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November 13, 2016

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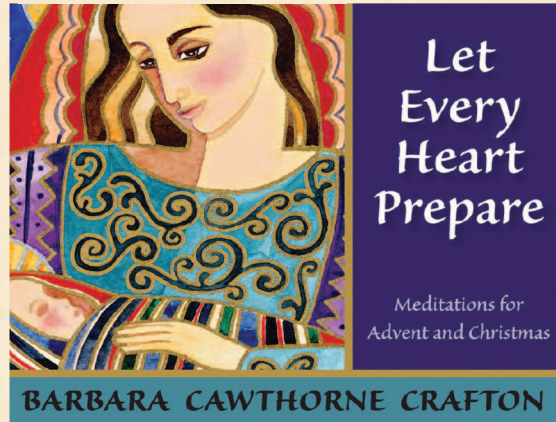
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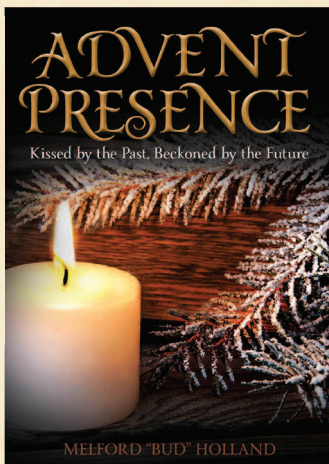


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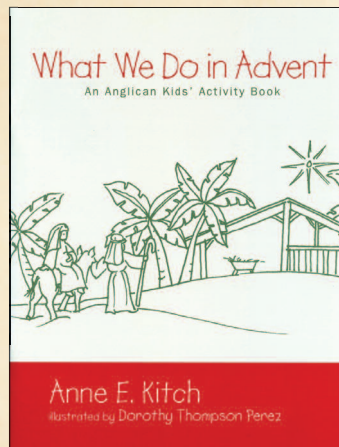
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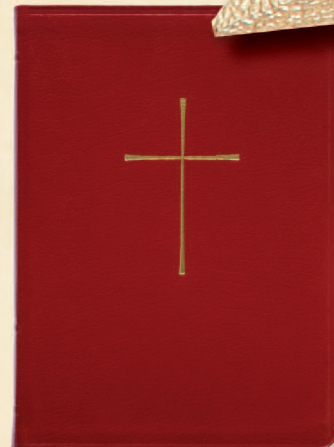
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ON THE COVER

Cathedral Church of the Advent
in Birmingham [p. 30]

Michael Hawkins photo

THE LIVING CHURCH

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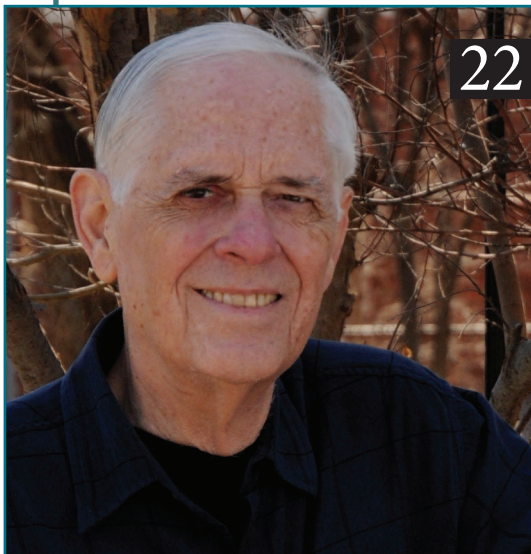
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LIVING CHURCH Partners

We are grateful to St. Mark's Cathedral, Shreveport [p. 33], and All Souls Anglican Foundation, Oklahoma City [p. 35], whose generous support helped make this issue possible.



In the Episcopal Church

Standing Rock Comes to Council

When members of Executive Council gathered for Communion each day, they faced a tattered Episcopal flag draped over the altar. The council met at the Heldrich Hotel in New Brunswick, New Jersey, Oct. 19-22.

The flag earned its scars through months of service on the wind-whipped plains of North Dakota, where Episcopalians have joined and supported Native American tribes in seeking to halt construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline near the Standing Rock Reservation. Presiding Bishop Michael Curry visited the camp in September to support the protest.

The Rev. John Floberg, who serves three congregations in the Standing Rock area, presented the smoke-suffused flag to the council. He told council members that 300 tribal, national, and other flags fly at the protest camp, but this was the only flag from a Christian denomination. He choked back tears as he presented the flag to the group for display at the Archives of the Episcopal Church.

Floberg was critical of how local and state authorities have confronted the protesters. “They’re scared to death that we’re digging in for the winter,” he said. “We *are* digging in for the winter.”

At times more than 4,000 people have been living in the camp in tepees, tents, and makeshift shelters. About 500 of them have vowed to “winter over” to continue the protest, in an area where winter temperatures can drop 30 degrees below zero.

The protesters say the proposed oil and gas pipeline will disturb sacred burial grounds near the reservation, and by tunnelling under the Missouri River it will endanger the water supply that sustains the reservation. Pipeline supporters say the pipeline will be less risky than the current practice of transporting oil by rail and truck.

Executive Council unanimously approved a hastily drafted resolution calling on authorities to “deescalate military and police provocation” and

commended the presiding bishop and his staff for supporting the protest.

The church supports the protesters because of their concerns, but also because “decisions were made and reached which adversely affected native communities ... when there may have been other alternative ways to accomplish the same thing,” Curry said in a news conference.

“The danger of the Missouri River being polluted is a violation of God’s creation, and potentially harming God’s children,” he said. “We don’t violate cemeteries anywhere else in this country.”

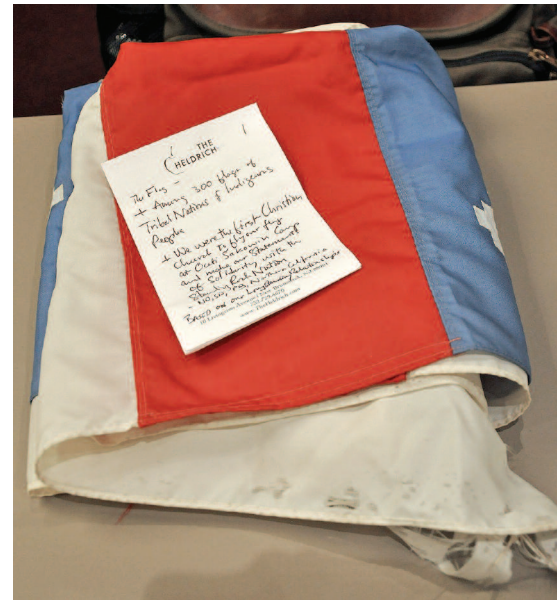
On another front, Executive Council has authorized Episcopal Migration Ministries (EMM) to raise funds from non-governmental organizations in support of its mission. It also supported a Chevron shareholder resolution regarding hydraulic fracturing (or “fracking”) to extract oil from shale formations.

EMM is one of nine resettlement agencies in the United States, and it was the only one that did not solicit funds from private donors, said the Rev. Gay Clark Jennings, president of the House of Deputies and vice chair of Executive Council.

Most of EMM’s funding has come from government contracts, which inevitably have tight restrictions on how the money can be spent. EMM has been forced to absorb certain ancillary but necessary expenses, which Curry called the kind of costs “that you would use a bishop’s or priest’s discretionary fund” to cover.

The Chevron shareholder resolution would require the energy firm to make an annual report to shareholders about steps it has taken “above and beyond regulatory requirements” to minimize adverse effects on water and on communities from fracking.

In response to a question, treasurer Kurt Barnes said Chevron accounts for less than one-quarter of 1 percent of the trust funds portfolio, and fossil fuel



Mary Frances Schjonberg/Episcopal News Service photo

The Episcopal Church flag that flew over the Dakota Access Pipeline camp in North Dakota, along with the Rev. John Floberg’s notes from his presentation of the flag, were sent to the Archives of the Episcopal Church in Austin, Texas.

stocks are less than 1 percent. In 2015, General Convention passed a resolution instructing the council’s investment committee “to divest from fossil fuel companies and reinvest in clean renewable energy in a fiscally responsible manner.” Barnes said the committee will continue research on how to divest those holdings.

Kirk Petersen

\$100,000 for Savannah

The Diocese of Georgia has received a \$100,000 grant to establish a new young adult ministry in Savannah. The Rev. Kelly Steele will lead the effort among college- and post-college ages.

“In the last several years we have witnessed a hunger among young adults to learn more about and experience Christ’s transformational love, grace, and forgiveness,” said the Rt. Rev. Scott A. Benhase, Bishop of Georgia. “This grant will allow us to reach

those most in need of this gospel message, especially many young adults who have heretofore shunned organized religion and its institutions.”

A 2015 summa cum laude graduate of Duke Divinity School and a 2012 summa cum laude graduate of Duquesne University, Steele calls herself a priest “in the wild” and “an investigator for Jesus” looking to connect with and learn from church-avoidant people.

She is involved in Emergent Savannah (“a collaboration of local activists who believe that Savannah is capable of evolving into a more intentional community, empowered to create its own future, while continuing to honor its past”) and Chatham-Savannah Citizen Advocacy, which “recruits, matches and offers support to over 110 local citizens in voluntary citizen advocacy relationships.”

Steele plays roller derby as a way to connect with other young women. Along with her husband, the Rev. Guillermo Arboleda (priest-in-charge

at St. Matthew’s, Savannah), she was ordained to the priesthood in May at Christ Church, Savannah.

Diocese of Georgia

California Bishops Fight Death Penalty

California’s six Episcopal bishops have called for an end to the death penalty in their state.

“We believe that the citizens of our state face a profound moral choice this November in the form of Proposition 62. That measure, if approved, will end the death penalty in our state, replacing it with a sentence of life without parole,” they said in a statement.

“While we acknowledge that this may be an issue on which reasonable people of good faith might disagree, we want to reaffirm emphatically our church’s opposition to the death penalty, a position first officially stated by our General Convention in 1958.

“Then, and in subsequent state-

ments, the Episcopal Church has based its opposition to the death penalty in our understanding of God’s justice, our regard for the sacredness of human life, our commitment to respect the dignity of every human being, our desire to seek and serve Christ in all persons, and our mission to continue Christ’s work of reconciliation in this world.”

Diocese of Northern California

Spokane Elects 9th Bishop

The Diocese of Spokane has elected the Rev. Canon Gretchen M. Rehberg, a rector from Idaho, as its ninth bishop. Rehberg has served as rector of Church of the Nativity, Lewiston, since 2006.

Rehberg led in both orders on the first ballot and was elected on the sixth ballot. On the third through fifth ballots, Rehberg led among clergy, but the Rev. Canon Lucinda Ashby, canon to

(Continued on next page)



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The Saint Francis Foundation

Spokane

(Continued from previous page)

the ordinary in the Diocese of Idaho, led among laity.

Rehberg is a native of Pullman, Washington. She has four degrees: a bachelor's in chemistry from the University of the South, a PhD in organic chemistry from the University of Minnesota, a master's of divinity from General Theological Seminary, and a doctor of ministry from Wesley Theological Seminary.

In the 1990s, she was a postdoctoral fellow at the Swiss Institute of Technology and taught at Bucknell University in Lewisburg, Pennsylvania.

In addition to Rehberg and Ashby, the other nominees were the Ven. Christopher Athan Pappas, archdeacon for congregational development in the Diocese of Edmonton, Alberta, and the Rev. Canon Neysa Ellgren Shepley, canon to the ordinary in the Diocese of Oregon.

Leadership Changes in Massachusetts

The Rt. Rev. Alan M. Gates, Bishop of Massachusetts, has appointed the Rev. Karen Coleman to serve as the acting Episcopal chaplain at Boston University.

She succeeds the Rev. Cameron Partridge, the Episcopal chaplain at BU since the fall of 2011. Partridge has accepted a call to become rector of St. Aidan's Church in San Francisco.

In addition, the Very Rev. John P. "Jep" Streit, Jr., dean of the Cathedral Church of St. Paul in Boston since 1995, has announced his plan to retire in February 2017.

The completion last year of significant renovations to the cathedral church, together with the merger of the cathedral congregation with that of the now-closed Church of St. John the Evangelist in Boston, make this a good time for new clergy leadership, he said.

He announced that the Rev. Canon Katharine Black, former rector of St. John's who has served as the canon for

liturgies at the cathedral church since the merger, will also end her tenure early in the new year.

An interim dean will be appointed to serve during the transition, with a new dean to be named after a period of discernment and consultation, Gates said.

Diocese of Massachusetts

Nominees in Puerto Rico

The Diocese of Puerto Rico has nominated four priests to become its eighth bishop.

The slate includes one priest serving in Manhattan: the Rev. Carla Roland Guzmán, rector of the Church of St. Matthew and St. Timothy in New York City. She is co-coordinator of the Latino/a Roundtable of the Center for LGBTQ and Gender Studies in Religion at the Pacific School of Religion.

The other three nominees all serve in the Diocese of Puerto Rico: the Rev. César Ramírez Segarra, the Rev. Rafael Morales Maldonado, and the Rev. Luis Fernando Padilla Morales.

An election assembly will meet on Dec. 10.

SCLM Gathers Rites

In response to General Convention's Resolution A182, the Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music has begun gathering rites that address issues of racial injustice and reconciliation. Some of the rites may be distributed for churches to consider in their Prayers of the People.

