

Hymnal Revision

Forming Leaders

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THE LIVING CHURCH

December 3, 2017

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EVANGELICAL

ECUMENICAL



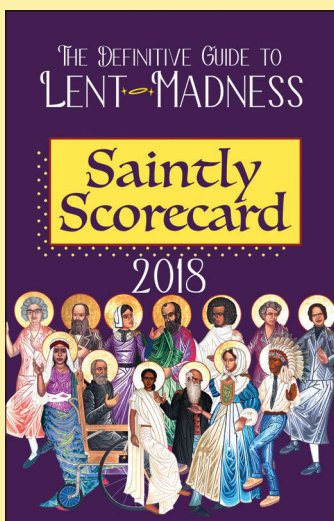
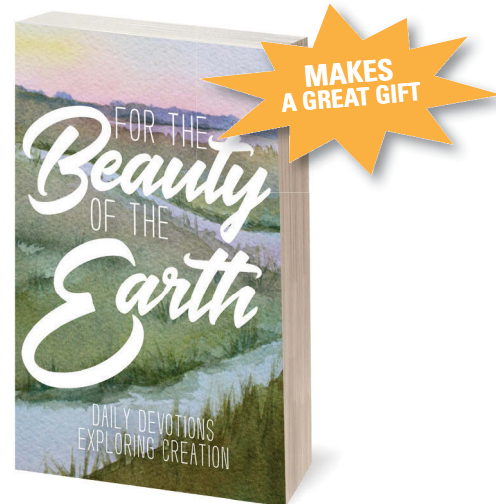
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THE LIVING CHURCH

THIS ISSUE | December 3, 2017

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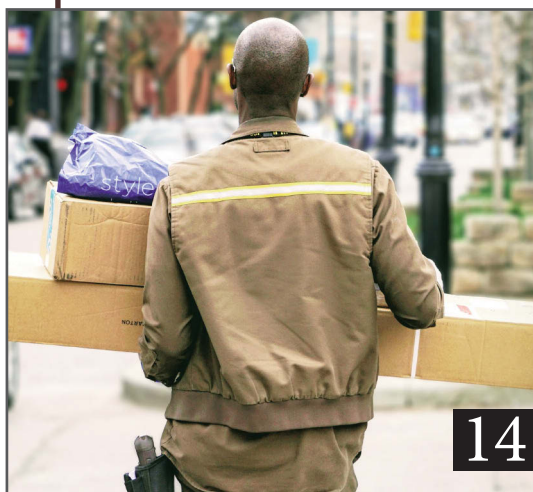
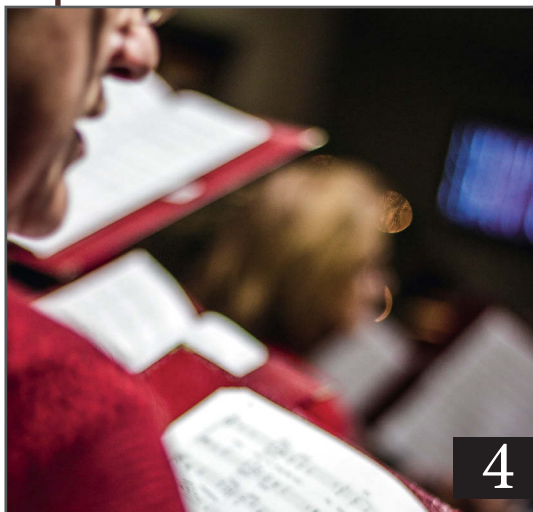
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We are grateful to St. Mark’s Cathedral, Shreveport [p. 43], and St. Mary’s Church, Orlando [p. 44], whose generous support helped make this issue possible.



Sing a New Song?

Liturgists, musicians are cautious about revising the hymnal.

By Mark Michael

A symposium at Virginia Theological Seminary, “The Once and Future Hymnal,” celebrated the 1982 Hymnal and discussed possible directions for its revision. The event, sponsored by the seminary’s Center for Liturgy and Music on Oct. 23-24, gathered dozens of scholars, musicians, and clergy from around the country. Speakers sang the praises of the current hymnal and sounded a rather hesitant note about the prospects for a new one.

“As the Episcopal Church looks toward prayer book and hymnal revision — do we? or don’t we?” said Ellen Johnston, the center’s director and a member of the Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music. “I was especially taken with the presentations of the Rev. Martin Seltz of the [Evangelical Lutheran Church in America] and David Eicher of the Presbyterian Church (USA). Hearing about their processes of hymnal revision opened my eyes to the many facets of this work.”

Episcopal speakers at the symposium most often expressed concerns about the time costs and difficulty of finding consensus that would attend a comprehensive hymnal revision.

The discussion echoed the standing committee’s 2012 Hymnal Revision Feasibility Study, which discouraged proceeding with hymnal revision, especially amid strong opposition to revision among the laity and those younger than 29. In the symposium’s closing sessions, several speakers joked about a new hymnal being as yet “a glimmer in the eye” of the Episcopal Church.

The symposium was a companion to a similar event about prayer book



David Beale/Unsplash photo

revision held earlier in October at the University of the South’s School of Theology. Both events are part of a conversation across the Episcopal Church in response to the 2015 General Convention’s direction that the Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music prepare a plan for prayer book and hymnal revision.

The VTS gathering opened with presentations that traced the revisions leading to Hymnal 1982. Former music professor James Litton, who served on the former Hymnal Revision Committee from 1966 to 1982, described a painstaking process of text and musical editing, with thorough vetting of hymn selections by clergy and musicians.

The revisers, he said, were “living at a time of hymn explosion,” and could draw on compelling new texts by Fred Pratt Green and Carl Daw, as well as a distinctive genre of unison “art song” hymn tunes, especially associated with

American composers David Hurd and Calvin Hampton. He suggested that a new hymnal should not be prepared until after the prayer book has been revised, because “the hymnal is really the companion to the Book of Common Prayer.”

The Rev. William Bradley Roberts, professor of church music at VTS, celebrated further achievements of the 1982 Hymnal in a lecture interspersed with vigorous hymn-singing. Roberts said the Hymnal 1982 significantly expanded the number of plainsong, American folk hymns, and African American spirituals being sung in Episcopal churches, with a few forays into Latino, African, and Native American hymnody. Ray Glover, the revision committee’s chairman, told Roberts that his great regret was that the hymnal did not include more Spanish-language hymns.

Marilyn Haskel, formerly of Church Publishing, reviewed a series of supplements that followed the hymnal. Aiming especially at expanding the use of inclusive language and introducing hymn texts in other languages, the supplements were intended to be temporary and experimental, an opportunity to “take risks and see what works,” she said.

While earlier supplements like *Wonder, Love and Praise* (1997) were authorized by General Convention, Haskel said Church Publishing assumed direct responsibility for later ones. The period of experimentation overlapped with what Haskel called “the Age of Congregational Musical Diversity,” as the 1991 General Convention permitted the use of “great diversity of musical styles” to address the church’s evangelistic needs, a decision that “opened the door to less musical

oversight in the Episcopal Church.”

Seltz and Eicher discussed the ELCA’s *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* (2006) and the PCUSA’s *Glory to God* (2013). Both men played coordinating roles for their church’s revisions. Both hymnals focused intensively on introducing texts that are “expansive with respect to God and inclusive with respect to people,” though Seltz said that the Lutheran hymnal also attended to the integrity of texts that are “in the repertoire of memory.”

The new hymnals also use texts and tunes from a wide variety of cultures, though Seltz said that in the case of *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*, this “reflects the diversity that a big umbrella denomination like the ELCA wishes to see in itself, to which it aspires. . . . It is what we would like to be, not what we really are.”

Seltz noted that *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* required six years of work. “We could have used more time, twice the amount of time for communal reflection.”

The Rev. Frank Wade, VTS’s interim associate dean of students and a delegate to 12 General Conventions, offered a keynote address about changes in the church’s cultural standing since 1983.

Wade’s talk was an affectionate but occasionally bracing critique of the Episcopal Church’s seeming loss of direction and inability to speak to “a world becoming more and more uncertain.” He suggested that the church’s enthusiasm for diversity ignores “an utter and complete failure in theological diversity.”

Wade also said that Episcopalians often exaggerate the church’s influence during the Civil Rights era, when “Episcopalians were well-represented on both sides of the Edmund Pettus Bridge.” Noting that in recent decades the Episcopal Church has focused intensely on the immanence of God, he suggested a change in direction might be needed: “I would wonder how to emphasize the transcendent — that we claim this lest we forget it while the world is forgetting.”

He said the church’s 1976 decisions to revise the Book of Common Prayer and to ordain women to the priest-

hood in 1979 brought profound and unsettling change. While stressing that he supported these decisions then and now, Wade counted their costs.

“We made some profound changes, and with that comes this implication: we can rethink this stuff. Very few things in our structure, very few things in our common life, are now fixed. If you can change the concept of ministry to include the ordination of women and to center it in baptism instead of ordination, you can do almost

anything. You can make almost any kind of change. And so, with the uncertainties that live with us in the world around us, there is the uncertainty to change almost anything we leaned against as a church, almost anything that holds us up. That’s an uncertainty in some minds. It’s a freedom in others.”

The Rev. A. Katherine Grieb, the seminary’s Meade Professor of Biblical Interpretation, offered a similar review

(Continued on next page)



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Hymnal Revision

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of theological changes. Grieb traced 35 years of shifts in theology, some of which affect hymn texts. A whole range of contextual theologies have arisen, she said, leading to “huge arguments about how to name God or whether to name God.”

Christian-Jewish relations have developed considerably, as global Christian leaders have expressed remorse for Church complicity in the Holocaust. Episcopalians, Grieb said, may need to reexamine the texts of popular hymns like “My Song Is Love Unknown” and “Lord of the Dance,” which engage in stereotypes about Jews in Jesus’ time.

She suggested that new texts are needed to address contemporary pastoral realities, like the suffering of immigrants and the need for reconciliation created by conflict across the Anglican Communion.

Grieb concluded with a consideration of the attacks on traditional sacrificial atonement theology posed by some contemporary theologians. While she is deeply concerned about the glamorization of violence in contemporary culture, a sacrificial understanding of Jesus’ death is rooted in the New Testament. The topic, Grieb said, is “left hanging unresolved in theological discussions.”

Carl MaulsBy, an Episcopalian and composer of African American hymns, discussed a marked tendency toward mixing styles such as hip-hop into worship music.

Andrew Sheranian, who at 37 appeared to be the youngest speaker by a decade or two, stood out as the only representative from a congregation that still uses the 1940 Hymnal. He described an engaging choral program and a devoted hymn study group at All Saints, Ashmont, in Boston, a predominantly Afro-Caribbean and Anglo-Catholic congregation that he serves as choirmaster.

Despite other speakers’ remarks about exhaustive consultation for the 1982 Hymnal, Sheranian hears “stories

of pain, very often,” he said. “Even in our desire to be inclusive with language and diverse in musical styles, the way this is perceived by people in choirs and congregations is as exclusion.”

Keith Tan, music minister at Christ Church in Glen Allen, Virginia, made a strong appeal for deeper engagement with contemporary Christian music within the Episcopal Church. His parish uses praise and worship music extensively because its leaders believe “the worship style should be indigenous to the congregation’s culture.”

Citing a recent Nielsen Music Report that ranked classical music as the least popular of ten genres, Tan challenged his largely traditionalist audience: “Ninety-nine percent of people we are trying to get to church like music with a drum beat. Using classical music, we are speaking to the music vernacular of only one percent of the population.”

Tan described an opportunity for Episcopal musicians to contribute to songs rooted in ancient faith, such as service and ritual music. “We need to sing our Creed. We need to sing canticles like the Magnificat. And they need to be written in contemporary flair, in the vernacular of 99 percent of the population, so that these ancient songs become indigenous to our people today.”

Presbyterian hymn writer Mary Louise Bringle addressed the volatile topic of revising hymns for inclusive language. Bringle served on the preparation committee for *Glory to God*, which revised texts extensively. She said hymnals are not anthologies, and that there is a warrant “to create texts that our congregations, in their contexts, can sing with understanding.” She said good hymns provide “a translucence to the Word and glory of God. If it arrests the singer, it’s not doing its job.”

Bringle expressed caution about altering much-loved texts. She said good editors should ask, “Is the line in a heart song? Then maybe the thing to do is to add a counterweighting body of new. We need to do ... very good re-

search into what is the heart song, that they would grievously lament having it altered or if taken from them.”

Episcopal hymn writer Carl Daw also expressed concern about extensive text editing: “You may be commissioned with power to change something, but it may be usurping the authority of the people of God.” He said the terms *king* and *Lord* have etymologies rich in theological meaning and deserve to be retained and explained more carefully.

Lutheran hymn writer Susan Cheriwien said that in her younger days she would have gladly taken a red pen to many older hymn texts, but she has grown more reluctant: “When there is not something that is false, memory trumps. Why change something if it is not blatantly false?”

Panelists discussing change in technology were quite hesitant about the value of recent developments for common worship. Nancy Bryan of Church Publishing said that projecting hymn texts harms community singing. “We retain, memorize, and embody text more easily from a book than from a screen.”

David Eicher said that *Glory to God* was launched in a popular digital edition and as an app for tablets and smartphones. *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* was issued in a version for screen projection, though Martin Seltz surmised that only a small percentage of ELCA churches have abandoned hymnals in the pews.

“There continues to be a strong value placed on having a book,” he said. “It is a statement of what belongs to the whole people of God. ... It’s a kind of safeguard and protection against religious professionals who will want to spoon-feed us only those things that will fit their agendas and not allow us to receive the whole compass of what’s available to us.”

Seltz shrugged off the value of discussing technological change when the real prospects for a new hymnal seem quite dim: “Nothing that any of us has said today will apply when you actually get to a [new] hymnal.”

Episcopal Church's Draft Budget Deficit Cut in Half

The Episcopal Church seeks feedback and suggestions on how to close a projected \$4.5 million deficit in the budget for the 2019-11 triennium. A working draft of the budget, which will be completed at General Convention in July 2018, is available at generalconvention.org.

The budget draft calls for income of \$128.4 million and expenses of \$132.9 million. The 2016-18 budget passed by General Convention in 2015 showed income of \$125.1 million and expenses of \$124.7 million, leaving a surplus of about \$353,000. In actual results through October, the surplus has dwindled to about \$12,000.

The 47-page spreadsheet, which breaks out expenses by line item, points to at least two topics likely to generate discussion leading up to General Convention: a sharp cutback in spending on evangelism, and a proposed salary for the president of the

House of Deputies, currently a volunteer position.

