their support in outlying areas, are hardy perennials here touched upon. Discontent in the congregations of the church, and the subject of clerical discipline, will be painfully familiar subjects to today's bishops. James Otey of Tennessee remarked that advice, admonition, or correction offered by the bishop were often "received coldly, or heard with impatience, or rejected ungraciously" (p. 167). Henery mentions that bishops of the period were known to identify the age's characteristic commitment to individuality and the exercise of liberty as the root cause of difficulties in the exercise of their office. *Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose.*

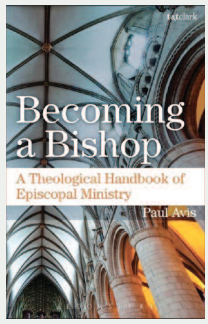
More positive examples are offered under the heading of counsel and encouragement offered by the bishop to clergy and congregations, and hospitality extended. A letter or word received at the right time could sustain a priest in danger of discouragement. This encouragement worked both ways. Carlton Chase, president of Vermont's standing committee, wrote to John Henry Hopkins that he regarded him as "the best piece of Bishop stuff in America" (p. 180). The work of the bishop as chief evangelist and missionary shows some of the bishops at their best. Alonzo Potter of Pennsylvania, after ten years as bishop, said that he had preached 1,700 sermons. On his missionary travels, Benjamin Morris of Oregon carried printed posters announcing that he would preach in the evening at the town hall. Thomas Claggett of Maryland made an indelible impression on a young lady at her confirmation by his appearance with miter and episcopal robes.

Benjamin Morris of Oregon carried printed posters announcing that he would preach in the evening at the town hall.

Henery, inspired by 1 Corinthians 3:10, concludes with a brief and spirited meditation about the nature of episcopal ministry, one that strikes home to me. Its enduring characteristic is that of "deferred hopes" (p. 262). A bishop cannot expect that all efforts will find their fruition now. Part of the ministry is to begin work that others will harvest. Henry Lay of Easton wrote that a bishop "may succeed tolerably well in keeping a Diocese in good order, gathering an annual harvest of Confirmations … and yet, when he comes to the end of his work, he may look back regretfully, if he has planted no seed of larger and better things" (p. 262). We are in Henery's debt for bringing this and similar material to light today.

The Rt. Rev. John C. Bauerschmidt is Bishop of Tennessee.

Manual for a Bishop



Becoming a Bishop
A Theological Handbook of Episcopal Ministry
By **Paul Avis**. Bloomsbury T&T Clark.
Pp. 176. $25.99

Review by George R. Sumner

What would *Becoming a Bishop* have been like with Irenaeus as the author? It would be similar to this book by Paul Avis, since Avis draws on the vision of oversight from the early Church. It is just this debt that makes his book so valuable. It recalls us theologically to the "better angels of our nature."

But Irenaeus for his part described not only the nascent faith of the creed, but also the ornate beliefs of the rival Gnostics. And the latter were not some alien intruder upon the faithful; some believe they may have outnumbered the Catholics inside the Church. I imagine that his daily work had recurrences of this struggle along with the long, slow grind of isolated, embattled congregations. A description of the real life of a patristic bishop would have included a great deal of both. (In much the same way Augustine's week had lots of petitioners and parishioners in messy quasi-pagan relationships from which treatises may have been a relief.)

Avis's book reads like the platonic ideal of episcopacy, which is itself salutary in a church little turned toward theology. He presents the defending, teaching, disciplining, and counsel-taking roles well. He summarizes the classically Anglican view of its relation to apostolicity, and links this to contemporary conciliarity. But it also has thereby a touch of unreality, giving as it does little account of that tide that the bishop today teaches or exhorts against.

Theology in every age must deal with some overarching threat from its host culture, some homey swamp into which the gospel might sink. For Irenaeus and his contemporaries the intimate enemy was Hellenism. For moderns it is the notion of the human as a detached creator of self. It comes to us as the market, as the psychological, as experience, as technique. It summons us simultaneously to pride and sloth. In its light even the traditional roles of bishop are subtly altered into public relations, purveyance of a religious product, management. The corruption of church life is, after all, subtle. Even indulgences seemed to those offering them a religious moment.

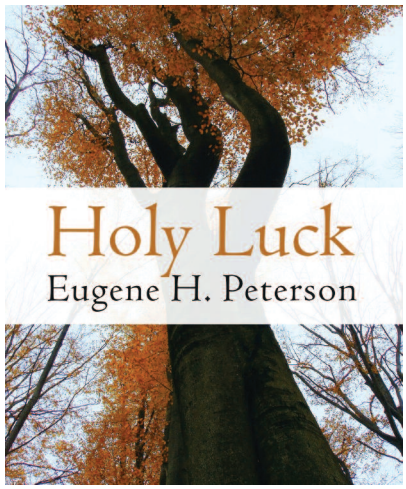
Being a Christian leader today is to steer something half-forgotten, compromised, broken. This was true for Irenaeus too. If we think our challenge is unique, we flatter ourselves. Yet there is something particular to our problem, something that goes to the heart of the distinct challenges of leading today in a culture leery of authority. Avis touches on this especially in his treatments of conflict and of the contemporary thirst for leadership.

Some years ago, there was something called "as if" theology. First, the bishop acts on the assumption of having authority, even in the face of abundant evidence to the contrary. Second, the watchword for all who would reclaim and retrieve, including Avis, is *catechize*. Third, bishops, like missionaries, must be open to God's surprises, among which I would number the Anglican Communion itself and today's Canterbury Road. "With God all things are possible."

The Rt. Rev. George R. Sumner is Bishop of Dallas.

A Shepherd of Words

Review by Phoebe Pettingell



Holy Luck
By **Eugene H. Peterson**
Eerdmans. Pp. 84. $12.

In his preface to *Holy Luck*, Eugene H. Peterson sees a parallel between pastors and poets. Both are, or ought to be, "shepherds of words." He explains that good clergy, like good writers, "use words with reverence, get immersed in everyday particulars, are wary of abstractions, spy out the glories of the commonplace, warn of illusions, attend to the subtle connections between rhythm and meaning and spirit." Peterson, a Presbyterian minister and Bible scholar, is the author of many books on spiritual theology and professor emeritus of that subject at Regent College in Vancouver. He is, perhaps, best known for his Bible paraphrase, *The Message*, which some scholars have dismissed as a "New Age Bible." Others have praised its ability to convey qualities of the original tongues to the average reader; in particular the earthy, unpolished *koiné* Greek — not as an elegant but obscure language to send one scurrying to commentaries and dictionaries, but the rough *lingua franca* of the Eastern Roman Empire. Peterson has often said that he never meant his paraphrase to be used as a lectionary Bible. As a poet, he understands the appropriate contexts for one kind of speech over another, as his poems attest.