The SCLM envisions this as a churchwide project. Its members are eager to learn about the ways the Church has already been praying about racial reconciliation.

The SCLM asks for responses by Dec. 1.

Evangelism Conference Plans Live Stream

Evangelism Matters, a churchwide conference on evangelism scheduled for Nov. 18-19, will be available through live streaming. Registration is full for attending the conference in person.

The conference is cosponsored by

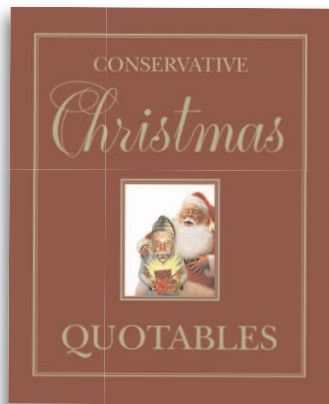
“When a sale at Crate & Barrel gets entangled with the birth of Jesus, something has gone terribly wrong.”

-Kirsten Powers

A collection of wit and humor, *Conservative Christmas Quotables* captures the best of writers like P. J. O'Rourke, Christopher Buckley, and Jonah Goldberg as they dish out the most memorable quotes of the holiday season - all in a tiny, 3"x 4" package.

You'll be sure to laugh, but you'll also be sure to pause, as you return to a time when Christ was still part of Christmas, and family was at the heart of the holiday.

For the friends and family members it's hard to gift-shop for, consider this stocking-stuffer your solution.



Forward Movement and the Presiding Bishop's Office, and is hosted by the Diocese of Dallas and Church of the Transfiguration in Dallas.

"Episcopalians are excited to focus on evangelism, noticing and celebrating how God works in our lives and in the lives of the people around us," said the Rev. Canon Stephanie Spellers, the presiding bishop's canon for evangelism and reconciliation. "We've made arrangements for those who could not attend to connect through a live webcast and on-demand afterwards, and we hope as many individuals and groups as possible will host viewings and participate in this churchwide movement."

Key portions of Evangelism Matters will be webcast live to allow for individual and group viewing during conventions, discussion groups, and local evangelism gatherings.

The free webcast will be accessible through the Evangelism Matters website. A webcast in Spanish will be available through a Facebook feed.

Office of Public Affairs

In the Anglican Communion

Australia's Marriage Debate

There might be wars abroad and an economy to fix, but the Australian government has focused recently on same-sex marriage. When it was elected in July, the government promised a plebiscite on the question. As voting is compulsory in Australia, the poll would have given a definitive verdict from the community.

Defenders of traditional marriage have been vocal in their support of a plebiscite, saying their support in the community is wider than commonly believed. The government has pledged AUD \$15 million (U.S. \$11 million) for each side to make its case.

Supporters of same-sex marriage have opposed the plebiscite, saying the debate that would ensue would be hurtful to LGBT people, particularly young people. Let the Parliament decide, these activists argue, as it is elected to do.

Parliament vetoed the plebiscite,

which means the issue is stuck in a stalemate, probably for three years.

"This latest political maneuvering does not change the essence," the Rt. Rev. Michael Stead, Assistant Bishop of Sydney, told the diocese's synod Oct. 12. "It just changes the timing."

The conservative, evangelical Diocese of Sydney has long been a vocal opponent of same-sex marriage. In 2015, the Sydney synod affirmed that marriage is "a gift from God who made us male and female, is the union of a man and a woman to the exclusion of all others, voluntarily entered into for life."

Bishop Stead cited a survey that showed a majority of Sydney Anglicans oppose same-sex marriage; only 8 percent want to see it practiced in churches.

The diocese also is committed to a "civil and respectful public discussion on this issue."

"It is essential that we should have a debate, before making such a fundamental change to the definition of

marriage in our country," Stead said.

The synod authorized publication of a booklet to explore the consequences of same-sex marriage in communities, particularly for children.

The bishop said the tone of the booklet would be "moderate and reasonable and non-defensive, and not narky or hysterical."

He said it would seek "to present a positive argument that marriage as God designed it is a good thing. It gives — we think — a good way of communicating that message to people who don't necessarily share our belief in God."

Anglican supporters of same-sex marriage said they regret the public image of church is that it is of one mind on the issue.

The Rev. Stephan Clark, a parish priest, father, and grandfather who serves at St. Mary Magdalene's in the gritty inner-city of Adelaide, says he has many colleagues in his and other churches throughout the country who

(Continued on next page)

A New Advent 2016 Resource

Practicing Simplicity With All Your Heart, Soul, Strength, and Mind

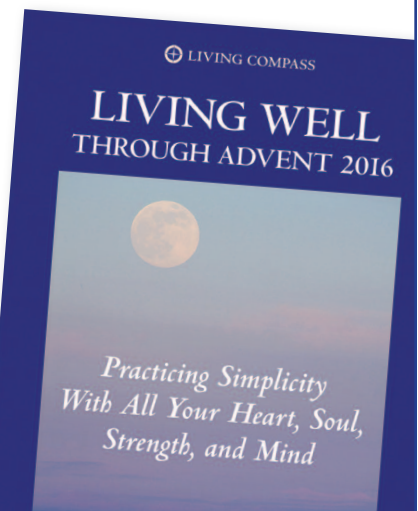
Practicing simplicity is always challenging, but especially so this time of year. ***Practicing Simplicity With All Your Heart, Soul, Strength, and Mind*** is a timely resource to help us slow down and simplify the choices we make at a time when the world around us is often doing just the opposite.

Designed for use as an individual reflection or for group study, this guide provides a foundation for seeking a deeper experience of the Advent season, an experience that will help prepare us for the true meaning of Christmas.

This guide includes reflections from:
The Rt. Rev. Ian Douglas
The Rev. Canon Suzann Holding
The Rev. Canon Carol Petty, D.Min.
The Rev. Dr. Scott Stoner
The Rev. Edward Thompson

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Australia

(Continued from previous page)

support same-sex marriage.

"It's a caricature that the whole church is opposed to marriage equality," he told TLC.

Clark's support for same-sex marriage emerges from his pastoral experience. One of his early parishes, he recalls, had a majority of families led by one parent.

"We only had two families in the parish which were the conventional nuclear family," he said. "And one of them was ours."

He talks about women who escaped domestic violence for a more nurturing same-sex relationship, or gay couples who proved to be the linchpin for their wider families when relationships broke down.

A study released by the Australian Institute of Family Studies earlier in October showed that 43 percent of children younger than 13 have more complex living arrangements than the simple nuclear family.

"Complex" families can mean those children living with single parents, with grandparents, or in blended families.

Marriage "is a more secure environment for the nurture of children," Clark said. "It is bloody hard to bring up a child on your own."

Robyn Douglass

Asia Bibi Waits

Pakistan's Christian minority is a permanent underclass. One of Pakistani Christians' many fears is the country's dreaded blasphemy laws. Men and women are often condemned with blasphemy accusations used as a pretext in local disputes. Mob violence is often deployed to intimidate judges and lawyers seeking to give the accused a fair hearing.

The troubles of Asia Bibi, a Christian woman from Ittan Wali in rural Punjab, date from June 2009. She was picking berries in a field alongside other women. An argument broke out about sharing water. Later it was claimed she had insulted Muhammad and she was

chased and caught by an angry mob.

"In the village they tried to put a noose around my neck, so that they could kill me," she said. Intervention by the police saved her from immediate death, but she went on trial and a death sentence was pronounced on the basis of accusations by neighbors.

The case has exploded into violence. Salmaan Taseer, the governor of the Punjab region in Pakistan, had spoken on behalf of Bibi, suggesting the country's blasphemy laws were outdated and being used to settle scores against Christians in areas wholly unrelated to religion. In January 2011, one of his bodyguards killed him with 26 shots from a submachine gun.

The assassin was showered with rose petals while being escorted to the Anti-Terrorism Court in Rawalpindi. He was tried, sentenced to death, and hanged earlier this year. Protesters are calling for him to be considered a martyr.

Pakistan's former Minister for Minorities, Shahbaz Bhatti, spoke out on behalf of Bibi on national television. He was shot and killed on March 2, 2011. Tehrik-i-Taliban told the BBC that it carried out the attack because Bhatti, a Christian, was a "known blasphemer."

Asia Bibi languishes on death row. In October 2014 the Lahore High Court rejected her appeal against the death sentence. If the sentence is carried out she will become the first person in Pakistan to be executed for blasphemy. Safety issues have forced her transfer to other prisons five times.

Her husband, Ashiq, and their two young daughters, Isha and Isham, face daily uncertainty about her fate and they fear leaving home because of possible violence.

Asia Bibi's case was due to be heard by the Supreme Court in Pakistan on Oct. 13. But the hearing was postponed and no new date has been set. Christian Solidarity International and the Australian branch of Amnesty International are working on her behalf.

A Case for Short Sermons

A Roman Catholic leader in the United Kingdom recently advised priests to preach no more than seven minutes.

It's advice that would find short shrift in Sydney, Australia, where last week the diocesan synod declined to pass a motion urging preachers to limit their messages to 20 minutes.

A lay member, David Oakenfull, proposed the motion. Oakenfull said it was difficult to listen to a sermon for more than 15 minutes, especially for older people, and that retention of the content dropped from 70 percent in the first 10 minutes to 20 percent in the last 10 minutes.

Moore Theological College in Sydney advises its students to stick to 20 minutes. It believes this will make them work harder; short sermons, it says, are harder to prepare than long ones.

Not every Sydney preacher follows that advice. When he was a young curate, a recently retired Sydney bishop would routinely preach for an hour. That may be an extreme case.

But Toby Neal, who ministers at Vine Church in Sydney's inner-city Surry Hills, makes no apology for routinely preaching for 40 minutes. He believes that widespread biblical illiteracy means it takes longer than 20 minutes to bring people to know Jesus: "I need at least 40 minutes to dismantle the false view the world is giving them."

Twenty minutes, he says, may be enough for a pep talk that encourages Christians for the week ahead. But it is not long enough to change someone's worldview.

He added: "With widespread biblical illiteracy, and people coming to church from other religions, it takes time to explain the context of what we're reading in the Bible, to answer objections, and show how every bit of the Bible relates to Christ."

Archie Poulos, head of ministry at Moore College, said he voted against the motion because many factors determine the length of a sermon. But he could see the value of the synod motion in warning clergy not to presume on their congregants' valuable time and to work much harder on their sermons.

"What we say at college is always give people value for their time," he told a local newspaper. "If you have a

(Continued on page 10)

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Short Sermons

(Continued from page 8)

congregation of 150 and you're preaching for 30 minutes, you're taking 75 human hours. We say to students that it needs to be valuable time."

The Rev. Michael Jensen, a Sydney rector and a former lecturer at Moore College, said about the debate: "It was futile in the sense [it was] never going to pass. You can't have a synod motion that restricts sermons — it would have no power or force — but it was a useful thing to discuss." He restricts his sermons at St. Mark's Darling Point to 25 minutes, and believes it takes a very good preacher to speak for longer than that.

"I think the problem is not simply the length of sermons, it's the length of services," Jensen said. "Our services go for an hour and 10, tops, and if we're going to have four songs and significant prayers and reading of the Bible then you can't preach for 35 to 40 minutes."

Slavery Is All Around Us

"When we hear the word *slavery*, we often think of something overseas. Slavery is all around us, but we are too blind to see it," Archbishop Justin Welby said Oct. 13 at Westminster Abbey. "It is in our hands, and yet we are too insensitive to touch it. To change that, we do not face a problem of stupidity but of awareness."

Welby was preaching at a service celebrating the work of anti-slavery campaigner William Wilberforce and marking the United Kingdom's commitment to combating modern slavery.

The service marked the new role of Keith Hyland as an independent anti-slavery commissioner.

Hyland is former head of the London Metropolitan Police Service's Human Trafficking Unit.

"We drive past slaves at car washes, we encounter slaves in the street doing routine jobs, for which they receive virtually nothing," Welby said. "We buy goods where the supply chain includes slavery. It is around us. It is in our hands.

"William Wilberforce convinced his generation that slavery was a sin — a sin that was a curse of the country in which he lived. That belief has not changed. Yet slavery still demeans more than 30 million in our world. This is the reality for thousands, possibly tens of thousands, in our own country, not because we think it is acceptable, but because our sin lies in blindness and ignorance."

John Martin

Archbishop Kwong's Communion Vision

Being proactive, building links, and bringing peace to a world in turmoil — those are the main tasks ahead for the Anglican Communion and its leaders, said the Most Rev. Paul Kwong, Archbishop of Hong Kong and chairman of the Anglican Consultative Council.

Archbishop Kwong is celebrating his first six months in the ACC post. He is the first serving primate to be elected to the role. Speaking to ACNS, he said it was vital for the Communion to be relevant.

"We are not simply a body of churches," he said. "We have a mission to do: to serve the world, especially in areas afflicted by conflict, human trafficking, and terrorism.

"It seems to me there is no safe place in the world today. We have to help people find peace in their lives and in their hearts. This is the gospel we have to bring to the world."

He urged Anglicans to continue to pray for peace.

"There is no peace in the hearts of most people," he said. "Wherever you go, you see so much conflict, confrontation, polarization. It is very sad. We need to pray."