The 2015 General Convention adopted evangelism as one of three priorities for the coming triennium, along with racial reconciliation and the environment. Yet the budget calls for total evangelism spending of \$3.5 million for 2019-21, compared to \$6 million in the prior budget. (Some line items have been moved in and out of the evangelism heading, which may account for some of the decrease.)

The draft reduces the budget for starting new congregations (described in the Oct. 10 issue of TLC) from \$3 million to \$2 million, and cuts other evangelism initiatives from \$3 million to \$785,000. At the October Executive Council meeting, some members expressed dismay at the cuts, and can be expected to lobby for restoring some funding. Executive Council is the elected body that oversees the church

between General Conventions.

An explanatory note accompanying the draft budget states that \$2.8 million of evangelism spending for the current triennium was financed by a special draw from investments and dividends, driving the total draw to 5.7 percent. The draw for the coming triennium is set at 5 percent, and the note states: "Draws of over 5% from investments are not sustainable over the long term. The short-term reserves are now considerably lower at \$2.3 million than the \$9.5 million required to cover 3 months of operating income."

No salary has ever been provided for the president of the House of Deputies, a position to which the Rev. Gay Clark Jennings was elected in 2012 and re-elected in 2015. Under the canons, she is eligible for reelection to one more three-year term at the 2018 General Convention.

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Draft Budget

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The budget draft sets aside up to \$900,000 for the president's salary and benefits in the coming triennium, pending approval by General Convention. In the canonically mandated annual disclosure of salaries for top staff, the president of the House of Deputies is designated one of the five top officers of the Church — and the only one serving as a volunteer.

Since benefits typically cost about a third of an employee's salary, the \$900,000 earmark implies a salary comparable to the salaries currently paid to the other top four officers. For 2017, those salaries range from \$200,000 for Chief Operating Officer Geoffrey Smith to \$280,500 for Presiding Bishop Michael Curry.

In a message to the House of Deputies sent a few hours after the budget was announced, Jennings noted that a resolution passed by the 2015 General Convention "directed Presiding Bishop Curry and me to appoint a task force to consider issues of leadership and compensation as they affect the president's position." The 11-member task force will make its formal recommendation on Dec. 1.

The working draft of the budget leaves blank the expected income and expenses for Episcopal Migration Ministries, the church's refugee resettlement program, because of continuing conflict and uncertainty over federal immigration policies. EMM is designed to break even, and was budgeted for

\$51.8 million in both income and expenses for the current triennium.

Because much of the program's income comes from government payments on a per-refugee basis, federal restrictions on the number of refugees have created huge financial challenges. At its February meeting, Executive Council made a special \$500,000 grant to EMM.

By far the largest category of income for the church is from diocesan assessments, budgeted for \$87.2 million for the coming triennium, based on full participation at 15 percent. The budget draft projects granting \$6.5 million in waivers to about 17 dioceses, but those numbers are more preliminary than other parts of the budget. A report on the Finance Office's website shows that about 30 domestic dioceses paid less than 15 percent for 2016.

For church staff, the budget includes a 3 percent pay raise each year, and projects 9 percent increases in health insurance costs. "The Presiding Bishop has expressed his satisfaction with the size of the staff in place and asks that there be no new hires in the 2019-2021 budget," the explanatory note said.

The comment period ends on Jan. 10, 2018, after which an updated draft will be considered by Executive Council at its meeting later in January. The budget then goes to the Joint Standing Committee on Program, Budget and Finance (PB&F) for consideration.

PB&F, an appointed body that includes members of the House of Bishops and the House of Deputies from each province, will meet in February to prepare a final budget for consideration at General Convention.

Kirk Petersen



File photo

'A New Season Begins'

After two years of conflict that cost millions of dollars and tarnished the end of a bishop's career, the people of St. James the Great will soon be returned to the building they love in Newport Beach, California.

Healing the emotional wounds will take longer, but the key participants seem determined to make the effort.

In a joint statement Nov. 9, the parties stated unambiguously that the congregation will be allowed to return to the 40,000-square-foot facility on Via Lido, which has sat empty since June 2015.

The statement was signed by the Rt. Rev. John Taylor, who became Bishop of Los Angeles on Dec. 1; by the Rev. Rachel Nyback, the head of the diocese's standing committee; and by the Rev. Canon Cindy Voorhees, who has continued to lead her congregation in worship every Sunday in a community room of the Newport Beach City Hall.

The statement read in part: "Once St. James has been granted mission status, it will be invited to resume use of the church. Once Bishop Taylor, by the grace of God, is diocesan bishop, he intends to name Canon Voorhees as vicar."

The statement was the result of three weeks of tense discussions that began with a meeting of the three parties on Oct. 18. It included an acknowledgment of mutual responsibility for the conflict, and a pledge of mutual effort toward healing:

The church's sudden closing hurt the people of St. James. Their leaders countenanced hurtful statements and

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tactics. This cycle of hurt strained relationships in the diocese. We will end the cycle by sharing our narratives openly and honestly, using reconciliation in relationship to rediscover our unity and purpose as a diocesan family in Christ.

“A new season, we pray, begins this morning,” said Taylor in a separate, individual statement.

In separate telephone interviews with TLC, Taylor and Voorhees both took pains to choose their words carefully. Nyback could not be reached for comment.

When asked if the negotiations had been contentious, Taylor paused before addressing the question tangentially: “When people get together and open their hearts and minds to the movement of the Spirit, and are willing to be vulnerable, and willing to speak truth graciously, all things are possible. That’s the kind of work that we’ve been doing.”

“I’m just glad that there’s been a resolution, that we’re moving forward in reconciliation, and that the 70 years of good work that St. James has done can continue,” Voorhees said.

The Rt. Rev. J. Jon Bruno, the retiring Bishop of Los Angeles who faces a suspension from ordained ministry as the result of a disciplinary process resulting from the conflict, struck a different tone.

In email to the diocese sent 16 hours before the announcement that St. James will be reopened, Bruno said:

“The legal challenges brought against Corporation Sole by an entity called SAVE St. James the Great have been concluded in favor of the Bishop, Corporation Sole. The SAVE entity has offered to dismiss its appeal efforts, leaving the previous determination by the Superior Court in favor of Corporation Sole to stand. As a part of the SAVE dismissal they have requested that I agree to not pursue legal actions against them and their legal counsel for filing a malicious prosecution lawsuit against Corporation Sole in 2015. Although there is sound basis on which to pursue further legal action, so as to fully resolve the conflict, I have agreed to those terms.”

Bruno did not return a call seeking

comment. Corporation Sole is a legal entity established in 1907 in the Diocese of Los Angeles “as a unique form of nonprofit corporation, operating with no directors or members other than the Bishop Diocesan and his or her successors,” according to an auditor’s report. Corporation Sole owns the St. James property, as well as a somewhat random collection of other real estate and trust funds.

Asked how long it would be before St. James is reinstated with mission status and allowed to return to the building, Taylor said: “My first email at 10 o’clock [when the announcement was issued] was to Canon Voorhees saying that she and her congregants would continue to be in my prayers, and inviting her to reach out” and begin the formal process of applying for mission status. “I know those conversations are underway, and they’ll take the time that they take,” he said.

According to the joint statement, while the mission status process proceeds, “the diocese may reopen the church for weekly celebrations of Holy

Eucharist by supply clergy. Bishop Taylor and Canon Voorhees will be among those on the rota.”

As part of the agreement, St. James agreed to “stop using communications strategists and social media to advocate in connection with its relationship to the diocese. The diocese and St. James hereby repudiate all past and future anonymous correspondence sent on their behalves. If those responsible for Save St. James The Great wish it to persist as a non-profit organization, they will change its name and devote it to a religious or charitable purpose.”

The Save St. James the Great page on Facebook — which included a great deal of advocacy and informal commentary, some of it harsh — has been taken down. The group’s website at savesaintjamesthegreat.org is still online, but has been purged of any mention of the conflict. Roger Bloom, a public relations consultant who has been speaking for the congregation, did not return a call seeking comment.

In his individual statement, Taylor

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'New Season' for St. James

(Continued from previous page)

said the two-plus years of conflict had taken a toll on the entire diocese. "Among the casualties: The reputations of a beloved and courageous bishop and his talented vicar, deep disappointment experienced by a congregation, deep mistrust between diocese and congregation, strained relationships among bishops, deacons, laypeople, and priests, and a black eye for our diocese in the local media and national church."

He called for "a season of truth-telling, mutual discernment, and reconciliation. Undistracted by participants' preferred outcomes when it comes to occupancy of the building on Via Lido, we stand a better chance of constructing an accurate narrative about our recent troubles."

Kirk Petersen

Nashotah Board Chairman Replaced

The leadership of the board of directors at Nashotah House changed in October when the Rt. Rev. Daniel H. Martins, its chairman since 2012, was not reelected.

The new chairman of the Wisconsin-based seminary's board is, for the first time, a priest: the Rev. Canon Edward Monk, rector of an Episcopal parish in Dallas.

Under the new governance structure Nashotah adopted a few years ago, the board of directors is elected by members of the Corporation of Nashotah House, the legal owners of the seminary. All board members continue to serve as members of the corporation. While Martins is no longer on the board, he continues as a member of the corporation.

Garwood Anderson, acting dean, told TLC that the change signaled a desire for a new style of leadership and

that "Bishop Martins served us well through several transitions."

Kirk Petersen

Bishop Sauls Files in New York

Bishop Stacy Sauls, a top Episcopal Church administrator who was fired in April 2016 after a misconduct investigation exonerated him, is bringing his defamation claim against the church and 30 unnamed defendants to a new venue where experts say it belongs: New York City.

In response, the Episcopal Church is once again calling for his claims to be thrown out, as it did successfully when Sauls first brought them in Mobile, Alabama, earlier this year. Sauls is now appealing that ruling to the Alabama Supreme Court.

But in New York, the church is also challenging the merits of the case since the propriety of the venue is no longer in dispute.

In a 31-page memorandum filed Nov. 1, the church laid out for the first time its response to Sauls's allegations. He claims a top-level, Machiavellian conspiracy at church headquarters in New York City ruined his reputation and successfully sabotaged his pursuit of new employment.

The church argues its 2015 public statement, which announced the start of a misconduct investigation and administrative leave for Sauls and two colleagues, was truthful and therefore non-defamatory.

"Plaintiff's assertions border on the incoherent to the extent he claims that these statements were 'intentionally misleading' and in 'reckless disregard of the truth,'" the church's filing says. "Plaintiff does not plausibly allege or explain in what respect Defendants' December 2015 Statement was either false or misleading."

As a matter of policy, the Episcopal Church does not comment on pending litigation. Sauls's attorney, Michael Rose, did not respond to TLC's request for comment.

To a large degree, Sauls's new complaint largely reflects the claims he filed



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in Mobile in January. A judge threw out the Mobile case on grounds of improper jurisdiction. But his new claim in New York, where Sauls lives, also includes some new detail and allegations.

For instance, in pursuing restitution, Sauls says he has spent more than \$200,000 on attorneys' fees and costs so far. He also blames defendants for fostering "widespread rumor, accusations and speculation" that refer to possible "financial misdeeds," "pedophilia," and other misconduct.

"With the said conspiracy continuing daily, unabated, the wrongful acts of the Defendants have made it impossible for Plaintiff to find employment in [the Episcopal Church], anywhere," the suit says.

In its response, the church calls on the New York court to dismiss the case on multiple grounds. It cites the pending case in Alabama as reason to keep the new suit from proceeding in New York. It also invokes legal precedent in church-and-state cases.

"This case would substantially entangle the Court in the Church's ecclesiastical decision-making and internal self-governance," the filing says.

It also contends that because more than a year has elapsed since the public statements first came out, Sauls should be barred under New York's statute of limitations from seeking damages related to defamation. Sauls does not list an amount for the damages he seeks.

G. Jeffrey MacDonald

Archbishop Welby Calls for Reconciliation

While the mood in Kenya is said to be tense after the nation's reprised presidential election on Oct. 26, President Uhuru Kenyatta and his archrival, Raila Odinga, exchanged greetings at a special service at All Saints Cathedral in Nairobi.

The politicians attended the Nov. 5 celebration of the cathedral's centennial, and the Archbishop of Canterbury preached.

"I am not calling for mediation but for the steady and long-term work of

building structures of reconciliation, the capacity to deal with the nation's challenges in a way that brings peace in the future, even when there are deep disagreements," Archbishop Justin Welby said.

Kenya, he said, had always set a sterling example of being a peaceful country. "Since independence, Kenya has been a model for Africa — yes, with problems and trials, but for the most part keeping the peace. We need an example of reconciliation, not only in this country, but in the region of which it is the leader.

"Reconciliation is not mediation or arbitration, or trickery and abandoning principle," he said. "It is the transformation of violent and destructive conflict into lives in which disagreements are still there but dealt with peacefully for the common good."

Welby, on his second visit to Kenya this year, met the evening before with President Kenyatta at State House, Nairobi, where he urged leaders of the nation to maintain peace.

John Martin


'Prayer Is Not a Dodge'

Bishops of the Episcopal Church together denounced the Nov. 5 mass murder of 26 at a Baptist church near San Antonio, Texas.

"I was in church at 11:30 yesterday, celebrating the Holy Eucharist, as were many of you, when a young man walked into First Baptist Church, Sutherland Springs, and murdered 26 people, and wounded 20 more, with an assault rifle," wrote the Rt. Rev. David M. Reed, Bishop of West Texas. "Young children and the elderly were among the victims. This evil violence felt all the more obscene because of the place that it occurred: in a little church in a little town, in a setting of familiarity, trust and safety."

Reed said Episcopalians could turn to prayers and psalms of lamentation "to pray as faithful persons who cry out to God in the face of ungodly and unjust horror. Such lamentation expresses an anguished sense of the absence of God, and also calls upon him to be true

(Continued on next page)



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'Prayer Is Not a Dodge'

(Continued from previous page)

to himself and to his promises. It speaks out of the fear and darkness of present circumstances, and also trusts that God is greater."

The Bishops United Against Gun Violence issued a statement calling people to prayer — and expressing concern that elected officials' use of the word allows them to avoid taking action regarding public safety, praying "in lieu of demonstrating political courage."

"In prayer, Christians commend the souls of the faithful departed to the mercy and love of God. We beseech our Creator to comfort the grieving and shield the vulnerable," the bishops wrote. "Prayer is not an offering of vague good wishes. It is not a spiritual exercise that successfully completed exempts one from focusing on urgent issues of common concern. Prayer is not a dodge. In prayer we examine our own hearts and our own deeds to determine whether we are complicit in the evils we deplore. And if we are, we resolve to take action; we resolve to amend our lives."