In a touching story, Peterson explains how he first came to poetry. At 13, having recently moved to a new neighborhood where he had yet to make friends but was in possession of a new, leather-covered King James Bible bought with his own money, he spent the summer reading the Psalms. Raised in a culture that insisted on the literal truth of every word in the Bible, he was confused by the metaphorical language, but did not dare ask anyone to explain. Driven back on his own resources, he gradually began to understand the power and meaning of such expressions as "the Lord is my Rock" or "put thou my tears in thy bottle." With this key, not only did the rest of Scripture come alive for him but he found a new way of looking at and experiencing his life.

Peterson grew up in Montana, and has retired there. Its scrublands easily blend for him into biblical wildernesses. In "Egypt," he considers how difficult Mary and Joseph must have found the period when they were forced to live in an alien culture "in rented rooms," but also the wonder of retracing the paths trodden by Abraham, Elijah, and so many other ancestors of their people, going into exile to flee danger. "Promises / Kept in unpromising places," the poet remarks, and suddenly we have a startling perception of God's mysterious ways, which always do seem to take place in the most unexpected and unlooked-for venues.

Peterson's title refers to the Beatitudes, which he defines as Jesus' "ruthless and unqualified rejection of what it means to take up with the world and then [his] replacement of that understanding with a total reorientation of the imagination as we take up with the way followers of Jesus speak and act in the Kingdom of God." For "Blessed are those who mourn," which he calls "The Lucky Sad," he imagines grief as the torrents that create canyons, cutting through and exposing the layers hidden away underneath:

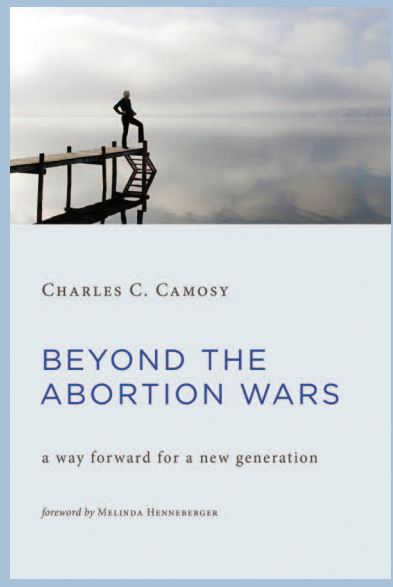
> No pain
> Is ugly in past tense. Under
> The Mercy every hurt is a fossil
> Link in the great chain of becoming/
> Pick and shovel prayers often
> Turn them up in the valley of death.

In his best work, Peterson shepherds his words and images so that whether he makes them lie down in green pastures or on the rocky desert places and gorges, they uncover fresh revelations from the Word of God that continuously shapes the Christian disciple's view of the world.

Phoebe Pettingell is a literary critic, liturgical writer and editor, and sacristan of S. Stephen's Church in Providence, Rhode Island.

New Insights on Abortion?

Review by Ian S. Markham



Beyond the Abortion Wars
A Way Forward for a New Generation
By **Charles C. Camosy**. Eerdmans. Pp. xiv + 207. $22

The Supreme Court made its *Roe v. Wade* decision in 1973, and it still provokes passionate debate. Abortion is not rare. Approximately one-third of American women have at least one abortion in their lifetime. Half of all abortions are the mother's second or third. A high percentage of women regret having an abortion. And conceptually, we recognize that in the end there is no difference between a newborn baby and an eight-month-old fetus. We do not want a society in which babies are killed, so we wonder about the practice of abortion.

Into this highly polarized world steps a young Roman Catholic ethicist from Fordham University. Charles Camosy establishes his credentials early on. His friends include the Princeton ethicist Peter Singer (who thinks that infanticide can be ethically appropriate) and the former *Washington Post* journalist Melinda Henneberger (who wrote in the *Post* so movingly about her painful experience of rape). As a white Roman Catholic male, he is sensitive to the charge that men are too eager to pontificate on women and their bodies, so he ensured that his many feminist conversation partners reviewed his text.

Camosy's theme is simple: the binary of pro-life or pro-choice is collapsing. It is collapsing in polling data (a high percentage of Americans worry about third-trimester abortions); it is collapsing in law (the shift from privacy in *Roe v. Wade* to undue burden in *Planned Parenthood v. Casey*); it is collapsing in consequences (we do not want a world in which sex selection is increasingly a criterion and abortion rights are an excuse for doing nothing to support mothers); and it is collapsing in logic (e.g., defining the difference between abortion and infanticide).

Camosy sets out his argument. First, he thinks that the fetus should have legal standing as a person. The fetus has the trait that leads to full personhood.

Second, he thinks that feminists should worry about the consequences of abortion for women. He notes how many early opponents of abortion were women. He argues that men do not want to make any accommodations for combining childrearing with careers (such as universal access to maternal health care and prekindergarten) and therefore men are the primary supporters of abortion.

Third, he thinks that abortion should be permitted when the mother's life is in danger (he invokes the right of self-defense), and indirect abortion (an action in which the fetus dies as an indirect consequence) should be permitted in cases of rape up to eight weeks and beyond eight weeks when confirmed through a process that ensures rape has really occurred.

Finally, he is opposed to abortion for all forms of disability, although he concedes that sometimes the baby should not be subject to excessive interventions to preserve life.

He proposes a federal law, "The Mother and Prenatal Child Protection Act," which sets out the legal restrictions and includes a substantial commitment to the support of mothers and their children during and after pregnancy. He is impatient with a rhetoric from the right that emphasizes the fetus but is indifferent to the subsequent child's education and medical care.

This is a remarkable study. It is illuminating, fascinating, well written, and well argued. He is persuasive: the mood of America is shifting; and the proposed federal law would reflect the position of the

majority of Americans.

There are two elements of his argument that are problematic. The first is that in the status of the fetus debate, the gradualist position is not clearly represented. Camosy focuses on the principle of viability, which is part of the gradualist position but not all of it. My own view is that a fertilized egg, three-quarters of which do not implant, should not be considered a human. There are several reasons for this.