Archbishop Kwong acknowledged divisions within the Communion, especially on issues such as same-sex marriage. But he said he hoped people would remain committed to working out their differences.

"I want the standing committee to be proactive and not defensive. I want us to take the initiative and reach out to the people who like us, and those

who 'loathe' us. After all, we are brothers and sisters. We are not enemies.

"There are no enemies in our family. Yes, we have people who have different views, who think differently, but that doesn't mean we cannot talk to each other."

Kwong said he hoped people would remain together despite disagreement.

"In reality, people are free to choose whether to stay and walk together or not," he said. "But, as chair of the ACC, I don't want to see anyone walk away."

So far the archbishop has spent his time working behind the scenes: meeting people and trying to bring people together, such as a meeting of Presiding Bishop Michael Curry with archbishops from Southeast Asia.

"Connecting people is a really important part of the job," he said. "We have committed to walk together, so it is one of the main things I must do."

Adrian Butcher, ACNS

Bishop Designs Nativity Coin

Britain's Royal Mint has produced the United Kingdom's first Christmas coin, and has turned to the Rt. Rev. Gregory Cameron, Bishop of St. Asaph in Wales, for its design. Cameron, former deputy secretary general of the Anglican Communion, designed the U.K.'s last round pound, released in May.

The Royal Mint is issuing 30,000 of the new £20 silver coins. The coins have been produced for the collectors' market and, while legal tender, are not designed for general circulation. People who purchase the coin will receive a booklet "with space to note down your favorite moments of 2016 and wishes for the coming year," the Royal Mint said on its website.

"Commemorative coins are generally treasured for their aesthetic and collectible value, or for their rarity. Collectors appreciate the detailed hand-finished processes and expert skills used to make them."

The design features the Magi's visit to the holy family, bringing gifts in homage to Jesus.

Gavin Drake, ACNS

Little Church, Big Screen

All Saints' Church in Smyrna, Tennessee, gains film studio's attention with its care for Karen refugees.

By Rebecca Terhune

About 20 miles southeast of Nashville, a little church's story is destined for the big screen. Since 2005, All Saints' Church in Smyrna, Tennessee, has ministered to Karen refugees, a people of eastern and southern Myanmar (formerly Burma). Eight years ago, both *The Tennessean* and *USA Today* told the story of their arrival at the church.

The Rev. Michael Spurlock, his wife, Aimee, his family, and All Saints' welcomed the refugees and gave them a portion of land to garden, which proved important to the survival of the newcomers and the church.

At the time this mission church in the Diocese of Tennessee was struggling financially. The garden assisted both the Karen people, who had farmed in their home country and needed food, and the church, which needed revenue to pay its mortgage and bills.

Director Steve Gomer (of TV's *Blue Bloods* and *Private Practice*) read the dramatic story and contacted Spurlock to inquire about making it into a movie. Recently a team from Affirm Films has been working on locations with All Saints' and its current vicar, the Rev. Robert Rhea, to bring this story to the screen.

"God has given us at All Saints' a wonderful story about loss and redemption, hospitality and welcome, diversity and unity," Rhea said. "We are excited to share our story through the medium of film, and trust that God will inspire other churches and faith communities to reach out to the strangers, refugees, and immigrants in our midst to welcome them with the love of Jesus."

The film *All Saints*, shorn of the possessive apostrophe and arriving in 2017, will explore the Karen people acclimating to their new life while still



Early morning at All Saints' during the shooting

Lisa Rhea photo

farming. The mission works to turn its land into a working farm to pay the church's bills and to feed the people. Rhea said that during the Spurlocks' tenure, All Saints' encouraged members to plant family gardens on the church property, which includes 12 acres of arable land. Today 12 families farm 1.5 acres and feed more than 100 people.

The movie also tells the story of how Spurlock, the church, and the Karen newcomers taught one another about how to worship together.

The first Karen people came to All Saints' when World Relief asked the Rev. Raymond Kasch about sponsoring a refugee couple. Spurlock, who now serves at St. Thomas' Church Fifth Avenue and is a member of an Over My Shoulder mentoring group, became integral in working with the Karen people.

"Fr. Spurlock and his wife, Aimee, and the people of All Saints' were open to living out the gospel by welcoming the stranger," Rhea said. "Israel was

once the stranger, and those among us are to be protected and honored. This story is about cooperation, redemption, and love's response in action. Steve Gomer has sought to bring a story of survival, hope, and the cultural challenges that people face when beginning their new home."

In 2007, other Karen people sent a representative to ask if they could worship at All Saints' and the church began to grow. The early arrivals lived near the church, where they walked in their traditional flip-flops, even in winter, to worship in a language that they did not yet understand.

As the church grew, services became standing room only and a nursery served nearly 60 children. In time, All Saints' had two Sunday services, in English and Karen. The Rev. Thomas Bu Christ was the celebrant at the Karen service. The Rev. Randy Hoover-Dempsey oversaw the growth of All Saints' to nearly 300 members.

In the years since the relationship

(Continued on page 13)

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Little Church, Big Screen

(Continued from page 11)

between All Saints' and the Karen families first took root, the community's cast of characters has steadily grown, and includes Karen people in key leadership roles.

Ye Win has been a leader of the Karen since 2006. He is vital to the settlement of new Karen arrivals and assisting Karen with their needs. Ye Win performs duties similar to a social worker and translates the Sunday sermon. Beginning in November 2014, Kathy Short became Ye Win's assistant. She provides transportation to doctor appointments, helps people apply for benefits, and keeps a long list of tasks to assist members. She also helps with tutoring. Christ Paw was hired as All Saints' farm manager in May 2011. He became sexton in August 2012.

Likewise, the team at All Saints' has continued to grow as the church has. Paul Adams has led an English as a Second Language program since 2007, with the help of many volunteers. The program has evolved to meet the needs of the students, currently providing homework assistance and teaching citizenship classes. Merry Adams became treasurer in 2009. She helps the Karen apply for TennCare and the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, as well as applying for green cards and citizenship.

David McGee is the current farm manager and maintains the equipment, prepares the ground for planting, runs Bush Hog equipment, and does the numerous other jobs needed to make farming successful. Landra Orr does counseling (mostly of non-members) at the church and established a family and children's ministry that helps new mothers. About 70 children now attend the congregation.

The Karen are predominantly Christian and many seek to be resettled in Australia and the United States because of political and religious persecution in Myanmar. Since 2005, the Karen have lived in refugee camps administered by the United Nations. Several dioceses assist the Karen in various areas of the United States, including the Diocese of Albany, the Diocese of Nebraska, and



All Saints' congregation with members of the cast

Lisa Rhea photo

the Diocese of Quincy (ACNA).

In this quiet corner of Tennessee, the love of Christ is being worked out in daily acts: in gardening, in worship, and now in filmmaking.

Principal photography on *All Saints*, which has a \$4 million budget, continued through October in Nashville and Smyrna. The movie stars John Corbett (*My Big Fat Greek Wedding* and *Northwestern Exposure*), Cara Buono (*Stranger Things* and *Mad Men*), comedian

Chonda Pierce (*Laughing in the Dark* and *This Ain't Prettyville*), and Nelson Lee (*Law & Order* and *Oz*). Steve Armour (*Losing Gracie*) wrote the screenplay.

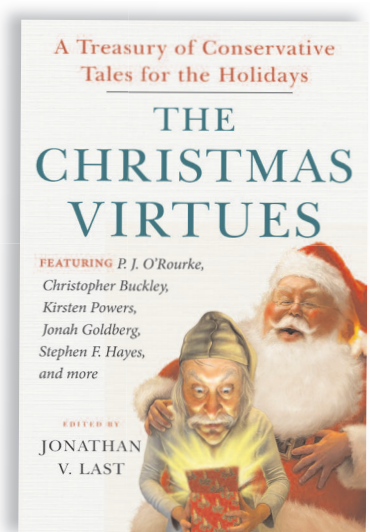
Rebecca Terhune is a graduate of Nashotah House and a lay person in the Diocese of Tennessee. Her husband, the Rev. Jason S. Terhune, is priest-in-charge at St. Mary Magdalene's Church in Fayetteville.

“On Christmas, you honor the Holy Family while rolling your eyes at your own.”

-Jonathan V. Last

The Christmas Virtues is a humorous guide to navigating the trials and tribulations of the holiday season. It's a reminder of how we can embrace the joy, hope, and love of Christmas—the real Christmas.

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Beeswax for the Ages

By G. Jeffrey MacDonald

In an age when disruptive technologies are upending business models from newspapering to taxi-driving, the family behind a 119-year-old company in upstate New York is glad it stuck with candle-making.

For five generations, the Steigerwald family and its Cathedral Candle Company have been bucking trends even among candle makers. While others target as large a retail market as possible, Cathedral Candle makes nothing but church candles. That was the niche Jacob Steigerwald chose to pursue in 1897, and his descendants find no reason to diverge from it.

“From year to year, sales are very steady,” said Mark Steigerwald, Jacob’s great-grandson and vice president of the company. “And aside from the logistics and the economic view, there’s always been a passion for what we do, a passion our employees bring to what we do, through distribution and service to the church.”

Demand has been so consistent that Cathedral Candle opened a new office last year in Syracuse. That’s in addition to a factory that churns out millions of candles each year on the original site and employs 70 full-time, year-round workers.

Though candles ceased to be a household necessity in the 19th century, they continue to play an important symbolic and atmospheric role whenever Roman Catholic, Episcopal, Lutheran, and other liturgical Christians gather for worship. Most candles are not required liturgically, but they are so beloved and traditional that worship would seem incomplete without them. And that’s been good for Cathedral Candle’s longevity.

With Advent coming soon, Cathe-

dral’s customers have been gearing up for one of the most candle-rich seasons in the church year. They have stocked up on Advent wreath candles, for instance, and not just for use in sanctuaries. Church of the Good Shepherd in Raleigh, North Carolina, and Church of the Advent in Boston are among parishes that will soon offer workshops in which families make Advent wreaths to light in their homes through the season.

Because Advent, like Lent, is a penitential season, Church of the Advent retains an appreciation for humility and darkness before Christmas, sacristan Stephen Sampson said. But come Christmas Eve, the Anglo-Catholic parish pulls out all the stops.

Advent “is a time for reflection and to welcome the Light of the world,” he said. “So I feel it’s appropriate that all the candles, starting at midnight Mass on Christmas Eve and throughout the Christmas season, should be brand new.”

Cathedral finds its wares consistently in demand, Steigerwald says, in part because church customers have expectations that most mass-market candle makers cannot satisfy. Among the key specifications: beeswax.

For churches, beeswax is more than a traditional ingredient that’s been used for centuries in worship. Roman Catholics in particular value how beeswax comes only from virgin bees, which means the symbolic Light of the world is cloaked in virginity, just as Christ was at birth. Roman Catholic protocol once required candles made from 100-percent beeswax. Today’s requirement calls for at least 51-percent beeswax. Cathedral sells both types, and the 100-percent variety costs 49 percent more.

Episcopal congregations have no



Photos courtesy of Cathedral Candle Company

Dominica Oliveri decorates every candle by hand.

beeswax requirements, but many opt nevertheless for certain special candles (altar or Paschal candles, for instance) to be made from 51-percent beeswax. For some, it’s a practical matter as altar guilds appreciate the physical properties of beeswax. It’s consumed by flame (no drippings). It burns evenly and slowly, which makes a candle last a long time. And even if many Episcopalians do not emphasize the virginity aspect, they still find important symbolism in the ingredient.

“One of the symbols is, it represents the community because it takes a hive of bees to make beeswax,” said Lynn Hendricks, president of the National Altar Guild Association and a member of the altar guild at All Saints Church in Homewood, Alabama.

A steady customer base has been crucial for Cathedral Candle, but that’s not been the only factor in its long-term stability. Tried-and-true systems for sales and production, including a prayerful and mission-centered approach in the factory, have been key as well.

Cathedral still uses machinery made more than 80 years ago to the specifications of Jacob Steigerwald, a German immigrant who learned the trade be-



Cathedral Candle Company's factory in Syracuse, New York

fore hanging his shingle. When parts wear out, the company hires a machinist to custom-manufacture new ones. But that does not happen very often.

"The nice thing about working with wax is it's not an abrasive material," Mark Steigerwald said. "So the equipment holds up quite well."

Because Cathedral Candle offers more than 2,000 distinct units in its catalogue, not everything can be mass-produced in molds by machines. The less commonly ordered candles are still

dipped by hand. When they're ready for decoration, they're delivered to a workspace shared by six Roman Catholic women who regard what they do as an offering to God.

Dominica Oliveri leads the decorating team. She's worked for Cathedral Candle for 20 years, almost since she first arrived in the United States from Italy. She loves worshipping at St. Mary's of the Assumption Church in Baldwinsville and seeing her handiwork on the altar. She'll sometimes lean over

and tell the person beside her: "I made that one."

"I know it's for God, so I work so hard," she said. "I will do everything, making sure all of the work gets done."

It's work that brings milestones of satisfaction. Oliveri recalls spending extra hours last year weaving silver leaf and gold leaf that would adorn custom candles for Pope Francis's visit to the United States. She beamed with pride when Masses were televised with her team's candles on the Holy Father's altar.

