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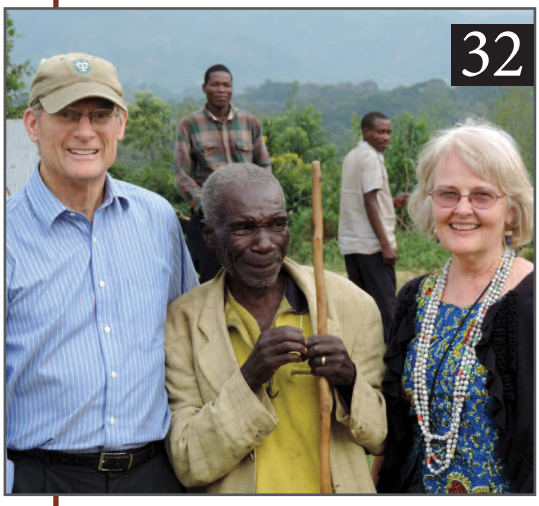
ON THE COVER

Anglicans in Uruguay fear for the future of their church: numbers have continued to decline, the parishioners are growing older, and the outside culture has not expressed taste for church.

Matthew Townsend photo



The Living Church

THIS ISSUE | September 10, 2017

NEWS

FEATURES

BOOKS

OTHER DEPARTMENTS

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We are grateful to the Parish of St. Paul the Apostle, Savannah, and Christ Church Cathedral, Nashville [p. 55], Trinity School of Midland and Christ Church, Cooperstown [p. 56], the Diocese of Texas [p. 57], and the Church of the Redeemer, Sarasota [p. 59], whose generous support helped make this issue possible.

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

Clergy gather at a Charlottesville, Virginia, protest.

Rodney Dunning/Flickr photo

Leaders Respond to Charlottesville

By Matthew Townsend

A surge of prayers, outcry, and demands for change has poured through the Episcopal Church, the United States, and the world after a brutal attack on Aug. 12 against counter-protesters in Charlottesville, Virginia, that left Heather Heyer dead and many injured. Two Virginia State Police officers, Lt. H. Jay Cullen and Trooper Berke M.M. Bates, also died in a helicopter crash during the events.

The attack — which occurred when a man drove his car through a crowd of people rallying against other groups protesting the planned removal of a Confederate statue in Charlottesville — has led leaders throughout the Episcopal Church to consider the task that lies ahead.

"What I've been saying all along is the work that the Church is called to do has not changed," the Rev. Cass Bailey of Trinity Episcopal Church in Charlottesville told TLC by phone. Bailey was with other clergy at a peaceful counter-protest, one of several in the city, and did not see violence.

The priest said there had been a few events leading up to the Aug. 12 clash, including a Ku Klux Klan march and other gatherings of hate groups. Bailey discussed how some feel emboldened to express hatred and that many in his congregation feel a renewed sense of urgency for justice. That work, Bailey said, means striving toward the vision of God.

Presiding Bishop Michael Curry, who noted that "the stain of bigotry has once again covered our land" and that "hope, frankly, sometimes seems far away," said Jesus of Nazareth shows the way through the chaos to the Beloved Community of God. Commitment to that way, he says, "is our only hope."

Curry said he knows talk of God's kingdom and Beloved Community can seem naïve in hard times, but that the alternative is also clear. "In this most recent unveiling of hatred, bigotry, and cruelty, as Neo-Nazis marched and chanted, 'The Jews will not replace us,' we have seen the alternative to God's Beloved Community. And that alternative is simply unthinkable. It is nothing short of the nightmare of human self-destruction and the destruction of God's creation. And that is unthinkable, too."

The Diocese of Virginia's three bishops wrote a public letter about the violence, as well, expressing concern that "we will be seeing more of this." Like Bailey, they said those who are angry and hateful are organizing to bring racist rhetoric elsewhere in America. "Angry resisters are more than ready to meet their violence with violence," they added.

"It's hard to imagine a time when the Church is more needed in the public square. It's hard to imagine a time when our need would be greater for God to take our broken hearts and break them open for wise, loving, and faithful witness in Christ's name."

The bishops also offered tangible actions that Episcopalians can take to seek Christ in these times, which included writing representatives, prayer, and completing a moral self-inventory on racism.

One tangible act by the church occurred in the Diocese of Long Island, where two plaques commemorating Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee were removed from a former church building in Brooklyn.

Newsday reported that the Diocese of Long Island decided to remove the plaques from the lawn of St. John's Church, Fort Hamilton.

"I think it is the responsible thing for us to do," the Rt. Rev. Lawrence Provenzano told *Newsday*. "People for whom the Civil War is such a critical moment — and particularly the descendants of former slaves — shouldn't walk past what they believe is a church building and see a monument to a Confederate general."

The plaques, installed in the early 20th century by the New York Chapter of the United Daughters of the Confederacy, commemorate a tree said to have been planted by Lee while he was stationed at Fort Hamilton.

The church has not been in active use since 2014 and is being sold.

Other comments from across the church:

"If we want an evangelism message, here it is: *We Christians see the risen Christ in everyone — and we will treat each person as if he or she is indeed Christ walking beside us*. Take that message to heart. Evangelize our friends. Evangelize our fellow employees. Evangelize our political leaders. The church and the nation need our witness now more than ever."

—The Rt. Rev. Larry Benfield, Bishop of Arkansas

"We must work across religious traditions to reflect on the ways we have been complicit in upholding and benefiting from the sins of racism and white supremacy. We must join others in praying for the strength and courage to stand arm-in-arm against racism, white supremacy, and nationalism in all its forms. We must not back down [from] those espousing hate and we must be willing to participate in acts of peaceful protest, including rallies, marches, and at times even civil disobedience. We must continually and tirelessly engage in action to oppose structural racism, both outside the church and within its walls."

—Churches Uniting in Christ

"To resist evil, I must acknowledge that evil is also part of me. Resisting evil will not make me good. Whenever I resist evil, I stand the very real chance of falling into sin. I may become the mirror image of that which I resist."

—The Rt. Rev. Martin Field, Bishop of West Missouri

"The myriad of sound bites, editorials, water cooler conversations, and late-night commentators will offer advice on what to do next, but remember: The Christian's principal act of refusal to be complicit with prevailing cultural

(Continued on page 7)

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Charlottesville

(Continued from page 5)

prejudices, biases, and hate is *the celebration of the Eucharist* — the making present of the Sacrifice to end all sacrifices, the table fellowship that erases (present tense) every distinction within the Body of Christ. It is the Eucharist that calls us to be pacifists. It is the Eucharist that calls us to abolish the death penalty. It is the Eucharist that declares the last will be first. It is the celebration of the Eucharist that condemns the racial hatred espoused by all those who stand in the tradition of the Ku Klux Klan."

—The Very Rev. Timothy E. Kimbrough, dean, Christ Church Cathedral, Nashville

Drowned Out by Outrage

The legacy of Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee is at the center of many debates since violent protests erupted in Charlottesville, Virginia, on Aug. 11-12. A priest in Virginia who has studied Lee's legacy for many years finds that puzzling.

"I've been very concerned — as a historian, a priest, an American, an alumnus of the University of Virginia — about perception," said the Rev. R. David Cox, author of *The Religious Life of Robert E. Lee*, published in April by Eerdmans.

When members of the Ku Klux Klan and neo-Nazis marched through Charlottesville in a torchlit parade and chanted "Jews will not replace us," Cox said, "that had nothing to do with Lee."

"In that sense, I think nobody is paying attention to him and who he was," Cox said. "We are dealing with a human being, and we're not treating him as such. "Yes, he was a Confederate general, who opposed slavery and secession, even though he fought for what would perpetuate both. And after the war, he dedicated himself to reunifying the nation and restoring its prosperity."

Cox's book is neither hagiography nor denunciation, but a thorough study of what Lee believed, why he believed it, and how it affected his choices regarding slavery, the Civil War, and its aftermath.

Cox documents that Lee, like so many other people of the time and in both North and South, agreed with notions of racial superiority, but he did not believe it should lead to racial suppression. He oversaw slaves inherited from his father-in-law. But he also wrote to Jefferson Davis in 1865, urging that the Confederate States of America free all slaves.

"He really tried to treat people as people, no matter their color, no matter their class, no matter their station in life," Cox said.

Cox majored in history as an undergraduate at the University of Virginia. He was inspired, in part, while sitting through a passionless lecture by a history professor and thinking it was a crime to turn American history into a boring topic.

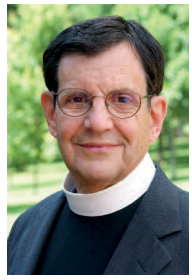
He was ordained to the priesthood in 1972 and has served in many parishes since then. His interest in Lee became kindled when he served as rector of R.E. Lee Memorial Church in Lexington, Virginia, from 1987 to 2000. He continues to live in Lexington and is a professor of history at Southern Virginia University in Buena Vista.

He wrote *The Religious Life of Robert E. Lee* because so few people seemed prepared to devote serious study to the topic. "Everybody who studies history agrees that he was a religious person. The religious people were busy polishing his halo. Secular historians did not have the theological context to make sense of his faith."

Cox says he is troubled by the impulse to remove every vestige of Confederate leaders from public spaces in America. There is a case for removing some of those sculptures, especially when they were erected in honor of post-Reconstruction racist movements or events, he said.

While stressing that he is not proposing Lee for sainthood, he mentions visiting St. Cuthbert's Church in Wells, England, and seeing it stripped of every icon and statue marking Christian history.

"I've never seen such an example of the destructiveness of the Reformation, when people in good conscience went through ripping out statues and icons," said Cox, who teaches a course on the Reformation as part of his university work. "From the perspective of 500 years later, did all of them have to go?"



Cox

"As Episcopalians, we know how important symbols are," he said. "By removing statutes, or leaving them in place, what have we done to make people's lives better, or more prosperous?"

He believes a stained-glass window of Lee in Washington National Cathedral gets it right, because it shows Lee both as a Confederate general and in his post-war role as president of Washington and Lee University, also in Lexington.

"There was more to Robert E. Lee than the Confederate general, and that was where his greatness started to emerge," Cox said. "After four years of trying to tear the Union apart, he spent five years trying to put it back together."

"At the close of the Civil War, Lee was the paramount moral authority in the South. And he used that authority to promote peace, prosperity, and reconciliation."

Rather than widespread removal of monuments or statues, Cox would like to see their message countered with new monuments that tell other sides of the Civil War's history, and of America's history since then.

Cox spends part of his time at a small apartment in Richmond, which places him within walking distance of the looming statue of Lee on Monument Avenue. Cox would love to see new tributes along Monument Avenue that honor the city's civil rights attorney Oliver Hill, educator and businesswoman Maggie Walker, and Elizabeth Van Lew, a prominent member of Richmond society who sent Confederate secrets to the Union and helped escaped slaves reach the Underground Railroad.

"I think we ought to build up rather than tear down."

Douglas LeBlanc

Members of St. James the Great gathered for a photo before the church's closure. ENS file photo

Sale of Newport Beach Church to Proceed

Members of St. James the Great Church in Newport Beach learned Aug. 14 that what they thought might be a tentative agreement to sell the property is in fact a binding contract, and the developer plans to complete the purchase.

In June, both Presiding Bishop Michael Curry and a disciplinary hearing panel ordered the Rt. Rev. J. Jon Bruno, Bishop of Los Angeles, not to sell the property, after learning of his intention to do so. But it was already too late, as Bruno had committed the diocese to the sale. The congregation has been locked out of the 40,000-square-foot building, which sits empty, since June 2015.

"The buyer has the legal right to expect the seller to honor the contract," wrote the Rt. Rev. John Harvey Taylor, Bishop Coadjutor, whom Curry put in charge of all St. James matters. "Much as we might wish it were otherwise, we do not believe that it would be in the interests of the diocese or consistent with our fiduciary responsibilities" to breach the contract.

Walter Stahr, an attorney and parishioner who has played a leading role in efforts to recover the church property, told members via email Aug. 14 that he and the Rev. Canon Cindy Voorhees met that morning with Taylor and two other diocesan officials.

In a subsequent interview, Stahr rejected the idea that Taylor had to proceed with the sale because of the binding contract. "That's not true, and I told Bishop Taylor that this morning. All the time, people terminate contracts. … It was open to Bishop Taylor to negotiate with the purchaser to terminate the agreement, and he has chosen not to do that."

Despite the sale agreement, Taylor held out some hope in a lengthy letter to the diocese that the St. James congregation might worship in the church under new ownership. The developer, Burnham-Ward Properties, "plans to preserve the worship space so it may continue to be used by churches and other community organizations, including St. James if it wishes," Taylor wrote. "We were encouraged to learn of preliminary conversations some weeks ago between Burnham and a congregation representative about the possible use of the space by St. James."

Stahr said he is the "congregation representative" mentioned in Taylor's letter. "They would hope to turn what is presently Parish Hall into a café," he said of the developers. "They would hope perhaps to turn what are presently the Sunday school classrooms into perhaps a conference center that they rent to commercial businesses, perhaps into office space that they just rent as office space."

He said the developer had discussed building "perhaps a five- or six-story parking garage" to accommodate more intensive use of the campus, which he said has open space that could be developed. A woman who answered the phone at Burnham-Ward during business hours said nobody was available to discuss the matter.

As for the possibility of the congregation worshiping in the space after the sale, Stahr said, "The notion of renting — for two hours at some point on Sunday — the sanctuary alone, not the kitchen, not the classrooms, just the sanctuary … that's rather hard, when you're paying the developer to rent what used to be your church."

In his letter to the diocese, Taylor

expressed support for the congregation, but said there were missed opportunities for resolving the standoff throughout the two-year conflict. "The responsibility for these missed opportunities is shared by both sides," he wrote.

When asked in a subsequent interview to describe the congregation's responsibility, he told TLC by phone, "There are going to be opportunities, we pray, in the weeks and months ahead to have the kind of open-ended, mutually vulnerable exchange of views about this two-year-long saga for our diocese." Taylor has accepted an invitation from Voorhees to worship and meet with the congregation, on a date to be determined.

In July, a five-member hearing panel voted 4-1 to suspend Bruno from his Episcopal ministry for three years because of misrepresentation and conduct unbecoming to a member of the clergy during the dispute with St. James.

"In all likelihood, after 40 years of ordination, including many moments of courage and vision, he will lose the right to say Holy Eucharist and to baptize, confirm, and bless for three years," Taylor wrote to the diocese. The suspension has not taken effect, and is in the early stages of a complicated and potentially lengthy review and appeal process. Bruno, 70, reportedly plans to retire sometime this year.

Taylor expressed admiration for members of St. James the Great, who have continued to worship together every Sunday since Bruno changed the locks in June 2015. They currently worship in the Newport Beach City Hall. "Their purpose and drive these last two years demonstrated that they love their church building and also that they don't need it to be the church, to remain in unity, and to praise God and serve God's people," he wrote.

"When by the grace of God I succeed Bishop Bruno on his retirement," Taylor said in his letter, "I pledge to do all I can pastorally, logistically, and financially to support the St. James congregation should it wish to remain together and reapply for mission status."

He expressed similar commitments repeatedly in the later interview. When told of Stahr's critical comments, Taylor pledged to focus on "the art of the possible" in discussions with the congregation.

"There may be a better season for [those discussions] than this first day, as the good people of St. James deal with this news and these developments," he said. "We're going to be together in the Church and in the body of Christ for a good long time. I believe there are possibilities for new life in all things."

Kirk Petersen

Nashotah Dean Resigns

The board of directors of Nashotah House announced on Aug. 7 that the Very Rev. Steven Peay, dean and president, would step down on Aug. 31. He has been appointed research professor of homiletics and will remain affiliated with the seminary upon the conclusion of his service as dean and president.

Garwood P. Anderson, academic dean and professor of New Testament studies, agreed to become acting dean on Sept. 1. Anderson is well-known to the Nashotah House community for his many years of service as a teacher, scholar, and previous academic dean.

Peay notified the board in the first week of August that he had decided to step down based on a number of personal factors, including the need to concentrate on full recovery from a recent health issue and a desire to develop new leadership at Nashotah.

"Fr. Peay has provided extraordinary

(Continued on next page)

Nashotah House

(Continued from previous page)

leadership to the House at a pivotal, and critical, moment in its history," said the Rt. Rev. Daniel Martins, chairman of the board. "He has worked tirelessly over the course of the past two-and-a-half years to lead the House through a period of transition and institutional restructuring — and he has done a magnificent job. The board is grateful for his ministry and service in leadership, and is pleased that Fr. Peay will remain affiliated with the seminary in the days ahead."

During his tenure as dean and president, Peay worked closely with the corporate leadership of Nashotah on a new institutional governance structure. He also led a successful effort to preserve the seminary's accreditation, and laid the foundation for the next evaluation by the Association of Theological Schools.

Peay raised more than $7 million for the seminary's endowment, the largest fundraising effort in the history of Nashotah, and moved the institution closer to its goal of ensuring long-term financial viability. He ensured that the gift of eight Whitechapel bells will ring out at the campus, securing the gifts necessary to build the tower to house them.

Nashotah House

POSTCARD FROM LONDON

Anglicans, Methodists Closer to Unity

Every three months or so I lead worship and preach at a Methodist church a couple of hundred yards from our parish church in North Ealing, midway between the city and Heathrow Airport. I've had links with local Methodists for about ten years. There's been an alarming decline in Methodist numbers during that time. Now Sunday worshipers at this parish are often less than ten.

This mirrors somewhat the situation of Methodism in England. Overall, Methodists are asset-rich and boast many excellent church facilities across the country. Our local Methodist church is in the same situation. It's a delightful complex, replete with a gracious church building, assorted kitchens, and halls that produce healthy rental income.

As revealed in a report to last month's annual Methodist Conference, however, Methodism has suffered a 3.5 percent year-on-year decline in membership in the past decade. Total membership now stands at just 188,000, with 500,000 people attending worship each week.

