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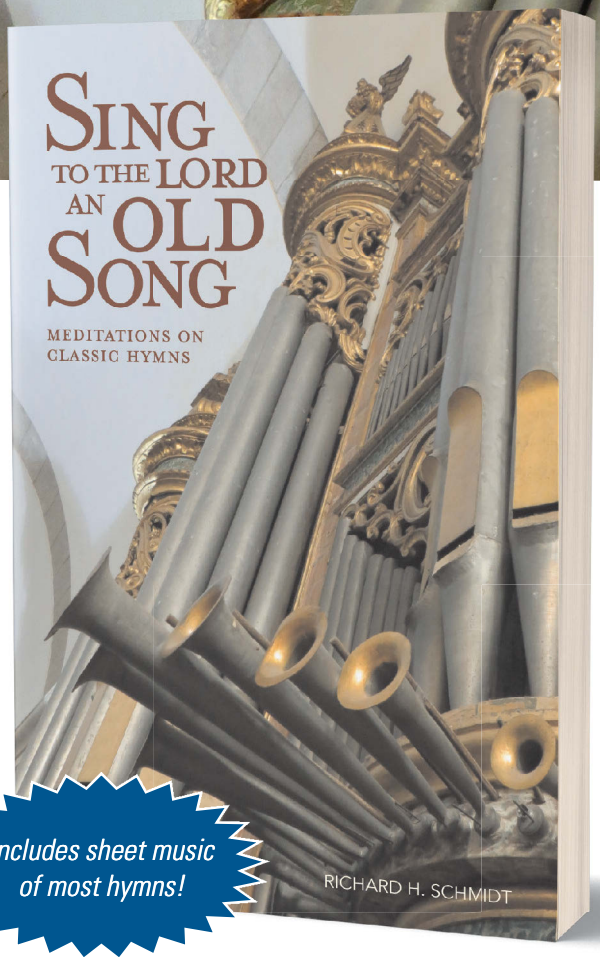

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ON THE COVER

A visit to Zion Episcopal Church, Talbotton, Georgia: "I decide to amble around the church, which is a remarkable example of rustic 'Carpenter Gothic' architecture: easily the most remarkable in Georgia, not only for its design, but also for its location and context" (see "The Gnat Line's Gothic Treasure," p. 22).

Halston Pitman | MotorSportMedia photo

The Living Church

THIS ISSUE | February 9, 2020

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

Seeking Communion in the Midst of Disagreement

By Mark Michael

Consultation participants share intense discussion: Katherine Sonderegger, Margaret Rose, Daniel Joslyn-Siemiatkoski, Brian Flanagan (in foreground). | VTS photo

Speakers from across the Anglican world gathered in Virginia January 13 and 14 to explore strategies for maintaining unity within the Anglican Communion in the midst of deep theological differences. Fifteen Anglican and Episcopal bishops and a larger group of church officials, seminary faculty and clergy participated in a consultation titled "When Churches in Communion Disagree."

The participants, who held a wide diversity of views, plumbed the depths of Scripture, church history, classic Anglican divinity, and contemporary ecumenical theology. The event was sponsored by the Living Church Institute, the House of Bishops' Ecclesiology Committee, the Dioceses of Dallas and Texas, and Virginia Theological Seminary, which hosted the meeting.

Robert Heaney, the director of Virginia Seminary's Center for Anglican Communion Studies and one of the consultation's organizers, described the event as marked by "a spirit of generosity and deep listening." The consultation, he added, "called the church to deeper and more patient and intercultural ecclesiological investigation for the future of the Communion. Amidst division there was real hope in the room this week."

Canon Sarah Snyder, the Archbishop of Canterbury's Advisor for Reconciliation, opened the gathering by considering reconciled diversity in texts from John and Ephesians. John reveals Jesus as a careful listener and an advocate of mutual love. The Church, she argued, "is to be a community of love and service, modeled on how he loves and serves." The cosmic scope of reconciliation outlined in Ephesians helps place our disagreements in the context of the deeper unity Christians share. "If you are in Christ and I am in Christ," Snyder said, "then we must view our conflict through the Christ between us."

George Sumner, the Bishop of Dallas, argued that the criteria outlined by John Henry Newman in his *Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine* can help Anglicans discern about contested changes in teaching about sexuality. Newman's model, he said, argued for patience and continuing dialogue. In a series of "guidelines in the meantime," Sumner said that traditionalists, like the Communion Partners within the Episcopal Church, have a crucial "Newmanesque role" within churches that trend towards departures from historic norms.

