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ON THE COVER

W.L. Prehn writes: “What is plain in the history of Saint James ... is that school leaders assumed that character is the end of education. If character is the aim, everything else falls into place” (see “Lessons from the History of Saint James,” p. 16).

Photo courtesy of Saint James School

THE LIVING CHURCH

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We are grateful to the dioceses of Springfield [p. 27] and Southern Ohio [p. 28] whose generous support helped make this issue possible.

Church Rallies for Surviving Schools

By G. Jeffrey MacDonald

The Episcopal Church is mounting a full-court press to save St. Augustine's University in Raleigh, North Carolina, ahead of an autumn accreditation review that could make or break the 151-year-old, church-affiliated, historically black institution.

In a bid to satisfy accreditors who need to see much-improved financial stability this year, St. Augustine's has raised about \$3 million, President Everett Ward said. But that's not enough. The school still needs to raise another \$3 million before June 30, he told TLC in a March interview.

"It's the final push, so we're pushing real hard," Ward said. "We have obtained strong support from the Episcopal Church, and we're looking for even more support."

St. Augustine's has an annual budget of about \$26 million and had a \$1.7 million deficit last year, Ward said. The school has been tackling deferred maintenance on buildings dating to the 1970s and '80s, but still aims to end the fiscal year with a surplus, which is what accreditors like to see.

"We have addressed the financial control issues," Ward said. "Once those are completely eliminated, which they will be this year, we will be facing a continued very bright future here at St. Augustine's."

From fundraising tours to in-kind donations, the church's campaign to rescue St. Augustine's before it's too late has been a pillar of Presiding Bishop Michael Curry's racial reconciliation agenda for his episcopacy since his installation in 2015. It also marks an attempt, observers say, to learn from past mistakes, including costly indifference and neglect that preceded closure of other Episcopal-affiliated historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) as recently as 2013.

Support has been welling up across



St. Augustine's University photos

D'Ares Potts, a junior majoring in criminal justice, leads "The Confessions of a Saint: The Lives of Saint Augustine of Hippo" during the Saint Augustine's Legacy Tour in 2017 in the university's chapel.

the Episcopal landscape with encouragement from Curry, who preached at Ward's installation in 2014 while serving as Bishop of North Carolina. At the time, his Raleigh office was located less than two miles from the campus, and Curry came to know the school's history and challenges intimately.

To mobilize support, Curry has asked more than 15 diocesan bishops and other clergy to host forums at which Ward will address potential donors, said Tara Elgin Holley, the church's director of development. Twenty-five parishes and dioceses (including Central Florida and Rochester) have helped raise funds for St. Augustine's.

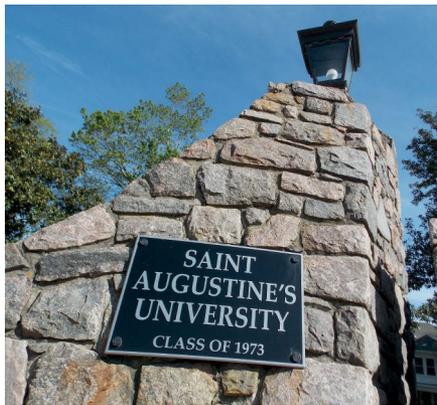
Parishes have proven instrumental in marshaling support. One fundraiser at Christ Church in Raleigh netted \$65,000. Another \$29,000 was raised at St. Paul's Church in Atlanta to support scholarships at St. Augustine's. At Bishop Curry's initiative, a church-wide collection of the Blessed Absalom Jones offering garnered more than

\$10,000 for the school, and another \$10,000 for Voorhees College in Denmark, South Carolina.

Curry has also supported assigning national church staff, including development officers, to work closely with St. Augustine's. Among the goals: to shore up fundraising programs and otherwise help the school show accreditors what they need to see in order to lift sanctions. Canon Lang Lowrey of the Diocese of Atlanta has helped upgrade software at the school to enhance financial controls with a new system that goes live on May 1, Ward said.

"We're pulling out all the stops," Holley said. "We're trying to build a more traditional fundraising model for the two schools," she said, referring to St. Augustine's and Voorhees College. Building relationships with bishops, foundations, and parishes is central to that approach.

St. Augustine's and Voorhees are the only two remaining Episcopal-affiliated HBCUs. The Episcopal Church historically had ties to 10 HBCUs, but



the other eight have closed, including St. Paul's College in Lawrenceville, Virginia, in 2013.

To save St. Augustine's now would be to preserve the church's oldest HBCU, founded in 1867 with a mission to educate former slaves. Preparing candidates for the priesthood was a goal from the early days, according to Ward, and is part of the school's vision for reconnecting with its ecclesiastical roots.

An administrative shakeup in 2014 followed several disclosures of the school's financial woes, including unpaid contractors and overtime pay owed to staffers. Since then, Ward has made closer ties to the church a central plank in his administration's strategy to save the school.

For St. Augustine's, the stakes now are sky-high, and time is quickly running out. Since December 2016, St. Augustine's has been on probation after the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) deemed the school to be lacking adequate funds, plans, and financial controls.

"Probation is the most serious public sanction imposed by SACSCOC's board of trustees short of loss of accreditation," the board wrote in its December 2017 report on St. Augustine's. "The maximum consecutive time that an institution may be on probation is two years. In December 2018, Saint Augustine's University will have been on probation for two years."

At this critical moment, St. Augustine's must either demonstrate financial soundness or lose accreditation. The latter would likely be a death knell for St. Augustine's, observers say. As soon as schools become unaccredited,

they struggle mightily to attract students and qualify for student loan financing. Enrollments then plunge and doors quickly close, said historian Bobby Lovett, author of *America's Historically Black Colleges and Universities: A Narrative History, 1837-2009*.

That happened to St. Paul's College, which was shuttered one year after it lost accreditation for various financially related problems, including inadequate financial controls and not enough PhDs on the faculty.

St. Paul's could have averted its fate if the Episcopal Church had stepped up in the manner now seen in the St. Augustine's campaign, said Eric Williams, former vice chairman of St. Paul's board of trustees. He said St. Paul's asked for every type of support the church now provides for St. Augustine's — in-kind guidance on fundraising, introductions to potential benefactors, diocesan partnerships, active support from the presiding bishop's office.

"We asked the church for anything and everything that we needed in areas where they had the ability to assist," Williams said. "The church could have done so much more; not just green-lighting the monies that were needed, but also directing students from their dioceses to say, *Hey, you need an opportunity? St. Paul's is a good place where you could go.* ... The help just wasn't there at the end of the day."

The money trail does show a decline in financial support from the Episcopal Church at the time. Three weeks after St. Paul's lost its accreditation, General Convention in July 2012 slashed church support for all three HBCUs by 9.7 percent; each institution lost more than \$70,000 in the cut.

On the diocesan level, the Rt. Rev. Herman Hollerith, Bishop of Southern Virginia, told TLC he had researched how St. Paul's might be saved but ultimately deemed the debt too large and the situation unfixable. He supported a proposal for St. Augustine's to take over St. Paul's campus, but St. Augustine's rejected the idea.

"It's always important for us to support our Episcopal institutions, but we also have to have some sense of whether those institutions are viable," Hollerith said. With St. Paul's, "never at

any point did any workable strategy come to light, except for [the proposed merger with] St. Augustine's."

As the church aims to save St. Augustine's, longtime champions of HBCUs are being heard. The Rev. Canon James Callaway, general secretary of Colleges and Universities of the Anglican Com-



Ward in the pulpit at St. Augustine's

munion, says Episcopalians routinely ask him: "Why do we need HBCUs?" He jumps at the opportunity to explain. They not only blend practical higher education and personal development, but also serve justice.

"What the HBCUs do is take smart kids that have been poorly prepared and put them on a fast track," Callaway said.

All HBCUs struggled in the past decade, Callaway said, as federal loan formulas penalized students who took more than four years to graduate. Such formulas are being remedied, but only after a time when enrollments dropped across the board because unfunded students were forced to drop out.

To shore up support, the Episcopal Church now makes sure the needs of St. Augustine's and Voorhees are never far from leadership's radar. What began as an HBCU task force has become an HBCU Committee of Executive Council during this first triennium of Curry's tenure as presiding bishop (2015-18). In effect, the panel establishes a permanent advocate within church governance, which can help connect the schools with resources and potential supporters around the church.

"The church is doing it now because it recognizes that we're very blessed to

(Continued on next page)

Schools

(Continued from previous page)

have two outstanding HBCUs and we want to make sure that they survive,” said the Rev. Martini Shaw, chairman of Executive Council’s HBCU Committee. “And we have a presiding bishop now who certainly feels it is important to save these two HBCUs.”

At St. Augustine’s, the challenge remains one of demonstrating financial sustainability. (Unlike St. Paul’s, its faculty standards have not drawn criticism from accreditors). Enrollment is a key factor because the school has a tuition-based financial model. Enrollment dropped from 1,508 in 2010 to 945 in 2016, but has climbed back to 975 this year. Sustainability depends on enrollment exceeding 1,000, Ward said. He expects St. Augustine’s to reach that level next year with help from dioceses in raising the school’s visibility and recruiting students.

The strategy appears to be helping. By offering a 50-percent tuition discount for Episcopal students, St. Augustine’s has increased the Episcopal cohort in its student body from just one in 2016-17 to 60 in 2017-18, Ward said. After the discount, Episcopal students pay \$8,500 per year in tuition plus another \$8,500 for room, board, and fees. St. Augustine’s will need to cap enrollment in the Episcopal discount program at some point, but not yet, Ward said.

Accreditors will assess next fall whether all the newly mobilized church support has been sufficient to save St. Augustine’s accreditation. A decision is expected in December. Then the fate of St. Augustine’s will represent either an important battle won for Bishop Curry’s racial reconciliation agenda or a stinging defeat if the school does not survive.

“The church has provided administrative support and professional assistance that gives us a leg up,” Ward said. “That would have been a challenge for the institution [to afford] while we’re working on this turnaround strategy.”



Bishops Stokes and Beckwith with young protesters.

Nina Nicholson photo

‘Something Different This Time’

The Episcopal Church was well-represented at March for Our Lives events in Washington, D.C., and across the country on March 24.

Ten Episcopal bishops participated in an ecumenical prayer vigil attended by 2,000 people at Washington National Cathedral on the evening before the D.C. march. It was less of a march than a rally, with more than three hours of presentations from a stage on Pennsylvania Avenue, near the Capitol. Other Episcopal churches and dioceses participated in rallies held throughout the country.

Bishops from the two dioceses in New Jersey spent the afternoon together in Washington as part of a large contingent of Episcopalians and Lutherans from throughout the state. Buses departed before dawn from four cities throughout the Garden State, arranged by the Lutheran Episcopal Advocacy Ministry of New Jersey.

LEAMNJ advocates in the state legislature for the official positions of the Episcopal Dioceses of New Jersey and Newark and the New Jersey Synod of the Lutheran Church. Its slogan for the day was “praying with our feet to end gun violence.”

Clad in their purple cassocks, Bishop Mark Beckwith of the Diocese of Newark and Bishop William “Chip” Stokes of the Diocese of New Jersey attracted quite a bit of attention as they walked toward the venue through canyons of government buildings. Crowd sizes are always a contentious issue, and the estimates ranged from 180,000 to the organizers’ 850,000.

Regardless of the number, the concentration of smartphones overwhelmed local cell towers, making it

difficult for people to connect. The Rev. Sara Lilja, a Lutheran pastor who is LEAMNJ’s executive director, caught up with the two Episcopal bishops shortly before the program began at noon. She joked that she had found them by asking bystanders if they had seen purple robes. Beckwith and Stokes repeatedly posed for selfies with marchers.