While visiting the Scottish Episcopal Church, Presiding Bishop Michael Curry sent a video message about the shooting, offering the Lord's Prayer.

"I offer this prayer for those who have died, for those who are suffering, for those who are still healing from

physical wounds, and the emotional, spiritual, and mental scars. As I pray and invite you to pray the prayer the Lord taught us, I invite you to pray that God's will might be done, that God might guide us to find a better way, to find concrete steps so that this kind of thing doesn't happen anymore."

One Dead, Three Freed in Nigeria

One of four British missionaries kidnapped in the Nigeria's Delta region has been killed, but three others were freed, government sources said. The four were kidnapped on Oct. 13.

The death of Ian Squire, an optician, was confirmed by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. British and Nigerian authorities obtained the release of Alanna Carson, Dr. David Donovan, and Donovan's wife, Shirley.

Nigerian authorities pledge to continue investigating the incident and to support the affected families.

The Donovans have lived in Nigeria for over 14 years. The couple ran New Foundations, a charity helping poor villagers in a remote part of the country.

Relatives of the released missionaries said they are "delighted and relieved" that Carson and the Donovans had returned safely.

"Our thoughts are now with the family and friends of Ian as we come to terms with his sad death," they said in a joint statement.

John Martin

Arizona Bishop to Retire

The Rt. Rev. Kirk S. Smith, Bishop of Arizona since 2004, announced his intention to retire in March 2019.

"We have accomplished some great things together, and thanks to your hard work and prayers, the diocese overall is healthy and growing," Smith said in a Nov. 9 statement. "By the time I retire I will be almost 68 years old. It is time for the diocese to move on to a new mission with younger leadership."

Smith wrote that he would serve as a visiting professor of church history at General Theological Seminary in late 2019.

Compass Rose Aims for \$10M

The Compass Rose Society has launched a \$10 million endowment to support the work of the Anglican Consultative Council and the international ministry of the Archbishop of Canterbury.

"Who will stand in the breach between the needs of the Anglican Communion and the resources to undertake its ministry?" said the Rt. Rev. Andrew Doyle, Bishop of Texas and president of the society. "The Compass Rose Society is looking for partners to join us and meet this need squarely with the financial donations required to undergird the vision of Communion to which I firmly believe God has invited us."

Membership in the society requires an initial gift of \$10,000 and an annual commitment of \$2,500 to \$3,000. The money supports the society's goal of providing an annual gift of \$400,000 to the Anglican Consultative Council.

"As a former secretary general, I know firsthand how important such an endowment is," said the Rev. Canon John Peterson of Washington National Cathedral. "This endowment will allow the Anglican Communion to initiate new unbudgeted programs between ACC meetings or respond to humanitarian crises."

The endowment will be held by a trust fund established as an English charity, with the Anglican Communion

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ion Office as sole beneficiary. The Compass Rose Society's board of directors and its finance committee will oversee the endowment, and the trust will be supervised by five trustees.

ACNS

Duke Hires Beeley

The Rev. Christopher Beeley will become director of the Anglican Episcopal House of Studies at Duke Divinity School next July. He will also serve as professor of theology and the Jack and Barbara Bovender Professor of Anglican Episcopal Studies and Ministry.

Beeley is Walter H. Gray Associate Professor of Anglican Studies and Patristics at Yale University and teaches early Christian theology and history and modern Anglican tradition.

Agreeing on the Spirit

Theologians from the Anglican Communion and Oriental Orthodox Churches have signed a historic agreement on the Holy Spirit. The theologians signed their agreed statement, *On the Procession and Work of the Holy Spirit*, Oct. 26 at the end of a week of discussions by the Anglican Oriental-Orthodox International Commission (AOOIC). The statement concludes two years of work on the subject.

In their 2015 meeting in Wales, AOOIC members discussed the "procession" of the Holy Spirit, and agreed on omitting the Filioque clause.

The clause was appended to the Nicene Creed by the Latin Western tradition. It says the Holy Spirit proceeds "from the Son" (Jesus) as well as the Father.

Last year, the theologians continued their work at a meeting in Lebanon, concentrating on "the Sending of the Holy Spirit in Time (Economia)."

This year, commission members completed the text of both sections of the agreed statement, which was then signed by the co-chairs, the Church in Wales' Bishop of St. Asaph, Gregory Cameron, and the Coptic Orthodox Church's Metropolitan Bishop of Damiette, during a choral Evensong at the Dublin's Christ Church Cathedral. A

published version of the statement will be launched when the commission next meets in Lebanon in October 2018.

POSTCARD FROM LONDON

New Debates, Few Insights

In the United Kingdom, two seemingly unrelated topics regularly cause fractious and polarized debate, with few fresh insights into the divide between

secular and religious life. The first is presence as of right of 26 bishops in the House of Lords. The second is the 2-minute, 45-second *Thought for the Day* heard at peak time on *Today*, BBC Radio's flagship current affairs program.

First, the House of Lords: With plans in place to reduce membership of the House of Commons from 650 to 600, few disagree that the Lords with 800 members is bloated and urgently needs

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A Reason to Smile?

AmazonSmile offers financial support to vital church ministries. But what are the theological and relational costs?

By Katy Crane

Have you been to your parish's website lately and noticed a familiar corporate logo? The up-turned arrow we look forward to seeing on our front porches and doorsteps has been appearing on many Donate pages on church websites for years now. Church use of AmazonSmile, the philanthropic arm of Amazon Inc., now seems as ubiquitous as UPS trucks in the weeks before Christmas. Churches have received donations from this program, but some express concerns about the automated nature

of this kind of giving, and the lack of incarnational involvement in online shopping.

AmazonSmile launched in 2013 to offer Amazon customers a chance to help their favorite charities through smile.amazon.com. Through Smile purchases, Amazon will donate 0.5 percent of eligible item prices to a nonprofit organization of your choice. Many of America's largest charities are registered recipients, such as the Red Cross and United Way, but a great many churches — Episcopal, Methodist, Orthodox, Presbyterian, and Roman Catholic — are registered, too.

A web search reveals Episcopal participants using Smile in a variety of ways. On its website, the Diocese of Alabama directs members to Smile to help with diocesan ministry.

The Diocese of Ohio recently began using Smile to support the bishop's annual appeal. "At AmazonSmile you'll find the same low Amazon prices, selection and convenient shopping, plus Amazon will donate a portion of your purchase price to The Bishop's Annual Appeal," Ohio's website says.

Northern California suggests helping Camp Noel Porter: "AmazonSmile will automatically give CNP extra

“This is not an excuse to get out of a pledge. This is a way of conceiving of stewardship in a broader sense.”

—The Rev. Kevin Olds

funds to support programs here at camp when you log in.” Montana sends parishioners to Episcopal Relief & Development’s Smile page, directing donations to that national ministry. Countless parishes participate, as well.

How effective is AmazonSmile as a funding stream for such organizations? For geographically distributed entities serving thousands of members, Smile could be an effective, easy way to support a common concern. According to Consumer Intelligence Research Partners, the average Amazon shopper spends about \$700 a year — Prime members, who receive free shipping, spend around \$1,300. Thus, a non-Prime shopper might produce about \$3.50 for a parish or mission annually. A diocese of about 10,000 baptized members could, according to the averages, see a Smile check for more than \$35,000 in any given year. Such numbers suggest a sizable donation to mission and ministry is possible.

Smaller organizations like parishes and missions would be looking at smaller possible returns. For example, a parish of 300 Prime shoppers would stretch to produce \$2,000 per year in Smile donations, though actual numbers suggest that Smile is not yet that lucrative for most. Parishes that shared their numbers with TLC suggested Smile equates to a small drop in the collection plate — dozens of dollars per quarter.

Such math only holds if all members make Amazon purchases and if they always direct Smile donations to the same charity. If a member does not shop through Smile, the 0.5 percent donation disappears. Donations are not made through Amazon’s main site, and there is no account setting that passes your purchases automatically through Smile.

Cindy Rees, treasurer at St. Michael’s by-the-Sea in Carlsbad, California,

told TLC this is one of the potential challenges of the program. “That’s the hardest thing to do, to make people go directly to our site to click on the Smile logo, that then brings them to the shopping site.” Rees said her parish earns about \$50 per quarter, on average.

Despite the added hassle of reminding parishioners to go to the parish website before they shop, or simply to use smile.amazon.com and not amazon.com, the process of registering on Smile can appeal to churches looking for low-hanging financial fruit. Fill out the registration form, receive a little extra money, and remind parishioners of their faith as they shop.

But how does this affect the balance of tithing or charitable giving in general? As church use of the program is relatively new, it’s hard to say, but experts on sites like Philanthropy.com and HuffPost fear that Smile has an element of “clicktivism” — the phenomenon of online giving and virtual participation in causes that actually decreases the probability of real-life participation. If you donate online once, or like an event page for a rally, you might feel as if you have participated enough to decline giving or stay at home.

“Like any other thing, if it’s part of a well-balanced diet of a life of a follower of Christ, then that’s splendid,” said the Rev. Canon Victoria Heard of the Church of the Redeemer in Irving, Texas, and writer for TLC’s weblog, *Covenant*. “If it is a substitution for genuine proportional giving, or tithing, or avoiding contact with Christ in his various disguises among the poor, then we have a problem.”

Most participants said they feel it is merely an extra that does not affect their overall tithing and should not be a substitute for regular, consistent giving.

“I see it more as a donation [rather

than part of tithing]: it’s just so small,” said the Rev. Ross Kane, who serves as senior associate at St. Paul’s Church in Alexandria, Virginia. “We’ve gotten funds back, but it will be years before we really get some substantive income.”

Kane, who is also an ethics professor at Virginia Theological Seminary, said the donations should not distract from tithing. “I think my parishioners also think that, since we’re already there [shopping on Amazon], why not? It simply is a way to recognize how people spend money these days, and tries to use that as an opportunity to give back in a more consistent way. At the end of the day, it’s a way to implant the mission of the church in everyday life, including consumption.”

The Rev. Kevin Olds of St. Timothy’s in Fairfield, Connecticut, agrees. “This is not an excuse to get out of a pledge. This is a way of conceiving of stewardship in a broader sense — things you can do in other parts of your life for the church.” Olds tempers his enthusiasm for Smile with the knowledge that Amazon benefits more than the church. “Amazon gets a big tax write-off.”

Olds said faith communities have to weigh the pros and cons of Smile. “There’s nothing that’s pure, or 100 percent good.”

The tax break that Olds cites — Amazon does the giving, the consumer does not, so the donation is tax deductible by Amazon — should raise further questions for churches mulling participation. Purchases made through Smile ultimately reduce Amazon’s tax burden, and taxes provide needed services for communities, supporting schools, roads, health care, education — the very services that parishes often augment with their time and treasure. Throughout its lifetime as a corporation, Amazon has paid almost no state

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A Reason to Smile?

(Continued from previous page)

and local taxes on purchases and has objected to such taxes, arguing that it has little physical presence in most states.

A deeper look into the mechanics of the Smile program raises questions about its suitability for charitable donations. A recent article by the American Independent Business Alliance (AMIBA) interpreted the payments given to nonprofit agencies as “pure sales commission for marketing referrals, not donations.”

Jeff Milchen, co-director and co-founder of AMIBA, told TLC: “When Amazon sends a payment to the nonprofit in return for having delivered customers to buy from them, it’s misleading to call that charity — it’s a sales referral. It’s not to say it’s not worth doing, but it’s certainly not charitable: it’s marketing, pure and simple.” Thus, Smile could be interpreted as a form of pay-per-click advertising.

Milchen also said Amazon, which did not respond to TLC’s request for comment, has had an effect on small-business owners — and that the choice to affiliate with Smile could be problematic. “There are invariably some business owners who may be alienated by this move. Part of the role of churches is to build community and strengthen local relationships.

“When you are sending people to Amazon, it comes off as an endorsement of an absentee corporation, whether that’s intended or not. In the vast majority of cases, these purchases made on Amazon could have been made in the community, even from actual members of the congregation.”

William T. Cavanaugh, professor of Catholic Studies at DePaul University and author of *Being Consumed: Economics and Christian Desire*, echoes the concern about small business. “Amazon has been murder on small businesses, which is a serious problem,” he told TLC. “The vastness of Amazon has funneled away power and money from local contexts into the

hands of an impersonal megacorporation. It’s wreaked havoc on our downtowns, and has poor labor practices.”

Indeed, a report by the Institute for Local Self Reliance states that between the years of 1997 and 2012, communities across the country have lost about 108,000 local retailers (enterprises with fewer than 100 employees). Even big-box retailers with brick-and-mortar stores have suffered. According to a recent article in *The Atlantic*, nine major retail chains have filed for bankruptcy in 2017. CNNMoney.com reports that 2,056 of JCPenney, Staples, and Bebe storefronts closed in 2016, and 5,077 in 2015.

Concerns about Amazon’s labor practices have also appeared in the press. A business leviathan, Amazon employs a massive workforce — approximately 90,000 — with many more thousands of temporary employees added in November for the Christmas season.

Life on the job has been documented many times over, and most harrowingly by *The Huffington Post* in a report from October 2015. The story described a worker found collapsed on the floor in an Amazon warehouse; he was later pronounced dead from cardiac dysrhythmia. Family described him as increasingly exhausted in an environment where workers are pushed to their maximum level of output. Management tracks how many seconds it takes a worker to process an order, and those with the best times keep their jobs. In 2015 interviews with *Forbes*, Amazon employees describe this corporate culture as “metrics obsessed.”

The New York Times reported in 2011 on poor working conditions at an Allentown warehouse during the height of summer. Employees were forced to work in heat above 100 degrees, and ambulances were kept on site to treat fainting and heat-sick em-

ployees. Fifteen people were sent to the hospital, and between 20 and 30 were treated on-site. Workers sent home reported that managers imposed disciplinary points on them.

While these crises happened to real people, the simplicity, cleanliness, and remoteness of Amazon’s 1-Click home ordering can hide those people from view. And with an absence of locality, relationships between consumers, workers, and production do not form. “Having political and economic lives locally is really important. Local is human-scaled,” Cavanaugh said. “You can encounter human beings as human beings face to face, and see the face of Christ in them.

“Part of the characteristic of a global economy is that human beings disappear. Humans disappear from the whole thing, and that contact is replaced with a relationship with the product. I understand the logic of churches wanting to participate in the program, but the Church should be questioning the practice of buying from Amazon in the first place.”

