Budgeted Evangelism Revising Leonel Mitchell George Lindbeck Festschrift

February 11, 2018

The Living Church

CATHOLIC EVANGELICAL ECUMENICAL

The Truth about Martin Luther King Day

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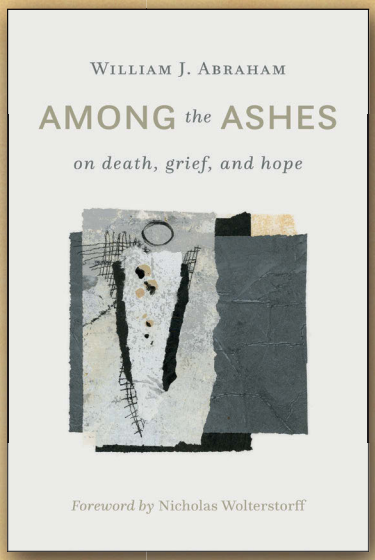

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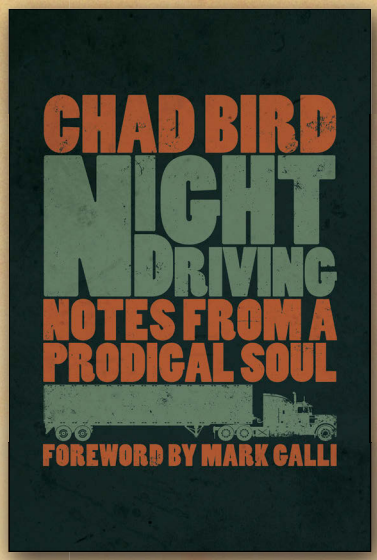

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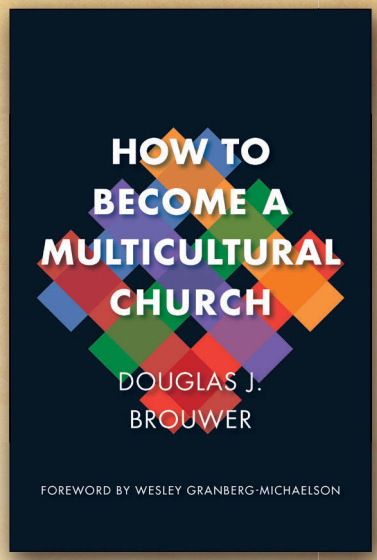

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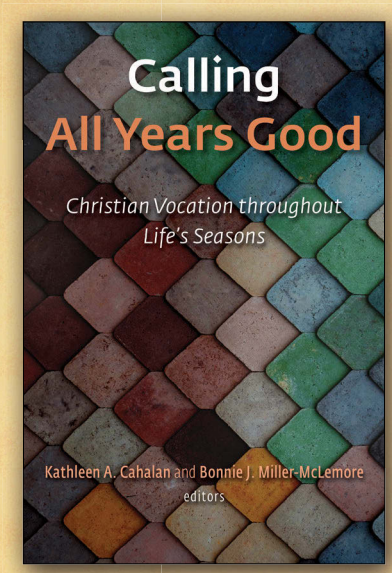

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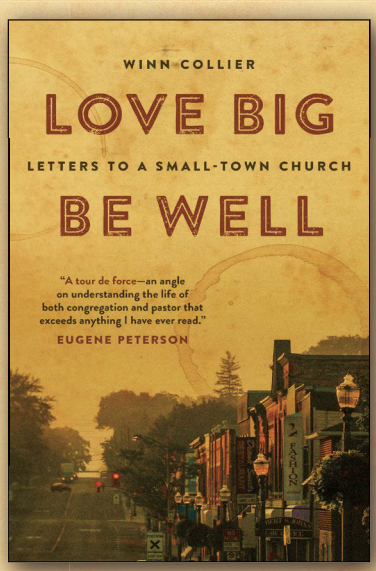

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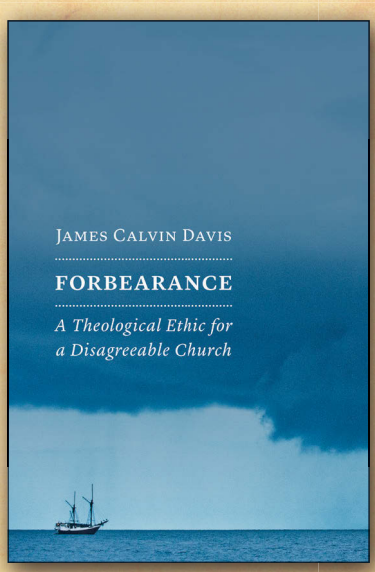

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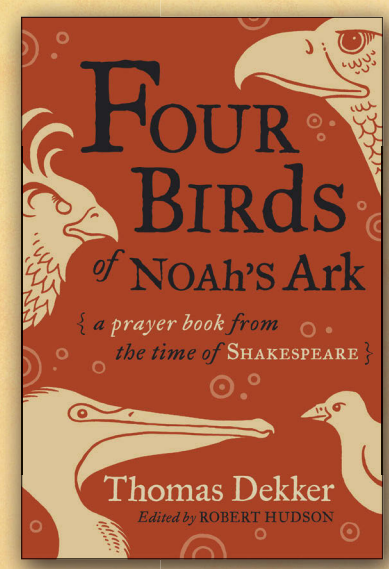

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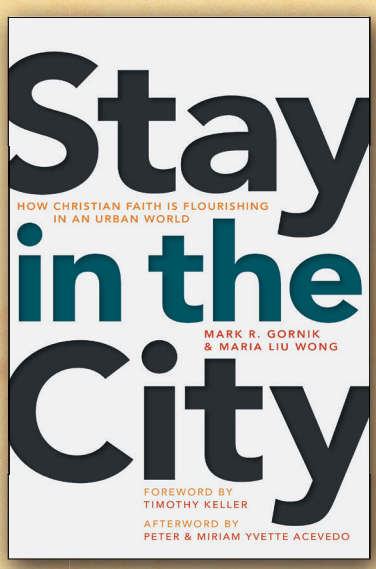

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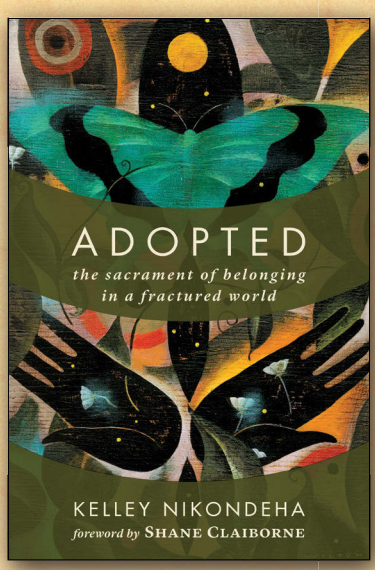

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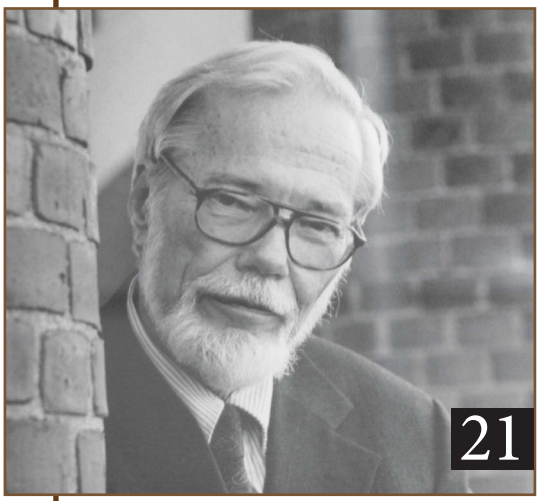
ON THE COVER

"He will not abandon us even if our struggle takes us to the grave, and God's promise is that his presence with us shall prevail over the powers of death and hell" (see "The Truth about Martin Luther King Day," p. 14).

Richard Hill photo



The Living Church

THIS ISSUE | February 11, 2018

Living Church Partners

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EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

Budget Priority on Evangelism

In response to "a clarion call" of comments on the proposed budget that was posted in November (TLC, Dec. 3, 2017), the Executive Council of the Episcopal Church added more than $1.8 million to the church's planned spending for evangelism.

At the same time, thanks in large part to the booming stock market, the budget committee was able to close a $4.5 million projected deficit from the prior draft. The result was a balanced budget of $133.7 million for the 2019-21 triennium, which the council approved unanimously.

In the church's multi-step budget process, the spending plan now goes to the Joint Standing Committee on Program, Budget, & Finance, a 27-member body appointed by the presiding bishop and the president of the House of Deputies. PB&F will hold hearings in early February and has the authority to change the budget passed by the Executive Council. The budget will be adopted by the General Convention in July, subject to amendments from the floor.

The Rev. Gay Clark Jennings, president of the House of Deputies, said after the three-day meeting that there had been more than 200 comments submitted about the proposed budget, many of them protesting planned cuts in the evangelism budget. There was "a clarion call to increase that line item," she said.

The budget story is quite complicated, and complexity increases the potential for conflict. The 41-page budget with hundreds of line items has been fundamentally reorganized, making apple-to-apple comparisons impossible in some cases.

Past budgets have been organized according to the Five Marks of Mission adopted by the 2009 General Convention, which meant that most of the spending lines of the budget were organized in groups named Proclaim the Good News; Teach, Baptize, Nurture; Human Need/Loving Service; Change Unjust Structures; and Safeguard Creation. In some cases, portions of departmental budgets were allocated to multiple categories.

Shannon Ferguson Kelly photo

The Rev. Mally Lloyd (right), the committee member who leads Executive Council's Joint Standing Committee on Finances for Mission budget work, presents the 2019-21 draft budget to council with Tess Judge, FFM chair.

The new budget format is called the Jesus Movement budget, drawing on Presiding Bishop Michael Curry's signature rallying cry. The budget organizes some programs under the three priorities adopted when Curry was elected at the 2015 General Convention: Evangelism; Reconciliation and Justice; and Creation Care. But more fundamentally, the new format organizes departmental budgets in a more conventional corporate structure.

The evangelism line in the budget adopted three years ago was a shade under $6 million, and the prior draft of the coming budget showed $3.5 million on that line. Finance committee members took pains to describe why the reduction was not as sharp as it seemed.

Church planting is a major portion of the evangelism budget, and the 2015 General Convention increased the church-planting budget from $2 million to $5.8 million — including $3 million in direct grants to new churches,

and $2.8 million to develop an infrastructure of assessment, training, and coaching to support church planters. This sharp increase was funded by a temporary increase of 0.7 percent in the draw from the church's investments.

Tess Judge from the Diocese of East Carolina, who serves as chair of the Finance for Mission committee, told the council that the church's reserves are too low to permit a repeat of the special draw. The draw reverts to its prior level of 5 percent, which is still higher than the 4.5 percent urged by some members of the committee.

So the reduction in evangelism spending can also be seen as the expiration of a one-time infusion of funds, and the proposed $3.5 million budget represented an increase over pre-2015 spending. Also, some expenses previously rolled up under evangelism had been moved to other lines in the reorganization.

Nevertheless, the evangelism budget had been cut, and some council members had made impassioned pleas for restoring funding. Over the course of the three-day meeting in Linthicum Heights, Maryland, the committee was able to shift money from other areas and take advantage of higher-than-expected investment income. The budget as approved has $5.3 million allocated for evangelism.

This is down from $5.9 million approved in the prior three-year budget, and even further below the $6.7 million projection for actual spending for 2016-18. But Frank Logue, the council's liaison to the church-planting staff and a fervent supporter of the effort, pronounced himself satisfied.

Judge told the council the prior $4.5 million projected deficit was eliminated by a combination of three factors: An increase of $1 million in income from investments, driven by strong markets; an increase of $2 million projected income from diocesan assessments; and $1.5 million in budget cuts identified by staff.

There was a widespread belief on the council that the budget process had worked as intended and had reached a good outcome. While the opening plenary session on Monday began with some tense exchanges, by the closing plenary on Wednesday the finance committee was leading the group in a rousing chorus of "The Hills Are Alive with the Sound of Budget," with several stanzas of well-cadenced lyrics projected on screens in the meeting space.

In other matters discussed by the council:

The **Title IV disciplinary process** is likely to come under scrutiny at General Convention, because of dissatisfaction with the trial of the former Bishop of Los Angeles, J. Jon Bruno. The disciplinary process dragged on for more than two years, and in one sense has not ended, because Bruno, now retired, is appealing the three-year suspension he received for misrepresentation and conduct unbecoming a member of the clergy.

Steven Nishibayashi, a council member and resident of the Diocese of Los Angeles, told a council committee that the protracted dispute had taken an emotional toll on the entire diocese and that clergy were frustrated by a lack of information during the process. The canons call for pastoral care to be provided to all who are affected by a Title IV proceeding, but no such pastoral care was provided to the diocese, he said.

There also were complaints about a lopsided lack of confidentiality during the process, which saw considerable vitriol directed at Bruno on social media. Both sides of the dispute over the closure of St. James the Great Church in Newport Beach had been directed not to comment publicly on the case, but there is no way to enforce such a prohibition against anyone who is not ordained.

Council member Polly Getz of the Diocese of San Diego said work is proceeding on a public website that will provide guidance and training for any parish or diocese involved in a Title IV matter. The website is to be launched at General Convention in July.

The budget as approved included funds to pay a salary for the **president of the House of Deputies**, a role that has always been filled on a volunteer basis. The Rev. Canon Michael Barlowe, secretary of General Convention, said

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Executive Council

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the president's role has evolved over the years into a full-time job.

The mandatory disclosure of five top executive salaries for any tax-exempt organization shows a $280,000 annual salary for the presiding bishop, $200,000 or more for three other officers, and zero for the PHoD. The $900,000 earmarked in the budget for salary and benefits for the coming triennium implies a salary in the same range.

The salary must be approved by both houses of the General Convention. The House of Deputies has voted in favor of compensation at the last two conventions, but the House of Bishops has not supported it. Because it is a demanding, full-time position, as long as it remains unpaid it likely will be filled only by persons of independent means.

Jennings, elected in 2012 and re-elected in 2015, is eligible to serve one more three-year term. When asked if she plans to run for reelection, she laughed and said she would make an announcement at a later date.

Barlowe said that the report of the committee that has been studying the matter since 2015 will be posted for public review "very soon."

The Rev. Ronald Byrd made his first appearance at Executive Council in his capacity as **Missioner for Black Ministries**. He was hired in that role on Nov. 6, 2017, after serving six years as rector of a church in Williamston, Michigan.

Byrd outlined for one of the council's committees the work he has begun doing to build further relationships with black constituencies. He has close ties to the Union of Black Episcopalians, an independent organization, having served three years on its executive committee. Byrd said it was no secret that in the past there has been a strained relationship between UBE and the Office of Black Ministries. "That ended November 6," he said.

Kirk Petersen

New Space, New Direction

The Episcopal Church in Minnesota recently held an open house for the church's new office space in Minneapolis — office space that also opens a new chapter in the life of the diocese.

ECMN was previously headquartered in an office building near the diocesan cathedral and central Minneapolis's lush Loring Park. The diocese sold that building to the White Earth Nation (Chippewa) in 2017.

Now the church looks toward its future from 1101 West Broadway Avenue, a very different location in North Minneapolis.

"North Minneapolis has been historically disenfranchised," the Rt. Rev. Brian Prior, Bishop of Minnesota, told TLC by email. "With a lack of investment by businesses, schools, and industry, the community has been economically depressed."

Prior emphasized that the diocese wanted to ensure its headquarters was located within a community. "We knew that we needed to learn and grow through relationship, that we needed to be connected to our neighbors, and be working to steward the gifts and resources that God has given us to be useful and usable in that space.

"God calls us to move into the neighborhood, to join God in what God is doing there. And North Minneapolis is the perfect place for ECMN to do this. Not because it's so broken and in need of repair, but because there are churches and organizations who have been doing this good work for decades, and we have so much to learn from them."