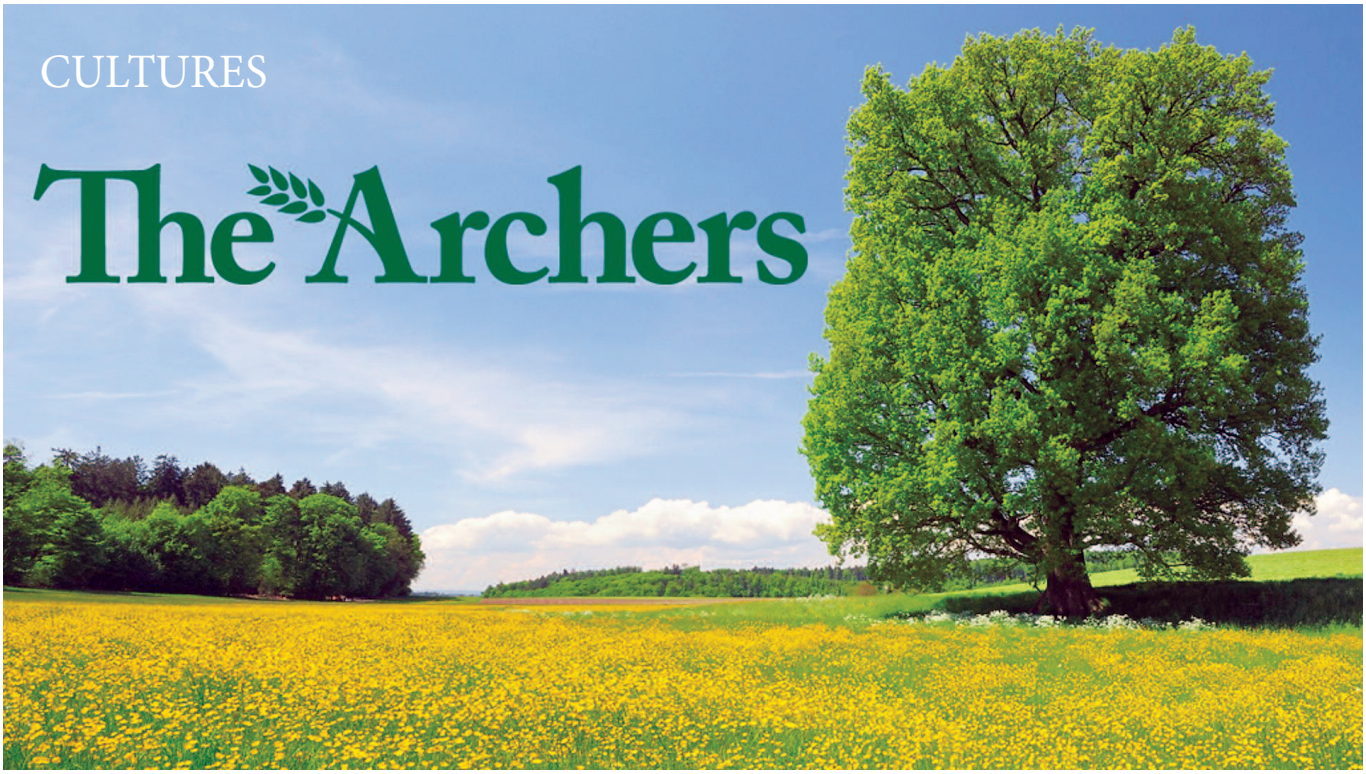
First, if the majority of human lives never live, then I think we have a theological problem. If heaven is primarily populated by fertilized ovums, the subsequent 70 years of some may seem insignificant. Second, the fertilized ovum will become many things: it may be identical twins and part will be the umbilical cord and the amniotic sac. You cannot say that a fertilized ovum is a clearly entitled human because it is not yet. A gradualist would, however, concede increasing rights as the embryo grows. It is clear a human life is developing that should be granted legal safeguards. Therefore, this difference does not make the proposed "Mother and Prenatal Child Act" wrong. Indeed, a gradualist will want to support Camosy's proposal for a dramatic reduction in third-trimester abortions.

The second problematic element in Camosy's argument is his treatment of rape. To obligate a woman to carry to birth a pregnancy as a result of a non-consensual sexual act is morally abhorrent. Camosy recognizes this. But he only trusts the report of the woman for the first eight weeks; after this, he wants some legal process for fear of a woman lying simply to obtain an abortion. Given the horrendous trauma of rape, one cannot assume that two months mark sufficient time to make this decision. Rape in my judgment is analogous to the threat to the mother's life: it should always be grounds for an abortion and should not be made legally complicated.

One aspect of this book is already out of date. Camosy assumes an evenly split Supreme Court that will hear abortion cases in the next few months and years. It is indeed split, but the math is complicated without Justice Anthony Scalia. Before his death, this book felt prescient; now the book feels a little further away, with a high likelihood of the legal status quo continuing into the future.

Yet the achievement of this book is remarkable. The assembled data are amazing. The broad outlines of the argument seem right. How we treat human life is a mark of a civilization. We need to do our part to make sure that life is valued.

The Very Rev. Ian S. Markham is dean and president of Virginia Theological Seminary.



BBC photo

Domestic Abuse and *The Archers*

By John Martin

Every so often I enjoy revisiting childish innocence by watching *The Jungle Book* (1967), based on Rudyard Kipling's famous children's tale. There's a dramatic moment when Kaa the venomous snake sings, "Trusssst in me," to hypnotize Mowgli, the boy who is saved from the dark arts of the wily reptile in the nick of time.

The Archers is Britain's longest-running radio soap opera. It first went to air on New Year's Day 1951. It is heard six days a week on BBC Radio 4, the country's premier speech station. Originally it was billed as "an everyday story of country folk." For many years the plots moved at snail's pace, one of its aims being to boost agricultural production in a post-war nation struggling to achieve food security.

The Ministry of Agriculture cooperated closely with its BBC producers and plots often centered on a middle-class family determined to make a go of farming, an improvident one that muddled through, and a rich man who used farming to achieve a tax loss, something that is no longer possible.

These days *The Archers* is described as a "contemporary drama in a rural setting." It has run to more than 17,850 episodes. Its plots now have many of the hallmarks of urban television soaps: clandestine love affairs, rape, family dysfunction, crime, death by misadventure, fire, and flood. Until now, however, it has stopped short of murder.

About two years ago *The Archers* embarked on a dark story line dramatizing domestic abuse and coercive control, seeking to provide a realistic picture of an issue confronting many women. It coincides with a new Parliamentary Act recognizing this issue in British life. My wife, Deirdre, and I have listened nonstop to *The Archers* for the best part of two decades but we eventually found this turgid story line a bridge too far and have simply followed plots via internet summaries. That is until recently.

Helen Titchener (nee Archer) is married to a former dairy manager, Rob. At first she is deeply in love. On the surface he is charming and able, but slowly there unfolds a creepy, manipulative, and domineering character. He undermines her self-confidence, demands to know every detail of her movements and restricts them, puts up barriers to her friends and family, and takes

control of her finances and family business. There is an uncanny parallel with the actions of Kaa and his attempt to paralyze the young Mowgli.