Consumers, businesses, and nonprofits experience an increasingly complicated set of relationships with Amazon. It’s a necessarily convenient source of myriad goods; it’s a helping hand to nonprofits looking to raise consumer consciousness; it’s a promise of labor to cities and towns struggling with unemployment rates; it’s a threat to businesses and workers hoping to thrive in a challenging economic environment. The case of one Episcopal ministry in Atlanta shows how the lines of consumer, beneficiary, promoter, and partner can blur in this Amazonian world.

The Cathedral Bookstore, a nonprofit book shop run by the Cathedral of St. Philip, is an Amazon competitor, and is eligible to receive Smile donations.

“Our board of directors had talked



flickr/Ramesh NG photo

Hispanic Growth Equals Episcopal Growth?

By Kirk Petersen

If you ask any American what comes to mind when you say *Latino religion*, the response will almost certainly be *Catholic* and not *Episcopalian*.

But the link between Latinos and Romans is not as strong as it once was, and the shift is accelerating. In 2006, Pew Research found that 70 percent of American Latinos were Roman Catholic. Just six years later, that number had dropped to 57 percent. Nearly one in four Hispanic Americans are now *former* Catholics.

But while the pope's share of the Hispanic pie is in decline, the pie is growing dramatically. In 2012, Nielsen found that the Hispanic population was expected to grow 167 percent between 2010 and 2050 — compared with 42 percent for the population as a whole, and 1 percent for white non-Hispanics.

Little wonder, then, that the Episcopal Church sees America's Latino population as an important opportunity for growth. The church has had a Hispanic missionary since 1971, and in 2005 the Rev. Canon Anthony Guillén became the fourth person in that role.

From his base in Los Angeles, Guillén also heads the six-person Ethnic Ministries group, which includes missionaries for black, Asian-American, and indigenous outreach.

Historically, “we have not done a very good job of raising vocations amongst the members of Latino congregations,” Guillén said. “Most of our Latino clergy in this country were imported from Latin America. ... They were successful in building a Spanish ministry, but they built it in Spanish,” because their English was limited.

That model is no longer sufficient, Guillén said, because today “two-thirds of us are bilingual and bicultural.”

Despite the current debates, the biggest driver of the Latino population is not immigration, but rather birthrates. One of four babies born in the United States is Hispanic.

“Unlike their counterparts in the white and black populations, they still value their parents' and grandparents' religious traditions,” Guillén said. “Even if they don't go to church, we don't have to talk to them about

the existence of God; we can talk to them about belonging to a community of faith.”

Nearly half of the Episcopal clergy who are involved in Hispanic ministry are Anglos, Guillén said. He summarized their concerns as “I believe I would be more successful if I understood the culture of Latinos, and



Guillén: “two-thirds of us are bilingual and bicultural.”

Nina Nicholson photo

understood their spirituality, and understood their values. And I don't know that part.”

To address that, he's launched a series of intensive nine-day courses in cooperation with seminaries, so seminarians can earn academic credit if they attend. The first met in June, and another in October at Bexley Seabury Seminary in Chicago.

Among other things, the course dives deeply into traditional Latino religious traditions, and examines the difference between immigrant/first generation Latinos and American-born, multigenerational Latinos, who require more of a bicultural, bilingual, or English-dominant ministry.

Every two years since 2002, the Episcopal Church has teamed with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to offer a four-day conference called *Nuevo Amanecer*, or *New Dawn*. The event features networking, leadership training, and workshops, and provides an opportunity for participants to share best practices. □



Year-round Advent

By Sybil MacBeth

Advent is a feast for the senses, a preparation for a journey, a pep rally for the Church's new liturgical year, and the kickoff celebration for our daily pilgrimage with God. Advent is juicy and pregnant. It is not just the four-week waiting period before Christmas. It is the gestation time and dress rehearsal for the way to live every day of the year.

A luscious Advent vocabulary of nouns and verbs sprinkles our church and home conversation during these four weeks: *preparation, anticipation, wonder, star, journey, waiting, watching, attention, patience, hope, despair, expectancy, darkness, light, fear, faith, and repentance*. These words indicate that something special is about to happen. There is physicality and emotion in these words. Some words are about waking up and being alert. Others are paradoxical pairs; they describe the conflicting experiences we have in life. We recite them, read them in Scripture, and sing them during the weeks before Christmas.

Christians are called to be Advent people all year. Jesus is our longed-for Savior; but even after Christmas, we still wait for the transformation of the world into the kingdom of God. As a flesh and blood Savior, Jesus calls us to be God's hands and feet on earth. Our waiting during Advent and beyond is both active and incremental. Jesus' invites us to be part of the Incarnation, to put our feet on the ground and join in God's kingdom-building pilgrimage on earth. The practices we take on in Advent teach us to be attentive, one-day-at-a-time pilgrims. The words we learn in Advent are the daily, year-round vocabulary of Christians. We *wait, hope, watch, hope, fear, trust, anticipate, and repent* throughout the year.

Here are a few of my favorite Advent practices and activities. They immerse me in the season and language of the season. Most of them are daily (but not lengthy) practices reminding me that the spiritual life is one baby step at a time. These activities are physical, embodied, sensory, meditative, playful, and active. Some are solitary, some are communal.



Plants and Bulbs: To teach children (and adults) about *watching* and *waiting* — but not waiting in vain — plant paperwhite narcissus or amaryllis bulbs at the beginning of Advent. Fill a clear container with potting soil or stones. A clear container makes the growing roots visible. Plant the bulb in the soil or stones with about half of the bulb showing above the surface. Place

the bulbs in a warm spot near a window. Watch the daily, incremental growth of the plant. Daily watering can be the task of even a young child. Even as an adult, I never tire of watching the day-to-day progress of the green stalks and the ultimate flowering of the plant.

Advent Calendars: Download a calendar template for late November and December. (Look on my website prayingincolor.com for my free, annual Advent calendar.) Each day write an Advent word in the space or the name of a person for whom you are praying. Doodle around the word or the name. Add color. Sit with the word or the person as you meditate and pray. I like to think of this calendar as a “count up” to Christmas and not a “countdown.” At the end of the 22 to 28 days you will have a colorful dictionary of Advent words or a beautiful visual prayer list.

You can create another version of this calendar by attaching small envelopes to a rope or string with clothespins. Each day, ask one family member to choose a word or name for the envelope. Doodle and color around it. Put dollar bills or loose change in the envelope of the day. When Advent ends, send the collected money to an organization or charity of your choice.

Color with Purple or Blue: Whether you are a purple or blue Advent devotee, splash your house or apartment with Advent color. For me, a string of purple lights, a purple paper chain, or a purple ribbon on a wreath acts as a stop sign. “Wait; it is not yet Christmas. Slow down. Enjoy this time of preparation.”

Quiet Corner: Create a place where people can go to be alone and quiet. A little table in a corner with a battery-operated votive candle, a few sprigs of greenery, a purple ribbon, and an old-fashioned egg timer creates an enticing place for children and adults to be alone and quiet. Invite children to turn on the candle, turn over the egg timer, and sit in the mystery of dark and silence for three minutes.

Advent Tree or Bush: Go ahead and buy a Christmas tree during Advent, but string purple, blue, or white lights on it. Use the tree as a large Advent calendar and pin an Advent word a day onto it. See if you can hold off on



adding the Christmas ornaments until after December 20.

Short and Simple Writing: As a family or alone, read the Scripture passages about the people we associate with Advent: Mary, Joseph, Gabriel, John the Baptist, Elizabeth, Zechariah, angels. To summarize what you learn, write a tweet or three-sentence story. This is a playful way to corral your thoughts and a fun activity to share with others. Here is a 139-character tweet about Zechariah: *Z struck speechless when he dissed the angel's prophecy of impending fatherhood. Z's first words after 9 silent months: "His name is John."*

During Advent, we chant the an-

tiphon from Mark 1: “Prepare the way for the Lord.” When we proclaim these words, we are not just setting up for the grand party of Jesus’ birth on Christmas Day and then sending him on his way to be Savior of the World. We are preparing to join him and follow him on whatever highway he takes with our hearts, minds, bodies, and souls. Advent is our soulful, triumphal entry into the new Church year.

Sybil MacBeth is the author of The Season of the Nativity: Confessions and Practices of an Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany Extremist and Praying in Color: Drawing a New Path to God.



A Symposium

Since 1964, the Episcopal Church Foundation has supported over 200 scholars and ministry leaders in its Fellowship Partners program. Today, many of these Fellows are leading the Episcopal Church as seminary professors, bishops, community activists, clergy, and in innovative ministries that stretch ahead to imagine the Church's future. THE LIVING CHURCH and ECF asked eight Fellows this question:

***How can we form faithful leaders
for tomorrow's Church?***

Leaders Show Up

by Audra Abt



As a community-based priest and mission developer, I am part of many conversations about how the church of today does not look like the church of 50 years ago. Our spiritual landscapes are

changing. I know many people in church who express frustration, confusion, and weariness with the uphill nature of their work, as commitment to a community does not seem to work the way it used to.

The leaders of tomorrow need to model commitment. Social media have opened new avenues for engaging spiritual communities, but options like “Maybe” and “I’m interested” seem to follow the trend of enjoying access without committing to regular participation. Showing up — for God, for each other, for a community greater than ourselves — is a discipline. It is a huge part of what it means to be the Church.

Leaders model showing up. Without eschewing social media (or relying exclusively on them) for organizing new communities, leaders in the Church of tomorrow will need to commit to gathering as members of the one body. Leaders will also need to help others see how meaningful and beautiful committed communion can be, as we show up for and so become genuine members of a diverse and beloved community.

Leaders can help create space for this communion in many ways, through invitations, preparation, and guiding

presence, as a community gathers and becomes something new through what its members do together. Church as a Sunday-morning gathering in a steeple-topped building, while still the dominant form of faith community, should not be our only option for gathering as God’s people if we’re living into our apostolic calling. One ministry I am part of centers its eucharistic life in an apartment complex where many do not have cars. Here, invitations come by word of mouth and the sound of singing from an open window. Another ministry formed around morning prayers at a bus stop where people cross paths between the night and day shifts — no Facebook invites needed!

Creating and sustaining new or old spaces for people to encounter the holy, and helping them commit to each other and to God, is often frustrating, long-term work in our shifting spiritual landscape. Visible fruits, and results, will rarely come on expected timelines. This requires leaders in the Church of tomorrow to be strong in their convictions, and dedicated to Scripture and spiritual practices that keep us imagining a new world with new possibilities. Their imaginations formed and fired by the Scriptures and Christ’s resurrection life, leaders of tomorrow’s Church will invite people to commit to a shared experience of abundant life in Christ.

The Rev. Audra Abt is a 2015 Episcopal Church Foundation Ministry Fellow and works as a missionary for intercultural and Latino/Hispanic ministries in the Diocese of North Carolina.

Leading into God's Future

by Kelly Brown Douglas



Within 25 years, most Americans will be people of color. This demographic shift has brought to light the reality of bigoted injustice, oppressive intolerance, and white supremacist ideologies that have long been a

part of the nation's social, political, and even ecclesiastical fabric. It has catalyzed even greater resistance to pluralism in some quarters. Within this context of racist and xenophobic resistance to America's increasingly diverse population, we must ask not only what it means to foster faithful leadership, but also what it means to be Church. For to be Church is to embody the reality of God's future, in which all people are treated as sacred and valued human creations regardless of race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual expression, or religious beliefs. Being Church, therefore, requires carrying forth into the world Jesus' ministry of sanctuary and witness.

Sanctuary means fostering gracious spaces for all who are made to feel targeted by social, political, or ecclesiastical structures, practices, policies, ideologies, and ways of thinking. Witness involves working to dismantle and disrupt dehumanizing and degrading systems, structures, ideologies, and beliefs so as to make real the justice and love of God. So we must ask: how do we prepare faithful leaders to be sanctuary and witness in a world that belies God's future and thus

stands in opposition to what it means to be church?

Such preparation involves critical historical, theological, and liturgical engagement with the diverse richness of the Anglican/Episcopal communion by a deep spiritual foundation. Through this engagement, students will gain the foundation for faithful leadership in a culturally and humanly pluralistic world by recognizing the array of human traditions and experiences that allow us to appreciate more fully the reality of God.

This way of preparing leaders also allows us to explore and learn from the Anglican and Episcopal churches' complicated story of both encouraging justice and advancing injustice. Finally, engagement with the diversity of Anglican/Episcopal traditions fosters appreciation for the relationship between social-cultural contexts and liturgical and worshiping practices, thereby allowing leaders to develop new liturgies for changing and diverse contexts even as they are practiced in the standard liturgies of the church.

If the Episcopal Church, which is 90 percent white, is to thrive in the future, we must produce leaders who can respond to the experiences and realities of a non-white nation and world. By doing this, we can perhaps lead the way in being Church faithfully.

The Rev. Dr. Kelly Brown Douglas is dean of the Episcopal Divinity School at Union Theological Seminary and canon theologian of Washington National Cathedral.

Leading the Church to the Margins

by Bob Leopold



How can we form faithful leaders for tomorrow's Church? With the current structure, we cannot.

Today's Church trains and employs experts. Parishioners can avoid spiritual work, as it is done for

them by expert employees. Jesus said to *do* many things: clothe, feed, free. Today's church best implements "do this in remembrance of me." Liturgy is transactional, not transformational. Modernist "expertification" also alters experts: "knowing about" God/Bible/liturgy is our clever substitute for "knowing" God/Bible/liturgy.

Tomorrow's Church "knows God/Bible/liturgy" with those doing Jesus' work outside Church walls: seeking the Holy Spirit already active in their communities and joining in, remembering every *do* from Jesus. Journeying with the marginalized, tomorrow's Church has access to the best teachers money cannot buy: those who most earnestly pray "give us this day our daily bread." Relationships cost little money.

Today's Church gets stuck fundraising for place and personnel, where success looks like a big budget or weekly attendance. Tomorrow's Church flips the current model on its head: spending 10 percent on itself and 90 percent outside itself; meeting in shared spaces with few, bivocational, creatively compensated positions; getting disciples out in mission,

not attracting new pledging units to pay for unsustainable systems; operating as nonprofit, public-benefit corporations, not outdated tax shelters. Jesus toppled an empire with no pension, no endowment, no budget, and few followers.

Already expert on the material, today's Church is compelled to learn, not know. Seminary experts form new experts. Books or programs promise fixes. Achievers in this system are unlikely to change, but tomorrow's Church will be different, with unheard stories heralded. Today's Church allows for Sunday morning leadership, under experts' oversight. Tomorrow's Church utilizes innovative leadership from changing models: college dropouts founding million-dollar companies; Generation Xers and Millennials retiring before their parents; social media creating leaders anywhere.