"Like many others, I know the deep joy and profound impact that finding a home in the Methodist Church has had in my faith journey, and I know that I desperately want others to have that same experience," said Doug Swanney, secretary of the British Methodist Church's connectional team. "We continue to rejoice in the good news stories and shoots of growth in certain areas of the Methodist Church, but we cannot ignore the importance of these numbers."

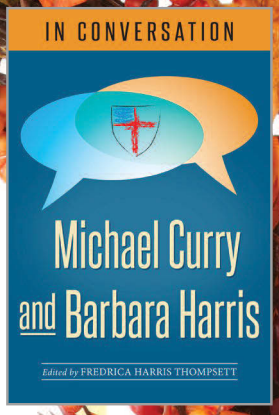
The senior minister at Ealing Trinity Circuit says that during the next three years the little congregation in north Ealing will need to make some hard decisions. Close by in Southall, an Asian-majority area, the tiny Methodist community has reverted to a class model.

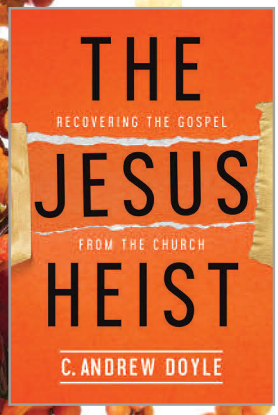
Classes, brainchild of the founder John Wesley, were the movement's primary unit. They met weekly, often in homes, to study, sing, pray, and contribute a regular sum to support the church. Modern Methodist music underwent changes in the early part of the 20th century. Before then, tunes were mostly in the style of chamber music that used slow tempos, often set in minor keys, suited to small-group singing.

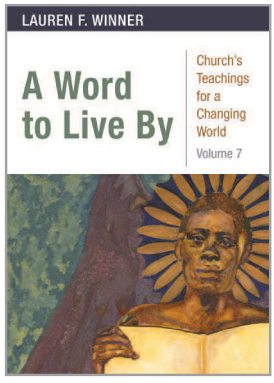
A proposed Anglican-Methodist Covenant has also been discussed. On the table is a plan that would bring an end to the break between Anglicans and Methodists in the late 1700s. It envisions a new Methodist "president bishop" and interchangeability of ministries. The plan still needs endorse-

(Continued on page 12)

New from Church Publishing







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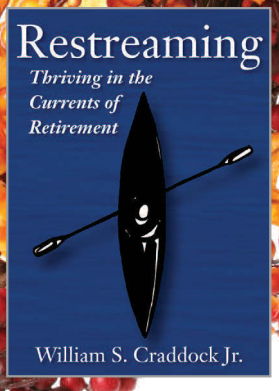

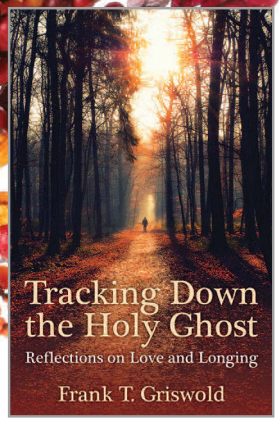

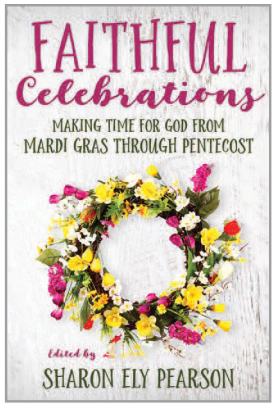

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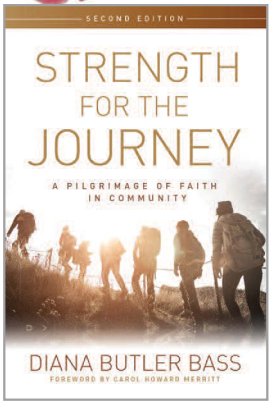

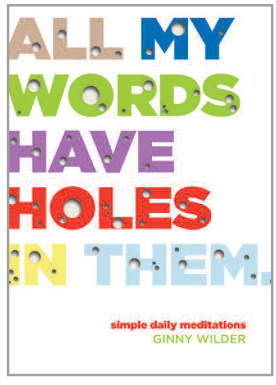

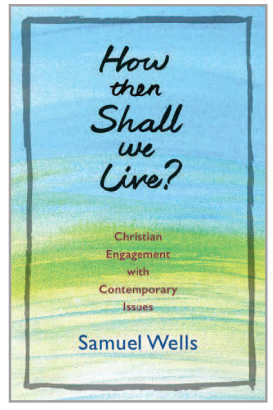

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Anglicans and Methodists

(Continued from page 10)

ment by top Church of England and Methodist governing bodies.

Twice before, plans for Anglican-Methodist union failed at the eleventh hour. In 1972 a full-union proposal was approved by Methodists, only to fail to achieve a two-thirds majority in the Church of England's General Synod. Archbishop Michael Ramsey said it was "the saddest day in my life."

In 1982, another vote by General Synod derailed a Covenant for Unity between Anglicans, Methodists, and the United Reformed Church, again after it won approval by the other parties. In both instances, Anglican traditionalists could not accept a plan that included women ministers.

These actions by the Church of England inflicted real pain, particularly on Methodists, who are generally church-unity enthusiasts. A fresh covenant initiative began in 2003, but has moved at a snail's pace. A big change that removes the key impediments to its adoptions by Anglicans is that the Church of England now welcomes women as priests and bishops.

Wesley and his brother Charles considered themselves lifelong Anglicans. John, however, agreed to the consecration of Thomas Coke in 1784 as bishop of the American Connection, although he would not take such a title as leader of English Methodists. His contemporary successors hail the proposal for a president bishop and interchangeability of ministers as "a deeply Methodist way for John Wesley's people to engage at every level with the Church of England."

John Martin

Christchurch May Donate Cathedral

A third option has emerged for the future of Christchurch Cathedral in New Zealand. Christchurch's Diocesan Synod will have the choice to donate the building, stricken by an earthquake in 2011, to the government and people of New Zealand, ensuring its future as a public space.

Under this arrangement, church authorities would have access to the building at Christmas and Easter and for other large services.

"We love and have always loved the cathedral building in the square," the Rt. Rev. Victoria Matthews, Bishop of Christchurch, said in a statement on Aug. 14.

Bishop Matthews said the diocese must be mindful of what it can afford to pay for restoring the cathedral.

"If the damage is worse than anticipated, or there is a fundraising shortfall, we would be in serious trouble even with the generous government offer," she said. "We need to be good stewards. By [giving] the cathedral building to the government, it would be reinstated to its former glory and managed by them on behalf of all New Zealanders for use as a public space."

Nicky Wagner, minister of Greater Christchurch Regeneration, said the new option showed that the church understood the importance of reaching a decision at synod. She added that

Cathedral Conversations photo

Christchurch Cathedral's devastated nave

the government does not know all the details of the proposal.

Wagner did not say whether the government wants the cathedral, should it be offered. The model for funding would "likely have to remain the same," she said, with $90 million already earmarked to cover the main building and auxiliary. Repairing the steeple and turret will require more fundraising.

The mayor of Christchurch, Lianne Dalziel, said she has "a lot of unanswered questions" about the offer, and requires more detail before she will comment.

Restoration campaigner Philip Burdon, who co-chairs the Greater Christchurch Buildings Trust, said he would like to see the cathedral restored "under the auspices of the Anglican Church."

"However, if they are not prepared to do that, then it's appropriate to [give] it to the crown and the people of New Zealand."

John Martin

New Suffragan for West Texas

Brooke-Davidson

The Rt. Rev. Jennifer Brooke-Davidson was ordained and consecrated as sixth bishop suffragan of West Texas on July 29. She is the first woman to be ordained a bishop in the diocese. Presiding Bishop Michael Curry was chief consecrator and preached.

Brooke-Davidson will serve alongside the Rt. Rev. David Reed, whom she succeeds as bishop suffragan. Reed was invested in June as tenth Bishop of West Texas.

Brooke-Davidson was elected at in February. She was ordained a priest in 2009 after graduating from Fuller Theological Seminary. She served as vicar of St. Elizabeth's in Buda from 2011 until June of this year. She also served as assistant rector of St. Stephen's in Wimberley from 2009 to 2011.

Before her ordination, Brooke-Davidson practiced commercial financial law for 12 years. She is married to Carrick Brooke-Davidson, and they have two grown daughters, Emma and Kate.

Diocese of West Texas

Kentucky Rector Elected in East Tenn.

The Diocese of East Tennessee has looked to the neighboring Diocese of Lexington to elect its fifth bishop.

An electing convention on July 28 chose the Rev. Brian Cole, rector of Church of the Good Shepherd in Lexington, on the fifth ballot. Cole led among both clergy and laity from the first ballot, but by a wider margin among the laity.

'Rare and Precious' Celebration

The Archbishop of Canterbury welcomed the Episcopal Church of Sudan as the 39th province of the Anglican Communion and invested the Most Rev. Ezekiel Kondo as its archbishop.

Archbishop Justin Welby presided at the July 30 ceremony and presented Archbishop Ezekiel, Bishop of Khartoum, with a primatial cross. He said the birth of a new province was a "rare and precious" event.

"To be invited here to preach this morning is a privilege of which I could never have dreamed," he said. "I thank the Province of Sudan for the honor of being here at your birth. Like all births, it comes with responsibility. It is for the Christians to make this province work and for those outside to serve,

(Continued on page 15)

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Sudan

(Continued from page 13)

pray, and to love this new province."

Sudan is predominantly Muslim but has around one million Christians. Archbishop Justin spoke of seeing Christians and Muslims "co-existing powerfully and effectively" when he had visited the southern Diocese of Kadugli. Such tolerant coexistence requires freedom, he said.

"My prayer for Sudan is that there will be freedom continually so that Christians may live confidently, blessing their country," he said. "The more they are free, the more they will be a blessing to Sudan."

"No government anywhere in the world need fear Christians," he added.

Sudan has been an internal province within the Episcopal Church of South Sudan and Sudan, which will now be known as the Episcopal Church of South Sudan. Archbishop Welby praised Archbishop Daniel Deng of the South Sudan province for his wisdom and leadership in preparing for the inauguration: "He is the midwife of this province who has encouraged it and strengthened it to the point we have now reached."

South Sudan is the first new province since 1998, when the Anglican Communion welcomed Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui.

ACNS

Slavery Grows in the U.K.

When the United Kingdom celebrated the 200th anniversary of the abolition of the international slave trade in 2007, few took seriously claims that slavery still existed within its borders. But a new report from the National Crime Agency (NCA) claims slavery in the UK is far worse than previously thought, and the Church of England believes it is uniquely positioned to fight it.

Will Kerr of NCA said last week that earlier estimates of trafficking victims — between 10,000 and 13,000 — were just the tip of an iceberg. There are 300 police operations investigating and tracking slavery cases, and slavery occurs in "every large town and city in the country," the NCA report says.

Kerr says affected people are likely to be "in the tens of thousands. The more we look for modern slavery, the more we find evidence of the widespread abuse of the vulnerable."

Philippa Bowen, lay chaplain to the Bishop of Derby, has called on churches to become involved, spotting and reporting instances that could amount to slavery. "We need communities that have their eyes open, who are aware enough of their surroundings that they can say when something doesn't look right," Rowen said.

She offered examples: "When the man cleaning their car has no safety equipment and looks underfed and tired; when their neighbor's live-in nanny never seems to leave the house, and is too frightened to talk to them; when the holiday let at the end of the road is being visited by different men all through the day and night."

John Martin

Protracted Diocesan Lawsuits

In a ruling that may be significant across the country, the South Carolina Supreme Court issued a long-awaited decision on church property in the Diocese of South Carolina. But the matter is far from settled.

In a highly fractured and confusing decision, the court ruled that the Diocese of South Carolina (ACNA) must turn over 29 churches to the Episcopal Church in South Carolina, as well as the enormously valuable, 314-acre St. Christopher Camp and Conference Center.

A smaller number of parishes — six, or seven, or eight, depending on the interpretation — will keep the church buildings they have been using for years, since before the Rt. Rev. Mark Lawrence led a majority of the diocese out of the Episcopal Church in 2012. The court's opinions came nearly two years after oral arguments in September 2015.

The Supreme Court made no ruling about which party is entitled to use the name *Episcopal Diocese of South Carolina*, thereby letting stand a prior decision that the ACNA diocese held the trademark on that name.

Lawrence announced plans to file for a rehearing with the state supreme court. The Rev. Jim Lewis, canon to the ordinary, said that a rehearing is warranted because of the complexity and confusion of the separate opinions published by each of the five justices.

Among other things, he said, the justices disagreed on "how many congregations had been set free, if you will." The lead opinion said seven, while a dissenting justice insisted it was eight.

"Six of our congregations are affected," Lewis said, explaining that a seventh, St. Andrew's of Mount Pleasant, had left TEC earlier. That parish is led by the Rt. Rev. Steve Wood, Bishop of the ACNA's Diocese of the Carolinas, which overlaps with Bishop Lawrence's diocese.

There are two categories of churches because some had not explicitly accepted the Dennis Canon, a governing change made by General Convention in 1979. The canon — formally Title I.7.4 — reads in part: "All real and personal property held by or for the benefit of any Parish, Mission or Congregation is held in trust for this Church and the Diocese thereof in which such Parish, Mission or Congregation is located."

Some of the justices held that to be valid under South Carolina trust law, "a trust of real property … must be

proved by some writing signed by the party creating the trust." Most parishes changed their bylaws to agree to be governed by the revised canons, but no record of agreement could be found for the seven or eight congregations. The carve-out of a handful of churches was ordered by a 3-2 majority composed differently than the 3-2 majority of the main decision.

If the court does not agree to the rehearing, an appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court is "very much on our radar screen," Lewis said, but the nation's highest court agrees to hear only about 1 percent of the cases brought to it.

By email, the Rt. Rev. Gladstone B. "Skip" Adams III, bishop of the Episcopal Church in South Carolina, said "We are keeping our options open." He declined further comment because the case is not resolved.

The ruling does not directly affect the other property disputes in the four other dioceses that withdrew from the Episcopal Church, but litigants often cite decisions from other jurisdictions to bolster their case.

This is a summary of the status of litigation in those dioceses.

Fort Worth

Just days after the South Carolina decision, the Episcopal Church's diocese filed a letter with a Texas appeals court hearing its case, describing South Carolina as "a case with important similarities to the case before this Court."

The Episcopal diocese is fighting an uphill battle, because a trial court ruled in 2015 that virtually all diocesan property belonged to the ACNA diocese. An appeals court heard arguments in March 2016, but has not yet ruled.

After the 1979 enactment of the Dennis Canon, "This new Episcopal Diocese and every congregation within it" signed a resolution accepting the canons in their entirety, said a letter for the Episcopal diocese. The Diocese of Fort Worth was created in 1983 by splitting 24 counties from the massive Diocese of Dallas.

The letter said, "All parties agree, and Defendants have repeatedly argued … [that] the disputed property

(Continued on next page)

Lawsuits

(Continued from previous page)

[is held] only in trust for the Episcopal Diocese of Fort Worth and its congregations," the letter added.

The disagreement concerns which diocese may use the name *Episcopal Diocese of Fort Worth*. Both parties use the name on their websites.

The letter also cited a 1976 U.S. Supreme Court decision holding that, under the First Amendment, the courts must defer to church authorities on matters of church governance, even if doing so settles a secular property dispute that might otherwise be decided differently.

Pittsburgh

In 2008, the Rt. Rev. Robert Duncan and more than half the congregations left the Episcopal Church and took the name Anglican Diocese of Pittsburgh. Litigation on property ownership began the next year, and in October 2009 a state court ruled entirely in favor of the Episcopal diocese.

Specifically, the court enforced a 2005 stipulation negotiated between the parties that established two categories of churches: those in which property was held or administered by the diocese and a smaller number of churches in which the title to the property was formally held by the congregation. Under the agreement, properties in the first category remained with the Episcopal Church even if the congregation had left. The court ruling did not settle the status of the other properties.

An appeals court upheld the trial court, and when the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania declined to take the case, the Anglican Diocese decided not to appeal further.

Approximately two dozen church properties were then returned to the Episcopal diocese. Negotiations between the parties continue on the dozen or so property titles held by congregations.

San Joaquin

In 2007, a large majority of the delegates at the Diocesan Convention voted to leave the Episcopal Church and organized themselves as the Anglican Diocese of San Joaquin. In the litigation that followed, a judge ordered that 28 church properties be returned to the Episcopal diocese.

Then an appeals court sent the case back to be retried based on different legal principles. The Episcopal Church prevailed again at the new trial, and in the appeals that followed. On July 13, 2016, the California Supreme Court refused to hear the case, and the Anglican diocese announced that it would not pursue further litigation.

Quincy

The Episcopal Diocese of Quincy no longer exists, but its litigation lives on.

Quincy already was one of the smallest dioceses in the country when the bishop and 18 congregations left the Episcopal Church in 2008, and organized as the Anglican Diocese of Quincy. The five remaining congregations soldiered on as a diocese until 2013, when Quincy merged into the Diocese of Chicago.

The rift led to three related property lawsuits and appeals, which are being argued sequentially. ACNA prevailed in the first suit, in Adams County, which focused on a diocesan trust fund and the diocesan headquarters. In May 2016, the Episcopal Church lost an appeals court ruling and decided not to pursue the Adams case further.

The suit affecting most of the property, filed in Peoria County, was stayed pending resolution of the first suit. The parties have been trading briefs on ACNA's motion to dismiss the Episcopal Church's lawsuit, with a hearing and potentially a trial to follow. The third suit focuses on a single church, and has been stayed pending the Peoria case.

Conclusion

Partisans on both sides of the issue have been known to say or imply that the courts have uniformly ruled in their favor, but that clearly is not true. The cases involve a swirl of property law, ecclesiastical authority, and a yearning for justice, and there are meritorious arguments on different sides.

Perhaps there are no winners when Christians sue Christians.

The various rulings reflect subtle, and sometimes random, differences in state law and in the interpretation of laws.