Sumner said, "If doctrinal developments, to be legitimate, must be proven over time to be actual developments rather than wholesale rejections of what has come before, so that a body can change over time yet remain substantially the same — then it seems to follow that there should be no need to abolish traditional liturgies and communities that practice them, since those in favor of that tradition's development must believe that their favored revision is in substantial continuity with what has come before it. It also seems to follow that adding new liturgies and new communities to the old, while allowing for both to coexist side-by-side for what may be a very long time, is simply what is required for the ongoing work of discernment to test whether or not a contested doctrine is in fact a legitimate development of the tradition."

Katherine Sonderegger, Virginia Seminary's Meade Professor of Christian Doctrine, urged Anglicans to revisit the 2004 Windsor Report, which remains relevant to contemporary conflict. "The truth is," she said, "that the Windsor Report is right — or so it seems to me — that the matter of homosexuality is not closed, not behind us, not settled, and most certainly not forgotten in the Communion to which we belong." Advocates for the full inclusion of LGBT people are called, she argued, like advocates for women's ordination in prior generations, to practice a "grace-filled and demanding patience."

Sonderegger proposed a model for contemporary Anglicans from 16th-century Roman Catholicism, an intense and decades-long debate between followers of theologians Thomas Aquinas and Luis de Molina about God's knowledge of future contingencies. Two suc-

cessive popes, Clement VIII and Paul V, summoned theologians to present their arguments in a series of conferences known as the *Congregatio de Auxiliis.* Finding the contentious matter ultimately unresolvable, the papal decision was to declare a "difference of schools," recognizing that, for the sake of unity, both opinions would be tolerated in the church's life.

"We may never agree," she said. "We may be left with baroque Thomists and Molinists who simply cannot countenance each other's primary commitments. But the aim of this entire distinction is to find a way forward: to see a distinction that abides in unity. We are not there yet. And I think a very great patience is needed as we take up this work. But I believe if accord cannot be reached, we may still come to see that in one Church, one Communion, a difference of schools can be tolerated, even welcomed."

Living Church Executive Director Christopher Wells turned to other 16th-century sources, parsing the differences in the ecclesiologies of Anglican theologians John Jewel and Richard Hooker in seeking a model for living faithfully in the midst of church divisions. Wells lifted up Hooker's patient vision of a church that seeks the greatest degree of communion possible while trusting in God's final judgment. "Hooker haunts Anglican Communion texts in their suppleness and talk of degrees of difference among Anglicans and ecumenically," he said.

Jeremy Worthen, the Church of England's Secretary for Ecumenical Relations, addressed significant, if often overlooked, differences between agreement and communion. "In recent decades," Worthen noted, "there has been a recognition that disagreement belongs within the life of the church — that it need not, in and of itself, tend toward conflict and division. There are some disagreements that can and should be borne." Drawing on the Church of England's recently thwarted progress toward full communion with the British Methodist Church, Worthen said a crucial factor is determining in advance how much agreement is necessary for establishing or maintaining communion.

Archbishop Mark MacDonald, the leader of the Anglican Church of Canada's indigenous province, spoke of indigenous people's struggle to gain a fair hearing for their own theological vision within the white-majority Canadian church, which suffers, he said, from "an incapacity to absorb difference." The Anglican Communion's current struggles unfold, he said, against a hidden background dominated by "the global culture of money" and the collapse of Christendom.

Bishop Joseph Wandera, who serves the Anglican Church of Kenya's Diocese of Mumias, interviewed half of his church's 40 bishops to learn more about their willingness to continue in relationship with Anglicans who differ from them in significant ways. Wandera discovered a surprising amount of diversity.

Fellow Kenyan Bishop Samson Mwaluda, founding bishop of the Diocese of Taita Taveta, told Wandera, "Gafcon is growing. The liberals are

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shrinking. Here I can grow the church; here I can stand genuinely. My spirit is at peace. This is the faith I can die for. Your soul and pastoral work will be safe in Gafcon, not Canterbury." Bishop Tim Wambunya of Butere, also in Kenya, countered: "Personally, I think the Gafcon axis has become obsessed with the matter of sexuality. Secondly, I think the Archbishop of Canterbury should try to steer the Communion toward the gospel, rather than simply discussing the issue of sexuality. No more resolutions on sexuality, please."

Wandera said he spoke to many bishops who were concerned about a "lack of magnanimity toward differences in the Communion. This concern is framed as a need for extending pastoral care to those who may be different from 'us.' Such pastoral care is not seen, necessarily, as 'agreeing' with certain positions, but rather as a gospel invitation to forgiveness and reconciliation." He also sees great promise in the way that Kenyan Anglicans so frequently describe worldwide Anglicanism as a family. Africans, he said, "prefer to think of those extended families that embrace a number of generations and are united by strong and enduring ties as a model for the church. The families we have in mind cannot easily be broken by circumstances. Even when two brothers are engaged in a physical fight, our culture provides for avenues of restoring the family relationship."