Beckwith is one of the conveners of Bishops United Against Gun Violence, which he said was formed soon after the Sandy Hook massacre of 2012. The group now includes about 80 Episcopal bishops. He was unaware, when he arrived at the vigil the night before, that he had been selected to read the Prayers of the People in tandem with another cleric.

Stokes also is a member of Bishops United. “I’m here to stand with the kids from Parkland, mostly,” he told TLC. “As soon as they announced they were going to come to Washington on March 24, I was on board. Their voices have resonated in a way that I think no others have,” he said. “There seems to be something different this time.”

Bishops United works against gun violence through public liturgy, spiritual support, teaching on Christian compassion, and “persistent advocacy for common sense gun safety measures that enjoy the support of gun owners and non-gun owners alike,” according to the organization’s website.

Episcopal News Service collected a social media feed of Episcopal participation in demonstrations elsewhere, including Los Angeles, Sacramento, Akron, Louisville, Syracuse, Pittsburgh, and many other cities.

Kirk Petersen

Clergy Housing Taxes May Change

As priests file 2017 taxes ahead of this year's April 17 deadline, experts in tax and constitutional law have a message for them and their congregations: enjoy these good times while they last, because a clergy tax hike could be coming.

The clergy housing allowance, a cherished perk that lets the ordained avoid federal income tax on some or all of their compensation, faces the stiffest challenge in its 64-year history. With a 2017 ruling from the Western District of Wisconsin, federal judge Barbara Crabb found the allowance unconstitutional and rendered a decision that could have national implications.

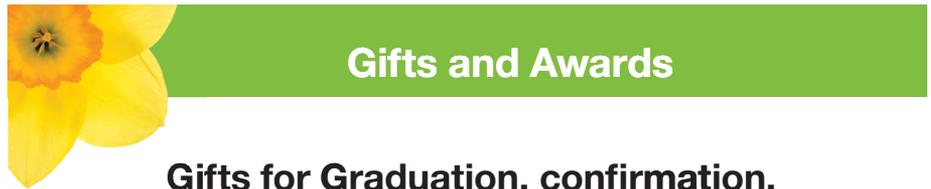
"I don't want [Judge Crabb's ruling] to be a good opinion, but I've read it, and it's a pretty good, well-written, well-reasoned opinion," said attorney Nathanael Berneking, director of finance and administrative ministries for the Missouri Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church. "It's going to be pretty hard to argue with her on that."

Experts say it's not time to panic. Defendants have appealed the ruling in *Gaylor v. Mnuchin* to the Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals. If they lose there, they could ask the U.S. Supreme Court to hear the case, which could stretch the process into 2019 or 2020.

Even if the Seventh Circuit were to uphold the ruling, it would be binding (at least initially) only in the appeals court's jurisdiction of Wisconsin, Illinois, and Indiana. But the Internal Revenue Service could at any point opt to take the standard national, said Myron Steeves, director of the Church Law Center of California and an attorney with a focus on nonprofit organizations. Such an outcome would bump up taxes owed by more than 600,000 clergy who minister in settings across the United States.

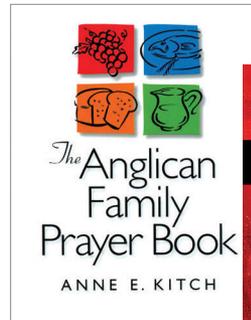
"It's a significant part of an ordained minister's compensation package," said Simeon May, chief executive officer of the Church Network, an association of

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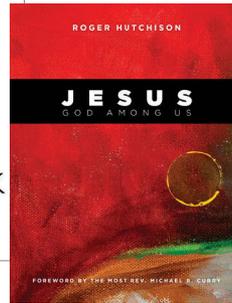
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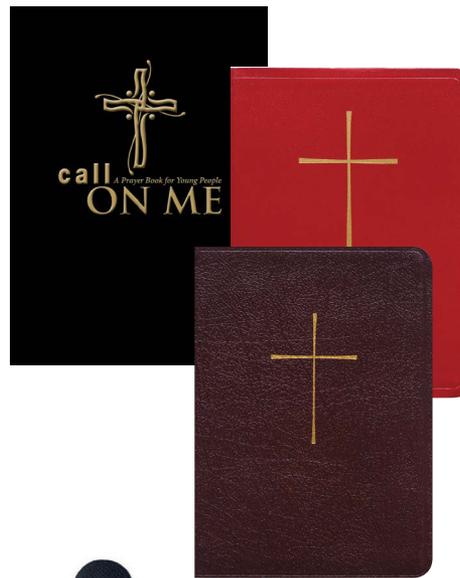
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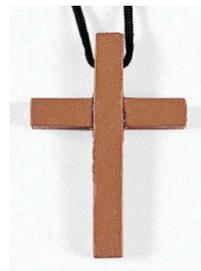
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Clergy Housing

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church administrators that is based in Richardson, Texas. “It can be a huge tax savings for that ordained minister. If it goes away, it’s going to mean a significant increase in taxes for that minister.”

How much more a priest would have to pay depends on several factors, including taxable income levels and cost of housing (rent or mortgage plus utilities, furnishings, and more). A cleric’s tax bill could jump by several thousand dollars, Berneking said.

He cites an example of a cleric who earns \$39,000 in taxable income before



considering housing and who claims a \$20,000 housing allowance. That cleric would suddenly pay as much as \$4,400 more in federal income taxes (22% of the housing income, based on the tax bracket).

Observers are reluctant to speculate on what courts will do, but they urge congregations to take the challenge seriously. Though a prior challenge from five years ago failed, it was defeated on procedural grounds. A technicality meant plaintiffs lacked standing to bring the case.

The current challenge is different in that plaintiffs now have standing to sue, at least according to the lower court. The Wisconsin-based Freedom from Religion Foundation is claiming disenfranchisement because its employees tried to claim housing allowances and were denied by the IRS. Judge Crabb’s opinion supports the claim on its merits.

Despite uncertainty, denominations urge pastors and parishioners to prepare for a worst-case scenario. On March 12, the United Church of Christ released a

memo advising all local churches and clergy on specific steps to take now. The Church Pension Group, which provides financial benefits to Episcopal Church employees, declined to comment on the outlook for housing allowances but furnished advisory documents from the Church Alliance, an association of church pension programs.

Listening to guidance from denominations, advocates and attorneys, congregations and clergy are hearing common themes. Here are some of the most common recommendations for next steps.

For Churches

Keep paying housing allowances while the challenge is litigated. The Church Alliance notes that Judge Crabb put a stay on her order until appeals are complete. That means housing allowances remain legal in all 50 states, at least for now.

Do not convert your parsonage to a housing allowance. In a trend of recent decades, congregations sold parsonages and began paying housing allowances instead. Experts caution against this strategy now. Unlike housing allowances, parsonages are not affected by this case. Congregations that own parsonages should, if possible, hold on to them while the litigation plays out, Berneking said. One reason: if housing allowances end, parsonages could become more valuable assets for attracting clergy.

Save up to make clergy whole. Congregations can help their clergy absorb a tax increase by budgeting to pay them more in years ahead. A congregation would need to boost salary by \$5,368 just to keep after-tax income and spending power at the current level for a cleric earning \$39,000. No matter the amount, churches would do well to start a nest egg. “Consider adding a reserve to your budget for some or all of that amount so that a jump in compensation in a future year is not so large or unexpected,” wrote Heather Kimmel, UCC general counsel, in a March 12 memo to local churches and clergy. “If the housing allowance does not end, then you can use the reserve for other purposes.”

Expect ripple effects. A tax increase

for clergy could affect career decisions and, in turn, affect congregations. For instance, pastors who do not receive raises sufficient to cover their new tax burden might take on second jobs to maintain their spending power, May said.

Remember retired clergy, who could be hit especially hard. Retired clergy who rely on church pensions and fixed incomes could have difficulty absorbing this tax increase. Checks they now receive from church entities are permitted to count toward qualifying housing expenses. But if allowances go away, they will have few options even if they did careful retirement planning, May said. “An active minister might be able to get the church to give them a raise to offset the difference [in taxes], but a retired minister doesn’t have that,” May said.

For Clergy

Alert vestries and finance committees about what might be coming. Clergy should not assume congregations are tracking this issue and its potential ramifications as closely as they are. Kimmel is advising UCC clergy to encourage their employers to plan, in consultation with accountants or legal consultants, for a future without housing allowances.

Do not make housing allowances a factor in long-term financial planning. “Any pastor who is considering buying a house right now, anywhere in the country, should bear in mind that they need to calculate their budget on the possibility that they may not be able to rely on the housing allowance,” Steeves said. Otherwise, clergy could find themselves overextended and unable to cover monthly payments.

Beyond these steps, experts say, congregations and clergy will need to see what comes down from the courts. A decision from the Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals is expected later this year. If it is appealed again, the Supreme Court might decline to hear the case, Steeves said. A Supreme Court hearing becomes more likely, he noted, if another federal jurisdiction were to hear a similar case and render a different ruling. Years could elapse before the matter becomes settled law.

"It's a wait-and-see situation," said Kevin DePrey, parish administrator of Trinity Church in Indianapolis, where the plan is to take action only if necessary after all appeals are exhausted. "You could waste a lot of time in prep because there's not a notion that this could go one way or the other."

Meanwhile, hope endures among clergy even if court judgements do not break their way. In the event of a defeat, advocates are vowing to propose legislation that would expand housing allowances as a benefit for more than just clergy, perhaps including many or all employees of nonprofit agencies. Whether that would be politically palatable in Washington remains to be seen.

"If Congress were to broaden [the allowance provision] to even include, not all sectors, but other sectors of the nonprofit world, it would solve the constitutional problem," Berneking said. "The political question is going to be much more difficult. ... The problem with it is going to be cost to the federal government because the broader the exclusion is, the more cost. And I just don't know if Congress is willing to spend in the nonprofit world."

G. Jeffrey MacDonald

Diocese and St. James Turn the Corner

After nearly three years of a struggle that cost untold sums of money and toppled a bishop, the congregation formerly known as St. James the Great received approval to move back into a massive church building in Newport Beach, California.

The first service in the building was scheduled for April 8, the Second Sunday of Easter. The Rev. Canon Cindy Voorhees had hoped to be back inside by Easter, but said after the announcement: "I think Easter Two is the perfect timing. We'd love to be in for Easter, but we'd also like the bishop to be there for the opening," and the bishop already had plans for Easter Sunday.

The Rt. Rev. John Taylor, Bishop of Los Angeles, said in a statement that he

would "have the privilege of presiding and preaching" at the service on April 8. In a letter on March 29, Taylor and the Rev. Abel Lopez, the president of the diocesan standing Committee, told Voorhees and her flock the diocese has "approved your application for mission station status on a trial basis."

"We authorize this name and this name only for the mission station: 'St. James Episcopal Church,'" the letter said. This means the congregation must drop "the Great," a suffix added in 2013 to differentiate from St. James Anglican Church.

What is now St. James Anglican Church, Newport Mesa, voted to leave the Episcopal Church in 2004, and continued to worship in the building until nearly a decade of litigation determined that it belonged to the Episcopal diocese.

The letter also invited the congregation to prayerfully consider whether "it may be in the interests of the congregation and diocesan community for the bishop to designate a different name" in light of the many years of conflict.

"I'm pretty open" to a name change, Voorhees said, but she wants to confer with the local community as well, because St. James has been a major presence in Newport Beach for 70 years.