Following a tip from a friend, Deirdre and I tuned in the replay of an episode in which the Helen-Rob drama comes to an awful climax. Helen is determined to leave, reportedly the most dangerous moment in an abusive domestic arrangement. Helen is subject to a torrent of horrible verbal and physical abuse. Rob hands her a knife and taunts her to use it as "the only way out," saying, "you are nothing without me here." It then goes quiet. Helen rings a friend to say she killed him to make him stop.

In real life in Britain two women are killed every week by a current or former partner. Police on average receive one call every minute about domestic abuse. Yet it is estimated that only about 35 percent of domestic abuse cases are actually reported. Contrary to what happened in *The Archers*, men are the main perpetrators of violence and domestic deaths.

Certainly this story line is shedding light on an area of life that's much neglected. In true British fashion the story has triggered a charitable appeal to help women's refuge centres and almost £100,000 ($143,000) was donated in less than a month.

Already the plot is attracting church comment. Paul Woolley, acting CEO of the Bible Society, who also admits to having taken a break from *The Archers* because of this story line, has said: "As the story of Rob and Helen shows, physical abuse doesn't necessarily start soon after a couple get together. It can occur after weeks, months, and often years of emotional abuse. The victim will have been belittled and worn down."

He continued: "It's difficult to think of a behavior that is more antithetical to the gospel. 'I give a new commandment to you,' Jesus said: 'Love one another; just as I have loved you, you should also love one another'" (John 13:34).

And he concludes, "It's time for all of us in the Church to play our part in unmasking this evil and doing everything we possibly can to support the victims of such violence."

John Martin, writing from London, is TLC's associate editor for international news.

CATHOLIC VOICES

Eulogy for a Lapsed Christian

By Lawrence N. Crumb

"For all who have died in the communion of your Church, and those whose faith is known to you alone, that, with all the saints, they may have rest in that place where there is no pain or grief, but life eternal, we pray to you, O Lord." These words from the fifth form of intercession (BCP, p. 391) represent a much-needed expansion of the traditional prayers "for the faithful departed." Of course, Christians have an obligation to pray for those who share in the same faith and fellowship. As the body of Christ, as Christ's presence in the world today, we are also obliged to show concern for the entire world for which Christ died, and for all its people.

There has long been a doctrine affirming the moral worth of men and women of good will who, for one reason or another, are not Christians. In the case of those who began within the Christian family and then ceased to be active participants, the reasons are many and varied. Some, like my parents, rejected a form of religion that was puritanical, pietistic, or narrowly dogmatic. Others have been disillusioned because of uncharitable conflict within a congregation, or the misconduct of clergy or lay leaders. And for some the reasons are unstated. We do not need to know.

There is an interior foundation for those who have received the sacrament of Holy Baptism, whether in infancy or later, and especially for those who received the sacrament of Holy Communion during their formative years. That foundation remains, however absent in the exterior, and with it comes a reservoir of grace that may enable a virtuous life beyond the natural order. In the lives of many, we see this in their service to country in time of war and in their service to family and community at home. And we see it reflected in the lives of those closest to them.

Jesus said, "In my Father's house, there are many mansions." We say at Morning Prayer: "Lord Jesus Christ, you stretched out your arms of love on the hard wood of the cross that everyone might come within the reach of your saving embrace" (BCP, p. 101). And we sing in a beloved hymn (Hymnal, 1942):

> There's a wideness in God's mercy,
> Like the wideness of the sea;
> there's a kindness in his justice,
> which is more than liberty. …
>
> If our love were but more simple,
> we should take him at his word;
> and our lives would be all sunshine
> in the sweetness of the Lord.

For our departed brother, and for all those whose faith is known to you alone, that they may have rest in that place where there is no pain or grief, but life eternal, we pray to you, O Lord.

The Rev. Lawrence N. Crumb is vicar of St. Andrew's Church in Cottage Grove, Oregon.

Beyond Conflict

ACC-16's Call to Unity

"Our conversations were enriching, not embattling," said Bishop Jane Alexander, a Canadian delegate to the 16th meeting of the Anglican Consultative Council (ACC-16) in Lusaka, Zambia. Her remarks during the council's final session echoed a chorus of similar responses. In the words of Bishop James Tengatenga, departing ACC chairman, from his farewell sermon: "May I be a little smug and say, 'The rumor about the Anglican Communion's demise is greatly exaggerated?'"

Under the theme "Intentional Discipleship in a World of Difference," ACC-16 tackled common challenges across the Communion, in the shadow of the January Primates' Meeting and its relational consequences for the Episcopal Church (see TLC, Feb. 21, "A Fragile but Intact Communion"). Notwithstanding the advice and objections of varying voices, the Episcopal delegation announced at the outset its intention to participate fully in the council. The Nigerian, Rwandan, and Ugandan delegations, associated with the Global Anglican Future Conference (GAFCON), in turn boycotted the meeting, while the Most Rev. Mouneer Hanna Anis, Archbishop of Egypt and Primate of Jerusalem and the Middle East, sent last-minute regrets on similar grounds.

In the face of these headwinds, attending their first ACC meeting in their respective roles, Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby and Secretary General Josiah Idowu-Fearon showed great skill in maintaining a focus on what old-style ecumenists call "life and work" initiatives. Streamlining the legislative process, they sidestepped contentious debate about resolutions, relying instead on Indaba-style discussion of common needs and strategies.

After initial jitters, the council found its feet when delegates, sorted into inter-provincial groups, reflected together on the Five Marks of Mission in light of local priorities. Multiple points of convergence emerged. Many Anglicans suffer from climate change. Gun violence is overwhelming American and South Sudanese society. Islamic extremism threatens vulnerable Christian communities on several continents. Many delegates, especially from poorer provinces, rose to share stories of suffering, and then called the council to unity for the sake of common witness.

Unity and mission returned as themes in a series of presentations by Anglican Communion Office (ACO) staff. An impressive resource on intentional discipleship spurred conversations about connecting faith and life. In his presidential address, Archbishop Welby urged delegates to move beyond internal conflicts and focus instead on the "global and generational challenges" of climate change and religiously motivated violence. Plenary sessions spotlighted dynamic work among African youth. Exuberant worship led by local choirs lifted spirits.

The entire meeting made a case for what ecclesiological architect Paul Avis, in a report approved by the gathering, called "mission in communion," and the council applied the argument from unity on several scores. Archbishop Welby described Anglican unity in discipleship as "the pearl of great value … the only way we show to the world that God raised Jesus Christ from the dead." Archbishop Idowu-Fearon chided GAFCON provinces for refusing to contribute to the ACO's budget for several years while benefiting from its programs. With remarkably little contention (*pace* subsequent scuffles), the council backed the primates' consequences for the Episcopal Church by "receiving" Archbishop Welby's report, which also reiterated the primates' unanimous rejection of

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laws that punish people attracted to the same sex. And Bishop Ian Douglas of Connecticut, in a gesture of gracious restraint, refrained from running for chairman of the standing committee, placing conscientious respect before "rights" (cf. 1 Cor. 10: 23-33).