To form faithful leaders for tomorrow's Church, today's Church might have to let go of preconceived notions of what tomorrow's Church might be. Where the present structure gets in the way of Jesus' mission, tomorrow's Church builds new structures. Tomorrow's Church is a resurrected, countercultural, disruptive industry that is replacing today's Church. Experts like me have to let go of our need to control, save, or fix, and just let the Holy Spirit work.

Bob Leopold is the 2015 William B. Given Jr. Episcopal Church Foundation Fellow and "expert" consultant specializing in leadership development in missional areas, most recently with the University Episcopal Community in Minnesota.

Leadership in New Contexts

by W. Mark Richardson



At Church Divinity School of the Pacific, our mission statement calls for forming “visionary spiritual leaders who embrace God’s mission and serve a changing world.”

Imagining what tomorrow’s Church might be, identifying the type of leadership this calls out in us, and determining how to support and guide its development are the tasks of theological education today.

At CDSP, we have reorganized our curriculum around classic markers of Christian vocation — mission, evangelism, and discipleship — while knowing that we must stretch these markers to meet new conditions in today’s world.

I believe this is true also for leadership formation. The classic markers hold true, but as we press forward we must realign them for new contexts. In Charles Taylor’s terms, it means “breathing new life into the half-collapsed lungs of the spirit.” Future leaders must first *model* faithful leadership for their communities — through spiritual practices, character development, the integrity of a thoughtful life, and the willingness to take risks in service of the truth. This should motivate our seminaries to focus on emotional and spiritual growth for leadership. If seminaries become places where we simply check the boxes for ordination, we are not preparing leaders for navigating the uncharted waters of our future.

As important as formation is in

seminary training, faithful Church leadership also requires rigorous study in the classic theological disciplines, as well as what I call practical critical thinking. Put together, the outcome of this holistic education is leadership that serves the spiritual healing of wounds, and prepares the Church community to enter God’s mission in the world.

Our presiding bishop is calling us out of the pews and into the world as gospel people. Future Church leaders need to develop confidence at the interface of faith and public life. This means gaining the skills for public relationships, and thoughtful management of the Church’s resources for both community worship and public interaction.

I believe the Church should prepare leaders, lay and ordained, who will participate in the problem-solving that must go on in our society, such as our response to climate change, or policy making in issues of medical access. Our participation will not necessarily be as technicians, but as contributors to conversations about the good we seek as we face momentous issues and cultural crossroads. Perhaps listening and giving utterance in these new locations is where we will find the good news.

One thing is certain: we cannot afford to prepare leaders to play it safe in the *sedilia*. We need leaders willing to take the risk of finding out what the gospel calls us to in new and unfamiliar places.

The Very Rev. W. Mark Richardson is president and dean of Church Divinity School of the Pacific.

Setting Tables in the Wilderness

by Cynthia Kittredge



To form leaders for tomorrow's Church is a shared responsibility. The Episcopal Church Foundation has been encouraging and providing resources for that task for decades. I am grateful for its work to nurture lay and

ordained leaders in the Fellows program and in all the dimensions of its activities.

Although we do not know exactly what tomorrow's Church will look like, we do know that its faithful leaders must be people whose Christian faith is so integral to who they are that they can share the gospel with all kinds of people where they are. I call this being able to "set a table in the wilderness." Even while Israel complained and doubted, God was able to do just that.

God calls Church leaders to proclaim the good news in unexpected and under-resourced places, in landscapes where the language of faith is not widely known. When a person is deeply saturated and formed in the Scriptures and symbols of the Christian tradition, she can creatively adapt and remake them in new settings — with soldiers on deployment, in an emergency room, with a couple in counseling, and within a congregation. You need to know the tradition inside and out to improvise, and that takes time, practice, trial and error, and analysis and reflection in community. Theological education at its best, in and beyond the seminary, teaches the tradition and provides this intentional

practice among colleagues.

Lay and ordained leaders will be those who can offer hospitality in a diverse world. They can speak many languages, eat all kinds of food, and be at home in all kinds of homes. They will engage across boundaries of class, race, language, politics, and theology. Led well, churches and schools can seek out and enter into difficult conversations.

Tomorrow's Church will need leaders who can find partners and make creative alliances with others in the arts and in industry, in community development, in psychology and medicine, and across faith traditions to work together to heal the world. The Church can uphold and support confident servant leaders who can elicit the leadership of others by honoring and developing the manifold talents of its members in fields outside the professional "Church."

The Rev. Dr. Cynthia Kittredge is dean and president of the Seminary of the Southwest.

Leadership Transformed, and Transforming

by Altagracia Perez-Bullard



To form leaders for tomorrow's Church, we must first examine our definitions of leader and Church. The Church, the gathered people of God, is where lives are transformed.

As we encounter the power of the Spirit through word and sacrament, we are changed. Our primary purpose in life becomes to share what happened to us, showing through word and deed how God is alive and making all things new.

Of course, that means admitting we need transformation. It means bold preaching that challenges our lifestyles, our priorities, our values, and even our culture. It means challenging consumerism, greed, selfishness, addictive behaviors, and white supremacy, to name a few. It means a change of culture in our churches, not places frozen in time, but places that are ever changing and growing, just as those who are gathered are ever changing and growing.

As we encounter the Spirit, we become evangelists. We become people whose lives, gifts, and resources are dedicated to sharing the good news of Christ. That kind of community in turn raises up leaders who understand and can teach others about how a community guided and healed by the Spirit of God transforms while being transformed.

The experience of sharing the transformative reality of life with God creates a

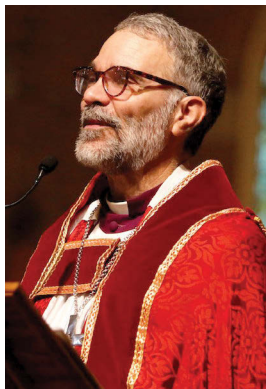
community that is not only being healed but also goes out to heal. These leaders will be formed by a community that models justice and inclusion within itself, and then organizes to go out and do the same in the many neighborhoods and institutions its members engage.

As God transforms us, leadership is redefined. Leadership is shared. Teams of laypeople and clergy challenge, teach, mobilize, feed, clothe and heal. They identify and equip others who will lead small groups of people passionate for God and what God is doing in the world. I work with congregational leaders who want to renew their churches, helping them renew their concept of leadership and ministry. They are equipped to use principles and strategies of community organizing to mobilize their community for change. They connect to the work of God and the passion within as the starting point for their call to serve the world. They are encouraged to be disciples, constantly learning, experimenting, and adapting, finding new and more effective ways to share the good news.

The Rev. Canon Altagracia Perez-Bullard, PhD, is canon for congregational vitality in the Diocese of New York.

Back to the Future

by George Sumner



Before I offer my response, I want first to thank ECF for helping make doctoral study possible for me, which was in my life closely connected to the answer I am about to give.

The best thing we can do to form leaders for tomorrow's Church is to promote in every way possible residential seminaries, endangered species though they be. The chorus of opposition has many voices. One hears things like: the ministry of the whole people of God requires a new pedagogy, and technology will save us, and study should be embedded in context. There are also opposing thoughts less often expressed: What good is theology? It only leads to strife, and anyway we're Episcopalians! Or: Had we not better batten down the financial hatches before the tsunami strikes?

But all this is cognitively distorted. In fact the pace of change and the uncertainty of the future Church require more theology, not less. The importance of formation in the rhetoric of the Association of Theological Schools was not mistaken, and no dispersed program can match the intensity of formation of a seminary. Most importantly, viable residential seminaries are not a zero-sum game with new kinds of local education. Actually, they are the condition for local education's flourishing!

It may be that, to some extent, the

Darwinian moment predicted for our seminaries is finally and fully upon us. Surely there is now an important place for seminaries with Anglican houses of study. And there is value in the efforts that ECF has branched into. But at the same time it is simply impossible to look at our church and conclude that we have a surfeit of theological capacity at either the level of academy or parish.

We need to rediscover and to revive the vocation of the seminary at precisely the moment of its greatest risk. And to this end ECF must claim yet more firmly its calling to help a new generation of theologians emerge for our church. Surely, being faithful has as a precondition knowing the faith. What if the most radical and daring plan were, in these times, the most traditional?

The Rt. Rev. George Sumner is Bishop of Dallas, and retired dean of Wycliffe College, Toronto.

Contending for the Faith Once Delivered

by Joseph Wolyniak



The 1611 Authorized Version beautifully rendered Jude’s exhortation to “earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the

saints” (Jude 3). That remains our charge. Yet it is necessary to admit — indeed, confess — that we have largely failed in the task of transmission. We are perilously close to a faith that was simply once delivered, full stop.

The average Episcopalian is almost wholly biblically illiterate, lacking a general sense of Scripture’s narrative arc and knowing only enough historical criticism to dismiss scriptural integrity, authority, and relevance. Many among us would be hard-pressed to tell Malachi from Maccabees from Matthew; forget reading, marking, and inwardly digesting. And there is wide variance in our common prayer, with many opting to do what is right in their own eyes. When it comes to catechesis, we fall back on appeals to *lex orandi, lex credendi*, but we forget that such appeals presume, as St. Prosper of Aquitaine put it, “the sacraments of priestly supplication, handed down by the apostles, are celebrated uniformly throughout the whole world and in every catholic Church, so that the law of praying might establish the law of believing.”

Perhaps this is not unique in the history of the Church. No less unique is the Church’s continual commitment to redoubling its formational and reformational efforts — *ecclesia semper*

reformanda est. To properly form, we will need to reform.

The good news is that the Church always contains the seeds of its revival. Our prayer book’s emphasis on the ministry of all the baptized, for instance, is a gift we have only begun to open. We must continue to explore implications of the common font, as the collapse of cultural Christianity strains priest-centric parochial formation. Developing more and better approaches to forming the whole body of Christ is imperative. While bishops and priests must live out their vocations as teachers, the whole Church needs to better identify, equip, and employ those with obvious charisms for catechesis — especially laity and deacons — and demonstrate how the proper terminus of formation is not presbyteral ordination.

Finally, we must expunge our nagging congregationalism and live into Anglican catholicity, marked by an open ecumenism and preferential option for the poor. From each as able to all as have need, better-resourced parishes and dioceses are called to solidarity with the wider Church — especially communities lacking access to quality formational materials or teachers.

The challenges before us are real. But we are, after all, a people of hope. And we look not to ourselves, but “unto him that is able to keep [us] from falling” (Jude 20, KJV).

The Rev. Joseph Wolyniak (2012 ECF Academic Fellow) is the Episcopal chaplain at Princeton University.

Over 50 Years of Supporting Leaders for Tomorrow's Church

The Episcopal Church Foundation's *Fellowship Partners Program* is well known for identifying and supporting promising scholars and ministry leaders across the Church. Less well known is the fact that the program was founded at a time of significant angst in the Episcopal Church, when denominational leaders were concerned about the formation models and quality of teaching at Episcopal seminaries. The eight voices represented in these reflections on the future of leadership education stand in a long line of critique and questioning fostered by the Episcopal Church Foundation.

In 1962, ECF's Board of Directors sponsored an intensive study to assess the Episcopal Church's needs and resources in theological education. In addition to assessing the model of education offered in Episcopal seminaries, the study examined the number of qualified leaders in the church and academy. Finding that the level of academic attainment among Episcopal clergy was lower than expected, the Foundation's directors created the Fellowship Partners Program in 1964 to identify and support doctoral students who expressed commitment to teaching in Episcopal seminaries. Since then, ECF has proudly supported over 200 scholars and ministry leaders with a passion for forming the next generation of leaders in the Church.

In the decades since, ECF has expanded its understanding of where leadership formation takes place. The eight voices published here represent only a small cross-section of over 50 years' worth of Fellows whose work continues to be about forming leaders for tomorrow's Church. Today, ECF identifies and supports scholars and ministry leaders who are committed to forming the next generation of leaders, both in the seminary classroom and beyond seminary walls. **The application process for the 2018 Fellowship is now open and the deadline is March 16, 2018. If you would like to learn more about becoming an ECF Fellow, be sure to visit the ECF website at bit.ly/FellowshipPartners**

The Episcopal Church Foundation (ECF) is a lay-led, independent organization that has been serving the Episcopal Church since 1949. Its mission is to strengthen the strategic, leadership and financial capabilities of Episcopal congregations, dioceses, and related organizations so they can better pursue their mission and ministry.



A Primer on Marian Devotion

Review by Jennifer Strawbridge

Marian devotion and doctrine are important not only for our Roman Catholic and Orthodox brothers and sisters, but are also alive and well within the Anglican tradition. Beyond the churches throughout the Anglican Communion that begin or end worship with the Angelus or a seasonal Marian antiphon, a number of Anglican churches have chapels (sometimes on a grand scale such as that in Ely) dedicated to the Mother of God.

For those who desire a deeper understanding of the practices and doctrines related to Mary, as well as the development of Marian devotion, *Gateway to Heaven* is a wonderful place to begin. This book draws together both ancient sources and recent scholarship on Marian devotion and piety, with a particular focus on the development of Marian doctrine.

The first of a projected two-volume set, *Gateway to Heaven* comprehensively traces the development of Marian practice and thought through the patristic and medieval periods, with each chapter arranged both chronologically and by theme. The writings from the patristic period include translations of Greek, Latin, and some Syriac, while the writings from the medieval period primarily focus on the Christian West.

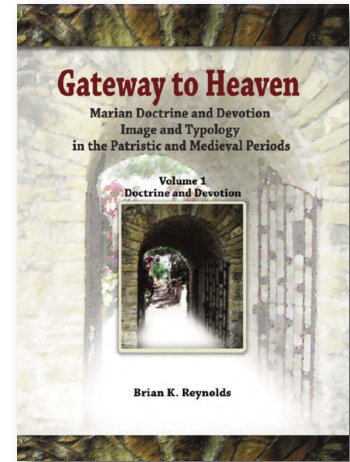
This does not mean the Christian East is completely neglected, as Reynolds compares Western developments with precedents in the patristic East. Full of extensive excerpts from primary sources, *Gateway* is an essential source for those engaged in Marian research. But its value is not limited to those with academic intentions, and this text is not simply a catalogue of excerpts.

Reynolds is careful not to reduce his

engagement with the primary material to a study of Marian doctrine and devotion as a social-historical enterprise. Rather, he keeps the focus firmly on theological issues and doctrine, addressing issues such as the meaning of Mary's motherhood and virginity (chapters 1-2), Mary as Co-Redemptrix and her soteriological role (chapters 3 and 6), and questions about intercession and mediation (chapters 4-5), the Assumption (chapter 7), and the Immaculate Conception (chapter 8).