The building offers full accessibility — and improvement from the previous headquarters. There is also a "big difference in space." Prior said the office space for the bishop and missioners is roughly the same, but that the building, entirely owned by ECMN, offers three floors of usable space. The new building offers significantly more room for meetings — among Episcopalians or community members — with capacity for groups of six to 100. The previous building could host meetings no larger than 12.

ECMN photo

Bishop Brian Prior speaks at ECMN's new headquarters.

The diocese also serves as new landlord for a well-known business in the building's first floor— which is part of how ECMN came to its new location. "ECMN's move to this community started with a relationship with a locally owned business — Sammy's Avenue Eatery," Prior said. "Sammy, a young African American entrepreneur, is an anchor in the community — his cafe is a hub and a meeting place in North Minneapolis."

Prior said the first priority of the purchase — which was fully funded, along with improvements to the building, by the sale of the previous headquarters — was to find a building and neighborhood aligned with ECMN's "desire to live in a missional way. We were looking for a new home that could be useful to Episcopal faith communities and affiliates, as well as something that was within budget. We weren't necessarily looking for a building that had this much space, but the more that we dreamed, the more we realized that this could move ECMN towards the missional vision.

"As we outfitted the space to meet the needs of ECMN, we've taken into consideration the widest possible definition of our community — we've asked ourselves questions like: how will this space be useful in 20, 40, 60 years? How can this be a usable asset for every faith community in the state? How could this space serve our neighbors?"

Matthew Townsend

Guilty Verdict on Spiritual Abuse

In what is thought to be a landmark case, a church tribunal has convicted a vicar from Oxfordshire of spiritual abuse.

The Rev. Tim Davis of Abingdon moved into the family home of his victim, engaged in lengthy encounters in his bedroom, and tried to control his behavior. He forbade the boy, who cannot be named for legal reasons, from seeing his girlfriend. The case is said to be the first of its kind.

Davis was found guilty of misconduct after a tribunal found that his intense mentoring of the boy between 2012 and 2013 amounted to abuse. It found he sought to control the boy's life and relationships. There were nightly one-to-one, unsupervised mentoring sessions lasting up to two hours in the boy's bedroom. The boy was between 15 and 16 during those sessions.

Davis would react angrily if the boy did not attend services, particularly if he was with his girlfriend. His mother decided not to end the vicar's relationship with her son because "she was scared of going against God." It took a year for her to see his actions were not right, she told the hearing.

The tribunal found that the vicar "lacked propriety and failed to heed the effect [his behavior] was having on others and in particular [the boy]." The sentence against Davis will be announced in a few weeks.

"Abuse of spiritual authority and power falls far short of the obligations and duties of those in Holy Orders," leaders of the Diocese of Oxford said in a statement. "Clergy are in a privileged position of trust in their congregations and communities. The professional guidelines to which they are bound make clear that this is a trust that they must not abuse."

John Martin

Canadian Primate Announces Retirement

The Most Rev. Fred J. Hiltz, Primate of Canada since 2007, has announced his decision to retire in 2019.

"In 2017, I marked 40 years in ordained ministry and 40 years of marriage with my dear Lynne," he said. "For 23 of those 40 years I have served our Church as a bishop, and for 10 of those 23 as Primate."

Hiltz said he had not aspired to the office. "Nonetheless I have endeavored to fulfil the duties required of me in the best interests of our Church and its commitment to God's mission in Canada and as a loyal partner in the life and witness of the worldwide Anglican Communion."

He will resign at the conclusion of General Synod 2019, held that year on July 16.

Lay Pensions Survey

Church Pension Group (CPG) has launched a survey to examine lay employees' preparedness for their retirement.

CPG has distributed the confidential online survey to approximately 8,000 individuals enrolled in the Lay Pension

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Lay Pensions

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System that it administers. CPG will contribute $5 to Episcopal Relief & Development for every completed survey, up to $12,000.

"There is more we want to learn about how lay employees are preparing for retirement," said Matthew Price, CPG's senior vice president of research and data. "This survey will help us develop a holistic picture of the retirement readiness of lay employees and will help us better understand their overall financial well-being. The survey results will inform the programs and tools we make available to lay employees to help them prepare for retirement."

CPG has already undertaken a comprehensive review of clergy deployment trends, which informed its recent decision to revise the Church Pension Fund's Clergy Pension Plan. Price hosted a streaming webinar to discuss the findings.

"As we work on implementing the Clergy Pension Plan revisions, we look forward to continuing to understand our clients' needs by taking a deep dive into lay employee retirement readiness," Price said. "CPG is committed to helping lay employees prepare for retirement, and understanding their needs and mindsets is an important step."

Primus Rejects Protest

The Primus of the Scottish Episcopal Church has responded sharply to an open letter opposing the Rev. Canon Anne Dyer's appointment as the next Bishop of Aberdeen and Orkney.

Canon Dyer's consecration is scheduled for March 1. She was selected by an Episcopal Synod after the diocese twice failed to select a bishop.

The Most Rev. Mark Strange said he deplores the publication of the open letter, writing on behalf of the College of Bishops: "we are dismayed at the invidious position in which it places Canon Dyer as the Bishop-elect of the diocese."

The open letter, signed by 18 clergy and lay leaders, said that Dyer's appointment "directly goes against the established wishes of the Diocese on the views it would hope that our new Bishop would hold, and minister to us from the perspective of them."

"Our protest is not in any way personally directed at Canon Anne and should not be construed in that way," the leaders added, asking that their concerns about the process be "discussed at the next General Synod as the action of the bishops in our case have caused unnecessary anguish and distress in a Diocese which had been largely united in its hopes and aspirations for the years ahead."

The primus said the process was "entirely in accordance with the proce-

dure set out by Canon 4." He said the diocese went through "two complete processes under which it had full opportunity to elect a bishop" and was "unable to produce a shortlist of the required minimum of three candidates."

"There is no provision in Canon 4 for election by the Episcopal Synod to be subject to any subsequent vote on the part of the Diocese," he added. "To introduce such a vote would be at odds with the canonical procedure."

He said that it was "not open to the bishops" to alter the procedures of the canon, which had been adopted by General Synod following consultation with dioceses.

"The election of Canon Dyer followed a period of deep prayer and reflection on the part of the bishops," he said. "Whilst it would not be appropriate to disclose the internal discussions which took place among the bishops, suffice it to say, that the bishops fully believe and trust that they have been led by the Holy Spirit in their election of Canon Dyer. She too shares that conviction and looks forward to becoming the new Diocesan Bishop in response to God's call. The bishops know her to be a person who will seek, under God, to enable the diocese to move forward in its mission and ministry and in service to the people of Aberdeen and Orkney."

ACNS

Archbishop for Rwanda

The Rt. Rev. Laurent Mbanda, Bishop of Shyira, has been elected as the next archbishop and primate of *La Province de L'Eglise Anglicane Au Rwanda* (the Province of the Anglican Church of Rwanda).

The election took place Jan. 17 during a meeting of the province's House of Bishops at St. Etienne Cathedral in Kigali.

He will succeed Archbishop Onesphore Rwaje, who has served since December 2010 and will retire in June. Mbanda will be enthroned as archbishop June 10, and will become Bishop of Gasabo.

Mbanda, a former vice president of the child-development agency Compassion International, was enthroned as Bishop of Shyira in November 2010. He said at the time that his focus would be to train church people holistically and spiritually to lead transformation in society.

ACNS

Bishop Gibbs to Retire

The Rt. Rev. Wendell N. Gibbs Jr., Bishop of Michigan since November 2000, plans to retire at the end of 2019.

"On February 5th of this year, I will begin my 19th year as a bishop in God's holy Church," he said in a letter to the diocese. "I have served as your Bishop Diocesan since November 1, 2000. After much prayerful discernment, I have heard God's call to move into retirement."

Gibbs said he would resign effective Dec. 31, 2019; ordination and consecration of the next bishop is expected in Feb. 2020.

£24 Million for New Churches

The Church of England has announced several grants amounting to £24.4 million through its Renewal and Reform program.

The Diocese of London, which plans to open 100 new churches in Britain's capital, will receive the largest grant, £4.8 million, to revitalize churches and develop church growth learning communities. It will receive an additional £3.89 million to train curates.

Bishop Richard Chartres obtained the church's blessing in 2015 to revive the See of Islington as suffragan bishopric with responsibility for church planting in the capital and elsewhere across the church, at the invitation of relevant diocesan bishops.

"I love the intention of the national church to support church growth and new ministry across England," said the Rt. Rev. Ric Thorpe, Bishop of Islington. "We are excited to receive this strategic development grant that will help us to support churches across the traditions and in every kind of parish to grow and flourish in London and beyond."

"Planting and learning communities complement the inherited parish and chaplaincy model," said the Rt. Rev. Pete Broadbent, acting Bishop of London. "I'm delighted that the national church is investing in London in this way."

The second-largest grant of £4.23 million will help the Diocese of Winchester engage with missing generations of young people across Hampshire and East Dorset. The diocese, which is investing £4 million of its funds in the Winchester Mission Action, will bring the Christian message to people who have not previously interacted with the Church of England.

"Society is changing rapidly, and traditional institutions are adapting," said the Rt. Rev. Tim Dakin, Bishop of Winchester. "Winchester Diocese is committed to the sustainable growth of the Church for the common good. We have taken time to identify the challenges which face the people of Hampshire and East Dorset, whether they be in our rural villages or urban centers, seeing those challenges as opportunities for Mission Action. We are a growing Christian community with an increasing emphasis on young people. Shaped by the life and work of Jesus we aim to be an active participant in helping to renew our society and address the concerns of our cities, towns and villages."

The Diocese of Blackburn will receive £1.54 million for opening new churches in deprived urban estates.

The grant will support the appointments of a lead evangelist and pioneer evangelist at Grange Park Church Army Centre of Mission in Blackpool, to develop work already started by the clergy and congregation on the estate. It will also fund 20 young adults to take part in the Blackpool Ministry Experience in the next six years, living on the Mereside estate in Blackpool, and working with local residents, as well as in nearby deprived urban parishes in Blackpool.

"I believe passionately that if we are serious about the renewal of the Church we must commit ourselves

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New Churches

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afresh to proclaiming Good News to the poor," said the Rt. Rev. Philip North, Bishop of Blackburn. "This project will share the Good News with people living on our urban estates by planting a number of new congregations.

"It will also ensure that church life is sustainable over the long term in these areas by forming quality lay and ordained leaders both from and for our estates. Our aim is to call and form local leaders who can be good news for their communities."

Other grants include:

• £3.09 million for church planting and to strengthen mission across the City of Leeds

• £1.88 million to develop mission in St. Helens, Warrington, and Widnes in the Diocese of Liverpool

• £1.84 million to develop mission and ministry to children, young people, and families in the Diocese of Sheffield

• £1.61 million for nine new pioneer posts to across Somerset in the Diocese of Bath and Wells

• £1.45 million to support evangelism with younger generations, social action, and church planting in the city of Bristol

The Church of England invites more applications from its dioceses for future strategic investment funding.

Adapted from ACNS

POSTCARD FROM LONDON

Changes in Global Mission

Paul Tester, Church Mission Society's new mission development manager for Latin America, plans to encourage the growth of mission in the Latin America region, and he will be based in Lima, Peru. His appointment is the latest episode in a process that CMS launched more than two decades ago.

Opponents of the transatlantic slave trade founded CMS in 1799. In the years before its bicentenary, CMS announced a program of Decentralization, Internationalization, and Regionalization. Its aim was to assist new churches of the Global South to become fully missional in their own right.

The process recognized that two centuries after the foundation of CMS, mission had changed radically. In 1799 Christianity was a predominately Northern Hemisphere faith, but 200 years later it had become a global faith.

The missionary movement of the late 18th century resulted in a vibrant form of Christianity taking root in the Global South, growing at 3,000 conversions per day. In contrast, Christianity in the Global North had entered a phase of recession.

The late David Barrett, editor of the *World Christian Encyclopedia*, claimed that statistic; he also claimed that the number of missionaries from the Global South had surpassed those of the North. Churches in Brazil, China, India, South Korea, became major sources of missionaries. Africa, too, launched several fledgling missionary movements.

A useful case study of the change in mission can be seen in the way medical mission developed. It took some time for Western agencies to admit that medicine had a place in the missionary movement. But medicine and healthcare opened many doors, not least in mission to women by women. The Anglican churches of Burundi and Rwanda grew largely out of medical missions.

Once it was the Western missionary doctor who undertook medical missions. Today, more often than not, Westerners are simply part of a medical team. But there are many avenues for medical mission beyond the traditional mission hospital.

Moreover, there are incalculable numbers of doctors and nurses from Africa, Asia, and elsewhere spread all over the world. Their motivation: a missionary calling. Often these health professionals are to be found in places that are closed to Westerners.

The movement of health professionals is not always dependent on financial support from mission boards, but a grounding in theology and the principles of cross-cultural mission is vital.

Mission was once a movement of "the West to the rest," but it now moves from everywhere to everywhere.

Taking this change into account, in the early decades of this century CMS began to reshape its work in Africa and Asia, providing seed money to sponsor mission movements based on these continents under local leadership. Both CMS Africa and Asia are entering a second generation of local leadership.

In December, CMS in Asia named as its new leader the Rev. Chan Nam Chen, a former superintendent minister in Sabah for the Assemblies of God.

A search is underway for a successor to the Rev. Dennis Tongoi, who has led CMS Africa from its inception.

There are three possible future trends:

• Expect Asia to become the leading agent for global expansion of the Church. China will be a key player.

• Expect the churches of the West to continue in recession as new churches

spring up elsewhere. This fits a long-standing pattern in Christian history, first in evidence when Antioch took over missionary leadership of the Church from Jerusalem.

• Expect persecution and migration to be major factors stimulating evangelism. This has been in evidence since the first-century Church in Jerusalem was scattered after the death of Stephen. There are many examples of this trend down the centuries and in our times.

John Martin

Church Plans Digital Labs Day

About 50 Christians with experience in digital communications will meet Feb. 24 to pool ideas for new apps, websites, and social media campaigns. A panel of judges will sift through their suggestions and two will be selected for future development.

The Digital Labs day is part of the Renewal and Reform program, which seeks "to ensure the Church of England is a growing church for all people and all places," said Adrian Harris, head of digital communications.

The technicians and creatives, who have been drawn from across the country, will work together on campaigns that will help people grow in faith and support the work of local churches.

The panelists include James Poulter of the LEGO Group; BBC senior digital producer Lynda Davies; the Very Rev. Catherine Ogle, Dean of Winchester; and Siku (Ajibayo Akinsiku), who describes his roles as dreamweaver, narrative designer, artist, theologian, writer, musician, and creative director.

"We're delighted with the combined knowledge and experience our judging panel brings to Church of England Digital Labs," Harris said.

"I'm really excited to hear the creative ideas on the day that will help us develop our digital evangelism and discipleship offering."

This week, the church announced that its #GodWithUs Advent and Christmas social media campaign had reached 6.8 million people.

The campaign was designed to share a Christian message with the public, encourage people to attend their local church for a service or event in December, and encourage people to take part in its Your Christmas Journey reflections.

Adapted from ACNS

Happy Retail Easter

Easter is several weeks away, but much to the bemusement of some U.K. shoppers, Easter eggs are already on supermarket chains' shelves.

Lucy Lawson, who posted a picture of chocolate eggs in a Co-op store in Settle, North Yorkshire, simply wrote: "I kid you not," while other opinions

(Continued on next page)

Retail Easter

(Continued from previous page)

differed little from "way too early" to "that's actually insane."

"[O]ur stores often have limited backroom space which means products go on shelf when space appears," a Co-op statement said. "Sales figures show that many customers will buy Easter eggs as soon as they can."

Tesco and Morrisons, two other major supermarket chains, have likewise been criticized for their speed speed in displaying Easter eggs and bunnies.

John Martin

Uganda Mourns 6th Archbishop

The Most Rev. Livingstone Mpalanyi Nkoyoyo, 79, Archbishop of Uganda from 1995 to 2004, was laid to rest Jan. 9 at the Martyrs' Shrine in Namugongo. He cherished the site and had championed its reconstruction.