On all counts, ACC-16, like the Primates' Meeting before, marked an encouraging step for all who work and pray for Anglican unity. More prayer meeting than parliament, the council sought to strengthen "bonds of affection" across a communion deeply challenged by repeated unilateral action.

Archbishop Welby sees that communion subsists in affectionate relation: we wash one another's feet, as the primates did in January; and such sacramental gesture in turn shapes Welby's approach to church order. As in his opening remarks, Anglican authority may emerge "primarily out of loving one another more than through rules and regulations, or hierarchies." In this case, relational and canonical approaches are contrasted, as we seek a balance of "freedom, order, and human flourishing," a trio of values Welby has highlighted before.

In part the archbishop's approach reflects a habit of reserve common among Anglicans in addressing questions of order and discipline. He also remains, at heart, an evangelical, perhaps content to work within hierarchical structures while sitting lightly to more ambitious theological claims that sustain them.

Archbishop Idowu-Fearon implied in his address, however, that something more robust is needed in order to address deep and recurring division. The long-term flourishing of the Communion demands relational warmth *and* Catholic structure. We will not always have archbishops so charismatic, nor delegates so gracious. In the words of Professor Norman Doe, quoted by Idowu-Fearon, Anglicans should set out clearly "the jurisdictional boundaries of the instruments of the Communion," and so "fill a vacuum and provide a set of house rules for the Anglican Communion to address issues."

Which is to say, in the great good news from the meeting in Lusaka: the Anglican Covenant is back on the table, following a recent decision by the ACC's own standing committee. To be sure, the Covenant (http://bit.ly/1SWemxM) was not discussed at length by delegates nor taken up in the council's 45 resolutions, but this is not surprising: council members were doubtless unprepared, and much more work of a serious sort, round the Communion, would be required in order to proceed intelligently and wisely. Basic ecclesiological study, and indeed reception of two generations of ecumenical research, is needed. This *is* the work of the Covenant process. Along the way, perhaps partial adoption of the introduction and first three sections — setting forth the unity, heritage, and missionary vocation of the Communion — could make sense. These parts of the Covenant are generally admired and may help to focus our collective mind on the sorts of structures needed to sustain both common faith and common order, mutually reinforcing as these must be.

> The Anglican Covenant is back on the table.

This work will be enormously challenging, but its necessity is unavoidable — if, as ACC-16 affirmed again, we hope to answer the call of communion. In a high point of the meeting, Archbishop Idowu-Fearon invoked the "prophetic" challenge of Bishop Stephen Bayne, the Communion's first executive officer and an American, in a remarkable text written in 1961. If Anglicans are to resist the dangers "of isolation, of provincialism, of division and narrowness, which breed weakness and disunity, and which dissipate strength and defeat our essential unity and mission," Bayne wrote, then we must learn "to think and choose and act together," not as "a surrender of our traditional freedom, but rather an intelligent and far-seeing use of it."

With sure-footed leaders, clear focus, and a working consensus, the Anglican Communion may yet, in the providence of God, manage to think and choose and act in service of the unity and mission of the one Body. We may, that is, embrace our catholic, evangelical, and ecumenical vocation. Pray for the Church. ❐

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'The Consequences Stand'

(Continued from page 7)

mates came up with and ACC," he said. "I know there were people expecting the ACC to lock horns, and it didn't happen. … It means I can with boldness go, and wherever I go in the Communion, I can say, *yes, we are together*."

Intentional Discipleship

Discipleship, following Christ together in the midst of a challenging world, was the broader focus of the gathering. The tone of the meeting shifted dramatically on the second day, as delegates gathered in mixed, small groups and discussed the challenges faced by Anglicans in their respective regions. Strikingly similar challenges in dealing with refugees and internally displaced persons, gun violence, climate change, persecution, gender equality, and helping youth grow in faith in increasingly secular societies came from many different parts of the Anglican world.

After this discussion, the conference's focus shifted toward several of these pressing issues, especially youth engagement, climate change, and religiously based violence. Archbishop Welby highlighted the latter two issues as major "global and generational challenges" in both his address to a Young Green Anglicans gathering before the conference began and in his presidential address on April 15.

Facing these two challenges, Welby said, will be an integral part of intentional discipleship in the coming era, because both "can only be confronted with a theological and ideological approach and with a story, with a narrative, that is sufficiently powerful to overcome the natural selfishness of one generation, or the selfishness of countries which are more secure."

Intentional Discipleship and Disciple-Making: An Anglican Guide for Christian Life and Formation, a theological resource prepared by the Communion's Mission Office, was cited repeatedly by presenters throughout the conference, and discussed at length by ACC delegates. Delegates commended the document and committed the Communion to a season of focus on discipleship. They urged parishes, dioceses, and provinces to make the issue a priority in their life and work, and to develop locally appropriate resources to encourage that work.

Action on climate change was the focus of a plenary session presented by members of the Young Green Anglicans Movement in Central and Southern Africa, as well as several senior church leaders who have been working in this field. Speakers called for urgent action in the face of the climate crisis, and offered concrete suggestions about projects that were working well in their local contexts.

In response, ACC delegates adopted a resolution about climate change proposed by the Anglican Communion Environmental Network, which Archbishop Welby agreed to serve as chairman and patron. The resolution, the most complex and detailed one approved by the council, outlined a series of recommended initiatives, including developing eco-friendly investment policies, stressing energy efficiency in church operations, and advocating on behalf of those affected by natural disasters related to climate change. Delegates also adopted resolutions allowing for electronic Communion-wide meetings to reduce the church's carbon footprint.

Delegates learned a great deal about church life in the Province of Central Africa, especially through a day conference presented by parish ministries from the Diocese of Lusaka. The key focus of the conference was a call to the wider church to engage creatively with emerging culture. Youth panelists called on Communion members to try new strategies in worship and communication to connect with the spiritual longings of young people, and to take their voices seriously in determining priorities. In response, delegates voted to revive the Anglican Communion Youth Network, and to increase youth representation substantially at future ACC meetings.

Many delegates said the experience had reaffirmed their trust in Archbishop Welby's leadership, especially his ability to calm tensions, help delegates look outward, and find creative ways of working together to face common challenges.