For example, a key issue in some of the suits has been whether the Episcopal Church is a hierarchical or congregational organization. Loosely speaking: Are the dioceses governed by the church, or are they largely independent entities?

If the Episcopal Church is hierarchical, as it has consistently asserted, then case law has established that under the First Amendment the secular courts cannot overrule the church's highest ecclesiastic authority on matters of church governance. This is known as the rule of "deference to religious authority."

If the Episcopal Church is not hierarchical, then property disputes should be settled under "neutral principles of law," meaning the court will weigh the evidence of ownership as it would in any secular litigation.

In San Joaquin, judges ruled that the church is hierarchical, and the court awarded the disputed property to it. In Quincy, judges ruled that the church is not hierarchical, and the disputed property was awarded to ACNA, although an appeal continues.

In the five fractured opinions from the five-member South Carolina Supreme Court, the justices either agreed that the church is hierarchical or expressed no opinion on the matter. In that case, the critical issue was whether each local church had agreed to be subject to church canons after the 1979 adoption of the Dennis Canon. Under state trust law, such an agreement must be signed and in writing.

Each South Carolina church had been asked to accept the revised canons, and there is no evidence that any of them refused to do so. Rather, seven (or eight) churches were placed in a different category because there was no written record of acceptance.

By a single vote in a patchwork majority, the ownership of churches in the Diocese of South Carolina hinges on whether the clerk of the vestry bothered to record a vote more than three decades ago on a resolution that would have sounded like boilerplate.

Kirk Petersen

Back to Basics

When Washington National Cathedral hosted a pilot of Alpha, it quickly reached capacity registration of 130; about 70 percent of those who took the course are cathedral members.

The cathedral plans to offer Alpha again, said its dean, the Very Rev. Randolph Hollerith. Alpha is part of the Bishop of Washington's goal to build healthy parish congregations on established Christian beliefs. The Rt. Rev. Mariann Edgar Budde taught several Alpha classes at the cathedral. Both Hollerith and Budde vetted Alpha before offering it.

(Continued on page 50)

Worshipers greet one another during the peace at Holy Trinity Cathedral in Montevideo.

Matthew Townsend photos

Uncertainty in Uruguay

Will the church survive its mistakes in a land of secularism?

By Matthew Townsend

MONTEVIDEO — In a quiet corner of South America, far removed from the splendor of Machu Picchu or the excitement of Rio de Janeiro, you can find a small, committed group of Anglicans who deeply love their church. The Anglicans of Uruguay, the small coastal country nestled between Argentina and Brazil, also fear for the future of their church: numbers have continued to decline, the parishioners are growing older, and the outside culture has not expressed taste for church.

While the worldwide nature of the Anglican Communion is often a subject of discussion, Uruguay's Anglicans may not come to mind frequently to northern Episcopalians and Anglicans. The Iglesia Anglicana del Uruguay made headlines in 2010, when, based on its desire to ordain women to the priesthood, it voted to leave the Province of the Southern Cone and join Brazil. The rest of the province said no. Trouble also erupted after the election of Canadian-born Michael Pollesel as bishop in early 2012; the province's House of Bishops refused to ratify the election. In 2012, the Anglican Consultative Council declined Uruguay's request to leave the Southern Cone. However, with the ratification of Pollesel's election in 2013, and a local option for women's ordination granted in 2015, Uruguay's Anglicans have slipped away from the headlines and likely toward the back of Northern minds.

Americans, Canadians, and Brits may not think of Uruguay in general. If you live in North America, you may never visit Uruguay. After all, Uruguay is *far*: expect around 18 hours of flight time from New York. It is also small; by land area, the country is about the size of Oklahoma. And do not feel guilty if you have never met an Uruguayan: the population, about half of which lives in Montevideo, totals only 3.4 million. There are, in fact, more Oklahomans than Uruguayans.

To understand the church in Uruguay, it is necessary to understand the country. That is a task easier said than done. Name the last book you read or even saw about Uruguay. Try finding an Uruguayan travel book at your local

bookstore (you may gather some tidbits from a book on Buenos Aires, as day trips are possible). Try, if you will, asking Google for information about Uruguay. If you do, be sure to use Spanish, as English will yield far fewer results.

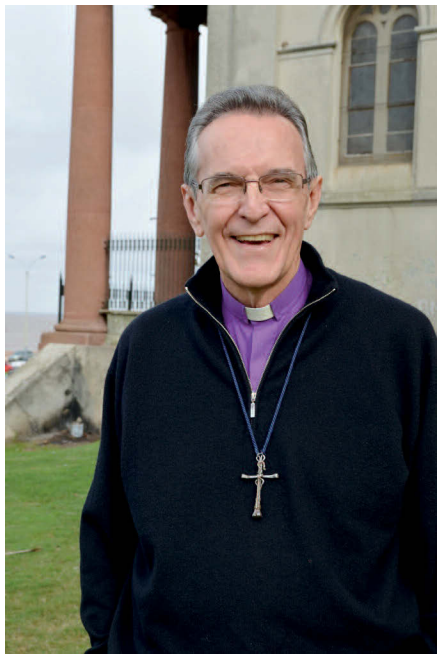
Some guidebooks may tell you that Uruguayans are similar to *porteños*, the inhabitants of Buenos Aires. While Montevideo is about five hours by boat from Buenos Aires, this is not a fair comparison. Sure, both peoples like yerba mate and soccer. They both suffered under dictatorship and instability in the 1970s and '80s. They both dance tango. However, Uruguay and Argentina have different histories and function under different circumstances. On the street, Uruguayans will readily tell you that they live at a slower, calmer pace than the Argentines. They are more obscure, and they know it. Argentines might tell you the Uruguayans are extremely well educated and that they make lousy coffee. They also might say Uruguayans are not aware of how easy their lives are, by comparison. In any case, there are similarities, but they are not the same.

For starters, Uruguay is the most socially progressive country in South America. Marijuana is legal for citizens, abortion is legal to 12 weeks, and same-sex marriage is legal. Education is free, including university. The president of Uruguay, Tabaré Vasquez, is a medical doctor and socialist. The current mayor of Montevideo is also a socialist; the previous one, a communist. In fact, communist and Marxist literature abounds in the many, many bookstores to be found in the capital, and pro-worker fliers and posters are scattered throughout the city.

Laicismo at Large

Another aspect of Uruguayan progressivism: a strongly secular society. "*Laicismo* is in the law here," the Rt. Rev. Michele Pollesel told TLC shortly before his retirement in July. Pollesel explained that laicismo — secularism — goes beyond separation of church and state in Uruguay.

"It's not only legal, but there's a sense of almost anti-clericalism in the country," he said. "Religion just isn't a part of most people's everyday life."



Pollesel: "There's really very little interest for anything like the church or religion here."

Pollesel said that North Americans would be surprised at just how secular Uruguay is. He said he's found it more secular than Canada or even Cuba, a country he came to know well while serving as secretary to the Metropolitan Council of Cuba. Uruguay is not a country where you find full churches on Sundays.

"To be a church anywhere is challenging, but there's that added thing that there's really very little support or interest for anything like the church or religion here," he said. "Up north you hear, *I'm spiritual. I may not have a denomination, but I'm spiritual.* I don't know that you would hear that here. It just wouldn't be a part of the mindset."

Rebecca Oswin, a native of England who has lived in Uruguay for 19 years, agreed. Oswin, who worships at Holy Trinity Cathedral in Montevideo, said she finds Uruguay significantly less religious than the United Kingdom.

"It's really, really secular," she said. "Life in the U.K. is very much plural; it's got a lot of different religions. They did a census a couple of years ago and actually put *Jedi* as a religion. I think we're sort of proud of being religious in some way or another, even if it's completely out there. Here, no. Here people can't really understand why I go to church and what is it. There's not a lot of interest because it's completely out of their knowledge.

"People my age here, they have no concept of going to church, being part of a church."

Indeed, a glance at the calendar would suggest that the Christian life has been entirely removed from public affairs. Celebrating December 25? That's Family Day. And then there's Tourism Week, which coincides with Holy Week. During this week, Uruguayans are encouraged not to attend church but to travel. Crosses and other religious symbols are not to be found in public schools and hospitals — they were removed in the early 20th century. A cross and statue were installed in the Tres Cruces area of Montevideo this year to commemorate the 30th anniversary of Pope John Paul II's visit to Uruguay. *El Pais* reported that the cross was accepted by former Uruguayan president and confessed agnostic Julio María Sanguinetti as a "record of this historical circumstance that will remind us not only of the Catholic community, but all men of good will." The daily also reported that the installation sparked heated debate in both legislative chambers.

Hector E. Luisi, a retired international civil servant who has lived in both Uruguay and the United States, told TLC that the country's encompassing secularism grew from the intersection of pioneering civil rights efforts and miscalculations made by the Roman Catholic Church.

Luisi, who is not an Anglican, cited the country's roots in secular revolution. It was Uruguay where Giuseppe Garibaldi first raised an army of Redshirts to fight in the Uruguayan Civil War. Many of Uruguay's early leadership embraced the values of the French Revolution — liberty, equality, and fraternity, all within a secular mindset. Uruguayan writer José Pedro Varela helped the country establish free, secular, and compulsory education in 1876.

"The lay tradition came very much after the Paris Commune and the breakup of the monopoly of the Catholic Church in primary schools," he said. "All of these things came together and created this perfect storm."

This storm was worsened by missteps made by the church during these years of change. Luisi shared a now-folkloric

(Continued on next page)

Uncertainty in Uruguay

(Continued from previous page)

story about the church refusing to bury a good German man in the interior of the country, which continues to stir resentment in Uruguayans. In 1835 Enrique Jakobsen died in San Jose and was refused burial both there and in Montevideo because he was a Freemason. After Jakobsen was finally buried at Cementerio Central in Montevideo, Bishop Jacinto Vera decreed that no other burials would occur there until Jakobsen's body was removed from the cemetery. The government responded by removing all church authority over cemeteries and transferring their administration to the police.

Luisi added that his ancestors faced unpopular resistance from the church for their pioneering efforts. Clotilde Luisi, his great-grandmother and Uruguay's first woman lawyer, brought several advances to women's education. Paulina Luisi, his great-aunt and the country's first woman doctor, championed women's rights in Uruguay and was the first Latin American woman to participate in the League of Nations.

"The church wasn't happy about it," he said. "And there was a backlash. The Catholic Church didn't play their cards right."

Luisi said the secular culture has allowed tolerance of religion rather than repression. "We don't like people or dislike people because they happen to be religious," he explained. "Catholics marry Protestants, Protestants marry atheists." He said atheism is widely accepted as well.

"This has created this extraordinary tolerance, which is quite unique and remarkable."

Anglican Missteps

Roman Catholics are not alone in struggling to connect with Uruguayans. Despite about 175 years of presence, Anglicans have not quite managed to engage Spanish-speaking Uruguayans or those seeking less traditional Anglican worship styles.

"I think some mistakes were made when the Anglican Church first came here," Pollesel said. "Like many other parts of the world, it was a chaplaincy to the British. It seems that it got stuck there. It didn't look beyond that."

In other parts of South America, such as in Argentina, locals became involved with the church. "That never happened here." Pollesel also cited the common nickname for Holy Trinity Cathedral, at which he also served as dean during his episcopacy: *el Templo Ingles*, the English Temple.

"So, why would I as a Uruguayan want to go to el Templo Ingles? — except maybe out of curiosity or something, but certainly not for any spiritual need I feel I might have."

Pollesel also said that Anglicans, while trying to revive, attempted to plant several churches in Montevideo rather than building up a single church. "And they've all been struggling ever since."

The cathedral is not faring much better. There are two Sunday services: morning worship in English, with about 12 to 20 people, and afternoon worship in Spanish, with around 5 to 10. The cathedral's members care about their church, but their numbers are few. The passing of the peace is warm and loving, but the singing struggles and graffiti remains on the church's exterior. Uruguay's somewhat persistent litter problem is evident at the church, exacerbated by the small number of homeless people who have taken residence on the cathedral green. There are only two young members there; the youngest of them is Oswin's teenage daughter. While the lights are on and Mass is celebrated, critical mass is not present.

"I would love to see it grow. I would love to see younger people come," Oswin said. "There's a lot of older people and there's very few younger people coming in to replace them."

The diocese is "at a crossroads, huge crossroads," the Rev. Cynthia Dickin told TLC. Dickin, who was in the first group of women ordained to the priesthood in Uruguay, has worked with Pollesel in the cathedral. She also served at a church in Malvín, a Montevidean suburb, for a year. "We're very tiny. In fact, if we read our canons — and I don't like to be legalistic — but if we read our canons we're not a church. We're a mission, still."

In contrast, the church in Argentina,

The exterior of Uruguay's cathedral, which faces Montevideo's iconic Rambla, shows signs of the church's challenges, including graffiti.

led by the Most Rev. Gregory Venables, has been able to develop a pattern for church growth that involves transition from Anglo chaplaincy and toward ministry to young, evangelical, Spanish-speaking families. Venables is presiding bishop of the Anglican Church of South America (formerly the Southern Cone), of which Uruguay is a part.

Argentina's success with such transitions may translate to Uruguay. The Rev. David George, who served as archdeacon in Argentina for many years, has now been assigned as vicar general of Uruguay during the transition following Pollesel's retirement.

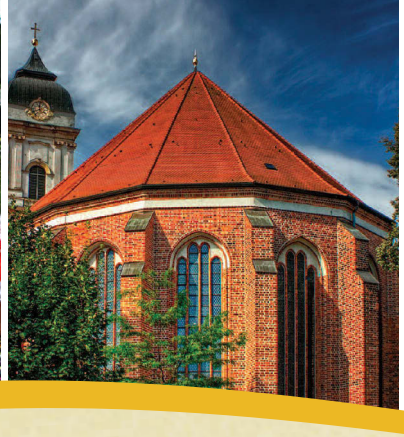
Venables, a British native, told TLC that Argentina's experience led to the Uruguayan church's request to work with George. "I think the fact that the Uruguayan Anglican church has asked us as a province, and particularly us in Argentina, reflects that," he said. "They're looking for more church identity. It's been very much a kind of chaplaincy of social work, which has done some wonderful things. But I think now it's a question of *Where's the community? How are we going to be a Christian community?* It's a challenge, but it's a wonderful opportunity."

Dickin described George as "a man with a lot of understanding of the whole context."

She said, "I believe that he is very well positioned to listen and, therefore, afterwards to counsel us; but also take back, hopefully, an objective point of view to the rest of the province."

There is cause for hope in the Uruguayan church. Pollesel said the parishes in Salto, a city in the interior, have attracted more young people. Last

(Continued on page 24)

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Uncertainty in Uruguay

(Continued from page 22)

year, the diocese hosted a vacation Bible school in partnership with the Diocese of Oklahoma. The event attracted about 40 youth there, double the number that came to the cathedral in Montevideo. The Rt. Rev. Ed Konieczny, Bishop of Oklahoma, told TLC by email that his diocese also helped construct student housing on the church campus in Salto and provided Spanish-language prayer books to the diocese.

Another hopeful initiative in Uruguay would develop formational community for students on the cathedral's grounds. Pollesel said he modeled the idea after Archbishop Justin Welby's similar community in Lambeth Palace. Students would have to agree to a rule of life and participate in the community. The program has yet to launch, however.

"The bureaucracy of the state just grinds you down," he said. Because of the cathedral's historic designation, it took two years to gain approval from the government. "From that perspective, it's a go. The other challenge is raising the funds for it, and from inside the country there's just no way it's going to come."

Pollesel said the most supportive outside response to the project has come from the Anglican Church in North America. He said he wrote to Canon William Deiss of the Anglican Relief and Development Fund to express concern that the project would halt upon his retirement.

"He wrote back immediately saying that he really hoped that the diocese did carry through with it, because they're very keen on supporting something like that. That would touch not just one or two people but a future generation."

Problems Social and Spiritual

Like other Christian churches, the Anglican Church in Uruguay has also tried to grow by providing direct ministry to those in need. Promoción Humana, the social work mentioned by Archbishop Venables, was started as a means to provide this help. The program is able to take advantage of substantial funds provided by the Uruguayan government to NGOs offering direct assistance to the poor and marginalized.

In light of the small size of the church in Uruguay, the scale of the project may prove surprising.

"The Anglican Church here has had a significant role in terms of working with the marginalized," Pollesel said. With money provided by the government, the church runs programs like infant care, a halfway house, and services for teenagers, street children, and young mothers. Around 200 employees work in these programs, with a total annual budget of more than U.S. $3.5 million — about 40 times the diocesan budget, Pollesel said.

The program touches a few thousand lives each year, though those being ministered to may not connect their help with the Anglican Church, Christian mission, or Jesus Christ. Of the 200 employees, "maybe less than 10 would say, *I'm an Anglican.* For the rest it's just a job, even though we have tried to be clear that we're doing this because this is what the church is called to do. For most it's just a job," the bishop said.

"For the recipient, as long as they're being taken care of, they really don't seem to care."

Pollesel said this is one of the harmful side effects of Uruguay's long-standing socialist government: an increasing dependence upon handouts among the have-nots, with little regard to where help comes from and little drive to change.

Thus, a program that was meant to increase exposure of the church and grow with it has instead grown while the church has contracted. And while Promoción Humana has carried out Christ's command to serve those in need, it may not be commissioning new disciples.

Pollesel said programs like Promoción Humana are not unique to Anglicans, either. "We're one of many. The Roman church does it. Other not-for-profit foundations or organizations do the same kind of thing." He said the government is able to use such programs to avoid being the direct provider of assistance. "So, in some ways it saves their bacon."

The bishop also said that Uruguayans also share in a collective impulse toward collaboration; it is not unusual to see soccer clubs and other civic organizations cooking meals for homeless people or giving away blankets. Young people routinely collect for organizations like Doctors Without Borders on the street corners of Montevideo. "You could say that's sort of a humanistic kind of approach to helping others. Whether there's any spiritual nature to that, I would have my doubts."