The state funeral took on a note of celebration. The archbishop's wife, Ruth, and Charles Peter Mayiga, prime minister of the Buganda Kingdom, told mourners that successful people should not be mourned when they die, but rather celebrated. Archbishop Stanley Ntagali led the mourners in prayer at the burial site.

The Rt. Rev. Kityo Luwalira, Bishop of Namirembe, said the late primate "had a special connection with Namugongo" and was committed to building the Uganda Martyrs Museum there. Until Nkoyoyo made it one of his projects, it was the poor relation of a nearby Catholic martyrs shrine. President Yoweri Museveni has vowed to complete the construction.

Livingstone Mpalanyi Nkoyoyo was born of a wealthy family, one of 25 children of a county subchief. His education was disrupted because his father often moved about because of his work. He left school at 15 to work as a motor mechanic. In the succeeding years he continued to enjoy tinkering with engines.

He felt a calling to ministry at a church youth camp, worked as a church teacher, and was ordained at Namugongo in 1969. His spirituality was deeply influenced by the East African Revival. During his time as primate, he would turn up unannounced at revival meetings, joining heartily in the revival's signature song, *Tukutendereza Yesu* (*We Praise You, Jesus*).

As the sixth Ugandan primate, he was a tall, impressive figure with a genial smile. He championed creation of Uganda Christian University at Mukono. He insisted that if Roman Catholic and Adventist churches had established universities, Anglicans should not be left behind.

He married Ruth Nalweyiso in 1965 and they had five children. Last year he traveled to Britain for cancer treatment. He succumbed to pneumonia and died on Jan. 5 in a Kampala hospital.

John Martin

Charles H. Murphy III, 1948-2018

The Rt. Rev. Charles H. Murphy III, an Episcopal priest who was consecrated as an irregular Anglican bishop and founded the Anglican Mission in the Americas, died Jan. 9 after a struggle with brain cancer. He was 69.

Murphy was a graduate of the University of Alabama, Trinity College (Bristol, England), and the University of the South's School of Theology. He was ordained deacon and priest in 1975.

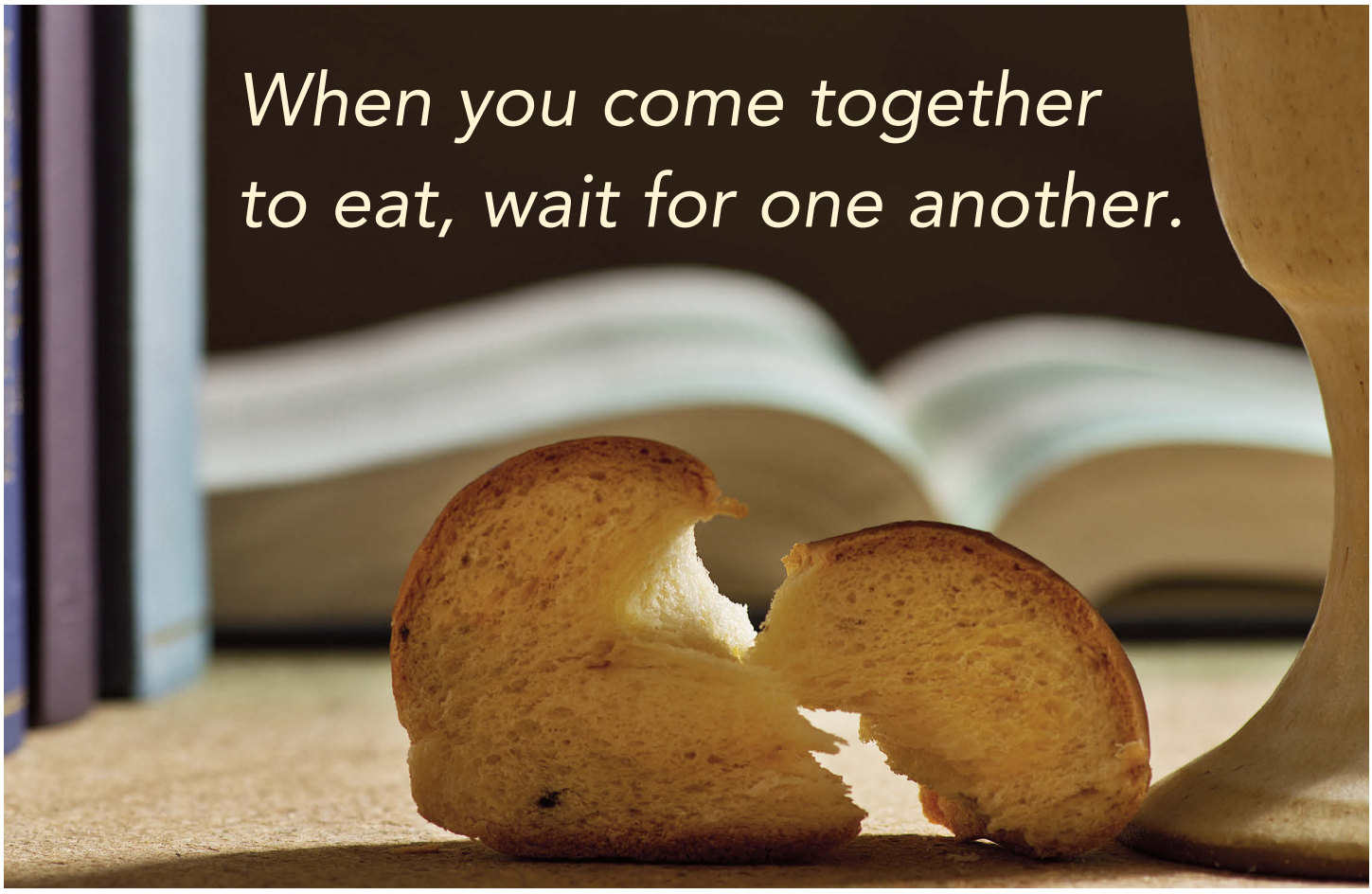
Murphy and the Rt. Rev. John Rodgers Jr., the second dean of Trinity School for Ministry, were consecrated as bishops in 2000 by the Most Rev. Emmanuel Kolini, Archbishop of Rwanda, and the Most Rev. Moses Tay, Archbishop of South East Asia.

Murphy became rector of All Saints Church, Pawleys Island, in 1982, and remained in that cure after his consecration. His founding of the AMiA led to a long-term legal struggle with the Diocese of South Carolina for the property of All Saints. The Supreme Court of South Carolina ruled in the diocese's favor in 2009.

The AMiA had further conflicts with the Diocese of South Carolina and the Anglican Church in North America in subsequent years. Murphy founded a new congregation, the Abbey at Pawleys Island, in 2012. He resigned as the AMiA's apostolic vicar in 2013, and most AMiA congregations changed their affiliation to the ACNA.

"Chuck passed away early this morning quietly and peacefully, surrounded by the love of his family and his Savior. He is survived by his wife, Margaret, three children and six grandchildren," wrote Murphy's successor, the Rt. Rev. Philip H. Jones, in announcing his death.

"I have to say, as I am sure many of you will attest, no leader has had the impact on my life like +Chuck. The Southern charm and sparkle in his eyes made one feel at ease with him. His faithfulness to the Word and openness to the Spirit characterized his rock solid faith. I will miss him as a mentor and a dear friend."



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.

The Living Church

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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.

Residents wave as a float for radio station KRNB shows a large image of Martin Luther King Jr.

Photos by Richard Hill

The Truth about Martin Luther King Day

By Matthew Burdette

In southeast Dallas there is a place where Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard intersects with Malcolm X Boulevard. A large image of the 1964 meeting between Martin and Malcolm is on a wall. Despite repeated attempts, it was the only time the two men met. That they would shake hands at their meeting was not assured. King feared that a meeting with Malcolm would alienate his white supporters. Yet they met. Photos of the event are among my favorite of the Civil Rights Movement.

Both men were undeniably political radicals, and, as James H. Cone has argued, one way to understand the basic political difference between them is to contrast their judgments about the United States.[1] In Martin's view, America lives in contradiction to its lofty ideals, perpetually captive to three key problems that arise from "ethical infantilism": racial injustice, poverty, and war. By contrast, Malcolm concluded that America's espoused ideals were little more than ideological smoke and mirrors; systemic white supremacy, poverty, and violence did not contradict American identity, but expressed it.

In Dallas, Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard is home to a variety of both open and defunct liquor stores, convenience stores, pawn shops, and payday lenders. The neighborhood is almost exclusively black and brown. Public education in the area is struggling. Homelessness and hunger are prevalent.

This year I was part of a group that marched in the annual Martin Luther King Day parade in Dallas, which includes a mile of Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard. The group, Reconcile Dallas, is composed of lay and ordained Christians from different churches in Dallas intent on expressing cross-confessional and racial solidarity and working toward visible and spiritual unity. A Church divided racially is still a divided Church, and so it is fitting that our ecumenical efforts would address both theological and sociopolitical conflicts. The Diocese of Dallas has committed to participating in Reconcile Dallas efforts, and Bishop George Sumner has insisted that addressing poverty and racism is a priority for Christian mission. So, on January 15, I and others gathered early in the morning and rode to south Dallas to march in the parade. On the way there I remarked to a friend that I found it off-putting that the event was called a parade rather than a march, the former denoting that the mission has been accomplished, while the latter acknowledges the work to be done. (As I write this, I cannot say that my mind has changed on this matter.)

While we waited for our turn to enter the parade procession, we stood in a notably depressed neighborhood and watched various school marching bands and teams of cheerleaders — almost exclusively black people — practicing their performances before marching. They were incredible. And theirs was an unqualified spirit of celebration, despite their depressed surroundings. This

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Boyish clowning knows no boundaries (left); marching members of the Lincoln High School Wall of Sound band (below)

The Truth about Martin Luther King Day

(Continued from page 14)

spirit of celebration was no less the possession of thousands of people — again, almost exclusively black — who lined the street to cheer and to shout to us, perhaps the only racially mixed and explicitly Christian group in the parade, "God bless you!"

But what were they celebrating?

We approached the intersection with Malcolm X Boulevard, and the image of Martin and Malcolm came into view. I remarked, to the same friend, "Next year: a march on Malcolm X Day." Of course, there is no such day, nor is one currently imaginable. The existing state of affairs does not permit it. Black and brown neighborhoods are still trapped in a web of poverty, drug addiction, crime, inadequate resources for education, debt, and low-paying jobs. That is to say, despite legal desegregation, it is difficult to say without equivocation that integrationist efforts have been a success. Malcolm's judgments about American society have yet to be falsified by the evidence.

But just as I was patting myself on the back for my social analysis of the situation (which was correct), congratulating my dismay at the unqualified celebration of the presumed meaning of King, which is far less radical and less theologically Christian than who King was (which is true), and thinking that Malcolm's speeches and autobiography ought to be required reading (which they are), it struck me that the other participants in the parade and those in attendance understood something that I was failing to grasp. And what I was failing to grasp has a great deal to do with the tradition of black worship and the place of the black church in the black community.

To give my misunderstanding context, I must indulge in a brief autobiographical excursus. I am the son of a white father and a Haitian mother. I grew up in a racially diverse, middle-class area of New Jersey. Having grown up with much of the black experience (i.e., being treated as black people are treated), I nevertheless did not share the cultural background of other black people in my community. Always unconsciously identifying as Haitian, I learned black American history not as *my* history, but *their* history. Likewise, the churches I grew up in were not black churches, nor did they share in the rich liturgical tradition of black worship. My coming to "black consciousness," if I may use the old phrase, has been as much the result of education as it has been the outcome of reflecting on personal experience. Solidarity with poor people and non-white people is a consequence of Christian formation. I cannot claim black culture as my own, nor can I claim that this culture is intuitively understandable to me.

The black church has been and remains a central fixture in black communities. Or, rather, Christianity as it has been received and practiced by black Americans has been formative for black culture — also for those black people who do not believe or practice the Christian faith.[2] Principal among the black church's gifts to the black community has been its tradition of preaching and music, which are very often celebratory, not as a response to the lives of black worshipers, but in faithful contradiction of the condition of their lives.

Celebration in black worship is not denial of reality, nor an opium to quell disquiet or resistance. Rather, this celebratory spirit that has infused both black church and black community arises from trust in God's eschatological promises.[3] And what God promises is not pie in the sky, but his very presence in the struggle for justice. He will not abandon us even if our struggle takes us to the grave, and when, as with Martin and Malcolm, the struggle takes our lives, God's promise is that his presence with us shall prevail over the powers of death and hell. Eschatological hope has been the lifeblood of the black church, and this is the blood that flows through the veins of black community. On Martin Luther King Day, as we marched through a region of Dallas shaped by generations of racism and economic injustice, that eschatological hope was expressed in the spirit of celebration.

Of course, none of this is understood if it is taken as an opportunity to deny or minimize the facts on the ground. Yet I cannot deny that I was heartened and indeed spiritually blessed to share in this event in the life of the black community in Dallas. I was among fellow Christians, gathered around a common hope. What is needed is that parallax experience of shifting perspectives, ever in a dialectic: the courageous empiricism of Malcolm, the faithful trust of Martin. The truth of that day is not that we have already succeeded, nor that America must necessarily fail. What is needed is a deeper Christian vision of God's promises, and trust that so animates our action and solidarity with one another that we are called to deeper bonds of communion as we strive for justice.

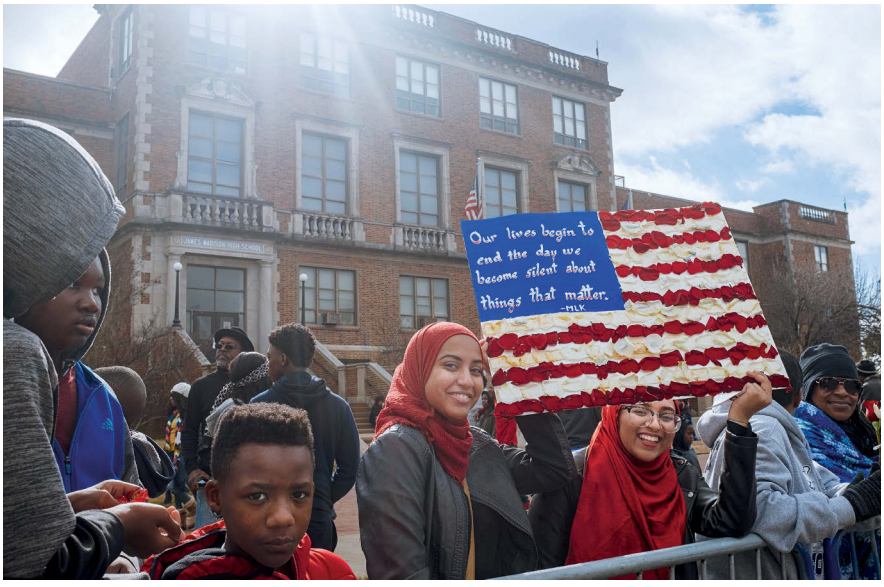
The Rev. Matthew Burdette serves as curate and director of student ministry at Good Shepherd Church, Dallas.

[1] James H. Cone, *Martin & Malcolm & America: A Dream or a Nightmare* (Orbis Books, 1991).

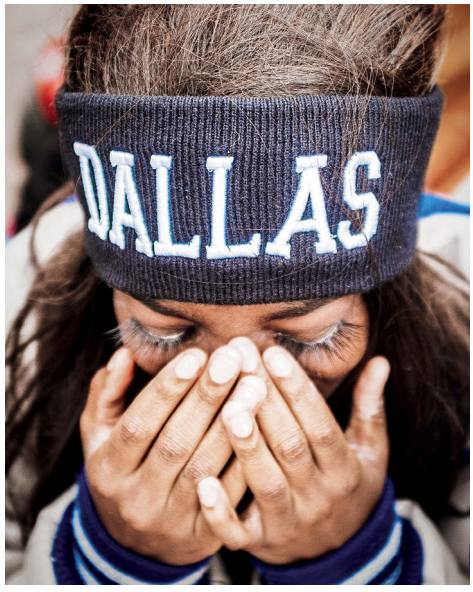
[2] Stephen C. Finley, Torin Alexander, and Anthony B. Pinn, eds., *African American Religious Cultures*, 2 vols. (ABC-CLIO, 2009). See especially volume 2.