"The unifying factor centers on our Archbishop Welby," delegate Charles Leong of South East Asia said. "I think he is a man to bring this Communion together as a big family. The main thing was that we should look beyond our differences and focus on the love of Christ and the common good of our Communion."

The Rev. Mark Michael
in Lusaka, Zambia

ACC Elects New Leaders

The Anglican Consultative Council elected the Most Rev. Paul Kwong, Archbishop of Hong Kong, its chairman April 15. Kwong, 65, is the first sitting primate to be elected to the position and will serve a six-year term.

Archbishop Kwong has served as primate of the Province of Hong Kong since 2007, and is Bishop of Hong Kong Island. He has served as a primatial member on the ACC's Standing Committee since 2011, and in that capacity has participated in two ACC meetings. He was the local organizer for the ACC's meeting in 2002, which met in Hong Kong.

Kwong described himself as "deeply honored and humbled by the election," and said Anglican unity would be his primary focus: "I think the most important work we have to do is to hold the Communion together, and to bring the people of different views together, and to work together and to serve together."

Kwong said his cultural back-

ground may help in that work.

"Chinese culture is very inclusive," he said. "Normally, we don't judge who's wrong and right. We walk together with those who are right and with those who are wrong."

He addressed concerns about electing an archbishop as leader of the only Instrument of Unity that includes laypersons, deacons, and priests.

"Some people might say that having a primate as a chair of ACC is helpful," he said. "The chair of ACC is to connect people in the Communion. Being a primate, I can get access to the Primates' Meeting, to the Lambeth Conference, to the Archbishop of Canterbury. I can get access to all the Instruments of Unity, to help them work together."

Archbishop Kwong is a lifelong Anglican and native of Hong Kong. His great-grandfather was among the first Chinese Anglican priests to be ordained in the 19th century. Archbishop Kwong is a graduate of the Church Divinity School of the Pacific, for which he now serves as a trustee. Before his consecration, Kwong founded two mission churches and taught in a theological college. Under his leadership, the Diocese of Hong Kong has produced a wide variety of Christian resources in Chinese.

Kwong also serves as a member of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Committee, a multiparty body of civil society leaders that advises China's National People's Congress. He was strongly criticized by democracy activists in Hong Kong for speaking out against protesters associated with Occupy Central, a civil disobedience movement calling for equal suffrage in the election of Hong Kong's chief executive. In a 2014 sermon, Kwong contrasted loud protests with Christ's silence in the face of suffering.

Three days after electing Archbishop Kwong, the ACC chose a diverse slate of leaders for its standing committee.

Delegates chose a new vice chairwoman and five standing committee members. In most cases, members of the standing committee serve for six years.

ACC's seven members on the standing committee work with five members elected by the Primates' Meeting to guide the Communion's life and work between ACC meetings, which are held every two to three years. The chairman and vice chairwoman of the ACC also lead the standing committee.

Maggie Swinson, a lay canon of Liverpool Cathedral, was the only candidate for vice chair. She succeeds Canon Elizabeth Paver, a lay delegate from the Church of England.

Swinson has wide experience in church governance, and has served on the Church of England's General Synod for more than 30 years. She is currently chairwoman of the church's Appointments Committee, and helped open the episcopate to women. Swinson worked closely with Archbishop Welby during his tenure as dean of Liverpool Cathedral.

Delegates elected five new members to the ACC's standing committee:

- The Rt. Rev. Jane Alexander, Bishop of Edmonton, Anglican Church of Canada
- Alistair Dinnie, lay delegate from the Episcopal Church of Scotland
- Jehoram Melendez, lay delegate from Costa Rica in the Anglican Church of the Region of Central America
- The Rev. Nigel Pope of the Church of North India
- The Rt. Rev. Joel Waweru, Bishop of Nairobi, Anglican Church of Kenya

Dinnie was among the leaders of the Episcopal Church of Scotland's Cascade Conversation on human sexuality, which led to a 2015 decision favoring same-sex marriage.

Pope, 39, is among the youngest delegates at the ACC meeting, and described his spiritual vision as "shaped by a context of extreme poverty, divisions of religion and caste, institutionalized patriarchy, minorities, and ever-increasing violence."

The new members will join the newly elected ACC chairman as well as continuing members, the Rt. Rev. Eraste Bigirimana of Burundi and lay delegate Louisa Lette-Mojela of the Province of Southern Africa.

The Rev. Mark Michael

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PEOPLE & PLACES

Appointments

The Rev. **Stephen Norris** is vicar of St. Barnabas', 3565 Bemiss Rd., Valdosta, GA 31605.

The Rev. **Cindy Obier** is archdeacon of the Diocese of Louisiana, 1623 7th St., New Orleans, LA 70115.

The Rev. **Ronald S. Okrasinski** is interim rector of St. Mary's Whitechapel, 5940 White Chapel Rd., Lancaster, VA 22503, and Trinity Church, 8484 Mary Ball Rd., Lancaster, VA 22503.

The Rev. **Meredith Kefauver Olsen** is rector of St. Barnabas, 13135 Forsythe Rd., Sykesville, MD 21784.

The Rev. **Joyce Parry-Moore** is rector of St. James, 24447 94th Ave., S., Kent, WA 98030.

The Rev. **Elizabeth Phillips** is rector of Christ Church, 815 Portola Rd., Portola Valley, CA 94028.

The Rt. Rev. **John Rabb** is interim rector of St. John's, 9120 Frederick Rd., Ellicott City, MD 21042.

The Rev. **Mark Riley** is assistant rector at St. John's, 100 W. Queens Way, Hampton, VA 23669.

The Rev. **Charles A. Robinson** is canon for transitional ministry and clergy development for the Diocese of Southern Virginia, 11827 Canon Blvd., Ste. 101, Newport News, VA 23606.

The Rev. **Joe Scheeler** is vicar of All Saints, 2206 N.W. 99th St., Vancouver, WA 98665.

The Rev. **Janine Schenone** is rector of Good Samaritan, 4321 Eastgate Mall, San Diego, CA 92121.

The Rev. **Mary Sulerud** is interim rector of Emmanuel, 811 Cathedral St., Baltimore, MD 21201.

The Rev. **Caleb Tabor** is rector of St. Cyprian's, 408 Granville St., Oxford, NC 27565.

The Rev. **Jeffrey Thornberg** is rector of Holy Trinity, 1601 Raeford Rd., Fayetteville, NC 28305.

The Rev. **John Throop** is rector of St. Peter's, 104 Elm St., Sheboygan Falls, WI 53085.

The Rev. **Craig D. Vance** is rector of Good Shepherd, 2140 Main St., Wailuku, HI 96793.

The Rev. **Diane E. Vie** is priest-in-charge of St. Paul's, 605 Clay St, Lynchburg, VA 24504.