The question of spirituality, and spiritual problems, is much on the mind of Fr. Héctor Robin Traverso Batto, a priest at St. John the Baptist Catholic Parish in the upper-middle-class Pocitos neighborhood. The all-Spanish church drew about 200 for a Saturday evening Mass in July, in which the priest started his sermon by discussing young parishioners' fears about automation and lack of meaningful work. Traverso, a native Uruguayan who has been a priest for decades, is enigmatic and witty as he addresses the congregation, but he is also quick to discuss spiritual problems.

Traverso

He told TLC in Spanish that the Catholic Church considers gay marriage, drug use, and abortion as moral issues. "The challenge isn't in the moral acts, but the challenge that we feel and, [as] our Archbishop Monsignor Daniel Sturla greatly insists, … the almost 700 suicides we have annually in Uruguay, absolutely out of proportion to the population." In fact, at 18.54 suicides per 100,000 people each year, Uruguay has the highest rate of suicide in South America and one of the highest rates in the world. That figure is double the rate of Chile and 50 percent higher than the rate in the United States.

"We have a proposal to make to the Uruguayans, and it is to find a reason to live, to find meaning in life," Traverso said. "The problem that we Uruguayans have, in the point of view of the Catholic Church and our archbishop, is that we are depreciating religion, depreciating the religious orientation of any religion. And the Uruguayan doesn't find a reason to live. He works and works, but for what?"

Traverso said that Uruguayan couples often avoid having children, favoring career advancement instead, arriving at 40 without children. Thus, they lose the op-

portunity to have a family, one way of finding meaning in life.

"Family is disintegrating in Uruguay," he said. "A lot of divorce, certainly. *If I don't feel good, if we don't understand each other, I wash my hands of it all.* Why? Because they lack principles that are useful for feeling purposeful in life. Then, if you feel uncomfortable, you have needs and look for something else, and look for something else, and look for something else, and look for something else, but without any direction. Religion usually gives that direction."

Traverso confirmed that the secular culture challenges conversations about the issues — and that children are not exposed to spiritual or religious ideas, even at home. Thus, children may go through an entire education never having addressed spiritual issues. He said problems with suicide and listlessness can be especially concentrated among middle class and upper middle class families that live south of Avenida Italia and closer to the sea, in places like Pocitos.

"The first failure they have, boom, their world comes crashing down and they don't know what to do; and rightly, as they have no firm spiritual formation, no meaning in their lives. *I have to do my own thing, earn my keep, have my success, get what I want, carry my own weight, and if something gets in my way, and I can't remove it, down comes my world.*

"We are materialist because we lack spirituality, we lack meaning in our lives."

He said the church is trying to expand its educational programs to address these issues, as well as the poverty that can be found on the city's north side.

Uruguay's Anglicans are certainly aware of the challenges in their society. Back at the cathedral, Rebecca Oswin described how her peers see moral issues. "Uruguay, a couple of a years ago, was the first country in Latin America to have abortion as something legal. At least people that I'm around, that I know, it was like, *okay, it's acceptable*. Gay marriage is the same. It's very accepted, and there's no sort of a moral dilemma behind it."

What remains to be seen, though, is whether the church in Uruguay will grow beyond Anglo chaplaincy and toward meeting the deep spiritual needs of a people far removed from religion. Pollesel expressed his concern that immersion in social work may cloud the church's task. "That's been part of the challenge for us," he said. "Because of the projects, the Promoción Humana as we call it, I and others have said, *Are we just another NGO that's doing good stuff — but we aren't really church?*"

The streets of Montevideo reveal Uruguay's progressive flavor, replete with signs of Communism, solidarity movements, and workers' rights.

"Pray for Conversion"

The future of the Anglican Church in Uruguay is uncertain. Dickin, the priest who has spent her life in the church, said the church needs time to sort itself out.

"I think your guess is as good as mine as to what the future holds," she said. "I believe we need to have a space, and a fairly big space, and not try and just barge ahead because we think as Uruguayans that we want to have an Anglican Church. We need to stop and listen, and not waste time but be honest.

"I don't know how many of us are really willing to say, *okay, we're at a crossroads and that's not bad*. But we need to listen to each other, ourselves, to God, and to others out there and not get stuck in *I want this* and *I think this is the only way to do it*."

Dickin also said people have been bruised by the church during turbulence in years past, and that the church should seek an opportunity to walk alongside them.

Michael Brown, a lifelong Episcopalian from California who has lived in Uruguay 12 years, expressed concern that the transition could see the diocese losing its independence. "Personally, my fear is that the province will take over," he told TLC. "We've been rather isolated and rather independent. We were, I think, the only diocese that really fought for female priests. We finally got local option out of the province, but that was very difficult."

Brown, who also worships at the cathedral in Montevideo, said the diocese has not really been a part of the Global South — in fact, use of the 1979 Book of Common Prayer and the Hymnal 1982 is part of the diocesan canons — and that this might change.

He said he hopes people will pray for someone willing to come to Uruguay and provide leadership. "We don't have any local leadership to take on the diocese. I think it would be ideal if we get another Michele, for example, to come for five years and really try to get things set," he said.

Brown added that the task of leadership would be a challenge. "There is a small group of very supportive people. The challenge would be to enlarge that group and possibly to bring back some of those who have left the church in recent decades. For somebody who's looking for a challenge, it would meet their goal."

From a practical standpoint and given his retirement, Pollesel said interested Episcopalians and Anglicans can help the church in Uruguay through the Diocese of Oklahoma. He also cited a need that can be fulfilled through prayer.

"What is really needed here, even in the church, is conversion," he said. "That would be my request in terms of prayer: that people who say they are Anglican Christians or Christian Anglicans really discover what that means and then live it out.

"Conversion really needs to happen here. If prayers from faithful people everywhere can help that come about, that would be fantastic." ❑

In Search of Growth

On this Rock

And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it. —Matt. 16:18

By Kirk Petersen

If you search the web for "growth or decline in Episcopal Church," you will encounter some scary headlines: "Why is the Episcopal Church near collapse?"; "Episcopal Church Continues Uninterrupted Decline"; "Episcopalians Continue Bleeding Members, Attendance at Alarming Rate" — the list goes on and on. Perhaps the most imaginitive: "Has the Last Episcopalian Been Born?" *(Spoiler alert: no.)*

Membership *is* declining. Pick any time horizon. One year: down 3.2 percent, as of 2015, by the most recent statistics available. Ten years: down 25.7 percent. Fifty years: down nearly 50 percent, from the peak in the mid-1960s. Among 99 dioceses throughout the 50 states, precisely one has experienced growth in average Sunday attendance (ASA) for both the year and the decade. (Look for a report from the Diocese of Nevada in a future issue.)

TLC's weblog, *Covenant*, recently published "Facing Episcopal Church Decline," a detailed analysis by David Goodhew. The article has a wealth of data, breaking out the decline geographically and demographically. Goodhew writes that the decline of Episcopal baptisms and weddings — key sources of future Episcopalians — is far higher than the decline in overall membership.

Judging from all of that, you might expect to find a bunker mentality wherever Episcopal leaders gather, but that is not the case, at least among churchwide leaders. (There are, of course, individual churches that worry they may have to close. Some of them will do so.)

At the churchwide level, there is discussion of financial issues, and talk about how to bring more people into the church. But despite the impression left by some disaffected bloggers, the Episcopal Church leadership doesn't seem preoccupied with concerns about an existential membership crisis.

"We don't sit in meetings saying, 'We need to grow,'" said the Rev. Canon Stephanie Spellers, canon to the presiding bishop for evangelism and reconciliation.

Nina Nicholson photos

Stephanie Spellers: "So you're not comfortable anymore? Good! Now you need Jesus."

"And I've been in spaces where that was the case, so I know we're not in that zone. What we're talking about is movement. My experience is, when you frame it like that, growth happens, but it doesn't happen for the sake of growth."

"When Jesus said, 'Go out into the world,' he didn't say 'and make them all come into the church,'" said the Rev. Canon Michael Hunn, canon to the presiding bishop for ministry within the Episcopal Church. "The fundamental goal is to spread the good news, not to bring people into the church."

Episcopalians are wealthier and better educated than Christians in other denominations, and the church has long had a social prominence that has exceeded its numbers. Of the 45 U.S. presidents, 11 have been Episcopalians — more than in any other denomination.

"We were the established church," Spellers said. "It's hard for God's Spirit to work with a church that confident, that secure, that established. … I prefer to say, hey, look at that decline. Now what? So you're not comfortable anymore? Good! Now you need Jesus."

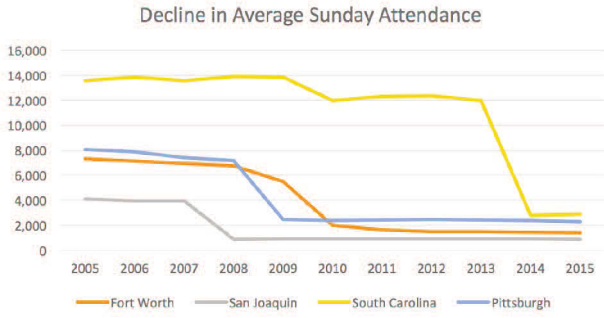
American society has been becoming more secular for decades, and attendance is down in all mainline denominations. "I think what is coming to an end is Chris-

Michael Hunn: "The fundamental goal is to spread the good news, not to bring people into the church."

tendom," Hunn said. "And by Christendom, I mean the kind of state-supported Christianity we've had since Constantine, [which] was basically in effect through the '50s. America was understood to be a Christian nation."

One significant cause of the decline in Episcopal attendance in recent years is, of course, the schism that began after the General Convention of 2003 consented to the election of the Rt. Rev. Gene Robinson, an openly gay man in a relationship, as Bishop of New Hampshire.

In the following decade, five diocesan conventions voted to leave the Episcopal Church: Fort Worth, Pittsburgh, Quincy, South Carolina, and San Joaquin. Some congregations in each diocese remained with the Episcopal Church, effectively splitting each diocese. The small remnant of the Diocese of Quincy was absorbed by the Diocese of Chicago; ASA in the other four dioceses all declined 70 to 80 percent in the past decade, by far the worst declines in the church. (These statistics, drawn from the parochial reports filed by every Episcopal church, are available from the Research and Statistics section of episcopalchurch.org.)



Departures for the Anglican Church in North America had dramatic effects in the dioceses of Fort Worth, San Joaquin, South Carolina, and Pittsburgh.

The departures had a dramatic effect in those dioceses, and individual parishes elsewhere in the country have also left the Episcopal Church. Most of the departing dioceses and congregations have joined the Anglican Church in North America (ACNA), founded in 2009. But nationally, ACNA is dwarfed by the Episcopal Church. Based on reports from the two churches, ACNA had 111,853 members, while the Episcopal Church was 16 times larger, with 1,779,335 baptized members.

Still, ACNA membership is growing, while Episcopal numbers are declining. With declining attendance comes declining revenues. The church does not exist for the purpose of making money, of course — but eventually money has a kind of veto power. If a church fails to pay the electric bill for enough months in a row, the lights will be turned off.

Real estate poses a particular problem for cash-strapped congregations and dioceses. "We're overbuilt," Hunn said. "There's a lot of our buildings that were built in the horse-and-buggy days, and so we are maintaining 12 or 15 churches in a city. … We've been around so long that our model was not just to have a building, but a beautiful building with a slate roof.

"We're going to see some sort of consolidation, where we can get some economies of scale," he said.

The decline in attendance has continued year after year and shows no sign of stopping. Church leadership is focused not on church growth or "market share," but on adapting to a new era. "What if decline isn't the end of the story?" Spellers asks. "What if decline is the beginning of the story?"

When the Most Rev. Michael B. Curry was installed as presiding bishop in November 2015, he immediately began describing the church as "the Jesus Movement." Spellers thinks that's the road ahead.

"We have to fall in love with Jesus again. It's the only answer to decline," she said. "The reason we've declined is because, frankly, we have not been as in love with Jesus as we've been in love with any number of the manifestations of Jesus — our buildings, our worship, our structures.

"If we are truly following Jesus in the way that he taught … if we are growing loving, liberating, life-giving relationships, with God, with each other, and with the earth, then there will be fruit. There will be fruit."

This is the first in an extended series of columns about growth in the church. Future columns include extended interviews with thought leaders; reports from individual growing congregations; a look at the dioceses hit hardest by division; and the flip side of growth: the need to close some churches. Suggestions for topics are welcome: kirk@kirkpetersen.net.

All Return to Dust

Clergy disagree about the most pastoral way to handle human remains after cremation.

By G. Jeffrey MacDonald

What are you going to do with the ashes? It's a question clergy seldom asked grieving survivors a generation ago when the vast majority of funerals culminated in a traditional burial. But it's increasingly part of pastoral care in America, where cremation outpaced burials in 2015 and will be the projected choice after 80 percent of deaths by 2035.

Just ask the Rev. Anne Emry, rector of St. Paul's Church in Salem, Oregon, a state where 74 percent of all deaths involve cremation. She has done 50 funerals in the past three years, yet only one involved burying an intact body. All the rest ended with loved ones carrying away dusty remains and facing several choices for what to do with them.

To sharpen the pastoral question, she asks: *Will the ashes be interred in one place?* She explains why she prefers that to scattering ashes in multiple locations.

"It's for the theological reason that it's clearer: this is the body, and this is where the body rests," Emry said. She does not insist, however, because she is "pretty sure God can sort it out," no matter where the ashes end up. What's more, families are often "quite determined [and] say, *Nope, this is what we're doing*."

"They don't want to be in one place," she said. "They want some of their ashes in designated holy ground. They want some with a family member who is somewhere else, and/or they want some on a beach, on a golf course, on a mountain. … They're multitasking after death."

The disposal question, like many others posed by the increased

use of cremation, challenges clergy to apply incarnational theology to situations in which ashes have replaced flesh and bones. It requires fresh grappling with theological and practical issues within a Christian tradition that, for nearly two millennia, considered burial the proper witness for people who believe in a bodily resurrection.

"It's been mainly about how you treat the body and which ceremonies you have as you bring it out and make it disappear for good," said Gary Laderman, an Emory University historian and author of *Rest in Peace: A Cultural History of Death and the Funeral Home in Twentieth-Century America*. "When you don't have those anymore, and instead you have more and more cremations, it's going to raise questions about whether the religious imagination is really keeping up with the times."

Cremation is most popular in America's least religious states, clustered in the Northwest and Northeast, as well as Hawaii, where land for cemetery plots is scarce and expensive. The practice is least common in Bible Belt states such as Mississippi, where only 21 percent of deaths result in cremation.

"The parts of the country that are least confident in life after death are more likely to opt for cremation," said the Very Rev. Ian Markham, dean and president of Virginia Theological Seminary and author of *Christian Hope, Christian Practice: A Funeral Guide*.

But in every region, cremation is on the rise with Christians and non-Christians alike.

Among factors driving the cremation trend are cost, with cremation prices averaging one-third less than burial, and convenience, according to Pat Lynch, a Michigan funeral director and former president of the National Funeral Directors Association (NFDA).

Some also see cremation as an eco-friendly alternative to burying toxic embalming fluids and manufactured caskets. Cremation also requires environmental compromises, including an energy-intensive process and release of noxious chemicals into the atmosphere.

As churchgoers opt for cremation in growing numbers, clergy are coming down on different sides of the theological issues it raises. For example, should a priest encourage family members to bury rather than cremate if they can afford to? And if family members choose cremation, should the body be kept intact until after the funeral?

Yes to both, says the Rev. Kenneth Koehler, a priest in Westminster, Colorado, and author of *Preparing a* Catholic *Funeral*. Burial honors the sacredness of the body, he said. It gives descendants a clear sense that their ancestor is at rest in a final place. Second-best is to postpone cremation until after a funeral, which helps children and others recognize that death has occurred and move toward closure.

"If they're willing to take that process, it seems they get through the mourning period a lot easier," Koehler said.

Conversely, cremating too quickly can deprive a family of both a viewing and time with the body, which they need as part of grieving, Koehler said. He recalled one situation in which a father committed suicide and his widow had him cremated immediately.

"The kids were teenagers, and they never got over that," Koehler

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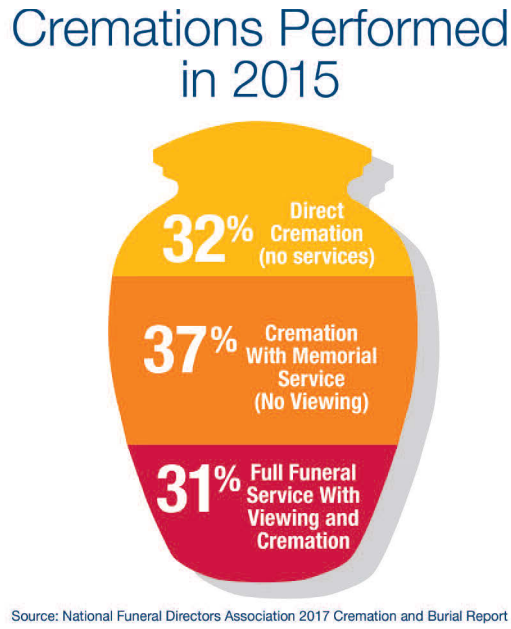

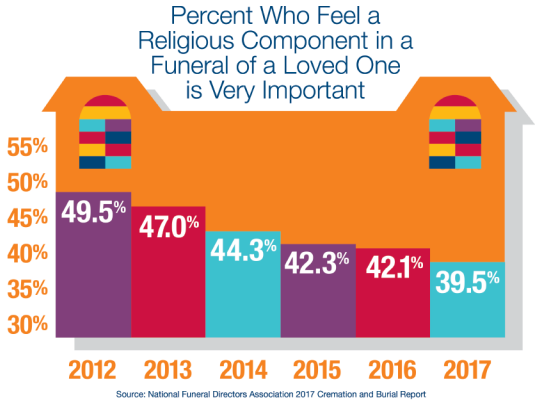

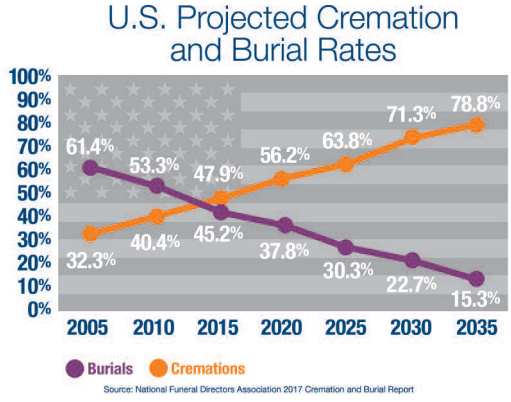

All Return to Dust

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said. "They kept coming back and asking questions. They were acting out in a resentful way: *Well, if we had just seen Dad* and *We're not sure what happened*. It was like they were deceived."