("The Great" refers to one of Jesus' 12 apostles, who also is known as "St. James the Greater" to distinguish him from other saints named James.)

In addition to imposing the name change, the letter included other blunt indicators that the congregation is on probation. "It is essential that your congregation meaningfully join the

whole diocesan community" in a reconciliation process that will be led by the Lombard Mennonite Peace Center, the letter said. The year-long process begins with workshops in mid-April.

The diocese "will weigh this factor carefully in the event that the congregation chooses to apply for mission status," the letter said. The terms *mission* and *mission station* often are used interchangeably, but the Diocese of Los Angeles considers them separate steps toward designation as a full-fledged parish.

The letter also contains a cryptic reference to sharing the facility with "the Redeemer Center for Diocesan Ministries," which it turns out does not yet exist.

Taylor told TLC the center will occupy "a substantial space" in the 40,000-square-foot facility, supporting "ministries designed to serve the people in the neighborhood and in the region. Much is yet to be revealed about exactly what that work will look like."

"I think he wants a Diocesan Center South presence," Voorhees said. "So it's actually a benefit, it's really quite an honor for St. James," and may help build bonds between the congregation and the diocese.

Taylor said Voorhees will receive a salary for leading the congregation, but declined to say how much. The church will "have a budget, it'll have a responsibility for working out compensation for the clergy, it'll do all the things that a mission station on a trial basis does," he said.

When Voorhees began working to build a new congregation in the facility at 3209 Via Lido in 2013 under the

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St. James

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former Bishop of Los Angeles, she was given permission to do so only on an unpaid or “non-stipendiary” basis. The congregation later began paying her a modest salary, which became an issue in the disciplinary proceeding against the Rt. Rev. J. Jon Bruno.

During a three-day ecclesiastical trial in March 2017, Bruno said the salary was unauthorized, and cited it as an example of Voorhees being disobedient to her bishop. Voorhees testified that she told Bruno about the salary, but no written record of that could be found.

Bruno eventually was suspended from ordained ministry for three years for misrepresentation and “conduct unbecoming a member of the clergy,” after secretly agreeing to sell the property for \$15 million to a developer who planned to bulldoze it and construct luxury condominiums. As tensions between the bishop and the congregation rose, Bruno ordered the locks changed in June 2015, and the building has sat empty ever since. Voorhees has been worshiping with her congregation of about 100 in a rented space in Newport Beach City Hall.

After the sale fell through in the face of the congregation's legal and disciplinary challenges, Bruno infuriated the disciplinary panel by making another secret agreement to sell the property while the panel was considering his case. That sale also fell through.

Bruno is appealing the suspension, although he retired as Bishop of Los Angeles in November 2017, weeks after his 71st birthday. The mandatory retirement age is 72.

After the mission-station announcement March 29, a joyful Voorhees described the atmosphere as “surreal,” and said “my phone's been blowing up, as you might imagine.”

“It's good to be home,” she said. After discussions with the diocese, “we all agreed this morning that we've turned the corner.”

Kirk Petersen

Archbishop Welby Expresses Shame

Revelations about child sexual abuse have made the Archbishop of Canterbury “ashamed of the church.”

Giving evidence on the penultimate day of a three-week hearing on child sexual abuse in the Diocese of Chichester, Archbishop Justin Welby said he could not read the transcripts from the hearing without being moved and ashamed.

“I want to put on record again — I don't know how to express it adequately — how appalled I am and how ashamed I am of the Church for what it did to those who are survivors and are coping with this. The apologies are fine, but you have got to find ways of making it different and we have got to do it as soon as possible.”

Archbishop Welby said he has “seen afresh the insanity of clericalism and of a deferential culture” within the church. He said sexual abuse is, at its core, an abuse of power.

He said bishops and other members of the clergy now receive training that makes it “quite clear” that not reporting a safeguarding issue is a disciplinary matter.

Archbishop Welby said the culture of parish churches needs to change, so that safeguarding failures are as unacceptable as drunken driving: “We have to get word to the culture that if anything is seen as untoward, every regular member of the church, everyone who knows, who is around, says ‘This isn't right and I'm going to do something about it.’”

Clergy who abuse children can never be trusted again, he told the inquiry, even if they confess or repent. He explained that forgiveness and the consequences of sin are “very, very different things.”

John Martin

Rwanda Dedicates New Cathedral

Anglicans in Rwanda rejoiced at the unveiling of a new cathedral to serve the Diocese of Gasabo northeast of

Kigali. The new building will be known as Holy Trinity Cathedral.

It will be the seat of the Rt. Rev. Laurent Mbanda, archbishop-elect, who takes office on June 10. Gasabo is located near key government offices and up to now the area has not had an Anglican church building. The departing archbishop, the Most Rev. Onesphore Rwaje, dedicated the new cathedral.

There are 11 dioceses in the Church of Rwanda. The East African country won independence from Belgium in 1965. Roman Catholics number just under two-thirds (65%) of the population. There are about a million Anglicans.

The Anglican province traces its origins to English medical missions dating from 1914. Expansion of the church was fueled by the East African Revival of the 1930s and 1940s. The first diocese dates from 1965, after the country became independent from Belgium.

For many years it existed as a single diocese, forming part of what was then the province of Uganda, Burundi, Rwanda, and Boga Zaire. The church became an independent province in 1992, with seven dioceses.

The 1994 genocide prompted the church to initiate spiritual healing programs for the many thousands of traumatized people.

The Church of Rwanda is part of the GAFCON movement.

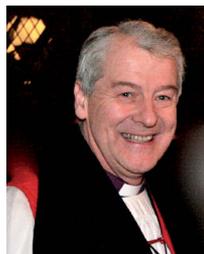
John Martin

Irish Archbishops Affirm Life Ethic

The Archbishops of Armagh and Dublin say that a proposed change to the Republic of Ireland's abortion law is "not an ethical position we can accept."

They urge church members in the Republic of Ireland to "think through the issues involved carefully and with prayer" before voting on a referendum, set to take place in May, that could overturn the country's constitutional ban on abortions. Under current law, abortion is outlawed in the Republic of Ireland except when it is necessary to save the life of the mother.

"We have previously expressed our



Jackson



Clarke

concern that the forthcoming Constitutional referendum is being understood as something akin to an opinion poll on the complex issue of abortion," Archbishops Richard Clarke and Michael Jackson said in a joint statement on March 28. "However, now that the Government has made known the general scheme of a Bill which it would introduce should the referendum ... be passed, voters face a stark decision."

The archbishops said the constitutional provision "has proved less than satisfactory in some respects" and had suggested a possible constitutional modification. But they said the government's proposals go too far in legalizing unrestricted access to abortion up to 12 weeks of pregnancy.

"As we have said before, unrestricted access to abortion in the first 12 weeks of pregnancy, or indeed at any stage, is not an ethical position we can accept. There is, for Christians, a very clear witness in the Scriptures that all human

life, including before physical birth, has a sacred dignity in the eyes of God.

"We therefore ask Church members to think through the issues involved carefully and with prayer over these coming weeks."

ACNS

Church Takes Contactless Gifts

It's a long time since the collection plate was the main source of parish income in England. The vast proportion of the £580 million the church receives each year comes in cashless forms, particularly bank standing orders.

Now, after trials in 40 parishes during the summer of 2017, the Church of England is rolling out portable card readers. So far 1,600 have signed up for the program. The readers can process contactless payments, Apple Pay and Google Pay, as well as chip and PIN transactions.

Card readers will be especially useful to collect cash from visitors at events such as weddings, funerals, christenings, church fetes, and concerts.

"How we pay for things is changing," said John Preston, the church's national stewardship officer, "and we want all generations to be able to make the most of their place of worship."

John Martin

Corrections and Clarifications

The co-convenor of the Evangelism Matters conference in Ohio was the Rev. Canon Frank Logue ["Building a Culture of Evangelism," April 8].

"Two Schools of Congregational Development" [April 8] misspelled the first name of the Rev. Alissa Newton, director of the College for Congregational Development (CCD) in the Diocese of Olympia.

The article said the Diocesan Church Development Institute (DCDI) had "borrowed a page from the CCD playbook by evolving into a diocese-based organization." While the article correctly reported that

DCDI had added the word *Diocesan* to its name in 2011 (after CCD's founding in 2009), the organization began shifting to a diocesan model in about 2000, while continuing to run a parallel national program until 2010.

The article said Newton "oversees the network of consultants who deliver the program in other dioceses"; she now says that her role is equal to the leaders of the program in other dioceses, although many of those leaders were trained by CCD in Olympia.

Finally, while the article correctly quoted Bob Gallagher saying of Bishop Melissa Skelton that "she was my boss," he had added: "I'm overstating that ... the reporting was through her to the dean."

Filling an Educational Void

When Episcopal Divinity School (EDS) left Cambridge, Massachusetts, last year for New York City, the move gave rise to a new void and a question: where will Boston-area candidates for ordination go for formation and coursework?

One answer is now coming from Boston University School of Theology (BUSTH), which is expanding its newly launched Anglican Episcopal Community of Learning. It is part of a multi-pronged effort at BU to fill more niches as economic pressures take a toll on the region's theological resources.

Boston's collection of major theological schools is shrinking from nine to seven with the departure of EDS and Andover Newton Theological School (ANTS), a clergy training hub for the American Baptist Church and United Church of Christ. EDS has joined forces with Union Theological Seminary in New York. ANTS is moving to Yale Divinity School this year.

"We are now responding to gaps in courses and formational opportunities, occasioned by the departure of EDS and ANTS," said Mary Elizabeth Moore, dean of BUSTH, via email. "More important, we are trying to create something new in our BUSTH ecumenical, multi-denominational community."

Though rooted in United Methodism, Boston University has long trained students from other denominations, including many who are attracted to the justice legacy of BU's most famous alumnus, the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. In the last nine years, BU's Anglican and Episcopal enrollment has ranged from 19 to 28 at any given time, Moore said.

In the past, BU students seeking ordination to the Episcopal Church's priesthood or diaconate would need to cross the Charles River to take Anglican and Episcopal history courses at EDS. Now BU is working

toward expanding its catalogue to offer such courses at BU.

"The move of EDS from Boston to New York means we have to come up with other ways to make sure some of those core courses are provided with the BTI [Boston Theological Institute]," a local consortium of theological schools, said the Rev. Edith Dolnikowski, canon for ordained vocations in the Diocese of Massachusetts.

The new learning community meets specific needs of the Diocese of Massachusetts, which collaborated with BU on the design. That influence is seen in its defining features: coursework, field work, fellowship, and spiritual formation.

"We are very hopeful that this community of learning will be a place where there can be real integration of academic, spiritual, and liturgical life," Dolnikowski said.

Some of the biggest changes involve liturgical life at BU. Each day, Anglican and Episcopal students now gather to recite the Daily Office. Twice a week, they gather for Eucharist in one of two on-campus chapels. Morning, noonday, and evening prayer are each offered once a week.

This spring, new courses in "Planning for a New Book of Common Prayer" and "Dismantling White Privilege" are expected to draw Anglican Episcopal Learning Community students. Those seeking ordination, including students who transferred to BU when EDS relocated, can also take their General Ordination Exams at BU as part of the new initiative.

Still, Dolnikowski noted that it is too soon to tell whether BU will excel in this new endeavor.

"Of the schools of theology that have Anglican Episcopal communities within them, those schools vary in the ability to provide the kind of integration of experience that denominational



Kimberly Macdonald/Boston University School of Theology photo
Bishop Suffragan Gayle E. Harris of the Diocese of Massachusetts meets with the new Anglican Episcopal Learning Community at Boston University School of Theology in October 2017.

seminaries can provide," Dolnikowski said. "Some do a really wonderful job. And some sort of technically have these denominational houses of study, but really don't function in the same way that a denominational seminary would."