[3] James H. Cone, *The Spirituals and the Blues: An Interpretation* (Orbis Books, 1972).

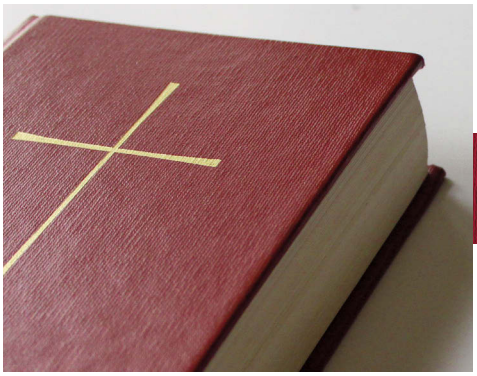
A mother uses a custom shirt to honor the memory of her son.



Two beaming young women remember King with a homemade poster.



A witness at the parade in a reverent moment



Necessary or Expedient?

A teaching series on prayer book revision

Leonel Mitchell, Reshaped

By Matthew S.C. Olver

Leonel L. Mitchell's *Praying Shapes Believing: A Theological Commentary on The Book of Common Prayer* is commonly understood as *the* key to understanding the 1979 prayer book. Leonel Mitchell was one of the most influential Anglican liturgists of his time and played a central role in the prayer book's revision. He published this commentary just as the new prayer book was beginning to reshape the Episcopal Church's worship, and it has been read by generations of seminarians.

More than 30 years after its publication, the classic has been updated (Church Publishing, 2016) by Ruth A. Meyers, dean of academic affairs and Hodges-Haynes Professor of Liturgics at Church Divinity School of the Pacific. As Mitchell's former student and longtime chair of the Standing Committee on Liturgy and Music, Meyers is a figure whose commanding place in the world of Episcopal liturgy compares to that of her mentor.

The 1979 prayer book emerged from the 20th-century Liturgical Movement. Liturgical reformers sought to renew the Church's worship for the challenges of the modern age through ritual simplification and a return to early Christian texts and patterns. The movement united Western Christians across a wide denominational spectrum, and was infused with energy and theological heft when the Second Vatican Council endorsed its agenda.

The individuals tasked with revising the liturgical rites brought a variety of agendas into their work. The relationship between their original purposes and the reception of their liturgies has been a focus of considerable scholarly debate. *Praying Shapes Believing* contributes helpfully to this discussion, interpreting the 1979 prayer book through the particular spin on the maxim *lex orandi, lex credendi.*

For both Mitchell and Meyers, this derives from the work of Aidan Kavanagh, OSB, who described the liturgy as "primary theology," referring to the language we use to talk with God. "Secondary theology" is the language we use to talk about God: "the body of statements or propositions based upon or derived from our reflection upon our interchange with God" (p. xix). Kavanagh interprets the relationship between the two such that the majority of the influence is from primary theology (*lex orandi*) to secondary theology (*lex credendi*).

The maxim, for both, seems particularly applicable to Anglican churches, which have relied on liturgical texts as doctrinal formularies to an unusual degree, in the absence of a formal magisterium as in the Roman Catholic Church or confessional tradition like much of the continental reformations. For at least some of those who shaped the 1979 prayer book, such as Urban Holmes, there was a desire to force a significant development in the Episcopal Church's theology *as a whole*, to reflect an awareness "of the bankruptcy of so-called 'classical theology'" ("Education for Liturgy" [1981], p. 131).

The relationship between *lex orandi* and *lex credendi* is actually much more complicated. There is a complex interplay between liturgical rites, the praying of those liturgical rites, the beliefs of those who pray them, and the formal teaching of the church. In an earlier essay in this series, Andrew McGowan reasonably suggested that despite 37 years of continual use, the sacramental sensibilities of contemporary Episcopalians have not really been altered by the more Catholic patterns and beliefs of the 1979 prayer book. Similarly, Louis Weil and Frank Griswold, who both contributed to the formation of the 1979 prayer book, have recently expressed a similar sentiment: we have not yet lived into the fullness of the "new" prayer book. In other words, the revision of the *lex orandi* has yet to result in a cohesive *lex credendi.*

Mitchell outlines a series of changes in the *lex orandi* of Episcopalians rooted in the Liturgical Movement's broader agenda. The eucharistic rites show a desire to return to the sources (*ressourcement*). This orientation included a distrust of medieval developments and a preference for the "golden age" of patristic praying. Hence the basis of all four Rite II eucharistic prayers is primarily not earlier Anglican prayer books but patristic rites.

Vatican II's advocacy of the "fully conscious and active participation" of the lay faithful is expressed through the

1979 prayer book's clear directions about lay participation in the liturgy, as well as the broader concern to distinguish the liturgical roles proper to the episcopal, presbyteral, and diaconal orders. Another characteristic of the movement is the emphasis on a balanced calendar that includes the centrality of Sundays and the normativity of a corporate celebration of the Eucharist on that day. Like many of the leaders in the Liturgical Movement, Mitchell expresses frequent concern that Western liturgy had become too cruciform in focus, so that the cross and the sacrifice of Christ overshadowed the resurrection, ascension, Pentecost, and the second coming.

There is a great deal to commend in Ruth Meyers's revision of Mitchell's classic text. The whole look of the book has changed, with new typesetting, fonts, and headers. The footnotes contain updated scholarly sources, especially where the consensus has changed. She notes, for example, that *Apostolic Tradition*, often attributed to Hippolytus, is no longer seen as Roman or Hippolytan, let alone the "golden anaphora" from which all others have fallen.

In light of the full communion shared between the Episcopal Church and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, occasional references are made to parallel liturgical practices in that sister church. In additional gestures of ecumenism, Meyers adds citations from the World Council of Church's *Baptism, Eucharist, and Ministry* (pp. 147-48), and refers to the International Anglican Liturgical Consultation (p. 150).

Other changes reflect Meyers's concerns. In the discussion of the Baptismal Covenant, she deletes this sentence: "The Church has called those who recited a different *symbolum* heretics, for quite literally they had a different baptism, because they baptized into a different faith" (p. 100). The holy catholic Church of the Apostles' Creed is no longer "the principal sphere of the Spirit's activity" but simply *a* principal sphere (p. 117).

In a section on participation in the Eucharist by the newly baptized, she deletes this sentence: "There are no theological reasons why baptized Christians who are not excommunicate (BCP: 409) should be forbidden to receive communion, and there are many good theological reasons why they should be encouraged to do so" (p. 117).

An interesting shift in emphasis can also be discerned at the conclusion of both books. Mitchell concluded with a brief section on "The Theology of the Liturgy." There he made a plainspoken *apologia* for the Episcopal Church's Catholic identity, "a province of the Anglican Communion within the Catholic Church" (p. 301). "The Church is a living tradition," he wrote, "and we come to its liturgy from within that tradition. The Church is the interpreter of its liturgy, as it is of its Scripture, and we cannot interpret the liturgy correctly except from this tradition. That is why I have used the liturgy of the Episcopal Church, within which I am a priest of the Catholic Church, as the source for my theology. I believe that the *Book of Common Prayer* 1979 expresses that theology in a way that men and women today can believe, live, and teach to their children" (pp. 301-02).

All this disappears in the new edition. In its place is a postscript focused on the mission of the Church and the Baptismal Covenant. This may, in fact, point to some of the shifts that have marked the Episcopal Church in the last 40 years: from the emphasis on its Catholic identity that certainly came to the fore in 1979 to the importance of what is unique about the Episcopal Church (both among Christians more widely and the Anglican Communion specifically). One of the factors that is considered most unique and central to the Episcopal Church's identity is the centrality of the Baptismal Covenant, which has become both the overriding hermeneutical lens and the engine behind the main developments that have marked the church's life during this period.

The Baptismal Covenant has become both the overriding hermeneutical lens and the engine behind the main developments that have marked the church's life during this period.

Possible Future Revisions

The most prominent indicator of the places where Meyers would like to see changes in the future is the way that *Enriching our Worship* is integrated into the revised text of *Praying Shapes Believing*. In her introduction to the Revised Edition, Meyers highlights the Enriching Our Worship series' five supplemental texts. Along with these books, she mentions *The Book of Occasional Services* (1979; last revised in 2003) and *Lesser Feasts and Fasts* (last revised in 2006).

A key distinction between these resources is left unstated. The materials in *Occasional Services* and *Lesser Feasts and Fasts* do not require the permission or authorization of a diocesan bishop or standing committee. *Enriching Our Worship*, on the other hand, is not authorized *carte blanche* for the whole Episcopal Church. Rather, its use is subject to the permission and direction of the bishop. *Enriching Our Worship* is meant to supplement Rite II. This sort of resource was never envisioned by the Constitution (a fact which General Convention 2015 attempted to address but ultimately did not with proposed Resolution A066).

Here's the issue: readers will be confused without a distinction between the Book of Common Prayer, which constitutes an expression of this church's authoritative and binding *magisterium* to which the bishops are subject, and other

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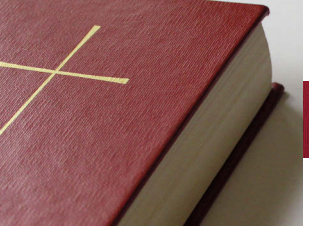

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materials, which do not carry such weight and are subject to the bishops. Such a distinction is nowhere to be found in discussion of the various eucharistic prayers, which moves between those in the prayer book and *Enriching Our Worship* with such fluidity that the reader is left to conclude the fullness of eucharistic praying is only achieved through the inclusion of the supplemental materials.

In her other books, Meyers cites other issues that might be addressed in a future prayer-book revision. One of those is the Nicene Creed. Meyers replaces a sentence of Mitchell's that acclaims the creed as sign of unity and renewal of the Baptismal Covenant with a clause noting that it "provides material for both an historical and a systematic theology."

"It is not an essential part of the liturgy," she adds. "It was introduced into Eastern liturgies in the early sixth century and was only added to the liturgy at Rome in the eleventh century. The core beliefs of the church are expressed in the eucharistic prayers, which carries much of the theological weight of the liturgy on weekdays when the creed is not proclaimed" (pp. 158-59). The complicating issue, of course, is that in *Enriching Our Worship*, any gendered proper names of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit and their subsisting relations disappear. This disappearance is only exacerbated if the Creed is not used, as Meyers seems to favor and as *Enriching our Worship* appears to allow.

When Meyers discusses the frequency of the general confessions, she adds the clarification that "there is no ancient precedent for a general confession of sin at any point in the eucharistic liturgy" (p. 152). This is a bit misleading, since there is precedence for preparatory prayers of penitence by clergy of both Eastern and Western churches, the use of the Confiteor from at least the 11th century in the West, and most importantly the requirement that a Christian confess all serious sins sacramentally before receiving Communion. The rejection of the necessity of auricular confession at the reformations leads to the appearance of general confessions. Without this background, one is left with the impression that confessions are simply an incursion into the eucharistic liturgy. This perspective is furthered because Meyers deletes a sentence by Mitchell that notes, "The confession of sin is an integral part of our common prayers and an important preparation for worship."

Conclusion

What gives me most pause in this update are the ways in which I find the book misleading. What I have described about *Enriching Our Worship* is perhaps the most serious concern, but it reflects the approach in some of Professor Meyers's other publications, especially on issues of gendered language for God. Both in this volume and elsewhere, an ancient source is often provided as the authority for the particular change discussed. For example, the alternative to "Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit" in Morning and Evening Prayer, the reader is told, is "similar to the opening doxology of Byzantine Vespers, 'Glory to the holy, consubstantial, life-giving and undivided Trinity'" (p. 43).

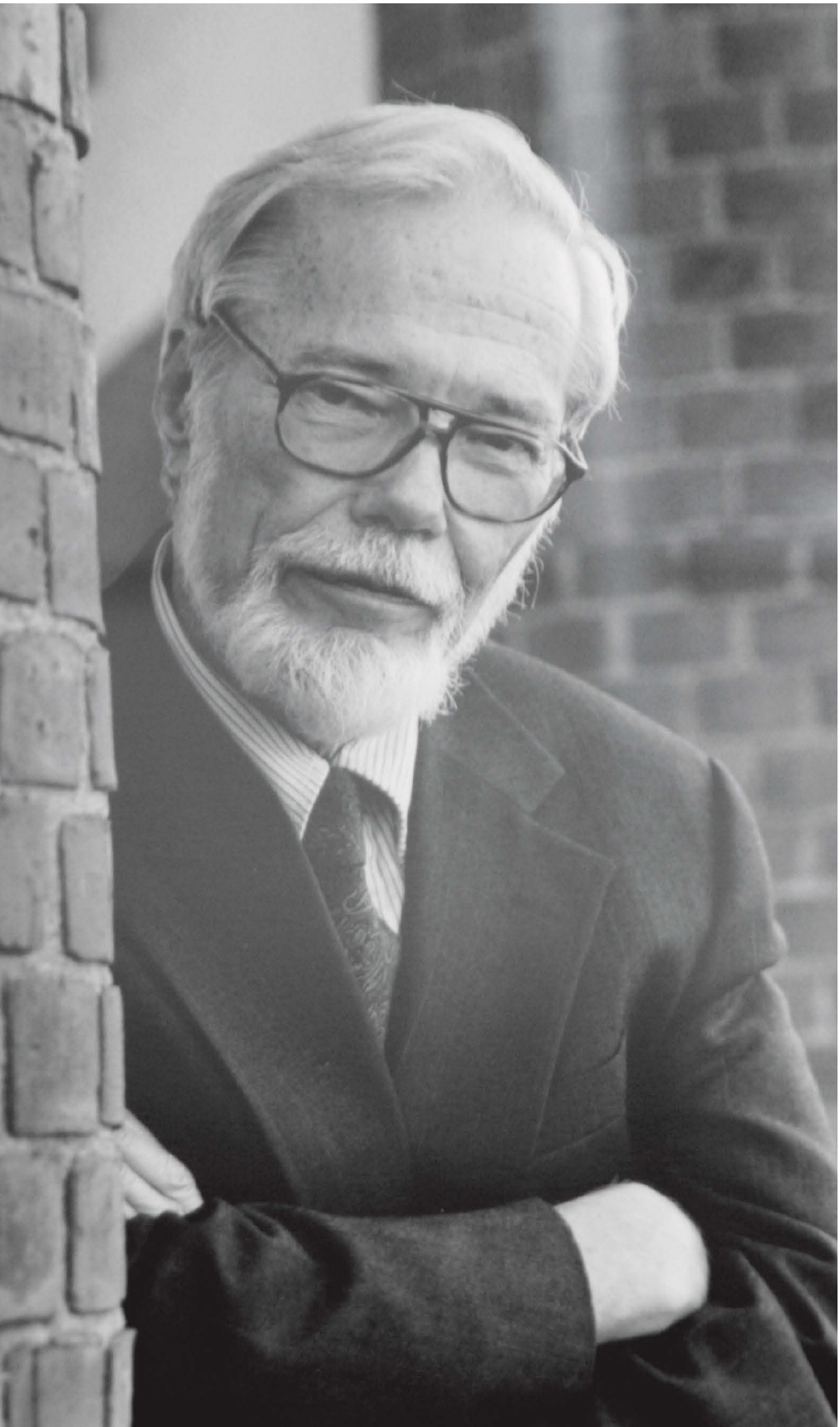
What is substantially different from the Orthodox usage, however, is that this language is not used in that different context and rite for the purpose of avoiding the proper Names for the Three Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. But that is precisely their purpose in *Enriching Our Worship 1*: to use only non-gendered language for God. Important patristic figures or other saints are named as the source for other particular changes, and this leads the reader to infer that these figures would support the sorts of changes envisioned by *Enriching Our Worship*. It is one thing for a saint to call Jesus *mother* in a particular context. But it is quite another to suggest that it is proper to revise the liturgical language of the eucharistic rite by replacing *Father* with *Mother*, or dispense with gendered language altogether, and to imply that those writers advocate such changes. Thus, I find it difficult to recommend the text for seminary classrooms.