"I called my family in Italy, my kids," she said. "I said to them, 'Go watch the TV.'" Consistency in location has enhanced Cathedral Candle's stability across the decades. The facility is in a neighborhood that's long drawn immigrants — first from Germany, then Italy and Southeast Asia — and offers them an employment opportunity. More than half of the company's employees live close enough that they can walk to work, Mark Steigerwald said.

Once candles are finished, they're sold through a network of distributors who call on congregations individually and maintain business relationships that span generations. Tonini Church Supply Company in Louisville has sold Cathedral Candle wares for more than 100 years.

"We've got five generations of Toninis that have been working here," said Richard Tonini, co-owner of his family's distributorship. Tonini's five-generation partnership with Cathedral Candle, Tonini said, testifies to their mutual regard for the church and their respective families' histories in enterprise.

In candle-making as in other industries, adaptation to change and challenge has been necessary for survival. Hi-tech tools now track inventory and keep production on track. New machinery hums alongside the old. Yet it's largely because some things do not change that Cathedral Candle can give thanks for its solid 21st-century business.

"The church is changing, and the world is changing," said May Sherrod, a longtime member of the altar guild at Church of the Good Shepherd in Raleigh. "But there will always be candles as far as the Episcopal Church is concerned." □

Seeds of Possibility

By Matthew Martin Nickoloff

Icons have long been considered windows into heaven. But for the Rev. Regan O'Callaghan, iconographer and artist in residence for three months in the Diocese of Long Island, they can also train our vision to see more deeply the glories of the earth. He describes it as teaching the art of "seeing the world and praying for the world with eyes open, opening us up to new and wondrous things."

Though a British citizen, O'Callaghan has deep family roots in the Maori people of New Zealand. From these roots he nourishes his artistic practice as part of his priestly vocation. His great-great-uncle was a master carver, and in a culture that revered ties to land and family, the artist carried spiritual responsibilities akin to a shaman.



O'Callaghan

"The shaman went on the vision quest for the well-being of the tribe or village, and the art they create from these visions — the cosmic serpent, for example — almost always shows the interconnectedness of all things," he said. "The aborigines speak of themselves as the rock people, the sand people, the star people, which kind of blows your mind, because it doesn't place humans at the pinnacle of things, but in the midst of things."

It is in the midst of things that O'Callaghan feels most called to awaken his students and parishioners to a deeper encounter with God through the practice of art. "In our age of so much information, people feel themselves more isolated than ever," he said. But from the Maori, he learned that "art is a binder, just as food or hospitality can be. Even before icon writing I believed in the communal, social power of art."

The extent of O'Callaghan's gathering is on display at George Mercer, Jr. Memorial School of Theology in Gar-

den City, New York, in an exhibit of his students' work created during his residency. Jacqueline Rodriguez, an artist who participated in a six-week course with O'Callaghan, helped cater the opening and was moved by the sense of community that emerged from the difficult discipline of creating together.

"Writing icons wasn't easy, and it wasn't always enjoyable," Rodriguez said. "There were so many times of frustration. Regan likes to say it's like entering into a cave, and while you can't see what's going to come, you see a shadow, and then there's more light and you see it's a shadow of a man. It's very multidimensional and reveals things in layers."

For students like Rodriguez, the process of writing icons was a microcosm of the challenges — and discoveries — of the spiritual life.

While a traditional artistic process typically begins with light colors and then defines the light using shading and shadows, iconography can be particularly challenging because it plunges beginners into darkness. "It blurs the lines; you can't really see and aren't sure of what's going to be created," Rodriguez said. "The formlessness, it's like a mirror to the Genesis story, of God working and forming and creating in the darkness"

Even as layers were added, students experienced themselves constantly covering and blending and remaking the image they sought. For Rodriguez, the process became "reflective of life: unsure where you're going to go, but having to continue to create and to build and to pursue the connection, such that the icon becomes the instrument that connects you to the divine, to sacred time and sacred space."

While the inward journey can be daunting for many, O'Callaghan considers it necessary for spiritual awakening. "[Shamanic spirituality] teaches that everything is combustible, but some things require a bit more energy



R. O'Callaghan photos

Archangel Michael and the Loon. Egg Tempera and gold leaf. Sisters of the Order of the Church, Ontario, 2016.

before they catch fire, take flame," he said. "So for me, that means I think everything is redeemable, just some things take more energy and prayer before they are combusted into light."

For O'Callaghan, art is a practice of prayer, which in turn permeates his class sessions and personal practice. In particular, he often asks the Holy Spirit for assistance in putting aside self-doubts, creating space for inspiration that can be carried out into all aspects of life.

"As a priest, I'm called to express my practice in a liturgical, ritualistic way, but for me, priesthood is actually about recognizing who we are in God, about being fully human, which is what Jesus was. If we believe in a creative God who created the universe, this planet we live on in all its beauty and diversity, then surely we ourselves must be cre-

ative. Not that we're all artists, but we all have that divine creative spark within. I want to encourage people to connect and tap into that."

In addition to binding practitioners to God and one another, O'Callaghan hopes to open his students' eyes to art's relationship with place. "With icon writing or painting, you're working with mostly organic materials, pigments and egg, and you can find these materials almost anywhere you go. You can grind your own charcoal, make your own pigments for free. So in addition to being sustainable, this speaks to me of reclaiming a lost sense of connection to your surroundings."

Much of O'Callaghan's work outside of iconography deals in media and themes of locality and sustainability, such as a mixed-media celebration of endangered New Zealand quail for the collection *Ghost of Gone Birds*.

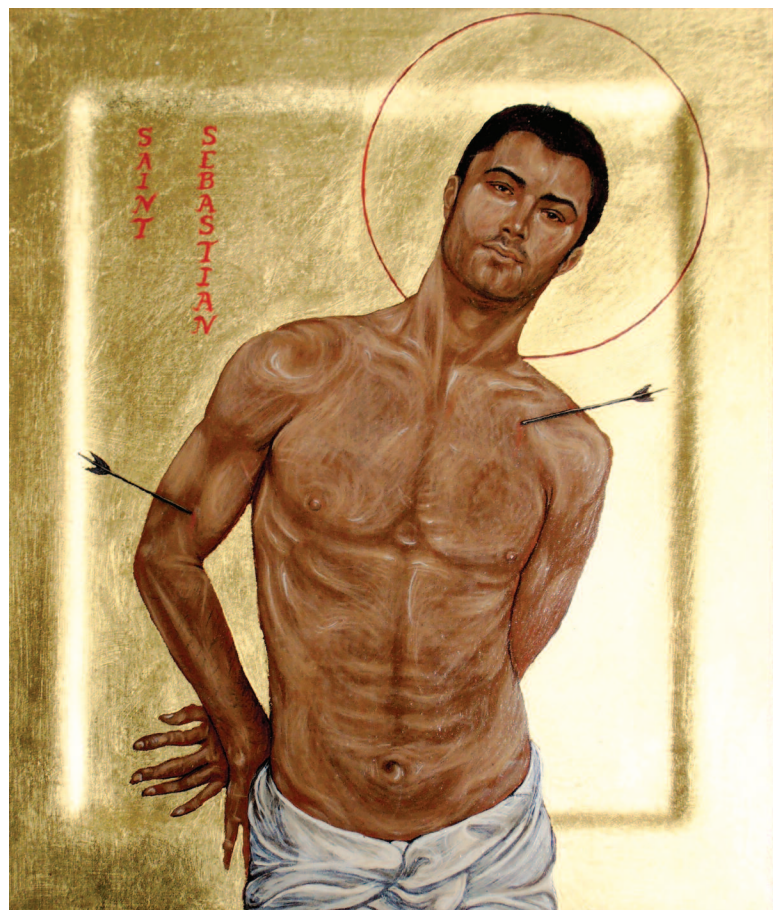
O'Callaghan combines these themes with his priestly vocation, pointing not only to life under threat but also the resurrection of life. While in residence in the Peruvian Amazon, he created a biodegradable work called *Aguaje: Fire in the Belly* that contained the eponymous palm seeds, sacred to Amazonian cultures, within it. When the art decays, the beginning of new life will be left behind, poised to bear fruit in the seasons ahead. Life mimicked this art: O'Callaghan baptized a local child in the Amazon River, contributing to the presence of the Church even after his departure.

For O'Callaghan, icon writing and the spiritual practice of art are part of the energy and prayer needed to leave behind the old and plant seeds of possibility. "When you are creative you are allowing yourself to be vulnerable, and that darkness can be scary, because you are revealing what you think is your lack of ability," he said. "Icon writing is asking you to rest with the lack, the darkness, let your eyes rest sufficiently, until you can move forward. Or, discover something is coming towards you."

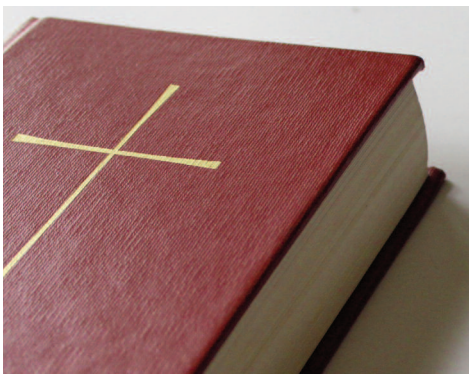
The Rev. Matthew Martin Nickoloff is pastor of the South Wedge Mission in Rochester, New York, and a graduate of Duke Divinity School.



Saint Paul and the Huia. Egg Tempera and gold leaf. St. Paul's Cathedral, London, 2008.



St. Sebastian. Egg tempera and gold leaf. Private Commission, 2008.



Necessary or Expedient?

A teaching series on prayer book revision

‘Let the Liturgy Be’

By Victor Lee Austin

To speak of mission is, in every instance, for the Church to speak of the being of God. The fundamental missions are the begetting of the Son by the Father, and the procession of the Spirit from the Father through the Son. To put this far too briefly, we can distinguish (but not separate) the being of God in himself, the “ontological” Trinity, and the being of God in relation to the created world, the “economic” Trinity. The doctrine of the Trinity tells us that God is ever pouring himself out in love. This is first a description of his being. But it also describes his relationship with the world, which he was under no compulsion whatsoever to make.

The mission of the Son is nothing but to receive the love that is bestowed upon him from the Father, and to return that love to the Father in an act of counter-bestowal (and to complete the picture we might say that the kiss bestowed upon this exchange is the Holy Spirit). This dynamic exchange of love is just who God is. But in terms of the economic Trinity, the mission of the Son is the Father sending him into the world to be human: a full, complete, sinless, authentic human being. The Father gave the Son that mission, and the Son freely accepted it, not reckoning his divinity as something to cling to (cf. Phil. 2:6), but emptying himself in complete humility, which is to say complete obedience. The result was his death. He died because, although he was fully human, no one else was: everyone else was a sinner.

Yet his mission was not over when he died. His Father, to whom he had abandoned himself, did not abandon him to death, but rather raised him up: the consummate action of love, restoring the Son to life in the Spirit. And once he had ascended to his Father’s right hand, he “gave gifts unto men” (Eph. 4:8). As the King of kings, the Son bestows gifts of patronage upon his people, the first and greatest of those gifts being the Spirit.

Such is the context for speech about mission. The Church’s mission is ever and only a participation in the mission of the Son from the Father, a participation given to us by the Holy Spirit.

The connection of liturgy with mission, as we receive it from God, is clearest in the liturgy of Holy Communion. This service puts us in remembrance of the night before Jesus died, when he took bread and wine, identified them with himself given over to death, and commanded that a similar action be done in his remembrance until his coming again. The liturgy of Holy Communion is the Church’s obedience to Jesus’ obedience. Jesus was obedient to the mission given to him by his Father even unto death, and likewise the Church is obedient to this, if you will, extension of Jesus’ mission in which we proclaim “the Lord’s death till he come” (1 Cor. 11:26). And in our obedience we show forth what all prayer is. Prayer is abandonment of the self to God, a complex dynamic of receiving God’s love — which is first of all simple thankfulness for one’s mere existence, and then thankfulness for the many gifts we enjoy within our lives — followed by the giving over of the self to God.

All prayer puts us right where the liturgy of Holy Communion puts us: with Jesus in his self-offering upon the cross. And we are able to do this thanks to the Holy Spirit, dwelling within us as the patronage gift of the ascended Jesus.

These thoughts are in line with what St. Paul writes to the Romans. When we pray, the Spirit within us sighs — praying with groanings too deep for words — and we cry out (with Jesus) “Abba, Father” (Rom. 8:26,15). Prayer is the Holy Spirit within us communicating with the Father through the Son. This is possible because of Jesus’ obedience unto death, his Father’s enduring love, and the consequent patronage gift of the Holy Spirit.

So Stanley Hauerwas is right to say, as he likes to, that the

mission of the Church is first off to be the Church. We are the Church when we celebrate this liturgy in which we “remember” the mission. Yet these are deep truths shrouded in mystery, not capable of being grasped instantly. And that is why Holy Communion has never been the only public liturgy for Anglicans, nor has it ever been placed first in the Book of Common Prayer.

This has to do with the need for mission in the more ordinary sense of the word. Jesus’ heart goes out to those who are lost or wounded or victimized by cultural forces and the false gods of the age. The Church’s mission is to offer Jesus, to bring Jesus to them.