The Diocese of Massachusetts has about 40 candidates for ordination to the priesthood and diaconate studying at seminaries around the country. Four currently study at Boston University, but that number is expected to increase as the program grows and becomes better known as a local option.

In the future, BU hopes to offer a Certificate in Anglican Episcopal Studies, which would help meet ordination requirements for students with Master of Divinity degrees from non-Episcopal institutions. In the meantime, BU seeks to enhance its Episcopal Church relationships.

"We will expand our collaborations [with Episcopal dioceses] beginning in spring of 2018," Moore said. "We have identified the importance of building our Episcopal faculty and leadership in the next three years."

G. Jeffrey MacDonald

Mastering Ministry

A new approach to practical leadership training — for lay vocations — emerges at General Theological Seminary.

By Retta Blaney

Michael W. DeLashmutt remembers the first time he was to lead Evensong as the new vice president and dean of academic affairs at General Theological Seminary. Anxiety was getting the best of him until one of his colleagues told him not to worry. If he dropped the liturgical ball, one of them would pick it up for him.

“That’s what liturgy does for us,” he said. “It catches us when we stumble.”

That story illustrates two key elements in DeLashmutt’s life: a respect for the tradition of a common liturgy and the power of community to sustain us on the Christian journey. They are the strength of the Episcopal tradition for him and the foundation of the seminary’s curriculum. To that core he has added what he saw as a missing ingredient in ministerial preparation: practical leadership training, that is, a new Master of Arts in Ministry degree for people interested in being leaders in the church but who do not necessarily feel called to ordination. It is the first new degree program in 20 years at the nearly 200-year-old seminary, and it welcomed four students to its inaugural semester in September.

“It responds to a real deficit in Christian education across the mainline churches,” DeLashmutt said. “It reflects a truer vision of what seminary education should be, to prepare people — all God’s people — for service.”

DeLashmutt discussed this new master’s degree in the seminary’s refectory, where students and faculty share a daily meal. He had just finished teaching the last class for the semester of “Introduction to Christian Theology,” during which students gave presentations on topics ranging from a feminist analysis of original sin to the theology of trauma. For DeLashmutt,



General Seminary photo

DeLashmutt

class and lunch go hand in hand.

“We’re engaged in reconciling relationships,” he said. “We’re reflecting the eucharistic table. You can’t talk about theology without engaging in practices of reconciliation. That’s what this is.”

Christian education happens in the classroom and it continues over a meal of turkey and gravy, roasted potatoes, root vegetables, and cream of broccoli soup. What General has added to the mix with the new degree program is leadership training to take spiritual values into the workplace.

“Spiritual habits transfer to people wherever they’re headed,” DeLashmutt said. “At an NGO or in nonprofit lead-

ership, all of these for a Christian would require a different context. Your leadership would be different if you believe the gospel is true. In youth work, it would be with an eye toward the spiritual formation of the individual.”

With the seminary’s educational history as its base, the Master of Ministry program includes a Harvard Business School-type component to create a

“Spiritual habits transfer to people wherever they’re headed. Your leadership would be different if you believe the gospel is true.”

degree that offers the same quality of education as that of training for the priesthood.

“There’s wisdom out there to be evaluated in light of the gospel,” DeLashmutt said. “Augustine gave us permission to look at these and evaluate where truth might be useful.”

DeLashmutt, who is a lay person with a PhD in theology from the University of Glasgow, said the church is changing significantly and that fewer full-time positions are available for clergy in the Episcopal tradition, making it important to prepare lay people for ministry “in a structured, thought-out way.”

The seminary has long been open to anyone seeking religious education, but the focus was on ordination. The Master of Ministry is the second professional MA, preceded by the Master of Arts in Spiritual Direction.

“To respond to the church of the future, there will be increasing and often parallel opportunities for lay people to

(Continued on next page)

Mastering Ministry

(Continued from previous page)

do ministry alongside the ordained,” said the Very Rev. Kurt H. Dunkle, 13th dean and president. “Education and formation are essential whether one is ordained or not. For those who feel so called to lead the church without the anticipation of being ordained, it seems like the church should work to equally prepare these folks.

“The MA in Ministry directly and practically affirms our commitment of educating and forming both lay leaders and ordained leaders for the church in a changing world.”

The seminary’s core remains the same.

“We are profoundly Episcopal,” DeLashmutt said. “We’re not changing that, but we feel we have something to share. We’re a residential seminary in an urban context. We want to make that available to as many people as possible.”

While lay people have been studying theology together for decades in Education for Ministry (EfM), a four-year distant learning certificate program, General’s program is an accredited

master’s degree.

“Walking away with graduate credits is always a good thing,” DeLashmutt said. “EFM can be theologically rich, but it’s not engineered specifically for vocational training.”

The seminary’s new degree can “respond to trends in a very short time,” DeLashmutt said, adding that if several students wanted to pursue careers in youth ministry, “in six months we could spin up a curriculum. We have the resources. We have thousands of dollars’ worth of books and the faculty is up for it.”

Similarly, if students are interested in Christian education, prison ministry, or social work, “we could quickly develop a curriculum to meet the changing needs of the student.”

In the case of David Gungor, who is a professional musician, this approach was applied to his summative project. Rather than writing a paper for his final project, he composed and recorded several songs that responded to themes in Wolfhart Pannenberg’s systematic theology. In addition to the music, he

wrote a small paper that described his process and spelled out the academic dimension of the creative work.

“We are teaching with a ministry horizon in mind, so that the future vocational goals of our students inform everything that we do,” DeLashmutt said. “As a small school, this allows us to work closely with students, to design everything from whole courses to individual assignments that help integrate theological studies and ministry development.”

The Rev. Canon C.K. Robertson, canon to the presiding bishop for ministry beyond the Episcopal Church, said we are at a time when it is important for seminaries to think outside the box and that General’s new degree is a good example.

“There’s a great need in the church to be more serious about leadership,” he said, citing St. Paul as someone whose ministry was successful because he combined the theological with the practical. “We’re at a time when we need to remember or imagine what ministry was like in the past.”

Robertson teaches a course each



Michael DeLashmutt weighs in during a class discussion at General Seminary.

General Seminary photos

semester at General in the Master of Divinity program, alternating between traditional subjects such as the New Testament and courses in congregational development and conflict resolution.

“Always the goal is how to join the theological with the practical,” he said. “That’s crucial.”

Accreditation for the new master’s was completed in April, leaving the school little time to advertise before deciding on fall admissions. DeLashmutt said this is good because, with only four students in the program, the seminary can readily meet their vocational needs. Two students heard of it through word of mouth and two were already students who transferred into the new master’s.

Gungor is one of the word-of-mouth newbies. An assistant pastor at Trinity Grace, a nondenominational church in lower Manhattan, he is also a songwriter, singer, and musician and has found what he’s learned in just one semester to be of great benefit to his work.

“I’m an artist and I work at a church that’s not Episcopal,” he said. “It’s a beautiful stepping stone to a more sacramental view of artistry. It’s good for my church and it’s good for my art. It’s practical to what I do.”

Gungor, 31, spoke from the living room of the apartment he shares with his wife, Kate, a student in the Master of Spiritual Direction program, and their four children. Windows look onto the lawn of the Close and the surrounding 19th-century buildings. It is into that picturesque world that he allows his children out to play, knowing they will be safe, with the kind of freedom he enjoyed growing up in the Midwest.

“We fell in love with the campus,” he said. “It’s such a family-friendly place. We feel like we have our own lawn.”

The son of an evangelical pastor, Gungor is not an Episcopalian. The new master’s is open to all Christians.

“The Episcopal Church really is a beautiful expression of faith for where I am,” he said, adding that the degree could be a track to see if he wants to be ordained. “The program seemed welcoming to me as an outsider. The Episcopal Church is welcoming to diverse thought. It’s not afraid to question and



David Gungor and family

to wrangle. I feel like I’m able to learn from and contribute ideas that are different in class.”

This is exactly what the program’s creator had in mind. DeLashmutt said models of traditional seminary education were inherited from the Berlin school, in which students trained to be “the intellectual leaders of the community.” It was highly philosophical and “practical ministry education of any sort was marginalized.”

That DeLashmutt has found a home in the Episcopal Church is a reflection of the same welcoming nature that Gungor found. His background is eclectic: Methodist then Baptist then Pentecostal, until an incident when he was 19 and he more or less abandoned going to church. He did, though, continue to respond to a call he first felt at 16, a desire for a career in some kind of ministry. Wanting a theological education led him to Fuller Theological Seminary Northwest and to what turned out to be a life-changing experience when a friend invited him to a Presbyterian service in Seattle. For the first time he experienced clergy wearing vestments and an order of service that began with a deacon offering a confession and absolution.

“I just felt something in me break. I had a profound sense of gratitude and acceptance.”

That was the beginning of his transition to mainline churches. He found his way to the Anglican Communion while living in the United Kingdom and was confirmed at Easter Vigil in 2011.

“Liturgy is that thing that carries you,” he said. “It’s almost like a net of grace that holds you when you can’t stand on your own. The prayers are from Scripture, to pray back to God. God gives us the words when we don’t have the words. Liturgical spirit, to me, is one way of providing deep meaning in the midst of life.”

DeLashmutt sees the seminary’s education as providing that net of grace. He thinks of the disorientation he felt before his first Evensong at General because it helps him relate to how new students can feel.

“We set a culture of forgiveness,” he said. “Students can feel free to make mistakes because they have a structure in place.”

Retta Blaney is an award-winning journalist and author of Working on the Inside: The Spiritual Life Through the Eyes of Actors.



Photos courtesy of Saint James School

Lessons from the History of Saint James

By W.L. Prehn

Saint James School in St. James, Maryland, is celebrating its 175th anniversary. It is a model Episcopal boarding school operating at full capacity. Though this school, located 65 minutes from Washington, has been thriving for quite some time now, I think it fair to say that many are unfamiliar with its history and current work. The place caught my attention in the late 1990s when a trusted friend told me enthusiastically, “This is the school we’ve all been looking for.” Since this is a large claim — we have so many good schools — I took notice. The Rev. Stuart Dunnan is in his 26th year as headmaster and is still a relatively

young man. What is yet to come at Saint James could be noteworthy.

Saint James School is historic for at least two reasons. First, Saint James is simply one of our oldest schools. Of our historic boarding schools still in operation, only the Episcopal High School in Alexandria (1839) is older. We who care about faith-based education of the Episcopal variety celebrate such a milestone.

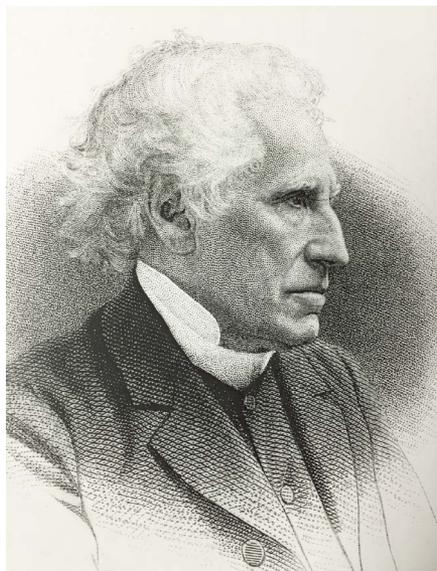
Second, Saint James was the mother lode for much subsequent prospecting in Episcopal education. Not just one or two schools were modeled on Saint James. Personnel from Saint James either founded or participated in the foundational years of St. Paul’s Concord (1856), Racine College in Wis-

consin (1858), the Shattuck and St. Mary’s Schools in Minnesota (1858 and 1859), and St. Mark’s Southborough (1865). Saint James was modeled on St. Paul’s College and Grammar School (1836), the mature iteration on Long Island of the scholastic vision of William Augustus Muhlenberg (1796-1877).