The Rev. **Craig Vocelka** is vicar of Faith Church, 20295 Little Valley Rd., N.E., Poulsbo, WA 98370.

The Rev. **Keith Voets** is priest-in-charge of St. Alban, 116-42 Farmers Blvd., Jamaica, NY 11412.

The Rev. **Kathleen M. Walter** is rector of St. John's, 1676 S. Belcher Rd., Clearwater, FL 33764.

The Rev. Canon **John Wesley** is rector of St. Paul's, 10 W. King St., Quincy, FL 32351.

The Rev. **Stan White**, rector of Christ the King, Valdosta, is dean of the Diocese of Georgia's Southwest Convocation.

The Rev. **John D. Willard** is rector of Good Shepherd, 7800 Lew Jones Rd., McKenney, VA 23841.

Ordinations

Deacons

Florida — **Saundra Kidd**
Rochester — **Troy Preston**
Southern Virginia — **Jan Brown**, **Genevieve Nelson**, and **Linda Ricker**
Virginia — **David Curtis**, **Sally Gunn**, **Brian Hutcherson**, **Joe Klenzmann**, **Grace Eun Soo Lee**, and **Theresa Lewallen**
Western Louisiana — **Frank Fuller**

Priests

Indianapolis — **Mary Victoria Bargiel**
Los Angeles— **Gianluigi Gugliermetto**
Southern Virginia — **Mark Douglass Riley**

Retirements

The Rev. **J. Edwin Bacon, Jr.**, as rector of All Saints, Pasadena, CA

The Rev. **Steve Crowson**, as rector of Trinity, Lewiston, ME

The Rev. **Michael Hartney**, as priest of the Episcopal Parishes of Schuyler County, NY

The Rev. **Priscilla Maumus**, as archdeacon of the Diocese of Louisiana

The Rev. **Carol Pinkham Oak**, as rector of St. John's, Ellicott City, MD

The Rev. **James Papile**, as rector of St. Anne's, Reston, VA

The Rev. Canon **Michael Spear-Jones**, as the Diocese of Southern Virginia's canon for transitional ministry and clergy development

Awards & Honorary Degrees

Episcopal Divinity School — The Rev. Canon **Kelly Brown Douglas**, **Joseph B. Moore**, and the Rev. Elder **Nancy L. Wilson**

General Theological Seminary — The Rt. Rev. **Santosh K. Marray**, **A. Gary Shilling**, and the Rev. **Becca Stevens**

St. Augustine College, Chicago — The Rt. Rev. **James W. Montgomery**

Seminary of the Southwest — The Most Rev. **Michael B. Curry**, the Rev. Canon **John A. Logan, Jr.**, and **Bertha Sadler Means**

Corrections
A deck headline for "Choristers Revive a Congregation" [TLC, May 1] misstated the location of St. John's Church. It is in Newport, Rhode Island.

The Rev. Frances Le Blanc retired as rector of Christ Church, Forest Hill, MD [TLC, May 1].

Prov. 8:1-4, 22-31• Ps. 8 or Cant. 13 or Cant. 2 • Rom. 5:1-5 • John 16:12-15

Wisdom Knows the Majestic Name

Before the formless earth and the dark depths of unrestrained seas, the first of all creation, Wisdom, came into being. She is a witness to what follows: the emergence of creation from the font of all being. God sets the heavens and draws a circle over the deep and establishes streams and limits the seas and makes the land secure over foundations. She looks and delights. God transforms mud and breath into a being bearing the divine stamp. Wisdom rejoices in the human race and every living thing (Prov. 8:31)

She deigns to stay with creation after the ancient disasters. Amid human evil and nature's torment, she calls and cries from the heights, beside the way, at the crossroads, near the gate, at the portals of the city. She witnesses to a majestic name, whispers of heaven's glory, haunts the world with the hope of God.

Standing on the threshold of divine sufficiency and divine creating, she sees creation's wonder and the Creator's majesty. She speaks to the children of Adam and Eve, saying: "I was brought forth, I was there, I saw creation come into being and I stood near Being Itself whose mystery is love and love's outpouring and love's returning. The majestic name of God, the mystery of God before the time-space broke forth, is pronounced *Father, Son, and Holy Spirit*." There is no greater wisdom than this name. The Wisdom of God calls and raises her voice, pleading for a hymn to the creator.

In the mud, breath, and blood of human life stained with failure and sin, a triune work is at work. To this as well Wisdom is a witness. God creates from love, and yet more wondrous still is God's love for a fallen world in sending the gift of his Son. "For Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous" (1 Pet. 3:18) Undeserving and in the grip of addicting evil, humanity seems lost and without hope. Yet God moves decisively in the Incarnate Son. "He rescued us from the power of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his Son" (Col. 1:13). And he brings us to the kingdom fully alive, fully forgiven, fully transformed. "If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit that dwells in you" (Rom. 8:11).

The Trinity is omnipresent, before time and in time. There was not a time when the Trinity was not. Love is and love flows and love returns. Like the double helix of DNA, the Father and Son move in a spiral dance of affection, round and round, forever and ever. Energy binds the font of being and being's outpouring, the love and light and fire called the Holy Spirit. All is full of love. The Father loves the Son. The Son loves the Father. Love loves the Father and the Son.

In the fullness of time, that is to say, the brokenness of time, God sent his Son to rescue us from sin and death. Having risen from the dead, Jesus disappeared into the clouds of heaven, but not before promising the gift of his Spirit. The Father sends the Son. The Son rescues by bearing and defeating death. The Spirit communicates the Son's life, which is the vessel of the Father's unreserved outpouring.

Think above and beyond time, and the Trinity will dazzle and amaze. Look to earth and feel the power of love sending, love rescuing, love infusing.

Look It Up

Read the Nicene Creed..

Think About It

This is love's freedom.

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SUNDAY'S READINGS | 2 Pentecost, May 29

First reading and psalm: 1 Kgs. 18:20-21 (22-29) 30-39 • Ps. 96
Alternate: 1 Kgs. 8:22-23, 41-43 • Ps. 96:1-9 • Gal. 1:1-12 • Luke 7:1-10

God Has Swallowed Religion

The people, standing with Elijah, limp under the weight of their opinions and their gods. The prophets of Baal likewise limp about the altar they have made, cry, cut themselves, and rave. Religion is, really, a miserable thing. Human beings tried to justify themselves before unseen forces and yet "there was no voice, no answer, no response" (1 Kgs. 18:29). There certainly is no deep confidence, no calming of conscience, and no abiding love.