The Christian faith is, among other things, a language and even has something of its own syntax. As Stanley Hauerwas puts it: "To speak Christian is an exacting discipline. It has taken the church centuries to develop habits of speech that help us say no more than needs to be said. … For learning to speak Christian means that what we say requires constant practice because the dominant speech habits that also shape our speech tempt us to not know what we mean when we say 'Jesus.'"

Becoming part of the Jesus Movement, a phrase that Presiding Bishop Michael Curry has brought into the regular speech of Episcopalians, involves not just learning to act in certain ways, but also learning to speak in certain ways and with a particular language, whether in conversation or in prayer. In Bishop Frank Griswold's preface to the first volume of *Enriching Our Worship*, he explains that during the process of its formation, this question was continually asked: "Is this text consistent with the Trinitarian and Christological formulations which we, as Anglicans, regard as normative and the ground of our common prayer?" I struggle to answer this question in the affirmative for much of *Enriching Our Worship*'s contributions to the Office and the Eucharist. And this is what gives me pause about the sort of material that would emerge from a wholesale revision. Let us give ourselves another generation or two, not just to pray the 1979 BCP, but to teach it well and mine its depths with new teaching texts like Derek Olsen's *Inwardly Digest: A Prayer Book Guide to the Spiritual Life* (Forward Movement, 2016). There is additional rich fare yet to be savored. Taste and see.

The Rev. Matthew S.C. Olver is assistant professor of liturgics and pastoral theology at Nashotah House Theological Seminary and a former member of the Anglican-Roman Catholic Consultation in the United States.

George A. Lindbeck, 1923-2018



George Arthur Lindbeck — Lutheran ecumenist and Pitkin Professor Emeritus of Historical Theology at Yale Divinity School — died Jan. 8. He was 94. In the pages that follow, TLC *publishes a Festschrift of tributes to Professor Lindbeck by his colleagues and former students.*

Quiet, Modest Pioneer

By Ephraim Radner

George A. Lindbeck's death on January 8 brings to a close an era of extraordinarily fruitful theological work that he engaged with colleagues around the Church. At Yale, he worked with the late Hans Frei and Brevard Childs; within Lutheranism, with thinkers like Jaroslav Pelikan, Robert Jenson, and Harding Meyer; he had Roman Catholic partners like Walter Kasper, and Jewish ones like Peter Ochs. Lindbeck's personal contributions to this network of discussion was enormous, though often modestly quiet. His writings were comparatively few, with only one monograph achieving renown, although one of towering proportions: *The Nature of Doctrine* (1984). Lindbeck also wrote numerous articles, only a few of which have been republished (cf. *The Church in a Postliberal Age* [2003]).

He tirelessly engaged in ecumenical discussion. He had a major role in the landmark Lutheran-Roman Catholic Joint Declaration on Justification (1999). His continuous teaching at Yale from 1952 to 1993 provided him with detailed research, notes, and reflection that, by the end of his life, pointed to as-

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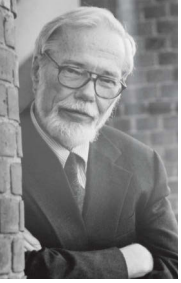

CATHOLIC VOICES

Remembering George Lindbeck

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tonishing new directions on ecclesiological reflection that not only derive from his individual creativity but embody elements drawn from his rich intellectual interactions. All scholars live within a vital network of collegial work. Lindbeck's, however, represents a unique moment of transition in the Church's theological self-understanding, laying on the table and engaging what are now standard, if difficult and contested, contemporary challenges of missionary witness within broadly hostile or indifferent cultural settings.

Lindbeck was born in China, to missionary parents, a formation that proved central to his vision. His advanced theological training was in late medieval philosophy, which he studied in Toronto and Paris, under Étienne Gilson and Paul Vignaux, respectively. In part this training shaped his precise, analytical approach to matters, one that sometimes masked his deep piety and Christian fervor. At Yale, he regularly taught ordinands medieval and Reformation theology in lectures that were detailed, careful, often profound and daring in their questions, as year by year he constantly refashioned his thinking in exciting ways. He was an expert on Luther but also on Aquinas (and his seminar notes on the latter are ones I still study). His many students, Protestant and Catholic, have enriched the Church's ministry, and many have become key theologians in their own right. Those who knew Lindbeck could not help but be transformed by his faith, humility, quiet focus, charity, sometimes sly wisdom, and profound knowledge and imagination.

For all his extraordinary historical and theological erudition, Lindbeck's main vocation was ecumenical. He was one of the official Protestant observers at Vatican II, and he remained engaged in formal and informal dialogues for his entire career. His celebrated volume *The Nature of Doctrine* was a direct response to this ecumenical work. It was concise, dense, and drew together sociology, epistemology, and anthropology in ways that remain groundbreaking. On one level the book provided a general theory about how religious communities order their self-understanding and communal formation.

The book left many questions unanswered, and thereby encouraged an onrush of debate, especially under the banner of his claim that he was proposing a form of Christian understanding that was neither conservative nor liberal, but postliberal. A veritable industry in postliberalism that began to take in not just theology but politics and culture (and was informed by more than Lindbeck's work) was set in motion and has continued to this day.

However interesting this line of debate has been, it has also proven somewhat sterile, in encouraging party labels and methodological worries that some theologians today rightly suspect have been distracting rather than illuminating of central Christian concerns. But Lindbeck's interest had always been ecumenical practice, not grand theory. In any case, Lindbeck's major contribution, in retrospect, lay less in epistemology and in theories of truth than in the areas of primary mission and pastoral ministry: how to maintain the integrity of the Christian community (Church) as a witnessing and serving body, faithful to Christ Jesus. He was deeply concerned, along with colleagues like Jenson and Childs, with what he perceived to be the slow corrosion of the Church's life from within, and through the assaults from without by an increasingly hostile, if seductive, un-Christian or even anti-Christian culture. Personal discussions with Lindbeck about the most abstract matters of ecclesiology often came back to on-the-ground realities, frequently tethered to his considered experience of mission in China: how does a church — the Church — *survive* and grow faithfully in the midst of the heavy challenges of social dynamics that are willy-nilly unraveling its evangelical center of life?

Lindbeck wanted to outline the *practical* missionary demands of the Church and why they in fact required deliberate, serious, and perseverant ordering of a certain kind. Here, the consequences were indeed specific: Scripture needs to be taught and assimilated in a central and continuing way; catechesis needs to be formal, articulate and pervasive; the ordering of the Church's life requires lived elaboration and buy-in; public and private talk about the Christian faith needs to be concrete, consistent, and enveloping; finally, the "performative" aspects of all of this are at the center of the Church's being, driven by the call to witness to the particular fullness of Christ Jesus, given in the Scripture and over time in the expended lives of his followers and of their historical communities. To say this amounted to a more conservative vision of the Church is true in some sense — it required a deep appreciation and assimilation of past Christian claims, tradition, and witness. But because his vision was so attuned to cultural context and realities, it was also a critical posture over and against the histories of various traditions and their variously wayward adjustments to de-Christianizing pressures and temptations. Lindbeck's discussions were about today, not yesterday; and they were about how the Christian faith can touch today's people, not about how it was engaged by those of the past.

This general focus on mission was not merely strategic, however. It led to more specifically theological and constructive work that, unfortunately because of his failing health, Lindbeck never brought to a synthetic conclusion as he might have wished. Yet he wrote enough about it in various essays to lay out enormously fruitful and rich avenues for others to follow. I have in mind here his proposal to see Israel as the center of ecclesial identity, order, and witness. The central failure of the Christian Church — over time and various ways — to maintain her identity with and as the Israel of the Old Testa-

ment, Lindbeck argued, was a fundamental cause of her debased communal integrity. Indeed, if *Israel* is substituted in *The Nature of Doctrine* for the *cultural-linguistic* community, not as an example but as its originating and ontological form, specifically Christian aspects of the book click into place. The supersessionist sin, in which the Christian Church claimed to "take the place of" Israel, not only led to the deforming and blasphemous sins of anti-Semitism, Lindbeck argued, but also hollowed out the Church's practices of scriptural formation, teaching, and outreach.

In his later writing, he began to investigate these issues in a variety of directions, moving ever more closely to engage Jewish thinkers and offering novel, creative, and radically challenging perspectives on the Christian Church's contemporary vocation in this respect. Lindbeck's earlier discussions of the "sectarian" option that so worried some commentators now began to take specific theological form in his notion of a Christian "Israelology," a distinct (and divine) community ordered not simply by scriptural promises but by the scriptural history and experience of Old and New Testaments in their unity. Thinking of the Church as Israel in this way would allow for a much richer and more flexible understanding of Christian experience in sin and virtue — hence its potential ecumenical value — that could get beyond the old institutional and purely dogmatic topics of debate among traditions and denominations.

Thinking of the Church as Israel could also focus Christian self-understanding in a more realistic and faithful missionary direction, by asking the right questions regarding faithful teaching, witness, and the necessary resources for survival and service. It would also, finally, open the door to the desperately needed conversion, repentance, and reconciliation Christians require in the face of their Jewish brothers and sisters. Not all Jewish theologians agreed with these perspectives and proposals. But few have criticized the deeply faithful motives behind these profound reorientations in Christian self-understanding that Lindbeck's discussions implied — ones not yet actually pursued, but left to others to take up. To quote from "What of the Future? A Christian Response," his remarkable essay that brings many of these themes together:

> With the passing of Christendom that is now taking place it is increasingly important for the churches to turn for instruction to Judaism. Jews learned much about faithful survival in hostile societies during the long *galut*; Christians need comparable lessons now that they are themselves becoming a world-wide diaspora and are seeking, via the ecumencial movement, to end their own dispersion by creating an institutionally decentralized common universe of discourse and, it is hoped, witness. (Tikva Frymer-Kensky et al., eds., *Christianity in Jewish Terms* [Westview, 2000])

The possibility of Christians turning to post-biblical Jewish writing as an authoritative part of their tradition is indeed freeing. Anglican Christians especially need to learn from Lindbeck, who was, in fact, a great friend to them. Our confusions about identity and common teaching — as well as our (sometimes subverted) gifts of common prayer and missionary vigor that cross local cultures and expectations, and that have taken in many hard experiences — have now exposed the stark challenges of our survival as Christian witnesses in the West, and of the living integrity of our global relationships. Many of our leaders have simply failed to take seriously what makes a Christian community and allows it to live through time, and here Lindbeck's more sociological and epistemological writings demand study.

More than that, Anglicans thirst for renewed understandings of what survival is *for*, of the living shape of the body of Christ they are a part of. Lindbeck's re-embrace of Israel, in her scriptural form and in her ordering to and in Jesus Christ, proposes that purpose in a way that is increasingly difficult to avoid. Joining in that embrace would mark a full transition into a new era of Christian faithfulness that George Lindbeck labored and prayed for. May he rest in peace, and his prayers be answered.

The Rev. Ephraim Radner is professor of historical theology at Wycliffe College, University of Toronto. A fuller version of this essay appears online at Covenant *(covenant.livingchurch.org).*

Dialogue of Zion

By Rowan Williams

I first met George Lindbeck 30 years ago at a symposium organized by Trinity Church, New York, to discuss what was probably his most influential book, *The Nature of Doctrine*. For me, as for many others, the book was a liberating contribution to theological debate, chiefly because it insisted that if you wanted to understand how doctrinal statements worked, you should ask "native speakers," those who were conversant with the "language of Zion."

After a longish period in which theologians seemed to be approaching classical dogma as if it were (at best) a dead language whose meanings had to be reconstructed or (at worst) a set of inadequate early solutions to problems we now understood more fully, this relatively brief essay simply pointed to the location in which doctrinal ideas worked and were used and spoken about: the worshiping and witnessing community. Obvious enough, you might think, but it was a breath of fresh air at the time, one of the most important expressions of a new turn in Anglophone theology that made responsibility to and in the Church look again like a natural aspect of the theologian's task. Along with Stanley Hauerwas, John Milbank, and a few other creative voices, George's essay set the agenda for a radically new look at theological method.

To speak of these and others as examples of postliberal theology gives a misleading impression of more convergence than was in fact the case among those who led this revolution: Church-focused theology is not necessarily any more uniform or convergent than any other serious and exhilarating intellec-

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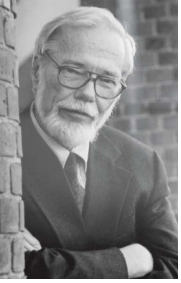

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tual enterprise, and a concern with theology as an aspect of spiritual integrity does not in itself constitute the program of a party or school (thank God). But we can rightly say that these writers helped to restore an intellectual and spiritual confidence to theology, not least within the Anglican tradition.

But I remember that some of the most challenging exchanges with George at that 1987 symposium were precisely about the differences between the United States and the United Kingdom's situation and the seductions of Anglican optimism (as he saw it). I was cautious about assuming that the language of Zion was quite as self-contained as George sometimes seemed to believe, wanting to ask about how as a matter of fact theological and cultural categories still leaked into each other, for good and ill, so that theology could properly learn something of how to be its best self from the world's critique. George argued that my questions grew out of a rather insular British Anglican positivity about the relation of theology and culture, and an insufficient sense of the quiet but enormous intellectual crisis generated by the loss in public understanding of traditional theological categories, so that my Anglican qualms could reopen the door to a new subjectivism.

The argument continued with friendly vigor (and, at least on my side, a lot of learning) for a good many years; and it is a debate that continues on both sides of the Atlantic and elsewhere. But it is enormously the richer and more nuanced because of George's unique contribution. Every contemporary theologian — and there are many — who takes for granted that the Church is the place where theology is done and that the language of liturgy and prayerful meditation on Scripture (not the supposed needs of a religious consciousness) is the normative background for theological labor is in George Lindbeck's debt.

Very few English-speaking theologians have made such a decisive contribution to the discipline. George's literary output was not copious in volume — a fact that reflects the reserved, somewhat ironic, modest, and nonpompous style of the man. Church and academy have every reason to be grateful to God for his steady, probing, reticent but also celebratory interrogation of how theology works.

The Rt. Rev. Rowan Williams is master of Magdalene College and honorary professor of contemporary Christian thought at Cambridge University.

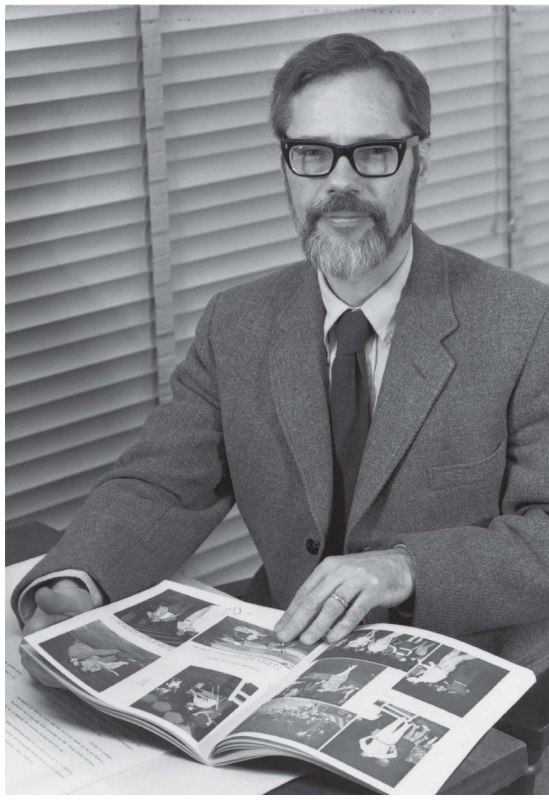
Missionary to Postmodernity

By George Sumner

How to describe George Lindbeck's perspective in brief? This is a difficult question about a mind so supple and original. I once heard him describe himself as a Wittgensteinian Thomist Lutheran. But there is another side of George I would like to highlight: the child of pietist Augustana Lutheran missionaries in northern China. Though not often on view, it was always down there.