As families gain more experience with cremation, they opt to pay more and have a funeral with the body in a casket, said Thomas Lynch, a funeral director who has reflected on death in several books, including *The Undertaking: Life Studies from the Dismal Trade*.

Among those served by Lynch & Sons Funeral Directors in Clawson, Michigan, families often choose to accompany the body to the crematory, sometimes with a cleric who will say a prayer or conduct a committal ritual.

"Nationwide, there's a belief among the consumers that if you choose cremation, you are not afforded the opportunity to have some of these other rituals with the body present, and that's simply not the case," Lynch said. "It really is the responsibility of both the clergy and the funeral directors to explain to families all of the options available to them."

About one-third of cremations involve a full funeral service that includes seeing the body, according to data in a July NFDA report. Funeral homes make almost a third of their money from funeral services. Another third comes from reselling merchandise such as caskets, which can be rented when a body will be cremated.

But some clergy argue there is no need for these extra expenses in order to keep a body around for a funeral or for burial.

"The service, whether funeral or memorial service, is not about the body," said the Rev. Diane Martinson, rector at St. Peter's Church in Honolulu, via email. "If it is a funeral with a body viewing, that takes place during the visitation and then the casket is closed before the service begins, symbolically representing the shift from this mortal life/body to eternal life. If cremation is the choice, the visitation is a time for people to greet the family with the urn, often with a photo of the person alongside."

Another question in clergy discussion: *What is left, theologically speaking, after a human body has spent several hours in an incinerator?*

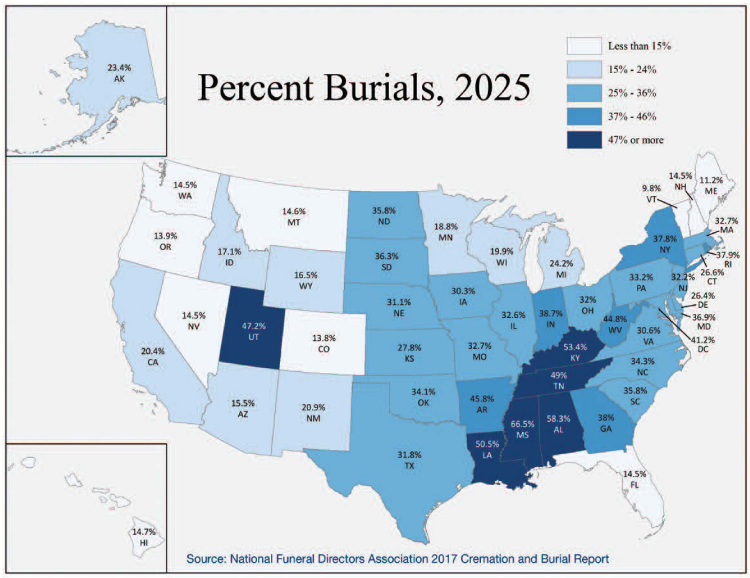
Emry believes the burned remains still constitute a body; it is just more compact and devoid of water. Hence all the rituals surrounding treatment of a dead body continue to be appropriate, in her view. For example, when ashes are delivered to the church, she gathers a group and offers the prayer for reception of a body. At the service, the urn is covered with the same white veil that's used to cloak Communion elements, much as a pall would cover a casket as a sign of baptism.

Markham brings a different understanding. He believes the body no longer exists after cremation. He believes that, because personhood is intrinsically linked to the body, a funeral should be held before cremation.

"Some people rush to cremation, and they pay a price in terms of closure," Markham said. "You lose one of the strengths of that service and liturgy when you just have an urn with ashes in it."

Unlike Emry, he says the commendation should ideally be said when the body is intact, not after it has been reduced to ashes. Guidelines from the Diocese of New York likewise say the commen-

Anne Emry, rector of St. Paul's Church in Salem: "They want some with a family member who is somewhere else, and/or they want some on a beach, on a golf course, on a mountain. ... They're multitasking after death."



dation should be omitted when there is no intact body to commend into the Lord's hands.

"The celebrant turns and faces *a body,*" Markham said, referencing rubrics in the Book of Common Prayer. "You face the *body*. You don't face a little urn."

By Markham's line of thought, today's practices cry out for more theological reflection on the essence of ashes. He posits that what remains is dust, akin to what God handled before creating Adam with an infusion of divine breath in Genesis 2. The observation of Ecclesiastes 3:20 ("all came from the dust and all return to the dust") is fulfilled as the body gives way to something more elemental.

Markham believes survivors should be instructed to bury ashes swiftly. Clergy should assert that it is not fitting to keep what is left of a spouse, parent, sibling, or child on the mantelpiece.

"The church should be clearer because it's a bit like the Eucharist: you're not allowed to stick it in your pocket and take it home as a souvenir," Markham said. "We ought to be as firm about the ashes and just say: *Look, decide now where they're going to go, and make sure it's only one place*."

Pastoral concerns lead to divergent views on the respectful treatment of ashes. Martinson believes it is fine to bring them home because of the possible effect.

"Handling [cremains] with respect is appropriate," Martinson writes. "For some people, it gives them comfort to have the cremains with them until they themselves die and then they can be buried together. That's perfectly fine."

Markham believes survivors struggle to move on in a healthy manner when they "cling" to ashes. He observes it can be hard to date someone new and grow emotionally close if it seems the late spouse is somehow still present in the room. Alternatively, he prescribes designating one final resting place, not several, and doing the interment without delay.

"Go through the liturgy, believe the liturgy, and come out the other side believing what the liturgy teaches," Markham said. "Part of that is you let go of the dust. You surrender it to the earth. That's where it belongs." ❏

By Ian Markham's line of thought, today's practices cry out for more theological reflection on the essence of ashes.

Scott and Carol Kellermann with a Batwa elder

Kellermann Foundation photos

Three Lessons for Foreign Missions

By Jordan Hylden

Dr. Scott Kellermann had come to the end of his rope. Three years earlier he had sold his house and his medical practice in California, and with his wife, Carol, answered a call to serve as Episcopal missionaries in Uganda among the Batwa people. They had lived in tents and traveled around giving medical care, stringing IV bags from ficus trees and learning the language and culture. Yet in all that time, he could think of no lasting accomplishments, other than how close he and Carol had grown.

The people he had treated would grow sick again, and he probably would not be there the next time. The Batwa people (also known as pygmies) were in real trouble after being evicted from their ancestral forest homelands by the Ugandan government in an attempt to preserve endangered gorillas. His initial health survey had found that 41 percent of Batwa children died before their fifth birthday. Life expectancy was only 28 years. Cast out from the only life they knew, the Batwa were practically homeless and desperately poor.

In the face of this, Scott felt like he and Carol had done nothing that would last. Carol had spent months on a project to grow eucalyptus seedlings, in hopes that the Batwa would grow them on their own. Yet the Batwa had sold them and used the money for a party. What were the Kellermanns doing wrong? Should they just give up and go home?

Talking all of this over with another missionary couple, the Kellermanns asked themselves some hard questions: Were they doing things *for* the Batwa, or doing things *with* them? They decided to focus on building relationships, and to ask the Batwa not about their problems but about their successes, so that they could build on what they were already doing well for themselves. Over time they built relationships and trust, and their work grew more successful as it became more collaborative.

Today, what began with stringing IV bags in trees has become the 112-bed Bwindi Community Hospital, an RN-level nursing school with more than 200

students, and a community development program run by the Batwa.

The under-5 children's mortality rate in the area has dropped from 41 percent to 6 percent, and the maternal death rate in childbirth has dropped 60 percent. There is a hostel for expecting mothers who come in from miles around, a community garden, and village buildings that do double duty as communal workplaces and worship spaces. The Batwa still face many challenges, but they are learning to not only survive but thrive in their new lives outside the forest.

All of this was far beyond what the Kellermanns dared hope after three years of what seemed like fruitless work. What had happened? And for an Episcopal Church that still does business as the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society, what can we learn from their story about foreign missions?

First, their story is in large part one of a lay-led initiative, fostered by relationships made possible by ties between the Episcopal Church and the wider Anglican Communion. When the Kellermanns initially answered the call for medical missionaries, it was the fruit of a process that had started years earlier when Archbishop Livingstone Nkoyoyo of Uganda asked Diane Stanton of Dallas for assistance in resettling the newly homeless Batwa. When the Kellermans arrived in Uganda, they worked in concert with what the local church was already doing.

Dedicated laypeople then began leading the project. When Scott Kellermann felt called to mission work in 2000, he simply Googled *Episcopal medical missions* and happened upon the Episcopal Medical Missions Foundation (EMMF), a lay-led group based in Austin, Texas. While the Kellermans began as rostered Episcopal Church missionaries, their base of support always came from lay-led nonprofit ministries: first the EMMF, and later their own Kellermann Foundation, which raises funds largely among Episcopal laypeople. Today, their foundation brings together a wide network of laypeople who are continuing and expanding their legacy, not only in the hospital but also in education, spiritual outreach, and community development.

In today's Episcopal Church, that kind of lay-led initiative is a necessity. A century ago, the church's office in New York was called the Church Missions House, purpose-built to house the Board of Missions. By midcentury, that core had become only part of a much larger operation on Second Avenue, but foreign missions remained vigorous. As Robert Prichard notes, in the mid-1960s the church sent more than 200 missionaries, but by 1977 that had fallen to 71. Today, it's between 40 and 50, many serving one-year or six-month placements with the Young Adult Service Corps or Episcopal Volunteers in Mission.

What is now called the Mission Personnel Office continues to do good work. Given more funding, it could do more. Yet the office is no longer designed to support and fund substantial numbers of long-term missionaries. The kind of fruit that the Kellermanns' ministry bore can still happen, but the kind of lay-driven initiative that built the Bwindi Community Hospital is essential.

A second lesson is the importance of long-term missionaries. After three years, the Kellermans still felt like failures, with no lasting accomplishments. It took that time to earn trust. They wound up staying ten years. If they had left after three, while their lives would

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Joined by Ugandans and long-term volunteers from Sweden, Scott Kellermann talks about his work at Bwindi Community Hospital.

Students at Uganda Nursing School Bwindi hold high their Kindle readers.

Three Lessons

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have been profoundly touched their legacy would have been small. Valuable as short-term mission trips are — and the Bwindi hospital is a revolving door of people who come to serve and leave deeply changed — nevertheless it took longer than two weeks or even two years to make a real difference on the mission field and not just on the missionaries.

Third, the Kellermanns discovered that faithful and successful mission is both collaborative and holistic. As Prichard writes, the shift that took place among Episcopalians in the latter half of the 20th century toward a more collaborative, humble, and less imperialistic model of foreign missions coincided with a sharp drop in both funds and personnel. Yet the Kellermanns found that they had real gifts to give to the Batwa people, which they discovered by recognizing and working with the gifts that the Batwa already had. Collaborative, non-imperialistic mission does not have to mean casting aside the heroic missionary zeal of the past, but setting aside whatever of the past had to do with racism or pride.

Their mission to the Batwa was holistic, aimed at both body and soul. As in much of Africa, joyfully infectious worship is central to the community of the Bwindi hospital. Paul and Barbara Thomas, missionaries with Wycliffe Bible Translators, spent a three-year placement there working on both community development and training the Batwa in the art of Bible storytelling. They are raising funds for shelters designed for both work and worship. There are many secular charities at work in the majority world, but the Church should not be ashamed of its unique mission to proclaim the hope of the kingdom of God.

There are other Kellermanns out there today, no doubt, Googling about Episcopal missions and looking to see where the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society might send them. There are more foundations to be started, more faithful laypeople to be inspired, more partnerships to be forged. If our church truly is part of the worldwide Jesus Movement, who then will be the next Scott and Carol Kellermann who will sell all they have, leave their homes behind, and "go into all the world, and preach the good news to all creation" (Mark 16:15)? Are we ready to send them? ❑

This is how Scott Kellermann would turn a ficus tree into a makeshift IV pole during his early time in Uganda.

The badly damaged entrance to the former royal palace

Steven R. Ford photos

Bad Karma Died on the Cross

Anglicans in Nepal build a growing church by caring for the poor.

By Steven R. Ford

As the AirAsia jet began its descent into Kathmandu, the view from my window seat was breathtaking. There, on this rare (I'm told) cloudless morning, were the mighty Himalayas, certainly among the most magnificent of God's creations on "this fragile earth, our island home." As the plane passed through 29,000 feet, the captain announced, "We're now at the height of Mt. Everest, visible from the right-side windows."

My mind began to race. Mt. Everest is a place to which I've felt spiritually connected ever since I figured out in grade school that Tenzing Norgay and Edmund Hillary reached the summit exactly three weeks after I was born. I vividly remember being awed by Hillary's photos in a geography textbook of Norgay planting a makeshift flag at the top of the world and of the view from there of shadowy, pure white rugged mountains as far as the lens could see. I recalled finding and buying, decades later in Wellington, New Zealand, what remains to this day a personal treasure: a local five-dollar banknote featuring a portrait of Sir Edmund and signed by the adventurer. As the plane touched down just east of Kathmandu, I sensed I had arrived in an otherworldly place.

The trip from the airport to the city center, however, revealed a different and much sadder reality. Many buildings had been damaged or destroyed by the massive earthquakes of several years ago, and tents and makeshift hovels were obviously housing hundreds if not thousands of people. Once downtown, I noticed the near absence of foreign tourists; before the earthquakes, tourism had been the mainstay of the fragile Nepalese economy. As I checked into a minimally damaged (and ultra-inexpensive) hotel, I asked the English-speaking clerk why nothing was being rebuilt. "It's politics," she told me with a shrug of resignation. "Our officials are all incompetent."

She was, of course, right, as far as she went. The seismic upheavals in Nepal came almost hand in hand with massive political upheavals. It had only been a few years since a Maoist-fueled civil war

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Bad Karma

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had come to an end. King Birendra and most of the royal family had been slaughtered by a prince who later died, and Parliament had later voted overwhelmingly to abolish the monarchy. By the time the quakes hit in April and May of 2015, officials had been arguing and fighting for more than a year about what a new constitution should look like. There was, for all practical purposes, no functioning government. More than $4 billion in foreign disaster relief flowed quickly, but no mechanism was in place to decide how to distribute or to use those funds. They simply sat in the treasury or remained abroad as uncollected pledges. They still do.

In the weeks that followed the earthquakes, a makeshift constitution was cobbled together, but it did not begin to address either age-old regional conflict or the vast ideological differences of newly formed political parties. One group and party, predominant in the south, responded with open rebellion, resulting in death for more than 600. As a result, India closed its border with Nepal for five months, effectively cutting off vital supplies of food, gasoline, and building materials.

One of many makeshift shelters in Kathmandu

Squabbling continued in Kathmandu, now centered on proposed constitutional amendments. Two years on, the government still does not function. A mountain of unused relief money remains untouched. Khadga Prasad Oli, Nepal's former prime minister, said of the problem: "the reconstruction effort is not going to end even in decades at this pace."

Although Buddhist communities exist in various parts of the country, a common thread binding most Nepalese people is a strong adherence to Hinduism, and Himalayan Hinduism is marked by an extraordinary emphasis

In the two years since the devastating quakes, baptized membership in the Deanery of Nepal has grown by an incredible 43 percent, and more than 1,200 have been confirmed.

on karma. People have and get what they deserve, to put it simply. Under karma, those who lost homes and families and livelihoods during the earthquakes clearly had it coming. This accounts for the obvious lack of concern by the few who were spared ruin for the many who lost everything, just as it accounts for the now destitute having no expectation of help. Officialdom remains preoccupied with itself; rebuilding shattered lives is not a priority at all.

Enter now the Anglican Church in Nepal. It began in 1999, when a small group of self-started Christian congregations, each including veterans of the British Army's Royal Gurkha Rifles (still entirely recruited in Nepal), petitioned the Bishop of Singapore for inclusion in his diocese. The diocesan synod received them as missions, and a priest was dispatched to teach the basics of Christian faith and Anglican doctrine and to celebrate the sacraments of the New Covenant. The Very Rev. Norman Beale was quickly named Dean of Nepal, and he immediately began training catechists and lay pastors to preach the gospel and to start new missions. By the time of the 2015 earthquakes, the Deanery of Nepal counted three priests (two of them indigenous Nepalese) and 76 full-time lay pastors serving 8,000 Anglicans in 48 separate congregations.

But that was only the beginning. In the two years since the devastating Himalayan quakes, baptized membership in the Deanery of Nepal has grown by an incredible 43 percent, and more than 1,200 have been confirmed. A number of young Nepalese Anglicans have been sent abroad as seminarians, to return in a few years for ordination as deacons and eventually as priests. Three Nepalese novices have begun training abroad with the intent of returning to Kathmandu to form an indigenous religious order. The goal now is for Singapore's Deanery of Nepal to become a diocese of the Province of South East Asia.