And so while our various churches have, in the past couple of generations, renewed the centrality of the Eucharist for our worship, we may not have given sufficient thought to the evangelical importance of Morning and Evening Prayer, those magnificent achievements of Cranmerian simplicity bequeathed to us in the first Book of Common Prayer. Any person can walk in off the street for Matins or Evensong and never be put on the spot. There will be no awkwardness of whether they could or should come forward for Communion; the service just happens for them, where they are.

It is significant that the names for these services are Morning Prayer and Evening Prayer. They are prayer services, which means they are located at the cross. But in an almost naive simplicity, Morning and Evening Prayer offer Jesus in the simple, plain reading of Scripture. They offer Jesus in the form of God’s Word written. Of course, the Word can be interpreted, with the addition of a sermon or informal *ferverino*. But the main thing is the Word, presented with the implicit trust that Jesus is the subject and author of the entire Bible, and that Jesus will speak through the spoken word. The traditional canticles — Benedictus always in the morning, Magnificat and Nunc dimittis always in the evening — make this point, as they give a christological response to the Old and New Testament readings of the day. Prayer is culminating response, but prayer points ultimately to Holy Communion.

It takes some rather esoteric thinking to comprehend the point of daily services of Holy Communion. Indeed, in some parts of the Church it remains a divided question. But daily prayer is a no-brainer. It is good to read some of the Bible every day, and to read a lot of the Bible over time, and indeed to work through most of the Bible in the course of any lectionary scheme.

Whatever is best in the liturgical pattern of any church will be culturally conditioned. Many non-Anglican evangelical churches today are excellent at introducing people to Christ, and through that introduction, fostering growth in holiness, helping people live more godly lives, and so forth. Yet these churches generally lack a sense of the greater tradition of the Church. They tend to lack liturgical forms



We spend inordinate time trying to make our liturgy “work.” Perhaps we should spend time doing other things like seeking and teaching and catechizing and discipling, and let the liturgy be.

shaped by the ages. When such people come to an Anglican church, they often discover with wonder that worship can have dignity, that prayers out of a book can be biblically profound, and that a sense of simplicity and transcendence can be given in worship. These are newcomers to Anglicanism that we should prize, and not only because they already know that they ought to tithe!

This observation is at the same time an indictment of some Anglican practice. Why don’t we do a better job of primary evangelism? One answer, surely, is that as a church we have prized our liturgy as an end in itself. We have not understood that there is a movement from the ontological Trinity, to the cross, to our participation in prayer, to proclamation and discipleship and service. Another answer is that we spend inordinate time trying to make our liturgy “work”: too much time on prayer book revision and supplementation, too much time on trying to make the weekly service relevant and meaningful. Perhaps we should spend time doing other things like seeking and teaching and catechizing and discipling, and let the liturgy be.

But there is a deeper answer: intellectual laziness. Too many of us do not know, and are not able to explain, how thoroughly saturated the classical Books of Common Prayer are in Scripture. My parents do not have a liturgical bone in their body. But when I became an Episcopalian and they came to church with me, they loved it. Why? Not for its beauty or for the dignity of our worship. Rather, because they could perceive, being themselves steeped in the Bible, how every prayer we say, every line of our precious book, comes from the Word, comes from Jesus:

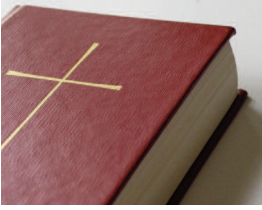
- *Almighty God, unto whom all hearts are open*: There’s Solomon’s prayer at the dedication of the Temple: “for thou, even thou only, knowest the hearts of all the children of men” (1 Kgs. 8:39).

- *All desires known*: “Lord, thou knowest all my desire; and my groaning is not hid from thee” (Ps. 38:9).

- *And from whom no secrets are hid*: Daniel declares to king Belteshazzar, “there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets” (Dan. 2:28).

- *Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of thy Holy Spirit*: Simeon said to Mary that “the thoughts of many

(Continued on next page)



Necessary or Expedient?

‘Let the Liturgy Be’

(Continued from previous page)

hearts” would be revealed by her Son (Luke 2:35) and the Psalmist prayed: “Make me a clean heart, O God ... take not thy holy Spirit from me” (Ps. 51:10-11).

• *That we may perfectly love thee:* “whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected” (1 John 2:5), and “If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us” (4:12).

• *And worthily magnify thy holy Name:* “Remember that thou magnify his [God’s] work” (Job 36:24); “O praise the LORD with me, and let us magnify his Name together” (Ps. 34:3); “My soul doth magnify the Lord” (Luke 1:46).

Permeated, marinated, soaked, thoroughly imbued with Scripture, which is not window dressing, neither direct citations, nor proof texts for an argument, but an environment, a world, an ocean. If it is true to say of God that in

him we live and move and have our being, then it is just as true that in God’s Word written the prayer book lives and moves and has its being. If we could recover this, not to monkey with our liturgies, but to take such prayer books as we have and reclaim a knowledge for ourselves of their scriptural provenance, there is no telling what effect this might have on our participation in the great and cosmic mission of Christ, sent from his Father to plant the Spirit in our hearts: because the first and last word about God is love, and he desires in truth that all people might turn to him and live.

The Rev. Victor Lee Austin is theologian in residence in the Diocese of Dallas. This essay is adapted from an address he delivered at Trinity School for Ministry.

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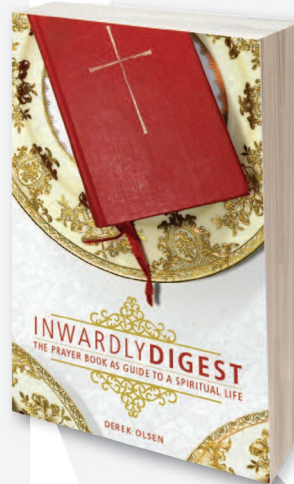
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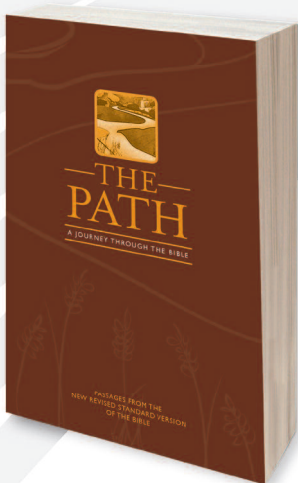
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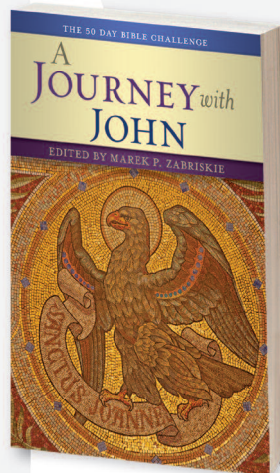
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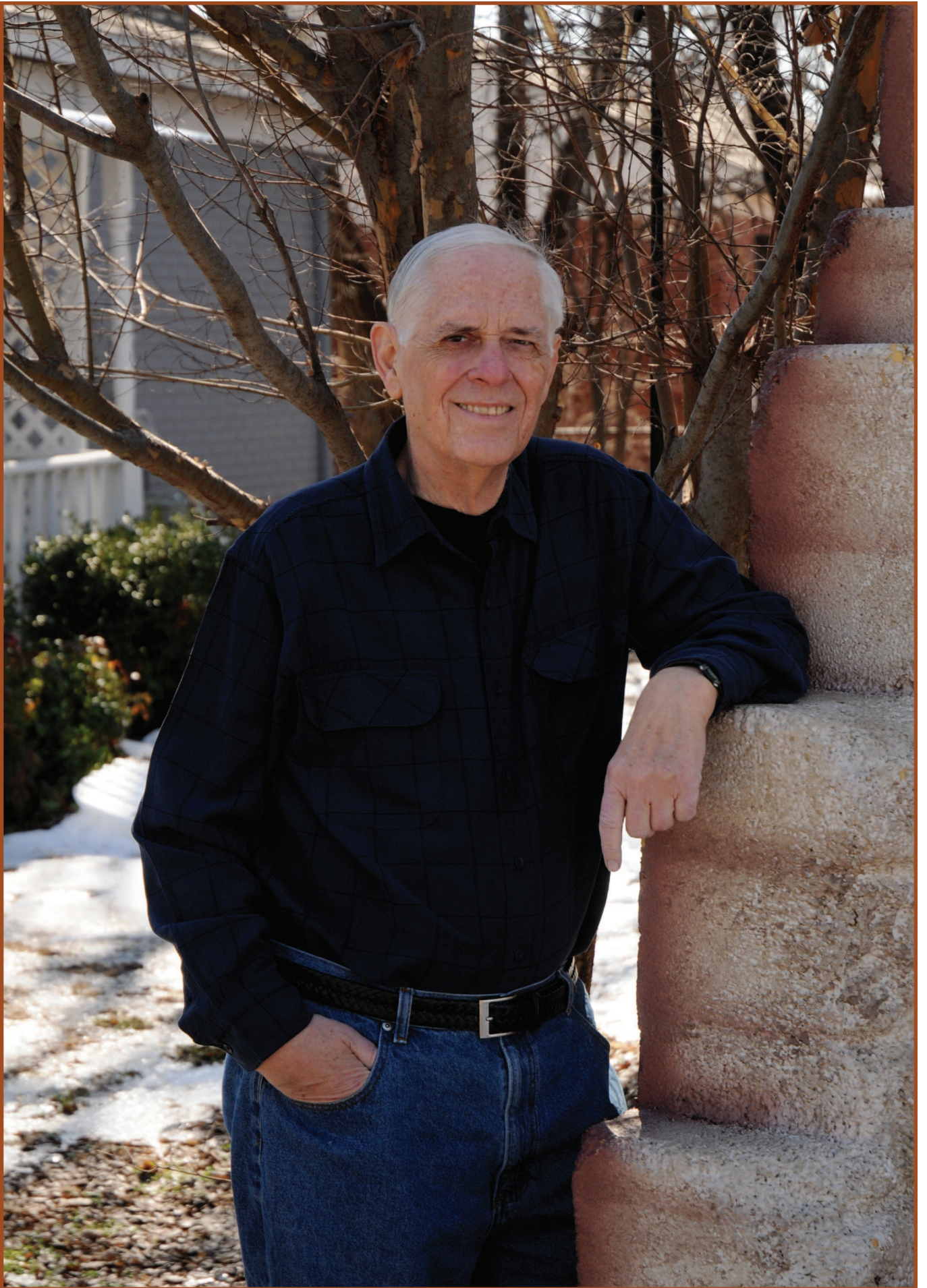


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One of the most prolific theologians of the 20th century traces his redemption.

Thomas Oden's Theo-Comic Perception

Review by Thomas N. Buchan III

A *Change of Heart: A Personal and Theological Memoir* tells the story of the life and career of Thomas C. Oden, until his retirement and appointment to emeritus status in 2004 as the Henry Anson Buttz Professor of Theology and Ethics at Drew University in Madison, New Jersey. The author of 50 books, Oden is now perhaps best known as the general editor of the *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture* (published by InterVarsity Press) and for his work as an advocate for church renewal through a retrieval of an ancient and orthodox doctrinal consensus.

His memoir is the story of his remarkable career, including a very different “first phase,” from his childhood in rural Oklahoma, to the leftist political activism and theological revisionism of his young adulthood, to his theological education under the tutelage of leading Protestant theologians, including Albert Outler and H. Richard Niebuhr, to his pioneering and innovative theological scholarship and dialogue with theological and philosophical giants of the 20th century, to his vigorous participation in the modern ecumenical movement, to his dramatic crisis in the faith he had fashioned for himself. The titular change of heart came later, turning him back to the Church's faith in the Living Word, the changeless and eternal One who humbles the proud, who makes foolishness of the wisdom of this world, who teaches sinners in his way, and who makes all things new.

It is also a story in which, in a very small way, I was blessed to have participated as one of Oden's students. Twenty years ago, my wife and I moved to

New Jersey so that I could begin my doctoral studies at Drew University. Several factors contributed to this decision, and several unexpected and life-altering relationships awaited us, but at the time what seemed to matter most was that Dr. Thomas C. Oden was on the faculty and that I would have the opportunity to work with him. In the simplest statement of the proposition, I was going to Drew because Tom Oden was there.

I had not met him before I arrived on campus in August of 1996, but by that time I had read more of Oden's published works than I had of any other living theologian. I knew his three-volume systematic theology and I had read a variety of essays, but I had first encountered his work in *After Modernity ... What?* (1990), the revised edition of *Agenda for Theology* (1979). Especially in one section of that book (“Interlude: Candid Talk with Old Co-conspirators”), I found myself deeply impressed by the degree to which Oden's theology was explicitly related to his personal experiences and commitments. This seemed to me something altogether warmer and more humane and quite different than any of the starkly “objective” accounts I had previously been encouraged to seek and value could ever aspire to be.

Though none of Oden's writings could really be described as memoirs, in all of them I nevertheless found a variety of what I considered interesting and engaging quasi-autobiographical glimpses: he made a most inviting use of anecdotes and asides, thoughtful statements of authorial self-disclosure, expressions of deeply held personal conviction. There seemed to be a genuinely interpersonal dimension to Oden's theological work that I found altogether attractive and compelling. Here, I

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Oden

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thought, was a theologian writing first and foremost about the faith, and not primarily about himself or his life, but still specifically *as* himself, and *from* his life, and in the process making a bracing and a refreshing case for the best kind of integrity between the personal and the theological, between belief and believer. It was inspiring and encouraging. I wanted to learn more of what he had learned. I wanted to experience for myself the riches of the ancient Christian theological tradition to which he had turned in midlife and for which he had become an unlikely late-20th century advocate. And I wanted to hear more of his story and the way he had renounced his modern doubts and come to own the Church's ancient faith.