God has swallowed religion whole. "Then the fire of the Lord fell and consumed the burnt offering, the wood, the stones, and the dust, and even licked up the water that was in the trench" (1 Kgs. 18:38). This proves "that you, O LORD, are God" (1 Kgs. 18:37). Indeed, nothingness after the fire proves that God is no thing of this world. The alchemy of God's falling flame makes wood, stone, dust, and water into the unseen holy of holies.

The majestic God has sent his Son into the world. The Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, "gave himself for our sins to set us free from this present evil age" (Gal. 1:4). This is not of human origin, but is wholly and completely the gift of God. (Gal. 1:11). This gift may be received, but never manufactured; it may be held in love, but not merely as one's own. This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes. To know the gift of Jesus Christ is to know that one has been called, summoned, set apart, and elected as a member of Christ's body. This is divine love calling out to an undeserving humanity. While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. While we were enemies of his cross, or indifferent to his suffering, Christ loved us and redeemed us.

And yet we often fail to guard a gift as pure and precious as imputed righteousness in Christ for the simple reason that it leaves no room for personal merit. It is in no sense deserved. Flesh and blood has not revealed this to you. Heaven gives it. But the ego objects. What about me? What about my effort, my goodness, righteousness, my fidelity, all my loves, and my suffering? What about it? Is there peace in one's approximate goodness? And is not the devil near and roaring? We confuse ourselves and confound the gospel if we look for something other than the pure gift of forgiveness, freedom, and new life in Christ (Gal. 1:7).

A centurion sends Jewish elders to Jesus to plead for the health of his slave. The centurion, though a military agent of Rome's oppressing arm, won the respect of many Jews. They say of him, "He loves our people, and it is he who built our synagogue for us" (Luke 7:5). So they say to Jesus, "He is worthy of having you do this for him" (Luke 7:4). The centurion sees his situation differently. "Lord, do not trouble yourself, for I am not worthy to have you come under my roof" (Luke 7:6).

Incredibly, Jesus interprets *I am not worthy* by saying, "I tell you, not even in Israel have I found such faith" (Luke 7:9).

Faith is a kind of emptiness, a passive righteousness. Everything is gone: the wood, the stone, the dust, the water. Every claim to goodness and merit disappears as Christ alone shines with all glory and goodness. "[T]he new man will sing a new song and will belong to the new covenant" (St. Augustine, Sermo 34). Take the gift and remember that even taking is a gift.

Look It Up

Read Ps. 115:1.

Think About It

It is not I, but Christ.

SUNDAY'S READINGS | 3 Pentecost, June 5

First reading and psalm: 1 Kgs. 17:8-16 (17-24) • Ps. 146
Alternate: 1 Kgs. 17:17-24 • Ps. 30 • Gal. 1:11-24 • Luke 7:11-17

A Child's Death, Conquered

Without a husband to protect her and without nature's bounty, she walks in hunger, an only son at her side. Her options are few. She decides to gather sticks, make a fire, bake bread, and share a last supper with her son. From a distance, the man of God, Elijah, calls out, "Bring me a little water in a vessel, so that I may drink" (1 Kgs. 17:10). As she departs to bring it, he begs for more: "Bring me a morsel of bread in your hand" (1 Kgs. 17:11). Touched by love or hunger's delirium, she prepares bread for the stranger first. Elijah says the jar of meal will not be emptied and the oil will not run out.

This is, of course, the Bible, a land where providence is on full display. The man of God brings a miracle, but only as a foretaste of the one and final miracle. In time, the woman's son dies. Now she cries in protest, "What have you against me, O man of God? You have come to bring my sin to remembrance, and to cause the death of my son" (1 Kgs. 17:18). Strangely, the man extends his body over the woman's child. He does it three times, unknowingly invoking the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. The death of the child is united to the death of Christ, and, in miraculous fashion, the child is united to the undying life of the risen Lord. "See, your son is alive" (1 Kgs. 17:23).

The Lord upholds the orphan and widow. The Lord lifts up those who are cast down (Ps. 146). The Lord may do it in any nation, among any people, in his grace and freedom. The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the resurrection of humanity. The Easter Acclamation means this: O Lord, you have drawn me up, you have healed me, you have brought me up from Sheol, you have restored me to life, you have turned my mourning into a dance (Ps. 30:1-3).

But I know. The death of a child is a different death, a different sorrow. Consolation may come in hoped-for and unexpected ways, but only with considerable time measured in years. Part of healing is letting death be just what it is, the end. What is faith, then? The substance of things hoped for. What things? Faith is a strange and hidden work, God's election, God choosing according to his will and good pleasure to reveal his Son as the One who lives evermore (Gal. 1:15-16). Faith is the arching hope that the death and life of the Lord extend over every child, every man, every woman, human nature, what we are.

Jesus says to a grieving woman, "Do not weep." Humanly speaking, it's a cruel thing to say. Weeping does not spend the night; tears are the bread of days and nights and weeks and years. Jesus, however, speaks from another place, and is himself the hoped-for end. Jesus restored the young man to his mother, which the spiritual eye reads thusly: "All we go down to the dust; yet even at the grave we make our song: Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia" ("The Burial of the Dead," Book of Common Prayer, p. 499).

I go to a grave, often. I go to church more often. "Just as bread that comes from the earth, after God's blessing has been invoked upon it, is no longer ordinary bread, … so too our bodies, which partake of the Eucharist, are no longer corruptible, but possess the hope of resurrection" (Irenaeus, *Liturgia Horarum*, vol. III, p. 84)

Look It Up

Read Ps. 130.

Think About It

God will raise you.

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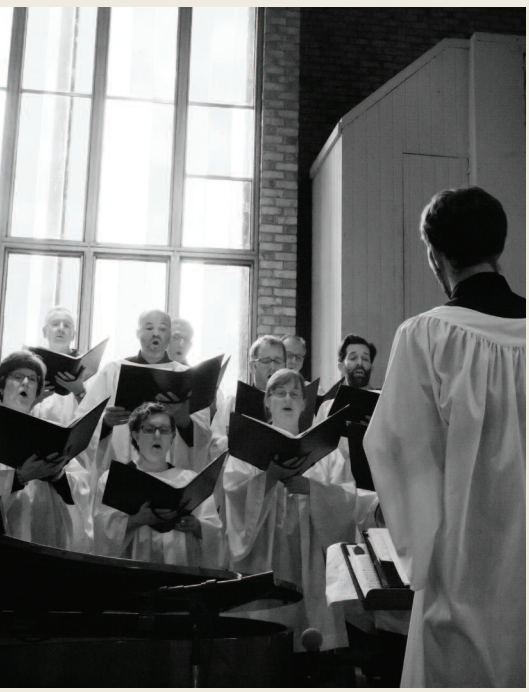

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