Why is the Anglican Church growing so rapidly in Nepal? I believe the answer is obvious. Anglicans in this devastated country proclaim the good news of God in Christ not only in their words but also in their deeds. "Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise," Jesus teaches (Luke 3:11), and brothers and sisters in Christ invite the most needy Hindus around them to share their tents and what little food they have. "Go out at once into the streets and lanes of the town and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind, and the lame," commands the king in a parable told by Jesus (Luke 14:21), and destitute Anglicans are at the forefront of rebuilding ruined health clinics in villages. They proclaim with conviction that "bad karma" has died with Christ on the cross, that God's will for all people is to "have life, and have it abundantly" (John 10:10). The witness of the rapidly growing Anglican Church in Nepal is simple. Like a married couple, it is a visible "sign of Christ's love to this sinful and broken world, that unity may overcome estrangement, forgiveness heal guilt, and joy conquer despair," accomplished as its members "reach out in love and concern for others" (BCP, p. 429). It is a compelling witness indeed.

In a land of physical and human destruction ruled by karma, I found the seeds of God's kingdom, planted and tended by faithful Anglicans, beginning to grow and to blossom. As I caught my last glimpses of the Himalayas from my window seat on the flight out of Kathmandu, I was vividly reminded that Christian faith can indeed move mountains.

The Rev. Steven R. Ford assists at St. Mark's/San Marcos, Mesa, Arizona.

TreeHouse photos

— Twenty Minutes with Jason Ballard —

Sustainable Housing for the Rest of Us

Jason Ballard, CEO of TreeHouse, wants his work to be "something beautiful for God."

By Jordan Hylden

Jason Ballard is CEO and cofounder of TreeHouse, a sustainable home improvement retailer and home solutions provider based in Austin that aims to do for our homes what Tesla did for cars and Whole Foods did for groceries. It will open two new stores this summer and plans a nationwide expansion. I caught up with him in a coffee shop in Dallas.

Your company describes TreeHouse as dedicated to "reinventing home improvement with the twin goals of ecological and human health." How can a home improvement store like yours make a difference?

I studied biology and ecology in college, and in the early part of my young adulthood I was chasing two parallel vocations. The one I thought would win was the vocation to be a priest in the Episcopal Church, and the other was trying to make a difference in what seemed to be some very obvious environmental challenges. I started seeing that if you triage all of the environmental challenges that we're facing, almost all the roads point back to the home. The home as a sector is the number one user of energy, and the number two user of water. The construction industry is the number one producer of landfill waste and consumer of renewable and non-renewable resources. Our homes are the number one source of toxin exposure.

Realizing all of this was an amazing revelation, once I had it. I just couldn't shake it, and so I thought if I wanted to make a difference in ecological and human health, then I needed to be working on the built environment. It is existentially urgent that we find a way to shelter ourselves without ruining the world around us, and so I just launched out. That may sound idealistic, but I'm an eternal optimist.

What led you to start TreeHouse?

After I graduated from college, I moved to Colorado with the goal of getting involved in environmental work. At the time, all I knew was that I wanted to be in nature and work on environmental challenges. I ended up putting myself at the disposal of the sustainable building industry, in the Front Range mountains in Colorado.

That's where the insight came from. There's something missing here, I recognized. The sustainable building industry needed someone who could do this on a large enough scale to make it affordable. It was clear to me at the time, and it still is, that one of the battles that TreeHouse exists to fight is that sustainable building can't be something that's just for the top 2 percent. It needs to

Jason Balllard: "I've told many people that Tree-House is an exercise in applied theology. What would home improvement look like if Jesus Christ is raised from the dead?"

have mainstream adoption or it won't make a difference. If only 2 percent of homes have solar power, we're going to miss, and we can't miss. I think it's a really exciting time to be alive, even if it's a bit scary, since we're making decisions right now that humanity's going to have to live with for the next thousand years.

Let's talk more about the issue of mainstream adoption. I've heard your store called the Whole Foods of home improvement stores. But people say that Whole Foods will take your "whole paycheck." How can environmentally conscious home improvement be more than a luxury good?

I'll defend Whole Foods a little bit, first of all. A lot of things can take your whole paycheck — deer hunting, motorcycles, theological books, you name it. But investing in good agriculture and good health is not a bad place to park some money.

That said, Whole Foods is more expensive than conventional grocery stores. TreeHouse has been eyes wide open about this issue from the beginning. But there also is a bit of a business strategy about it. It's very difficult to start a business at the bottom of the market. You might say that TreeHouse is a bit like Robin Hood, leveraging the top of the market so that we can make sustainability more affordable for more people. Tesla is another company that's famous for doing this. Their absolute goal is a $30,000 widely affordable electric car, but they started with a $120,000 electric car that's faster than a Ferrari. That's very intentional; it was just good business strategy.

That said, homes are generally expensive, and the kind of decisions about the home that TreeHouse wants you to make are not radically more expensive. And especially when you're pairing these expenses with reductions in energy use, they end up paying for themselves. If your goal is to spend the lowest amount of money over the next 10 years operating your house, the cheapest thing to do actually would be to shop at TreeHouse and invest in these energy-efficient technologies.

How can we help consumers think about larger values? I'm thinking of your standard big-box retailer that advertises a low, low price, encouraging us to think about nothing else. We aren't often told about things like whether workers were paid a fair wage in safe working conditions. Are there ways that we can empower and encourage consumers to think about these things too, not just the price?

Yes, but I've developed a more pragmatic approach to this over the years. When we opened TreeHouse, our first two years were really tough. We had the idea, I think, that we were obviously such a good cause that people would beat a path to our door. And that wasn't the case. So I realized that I was talking past people's housing needs. A home is primarily about shelter and comfort, and then emergent properties like self-expression, community, and so on. So whatever we do, we have to make sure that the homes that TreeHouse is offering are answering those first-order needs better than anyone else. That then gives us the permission to advance our business goals, which are health, sustainability, and responsibility.

I think Tesla is another company that did a great job of this. For a long time with electric cars, the pitch was, *Hey, they're kind of weird-looking, and most self-respecting people wouldn't be caught dead in one, they're slow, they might catch*

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on fire; but hey, save the whales and drive an electric car. Tesla came along and said: *No, if this is going to become normal, they have to succeed as cars. They have to be safe, fast, and sexy*. So our idea is that behavior changed by guilt is a very difficult thing to pull off, as most priests would tell you. You have to hold out a better hope. So at TreeHouse we aim to help people build their very best homes.

Let's talk about your business goals. Your values statement says, "TreeHouse grows through a commitment to our values. By caring for people, communities, and the environment first, we can fundamentally change how millions of people relate to the world around them." How can a for-profit business put people, communities, and the environment first? Don't investors want to see the value of their investment come first?

There are two layers to this question. One is that this is a thesis that TreeHouse is attempting to prove wrong. That is, I believe companies that embody our highest goals and ideals and work for the common good are always going to be better businesses in the long run.

The other way to answer the question is that if you start your own company you can do things however you want to. This is how I would like to do it, and if it won't work this way, then I'm not interested in being a businessman. Either I can do business while caring for people and the world around me, and trying to live from the truest places in myself, or I'll go back to seminary. I don't have my ultimate self-identity staked on business success. I feel like this is something I'm supposed to do at this moment, and for me it's a working out of my Christian faith. I'm not willing for it to be anything less.

You're a committed Episcopalian, and were in the ordination process for a time to become a priest. Did your faith make a difference in leading you down this career path? Do you see it as a vocation?

I find our church to be rich and deep, catholic and self-critical at the same time in the best sorts of ways, with an eye to the future and our roots at once. I love being Episcopalian; I think it's the most wonderful thing, and it nourishes me deeply.

I did train to become a priest. I have a very unconventional path to becoming a CEO, which includes my own faith journey. I always knew that whether I was to become a priest or go into business or something else entirely, I was very consciously trying to do something with my life so that each day was a response to the reality of the work of Christ. That's what I'm trying to do, rather imperfectly at times. I've told many people that TreeHouse is an exercise in applied theology. What would home improvement look like if Jesus Christ is raised from the dead? That's the most basic way to put it, and I'm very consciously thinking about my work this way.

Now, do I see it as a vocation? I know that might sound like a simple question, but it's a very piercing question for me. The last time I hung out with Bishop Tony Burton [rector of Church of the Incarnation, Dallas], I launched into an existential crisis about whether I should have become a priest, and whether I'm doing what I'm called to do. TreeHouse is getting some success: we're partnered with Tesla, we're partnered with Nest, and all of these cool companies. *Inc.* magazine is writing articles about us. But I wrestle with this, since Jesus pretty clearly had some strong words to say about the rich and the powerful, and he encouraged humility and poverty. So if I'm on a path that may well include wealth and power, am I truly following Jesus? But I've consulted people — my bishop, Bishop Burton, my Christian brothers and sisters — and I've continued to be encouraged that this can be good and holy work.

At the same time, I'm not ignorant, and I don't think I'm an exception to all of the warnings about wealth and power and fame found in Scripture. I have what I hope is a healthy skepticism about success. … I really did imagine myself a rural priest in South Dakota or someplace, writing and fly-fishing and living the George Herbert lifestyle. My life today is not one that I ever imagined. And yet I wake up every morning excited about the work I get to do, and I continue to believe that I can make it something beautiful for God. I hope that by God's grace, God will make it a beautiful of-

"Most churches have giant roofs, and so solar power is a no-brainer. With the financing options out there today, you are going to spend zero dollars more on energy that's causing no harm."

fering for himself. I still have a long way to go.

TreeHouse is focused on home improvement, but do you have any suggestions for church improvement?
The first place to start is resiliency. A lot of the financial burden on churches today comes from decisions made decades ago, when people went with the cheap option. Because of that, now they're expensive to maintain. Building things well the first time is a kind of endowment for the future of the parish. It's important to choose high-quality materials and pay the extra 20 percent up front, and avoid 200 years of maintenance costs.

The next two areas to address are energy and water use. These things can be very simple. Most churches have giant roofs, and so solar power is a no-brainer. With the financing options out there today, you are going to spend zero dollars more on energy that's causing no harm. It also is a kind of insurance policy for the church, to own your own energy source and guard against energy costs rising in the future. It's important to make sure all of the systems are functioning properly — lighting, HVAC, and so on. As for water, the main culprit in a church will be the toilets, and low-water-use toilets are easy to install.

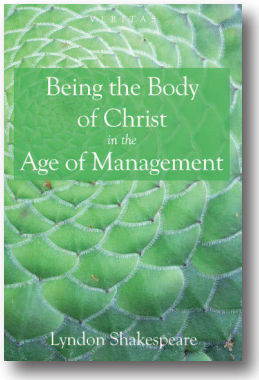
Lastly, as we're Episcopalians, we care about what happens to the physical spaces that we worship in, and our own bodies. So, we should make sure we're not bringing extra toxins into the church, when we paint or install carpeting. These things can be quite nasty. As we live longer and longer, we're starting to see increasing onsets of cancers and dementias, and an increasing body of evidence suggests that this has to do with the low level of toxin exposure we constantly have. It'd be nice if the church wasn't contributing to that, if the church truly were a sanctuary at every level of meaning.

Episcopalians and other liturgical Christians have a robustly physical involvement with their faith: We kneel, swing incense, we worship "in the beauty of holiness," we might venerate icons, and so on. Do you see connections between our worship practices and how we relate to the natural world?
This is one of the things that I think makes Christianity more true. I love the Eastern Orthodox concept of veneration. It's less than worship, but it's more than respect — it's like a holy respect. I love this idea, and it's one of the great insights of Christianity, I believe. And I think you can make a connection between venerating icons and venerating God's creation. There are lots of schools of thought, basically Gnostic, that say the physical doesn't matter, that the spiritual is really what counts.

On the other side, there's a kind of secularism that says the physical is all that matters, and the spiritual is a bunch of hocus-pocus. It's only Christianity that says these things are designed to be together, that God was physically incarnate and physically was raised from the dead, and has created a physical community called the Church to be his light in the world. It's deep and beautiful wisdom. ❏

Mission, not Business

Review by Thomas E. Breidenthal



Being the Body of Christ in the Age of Management

By **Lyndon Shakespeare**

Cascade Books. Pp. 238. $29

As the title of his book suggests, Lyndon Shakespeare points to a fundamental disconnect between two ecclesial paradigms: the Church as the body of Christ and the Church as a religious community whose success or failure depends on two things: externally on market strategy, and internally on best practices. Obviously, the managerial model comes out of the business world. Shakespeare's main contention is that the Church is not a combination of moving parts to be organized effectively. It is an integrated organism, just as any biological entity is.

More importantly, it is like a living human body — that is, an integrated organism that is capable of free agency. This means that the human body cannot be abstracted from the human person, as if the body were merely a vessel for the soul. Embodiment and personhood are inseparable. That being the case, human beings cannot be reduced to physical objects that can be manipulated to achieve any goal, however commendable. This is not because we are essentially unphysical: Shakespeare is very clear that we are essentially embodied. Rather, it is our very embodiment, suffused as it is with the capacity to act in unpredictable and graced ways, that gives the lie to any philosophy that reduces physicality to inert pliability.

Embodiment is about connection at every level: the connection of the body's various members one with another; the connection of embodied personhood with other persons; and the connection of the human community with the created order and, ultimately, with God. Shakespeare grounds his argument in a recovery of Aquinas's approach to the concept of body, biblically understood. The human race forms a single body — a body that has been taken on by Christ in the Incarnation. Through the gift of the Holy Spirit and through Christ's real presence in the Eucharist, that body is being reformed as the body of Christ, the Church.

Shakespeare's discussion of Aquinas is precise and apt. This book would be worth reading for that reason alone. It is also noteworthy for its application of Thomistic ecclesiology to current approaches to the Church's health and growth. If the Church truly is the body of Christ — that is, the human race taken up into the force field of our human nature, conjoined with God's in Christ — then it is a mistake to be concerned about its survival. A focus on survival leads inevitably to managerial approaches: operational efficiency, market strategy, delivery of goods, and the like. It also tends to shift the focus away from the whole body of Christ to the individual congregation, perceived as a unique institution with its particular assets, culture, and strengths.

I am in basic agreement with Shakespeare's thesis, but wish to note two areas, if not of concern, then of confusion. First, I am troubled by his insistence that individual congregations should avoid assessing their particular strengths and circumstances. I understand his concern that a focus on local uniqueness may simply devolve into marketing. But might this not also be an embrace of embodiment? So much of the Fresh Expressions work in the Church of England (and increasingly in the Episcopal Church) has been about congregational connection with the surrounding neighborhood. This essentially Thomistic agenda demands deep discernment on a congregation's part regarding its capacity to relate in humble service to its neighborhood. Asset-based congregational development need not be about individual survival on the business model.

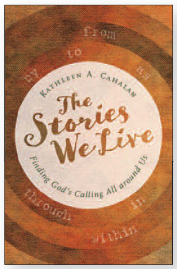
This leads to my second difficulty. Shakespeare clearly wants to recall the Church to its mission and its essence as the body of Christ. Yet his book evidences an animus against the whole notion of mission, one strangely at odds with his central message. I appreciate his annoyance with congregational mission statements, inasmuch as these may commit congregations to the business dynamics that produced the notion of mission statements in the first place.

But Shakespeare's rejection of missional language seems to go deeper. For instance, he is highly critical of the seminal Church of England report, *Mission-shaped Church,* seemingly arguing that the Fresh Expressions call to renewed mission is really a call to more effective marketing. This forces an important question. Is all our talk about a missional Church merely a cover for better strategies for survival (even survival as a smaller but leaner Church), or might it be about faithfully about doing God's will?

I am grateful to Shakespeare for reminding us that the Church all too easily confuses mission with self-aggrandizement. In my experience, however, the current push to be a missional rather than a self-centered Church is a call to sacrifice and loss, not management and gain. While Shakespeare's critique of the managerial approach deserves attention, his association of the mission-shaped Church with that approach borders on friendly fire.

The Rt. Rev. Thomas E. Breidenthal is Bishop of Southern Ohio.

EERDMANS



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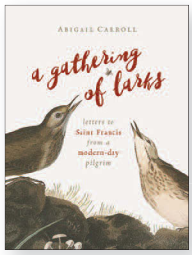

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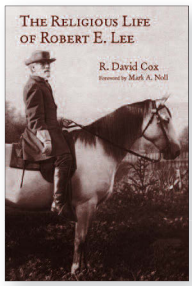

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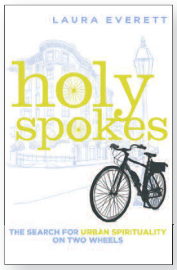

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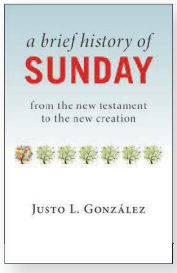

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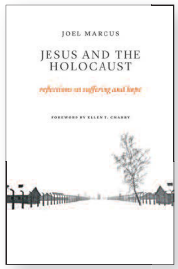

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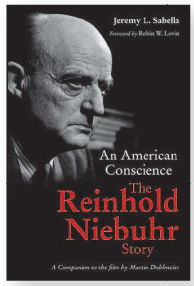

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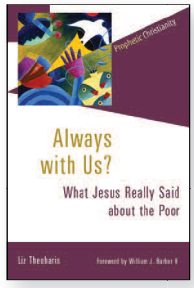

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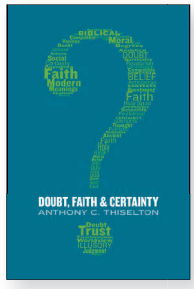

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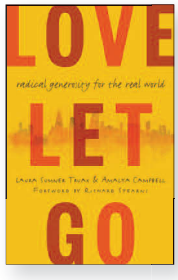

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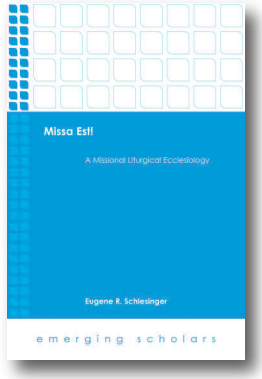
Both/And Missional Thought

Review by Daniel H. Martins

Missa Est!
A Missional Liturgical Ecclesiology
By **Eugene R. Schlesinger**
Fortress Press, 2017
Pp. 300. $79



In the current milieu among Christians in much of the world, any mention of *mission* is immediately tagged as presumptively timely and relevant. Books, conferences, and workshops on the subject abound. Parishes and dioceses, and those who lead them, are judged in many quarters by how effectively they engage mission. Presiding Bishop Michael Curry has dubbed the church that he leads "the Episcopal branch of the Jesus Movement," a distinctly missional appellation.