John Barrett Kerfoot (1816-81) painstakingly modeled Saint James on the first St. Paul’s. The founders of St. Timothy’s Catonsville (1845), St. Mary’s in New York (1865), Groton (1884), St. George’s (1896), St. Andrew’s Sewanee (1904), Kent (1905), and many other Episcopal schools across the nation admired Muhlenberg, Kerfoot, Henry and Joseph Howland Coit, and their

protégés as the pioneers of a new and most successful kind of institution called the Church school. Emma Hart Willard (1787-1870) admired what Muhlenberg and his circle of school-makers established. She was especially close to William Rollinson Whittingham (1805-79), Bishop of Maryland, who was close to Muhlenberg and Kerfoot and one of the founders of Saint James. (In her 1819 *Plan for Improving Female Education*, Willard alone intuited that it was going to be very difficult to realize the great educational vision on private funding alone.)

All of us recognize that there are many different kinds of Church schools in the world today. We are likewise aware that anything in this world changes and evolves. Nothing stays the same. But since Saint James still pursues the ideals of the specifically *Muhlenberg-type* Church school to a remarkable degree, we want to know the features of this model. The late James McLachlan enumerates the principles of Muhlenberg and his disciples in *American Boarding Schools: A Historical Study* (1970). We owe it to McLachlan for discovering both the originality of Muhlenberg's school model on Long Island and the fact that the schools in this tradition were by no means American copies of British models. Muhlenberg and his acolytes

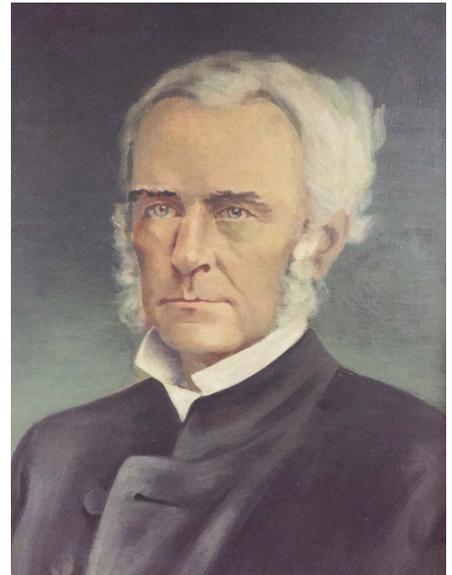


Muhlenberg

studied schools all over the world; hence, they did not despise good and workable ideas they found in the English public schools. But the Muhlenberg-type school was a new thing in the world.

The overarching concern of Muhlenberg, Kerfoot, and others was thoroughly to apply the gospel to education. If the gospel is true, its truths must be integrated into the daily life of a school. This application must be effected with great care and discretion, and Muhlenberg insisted that "religion should never be held to account for inferior scholarship." Thus these schools were actually scholastic brotherhoods. Since it was assumed that the school *is* the Church in the Church's scholastic work, the strong Christian commitment was neither overwhelming, artificial, nor sanctimonious.

Muhlenberg likewise longed deeply for a social catholicity in his schools that was less and less achieved in the typical Episcopal school (until quite recently). In their day, the schools were considered progressive. While they took it for granted that the deepest and most useful learning is gained through classical studies, and they were utterly convinced of the "moral benefits of exact scholarship" (B.F. Westcott), the Muhlenbergians brought the old subjects alive by showing their relevance to the whole of life. They added modern literature, modern languages, and science to the curriculum. The carefully selected teachers made the recitation room an experience to enjoy. By every extant account of their daily life, we know the schools featured something not known in those times: close and caring relationships between teacher and student. The whole brotherhood gathered for daily chapel, where their common and individual concerns were shared with the fellowship. The food was good. Discipline was humane and corporal punishment rare. The emphasis upon physical culture in fact antedated the enthusiasm for "games" in English schools. (Competitive rowing began at St. Paul's, College Point, in the 1830s and not at St. Paul's, Concord.)



Kerfoot

What is plain in the history of Saint James and other schools in the Muhlenbergian tradition is that school leaders assumed that character is the end of education. If character is the aim, everything else falls into place. They proved this over and over again. The head of school must not only model the values and goals of the community to the students, but must lead the way with strength. Authority in the school was no small matter to Muhlenberg and the others. They saw the radical relationship not only between authority and saving faith but between authority and sound learning. Kerfoot fleshed the idea out in an 1843 article for a Baltimore journal. The pupil must trust and believe in the testimony of the master, who is authorized to teach the truth: The very initiation of learning requires what Kerfoot called "first faith." In fact, the idea owes a good bit to Locke and not only to the New Testament.

In stressing character as the end of education, these Episcopal school-makers rediscovered something classical. It's a simple but powerful principle adumbrated in Plato and Aristotle: For the best results in education, the daily routine must aim high — or let us say, aim *deeply*. The entire daily life must set out to educate *the whole person* to excellence, beginning with the *inside* of a student. In the curriculum and

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My question is simply this: Besides historic Saint James School in Maryland, what others of you working in Episcopal schools feel you are pursuing the ideals of the Muhlenbergian Church school?



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pedagogy, in the organization of the institution and of the daily and weekly schedules, every aspect of human nature was to be addressed, “exercised,” and matured. There is a whale of a difference between a school using a rich, challenging, and comprehensive course of study as the means to character and a school using “character education” as a means to “academic excellence.” The Muhlenbergians kept their priorities straight. They favored the first kind of school and got astonishing results with their method. Besides, students have an instinct that “character education” is humbug.

Another way to articulate the central principle of the Muhlenberg-type Church school is to say that to do its best work by each student a school must aim *above* academic achievement. When this high aim is fleshed out in the life of the school community, lo and behold, a more general academic excellence does develop in the end. Muhlenberg, Kerfoot, the Coit

brothers, and all the others seem to have realized that superior intellectual power is given to a small percentage of the population, but their purpose and scope extended well beyond that elite group of youth. They took it for granted that a church school must have a superlative academic program (ne plus ultra), but they were horrified at the notion that a church school must be alone composed of students operating in the Top One Percent of national aptitude assessments. For them such a school would simply not be *the Church* at study.

Let me say a wee bit about the Church in the Church school. Although Muhlenberg distanced himself from the leaders of the Oxford Movement after 1845, when John Henry Newman converted to the Roman Catholic Church, it is patently clear that Muhlenberg was profoundly influenced for 20 years by the Tractarian strain of thought and in his idiosyncratic way he was an American expo-

nent of the North Atlantic Church Revival. Most of his disciples were High Church if not Anglo-Catholic. One of the great features of the Church Revival was a rediscovery of the phenomenon of the Church, the “one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church” of the Creed. The ideal of the Church as the body mystical of Christ inspired these educators. They associated sacramental grace with the pursuit of high standards in their schools. They believed that God’s divine help, grace, is mysteriously mediated in Christ to each member of the school. This is another, perhaps deeper, way to explain what the Muhlenbergians meant when they assumed that a church school *is* the Church in her scholastic function.

My question is simply this: Besides historic Saint James School in Maryland, what others of you working in Episcopal schools feel you are pursuing the ideals of the Muhlenbergian Church school?

While asking this question, let the reader know that I realize that Episcopal schools have come a long way in overcoming cultural baggage. I also want to be careful to state that Muhlenberg was a pragmatist: He sensed that he had created something rather new in education but the sources show that he gave his disciples complete liberty to develop the *Beau Ideal* in their ways in their regions and local situations. In the spirit of Muhlenberg and Kerfoot, Father Dunnan of Saint James has to my mind done a remarkable job of translating that Beau Ideal into a wonderfully fitting 21st-century reality.

The Rev. W.L. Prehn is interim headmaster of St. John’s Parish Day School, Ellicott City, Maryland, and earned a PhD in the history of American education from the University of Virginia. This essay is adapted from The Commons, the weblog of the National Association of Episcopal Schools.



Lazarus and the Resurrection of a Boy with Down Syndrome

By Zac Koons

When I stepped into the pulpit, I noticed a young boy in the first row sitting with his mother. He was maybe 7, and he had Down syndrome. On any other day, this would have been nothing out of the ordinary. But at this particular funeral, it sent a lightning bolt of fear through my spine, because the only three things I knew about Warren, the man we were gathered to bury, was that he was 74, he loved cars, and he too had a developmental disability.

I suspect all preachers are familiar with the moment when, like wine exposed to the air, you realize your written words have taken on a different chemical makeup now that they are exposed to the bodies in the pews. It's the moment that you realize your throwaway anecdote is actually named Ron and he's sitting on the aisle in the third row to the right, or while saying "I wonder if you've ever felt betrayed" that your eyes meet the tears of the divorcée who apparently has decided to return to church for the first time in six months. My suspicion is that these moments bring fear to the preacher because they are the moments when we realize that we are about to learn, in real time, whether we are telling the truth.

I could tell the poignancy of this boy's presence was not lost on the few who were gathered for this occasion. While I stepped into the pulpit, the boy's mother retrieved him from playing in the aisle, kindly trying to persuade him to stay still. And it felt to me like the whole room shared in my moment of terrifying realization: this sermon — and really, this funeral as a whole — would now not only be about Warren's past. It was also going to be about this young boy's future.

Would the preacher ignore Warren's disabili-

ty and thereby imitate how so many in the world have chosen and will continue to treat this boy? Or would he over-sentimentalize Warren's life, ignore the very concrete sacrifices required to care for someone with disabilities, and thereby make good news ring hollow? In short, would Warren's disability, and by extension this boy's presence, be treated as gift or an unwanted distraction in this assembly? Would we get to the other side of this liturgy and feel like resurrection hope included this young boy?

First Lazarus became involved. It was — providentially — the chosen Gospel text. Jean Vanier, in his commentary on John's Gospel, makes the intriguing suggestion that Lazarus had a developmental disability. Vanier offers several pieces of evidence for his claim: he points out how two adult sisters living with their adult brother made for an unconventionally shaped household, economically speaking, in the ancient world. This would imply not only that Lazarus was single, but also that *both* his sisters had forgone the financial security of marriage. Was it to care for their brother, perhaps? For what other reason would this text, written in an overtly patriarchal culture, refer to their house in Bethany as the "home of Martha" rather than the home of Lazarus? And most compelling of all, Vanier asks: what better explanation could there possibly be for the fact that Lazarus, *even after being raised from the dead*, never, according to St. John, spoke a single word?

After covering this ground, I preached what I imagined anyone would: I wondered if Warren's family had seen evidence that Jesus had a special affection for Warren as he had for Lazarus. I wondered if there were times when they called on Jesus to help Warren and were mystified by his delay. I wondered in what ways taking on the burden of caring for someone with disabili-

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ties led their family to meeting God in unexpected ways. I assured them, whether they identified more with Mary or Martha, that just as Jesus wept at the grave of Lazarus, he weeps with us today. As Jesus called Lazarus forth from the grave, he will raise Warren to new life in his heavenly kingdom.

The sermon was fine. I think it was meaningful to the family to hear someone name ways in which those with disabilities can be gifts rather than only burdens. But the real magic was still to come.

In the graveyard, Warren's body was lowered and we prayed the committal: earth to earth, dust to dust, ashes to ashes. I ended the service by encouraging those gathered to linger — perhaps for a personal goodbye before the graveside and, if they wished, to participate in the old Christian tradition of casting earth on the coffin.