I was not disappointed. During my years at Drew, in addition to academic and intellectual theological rigor, interpersonal contact and a willingness to collaborate and share experiences turned out to be among Oden's greatest gifts to me as a teacher and mentor. I spent time with him in the classroom (where his expectations were high), first as a student and later as a teaching assistant. I was one of several graduate students assisting him in his work as general editor of the (ambitious and labor-intensive) multivolume *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture*. He expected a lot from his students, but his pastoral gifts were always evident as well: meetings for advice or counsel invariably included caring discussions about my life. And this was not exceptional. He knew the names and occupations of spouses. He asked his students about their children and their family lives. With Oden, whatever else theological scholarship was, it was never impersonal.

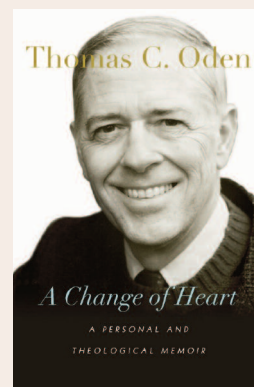
By the early 1990s, in his own writings as well as in a number of profiles and author biographies, the story had often been told of Oden's spiritual and intellectual journey away from the historical skepticism and theological experimentalism of modern Protestant liberalism and toward what — for a time at least — he described as a postmodern or postcritical orthodoxy. Decades on, *A Change of Heart* does not deviate from or revise this established pattern, but testifies in greater detail, more fully expediting the narrative, adding a depth and texture to the previous depositions. It takes the time to tell — more fully, more faithfully — the story of Oden's life as a Christian theologian, the story of his conversions, the story of his journey of faith and hope and love.

A Change of Heart

A Personal and
Theological Memoir

By Thomas C. Oden.

IVP Academic. Pp. 384 pp. \$40



As Oden has previously presented it and here tells it again, it is something of a story of repentance and redemption, a story of his corrective return to the consensual doctrinal patrimony of ancient Christianity, a story of eschewing modernity's eschewers of tradition — especially Marx, Nietzsche, and Freud — in favor of a living lineage of belief and practice passed down from and embodying the spirit of what he would later describe as “paleo-orthodoxy.” One of the things that sets Oden's tale apart, both here and elsewhere, is that unlike many other critics of modern theological liberalism (conservative, evangelical, fundamentalist, etc.), Oden was an impeccably credentialed member in excellent standing of the mid-20th century guild of self-consciously modern and critical theologians. Here, he writes of what he knows.

Born in the early 1930s and raised in a Methodist family in Oklahoma, Oden came of intellectual age in that optimistic period following the end of the Second World War. Desiring to change the world for the better, he embraced the theological and social agendas of a then-thriving mainline Protestantism as avenues for advancing his more explicitly leftist aspirations. As a “Social Gospel Methodist,” Oden spent the 1950s campaigning for causes on the political left and making recourse to an increasingly “demythologized” Christianity. He became an active and ideologically extreme participant in several student movements, a true believer in the modern ecumenical cause, a student observer at the second assembly of the World Council of Churches in Evanston, Illinois, and an eager and self-confident revisionist of the Christian tradition as a PhD candidate under the supervision of H. Richard Niebuhr at Yale University. (Hans Frei, George Lindbeck, and James Gustafson were among the younger members of the faculty.)

Already deeply interested in the intersection between psychology and theology, in 1960 Oden completed *The Concept of Obedience in Bultmann and Barth*, an ambitious dissertation on the theological ethics of two of the leading German-language theologians of the day. Subsequently, his project would give rise to two major publications, as well as correspondence and personal conversations with both of the major figures whose works it addressed.

The 1960s saw an energetic beginning to Oden's full-time teaching career and deepening uncertainties about the God who was purportedly the proper subject of his discipline. Deeply involved in the National and World Council of Churches, Oden was a restless (if not quite anxious) "movement theologian" in search of anything that might legitimate Christian theology according to the dictates of secularizing modernity. In 1965-66, he and his family spent a sabbatical in Heidelberg, the account of which alone amply illustrates the exceptional nature of Oden's ambition, the breadth of his interests, and the steep upward trajectory of his career at that time. Oden conducted research in existential psychology, observed portions of the last session of Vatican II, visited distant relatives in his ancestral homelands, made a brief and ill-timed family excursion to Jerusalem (by VW Microbus) that coincided with the Syrian *coup d'état* of 1966, and returned to Europe to attend the Geneva Conference of the World Council of Churches. Along the way, Oden's supporting cast of interlocutors included Rudolf Bultmann, Karl Barth, Wolfhart and Hilke Pannenberg, Viktor Frankl, J.H. van den Berg, and Metropolitan Anthony Bloom, as well as several American theologians abroad: John Cobb, Albert Outler, and Paul Ramsey. Although they were unable to meet, Oden "received a friendly handwritten note from Martin Heidegger," and visited with Hans-Georg Gadamer before returning to the United States.

For all the excitement and intellectual ferment of the year abroad, many of Oden's experiences in Europe and the Mediterranean contributed to the erosion of previously cherished ideas and ideologies. The perceptive criticisms of his conversation partners, the disappointments of unfulfilled expectations, the unanticipated value of seeing a conciliar process at work, the honest realization of his relative youth and inexperience in the company of great scholars: in so many ways, a space was pre-

pared for the beginnings of significant reversals of conscience and conviction. Perhaps none of these, however, was more confidence-shattering than the Geneva Conference of the World Council of Churches. Here, Oden's earlier youthful enthusiasm for modern and revisionist forms of ecumenism came to an end. Over the period between 1948 and 1966, Oden now saw a hypocritical collapse of the movement under the weight of its own insufficiently self-critical political idealism.

By the end of the turbulent decade of the 1960s, Oden would write three books begun in Germany, deepen his engagement in the intersection between psychology and theology, and begin to explore the dynamics of intensive group experiences. He would also find himself returning to pastoral ministry in the context of a local congregation and, as it seems, finding himself alternately buoyed and provoked by cultural trends and currents. Finally exhausted and saddened by the apparent fruitlessness of his efforts to accommodate the Christian theological tradition to the shifting winds of the spirit of the age, Oden wept for what he began to suspect his earlier experimentalism had cost him and others.

A change would come in the 1970s. After accepting a position at Drew University in Madison, New Jersey, Oden made the acquaintance of Will Herberg, a Russian Jewish social philosopher who spent his youth in the service of far-left political activism but who had turned from communism in the 1940s in favor of conservative Judaism. Herberg became a valued conversation partner, keen critic, and dear friend of Oden. In addition, Herberg (redirected to the sources of his Jewish faith by H. Richard Niebuhr) would play the key role in redirecting Oden to the sources of his Christian faith. Heeding Herberg's advice, Oden took up the classic texts of the early Christian centuries and reached a turning point.

"My life story has had two phases: Going away from home as far as I could go, not knowing what I might find in an odyssey of preparation, and then at last inhabiting anew my own original home of classic Christian wisdom," Oden writes. Like a prodigal returning home, Oden discovered the riches of a family he had but little known within the Christian tradition. Where he had previously craved and coined heretical novelties, he now found himself enamored of a chastening orthodoxy and pledged himself to "unoriginality": he would

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Oden

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transmit the faithful witness of the community rather than pioneering individual innovative insights. Setting out as a penitent, he also embarked on a journey of reparations for earlier “sins”: repenting of his attempts to correlate the disciplines by subordinating theology to psychology, Oden reversed the terms of this important equation and learned the cure of souls from the great pastoral theologians of the classical Christian tradition, whose insights anticipated and excelled much that modernity had offered. Oden reversed course politically as well, taking conservative positions on a variety of social, cultural, and economic as well as theological issues. He began a project of diagnosing the malaise of modernity, advocated for a conservative recasting of the state of theological education, and began to build new collaborative relationships with evangelical Christians, some within United Methodism and some without.

A turning point was reached in the 1970s and a new course plotted in the 1980s, but Oden’s path was not without controversy or struggle, professional and personal. His conversion put him at odds with some of his colleagues. Personal loss in the death of his father, in his wife’s battle with cancer, and in an emergency open-heart surgery clouded the decade. His advocacy for Methodist doctrinal standards was not welcomed in every quarter of the church.

And yet, this was also the period of perhaps the most generative of Oden’s acts of repentance: the ecumenism engendered by his return to patristic and other classical Christian sources in the venue of theological scholarship. Already by the end of the 1970s, Oden’s earlier infatuation with modern ecumenism had been supplanted by his deepening appreciation for the biblical, doctrinal, and conciliar consensus discernible within a more genuine and long-standing early Christian ecumenism based in theological orthodoxy. On through the 1980s, his change of heart brought him into contact with an expanding network of Christians — Protestant, Roman Catholic, and Orthodox — whose doctrinal differences were not insignificant, but who shared a more essential core of trinitarian and christological dogmatic tradition. Where modern ecumenical movements had disappointed his hopes, the classical Christian tradition ensured and enlivened a series of creative projects for faithful Christians across the confessional spectrum to make common theological cause and to stand together in witness to the faith once received. The

end of the 1980s saw the inauguration of a broadly ecumenical three-volume systematic theology founded on Holy Scripture and the patristic consensus. Welcomed by traditional Orthodox and Roman Catholic theologians, these texts had an arguably still greater effect among Protestant Christians, many of whom encountered and developed an appreciation for the thought of ancient Christian luminaries for the first time through their pages.

In 1988, a conversation with Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger planted the first seeds of Oden’s great project of the 1990s. Their shared recognition of the importance of the history of Christian biblical exegesis gave rise to the idea of a multi-volume biblical commentary drawn from patristic sources. In the years in which this vision matured, Oden vis-

The theological tradition of early African Christianity has become the predominant venue of Oden’s scholarly activity.

ited Rome, Moscow, and Havana, meeting Pope John Paul II and deepening his relationship with Cardinal Ratzinger, seeing firsthand the demise of the Soviet era and a resultant search for foundations on which to rebuild, and witnessing the power of the Holy Spirit in the faithful struggles of churches under the Castro regime. Meanwhile, the commentary project was further defined, acquired necessary funding for textual and digital computing resources, secured a relationship with InterVarsity Press, and began to recruit an editorial team of world-renowned scholars. Simultaneously, Oden found himself increasingly at odds with the currents of theological education at Drew. After a season of tension with faculty colleagues, he refocused his efforts on teaching, research, and writing.

Ecumenical efforts continued in the 1990s along at least two rather different vectors. With Richard John Neuhaus, Charles Colson, and others, Oden became a regular participant in the theological dialogue of Evangelicals and Catholics Together until illness prevented him from continuing in 2009. In a very different setting, Oden traveled to Harare, Zimbabwe, in 1998 for the World Assembly of the World Council of Churches, where he remained disappointed by bureaucratic ecumenism but was

encouraged by the vitality of a faithful and thriving African church. By this time, the Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture was well underway, headed toward completion and, later, translation into several languages. In Zimbabwe, Oden's interest in early African Christianity was reinvigorated and led to a new project that would provide ancient African Christian resources for contemporary African Christians. Three books and CEAC, the Center for Early African Christianity (founded in 2006), came as some of the fruits of this labor.

In the midst of the prolific activity of the 1990s, Oden's wife, Edrita, succumbed to cancer. His teaching load at Drew was reduced and he relocated from New Jersey to Oklahoma City. Nevertheless, he remained vigorously productive and engaged with a number of graduate students. Through grief and vocational reorientation, his work continued apace. Not including the ACCS, Oden wrote 34 books between 1962 and 1995. A further 16 titles would appear from the time his publishing resumed in 2002 to 2014.

Near the turn of the third millennium of the Christian era, Oden's activities included involvement in an important dialogue between Orthodox and evangelical Christians, travel to Egypt and a deepening experience of the Coptic tradition, and participation in founding the Confessing Movement for traditional renewal within the United Methodist Church. He also worked to promote church renewal elsewhere. In 2006, Oden's *Turning Around the Mainline* made the case against the further fracturing of ecclesiastical bodies and for a faithful perseverance within existing church structures.

The same return to classic Christian sources that produced a second season of theological productivity arguably even more fecund than the first continued to fund Oden's writing and publishing. *The Justification Reader*, *One Faith* (written with J.I. Packer), and *The Good Works Reader* continued to revisit the patristic consensus to refresh an ecumenical tradition from which Protestant, Roman Catholic, and Orthodox Christians might each draw and to which they might turn together. The Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture was completed and work began on multiple translation projects (into Chinese, Arabic, and Russian) as well as a number of auxiliaries (five volumes on Ancient Christian Doctrines, 12 volumes of Ancient Christian Texts, and the Ancient Christian Devotional series). But the theological tradition of early

African Christianity and its availability as a resource for contemporary African churches, as well as faithful Christians the world over, has become the predominant venue of Oden's scholarly activity.

A Change of Heart tells the story of one of the 20th century's most influential Protestant theologians, and tells it in a way that perfectly captures the author's personal and theological commitments. I had heard a fair portion of this story long before the appearance of the memoir. But there is more here, and told from a mature perspective and in fuller view of the fruits of Oden's labors, that makes the familiar story well worth hearing again. It also makes the narrative of this remarkable life accessible to a far wider audience and to a readership of individuals who did not have the privilege of working with Tom.