Various scriptural and theological taproots are adduced by the advocates of mission-based thought and behavior on the part of Christians, making it possible to be quite principled and high-minded in such advocacy. It is simply impossible to argue against the notion that the Church, by its nature, ought to engage in missionary endeavors. At the same time, it is equally impossible to deny that much of the rhetoric of mission masks an ever-rising tide of neuralgic anxiety about the substantially degraded influence of Christianity in Western society, to which the aging and shrinking Christian communities in Europe and North American bear chilling witness.

This much is widely agreed. Beyond that consensus, however, considerable differences emerge. These differences generally coalesce in one of two directions. A great many mission-minded Christians find their prime directive in the Great Commission (Matt. 28:16-20). In this paradigm, mission is simply tantamount to evangelism, but "with an attitude," that is, not mere dutiful proclamation of the gospel, but proclamation of such an effective sort that it results in numerical growth of biblical (e.g., Acts of the Apostles) proportions. Missionary faithfulness cannot but yield church growth.

Pushing back against this mission-equals-evangelism viewpoint is what might be called the *missio Dei* school. From this perspective, missionary work involves first observing and discerning where God is already active in the world — renewing, reconciling, redeeming — and then intentionally tagging along in that divine activity. Mission, after all, is *God's* mission, not the Church's, *per se*. "The Church doesn't have a mission," we often hear. "God's mission has a Church." What such cooperative tagging along tends to look like, in practical terms, involves a good bit of attention to political, economic, and social structures and the ills that flow from them. Mission is ultimately the work of promoting justice and love in human relationships and social institutions.

Into this rich and dynamic conversation comes *Missa Est!*. The volume is a slightly revised version of the author's doctoral dissertation at Marquette University. Eugene R. Schlesinger is a recently minted Episcopalian who, notwithstanding his free-church evangelical background, demonstrates a clear and thorough familiarity with the Book of Common Prayer (1979). One cannot help but surmise that, at some level, this academic offering is autobiographical, an artifact of Schlesinger's embrace of the Catholic tradition as a source of personal refreshment and encouragement.

Apropos of this is the considerable attention he devotes to the question of whether it is possible for a church that is liturgical — adhering to an ordered discipline of worship and sacramental life — not to be fatally compromised in its missionary endeavors. This is simply not a debate that rages within the historic ecclesial mainstream, whether Catholic or Reformed. That the author of this volume deems it worthy of being engaged with formidable zeal says something about the provenance of the dust on his shoes.

In attacking his subject, Schlesinger declines to accept the philosophical dichotomy regarding mission as I have laid it out here. Rather, he carefully includes both perspectives (mission as evangelism and mission as tagging along with God) in his vision. His approach, however, is no mere synthetic fusion of the two. He stipulates the *missio Dei* perspective; indeed, he embraces it. Of course all mission originates from God and belongs to God, and anything the Church does by way of mission is in service to the *missio Dei*.

But instead of just accepting the way some of its proponents frame it — that is, in terms of social engagement on behalf of justice and love — Schlesinger grabs the notion of *missio Dei* by the scruff of the neck and drags it through a close and critical dialogue with the likes of Hans Urs von Balthasar and Bernard Lonergan as they do battle over trinitarian theology. Then, with his captive still firmly in hand, he makes various pit stops in the realm of ecclesiology, sacramental theology, and even pastoral liturgy (including the 1979 baptismal rite and the Roman Catholic *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*). He pays an extended call on St. Augustine for a tutorial on the learned doctor's understanding of sacrifice as it relates to his overarching and ambitious idea of the *totus Christus*, the multiple bodies of Christ — the historical body, the sacramental body, and the ecclesial body — operating as a single organism in the dynamic exchange of gifts that forms the

heart of both the life of the Trinity and the action of the Eucharist.

What comes out at the bottom of this funnel is the compelling assertion that the *missio Dei* is nothing other than the paschal mystery: the complex of divine actions and events beginning with the Annunciation to Mary and concluding with the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, with station stops at the nativity, life and ministry, passion, death, resurrection, ascension, sending of the Spirit, and second coming. "To share in the life of the church is to share in the paschal mystery, is to share in the *missio Dei*, is to share in the divine life" (p. 90).

It then flows organically, since the liturgy of the Eucharist and the paschal mystery are hopelessly intertwined, that mission is connected to liturgy in a way possibly analogous to the hypostatic union of the human and divine natures of Christ — not to be confused, but not in any way separable. The liturgy is an end in itself and a good in itself, not some sort of sourdough starter for mission. And the Church in mission (Schlesinger is fond of language from Pope Francis's encyclical *Evangelii Gaudium*, which speaks of the Church being ever "in departure") is valid in its own right; it is not just a codicil on the Eucharist. Yet, each is fully coherent only in relation to the other. Schlesinger says repeatedly that mission "veri-fies" [his hyphen] the performance of the liturgy, and alone makes it intelligible:

> If the church becomes what it receives in the Eucharist, then the church too must be at the Father's disposal for the life of the world. Just as the Eucharist distributes Christ universally, the church is to be dispersed throughout the world so that all may come to share in Christ. (p. 146)

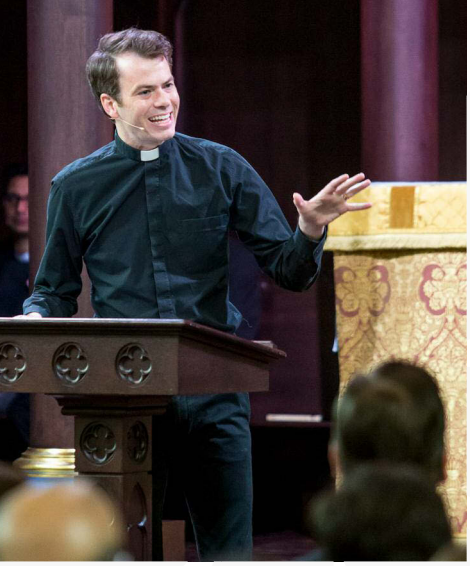
What, then, is mission for Schlesinger? It's a both/and scenario. Clearly, there is no Christian mission that does not involve baptizing and disciple-making. Mission must be about evangelization. And evangelization of necessity immediately leads back to mission; a baptized disciple automatically becomes a missionary before even drying off. Such missionaries are then, per Schlesinger, necessarily concerned with issues of justice in society. The Church's *ad intra* life and its *ad extra* mission are both integrally necessary. They are symbiotic; neither can be sustained without the other.

This is seriously academic theology, copiously footnoted (sadly, in a scarcely readable font size), with an extensive bibliography. As such, it is relatively unconcerned with practical theology — either missionary strategy or tactics. There is an almost mystical reliance on robust ecclesiology and sacramental theology effecting what they signify:

> The path of mission is not a detour, but, rather, the shape of the pilgrim church's peregrination. ... However, we must be on guard against overly didactic approaches to the liturgy that view the solution as thinking the right things during the Mass or learning lessons to be applied later. ... Instead, the liturgy itself ought to be doing this work, not because of its instructional value, but because through it, we share in the paschal mystery, and to share in the paschal mystery carries sharing in mission as part of its intelligibility. (pp. 206-07)

The writing is often repetitive, in keeping, one might surmise, with the material's origin as a dissertation. But, in a manner somewhat evocative of Dom Gregory Dix in *The Shape of the Liturgy* (and I mean this as a compliment), there are strewn throughout the text snippets of rhetorical luminosity that manifest a heart full of unquestionably earnest zeal for the gospel. Case in point: "It is the breaking of the bread, the pouring out of the cup, which constitutes the Christian community. In other words, the Eucharist makes the church, and it makes it by being a meal."

The Rt. Rev. Daniel H. Martins is Bishop of Springfield.



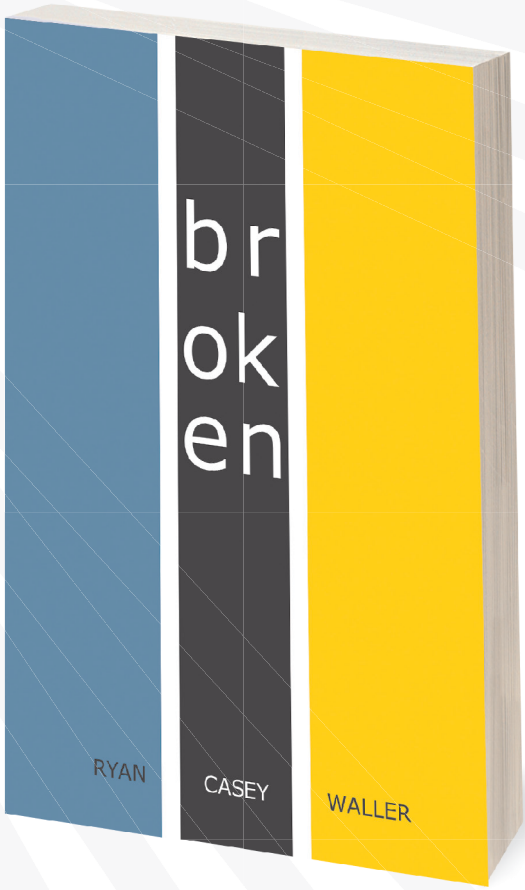
> "The truth is that we're all broken. We are all searching and wounded and hoping, in the end, we are enough. Enough for our friends. For our spouse. For our kids. For ourselves. For God. The good news is that we are enough."
>
> - Ryan Casey Waller, author of *Broken*

BROKEN

By Ryan Casey Waller

In the age of social media, where our lives are curated to show only our best and most beautiful selves, it is easy to believe we are the only ones who are broken. But we are not alone. We are all broken and in need of God's blessing. No one has it all together; no person is perfect.

In essays both humorous and achingly vulnerable, author Ryan Casey Waller urges us to join him in pouring out our brokenness, not just to God but to each other. Waller takes us through the trials of following Jesus during seasons of doubt and disbelief, anger, shame, and even hate, but always brings us back to the amazing news that Jesus blessed the bread before he broke it. Through Jesus, our brokenness is blessed, our wounds healed, and our hearts made whole.



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Stewards of Food and Land

Review by Nurya Love Parish

In the opening chapters of Holy Scripture, we read that "the Lord God planted a garden in Eden." Into that garden God placed the first human, "to till it and keep it." The human being, whose body was made from the earth, was first meant to steward the garden planted by God.

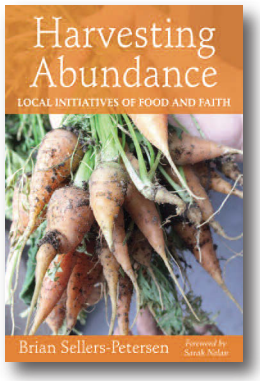
When it became evident that human beings were unable to fulfill God's intent for us, God came in the person of Christ to reconcile us with our Creator, a free gift of grace. In the last act of his earthly ministry, our Lord Jesus Christ provided a meal to his disciples. In that meal of bread and wine, he promised, we would find his presence as we remembered him.

And in John's vision of Revelation, the city of God has the water of life flowing through it, the tree of life bearing fruit each month and the leaves for the healing of the nations. God's reign means the reconciliation of all Creation: a garden city.

Given the importance of gardens and food to the biblical story of our creation and salvation, it's surprising that many Christians do not consistently integrate attention to food and agriculture as part of our life of discipleship.

A new book aims to show us a better way. *Harvesting Abundance: Local Initiatives of Food and Faith* contains a beautiful and inspiring summary of food garden ministries in the Episcopal Church. The book includes descriptions of 24 food and garden ministries with short narratives and beautiful photos. The gardens showcased run the gamut of potential locations: from Episcopal school gardens to church gardens; from seminary gardens to camp and conference-center gardens. Farm ministries, farmer's markets, and garden ministry networks are also profiled.

Brian Sellers-Petersen, a longtime staff member of Episcopal Relief and Development, a gardener, and beekeeper, has managed to span the breadth of food gardening in the church in these pages without neglecting depth. The short chapters and callout boxes with further detail make evident the integration of food, faith, and discipleship among the highlighted ministries.



Harvesting Abundance
Local Initiatives of Food and Faith
By **Brian Sellers-Petersen**
Church Publishing. Pp. 160. $16

But this book is not only a catalogue of good examples. The introduction tells the story of how and why Sellers-Petersen began investigating the church's garden ministries. The appendices include a multitude of resources: a glossary, steps to starting a food ministry, links for further learning, as well as a list of all the gardens and farms included in the book, organized by state. It is both a compendium and a practical manual.

As the introduction to *Harvesting Abundance* makes clear, the Episcopal Church owns a lot of land. How might we steward it to give God greater glory and serve our neighbors at the same time? This book shows many ways that disciples are doing just that. May it inspire many more.

The Rev. Nurya Love Parish is cofounder of Plainsong Farm, editor of growchristians.org, and priest-in-charge of Holy Spirit Church, Belmont, Michigan.

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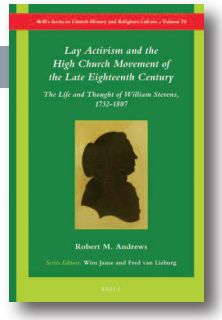
BOOKS

'Nobody' Was Somebody

Review by Richard J. Mammana



Lay Activism and the High Church Movement of the Late Eighteenth Century

The Life and Thought of William Stevens, 1732-1807

By **Robert M. Andrews**

Brill. Pp. xiii + 312. $166

Since at least 1800, William Stevens (1732-1807) has been known as "Nobody," a self-effacing and self-created alias. A group called Nobody's Friends meets three times a year in honor of Stevens's widespread legacy as a treasurer of Queen Anne's Bounty, a donor to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, and an encourager of the disestablished Scottish Episcopal Church. (Queen Anne's Bounty was officially "the Bounty of Queen Anne for the Augmentation of the Maintenance of the Poor Clergy," and the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel is a missionary agency founded in 1701.)

Stevens was a hosier who directed substantial private wealth toward organizations situated in the pre-Oxford Movement school of High Church Anglicanism, and his self-caricature as Nobody was an intentional act of humility designed to cloak his generosity. Robert Andrews of Australia's Murdoch University has reached behind Nobody to find a somebody whose activities and networks provide an important parallel narrative to the work of William Wilberforce among evangelical Anglicans.

William Stevens was born in Southwark and did not take a university degree. As a follower of the major pre-Tractarian High Churchman William Jones of Nayland (1726-1800), Stevens taught himself French, Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, and published an early major biography of Jones as well as a 12-volume edition of Jones's works. He never published in his own name, but had established a profile for serious agitation on church matters as early as 1773 in his opposition to a proposal for removing subscription to the Thirty-nine Articles in connection with ordination and university preferment. He also assisted in the organization of a Society for the Reformation of Principles to oppose intellectual currents in English print related to the French Revolution, and participated in founding the quarterly *British Critic*. In a period when Patristic study was uncommon for laypersons, he immersed himself in the writings of the first three centuries of Christianity, and worked to integrate similar principles in the church of his time. He is buried in his maternal parish of St. Nicholas Church, Otham, in Kent. A contemporary bishop and friend said of him, "Here is a man, who, though not a bishop, yet would have been thought worthy of that character in the first and purest ages of the Christian church."

Two aspects of this book make it stand out in a field of new material assessing the Oxford Movement and its predecessors or successors. The most important is the rejection of a notion that pre-Tractarian High Churchmanship was simply a weak or timid preparation for another movement, and lacked internal coherence and significance. Andrews elucidates a tradition vital in its own right, focused on the health of the church in Great Britain and its orderly expansion within the British Empire and elsewhere.

He also opens tantalizing directions for further research in his work on High Church women, including Susanna Hopton (1627-1709), Frances Norton (1644-1731), Mary Astell (1666-1731), Anne Coventry (1673-1763), Elizabeth Carter (1717-1806), and Sarah Trimmer (1741-1810). This is a dimension of Anglican piety almost entirely unexplored for its period. This book will be interesting mostly to specialists in its field, but it builds in happy ways on efforts by Geoffrey Rowell (of blessed memory), Peter Nockles, and Elizabeth Varley to push out the seams of inquiry in which scholars examine schools of affiliation, mutual support, and churchly encouragement.

Richard J. Mammana is the archivist of the Living Church Foundation.

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Alpha

(Continued from page 19)

The diocese received a Roanridge Trust Award Grant from the Episcopal Church to help rural parishes in southern Maryland sponsor an eight-week Alpha and to offer a weekend Alpha retreat. Roanridge grants are awarded every year for creative models of leadership development, training, and ministries in small towns and rural communities across the church.

> "Vital, growing congregations have several things in common, and one is a regular opportunity for people to gather to explore foundational questions and experiences of faith."
>
> —Bishop Mariann Budde

"Vital, growing congregations have several things in common, and one is a regular opportunity for people to gather to explore foundational questions and experiences of faith," Budde said. She sees Alpha not only as an entry point into the faith but also as an opportunity for people to go deeper into their faith.

In a recent weblog post she wrote about building God's house of solid rock and said that Alpha can be adapted to people at different points in their spiritual journeys; that there is value in having people of different backgrounds and levels of learning come together; that small-group discussions provide sometimes surprising and valuable perspectives; and that eating a meal together, as Jesus did with his disciples, is an opportunity for fel-

lowship in faith.

Designed for the unchurched, Alpha was brought to its current prominence by the Rev. Nicky Gumbel, who studied law at Cambridge and theology at Oxford, practiced as a lawyer, was ordained, and joined the staff of Holy Trinity Brompton Church in London. Gumbel wanted to address head-on what he called the "resurgence of interest among non-churchgoers" in Jesus. He wanted to help answer what he called questions of life, such as: Who is Jesus? Why did Jesus die? Why and how should I read the Bible? Who is the Holy Spirit? How can I resist evil? Alpha's popularity spiked in the 1990s in England and in the United States.