I stepped off to the side while siblings, cousins, nieces, and nephews all took their turn before Warren's body, each contributing their handful of earth. Eventually, after a brief pause in the action, the 7-year-old boy approached the grave. It turned out he was Warren's grandnephew, and he wanted to participate. His mom showed him to take some dirt from the giant pile beside them and to place it in the grave. He did exactly as instructed.

Then the boy kind of froze there before the grave, beside the giant pile of dirt. He stood as Jesus before the grave of Lazarus, in cosmic confrontation between life and death. We froze too, in rapt attention. Would he cry? Would he fall in? Does someone need to intercede? I half expected him to say, "Warren, come out!" I braced for a resurrection.

Eventually the boy decided to take a second handful of dirt and toss it on the coffin. Then he took another. Then another. And another. And all of a sudden, I realized what was happening:

He was *playing*. The boy sat down and mashed his hands into the earthen mound, swiping and gathering in the motions of sand castle creation. His church clothes were ruined, but his mother — in a moment of Marian inspiration — let him keep playing. O death, where *is* thy sting? O grave, where *is* thy victory? Jesus wept, this little boy played, but the result was the same: the death of a loved one had been transformed into an occasion of resurrection hope.

One thought I haven't been able to shake: Had another 7-year-old done this, would we — would I — have felt the same response? Would it have been just as beautiful? Would we have let it happen in the first place? Is it not more likely that we would have gasped at this child's "indecent" behavior, dismayed by the parents' lack of discipline and courtesy?

Was it precisely this boy's disability that allowed us to glimpse a moment of resurrection? That is part of it. But it also required the patience and wisdom of a mother and an entire extended family, all of whom could have easily cut the moment short.

How does a family obtain such virtue? The same way you obtain any virtue: practice. On this particular day we were celebrating 74 years of this family's love and care for a brother, a cousin, and an uncle; 74 years of learning, witnessing, and discovering the ways in which those with disabilities are gifts to our common life more than they are burdens. Warren, buried in the ground, was the seed that sprung up before our eyes that day in resurrection bloom.

In the beginning we had wondered whether this liturgy of resurrection hope might include those with developmental disabilities. But we had it the wrong way around. Warren and this boy were the better preachers that day, and neither spoke a single word.

The Rev. Zac Koons is associate rector at St. Richard's Church in Austin.

CULTURES

Marking Time

Now and Forever: The Art of Medieval Time
The Morgan Library and Museum
Morgan Stanley West Gallery
225 Madison Avenue at 36th Street
New York City
Through April 29

By Pamela A. Lewis

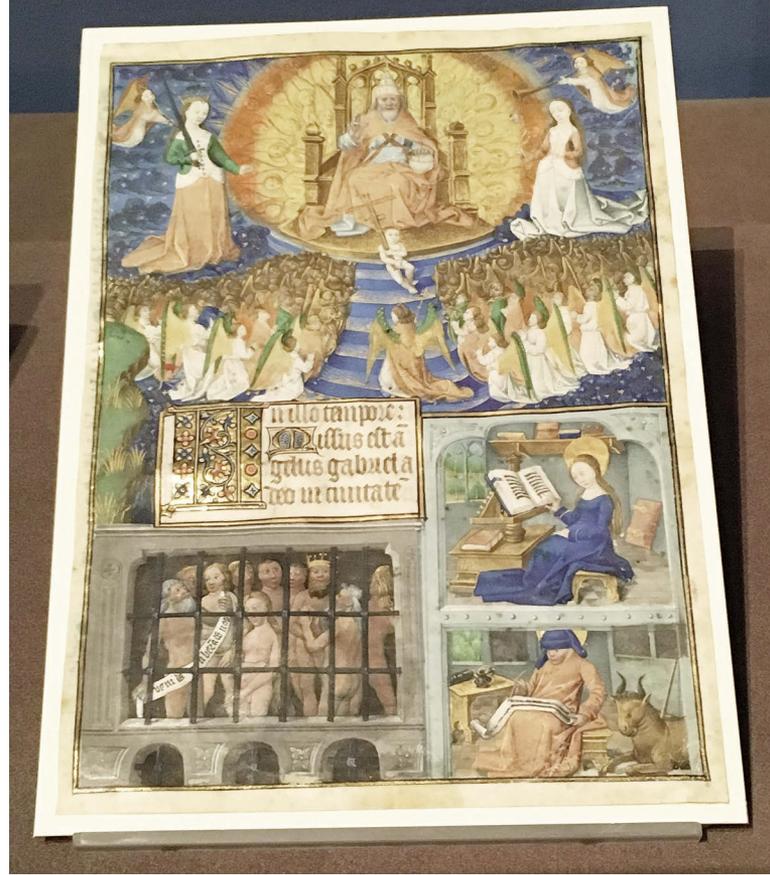
With our clocks, watches, and cellphones, we have many ways to help us to tell what time it is. But the Morgan Library's current exhibition explores how in the Middle Ages the concept of time, as well as telling time, were approached in different ways and with significantly different tools. Drawing upon the Morgan's rich collection of medieval and Renaissance illuminated manuscripts, ranging in date from the 11th to the 16th centuries, and representing all the major countries of Europe, *Now and Forever* offers visitors a fascinating glimpse into how people told time in the Middle Ages and what they thought about it.

The medieval calendar told time in two parallel ways, the first being the ancient Roman calendar that Julius Caesar had reformed in 45 B.C. This quirky system, which used three fixed points of Kalends, Nones, and Ides, plus the enumerated days leading to them, was employed throughout the entire Middle Ages. The second way was by the feast celebrated on the day, such as Christmas, St. Valentine's Day, or St. Patrick's Day.

Other features, such as Golden Numbers (which tracked the year's new moons) and Dominical Letters (which located Sundays), were used to find the date of Easter. Normal saints' days were indicated in black, while significant feasts were written in red (thus red-letter days). A month's two unlucky days (called Egyptian Days) were clearly noted. Also included was astronomical information, such as the start of the summer's *dies caniculares* (Dog Days). The exhibition provides a very helpful chart on how to read a medieval calendar. The Da Costa Hours (1515), illuminated by Simon Bening, opened to a page depicting robust peasants reaping wheat in August opposite a calendar that offers an object combining utility and beauty.

These calendars, peculiar as they may seem to modern eyes, were perpetual, used from one year to the next, and none numbered the days sequentially, as is done today.

In liturgical time, the day became divided into eight canonical hours: Matins and Lauds (midnight), Prime



Purgatory, Hell, and Limbo

(6 a.m.), Terce (9 a.m.), Sext (noon), None (3 p.m.), Vespers (sunset), and Compline (evening). Many present-day monastic orders have retained this division of the day. Sunday, in honor of Christ's resurrection, began the week of seven days.

Two overlapping systems governed the medieval year: the *temporale* and the *sanctorale*. Feasts celebrating the sequential events relating to the life of Christ were part of the *temporale* (which would come to include the feasts of protomartyr Stephen, John the Evangelist, and Pope Silvester), while the *sanctorale* commemorated the days when saints died: their "birthdays" into heaven. By the late Middle Ages, there were over 125 saints' days celebrated across Europe. Feasts were ranked, and one feast might take precedence over another if they occurred on the same day. There was no universal system of ranking; they varied not only from place to place but from one religious order to another.

Vestiges of this form of medieval timekeeping remain today. The medieval vigil, the start of an important feast on the day before, is today's eve (such as Christmas Eve or New Year's Eve). In like manner, when we refer to Christmas or St. Patrick's Day, we know their dates.

The Sacramentary of Mont Saint-Michel (ca. 1060), a superbly preserved *temporale* depicting the Ascension (Movable Feast), shows a red-robed and ascending Christ, flanked by the angels who explain to the awestruck apostles witnessing the event that Christ will return in the same manner to judge the world. The German "Berthold

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CULTURES

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Sacramentary” is an equally beautiful *temporale* for Palm Sunday (Movable Feast), illuminated for Abbot Berthold of Weingarten between 1215 and 1217.

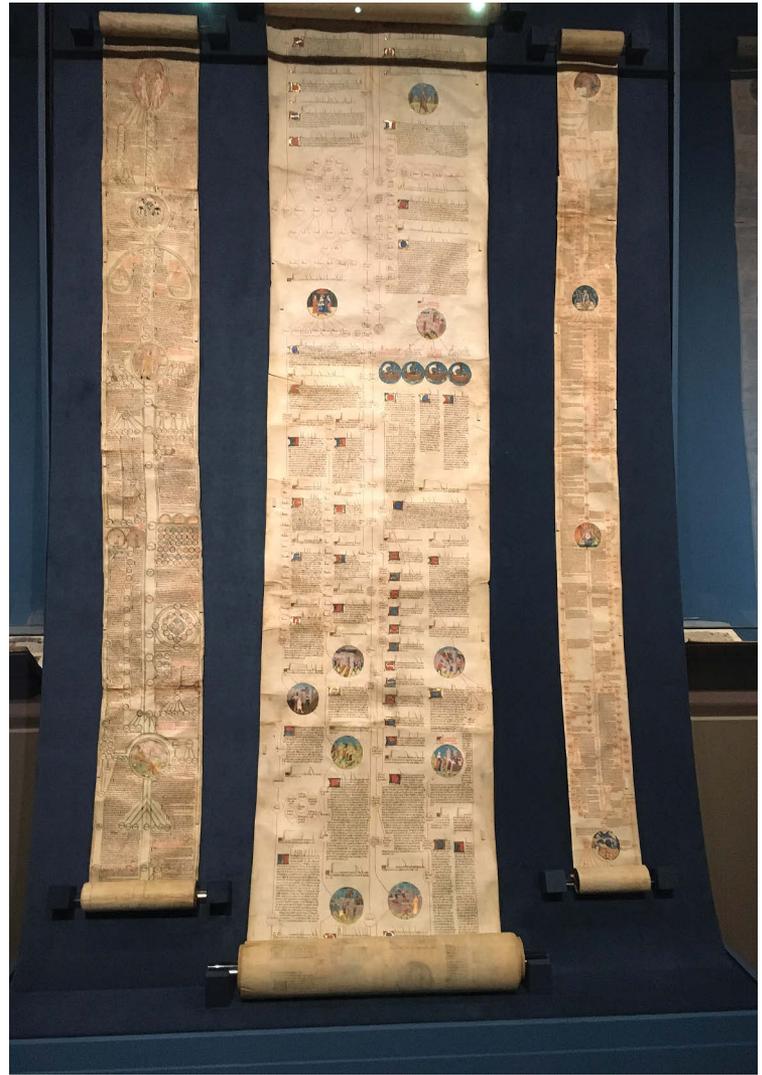
Three books of hours, from Italy, Belgium, and France, dating from the late 15th and early 16th centuries, show moments from the life of the Virgin. Such books of hours enabled laypeople, in imitation of the clergy, to pray throughout the course of the Canonical Hours in the privacy of their homes. Executed in jewel-like colors, these examples highlight the skills of the illuminators in creating devotional objects that are also aesthetically pleasing.

The “Piccolomini Breviary,” illuminated in Florence for Cardinal Jacopo Piccolomini-Ammannati by Mariano del Buono around 1475-80, is a *sanctorale* distinguished by the allegorical image of the Church as a ship. Here, Christ is crucified upon the ship’s mast; God wields the rudder, while the Holy Spirit perches on the prow as a dove. Apostles man the oars, and countless saints fill the deck. On shore, the hopeful good wait to board, while on the right, evil forces are powerless to prevail over them. Del Buono has handled this packed scene deftly, sacrificing neither the image’s message nor its artistic force.