The christological implications of Marian theology are not missed, as Reynolds includes an in-depth survey of the iconoclastic controversy at the start, as well as how, from the beginning, debates about Christ were connected to Mary and the nature of her motherhood (pp. 9-10). Thus, Reynolds engages not only with Marian doctrine but also with some key issues concerning the nature of Christ, such as the debate between Cyril and Nestorius concerning hypostatic union and Mary's title as *Theotokos* (pp. 25-29), as well as the role of Mary in the Christ-centered arguments of the iconoclasts (pp. 36f), Aquinas (pp. 89-90), and, briefly, Origen (pp. 57, 165). As Reynolds makes clear, focus on Christ's nature comes only through the lens of how Mary is understood and "her soteriological role" (p. 4).

My criticisms of this book are few and are not meant to detract from the contribution it makes to studies of Marian doctrine. A subject index would be extremely valuable alongside the index of primary texts. I would push against the limited understanding of the Greek *mesiteia* (mediation) as Mary's distribution of grace to humanity as mediatrix (p. 153), to include a broader understanding of the term, which is often found in the context of conflict and



Gateway to Heaven Marian Doctrine and Devotion Image and Typology in the Patristic and Medieval Periods

By Brian K. Reynolds

New City Press. Pp. 415. \$39.95

refers to negotiation, reconciliation, and arbitration. Examples of this broader understanding appear in the examples given from Basil (p. 172) and Paul Deacon Warnefred (p. 194).

For those interested in the history of Marian devotion and how Marian piety has developed since the earliest writings of the Church, this book is a brilliant, accessible resource, offering the clear message that Marian devotion is not simply a social or cultural phenomenon but is grounded in a deep and rich history and tradition.

The Rev. Jennifer Strawbridge is associate professor in New Testament at Oxford, Caird Fellow in Theology at Mansfield College, Oxford, and associate priest at St. Andrew's, Headington.

Pre-Revolutionary Thought

Review by Richard J. Mammana

Pavel Florensky (1882-1937) was a Russian polymath whose significance for Christian thought in the 20th century continues to become more apparent as his writings are translated into other world languages. A mathematician, physicist, poet, linguist, electrical engineer, art historian, semiotician, and philosopher, Florensky was ordained to the priesthood in the Russian Orthodox Church in 1911 in a country on the brink of war and revolution.

A key figure for the early 20th-century Russian religious intellectual renaissance, Florensky fell afoul of the Soviet régime despite having been a leader, clad in his cassock, in Bolshevik drives for rural electrification and in efforts to provide nutrition for gulag inmates from seaweed harvested on the White Sea. In 1937, he was executed in a prison camp in what the Orthodox Church today considers a martyrdom, and his burial place is unknown.

This book of eight brief essays is from the years just before Florensky's ordination to the priesthood, when he wrote as a public intellectual in periodical literature centered on the Moscow Theological Academy. One of his primary themes is the reconciliation of apparent contradictions between science and religion, and an essay on "Superstition and Miracle" is a fascinating contribution to this field of Christian inquiry.

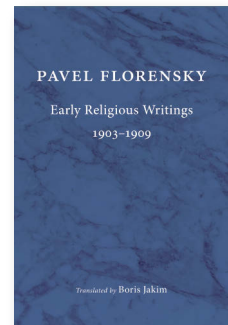
The two most compelling essays are biographical explorations of two of Florensky's contemporary spiritual exemplars: Archimandrite Serapion (V.M. Mashkin, 1854-1905), another theoretical mathematician who lived on Mount Athos before teaching at the Theological Academy, and an ex-

tended, moving hagiographical essay, "The Salt of the Earth," on Abba Isidore (1814-1908) of Gethsemane Hermitage at Sarov. Florensky was Isidore's spiritual son, and the firsthand account of his life (which has appeared previously in a separate English translation) is an indication of the vibrancy of Russian religious eldership (*starchestvo*) at the beginning of the last century.

Boris Jakim is the world's foremost translator of Russian religious litera-

ture into English, and this collection of material by Florensky joins his extensive earlier work on Dostoevsky, Solovyov, Bulgakov, and Khomiakov. This is a valuable contribution to the diversity of pre-Revolutionary thought, and a good way for beginning readers of Florensky to explore his thought before tackling longer works such as the monumental *Pillar and Ground of the Truth: An Essay in Orthodox Theodicy in Twelve Letters* (1914).

Pavel Florensky
Early Religious Writings, 1903-1909
By **Pavel Florensky**, translated by **Boris Jakim**
Eerdmans. Pp. xiii + 228. \$35



Since the 1930s, Episcopal Migration Ministries has offered life, opportunity, and hope to refugees. EMM honors the inherent value of human life, bringing communities together to love God, and to love their neighbors as themselves.

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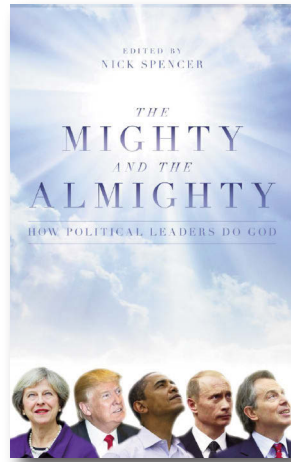
Public Servants (Sometimes of God)

Review by Stephen Platten

“At the last, Trump,” to wrench St. Paul entirely out of context, is how this book concludes. The final essay amongst 24 cameos of world leaders focuses on the 45th president of the United States. The Trump chapter is arguably the least objective of all within this engaging collection, having been written weeks after Trump’s inauguration. Time must elapse before a realistic assessment can be made.

Characters covered include presidents Ronald Reagan, Bill Clinton, George W. Bush and Barack Obama; Tony Blair, Angela Merkel, Vladimir Putin, Nicolas Sarkozy, Margaret Thatcher; and then, more widely still, Nigeria’s Goodluck Jonathan and South Korea’s Lee Myung-bak. The late Václav Havel is the only outsider, inasmuch as he never declared himself a confessing Christian. The book is focused on politicians who have declared Christian allegiance; doing God from a different religious background could fill a different volume.

The pattern adopted throughout is to begin with a mini-biography, followed by an analysis of the individual’s professed beliefs, a review of how these beliefs relate to political strategies, and a conclusion assessing these factors in light of the Christian faith. The miniature biographies are highly instructive. We are reminded of the dysfunctional family from which Clinton sprang, the extraordinary influence of Thatcher’s father upon her political and religious attitudes, and of Mary McAleese’s formation in a quasi-Roman Catholic ghetto in Northern Ireland and her triumphing over any bitterness from those childhood experiences. These accounts contribute considerably to understanding the religious back-



The Mighty and the Almighty

How Political Leaders Do God

Edited by Nick Spencer

Biteback Publishing. Pp. xvi + 347. £18.99

ground of each politician.

The analyses of Christianity’s influence on policies and achievements are invariably excellent. The variety of writers and subjects is bound to result in some unevenness. In the most idiosyncratic case, that of Havel, we apprehend how his observed moral authority is derived from Christian influences. Some specific philosophical and theological origins of his intellectual life are identified.

Perhaps most elusive of all is the interplay between religion and politics in each case. For some, the private nature of their lives obscures easy theorizing: Merkel and May show evidence of this. Elsewhere it is difficult to trace the tangled roots of Christianity upon public policy. Have individual leaders used religion for pragmatic electoral purposes, and have the religious and political strands remained distinct for others?

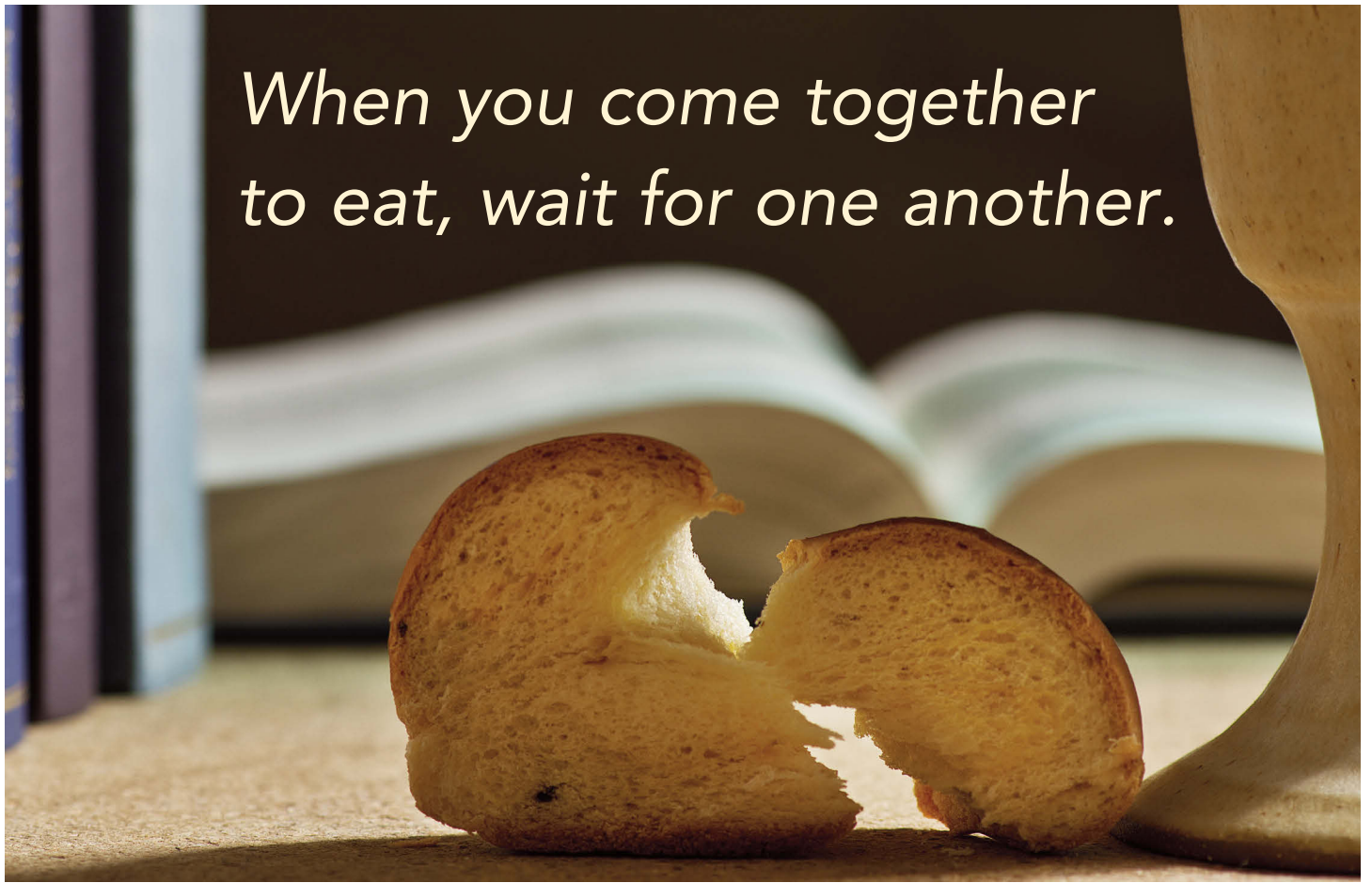
Editor Nick Spencer, the research director of the religion and society think tank Theos, provides a brief conclusion. He adverts to the remarkable religious influence on world leaders in recent decades. He rejects a purely cynical account of religion as a

vehicle to power. There is no consistent pattern of relationship across these individuals. Partly this derives from a useful aphorism he coins: “Christianity shaped them before it shaped their politics” (p. 340). Elsewhere he notes (mentioning Donald Trump) that “a Christian *faith* can co-exist happily with claiming the rights of a Christian *identity*” (p. 345).

This is a stimulating collection and will provoke further reading on certain politicians. There is no index, which would assist in cross-referencing, and there are one or two inaccurate generalizations. Spencer claims that Harold Macmillan was the only devout British Prime Minister between 1945 and 1980. Alec Douglas-Home was devout and Edward Heath was news editor of *The Church Times* in the late 1940s. But the final words should go to Spencer: “Christian belief contests *all* politics, its visions of human flourishing and the ethical claims it makes of people being so demanding that no political leader or political programme can full satisfy them” (p. 346).

The Rt. Rev. Stephen Platten is chaplain to St. Martin-within-Ludgate, London.

*When you come together
to eat, wait for one another.*



COVENANT is the weblog of THE LIVING CHURCH, an independent, non-profit ministry seeking and serving the full visible unity of the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church. Our writers are lay and ordained leaders who serve in parishes and dioceses, in schools, and in para-church ministries across the Episcopal Church, the Anglican Communion, and the wider body of Christ.

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The Living Church Foundation seeks to extend its unique ministry of journalism, publishing, organizing, and leadership development for the life and vitality of the Church.

The Beauty of Created Things

Review by Greg Garrett

We should be some years now past arguing about whether film and the other arts can carry sacred meaning — and, if we're honest, some centuries past it. The last decade's glut of "gospel according to" books on everything from *The Simpsons* to *The Hunger Games* should have accustomed us to the idea of reading contemporary culture for spiritual insight (I am as much to be blamed for this glut as anyone), but Christian understanding that God may be speaking through matter actually represents some of our earliest theological reflection.

Bishop Richard Harries has pointed out in his lovely short book *Art and the Beauty of God* that the early Church Fathers, studying the Old Testament in Greek, were reading that God created the world and it was very *kala* (that is: *right, fitting, good, perfect, beautiful*). The beauty of created things, Augustine wrote in *The Confessions*, was the answer to our questions about God. More recently, Rowan Williams has written that creation is still going on when we speak, or make art, or read a text; that God's Wisdom is always "looking for a home in the human mind and heart" (*Tokens of Trust*, p. 37).

Light Shining in a Dark Place, a new collection of essays on theology and cinema edited by Jeff Sellars, thus comes into a world perhaps a wee bit tired of texts reading texts for theological meaning. It also comes in with some tangible weaknesses: it is the nature of any collection that some essays will be more valuable to a reader than others, and the variety of approaches employed by these writers means that the reader is initiated into a methodology or a theological filter and

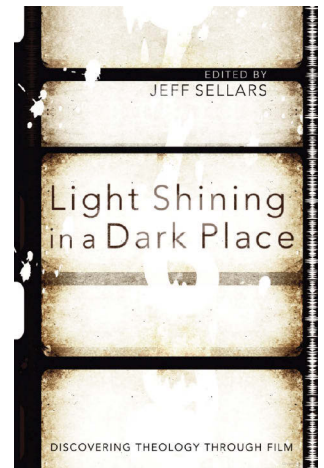
Too much religious study of film, music, television, or other forms of culture attempts to subdue it for Christian purposes; it fails to take account of how art forms work, in its anxiousness to mine a message.

then must set it aside in the next essay.