In describing Alpha at the cathedral, Hollerith said, "Alpha is a discipleship class. It was created for the unchurched and is a very evangelical interpretation of the Christian faith. We had to adapt it knowing that the people taking it here are not unchurched and are not big-'E' evangelicals. We wanted people, through this experience of Alpha, to become more faithful and become more comfortable talking about their faith."

Hollerith taught several Alpha classes at the cathedral, as did the Rev. Jamie Haith, who spent years on the staff at Holy Trinity Brompton and is now head of Holy Trinity Church, a nondenominational church in McLean, Virginia. Haith said more than 29 million people have tried Alpha, more than 169 countries offer it, and it has been translated into 112 languages.

An eight-week Alpha class includes eating a meal together, which introduces those taking the class to new people, some of whom come from outside the church where the course is held.

The cathedral is not the first church to bring Alpha to the Diocese of Washington. The program has been offered several times at All Saints Church in Chevy Chase, Maryland. After a hiatus of more than seven years, the church revived Alpha in 2015. In 2016 the course drew 50 to 65 participants on Sunday evenings; 40 volunteers helped with decorations, dinner service, clean-up, and small-group leadership. About 25 All Saints Alpha course participants attended an Alpha weekend at Meadowkirk Retreat & Conference Center in Middleburg, Virginia, in February 2016, hosted by Holy Trinity Church in McLean, with talks by Jamie Haith and discussion on the topic of the Holy Spirit.

"It is basic, but it gets at the core of our beliefs, and it clears up any misconceptions you might have had about church and what you have been taught to believe your whole life," said All Saints parishioner Krissy Lyons, who took the course and became an Alpha group facilitator.

"You have to distinguish between what is [the gospel] and what you have heard," said All Saints parishioner Tom Johnson, who also took the Alpha course and became a group facilitator. "Alpha uses a sharp knife to divide what is true from what you have heard. The sharp knife, of course, is the word of God."

Peggy Eastman

Judge Tosses Sauls Lawsuit

A district judge in Alabama has dismissed a lawsuit by the Rt. Rev. Stacy Sauls, former chief operating officer of the Episcopal Church.


Sauls

Mobile County 13th Judicial District Judge Ben Brooks said in his Aug. 22 decision that Alabama was not the proper venue for Sauls to file such a suit.

The judge ruled that the actions described in the suit occurred in New York, where Sauls still lives and where the church maintains its denominational office.

"The only potential Alabama witnesses are the lawyers [Sauls] hired," Brooks wrote.

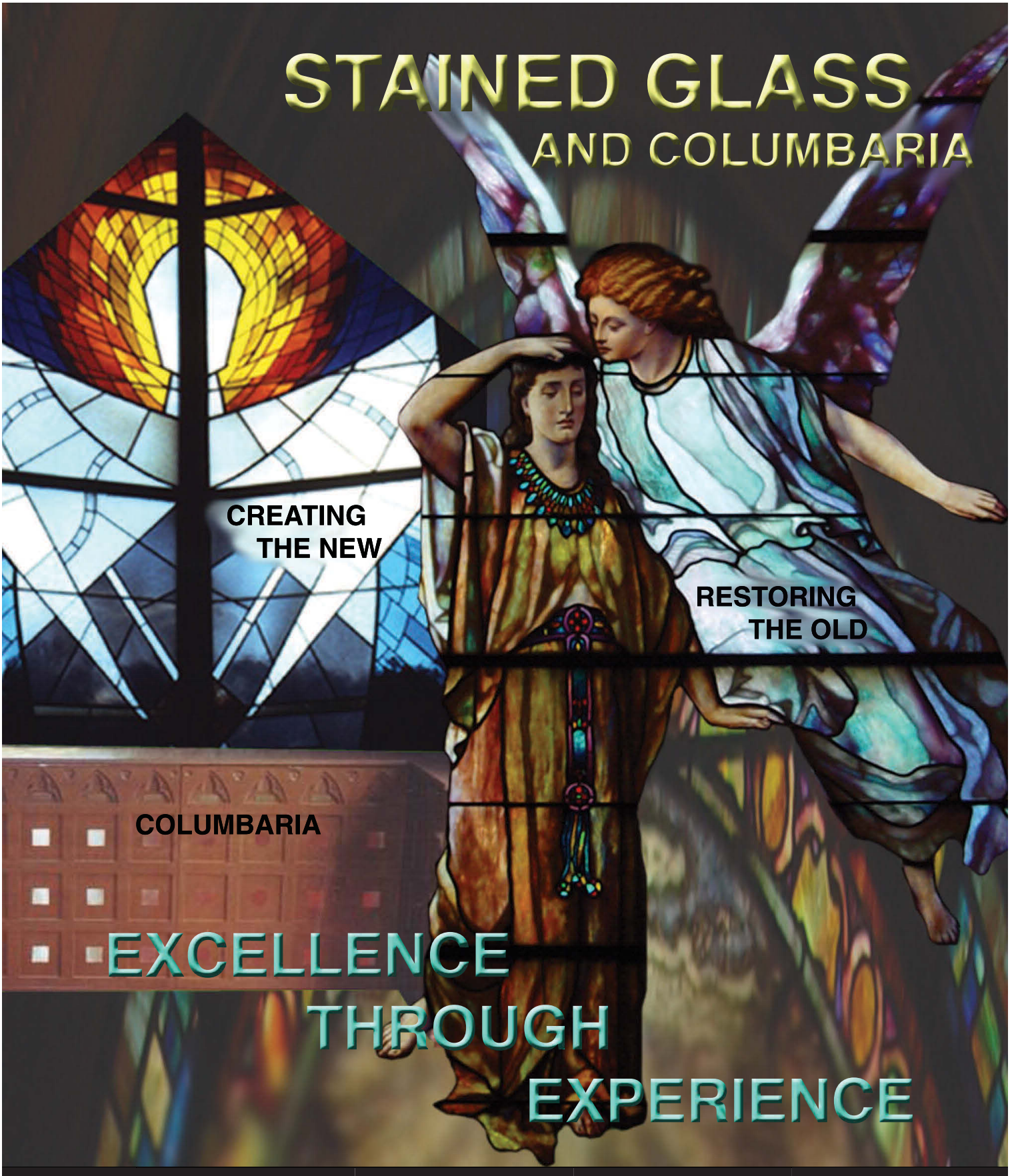
Neva Rae Fox, the church's public affairs officer, said late on Aug. 22 that "We will continue to keep everyone involved in our prayers," she said.

The judge's decision came about two months after he had ordered Sauls and church representatives in June to engage in state-mandated mediation. He took that action after he had heard oral arguments on the church's request that he dismiss the lawsuit.

The judge appointed Michael Upchurch, an Alabama lawyer and mediator, to lead that process. Upchurch was ordered to finish the mediation and report to Brooks by Aug. 18. Upchurch attends St. James Episcopal Church in Fairhope, Alabama, according to his profile on the website of the Mobile law firm Frazer, Greene, Upchurch, and Baker.

The bishop's suit against the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society and an unspecified number of unnamed defendants associated with the church claimed that Presiding Bishop Michael Curry's decision to replace him as chief operating officer had damaged his reputation and made it difficult for him to be employed elsewhere in the church.

Episcopal News Service



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ST PAUL'S PARISH, RIVERSIDE, ILLINOIS SEEKS A

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Upon the retirement of our Rector of 42 years, St Paul's Parish in Riverside, Illinois, a National Landmark suburb located 11 miles west of Chicago's Loop, is actively seeking a Rector.

We are a non-geographic "destination" congregation of mid-size (ASA: 53); Catholic, Anglican, Episcopal, and Benedictine in spirituality and culture. Our liturgical style is Solemn Rite II Benedictine monastic—an example of noble simplicity. We do not rely on gimmickry to try to bring people in. Benedictine hospitality and spirituality is what we do here, with no obsession with numerical growth at any cost.

A special emphasis is given to education and formation at this parish with fine adult programs and the Montessori-based Catechesis of the Good Shepherd for children. We are working on developing the Catechesis program for adults. An excellent library, curated by a parishioner with an MLS, provides parishioners with numerous opportunities to deepen their understanding of the Christian faith.

The Rector we seek should be dedicated to serving Christ and His people with integrity, dignity, perseverance, intelligence, and a well-developed sense of humor. Pastoral care is vitally important, as is the ability to be an effective abbatial-style administrator, not only of the seven Sacraments, but also the quotidian work of the parish. St Paul's is an endowed parish. Fiduciary responsibility is an absolute must.

For more information about our parish, please visit our website: www.stpaulsparish.org/rectorsearch.

If St Paul's Riverside is what you've been looking for, take the next step and visit the website of the Episcopal Diocese of Chicago (www.episcopalchicago.org) and click on Clergy Openings. The deadline for applications is October 31, 2017.

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PEOPLE & PLACES

Beginning with this edition, TLC revises its format of People & Places. Because addresses are so common on the web, and in the interest of publishing a timely list, we now will list churches' name and city rather than their full address.

Our online version of People & Places includes links to websites whenever they are available.

We will continue to publish retired clergy's home addresses when they are specified.

Appointments

The Rev. **Stanford Adams** is senior associate at Good Shepherd, Austin, TX.

The Rev. **Debora Adinolfi** is rector of St. Teresa's, Acworth, GA.

The Rev. **Kate Alexander** is priest-in-charge of Christ Church, Little Rock.

Amy Bradley is lay curate at St. Augustine of Canterbury, Augusta, GA.

Maggie Breen is northeast regional missionary for the Episcopal Church in Connecticut.

The Rev. **Bob Brown** is interim vicar of St. Peter's, Conway, AR.

The Rev. **Rosa Brown** is an interim priest at Christ Church Cathedral, Indianapolis.

The Rev. **Scott Brown** is headmaster of TMI-The Episcopal School of Texas, San Antonio.

Joshua A. Bruner is director of communications at General Theological Seminary.

The Rev. **Todd Bryant** is rector of St. Timothy's, Danville, CA.

The Rev. **Susan Buchanan** is rector of St. James, Lenoir, NC.

The Rev. **Elaine Caldbeck** is rector of St. Peter's, Bettendorf, IA.

The Rev. **Joshua Case** is associate rector of Christ Church, Charlotte.

The Rev. **Peter Casparian** is interim rector of St. Michael's, Austin.

The Rev. **Jordan Casson** is rector of St. Michael's, Yeadon, PA

The Rev. **Nancee Cekuta** is rector of St. Bartholomew's, North Augusta, SC.

David Chavez is lay curate at Santa María and Trinity Cathedral, both in Phoenix.

The Rev. **Cindy Clark** is vicar of Holy Innocents, Madisonville, TX.

Greg Cole is executive director of Emmaus House, Atlanta.

The Rev. **Suzanne Cole** is rector of St. Luke's, Wilton, ME.

The Rev. **Carlos de la Torre** is southwest regional missionary for the Episcopal Church in Connecticut.

The Rev. **Marya DeCarlen** is priest-in-charge of All Saints, Danvers, MA.

The Rev. **Dorian Del Priore** is canon for parish life at Trinity Cathedral, Columbia, SC.

The Rev. Canon **Nancy Deming** is interim rector of Christ Church, Media, PA.

The Rev. **Jay Denne** (ELCA) is pastor of St. Thomas, Sioux City, IA.

The Rev. **Taylor Devine** is curate at St. Philip's, Tucson.

The Rev. **Alexandra Easley** is rector of St. Andrew's, Seguin, TX.

The Rev. **Bonnie E. Edwards** is rector of San Gabriel the Archangel, Corrales, NM.

The Rev. **Noah H. Evans** is rector of St. Paul's, Mt. Lebanon, PA.

The Rev. **Joseph W. Farber** is rector of Transfiguration, Sisters, OR.

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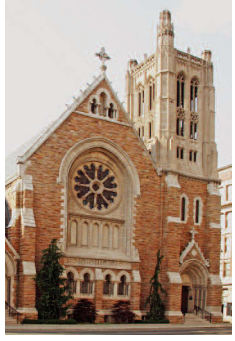

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SUNDAY'S READINGS | 14 Pentecost, September 10

Ex. 12:1-14 or Ez. 33:7-11 • Ps. 149 or Ps. 119:33-40
Rom. 13:8-14 • Matt. 18:15-20

Love, Reconcile, and Rejoice

"Owe no one anything, except to love one another; for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law" (Rom. 13:8). Conversely, one who fulfills the law has fulfilled the demands of love. The law says, "You shall not commit adultery; You shall not murder; You shall not steal; You shall not covet" (Rom. 13:9). Love is not merely what we do, and certainly not only what we feel. The most embracing love, extending to neighbors and strangers, is distinctly proscriptive. There are things to be left undone. Adultery, murder, theft, covetousness, and false witness are ruinous to human community. In a sense, love knows the Hippocratic Oath in its condensed form: Do no harm. "Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore, love is the fulfilling of the law" (Rom. 13:10).

Suppose, then, a violation of these proscriptions. What is a community to do? Is there some form of discipline? "If another member of the church sins against you, go and point out the fault when the two of you are alone"; "take two or three others along with you"; and "if the offender refuses to listen even to the church, let such a one be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector" (Matt. 18:15-17). These words are tempered by demonstrations of Jesus' compassion toward Gentiles and tax collectors, and by the goal to gain a hearing from the offending brother or sister. "If the member listens to you, you have regained that one" (Matt. 18:15). Rather like a chapter meeting in a monastic community, faults may be named, but only with the intention of reconciliation and strengthening the bonds of love in Christ that hold the community together. This is a bracing love, true, deep, and difficult. Without the presence and grace of Christ, it will not be.

Remarkably, this is introductory work. "Owe no one anything, except to love one another. … Love does no wrong to a neighbor" (Rom. 13:8, 10). If a member sins against you, seek to regain that one. Cherish and protect the bonds of love and peace in Christ's holy Church. But there is more.

"Besides this, you know what time it is, how it is now the moment for you to wake from sleep" (Rom. 13:11). The day of salvation is nearer than when we first believed, the night far spent, the day at hand. Initial conversion is the beginning of a great crisis, a moment when the future breaks open and floods the present. Christ would be our vestment, our armor, our light. He seeks our total transformation in grace. "Let us then lay aside the works of darkness, and put on the armor of light; let us live honorably as in the day, not in debauchery and licentiousness, not in quarreling and jealousy. Instead, put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires" (Rom. 13:12-14). The party is over, at least in one sense.

"Did you know," my wife asked, having picked up some trivia from the news, "that we live in the drunkest city in the United States?" The evidence is verifiable and the human cost horrible. Let us live honorably as in the day, not in reveling and drunkenness. The joy that makes us complete is Christ Jesus and his risen presence. He is the bread and wine of a parish block party, and all we need for a joy that is full.

Look It Up

Read Romans 13:11.

Think About It

Most of the time we are asleep. Yet Christ has risen!

SUNDAY'S READINGS | 15 Pentecost, September 17

Ex. 14:19-31 or Gen. 50:15-21
Ps. 114 or Ex. 15:1b-11, 20-21 or Ps. 103:(1-7), 8-13 • Rom. 14:1-12 • Matt. 18:21-35

Forgiveness

"In anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he would pay his entire debt. So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from the heart" (Matt. 18:34-35). This difficult end to a parable on forgiveness holds in tension both a final judgment against the unforgiving and the claim that forgiveness should not be motivated by external threat. Rather, the command of God should be so internalized that forgiveness toward a brother or sister flows *from the heart*. By divine command, forgiveness is necessary. Inwardly, it is the will of God working, by grace, in the free will of men and women bound together in Christ.

The king in the parable who forgives the servant does so "out of pity." The forgiven servant, however, grabs his debtor by the throat, refuses patience, and shows no mercy. Forgiveness, it seems, is something very close to compassion and empathy, an acknowledgment that the debtor is another self who, like every human, is burdened with debts that can never be fully and adequately repaid. What will a man give in return for his life? Forgiveness is a way of assuring that brothers and sisters in Christ remain in communion, and thus there is no limit to the number of times forgiveness may be offered. Acting "out of pity" simply is the normal and habitual condition of a healthy Christian body. For that reason, one who, having been forgiven, then refuses to extend forgiveness, is in violation of an essential part of life in Christ.

Forgiveness, to be sure, is difficult, complicated, and layered with subtleties when there is *something and someone* to forgive and the offense is *deeply serious*. God demands forgiveness, but God *gives the grace* by which forgiveness occurs, and *God gives time* for anger and sorrow to be fully felt by the person harmed. It is cruel, therefore, to stand in for God and demand that someone forgive when we lack the supernatural grace to make that happen. It is better, in the face of such suffering, to stand in solidarity and to feel pity that for now perhaps a person *cannot forgive*.

Forgiveness is rooted in grace and is a form of release. "Father forgive/release them, for they know not what they do." Strangely, in the normal trials in which forgiveness is needed, the person released is not primarily the offending party, but the person offended. The grip of a past sorrow, hurt, offense, or even attack may with time and grace loosen and then free a person to go on with life, and with new hope. But, let's be clear. Forgiving and forgetting do not belong together, if the latter means pretending that "it" never happened. Part of being released, however, may be a new freedom from an obsessive replay of previous hurt.

Look into the past. So much good flows into the present. So much sorrow and hurt spoil the life we might have. Let God do it. Let the God of storms breathe over the waters of the Reed Sea. "At the blast of your nostrils the waters piled up, the flood stood up in a heap; the deeps congealed in the heart of the sea" (Ex. 15:8). "The enemy [your hurt] said, 'I will pursue, I will overtake, … I will draw my sword" (Ex. 15:9). There is a power over which this enemy is powerless. "Terror and dread fell upon them; by the might of your arm, they became still as a stone" (Ex. 15:16). Emerging from baptismal water, we are forgiven and forgiving and free.

Look It Up

Read Matthew 18:27.

Think About It

Feel deeply and honestly, and let freedom be.

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