Although it is the story of a man in whose career we might be tempted to see two remarkable theological itineraries, I believe that in the light of providence Oden's story itself bears out and bears witness to what he has elsewhere described as "Theo-Comic Perception": the recognition of a divine transcendence of tragedy, a "seeing through" human misperceptions and their consequences to the grace of God persistently at work for human good, mercifully humbling proud sinners, and even repaying his wayward creatures for the years the locusts have eaten (Joel 2:25). In this light, Oden's life is not two stories, two careers, but one. His early and immature faith, his ambitions and desires, his impressively productive missteps into theological and personal misery turn out, despite pain and regret, to be not nearly so much tragically forfeited as they are comically redeemed: at the intersection of psychology and theology, in the instigation of a classically Christian ecumenical project and dialogue, in the inspiration of one of the most productively "unoriginal" theological projects of the late 20th century, in the discovery of a personal and theological comprehensiveness in the Catholic faith he once dismissed. In all these places and in all these ways, a kind of divine irony can be discerned in God's willingness to do more with Oden's humbled pride than his impenitent ambitions could ever have asked or imagined.

The Rev. Thomas N. Buchan III is associate professor of Church history at Nashotah House Theological Seminary.

New Perspective on Sanders

Review by Todd Brewer

Nearly 40 years ago, the publication of E.P. Sanders's *Paul and Palestinian Judaism* (SCM Press, 1977) marked a watershed moment for the study of the Apostle Paul and his relation to the Judaism of his day. In the view of a young N.T. Wright, Sanders demonstrated that "Judaism, so far from being a religion of works, is based on a clear understanding of grace, the grace that chose Israel in the first place to be a special people" (N.T. Wright, "The Paul of History and the Apostle of Faith," *Tyndale Bulletin* 29 [1978]: 80). For Wright and the many who would follow in the wake of this Sanders revolution, a New Perspective on Paul was born, one that refuted the caricature of Jewish, legalistic works-righteousness and likewise found Paul in complete agreement with Judaism on the question of grace and works (Sanders, p. 543). While the New Perspective on Paul has not been without its significant detractors, the basic insight of Sanders that Paul and Judaism did not differ in their belief in the grace of God has remained unscathed. As Wright wrote in *What Paul Really Said* (Eerdmans, 1997), Sanders "dominates the landscape, and, until a major refutation of his central thesis is produced, honesty compels one to do business with him. I do not myself believe such a refutation can or will be offered; serious modifications are required, but I regard his basic point as established" (p. 20).

It is precisely this recent consensus on Paul, Judaism, and grace that John Barclay's *Paul and the Gift* seeks to overturn. It is an ambitious endeavor, to say the least, but through much careful and innovative analysis of Paul and several Jewish writers Barclay sets a new course for the study of grace in Paul and Judaism, if not the New Testament as a whole. Barclay's main thesis is fairly simple: with Sanders, Bar-

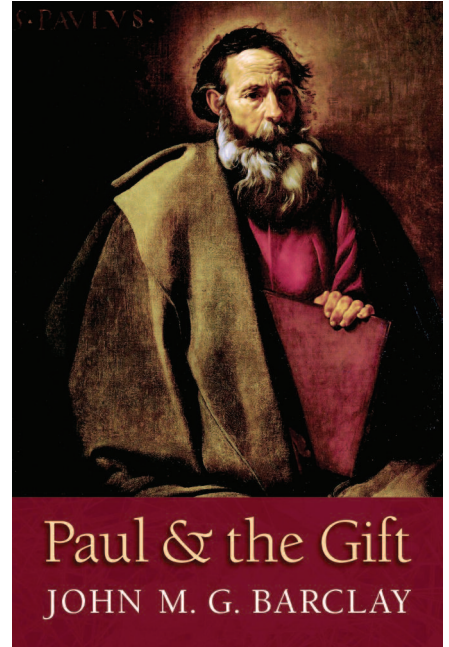
clay finds "grace" everywhere in Second Temple Judaism, but (against Sanders) it is not everywhere the same. The Paul that emerges from this inter-Jewish discussion on the meaning of grace has a distinctive, even radical, profile.

Beginning with the observation that the Greek word *charis* means both grace and gift, Part One offers an unexpected discussion of the anthropology of the gift and an essay by Marcel Mauss. Because the conventions for appropriate gift-giving and reception differ according to cultural norms, what constitutes a gift — as opposed to a wage or a bribe — is multifaceted and cannot be assumed straightforwardly, particularly the Western concept of a "pure" gift. Barclay proceeds to outline a foundational taxonomy of various "perfections" of gifts/grace. A gift can be perfected according to these factors, or some combination of them:

- superabundance (marked by excessiveness)
- singularity (the giver is exclusively benevolent)
- priority (given before the initiative of the recipient)
- incongruity (given without regard to the recipient's worth)
- efficaciousness (the gift does what the giver intends)
- non-circularity (given without expectation of a return gift)

These perfections form the conceptual matrix within which a given author's understanding of grace/gift emerges. In a surprising finale to Part One, Barclay illustrates the ways in which these six perfections of grace operate within the study of Paul, ranging from Marcion right up to the New Perspective.

The cumulative rhetorical effect of this chapter is threefold. First, it



Paul and the Gift

By John M.G. Barclay
Eerdmans. Pp. 672. \$70

demonstrates that many of the significant theological debates throughout Christian history — such as Augustine's encounter with Pelagius or Reformation disputes over justification — center on different understandings of grace. Second, the complexity of these debates subtly underscores how simplistic an understanding of grace was employed by Pauline scholarship within the post-Sanders consensus, which assumed that the perfection of the priority of grace necessarily entailed other perfections, such as incongruity. Third, notwithstanding Barclay's recognition that his reading of Paul is conditioned by or reflects "contemporary concerns and responsibilities" (p. 188), his study calls to account the whole history of Christian reading of Paul.

Equipped with a rigorous taxonomy of perfections of grace, Barclay proceeds to analyze five Second Temple

Jewish writers according to their understandings of the grace/gift of God, rather than flatly noting the presence or absence of grace. *Wisdom of Solomon*, Philo, the Qumran *Hodayot*, the *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum* of Pseudo-Philo, and *4 Ezra* are each studied in turn. This intertextual Jewish discourse amounts to a vigorous debate on the nature and definition of God's grace. For example, while *Wisdom's* strong emphasis on the "just and non-arbitrary cosmos requires that God's gifts are fairly distributed to those 'worthy' to receive them" (p. 309), such a definition of grace would have been disturbing to the writer of the *Hodayot*, for whom grace is perfected in its incongruity by close identification with God's mercy shown to worthless humanity. Likewise, while Philo perfects the superabundance and singularity of grace, this concern is not shared by *4 Ezra*, for which the final judgment is a simultaneous expression of God's vindication of the righteous and the punishment of the guilty.

While each of these five texts affirm that God acts graciously, they perfect the concept of grace in different ways and none agrees precisely on what this divine beneficence entails for either God or the recipients. In this way, Sanders's conclusions regarding the ubiquity of grace in Second Temple Judaism fail to account for contextual meaning. This reopens the question of Paul's similarity or difference to his Jewish context on the significance of God's grace.

Barclay then turns to Paul to place him within this Second Temple Jewish debate on the proper understanding of God's grace through detailed readings of his letters to the Galatians and to the Romans. Unlike several of his contemporaries, Paul peculiarly perfects the incongruity of God's grace, given without regard to the social or moral worth of its unfitting recipients. This second part of the book is more than just a word study, but includes many forays into contem-

Paul and the Gift is a landmark achievement, offering a number of momentous contributions to the study of Second Temple Judaism, Paul, and Christian theology.

porary interpretive debates on Paul, such as the meanings of *pistis Christou* (the faith of/in Christ) and *erga nomou* (works of the law). In doing so, Barclay aims to demonstrate that Paul's peculiar theology of grace is the foundation of his thought. Thus, the reintroduction of the Torah to the Galatian church is not simply a matter of a narrow social definition or practice, but the adoption of a rival criterion of worth that amounts to a refusal of God's gift in Christ.

Commenting on Galatians 3:28, Barclay explains: "Baptism 'into Christ' provides a radically new foundation for communities freed from hierarchical systems of distinction, not because of some generalized commitment to 'equality' but because of the unconditioned gift of Christ, which undercuts all other reckoning of worth" (p. 397).

As recipients of the incongruous Christ-gift, Pauline churches are marked by beliefs and practices that show a profound disregard for personal and social standards of worth. Instead of such worldly standards, the

recipients of the gift are generatively shaped and ordered by the Christ-gift. Unfitting believers are enlivened by the gift and empowered to a new life of love and obedience. For Barclay, grace is not unconditional or non-circular, but *unconditioned*: it necessarily engenders and expects a faithful response by its unfitting recipients.

Paul and the Gift is a landmark achievement, offering a number of momentous contributions to the study of Second Temple Judaism, Paul, and Christian theology. If Sanders dispelled the caricature of Judaism as a religion of works-righteousness, Barclay has dispelled Sanders's uncritically Protestant understanding of what grace meant for Paul and his Jewish contemporaries. Sanders's errors have been unwittingly reproduced by the New Perspective on Paul, and several of its foundational views on Paul now appear untenable or in need of substantial revision. In this vein, Barclay's sophisticated taxonomy of the perfections of grace substantially clarifies the meaning of grace for Paul and his Jewish contemporaries.

One may quibble with Barclay's selection of perfections or the way they might be coordinated with one another. For example, if grace for Paul is always prior, incongruous, and broadly efficacious, then the nature of grace's circularity is so highly asymmetrical that it may undermine the concept of circularity. But the introduction of this nomenclature is itself a leap forward. Finally, Barclay provides a reading of Paul that captures the radical nature of Paul's gospel, one that simultaneously addresses personal existential questions and promotes countercultural social activism. This book accomplishes a rare feat of exegetical and theological acumen, and offers a great bounty of riches for scholars, clergy, and interested laypersons alike.

The Rev. Todd Brewer is assistant professor of New Testament at General Theological Seminary.

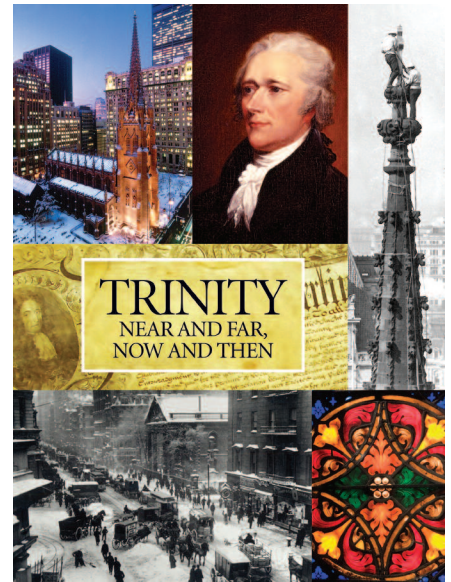
BOOKS

The Mother of Churches

Reviewed by Richard J. Mammana

There are few parishes known more widely in the Anglican Communion than Trinity

Church Wall Street — called the “Mother of Churches” in a 1973 parish history written by Clifford Phelps Morehouse of THE LIVING CHURCH. Since Trinity received its charter in



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An Adventure into God's Workmanship Past Present and Future

By John Harris Harper. Cathedral Church of the Advent. \$50

In *Witnesses to the Light*, the Rev. John Harris Harper captures what we take for granted. Too often in the church world, we forget that all of the objects that make a church building feel sacred have stories of origin. People offer stained-glass windows in memory of a beloved mother who has gone home to Jesus or to children lost too soon to illness. Bells honor soldiers who were killed overseas.

There are stories behind almost every vessel, window, and pew that make our holy spaces holy. Churches are memorials to our faithfulness in the face of life's turmoil. And the crucial artistic elements of a parish have a way of telling our stories of grief and redemption in light of the greater narrative of Christ.

During his time as a priest at the Cathedral Church of the Advent in Birmingham, Alabama, Harper developed a deep appreciation for the history and art in this historic parish. Every page is filled with such rich information. But he offers much more than simply beautiful photographs and pleasant words. *Witnesses* reminds me of those early Christians who depended on their churches and cathedrals to tell them the story of Christ through symbolism. Cover to cover, Harper's book feels like you are walking into

the glorious Cathedral of the Advent to worship God for the very first time.

Witnesses should be read less as a historical document and more as an act of devotion. Photographs of sacred objects are accompanied by accessible theological meditations written by everyone from George Carey, former Archbishop of Canterbury, to a laywoman who was baptized at Advent in 1942. Harper has chosen beautiful prayers from various iterations of the Book of Common Prayer and quotations from the likes of Martin Luther. Harper offers the rare opportunity to be edified by the historic, the personal, and the spiritual.

I recommend taking in this beautiful book a few pages at a time. Works like *Witnesses to the Light* remind us that we stand on the shoulders of the faithful men and women who came before us. Their love and dedication has left us with such sacred splendor. Certainly, it would be easy to take the glory of the Cathedral of the Advent for granted. But to do so would be a mistake. We would do well to remember the cost of what we have been given and the great love that inspired the gift.