This diversity also represents a strength, though. Instead of an entire book offering, say, an Augustinian reading of film, or exploring movies through the lens of theodicy, we have chapters that do these things. Then other chapters explore miraculous grace in P.T. Anderson's *Magnolia*, the communion of meals in films like *Babette's Feast*, and reflections on how a study of C.S. Lewis's writing and reflection on theology and genre might shape our theological responses to contemporary film.

The sum of these essays is a wide-ranging introduction to how we might employ film as a carrier of spiritual and religious meaning, more accessible than some, and running the gamut from popular and familiar films (*Schindler's List*, *The Social Network*, *Night of the Living Dead*) to movies chosen for their close fit with the questions under consideration (*Catfish*, *Babette's Feast*, DC Comics animated cartoon features). Some of these films are already staples for Popcorn Theology, movie sermon series, or other uses of film in the parish; others are novel, and well worth discovering.

Perhaps the most positive thing about the collection as a whole, however, is that it adheres to its warnings about how this sort of writing most oft goes awry, and it offers a consistent model of how to do theological reflection about culture properly. Sellars, in his introduction, cites Hans Urs von Balthasar, a great lover of both beauty and drama and their theological possibilities. But von Balthasar warns that to boil down beauty into truth runs the risk of eliminating beauty altogether, a common problem in cultural exegesis. Too much religious study of film, music, television, or other



**Light Shining
in a Dark Place**
Discovering Theology
through Film

Edited by Jeff Sellars
Pickwick. Pp. 231 + xix. \$28

forms of culture attempts to subdue it for Christian purposes; it fails to take account of how art forms work, in its anxiousness to mine a message.

Theological study of culture has to pay attention to the forms of that culture: how a film communicates, whether a song is in minor or major, whether we should consider a narrator ironic or sincere. The best theological writing on culture should show us how form and meaning — beauty and truth, if you will — shape each other. It should, as an essay in this collection does, understand what Anderson is doing in *Magnolia* as well as what the film might be communicating to us. It should explicate the form and prevalent images of zombie films, as well as their themes. It should know that the visuals of the landscape of *Paris, Texas*

communicates spiritual themes as powerfully as the film's dialogue.

I know of several good books on theology and film for non-scholars, both ordained and lay. *Light Shining in a Dark Place* is the most valuable collection of essays on the topic I have read since Robert K. Johnston edited his more scholarly *Reframing Theology and Film* (2007). I commend it as a tool for sermons, teaching, and formation, and as a thoughtful guide to an overcrowded field that nonetheless can still reward the reader.

Greg Garrett is the 2013 Centennial Professor at Baylor University, writer in residence at the Seminary of the Southwest, and a licensed lay preacher in the Episcopal Church.

How to Survive the Apocalypse

Zombies, Cylons, Faith, and Politics
at the End of the World

By Robert Joustra and Alissa Wilkinson

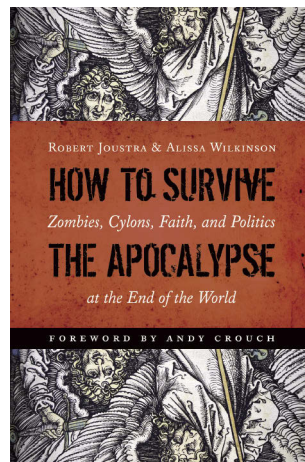
Eerdmans. Pp. 206. \$18

In this helpful and jauntily titled book, Robert Joustra and Alissa Wilkinson attempt to turn the tide of simply bemoaning the surrounding culture. They challenge us to take a critical look at the stories that our culture is trying to tell today, particularly the apocalyptic stories in television and film, with an eye on how Christians might respond to the narratives.

“We want to peer through the lens of apocalypse at ourselves, looking at these dystopias to see how we conceive of our life together — our politics,” they write. “We want to see what is good and what is broken in our culture, so we can then have more meaningful discussions about how to maximize one and heal the other” (p. 4).

Joustra and Wilkinson draw heavily from Christian philosopher Charles Taylor in *The Malaise of Modernity* and *A Secular Age*. And because Taylor can sometimes be a dense and difficult writer, they also draw on his interpreter James K.A. Smith's *How (Not) to Be Secular: Reading Charles Taylor*. In effect, Joustra and Wilkinson's book acts as a condensation of Taylor's thoughts through the lens of pop culture.

Joustra and Wilkinson diagnose how apocalyptic stories have moved within our culture from being God-centered to man-centered, in effect revealing



that we now perceive ourselves as gods and “the authors of our own destruction” (p. 3). Since the Cold War era there has been a marked shift from utopian stories (TV's original *Star Trek*) to dystopian stories such as *Star Trek: Into Darkness* by J.J. Abrams.

Why has this happened, and how is it revealed in our stories today? Joustra and Wilkinson trace the history of this shift from God-centered apocalypse to man-centered apocalypse. They examine *Battlestar Galactica*, *Mad Men*, *Breaking Bad*, *House of Cards*, *Game of Thrones*, *The Walking Dead*, and ABC's *Scandal*, and two recently popular films, *Her* and *The Hunger Games*.

The authors conclude on a weak note. While making some helpful suggestions about the need for engagement and dialogue, they fall a little flat in addressing how the gospel might address the hurts, needs, and pathologies of the surrounding culture.

Still, this book is a very useful resource for clergy, those engaged in evangelism, and for Christians seeking a better grasp of the times.

*The Rev. Kyle Tomlin
Fredericksburg, Virginia*

The List

Once a year, members of the Living Church Foundation's board honor their forebears.



By Richard J. Mammana

It is a cold Thursday morning near the banks of the Cumberland River in Central Tennessee, and I am preparing for a board meeting. I have had a mug of coffee with the morning's portion of the Psalter before a brief attempt at inbox triage — and then the last-minute compilation of the list that makes this board meeting different from every other board meeting.

The list is the annual necrology of the Living Church Foundation, read during the course of our yearly requiem: a constant practice that sets our time together about the common task of reports, nominations, votes, motions, budget discussions, and social fellowship.

The list contains the names of every deceased editor of THE LIVING CHURCH, its major benefactors across almost 140 years, its recently deceased employees, and others in whose memory gifts have been made to the foundation during the course of a year. Reading the list has become my privilege and my duty for the last decade or so, and I seldom make it all the way through without my voice quavering or a tear welling up at the name of a strong one or a loved one.

And then for those, our dearest and our best,
By this prevailing presence we appeal;
O fold them closer to thy mercy's breast!
O do thine utmost for their souls' true weal!
From tainting mischief keep them white and clear,
And crown thy gifts with strength to persevere.

These are my friends and siblings in the Lord, asleep now until the last trumpet when we shall all be changed. As a church archivist with that highly developed affinity for dead bishops that only those who possess it can recognize, the names I read are not by and large strange ones. I have known and supped with some in that storied dining room in Milwaukee whose wallpaper and windowpanes hold the powerful memories of a half-century

of such annual meetings — now nicotine-free.

Our work and our shared love in Christ have been knit together by correspondence, by family celebrations and funerals to which we have invited one another. The ones I do not know from cheerful and serious conversation I know from the pages of the magazine it has been our happy toil to create in an often quixotic-feeling confidence that we had of our strength any good word or work to build up the body of Christ.

And now, O Father, mindful of the love
That bought us, once for all, on Calvary's tree,
And having with us him that pleads above,
We here present, we here spread forth to thee,
That only offering perfect in thine eyes,
The one true, pure, immortal sacrifice.

I have read the list in that disused parish church in Tennessee, in a seminary chapel in Chelsea, in a great Ancient and Modern church of Dallas, in the tired bastions of the Upper Midwest, while the mud of a hurricane-battered Houston was still fresh. The tradition — because it is a tradition, of unknown origin — keeps our minds, but more our hearts, aware that we are inheritors and stewards with a goodly heritage.

If the names of the founders, John Fulton and Samuel Smith Harris, have been forgotten, they are not this morning. If the names of Frederic Cook Morehouse and his son Clifford Phelps Morehouse, those devout and intellectual servants of both church and country, have ever been forgotten, they are spoken at the altar today. If we remember — some of us — H. Boone Porter, Carroll Simcox, and Peter Morton Day, the necrology tells us that the proper place for our memories, our gratitude, our vexations, our blessings from God, met uniquely in each of them. It tells us that the place for all of this is at the foot of the Cross in the sacrament of remembering. I would wager a Mercury dime that the annual requiem is the only time when the name of Charles Wesley Leffing-

well, sometime editor, is ever still spoken aloud.

Look, Father, look on his anointed face,
And only look on us as found in him;
Look not on our misusings of thy grace,
Our prayer so languid, and our faith so dim;
For lo! between our sins and their reward,
We set the passion of thy Son our Lord.

We do not read their names because they were heroes, though three of them probably were. We do not read their names because they were especially venal — though some of them probably were. We read them not to change their souls' state with God, which would be folly.

We pray for the light perpetual and the mercy of God, because it is what *we* need today as they did in their day. We pray the names of the ones who have gone before us, sealed with the seal of faith, because we want in our feeble ways to be more conformed to them in duty, in service, in devotion to one another. We hold their names on our hearts as we approach the throne of grace because this is how a family cares for its loved ones.

And so we come; O draw us to thy feet,
Most patient Savior, who canst love us still!
And by this food, so awful and so sweet,
Deliver us from every touch of ill:
In thine own service make us glad and free,
And grant us nevermore to part with thee.

This board meeting is different from the other board meetings because of the list, and because we gather at God's Board. No person who has given real labor for the work of the foundation, or served on its governing board, can know it to have been other than a wrinkle of the service of perfect freedom to which we are all called. There is a leveling here, an awareness of our mortality: I have stood as worshiping neighbor in a room today with persons whose names I believe will someday also be on the necrology, and the best of hopefulness and thankfulness well up here. This is not morbid; it is Christian reality and honesty. Whether in the old Biretta Belt or in Texan-Canadian tones of reverence and awe, I have a good hope that it shall continue as long as THE LIVING CHURCH is in the Living Church. □

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LC2017-C

New Debates

(Continued from page 13)

slimming down. Fueling debate are regular media revelations of members who make no contribution but contrive to show long enough to collect the prescribed £300 allowance for daily attendance. People become truly ani-

mated, however, about the 36 bishops (Lords Spiritual) who sit in the Lords.

A new report from a working group led by Lord Burns, ex-chairman of a national television station and the retailer Marks and Spencer, signals full speed ahead with reform. But it deftly sidesteps the issue of the bishops. Earlier in the year the National Secular Society launched a petition for their complete removal, which attracted 10,000 signatures within days.

Lord Williams, the 104th Archbishop of Canterbury, appeared lukewarm, as did Archbishop Vincent Nicholls, when asked for a defense of the status quo.

Explaining his reasoning, Lord Burns said he thought including bishops in the menu of reform legislation would prove a distraction and it could wait until the rest of the process was complete.

Now, *Thought for the Day*: It is a monologue, hardly in tone from the rest of *Today*, in which confrontation is the order of the day. It's meant to bring a faith dimension to current affairs, with mainly Christian contributors and a sprinkling of other faiths.

Debate about the segment emerges regularly, most recently when *Radio Times* magazine covered the 60th anniversary of the program. It quoted John Humphrys, senior presenter, as calling *Thought* "deeply, deeply boring," inappropriate in an increasingly secular society, and "only occasionally interesting."

Somewhat colorless ripostes from church figures, including the Archbishop Justin Welby, were eclipsed by the Rev. Canon Giles Fraser, a regular on *Thought*. He said a "culture of sniggering contempt towards religion is endemic within the BBC. And one acceptable way of demonstrating this is to slag off *Thought for the Day*."

Fraser is plain-spoken figure who resigned as a canon at St Paul's London after a very public disagreement with the dean when protesters occupied the cathedral square in 2012. He is now vicar of an inner-city parish south of the River Thames.


On air he claimed church attendance was larger than crowds attending football (soccer), which gets more time during *Today*. When Humphrys questioned this, Fraser challenged him to a £5 bet. Later he confronted the BBC man with a bundle of statistics. Humphrys says his check is in the post.

Both Bishops in the Lords and *Thought for the Day* symbolize how the U.K. maintains institutions that, on the surface, seem to be anachronisms. When anyone calls for change, however, it stirs up a tempest.

John Martin

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The Incarnation and New Worlds

It is helpful to have Andrew Davison's survey of theological views, going back to the 15th century, on the possibility and the implications of intelligent life elsewhere in the universe ["Lord of the Starfields," Nov. 19].

But not only have theologians considered that extraterrestrial possibility, they also confronted directly an intra-terrestrial actuality about 500 years ago. This happened when Europeans became widely aware of entire civilizations existing in what we now call the Americas. That discovery led naturally to questions like these: Was the Incarnation for the American peoples also? How can God's salvation be understood to extend to peoples separated for 15 centuries by nontraversable seas from the cross and the good news emanating therefrom? Such questions were pondered, for notable instance, by the Salamancan school of the 16th century (Francisco de Vitoria et al.). And there are ways of answering such questions without impinging upon the uniqueness of the Incarnation or its universal effect.

In that sense also it would not be a new question to ask: How was the salvation wrought by the Incarnation effective for intelligent beings elsewhere in the universe, separated for vast times by nontraversable outer space from the cross and its good news? And again, there are ways to answer that question without restricting the universal reach of the one Incarnation of the Son of God.

*The Rev. Canon Victor Lee Austin
Dallas*

Buried Treasure

"Giving for the Long Term" [July 16] is excellent but it omits one important fact: The 1979 Book of Common Prayer, like its predecessors, requires clergy in charge of congregations to instruct their parishioners on planned giving.

Curiously, this requirement is contained in a rubric at the end of "A Thanksgiving for the Birth or Adoption of a Child" (p. 445): "The Minister of the Congregation is directed to instruct the people, from time to time, about the duty of Christian parents to make prudent provision for the well-being of their families, and of all persons to make wills, while they are in health, arranging for the disposal of their temporal goods, not neglecting, if they are able, to leave bequests for religious and charitable uses."

*The Very Rev. Canon John H. Park
Ambridge, Pennsylvania*

A Reason to Smile?

(Continued from page 16)

about possibly putting the store on the AmazonSmile registry, so that on the one hand, for our customers buying [on Amazon] what we don't sell here, we could benefit from those purchases," Kay Becker, who has worked at the store for 12 years, told TLC. "On the other hand, we wouldn't want our customers to get everything from Amazon and not patronize us."