He once mentioned an early memory of his father ministering to the sick late at night in a makeshift cholera ward. He also spoke of being evacuated at the outset of World War II and sailing back to the United States from Hong Kong while "the world seemed on fire." I might add that his early days in China included prowess as a high school ping-pong player on the national team.

Whatever else postliberalism is, it was meant to be an apologetic help to be a credal or mere Christian in our age. That is what George was and what he wanted to promote. Furthermore, it was a deeply missionary-influenced theory. He once said that he grew up in a non-Christian milieu in which the reality of the spiritual world was not in question, within which the mission station was a distinct cultural-linguistic world.



"He was rightly a Lutheran with profound Catholic sensibilities. In his life and thought he was what generous orthodoxy is." —Stanley Hauerwas

George was, like all great minds, ahead of his time. His call for a Church Catholic in thought but more sect-like in sociology was prescient. The root metaphor of doctrine as grammar oriented the research projects of many of us, and more widely the way people think about the Church's mission in postmodernity. We who are his theological children offer our deepest gratitude and thanksgiving to God for George's life and ministry.

The Rt. Rev. George Sumner, Bishop of Dallas, completed his PhD at Yale University in 1995.

Generous Theologian's Theologian

By Stanley Hauerwas

I did not have George Lindbeck as a teacher at Yale. During my time at Yale (1962-68) he was often at Vatican II. I remember my first encounter with him was about the Vatican II discussion on religious liberty. I had written a paper on John Courtney Murray in which I developed some criticism of Murray's position in *We Hold These Truths*. I am not sure how Mr. Lindbeck discovered I had written the paper, but he asked if he could read it. I was, of course, flattered that he was interested in anything I had done. I seem to remember he was not that impressed with my paper, though he was in fundamental agreement with my general criticisms of Murray. It turned out he was much more sympathetic with the French (and I think he meant Henri De Lubac) argument against the legal establishment of the Church than he was Murray's arguments, which seemed far too American.

Though I did not have the opportunity to take a course with Mr. Lindbeck, he had a decisive influence on me during my student years. That influence came through his book *The Future of Roman Catholic Theology*. Mr. Lindbeck's book put me on the road to becoming a fideistic, sectarian tribalist. What was remarkable is how Lindbeck saw so early and clearly that the only way to sustain the Catholic character of the Church depended on the Church becoming a disciplined community that looked more Anabaptist than the universalism represented by many forms of Roman Catholicism and mainstream Protestantism. *The Nature of Doctrine*, I think, was struggling to find expression in this early book.

I am not sure how Mr. Lindbeck and I became friends, but over the years I was honored that he claimed me as a friend. I am sure many wonder about that claim. Mr. Lindbeck was so learned and I am not, but he seemed to enjoy our interactions. He was even kind enough to suggest that I had been thinking for some time along the lines he developed in *The Nature of Doctrine*. I suspect our friendship reflected the influence of Hans Frei on both of us.

My favorite memory of Mr. Lindbeck was at an event organized by John Wright at the Nazarene Seminary in Kansas City that was to address the future of Protestantism. David Burrell and I were the other speakers. George's reflections on his upbringing in China, his difficult reentry into life as an American, how he became a medievalist, his interactions at the Council, and his surprise at how *The Nature of Doctrine* has been read are priceless. We are indebted to Wright for making George's remarks available in his book, *Postliberal Theology and the Church Catholic* (Baker, 2012).

When we were in Kansas City, I asked George what he made of Paul J. DeHart's criticism, which meant to make Frei's position more coherent than Lindbeck's account of "the text absorbing the world." George, who could be quite impish, smiled and said he was a bit surprised because he had learned that phrase from Frei. And that is how I will remember him. He was a theologian's theologian who never failed to be ready to be surprised by the God who is to be found on a cross. He was rightly a Lutheran with profound Catholic sensibilities. In his life and thought he was what generous orthodoxy is.

Stanley Hauerwas is Gilbert T. Rowe Professor Emeritus of Divinity and Law at Duke Divinity School.

Quintessential, Ecumenical, Lutheran

By Cyril O'Regan

For some of us graduate students at Yale, Mr. Lindbeck — never Professor, never Dr. Lindbeck — was the quintessential Lutheran theologian. For others, and relatedly, he was the quintessential ecumenical theologian. While I understood and appreciated the first, the latter was more important to me, but perhaps for more than the usual reasons.

The usual reasons did apply. For me the fact that Mr. Lindbeck was involved in Lutheran-Catholic dialogue was a wonderful sign of openness; that he had been an attendant at Vatican II served for me as a seal in that his gift was received. Yet while this openness elicited in me as in others a deep and abiding respect, they did not elicit astonishment. But astonishment there was. It simply came in an entirely different way, at once surprising and entirely convenient: surprising in that the ecumenism of Mr. Lindbeck did not come by way of propositions that linked Catholics and Lutherans on justification; entirely convenient in that it was tied to practices and a way of life more than words.

Mr. Lindbeck did not wax eloquent as to how much he loved Thomas Aquinas; he performed that love by teaching him as a master theologian for the entire Church. Mr. Lindbeck rarely ascribed the term *ecumenist* to himself as he mulled over without comment the very Catholic philosophical and theological dilations of someone like myself. What was astonishing and appalling at once was his economy of speech. There were words; it was just that they were remarkably few. There were pauses that never seemed to end, which with anyone else would have caused alarm, but in the oddest way they allowed you to feel safe. What defined Mr. Lindbeck as a theologian was what defined him as a person: deep listening that was a pondering and a questioning.

One accepted it, struggled to provide its provenance, only in the end to conclude that it was a mystery wrapped in an enigma. In his listening Mr. Lindbeck conformed to the first mandate of the *Rule of Benedict* far more rigorously than most Benedictines I have met. If he unapologetically embraced the Scholastic dialectic of Thomas Aquinas, he seemed to go beyond him in his measure of the laconic and call up the silence toward which Thomas strived that was at the same time the font of all that he said.

And then there was Wittgenstein, who with the anthropologist Glifford Geertz served as the non-theological *basso profundo* of his classic *The Nature of Doc-*

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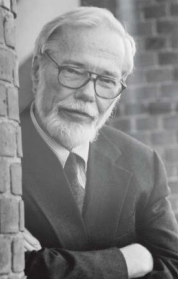

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trine. One wondered whether the affinity went deeper than the connection between religious language and form of life, and pointed perhaps to a space in which one only shows that which cannot be said. In the end, however, despite all of this I often found myself speculating just how deep the first 17 years Mr. Lindbeck spent in China penetrated his entire way of being with others. Often he came across as something like a Confucian sage who did not say what "manhood at its best" was but exemplified it.

Cyril O'Regan is Huisking Professor of Theology at the University of Notre Dame.

Prayerful Ecumenist

By R. Guy Erwin

In May of 1983, George Lindbeck was the Lutheran co-chair of the International Lutheran-Roman Catholic Dialogue Commission; his counterpart was Hans Martensen, S.J., Roman Catholic bishop of Copenhagen — like George, a participant in the Second Vatican Council 20 years before. The commission met that month at a converted monastery in the Black Forest in Germany, with the task of completing a joint statement on the 500th anniversary of Martin Luther's birth, coming up later that year. They only had about a week to complete the work.

I was a 25-year-old graduate student of George's at Yale, but had been in Tübingen on a fellowship for about a year. When George got to Germany, he called me, out of the blue, and invited me to join him at the commission's meeting the next day. Apparently since Bishop Martensen had a secretary, George thought he could have one too, and he even had a spare bed in his suite ready for me, should I accept the job. So I put on a black suit and jumped on the train.

It was an unforgettable experience to be George's secretary that week 35 years ago, and to see him up close doing what he loved: engaging in intense discussion with other scholars of great learning and deep faith toward the goal of Christian unity. In the freedom of that remote location, in those optimistic early days of John Paul II's pontificate, so much seemed possible, and the talk was wide-ranging and hopeful. We even discussed how eucharistic sharing might happen, step by step. And I saw a new side of George, how his shyness disappeared in the joy of the hope for unity. Praying with him each night made George more than just a teacher for me; it made him a father in God. I thank God for him and his witness for Christian unity.

The Rt. Rev. R. Guy Erwin is Bishop of the Southwest California Synod in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

'Don't Think, but Look'

By Frederick Christian Bauerschmidt

I very well might have gone to study at Yale Divinity school in any case, given that the woman I was eventually to marry was studying at the law school. But I had read a magazine review of *The Nature of Doctrine* that mentioned George Lindbeck's "cultural-linguistic" account of doctrine, and the debt he owed to Wittgenstein, and I was intrigued.

I had read both the *Tractatus Logic-Philosophicus* and the *Philosophical Investigations* as an undergraduate and considered myself, I suppose, to be some sort of Wittgensteinian in philosophy, but had wondered for some time about the implications of this for theology, which was my primary interest. I knew that it would involve attention to language and to "forms of life," as well as a willingness to follow Wittgenstein's injunction, "don't think, but look!" (*Philosophical Investigations* §66). But beyond that I was pretty clueless on how to proceed.

I found a copy of *The Nature of Doctrine* and worked my way through it. So much of it made sense to me, not only because of my Wittgensteinian proclivities, but because of the two and a half years I had spent working with churchfolk. I had come to the conclusion that what was primary was the actual practice of Christianity, that it was something more "caught" than taught, that doctrines most often made sense to people as ways of deepening their appreciation of practices in which they were already engaged: practices of prayer and liturgy, of social action, and of *ascesis*. Lindbeck's book helped clarify much of this by comparing religions to cultures, which are complex systems that always outrun the descriptions of their members, but about which those member descriptions have a kind of primacy, particularly in comparison with outsider descriptions.

He also helped me see the problems with and limitations of "expressivist" and "propositionalist" approaches that tended to be offered as the only two theological options. Expressivism— religious statements as expressions of a common, ineffable experience shared by all religions — was particularly prevalent in the progressive Catholic circles in which I usually ran, but had never sat well with me, since it seemed to undermine the significance of the particular texts and practices that made up the warp and woof of the Christian tradition. At the same time, a flat-footed propositionalist account of doctrine, in which religious statements mapped onto facts about God, seemed impossible to reconcile with what I knew of the development of doctrine and the vagaries of the Christian story. Lindbeck offered an alternative.

At the same time, I had some questions. As a Catholic, I wondered how Lindbeck's cultural-linguistic approach fit with traditional Catholic affirmations of natural knowledge of God, and with the work of the Spirit outside the visible bounds of the Church. Was the

Marquand Chapel, Yale Divinity School

Carol M. Highsmith/Wikimedia Commons photo

cultural-linguistic approach not, in some sense, narrowly sectarian, insufficiently attentive to the world outside the Church that was God's good creation? If religions were cultural-linguistic systems, how did they interact with the world outside that system? How do we account for change within a closed system?

In my two years at Yale, I took only two classes with Lindbeck. He was on sabbatical my second year, and when he returned I had decamped to Duke for my doctorate. But in those two seminars I came to see that Lindbeck's answer to my questions was more or less Wittgenstein's injunction, "don't think, but look!" That is, look at Thomas Aquinas, or Joseph Ratzinger, or Hans Urs von Balthasar, or Karl Rahner. Look at what they are doing. Attend to the movement of the texts. Much to my surprise, we were not expected to apply Lindbeck's "theory of religion" (which I discovered he did not set all that much store by) to the texts that we read. We were not encouraged to label Rahner an expressivist or Thomas a propositionalist. Rather, we found ourselves apprenticed to a master reader of texts who had through years of study explored these writers and could help us look and see the overall shape of their thought against the backdrop of the broad Christian tradition. In good Wittgensteinian fashion, we were asked to explore what the texts *did*.

My proudest moment during that year came when Lindbeck commented in class that a point I had made in my paper was wrong, but it was wrong in an interesting way. He knew that it in the pedagogical process it could be more important to be interestingly wrong than boringly right. He also knew that the primary language of theology was found in Scripture and creed and liturgy, not in books with titles like *The Nature of Doctrine*, which might one day be found to have been (interestingly) wrong. This freed him to take God seriously, while not taking himself too seriously, knowing that the role of the theologian in the Church was subordinate to the role of the simple believer. This was surely the most important lesson that I learned from him.

Frederick Christian Bauerschmidt is an associate professor in the Department of Theology at Loyola College in Maryland.

Charitable Reading, Patience, and the Ecumenical Long Game

By Joseph L. Mangina

It was George Lindbeck who taught me to read texts charitably. That tutelage probably began when I took his course on medieval and Reformation theology as an MDiv student, although I was too naive to realize it at the time. But my real education under Lindbeck came with my my doctoral studies. I recall one course in particular: a graduate seminar on ecclesiology (a predecessor of that course, titled "Comparative Dogmatics," had been the bread-and-butter of previous generations of Yale graduate students in theology). We read ecclesiological texts from a wide range of authors, ancient and modern, Catholic and Protestant. But whoever we read, Lindbeck made sure that we engaged that person both critically and fairly, asking first what the author was trying to accomplish and with what intellectual tools. Only then were we in a position to pose the question "But are they right?" It was a wonderful intellectual *askesis* and training for a life of teaching and scholarship.

Because Lindbeck was critical of the view of religion he called "experiential expressivism," people may draw the false conclusion that he was somehow an enemy of experience.

On the contrary! He was a warm, affectionate, and I dare say deeply pious man. He could use old-fashioned phrases like "loving Jesus" or "resting in the bosom of Abraham" without embarrassment or fear of sounding naive. The problem was never experience as such, but the temptation of turning experience into a universalizing method that glosses over particularities and complexities, and is to that extent ironically *un*-experiential. Expressivism too easily ignores the embodied world of time and space and social interaction that is the created context of human life. The "I" exists only as a social self, a lesson Lindbeck learned from his revered teacher H. Richard Niebuhr.

We attend to the world, and even to God, not by turning inward but by patiently exploring the givens of Scripture and historic Christian teaching. On the one hand, there is something here of the Reformers' insistence on the *verbum externum*: it is in God's revealed Word that he wills to meet us, rather than in the murky depths of the self. On the other hand, we can see why Lindbeck so loved Thomas Aquinas, whose patient exploration of the things of God involved attentiveness to the details of texts as well as the formulating of questions and objections and careful

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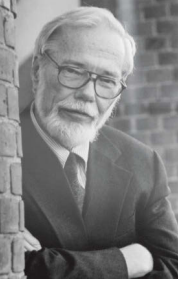

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distinctions. Reading a Thomistic article takes time, because God is so important as to demand that kind of timeful attention.

"Timeful attention" was in fact one of Lindbeck's chief virtues. He took time, first of all for his students; I've never known a more unselfish teacher in that regard, unless it was his friend and colleague Hans Frei. Lindbeck also took time for the Church. Much of his life was devoted to the slow, often thankless work of ecumenical dialogue, which does not yield to easy solutions or short-term thinking. One always had the sense with Mr. Lindbeck that he was playing the ecumenical long game, informed by the conviction that Christian unity is not something to be achieved in one person's lifetime.

As Ephraim Radner notes, part of that long game involved the Church's learning to be more like the Jews, as well as reclaiming a way of reading Scripture figurally and messianically in ways that have long since gone out of vogue. I would wager that Lindbeck's legacy has less to do with *The Nature of Doctrine* and its particular theory of religion than with his summoning us to this Israel-like understanding of the Church. A Church that is less Gentile and more Jewish in its self-understanding might better understand how to inhabit the time God has given us. Amen; may it be so.

Joseph Mangina is professor of systematic theology at Wycliffe College, University of Toronto, and editor of Pro Ecclesia.

Attentive Eyes

By Bruce D. Marshall

In the fall of 1978 I was a second-year student at Yale Divinity School. Two fellow students and I (future professors all) asked George Lindbeck to do a reading course with us on the theology of Martin Luther. He agreed — only many years later did I come to appreciate the generosity of that gesture — and we set about preparing a reading list for the course. One of our number was an Episcopalian, who wanted to read Richard Hooker alongside Luther. I thought this would be a waste of time, but Lindbeck stipulated that Hooker be included. Juxtaposing the two evidently intrigued him.