Some of the exhibition’s most compelling objects and iconography attest to the medieval period’s understanding of historical time and of humanity’s ultimate fate. The Bible was both the Word of God and a record of humanity’s early history. The Hebrew Bible (the Christians’ Old Testament) was a chronicle of actual events. The New Testament was the record of the life and death of Christ and of the early history of the Church, at times mentioning historic figures with known dates. A.D., *Anno Domini* (In the Year of Our Lord), derived from the dating system devised in the 6th century based on the (presumed) year of Christ’s birth.

Whereas today the Mayflower would mark the genesis of modern history (in America, at least), Troy marked the beginning of European civil history for the Middle Ages. Once it fell, the courageous Trojans sailed off and founded European cities, such as Rome, Paris, and London. A continuous link was therefore created by these descendants of Noah (so medievals believed) and the events traced in the Bible.

Among the outstanding examples underscoring these complex beliefs is the Leaf from a Bible with its extremely stretched and gilded initial *I* of the opening of Genesis (*In principio*: In the beginning), containing scenes of key moments from the Creation, as well as those of Christ’s life. A *temporale* (and Antiphony) for Easter (Movable Feast), created in Milan, Italy (1470-95), presents a fine illumination of the resurrection with musical notation on the opposite page. And the French *Chronique universelle* (1473-83), a 60-foot-long scroll outlining the 6,500 years of the history of the world from the Creation to King



Chronique universelle

Louis XI of France, is the exhibition’s central object and the most fully illustrated copy of this document known to exist.

In the section “Time after Time,” the show concludes with the late Middle Ages’ great obsessions: death, judgment, heaven, and hell, known as the “four last things.” Beautiful yet terrifying iconography (including two rare works showing figures in Limbo) depicting these universal human experiences adorn the selection of books of hours and antiphonaries on view, affording visitors some sense of what our medieval forbears might have felt as they contemplated these cautionary and fearful images.

Tightly organized in the Morgan Stanley Gallery, *Now and Forever* is a comprehensive and accessible exhibition about a complex period of time within the Middle Ages. It provides answers to questions about how notions of time were conceived and developed, and explains why these notions still persist. The beauty of these objects will draw us in and hold our gaze, staying with us long after we have moved on in time.

Pamela A. Lewis writes for The Episcopal New Yorker and Episcopal Journal.

Rescuing Bultmann

Review by J. Scott Jackson

Four decades after his death, the German New Testament theologian Rudolf Bultmann is still often debated and misunderstood. As David W. Congdon explains in this superb precis, the Marburg thinker, who made headlines in the 1940s and '50s, has been eclipsed by more recent developments, such as political and postliberal theologies. Thus, it has become even harder to get a fair hearing for his proposal to “demythologize” Christian faith and reinterpret it within a modern context.

Still, interest in Bultmann's work, catalyzed by recent scholarship, is enjoying a resurgence. Congdon has integrated the threads of this work into a lucid and engaging synthesis. Neither a biography nor a summary of Bultmann's diverse corpus, this book offers a thematic roadmap highlighting ten key concepts that run throughout Bultmann's constructive theology.

In the early 1920s, Bultmann joined cause with Karl Barth and other dialectical theologians, who rocked the European liberal Protestant establishment with their reassertion of divine transcendence over human culture. Yet within a decade the two thinkers parted ways, sharply, over theological differences, and since then many interpreters have echoed Barth's suspicions that Bultmann eroded historical faith or compromised theology by dabbling in philosophical anthropology.

Conservative critics, on the one hand, have charged Bultmann — who (in)famously claimed the “wonder world” of the Bible is a non-starter for contemporary believers formed by the scientific worldview — with appeasing modernist skepticism. Critics on the left, on the other hand, have claimed he did not go far enough, as he continued to assert the normative finality of God's revelation in Jesus Christ.

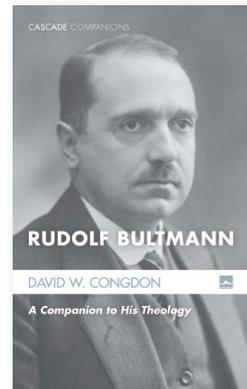
Bultmann's work presupposes an account of Christian origins that emerged, largely uninvited and unwelcome, through

the work of such scholars as Johannes Weiss and Albert Schweitzer. By this account, Jesus and his earliest followers saw the cosmos as a battleground of spiritual beings locked in an epic conflict that would soon climax when the Son of Man would come in glory to judge the nations. After the crucifixion, when the Messiah did not return immediately as expected, early Christians began reinterpreting their eschatology, deferring the final apocalypse indefinitely as the Church became increasingly equated with the kingdom of God.

The original vision, these scholars claimed, has been occluded by centuries of spiritualizing and allegorizing interpretations. Bultmann's mission, in essence, was to recover the tensive character of primitive eschatology without repriming the literal apocalyptic details. Congdon writes, “The eschatological reign of Christ confronts us not in history (i.e. in the observable past) but in what Bultmann calls our *historicity* (i.e., the existential present)” (p. 29). Put in terms of the liturgical year, the juxtaposition of Advent and Christmas shows that Christ's coming is not a once-for-all event but is always the future luring us beyond our own resources, judging our sinful alienation but offering us new life in a “perpetual advent.”

As a theologian, Bultmann drew upon secular philosophy — especially Heidegger's account of human existence as embodied being — and critically recast it in concord with the Lutheran doctrine of justification by grace through faith. God, who can never be objectified within human knowledge, may be encountered only as the living One who saves sinners by rendering a new self-understanding in faith.

As Luther asserted, God and faith cannot be separated. Bultmann's embrace of existentialism has fueled a caricature of his thought as perilously individualistic and subjectivist. Nonetheless, as Congdon argues, Bultmann understood that the life of faith presupposes the Christian community in whose preaching the gospel become real in the lives of



Rudolf Bultmann

A Companion to His Theology

By David W. Congdon

Cascade. Pp. 196. \$23.

believers. If, as Bultmann held, faith cannot be equated with doctrines and historical facts — say, about the teachings and miracles of Jesus — Congdon shows it is reasonable to expect that authentic faith might occur even in unconscious form outside the Church.

Moreover, in its historical and political context, Bultmann's emphasis on the freedom of the Christian was a courageous rebuttal of the oppressive, xenophobic groupthink of Nazi Germany. In this vein, as Congdon shows, Bultmann was a vigorous advocate for restoring classical humanistic studies to the national curriculum after the war, as a check against totalitarianism.

However much we may follow Bultmann's lead, Congdon has provided a vital resource for confronting this outstanding Christian thinker in context, in hopes we might read him for ourselves with greater perception and profit. This book would be an excellent resource for college or seminary courses, as well as for intrepid parishioners who are game to slog through the perplexities of modern theology. Discussion questions and an annotated bibliography offer grist for further reflection and study.

J. Scott Jackson is a theologian, independent scholar, and writer living in Northampton, Massachusetts.

Is Language Up to the Task of Theology?

Review by Cyril O'Regan

Rowan Williams, emeritus Archbishop of Canterbury, has always had the gift of words. It is, then, only appropriate that this poet-theologian should turn to the investigation of language and its relation to our speech about God. Yet *The Edge of Words*, which represents a lightly revised form of his Gifford Lectures, is pressed hard by the traditional apologetic agenda of the lecture series. Williams certainly feels the pressure of giving an account of the intelligibility and relevance of Christianity without appeal to the fact of its existence, its history, or revelation that provides its *raison d'être*.

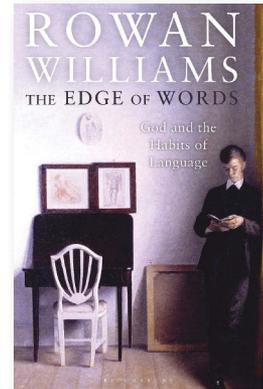
The title of the opening chapter ("A Future for 'Natural Theology'?") illustrates the self-imposed constraints under which Williams operates. For the purposes of this text, epistemology, religious epistemology, and philosophy of language are of more value than reflections on revelation and tradition, Church and authority, just as Ludwig Wittgenstein and Stanley Cavell are more useful than Scholastic or Neo-Scholastic forms of natural theology. Williams makes it clear, however, that the relegation of the latter is without prejudice to Thomas Aquinas, especially if one takes into account the "linguistic turn" in Thomistic studies.

The opening sentence of the introduction sets the agenda for the text. It has the form of a question: "Does the way we talk as human beings have anything to tell us about God?" (p. ix). Given the placement we are safe in assuming an affirmative answer, and it is the task of the next 200 pages to flesh out the answer. From the outset, however, Williams wants to chasten our expectations of method and result. He warns those readers hoping for a systematic treatment of the movement from language to God that they will find what he has to say disappointingly "eclectic" (p. xii). We are also advised throughout not to expect a knock-down argument that will tie general reflections on language to God considered as the mind-independent reality that provides the grounds for all things.

Given previous avowals, none of this should surprise. Williams has continuously made the case that Anglican theology is inherently non-systematic, with the implied corollary that its default genre is the essay. This certainly applies to his own work, and applies here even if there are sufficient connections between the chapters to rule out that we are dealing with six free-standing essays. And while Williams is hardly a deconstructionist who catches us up in an endless play of signifiers, it is fair to say that throughout his considerable oeuvre he has never been full-throated when it comes to the avowal of metaphysics. This book exaggerates his characteristic shyness. While it would always have been hard to confuse Williams with Radical Orthodoxy and its encapsulating of metaphysics into theology, here the gap between them seems positively oceanic: to decide for one is not to decide for the other.

It is no accident that the first and orienting chapter is once again a question, since questioning, revising one's stance toward reality, is a motif that cuts across the chapters. The specific question here is whether natural theology has a future. It is logically possible to answer the question in the negative, and in his Gifford Lectures this was precisely what Stanley Hauerwas did. Williams, however, does not give this answer. Instead he answers yes and then stipulates the conditions. Admiring of Aquinas, Williams does not think that demonstrations of God's existence from the world work. Williams does not provide a detailed analysis of why such arguments do not work. Evident are a somewhat reluctant acquiescence to Kant's critique (p. 14-18) and a corresponding interest in making any inferential process from natural phenomena to God immune from Kantian criticism. If natural theology is to be condoned, Williams judges that it will have to proceed more indicatively than demonstratively.

In his first and, arguably, gateway chapter, Williams speaks eloquently of continuous approximation to a reality that calls speech forth but never allows



The Edge of Words

God and the Habits of Language

By Rowan Williams. Bloomsbury. Pp. 224. \$34

satisfaction (p. 22). His approach is to uncover the dynamism of language, or language as a set of approximations and adjustments to a reality at once intelligible and imperative. What keeps human speech in its dynamic mode, and intelligence of which it is an expression, is reality's excessive character. Thus the analogy between human speech in general and its speech about God: this latter form of language brings out more explicitly what is implicit in speech in general to the extent to which it has not been mortared into redundancy. It is surely not an accident that later in his book (ch. 5) Williams will pay special attention to poetic language where there is the paradoxical coincidence of focused aim in speech and its breakdown in terms of fixing reality as an available referent.