One of the few remaining Episcopal bookstores, the shop sends packages to all 50 states, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. It distributes church calendars, worship and sacramental materials, hymnals, and prayer books, while also stocking other books and gifts.

Becker, who helps prepare items for shipment, said the bookstore has not been immune to the effects of the Great Recession and the ascendancy of online retailers like Amazon. "When I first started working here, I would prepare books to be shipped every day. Now, I could go several days without preparing a book to ship, even though we continue to ship lots of gifts and church-specific material — but regular books we ship less of."

Support from Smile could help the store's bottom line, yet Smile's math is simple and brutal: \$1 million in annual AmazonSmile purchases by patrons would only translate to a \$5,000 check to the Cathedral Bookstore. Under these conditions, could the store thrive without relationships with Episcopalians?

"Episcopal bookstores have been disappearing, so that's one reason we're serving a much wider area than usual, and there are things that we carry that are very particular and unique to the church. However, if we don't get the patron support we need, we won't be able to offer what our churches rely on us for."

Katy Crane has worked as a labor organizer and a community development missionary for the South Wedge Mission, a Lutheran-Episcopal church plant in Rochester, New York. She studied economics at Smith College in Massachusetts.

PEOPLE & PLACES

Appointments

The Rev. **Robert Berra** is chaplain at Trinity Episcopal Campus Ministry, Arizona State University, Phoenix.

The Rev. **Brent Carey** is interim rector of St. Michael and All Angels, Mission, KS.

The Rev. **Ralph Clark** is priest-in-charge of St. Joseph's, Fayetteville, NC.

The Rev. **George Daisa** is rector of St. Patrick's, Thousand Oaks, CA.

The Rev. **John F. Dwyer** is chief operating officer of Church Divinity School of the Pacific.

The Rev. **Glen Graczyk** is rector of St. Mary's, Palmetto, FL.

The Rev. **Daniel Gross** is associate rector of St. Peter's, Morristown, NJ

The Rev. **Marcus Halley** is rector of St. Paul's on Lake of the Isles, Minneapolis.

The Rev. **Ted Holt** is interim rector of Sts. Philip & James, Morenci, and All Saints, Saford, AZ.

The Rev. **Kenn Katona** is priest-in-charge of St. Clement's, Rancho Cordova, CA.

The Rev. **Gene LeCouteur** is rector of Emmanuel, Middleburg, VA.

The Rev. **Frank Limehouse** is chaplain of Christ Memorial Chapel, Hobe Sound, FL.

The Rev. **Matthew Lukens** is acting chaplain at Canterbury House, University of Michigan.

The Rev. **Gary Nicolosi** is interim rector of

Nativity, Scottsdale, AZ.

The Rev. **Lisa Ransom** is interim minister at St. James, Woodstock, VT.

The Rev. **Frank Russ** is interim rector of St. James the Fisherman, Shallotte, NC.

The Rev. **Anjel Scarborough** is priest-in-charge at St. Peter's, Ellicott City, MD.

The Rev. **Brad Smith** is senior associate for Christian formation and spiritual development at St. John's, Charlotte.

The Rev. **Regis Smolko** is priest-in-charge of St. Brendan's, Franklin Park, PA.

The Rev. **Susan Brown Snook** is canon for church growth and development in the Diocese of Oklahoma.

The Ven. Canon **Patricia Soukup** is archdeacon of the Diocese of the Rio Grande.

The Rev. **Jennifer Southhall** is priest-in-charge of Redeemer, Biloxi, MS.

The Rev. **Chuck Sowinski** is a deacon at Trinity Cathedral, Phoenix.

The Rev. **Kirsten Snow Spalding** is rector of Nativity, San Rafael.

The Rev. **Dana Strande** is priest at Nativity, Burnsville, MN.

The Rev. **Shawn Strout** is associate dean for academic affairs at the Diocese of Central Pennsylvania's Stevenson School for Ministry.

The Rev. **Geraldine Swanson** is deacon to the Richmond Episcopal Ministry, which oversees new ministry development on Staten Island, NY.

The Rev. **T.J. Tetzlaff** is assistant priest at St. Philip's, Southport, NC

The Rev. **M. Dion Thompson** is associate priest for pastoral care at St. Anne's, Annapolis, MD

The Rev. **Edward Thompson** is associate rector of Trinity, Galveston, TX.

The Very Rev. **John Tidy** is canon to the ordinary of the Diocese of Southeast Florida.

The Rev. **Marilyn van Duffelen** is vicar of St. Paul's Indian Mission, Sioux City, IA.

The Rev. **Joshua Varner** is canon missionary for children and youth in the Diocese of Georgia.

The Rev. **Alyse Elizabeth Viggiano** is curate at St. Paul's, Alexandria, VA.

The Rev. **Kate Wesch** is rector of St. John the Baptist, West Seattle.

The Rev. **Ginny Wilder** is rector of St. Anne's, Winston-Salem, NC.

The Rev. **Claire Woodley** is canon for ministry support in the Diocese of Long Island.

Ordinations

Priests

Albany — **John Carter Cairns** and **Donna Louise Howard Steckline**

Oregon — **Regan M. Schutz**

Western Michigan — **John Edwin Infante Pinzón**

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The Rev. **Paul Gennett Jr.**, as rector of St. Thomas's, Newark, DE

The Rev. **David B. Huxley**, as rector of St. Nicholas, Flower Mound, TX

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As You Wait

“And when [Jesus] came up out of the water, immediately he saw the heavens opened and the Spirit descending upon him like a dove; and a voice came from heaven, ‘Thou art my beloved Son; with thee I am well pleased’” (Mark 1:10-11). Because the Son was in the beginning with God, and because this beginning is before time and forever, the Word spoken from the rent heavens concerning the Son is an eternal Word. The heavens cannot be shut and the Word cannot be muted. “The Father spoke one Word, which was His Son, and this Word He always speaks in eternal silence, and in silence it must be heard by the soul,” St. John of the Cross wrote in *Maxims and Counsels*. “For God alone my soul in silence waits; from him comes my salvation” (Ps. 62:1).

Faith is a posture of waiting. Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, but never an assurance that blunts the deep yearnings of hope. Faith may have consolations, but these consolations are a stimulus to habitual longing. Faith hopes that the God who has arrived in his Word will yet come, will come moment by moment, until all things reach their proper end in the vision of God, until God is all in all. Faith imagines cosmic signs that announce transcendent wonder and power. God will open heaven, shake mountains, darken the sun, and scatter stars on the face of the earth (Isa. 64:1-2; Mark 13:24-25). God is coming from beyond all knowing, coming to those who wait, coming to those who seek to do right and are honest about having done wrong. Faith waits for a love that exposes the uncleanness of our lives, the filth that festered in the soul, the frailty at the heart of mortal being, the wind that sweeps us away (Isa. 64:6).

The God who has come and is coming in his Word is triune love. God hates nothing he has made, and so the soul's purgation in the presence of God is the soul's true healing. The judgment sought in faith is not unending wrath

against the world, but kindled flame in every soul. “Restore us, O LORD God of hosts; let your face shine, that we may be saved” (Ps. 80:19).

The espousal love of Christ for the Church and every member of the church is a complete self-offering. Christ gives “All that I am and all that I have” (marriage rite). He loves the church to the end, which is to say that he loves without end. So loving and so giving, every moment is the moment of his arrival. Every moment he is near, at the very gate (Mark 13:29). His presence invades and burns the brushwood of sin, ever creating ever a new being in Christ. The grace of God given in Christ comes in signs and wonders, and in hidden mysteries strewn upon land and sea, in the depths and upon the heights. God is and is coming in the wonder of a transparent universe.

Jesus is *God with us*. And yet he awakens and inflames our deepest desires. Although in some sense utterly filled with the fullness of Christ, the soul persists in a state of emptiness. Indeed, this emptiness deepens and grows as we await “the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Cor. 1:7). Enriched in every way, there is yet an infinite depth of God to know and feel, to know by not knowing. Every moment is a vigil. And hope does not disappoint us.

Look It Up

Read Isaiah 64:4.

Think About It

Waiting for God is his arrival.

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EDITORIAL AND BUSINESS OFFICES

Mailing address:

P.O. Box 510705

Milwaukee, WI 53203-0121

Shipping Address:

816 E. Juneau Avenue

Milwaukee, WI 53202

Phone: 414-276-5420

Fax: 414-276-7483

E-mail: tlc@livingchurch.org

www.livingchurch.org

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

SUBSCRIPTION RATES: \$55 for one year; \$95 for two years.

Canadian postage an additional \$10 per year;

Mexico and all other foreign, an additional \$63 per year.

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

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

MANUSCRIPTS AND PHOTOGRAPHS: THE LIVING CHURCH cannot assume responsibility for the return of photos or manuscripts.

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The End

In the current climate in which so-called alternative facts obscure the very notion of truth, it is refreshing to land in the season of Advent and hear the announcement of “this one fact,” namely, “that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like one day” (2 Pet. 3:8). God is Lord of time, Lord of the Ages, and Lord of every moment. God simply is and is sovereign.

From a merely human perspective, it may appear that the Lord is slow about his promise to return, but the Lord’s apparent delay is an expression of divine forbearance. God does not “[want] any to perish, but all to come to repentance” (2 Pet. 3:9). Advent is the season of waiting not only for the coming of the Christ child, but also and especially the coming of Christ at the end of time. “The day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a loud noise and the elements will be dissolved with fire, and the earth and everything that is done on it will be disclosed” (2 Pet. 3:10).

The problem and challenge, of course, is that the note of expectancy in this article of faith — he will come again to judge the living and the dead — is largely absent from the consciousness of the Church, and for reasons that are not hard to understand. It has been more than 2,000 years, after all. And we need to get on with daily life, which requires some sense of stability and some hope that tomorrow will arrive. Our abiding hope is that history will go on, not end. And, in a sense, this is a deeply Christian hope.

All created being is holy, time is sacred, our lives and bodies are temples of God. Christ came that we may have life and have it abundantly. Indeed, this temporal existence is good and beautiful and a gift of God from day to day. We need to live as if under a vow of stability to get on with a humane life, and to dispose our-

selves to daily graces. And we certainly should never do anything to hasten the end, either of our own lives, or of history. God forbid!

Still, time runs out. The Bible tells us so. The elements dissolve. The flower fades. We will all stand before the great judgment seat of Christ. If this truth is allowed a proper place in our Christian lives, it will magnify the preciousness of time. Time is a treasure precisely because it ends. Each moment and each day is an unrepeatable opportunity in which the grace of God calls out for a deeply personal response that would occur in no other life and in no other time. “Since all things are to be dissolved in this way, what sort of persons ought you to be in leading lives of holiness and godliness?” (2 Pet. 3:11) There is absolutely nothing morbid about this. Life ends. Christ comes. How will you live?

Imagine a high mountain from which an announcement goes out to the entire world, a herald of good tidings, good news, the justice and mercy for which the ages have hoped. A voice speaks: “Here is your God” (Isa. 40:9). It is fearful in judgment, and beautiful in mercy. “He will feed his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms, and carry them in his bosom” (Isa. 40:11). How will you live? How will we live together under the gaze of justice and mercy? God gives and will take away.

Look It Up

Read Psalm 85:10.

Think About It

The kiss of peace is the kiss of righteousness.

The Nation and My Whole Being

In roughly the mid-sixth century B.C., after God's people had suffered the loss of their homeland and temple, they were finally allowed under the rule of Cyrus of Persia to return home from their captivity in Babylon. Arriving, they saw devastation and waste on all sides. Church and state lay in ruin. Their migration home, of course, brought moments of joy and hope, but the vision of a homeland laid waste by war and neglect shook them deeply, so much that they had little choice but to fall upon the faith they had long known, and wait for the Lord.

God was faithful and just. God intervened through his holy prophet. "The spirit of the LORD GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to prisoners; to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn" (Isa. 61:1-2). These are not facile words of comfort spoken by an indifferent and distant party shielded by ease. God acts to provide for those who mourn, and not, of course, only for those in the sixth century B.C. in the land of Israel. In every age and every place, the Son of the Father says, "Blessed are those who mourn." Their comfort is the action and grace of God in Christ.

God acts on behalf of a whole people to restore not only their land and temple, but their collective spirit as well. God "gives a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit" (Isa. 61:3). Imagine, as we should and must, such a promise for our time, a church and a community and a nation in which the joy of one resounds as the joy of each and the shared joy of all. "Oh, how good and pleasant it is when brethren live together in unity" (Ps.

133:1). Such unity is rooted in a righteousness in which the irreducible dignity of persons is acknowledge and respected. Members of the nation are called "oaks of righteousness."

The prophet, though speaking for the Lord, speaks also for himself, as a person, and thus gives voice to the full life of every person. "I will greatly rejoice in the LORD; my whole being shall exult in my God" (Isa. 61:10). The same may be said with Christian emphasis, "May the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thess. 5:23). God is acting to restore the land, the nation, the temple, and persons, all the way down to the least of these, and God calls upon us to take our part in this great drama.

It has never been easy to work for the continual renewal of the Church, a more just state, a genuine respect for persons, and a proper regard for the land and sea and air and all life. But the joy of the Lord is precisely this work done in ways known and unknown, ways very small and sometimes vast. Christ gave himself for the life of the world, which pattern of self-offering is our own. God shows his strength, brings down the mighty, lifts up the lowly, and fills the hungry with good things. "The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do this" (1 Thess. 5:24).

Look It Up

Read Luke 1:46b-47.

Think About It

Mary sees her soul grow and her spirit rejoice in giving herself entirely to her Son.



Focused Outward

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

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

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

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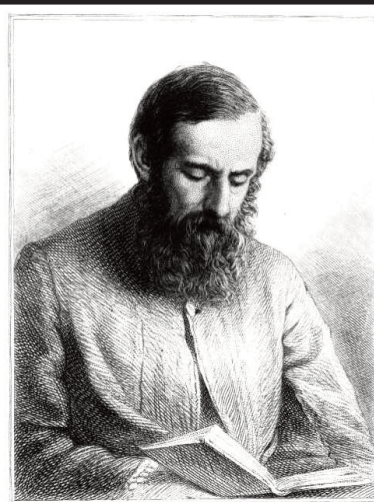
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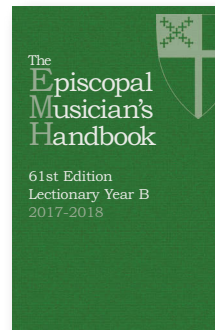
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