At our first meeting with Lindbeck, gathered at close quarters in his office overflowing with books and papers, we were discussing the essays he had required each of us to prepare. One of us, developing a comment in his essay, suggested that Hooker was more than a bit of a Pelagian, especially in comparison with Luther. Lindbeck silently picked up his volume of Hooker, flipped to a particular page, and read out a passage that manifestly rebutted the charge of Pelagianism. He paused. Looking over his glasses at the three of us, he said, "That was in the reading for today." He flipped to another page, and read out another passage from Hooker, elaborating the point. "That was also in the reading for today."

Having taught many such improvised seminars myself, I now realize that Lindbeck might understandably have put no more time into this junior reading course than it took him to meet with the three of us every couple of weeks. He had, though I scarcely realized it then, other things to do. At that

The opening of Vatican II's second session

Peter Geymayer/Wikimedia Commons photo

moment, however, all three of us realized that Lindbeck had in fact done the work of the course rather more seriously and thoroughly than the eager young theologians who had asked him to teach it. On that formative day we learned something even more momentous for us than that Hooker was not a Pelagian.

Thereafter we all read with newly opened and attentive eyes, determined not to be caught out like that again. Lindbeck seemed to warm to our efforts, and by semester's end we thought we had done well. As our last meeting was coming to a conclusion he offered, almost in passing, his own verdict on the course. "This was worthwhile. I'm sorry that I didn't have more time to spend with you. We're just getting to the point when you really might have written some good papers."

He was, by a long shot, the best teacher I ever had. Eternal rest grant unto him O Lord, and may light perpetual shine upon him.

Bruce D. Marshall is Lehman Professor of Christian Doctrine at Perkins School of Theology, Southern Methodist University.

Humble and Focused

By Michael Root

George Lindbeck will be celebrated, and rightly so, for his ecumenical work and his groundbreaking theological writings. Day in and day out, however, he was a seminary and university professor, teaching seminarians and graduate students and directing doctoral work at Yale. I was one of those students and served a year as one of his teaching assistants. For me he was always, along with his colleague Hans Frei, the model professor. He was objective, in the best sense of the word. His lectures were not examples of platform technique, far from it. They were about the subject matter, not about performance. One was captivated by what one saw as he spoke — the theological and ecclesial logic of the matter at hand. Intellectually, what he presented was a tour de force, but one didn't marvel at the mind, one was fascinated by what he laid bare.

Similarly, he attended to his students. He could be gentle when gentleness was called for, especially with students who had personal troubles. He could also be blunt when bluntness was called for, as I learned when I owed him two papers my first semester, and did much work on one and a slapdash job on the other. He told me he understood what I had done, but that I was never to turn in a paper like that again. He was friendly, could be humorous, but was not chummy. He insisted former students call him George, but I always thought of him as Mr. Lindbeck.

What I never observed in Lindbeck, either when I was a student or when I discussed ecclesial and ecumenical matters with him later, was an ego that got in the way of his clear-eyed perception of what was the case and what needed to be said or done. In this way, he was a model of professorial humility. It was not a humility based on a low estimate of his work. He knew his worth. Rather, it was a humility that valued the task to be addressed and the students and colleagues one worked with more than it valued one's status. After studying with Lindbeck (and Frei) I never had patience with academic divas.

Lindbeck's professorial humility was, in a way, deeply Lutheran. For Luther, faith is profoundly other-directed, forgetful of one's own merit or demerit and focusing on the one thing needful, Christ, and on the needs of the neighbor. Lindbeck was the academic embodiment of such an attitude. The brilliance of his work made his outlook all the more impressive.

Michael Root is ordinary professor of systematic theology at the Catholic University of America.

Fides caritate formata

By Caleb Congrove

I had the great fortune of being one of Mr. Lindbeck's very last students. In the spring of 2000, when I was a student at Yale Divinity School, but long after Mr. Lindbeck had retired from it, Christopher Wells and I met together with him weekly in a reading course we titled "Ecclesiology and Ecumenism." For us, in our mid-20s then, reading Yves Congar's *Divided Christendom* with George Lindbeck was a heady experience. We knew that we had stumbled unworthily into a golden age that time (and reality) should have withheld from us.

We poured ourselves into that course. Many hours of effort and revision stood behind each of the two-page masterpieces we submitted before our meetings. We looked on Mr. Lindbeck with awe, the sage master of our teachers. Besides the texts we read together that semester, we also carefully considered and discussed what he thought of us. If he was hard on us or on our essays, we worried. If he was too gentle, we worried even more.

Mr. Lindbeck was an intense conversationalist, and our meetings left us no place to hide from him. Floating some interpretive thesis or hypothesis entailed a real risk, and it was only heightened by his intent consideration. Our discussions were often punctuated by long and awkward silences. As nerve-wracking as these silences sometimes were, they really were gifts, concrete tokens of his attentiveness. Mr. Lindbeck took his students and their contributions very seriously. I think his pedagogy, in its peculiar way, was very personal.

I think he understood that teaching was about forming intellectual habits or virtues. Moreover, his teaching was guided by this basic pastoral sensitivity: people are different, and different students may require different lessons. He lifted up the lowly but cast down the mighty. Though he wore it quietly, I think love was his greatest virtue. A very reserved person, he was not especially warm, and I suspect that emotional displays made him uncomfortable. But "charitable interpretation" was far more than some ideal for him. Charity gave shape to Mr. Lindbeck's teaching. It was the concrete expectation he imposed on himself and his students.

Caleb Congrove is a high school teacher in Ohio and a father of three.

Beautiful Grasp of Augustine

Reviewed by John C. Cavadini

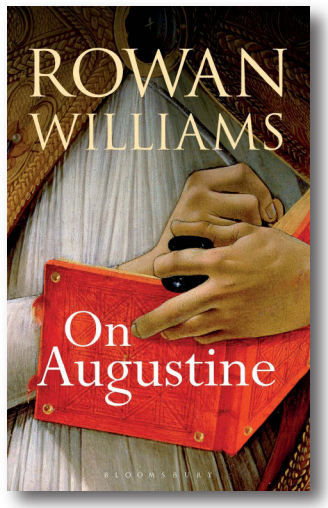
To read these essays now published in book form is a little like a homecoming. I had remembered reading those previously published with appreciation — but upon re-reading them, I have to add, perhaps not with sufficient appreciation. I had forgotten how beautiful they are. Rowan Williams writes: "It will be obvious that I believe Augustine to be a thinker supremely worth engaging with — not only as a specifically Christian mind but as someone whose understanding of subjectivity itself, of what it is to be a speaking and thinking person, is of abiding interest" (p. ix). Therefore, he "deserves all the lavish attention he has received over the centuries" (p. x).

Williams does not have only Christian theologians in mind, either as past or as prospective interlocutors. Rather, he wants to reach "beyond the community of Christian belief" (p. x) — not by neutralizing Augustine as a Christian theologian — but instead, hoping that Augustine can be read afresh by anyone, "as a thinker who illustrates beyond any doubt that Christian theology can be a vehicle for the most serious reflection on the nature of our humanity: its varieties of self-enslavement, its obscurity to itself, its emergence in relatedness and reciprocity" (p. x). Truth in advertising would have me reveal that I am fully on board with such a project and deeply grateful for the brilliant intellectual leadership that Williams has offered in its service.

Williams's leadership in this regard has not been abstractly intellectual, but rather it arises, as noted, out of a conviction about what is worth engaging, and what is of abiding interest, and such convictions cannot be proven in any kind of Cartesian sense of a clear and distinct idea that is self-evident once grasped, but must be, one could say, performed. There is therefore an almost sacramental character to these essays, because they mediate an experience of the conviction that animates their performance. The reader experiences the worthwhile engagement that Williams argues for.

Part of the performance is the always subtle but often dramatic release of Augustine's thought from trivializations that have occurred by way of caricature, and by way of the silos of scholarship that have tended to promote trivialization and cliché. We have all heard the clichés, but, just in case, Williams dryly enumerates them, mentioning "Augustine's alleged responsibility for Western Christianity's supposed obsession with the evils of bodily experience or sexuality, or its detachment from the world of public ethics, its authoritarian ecclesiastical systems, or its excessively philosophical understanding of God's unity, or whatever else is seen as the root of all theological [and, one could add, cultural] evils" (p. viii).

The scholarly tendency to study Augustine in the silos of the disputes in which he involved himself generates standard labels that deflect attention from the depth and nuance of Augustine's thought. For example, if a claim of his is labelled anti-Pelagian, it can seem as a sufficiently exhaustive treatment of the position and, since the label shows a vested interest, it also can serve to discount the position (by reducing it to its vested interest) without probing its depth. Williams notes that his essays "include no extended discussion of the major controversies of Augustine's episcopal career," not only because the texts discussed are largely the ones Williams happened to be teaching (an endearing comment if I ever read one), but also because they emerge out of his "interest in the fundamental categories of Augustine's work," those from which the doctrinal concerns about "grace and the limits of the Church" actually derive (p. ix).



On Augustine
By **Rowan Williams**
Bloomsbury. Pp. xii + 213. $42

One of the major watershed essays in the book, "Politics and the Soul: Reading the *City of God*," exemplifies this approach, using it to deflate the caricature of "'Augustinian pessimism,' so called," as well as the caricature, coming from Hannah Arendt no less, that Augustine is the enemy of the public realm and that his model of community relationships "represents a flight from time" (p. 126). But what we are actually seeing represented in these clichés, if one looks "more subtly," is — and there is no one who can say it better than Williams himself,

> a corollary of Augustine's pervasive hostility to two things: an elitist concept of human commonalty (immortality as the acquisition of a remembered name) and a nostalgia for some escape from the shapelessness and uncertainty of temporal existence as such (the Manichaean isolation of a pure and inviolate, ahistorical soul in us, the Platonist promise of ecstasy, the Donatist quest for absolute institutional purity, the Pelagian hope to achieve purity of will, unconditioned moral liberty).

Wow! This is a beautiful example of the way in which a focus on fundamental categories operative across the polemical fields shows what is at stake in all of them and blocks easy deflections of attention from Augustinian depth. Williams succeeds here in putting his finger on what I would call the anti-utopian strain in Augustine's thought without allowing it to be rendered banal by the cliché of pessimism. Williams shows that, for Augustine, it is rather utopian thinking that is ultimately pessimistic, prone towards the annihilation of human being as we know it:

> For Augustine, the problem of the life of the two cities is, like every other question presented to the theologian, inextricably linked with the fundamental issue of what it is to be a creature animated by desire, whose characteristic marks are lack and hunger …. On such a basis there is no possibility of building a theory that would allow final security and 'finishedness' to any form of political life. The claims of such a theory would be, ultimately, anti-political because anti-human: denials of death. (p. 126)

In another famously programmatic essay, we see the same use of fundamental categories to cut through customary trivializations of Augustine's thought. In "Augustine on Christ and the Trinity," Williams treats one of Augustine's texts most prone to flatfooted interpretation, the chestnut in *Confessions* 7 about Augustine's having read in the Platonist texts about the eternal Word of God, but not about the Word made flesh. To accept the Word made flesh means that Christian belief for Augustine was "not first and foremost the acceptance of certain statements as true, but a sort of moral turning inside out." We can stop trying to climb to heaven and act on the belief that the eternal Word has come down from Heaven in search of us. The payoff for the reader, though, is in the next two sentences, both poignant and pointed at the same time: "And this happens when you see yourself not as a boldly questing intellectual mystic, but as a sick person in desperate need of healing. … Left to ourselves, we can fantasize about gaining wisdom by effort, but in fact we shall only be locking ourselves up still further in our illusions, admiring not the eternal wisdom but our own spiritual skills" (p. 132).

It is interesting, in this connection, to see how easily and eloquently Williams's scholarship accommodates pastoral concerns. This is illustrated by the chapter called "God in Search: A Sermon," on the parable of the Prodigal Son. Williams points out the seeming paradox of thinking of Augustine — *par excellence* the example of a theologian of the "restless heart" in search of God — as, even more, the theologian of God's coming in search of us. Williams tells his listeners that until God has come in search of us, our own quest is doomed: "we are frustrated and disappointed in what we try to satisfy ourselves with … and so deepen our bondage and anger and misery," adding that "it is like drinking sea water to quench our thirst."

A little later: "The trouble with putting the human search for God at the heart of things is that it can lead to a self-important, individualistic religiosity that talks glibly about 'my spiritual journey' as a thing in itself, a fascinating exercise in a specialist activity, a very elevated hobby" (p. 208). Not only is the point that Williams takes into the sermon profoundly Augustinian, as shown in the essay on Christ and the Trinity, but the very fact of taking it into the sermon is Augustinian too, because Augustine characteristically filled his sermons with the depth of his theological discoveries and insights, if not with the jargon that sometimes can attach to them.

Williams sums up Augustine's achievement by characterizing him as a Christian theologian who is fundamentally and irreducibly theological and yet "whose doctrinal convictions open unexpected vistas on questions that are not narrowly theological." Williams's Augustine "shows theology at work in the shaping of *wisdom*." Williams, in turn, shows Augustine at work in this way by his own careful labor of meticulous eloquence, of a kind of deep-steam cleaning of the grime of intellectualized smog that has accumulated through the generations. Thereby he makes available for viewing an unsurpassed brilliance, but he also thereby performs the same for the religion of which Augustine was such a persuasive apologist.

These essays are not only a first class set of pro-Augustinian apologetics, in the best and classical sense, but they are also in one and the same act a set of apologetics — also in the best and classical sense — for the Christian faith. Ever the pastor as well as the scholar, Williams addresses his essays as much to people's souls as to their intellects. The essays carry with them, inconspicuously and almost by sleight of hand, an encouragement for those searching for faith and truth in the learned circles of our world where it can seem most absent. Augustine the pessimist, so called, becomes ironically in Williams's precisely crafted prose a source of consolation to those who might have been tempted to give up on the intellectual credibility of the Christian faith.

John C. Cavadini is a professor of theology at the University of Notre Dame and director of the McGrath Institute for Church Life.

Secular Humanism at the End of Life

Review by Phil Reed

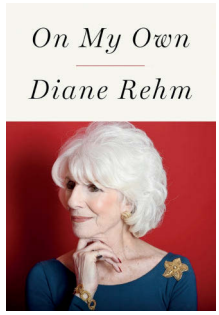
In the middle of Diane Rehm's *On My Own*, she spends a short time explaining and justifying her desire to wear makeup and high heels. This episode represents well the book as a whole: mindlessly echoing common cultural values such as superficiality, individual autonomy, and self-expression.

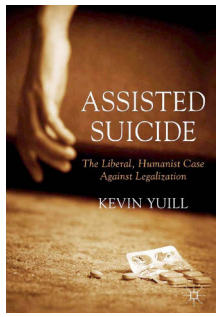
The book recounts the story of how Rehm deals with and responds to her husband's prolonged death from Parkinson's. She tells of how she became an advocate for "the right to die" and of how she confronts her drift into old age.

On My Own is filled with platitudes and clichés, offering virtually nothing of substance. While one cannot fail to have sympathy for her grief and perhaps appreciate her self-honesty, one can hardly finish the book without assuming that the only reason anyone would choose to publish or read it is because the author was the host of a famous talk show on American Public Radio.

Rehm's memoir displays nicely the shallow level of thought about death, suffering, and family life that is typical of our culture. Rehm prefers a sudden and painless death, not to be a burden on her family in aging, and indeed not to age at all (because aging is equated with a loss of dignity). She confesses guilt that she was not willing to give up her career to care for her husband as he became more dependent. She refuses to rely on or expect her children to help her as she ages, busy as they are with their lives and careers, although she would enjoy seeing her grandchildren more often. It is a sad book in other ways than she intended.

At one point she expresses the belief that her husband's spirit has returned to earth as a hummingbird, which is surprising because she also professes to be a Christian. While Rehm mentions her religion at various points, it is remarkable that in a book about the difficulty of grief in the face of aging and death, she apparently takes no comfort from her faith, the resurrection of Jesus, the suffering of Jesus, or the general resurrection.