The theme of analogy remains strong in chapter 2, and is there further clarified and developed. Dropping from view are mediating attempts to link reflection on the workings of human speech with God through reflection on God-talk. This mediation was clearly in play when Williams suggested in chapter 1 that natural theology has a plausible future if and only if we think of proof as a meditative process that brings us to the "edge of what can be said" (p. 16). We are now dealing nakedly with language as such and

whether or how God makes an appearance. Since revelation has been bracketed, Williams cannot call on it as it exhibits itself in a linguistic medium. Given this, God is not a possible object in language. Williams does not prescribe, however, the view of God as providing the horizon and goal of the entire dynamic of speech's attempt to be adequate to reality, which involves major shifts in perspective as well as correction of perspective. And in chapter 2 Williams introduces a clarification regarding human speech that regulates his discussion of language throughout the remaining chapters: speech is always speech in community. Non-redundant speech, speech that has as its aim truth or truthfulness, "invites responsive testing, to establish if it is at least recognizable" (p. 42).

Here one may comment on Williams's argument for the unfinalizability of language. Certainly the influence of Wittgenstein is present throughout the text, and is working in the first chapter insofar as the linguistic turn in natural theology in the Thomistic tradition follows largely from the influence of Wittgenstein, especially *Philosophical Investigations* and its interest in our linguistic behavior — and especially our linguistic adaptability, which makes it possible to ascribe linguistic or knowledge competence. But Williams risks becoming metaphysical when he concludes from the principled unfinalizability of human speech — the shifting of perspectives that comes over time, and the pluralization and adjustment of perspective in community, and presumably between communities — to the finitude of the speaker. I take it, however, that Williams is not really making a philosophical decision. Despite his approval of the analogy of being (*analogia entis*), it is safer not to read him as siding with the creaturely metaphysics of Erich Przywara. Again, despite the avowal of human finitude, it is best not to read him as having thrown in his lot with Heidegger over Hegel when it comes to thinking of the human subject, which is so in any event only in community. His appeals to philosophers are generally ad hoc. This is true even when he appeals to Hegel, who is read more nearly as a commonsense political-ethical religious thinker than the arch-metaphysician of the Western tradition.

Chapter 4 is continuous with chapter 3 both in terms of underscoring the unfinalizability of language as well as suggesting the protocol of finitude as a requirement for the open horizon of language. Chapter 4 adds to chapter 3 by coding the issue of unfinalizability in the language of representation. An exigent and excessive reality does not allow a final representation (or, in Thomas Nagle's language, something that is not recurred to), and exigent and excessive reality does not allow a view from nowhere. This chapter also adds the reminder that the speech of human beings — *parole* rather than language in Ferdinand de Saussure's sense — is the expression of an embodied being. Exorcised thereby from this immensely eloquent book is any toxic remnant of the ghost in the machine.

Williams's eloquence reaches its zenith in the final two chapters of the book, where reflection turns to the capacities of poetry and silence to handle a reality that calls forth questioning and approximation. A poet of some substance in his own right and a religious thinker familiar with modern and classical poetry in a variety of languages, Williams writes beautifully of the semantic over-determination in Welsh poetry, on the one hand, and the eloquence of silence on the other. Williams hardly needs an elaborate theory to justify either, and he advances these views as the fruit of a commonsense shared with his readers. Those of more theoretical disposition could easily find support for most of what Williams says in Martin Heidegger, Hans-Georg Gadamer, and especially Paul Ricoeur. Throughout these concluding chapters Williams provides us with enough hints of what theological analogues might look like. Unsurprisingly, given his previous work, one such analogue is the problem of *naming* in mystical theology, which has positive (*kataphatic*) and negative (*apophatic*) features. Still, the abiding impression that these chapters give is that Williams has never before been as close to the theology of David Tracy. This strange conclusion suggests itself if we think of Tracy's theology as grounded in the epistemology of Bernard Lonergan, who emphasizes the unfinalizability of knowing in light of an imperative and excessive reality that can be called God, threaded through the hermeneutics of

Ricoeur. Can it be an accident that in a number of chapters Williams highlights, like Tracy, *parable* as the form of biblical language that, cutting against the customary, forces a radical shift in perspective?

Given this similarity to Tracy — fully apparent in the final two chapters, with traces throughout — we might wonder: does *The Edge of Words* mark a systemic shift in Williams's thought? We can and should ask this question even if antecedent likelihood is against it. Williams does not depend on Tracy's intellectual platform, nor does he substitute one of his own. More or less unaffiliated, Williams avails of theory in an ad hoc way — a form of left-wing Hegelianism, or Aquinas scoured by Wittgenstein; but Williams refuses to risk everything on theory. Were someone to convince him that left-wing Hegelianism is a risky Christian conversation partner, he could and likely would move on. I take it, then, that the perceived affinity with Tracy is mainly contextual: Because the Gifford Lectures presume apologetics, Williams operates entirely within this default. This accounts for and to a large extent justifies the thinness of theology. Although we may crave something thicker, based on revelation and confession, Williams is imperatively — maybe even imperiously — minimalist.

The conversation between Christianity and secular culture is today at a standstill because it is not clear that we can agree on anything. Williams wants to correct that. If I had to think of a textual analogue for *The Edge of Words*, it would be Newman's *Grammar of Assent*. Williams and Newman are similar in type in that their gifts are those of intervention into the public space, historical analysis, and reflection on the value and limits of theological traditions, hand in hand with extraordinary eloquence. But we do well to recall that Newman's classic exercise in religious epistemology was four-fifths general epistemology and one-fifth religious and theological application. Allowing for the linguistic turn, the proportions in Williams's book are hardly out of whack. As with Newman, perceived need is the mother of proportion.

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Acts 4:5-12 • Ps. 23 • 1 John 3:16-24 • John 10:11-18

No One Else

Rulers, elder, scribes, the high priest, and members of the high priestly family question Peter and John about the power and name, that is, the energy and authority that fueled a healing, and, perhaps more troubling, inspired conversions growing to nearly 5,000 souls. Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, answers. He speaks, but in truth the sanctity and Spirit of God speak through him. “[L]et it be known to all of you, and to all the people of Israel, that this man is standing before you in good health by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead” (Acts. 4:10). “There is salvation in no one else,” Peter says, “for there is no other name under heaven given among mortals by which we must be saved” (Acts. 4:12).

“Jesus alone” is a clanging symbol if interpreted through a single or even several cultural contexts equated with the gospel. Conversion so understood would imply a change in one’s lived context to a purely artificial form of imitation. The gospel would then be confused with style, cultural preference, manners, and prescribed ways of accepting, confessing, and expressing faith. The cross would then imply the death of all natural affections and the normal bonds of affiliation to family, community, and nation. Such a message, though appealing to some, would never escape the criticism that Christianity sanctifies conquest and is the death of every natural good. Grace, it would seem, destroys nature. This is, however, a complete inversion of the gospel and the cross.

Jesus becomes what we are and lays down his life to pay our debt and claim our hearts. “I lay down my life for the sheep. I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice” (John 10:15-16). How Jesus will bring them and how they will listen to his voice is beyond knowing. In a sense, the one eternal gospel is heard and

received in ways ever new. As the gospel passes from hand to hand, it grows without changing, adapts while keeping the deposit of faith, and is fitted to earth though hidden in heaven. Jesus is not only a recapitulation of human nature generally, but a recapitulation and thus a reformation of persons in their irreducible uniqueness. Thus, the death to oneself in union with the cross of Christ is a new birth to one’s deepest and truest self. Every person and every cultural context is the raw material of Christ’s risen manifestation.

Jesus Christ brings life and salvation to the world, but not by replacing the world, not by imposing a new reality that extinguishes the old. Rather, he enters the valley of the shadow of death; he deigns to visit the exiled children of Adam and Eve who walk amid tears and sorrow and the judgement of death. Jesus shows his power, the power of his name, chiefly in showing mercy and pity. He lifts up the poor from the ashes; he exalts the humble and fills the hungry with good things. He does not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped. Instead, he empties himself to the point of death on cross. In his death he touches and knows the depth of human sorrow. In his resurrection he makes human life “the house of the Lord” enduring throughout one’s “whole life long” (Ps. 23:6).

We know that Christ abides in us by the Spirit given to us (1 John 3:24). The Spirit shares Christ as a presence malleable to flesh and blood, mind and soul. Jesus alone, no one else, no other name, embraces everyone and everything.

Look It Up

Acts 4:12.

Think About It

Whenever humans are saved, there Jesus is.

The Beginning

“From you comes my praise in the great congregation” (Ps. 22:25). The place is stated: the great congregation, in the midst of your Church, among your people (Ps. 22:22; Ps. 35:18). To be sure, praise may be offered anywhere by anyone. Praise may be the unconscious Song of Creation, intoned by the creative will of God, his sustaining love, the redeeming work of his attention and atonement for the agony of all beings. “Bless the LORD, all his works in all place of his dominion. Bless the LORD, O my soul” (Ps. 103:22). Whereas praise may be given anywhere, praise must be given in this place, in the congregation, among the faithful.

The Church is assigned the task of giving voice to every creature under heaven. We leave the world, step into the sacred space of liturgy: listen, behold, beseech, and give thanks. We praise with our whole being; but, in truth, we do not do it. “From you comes my praise” (Ps. 22:25). “Lord, open our lips. And our mouth shall proclaim your praise” (Ps. 51:15; Morning Prayer). “Let my mouth be full of your praise and your glory all the day long” (Ps. 71:8).

God has done this. God has appointed the place of his eternal praise, God has directed steps to this sacred space, and God has opened mouths and made them full of praise and glory. “You did not choose me, but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name. I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another” (John 15:16-17). God chooses and appoints that we may bear fruit and love one another. Oh, the generosity of God. Oh, the goodness of God. Oh, the wonder of God. “In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins” (1 John 4:10). “We love because he first loved us” (1 John 4:19).

In the beginning — God. Not to us, not to us, but to your name we give glory because you have chosen us as witnesses to your creating and preserving power, and your redemption of the world in the work of Jesus Christ. God has called us to live through his Son. The Son is eternally begotten of the Father’s love. The Son is love and love’s response to the Father. Love is a blessed Trinity of distinct persons and a simple unity of being. “Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God” (1 John 4:7) “God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in him” (1 John 4:16). “As he is [love], so are we in the world” (1 John 4:17). We are here. We lift every voice and sing. We give voice to every creature under heaven because we have been chosen for this life and work of love.

What happened to you? How did you receive the gospel? Were you not once like the Ethiopian eunuch who, on a wilderness road, sat in his chariot reading sacred words without comprehension? Did you not work and live and try in some way to make sense of life, but fall short of deep understanding? Jesus Christ, in the person of Philip, ran to the Ethiopian, sat beside him, and spoke to him about the Good News. Did not Jesus Christ run to you, sit with you, and speak to you?

Look It Up

Read Acts 8:30.

Think About It

Run! Make speed to help us!



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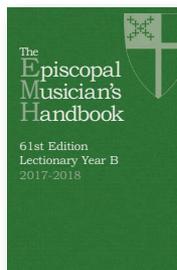
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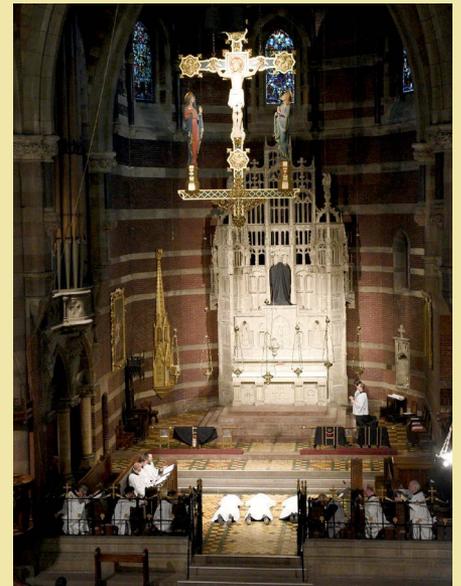
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