The Rev. Sarah Condon
Houston

Trinity

Near and Far, Now and Then

Edited by Linda Hanick.

Trinity Church in the City of New York

Pp. 138. \$39.95

1697 from King William III, the church has been a center of parochial, diocesan, urban, national, and international Christian endeavor. This new parish history traces Trinity's life from its beginnings in early New York to the aftermath of the September 11 terrorist attacks, when Trinity's St. Paul's Chapel became a major center for rescue work.

Under the skillful review of executive editor Linda Hanick, Trinity's central place in myriad aspects of Episcopal Church life comes into clear view: the Revolutionary War, church art and architectural history, education, choral music, fluctuating real estate markets, the High Church and Low Church disputes of the 19th century, civil rights, urban outreach, and the eventual globalization of the Anglican Communion all receive brief but careful treatment.

A major strength of the book is the inclusion of eight “partner profiles,” interspersed throughout the chronological narratives — interviews with living individuals who have carried out work with Trinity's support far beyond its walls: in Haiti, among rural and migrant communities in New York State, in Harlem, in South Africa, in Burundi, and in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. The authors are mindful

Witnesses to the Light

An Adventure into God's Workmanship
Past Present and Future



John Harris Harper

in balancing the more recent life of the parish with an awareness of its past, too: there are brief profiles of all past rectors, a notice of “Who’s Who in the Churchyard” (most notably Alexander Hamilton), and important attention to the large number of mission chapels and chapels of ease opened by Trinity across the centuries.

The presentation of this parish history is lavish, on glossy paper with one or more pictures on each page. It even includes a pocket in the back cover with reproductions of historical documents from Trinity’s archival holdings: the deed Aaron Burr signed when he purchased three lots of land from Trinity; a ticket to visit the steeple (Trinity was the tallest building in New York from 1846 to 1890); a child’s letter to 9/11 firefighters and police who worked at St. Paul’s Chapel; several postcards; an invitation to the parish’s bicentennial celebrations in 1897; and the 1696 “Drift Whale Document” granting Trinity ownership of beached whales. With eight authors, almost two dozen other named contributors, and a magazine-like style, *Trinity: Near and Far, Now and Then* is a hybrid between a coffee-table book and an outsized issue of *National Geographic*.

The book is a fine walk through the past and modern life of a parish community that journalist Jon Meacham describes as “at once temporal and eternal, tangible and intangible, secular in setting yet sacred in mission.” Meacham adds in his introduction: “Perhaps no parish in the Anglican Communion is a more vivid example of the contrasts between the hectic pace of this world and the holy promise of the next than Trinity Wall Street, which stands still on eminent ground, devoted all these centuries distant to the work of the risen Lord.”

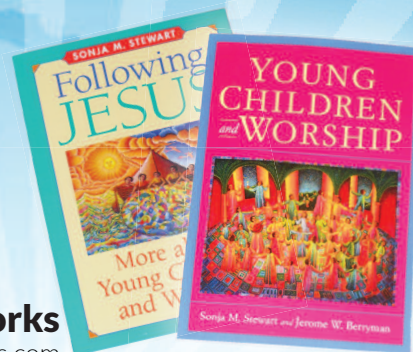
Richard J. Mammanna is the archivist of the Living Church Foundation and a parishioner and vestry member at Trinity Church in New Haven, Connecticut.

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Focused Outward

Fellowship, worship, and service are joined closely at St. Mark's Cathedral, Shreveport. Newcomers are welcomed at breakfast once a month before the 10:30 service. On Wednesday nights, supper is served before the evening's choir practices, youth programs, and a short conversational lecture for adults on Scripture and the spiritual life.

The cathedral's choral program includes the Boys and Girls Choir, dedicated to the highest musical standards, to educating and forming young people through music, and to enriching the cultural life of Shreveport. Adults participate in the Cathedral Choir, which sings a repertoire from Gregorian chant to 21st-century sacred music for the 10:30 service. The Evensong choir is an auditioned group made of up staff singers and adult volunteers who sing for weekly Choral Evensong, joining the Boys and Girls Choir.

The Community Ministries is particularly concerned with meeting the needs of children, the homeless, elderly, and the victims of poverty, crime, and religious persecution, not only locally but around the world. The Cooking Crew prepares meals together monthly for several area groups. In 2014, the Cooking Crew made approximately 7,400 meals, not including those for Thanksgiving and Christmas.

St. Mark's Cathedral

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Alternate: Mal. 4:1-2a • Ps. 98 • 2 Thess. 3:6-13 • Luke 21:5-19

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Storytelling

“**H**ear, O Israel: The Lord is our God, the LORD alone” (Deut. 6:4). “Hear what our Lord Jesus Christ saith” (BCP, p. 324). “Hear, O Son, the precepts of the teacher” (Opening words of “The Rule of St. Benedict”). Religion is attentive listening and repetition, the same story told again and again so that its teachings and virtues and victories are revisited as if new each day. The bread of the moment is the body on Calvary; the church-wine is shed blood for the sins of the world. Told well, the story of faith is moving, profound, and disturbing. A new reality comes into view: “as touching efficacy, force, and virtue,” antiquity is a present truth. (Richard Hooker).

A danger lurks. If a religious story rehearses losses, sorrows, and destruction at the hand of enemies, an ancient hurt may rise up in the present and pour blame on innocent victims. No serious reading of the Fathers, for instance, and even a close reading of the New Testament at various points, can avoid the shameful impression of a deep-seated fear of Jews after the death of Jesus. If our Christian religion is to be life-giving, it must carry within itself a strong corrective, a critical assessment of its celebrated past.

Here it is. “For I am about to create a new heaven and a new earth; *the former things shall not be remembered or come to mind*” (Isa. 65:17). The bitter story about victors and enemies, the good and evildoers, will be cast aside, burnt in a raging oven (Mal. 4:1). Divine judgement will be the judgment of the whole world. “Not one stone will be left upon another; all will be thrown down” (Luke 21:6). A religion of harm and hurt, division and bitterness — which, to some extent, is every religion written on the pages of real history — will be no more.

The ancient storehouse of faith declares Jerusalem “a joy, and its people a delight” (Isa. 65:18). Properly understood, Jerusalem is every city where

God may be, and there is not where God is not. “The earth is the Lord’s and all that is in it” (Ps. 24:1). The sound of weeping is not heard, cries of distress are no more, infants live, the elderly prosper, homes are safe, vineyards full, fruit plentiful. “They shall not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain, says the LORD” (Isa. 65:25). “With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation” (Isa. 12:3). Here is a vision of life forevermore. In a world such as the one we know from day to day, it is a monumental act of faith to work toward this peaceable kingdom.

The earth shakes, nations are at war, famine and plagues destroy, families are divided, hatred is a common language. In all this, Jesus gives “words and wisdom,” and the ability to go on in hope, the command to work for good and do what is right (Luke 21:15,19; 2 Thess. 3:12-13). As if commissioning the Church as a life-giving protest movement, Jesus says (or thinks, as he is always thinking the Old Testament): Make a joyful noise to the LORD; break forth into joyous song; get the lyre and trumpet and horn; let the sea and her creatures roar; and the hills ring out (Ps. 98:4-9). Love peace and pursue it with your heart, mind, soul, and strength.

Look It Up

Read Mal. 4:1. Throw *your* arrogance and *evil* into the flame.

Think About It

Think About It
Christ for the life of the world.

Tumult and the Saving King

Woe to the shepherds! Too often and repeatedly, political and religious leaders destroy and scatter, drive away and ignore need (Jer. 23:1,20). God is not mocked. "So I will attend to you for your evil doings, says the LORD (Jer. 23:2b). "I myself will gather the remnant of my flock . . . and I will bring them back to the fold, and they shall be fruitful and multiply" (Jer. 23:3; cf. Gen. 1:28). Still, God moves through human agency, promising an heir who will rule in righteousness over the nation, and lesser shepherds to bring order and security (Jer. 23:4-5).

Leadership is a yoke eased only when carried in the strength of a supernatural grace supplemented by daily and strong doses of humility. Speaking of the Church, but pertaining as well to the public square, St. Augustine says this: "There are many Christians who, not having been called to positions of leadership, arrive to God perhaps by an easier journey and who may even move along more freely because they carry less baggage" (*Sermo* 46, 1-2, my trans.).

The harder path, the difficult road of leadership in human community, though always a burden, may also be a calling, a shepherding under the sovereign grace of an observing and guiding God. And who is not, even if in small ways, a leader at times, the person who bears responsibility for and with others? This too is what it means to deny oneself, to take up one's cross on a road to a place called the Skull (Luke 23:33).

The warning to leaders is, strangely, a warning also about agitation and trouble in every speck of a beautiful and frail creation. The earth changes and mountains shake; waters roar and the hills sway; nations make an uproar and kingdoms totter; the earth melts (Ps. 46:1-6). So it has been since the old story of depravity's birth. Not to be outdone, God can shake the cosmos too, rattle the creation back to elemen-

tal being, to the moment when everything erupted from love's free-giving, love's provident direction, and love's leading all things to an end like but better than the beginning. "See what desolation [God] has brought on the earth" (Ps. 46:8). See how the violence of God is love's nonviolence. "[God] breaks the bow, and shatters the spear; he burns the shield with fire" (Ps. 46:9).

We cannot make wars to cease among nations and tribes and communities and families, nor can we prevent or correct every natural disaster. As long as evil lurks in the human heart, humanity and creation will groan. And yet we are not to give up in the work of creating a better world, advocating for a more humane life, and struggling to establish health and balance in nature's diverse and unified being. Indeed, our struggle is empowered by a victory already won. Christ has already put his feet into baptizing waters, already assumed into his divine being the human being of a human mother. He is in the midst of us. He has already suffered evil's attack, from demons and humans and spikes and wood. He has countered not by retribution but by a devouring river of love. "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing (Luke 23:34)."

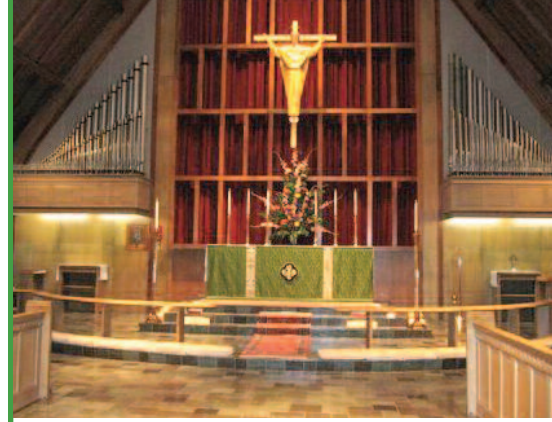
Forgiving them, he is dismissing them, letting them go, a point clear enough by the election of a Greek and Latin word. "Let them go," he prays. Do they get away with murder? God bid! What they get by Christ's dismissal is undeserved peace through the blood of his cross (Col. 1:20). Go forth in God's peace, then, and do the work of reconciliation.

Look It Up

Read Luke 23:34.

Think About It

Peace be with you!



Upholding Worship and Theology

All Souls' Anglican Foundation was established in 1994 by a group of parishioners from All Souls' Episcopal Church in Oklahoma City as an independent and duly registered 501(c)(3) charitable entity. The Foundation has as its sole purpose the perpetuation and propagation of traditional Anglican worship and theology. It has over the course of the years sponsored and organized a number of theological conferences and seminars with such noted speakers as William H. Ralston, James I. Packer, Robert Crouse, Peter Kreeft, Victor Lee Austin, Sir Roger Scruton, Leander Harding, George Sumner, Ephraim Radner, Edward Salmon, Michael Hawkins, Tony Burton, and others, and has also collaborated with Mockingbird Ministries. The Foundation was a sponsoring partner in the development of the app iPray BCP.

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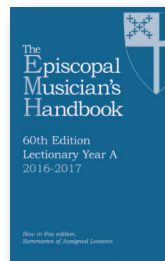
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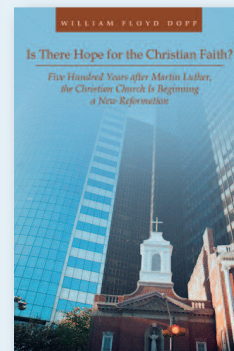
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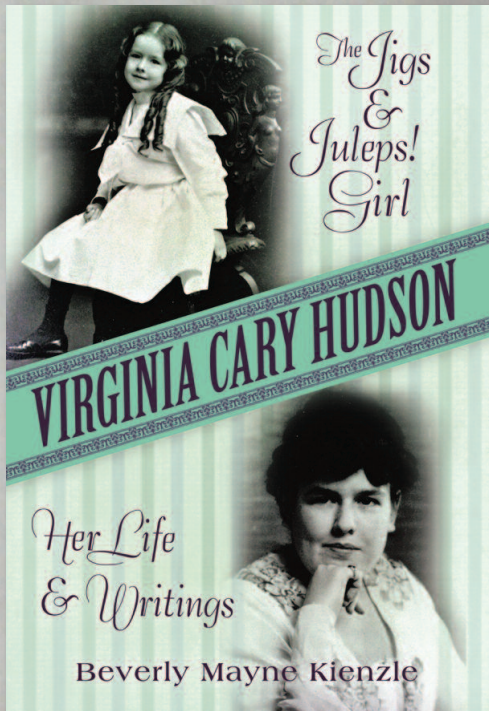
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