On My Own

By **Diane Rehm**

Vintage. Pp. 176. $16

Assisted Suicide

The Liberal, Humanist Case against Legalization

By **Kevin Yuill**

Palgrave Macmillan. Pp. xx + 188. $33

While Rehm's book presents a predictable set of secular humanist values at the end of life, Kevin Yuill's *Assisted Suicide: The Liberal, Humanist Case Against Legalization* shows much more ingenuity, nuance, and insight.

Yuill is critical of common arguments both for and against assisted suicide. On the one hand, he thinks that opponents of assisted suicide are too quick to rely either on nebulous claims about the sanctity of life or on unproven empirical arguments about how legalization will initiate a slippery slope toward abuse.

On the other hand, Yuill finds the

A Course in Christian Mysticism

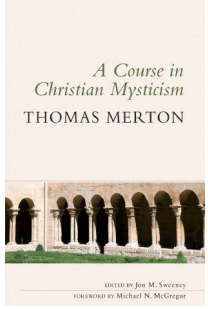
By **Thomas Merton**

Edited by **Jon M. Sweeney**

Liturgical Press. Pp. 235. $19.95

If for most avid readers books have a magnetic pull, the newly published lectures of Thomas Merton in *A Course in Christian Mysticism* have an electromagnetic pull.

The relevance of Merton's lectures to the novices of the Abbey of Gethsemane in 1961 can only be fully realized today. Merton warned that mysticism is not about self-discovery: "[W]e must recognize the importance of self-forgetfulness in relation to true contemplation and not encouraging souls in self-consciousness, self-awareness, the taste of self-awareness, etc." (p. 6).



The brilliance of Merton and the extent of his study are staggering, considering the breadth of information he gathered without modern technology. Beyond the expected exploration of mystics like St. Teresa of Avila, St. Augustine, and the Dionysian Tradition, he provides a rare analysis of Evagrius Ponticus, the Beguines, Maximus the Confessor, and a balanced approach to Origen.

"Without mysticism there is no real theology, and without theology there is no real mysticism," Merton says at the beginning of his lectures. Through that lens comes a book that is difficult to lay aside, or to complete without a profound change in the reader.

The Rev. Chris Roussell
Rapid City, South Dakota

most common arguments in favor of assisted suicide incoherent and contradictory. If autonomy is the basis for a change in the law, then there is no justification for restrictions on the availability of assisted suicide; yet such restrictions (such as that the person utilizing the law must have six months or less to live) are ubiquitous. Likewise, Yuill rejects compassion as a sound basis for assisted suicide on a number of grounds, including that the nature of compassionate acts should be spontaneous and free rather than regulated through the law.

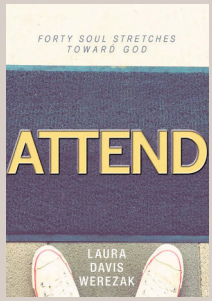
Yuill's focus is not on the morality of assisted suicide (he allows that suicide is sometimes morally permissible or even heroic) but on its legalization. To begin, he contends that a change in law is unnecessary: the option to commit suicide is already available to people; and where it has been legalized, few people make use of it.

On top of this, Yuill insists that institutionalizing assisted suicide has profound cultural effects that are usually overlooked. First, legalizing assisted suicide removes an agent's moral responsibility for committing the act. Second, it removes the act from the sphere of social and moral judgment, treating it instead as a medical procedure. Third, legalization expresses a prejudice against the lives of those who are suffering or at the end of life. Fourth, it prevents an individual's death from being a private affair by increasing regulation and oversight at the deathbed.

These arguments are all worthy of consideration and perhaps even successful. Yet Yuill's penchant for rabble-rousing seems to interfere at times with his ability to provide a clear and compelling argument. His account of the nature of suicide is conceptually confused because it undermines the significance of the intention to die. Moreover, the issue of abortion is just one example that complicates his claim that legal medical procedures are beyond the realm of public judgment.

Still, it is all too easy to approach the question of assisted suicide using the stereotypes that religious people oppose it because they believe God is the author of life, whereas secular people support it because they uphold absolute freedom of choice. The value of Yuill's book lies fundamentally in challenging these stereotypes, forcing the reader to think more carefully about the nature and meaning of this important ethical issue. Diane Rehm and others would do well to read it.

Philip Reed is an associate professor of philosophy at Canisius College, where he works on ethics, applied ethics, and moral psychology.



Attend

Forty Soul Stretches Toward God

By **Laura Davis Werezak**

FaithWords. Pp. 240. $21

The single word that best describes this spiritual guidebook is *gentle*. Laura Davis Werezak, a theologically educated mother of two young children, writes wisely for Christians who are busy and distractible but also spiritually hungry. Never setting too high a bar, the book amounts to an invitation to transform, gradually but radically, the sensibility with which we approach modern daily life.

In 40 short chapters, suitable for private or group study during Lent or any time, Werezak describes concrete, embodied ways we can practice God's presence — like "Send a handwritten note" or "Rock a child to sleep." Throughout, she gives glimpses into her spiritual journey, which includes an evangelical youth, a discovery of Anglicanism, experiences of the Holy Spirit, and a deep love for liturgy and the saints.

The prose is clean, simple, and free of scholarly footnotes, but Werezak's breadth of spiritual reading is evident. The influence of Barbara Brown Taylor and Robert Farrar Capon are closest to the surface, but the range of masters Werezak cites means this book could serve as an excellent launching point into further reading in Christian spiritual classics.

Abigail Woolley
Dallas

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SUNDAY'S READINGS | Last Epiphany, February 11

2 Kgs. 2:1-12 • Ps. 50:1-6 • 2 Cor. 4:3-6 • Mark 9:2-9

Ascending Flame, Descending Love

Elisha, though a prophet by election, is formed under the direction of a human master, Elijah. Election may be hidden in the mystery of an eternal now, but its working in time takes time, requires the slow process of learning, tasks repeated under the eye of a teacher, and the deep stirring of emotion intrinsic to such intimate instruction. Every teacher, however stoic, thinks: *Do you love me?* Elisha loved his teacher, and so their parting at the end tore his heart to pieces.

"As the LORD lives and you yourself live, I will not leave you" (2 Kgs. 2:2). Three times he repeats these words, at Gilgal, then Bethel, then Jericho. And yet the departure is imminent, the loss inevitable, to which a chorus of prophets gives twofold witness: "Do you not know that today the LORD will take your master away from you?" (2 Kgs. 2:3, 5). Elijah, moved by the love he gives and receives, asks what gift he may bestow on his beloved disciple. "Tell me what I may do for you, before I am taken from you" (2 Kgs. 2:9). In gospel fashion, they love each other until the end.

Just before their separation, Elisha says, "Please let me inherit a double share of your spirit" (2 Kgs. 2:9). Elijah pledges to do so provided "you see me as I am being taken from you" (2 Kgs. 2:10). Then, as they walk and converse, a celestial chariot and horses engulfed in flame descend and take Elijah up in a whirlwind. God once spoke out of a whirlwind to his servant Job: "Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding" (Job 38:4). Job put his hand to his mouth in fearful silence. Elisha puts his hands to his robes and tears them in sorrow. Silence and sorrow pierce the hearts of all those who see the tempest of God. And yet this remains a story about love.

Jesus takes Peter and James and John with him to a high mountain. He is transfigured before them, shining as no earthly being. Elijah and Moses, characters embodying the Old Testament dispensation of law and prophecy, appear with Jesus and then disappear. The Father bears witness to the Son: "This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him" (Mark 9:7). Finally, Jesus stands alone. There is light, fear, and silence. "As they were coming down the mountain, he ordered them to tell no one about what they had seen, until after the Son of Man had risen from the dead" (Mark 9:9). The fire of chariots and horses, the fire and smoke upon holy mountains, the white light suffusing the garments of Christ, all witness to the light of the World. This light in his divinity is wholly other than what we are, and yet he deigns to be among us.

Lift up your eyes and your hearts. Go up to Jesus, up to the expanding heavens. Be where he is upon the heights, and from there behold his coming. "Sing to God, sing praises to his name; lift up a song to him who rides upon the clouds" (Ps. 68:4). The majestic Son of the Father is where the Father is, riding upward, and we go with him. From this height of glory, the Son descends to orphans, widows, the homeless, and prisoners (Ps. 68:5).

Jesus is dazzling light, a storm in the heavens, a chariot of fire. He is also the tender compassion and the righteous judgment that give life to this suffering world. Look up to him, and behold his coming.

Look It Up

Read Psalm 113:6.

Think About It

Enthroned on high, God stoops to behold in love.

SUNDAY'S READINGS | 1 Lent, February 18

Gen. 9:8-17 • Ps. 25:1-9 • 1 Pet. 3:18-22 • Mark 1:9-15

Cleansing and Life

Many people try their best every day to fulfill obligations, meet moral duty, and face the demands and privileges of love. They try and they fail, but they try, and those who endure to the end will be saved. It is a virtue to love justice and mercy, but a virtue embedded in pangs of guilt.

All progress in the moral life incites a deeper and more sensitive awareness of the lurking and alluring power of evil. There are ministering angels among us and within us, to be sure, but demons too who roar and wait for the right moments to elicit visceral and vile evil. "I can will what is right, but I cannot do it." I cannot do it perfectly. Even goodness is tainted; self-examination exposes a false conscience. A terrible fall is never far from human virtue.

God looks and loves. God stoops to behold the heavens and the earth. God sees the evil that good people do and the sparks of goodness still resident in those who have given themselves to salacious desire and calculating greed. God plans a great and dramatic purging of evil in the telling of an ancient story. "The LORD saw that the wickedness of humankind was great in the earth, and that every inclination of the thoughts of their hearts was only evil continually. And the LORD was sorry that he had made mankind on the earth, and it grieved him to the heart. So the LORD said, 'I will blot out from the earth the human beings I have created—people together with animals and creeping things and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them'" (Gen. 6:5-8). Then a flood of water came on the earth, a purging baptism from which emerged only Noah and his family, living things enough to produce their kind, and plants for food. The water is baptism, the ark a holy church.

After the storm, "God said to Noah and to his sons with him, 'As for me, I am establishing my covenant with you and with your descendants after you, and with every living creature, that is with you, the birds, the domestic animals, and every animal of the earth with you, as many as came out of the ark" (Gen. 9:9-10). God says, "Never again!" Giving the rainbow as a sign, God promises, "I will remember my covenant … the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth" (Gen. 9:15-16). The wrath of pounding rain is spent. Evil has been swept away.

Jesus takes upon himself all the evil of the world and is put to death in the flesh. Prefiguring his death, "Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan" (Mark 1:9). Though perfectly righteous, he accepts an ablution proper to the unrighteous (1 Pet. 3:18). Having drawn all humanity into himself, his enacted cleansing is a real presence to the sinner, a real washing and making new. In Christ, all things are being made new, and all evil put to flight. Jesus is, in his body and whole being, the womb of a divinized humanity. At his death and from his side a new being comes forth, radiant with the Holy Spirit.

Imagine the lived reality of being made utterly new in Christ. It has been noted, for instance, that in the early Christian catacombs, adult-sized coffins sometimes bore an epitaph indicating the deceased was an infant, that is to say, newly baptized. Are we new? Have we come through the flood of baptism? Are we babes in Christ? God knows.

Look It Up

Read Psalm 25:1.

Think About It

Come up out of the water.

Your Parish Home

Whether you live in sunny Sarasota year-round, stay here seasonally, or are visiting this beautiful city on Florida's "cultural coast" for the first time on business or pleasure, the Church of the Redeemer, situated on Sarasota's vibrant downtown bayfront, invites and welcomes all to worship with us.

Known for its rich liturgical life and as a family church devoted to worship and service, Redeemer offers Sunday worship at 7:30, 9, and 11 a.m., and Spanish Mass at 1 p.m. Contemporary Mass is at 5:30 p.m. Saturday. Weekdays, Mass is said daily at 10 a.m., with additional Masses offered Wednesday, 7:30 a.m., and Thursday, 5:30 p.m.

Throughout every season, Redeemer is abundant with activity. The parish offers a multitude of ways for members and guests from the community to engage, including world-class musicians and singers, renowned guest lecturers and preachers, lively and in-depth adult education and fellowship, monthly Evensong, after-school and summer activities for children, Bible study, book clubs, movie nights and beach runs, and a plethora of other opportunities for fellowship and spiritual growth.

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(Continued on next page)

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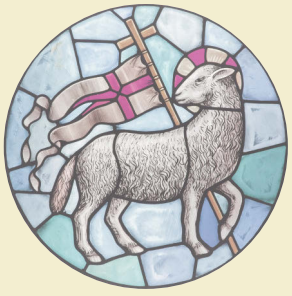

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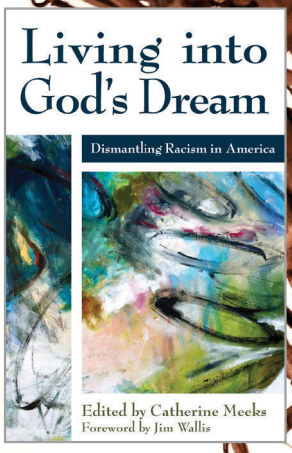

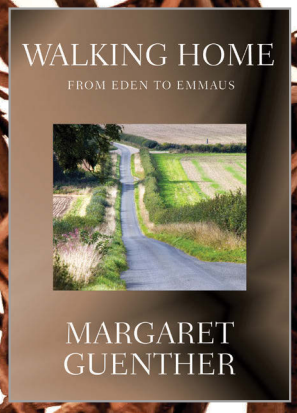

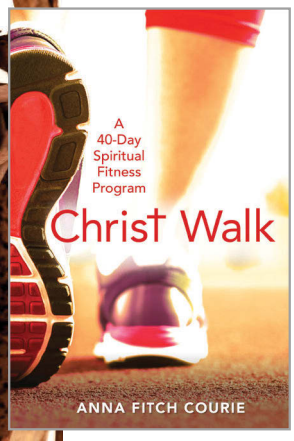

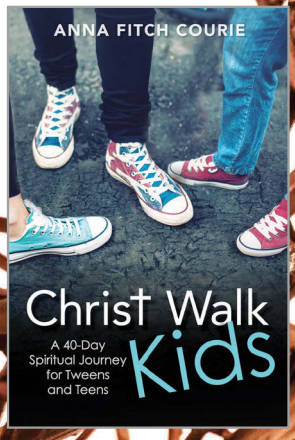

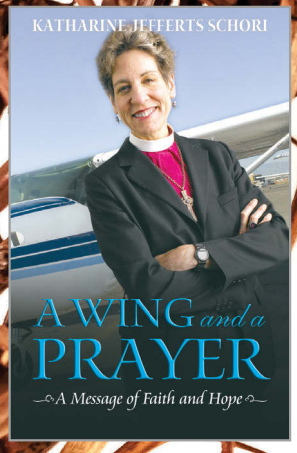

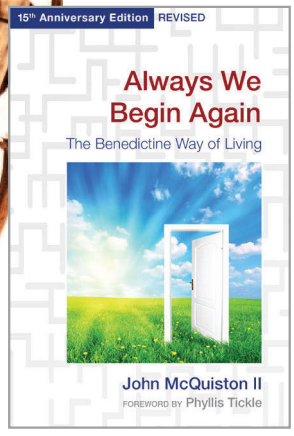

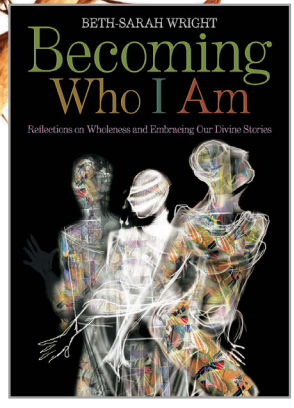

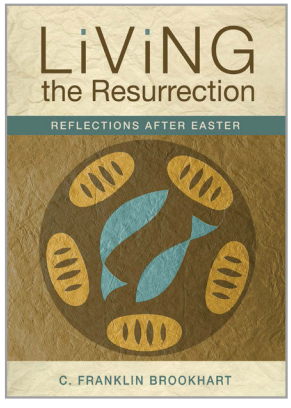

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