Two Episcopal bishops, John Bauerschmidt of Tennessee and William Gregg, formerly of Eastern Oregon, reflected on different models for churchwide decision-making passed down through our Anglican heritage. Bauerschmidt noted that recent conflict reveals the limits of traditional Anglican dependence on "the common counsel of the bishops," but said he was wary of abandoning this to give enhanced power for a bureaucratic instrument. Gregg proposed fully empowering the Anglican Consultative Council to lead the Communion, believing that this body reflects the best features of our common conciliar tradition.

Many of the bishops who attended said that they found the consultation's deep and respectful engagement with diverse views strengthened their own resolve to persevere in this work. Brian Cole of East Tennessee noted, "I feel even more keenly the sense that as the Body of Christ, we cannot say to each other, 'I have no need of you.' The past two days were an opportunity to be together, even in the midst of deep disagreement, and hear from each other, share meals together, pray together, and give value to our need to practice 'belongingness'… We react to each other more than we seek to be together, to respond to each other, face to face. After attending this consultation, I pray more of us will forego the rush to the printer's ink and seek to be together, face to face."

Bishop Dorsey McConnell of Pittsburgh urged those who attend this summer's Lambeth Conference to decide if they will approach the gathering with a sincere desire to listen to those with whom they disagree. He said, "The core question is whether Lambeth is going to be a repetition of the wooden dance of the past or some new way of engaging each other… [We need to be willing to say] 'my salvation depends on others in the room with whom I must disagree.' Then we have a clear call to our own repentance, conversion and amendment of life."

A fuller version of this article is available at www.livingchurch.org.

ACNA Communiqué Reflects an Emerging Institution

By Kirk Petersen

The Anglican Church in North America (ACNA) was formed in 2009, born in protest against progressive developments in the Episcopal Church (TEC) that were considered contrary to Scripture.

Despite some continuing internal conflict, ACNA has been steadily maturing and developing into an institution in its own right, rather than simply a splinter from the larger Episcopal Church.

Though formed as a conservative reaction within Anglicanism, ACNA

ACNA College of Bishops meeting, January 2020 ACNA photo

can be seen as making a subtle transformation into an Anglican wing of evangelical Christianity. It is structurally and liturgically Anglican, but its theological vision and cultural location share more common ground with evangelical, non-denominational churches, and with denominations such as the Southern Baptists, than with the Protestant mainline.

ACNA's bishops met January 6-10 in Melbourne, Florida, and afterwards issued a communiqué describing their deliberations. The statement made no mention of the Episcopal Church, but it staked out the boundaries of issues that not only distinguish ACNA from the church it left a decade ago, but also demonstrate its affinity with broader Christian orthodoxy.

Prayer Book and Catechism

Perhaps the clearest sign that ACNA is here to stay is its 802-page *Book of Common Prayer 2019,* which was written, ratified and published in less than a decade on a modest budget.

In July 2019, an article in *TLC* contrasted that accomplishment with TEC's inability at General Convention 2018 to agree on beginning a 12-year, $8 million effort to revise the 1979 BCP:

The ACNA prayer book retains more of the emphasis on sin and redemption that characterizes the historic Anglican liturgies. But it turns out that pronouns are important too, and some ACNA parishes want the new book in old language. The bishops approved an alternate version to meet that desire. "Parts of the traditional language version will be available electronically in the near future and the book will be in print by the summer of this year," the statement said.

ACNA is also developing "*Occasional Services*, and a lesser feasts and fasts book to be called *Sanctifying Time*." There is also a 72-page catechism already available, titled *To Be a Christian*.

The bishops also learned of an expanded music task force with an extensive new website at www.acna-musicresources.com — and therein lies a marker of ACNA's affinity with a non-Anglican evangelicalism. The Episcopal Church tends to use traditional hymns and choral pieces exclusively, while evangelicals lean toward contemporary "praise music," and ACNA is developing resources that will enable its churches to draw from both.

Global Anglican Relationships

ACNA "continues to maintain and develop strong, strategic, and growing relationships with Anglican provinces around the world," the bishops' statement said.

Since its early days, first under Archbishop Robert Duncan and since 2014 under Archbishop Foley Beach, ACNA has sought to position itself as the authentic, mainstream representation of Anglicanism in North America, and as a full-fledged member of the global Anglican Communion.

The church's website used to proclaim that ACNA is "a Province of the global Anglican Communion." After a firm rejection of that claim by the 2017 Primates' Meeting, ACNA's website now carefully states, "On April 16, 2009 [ACNA] was recognized as a province of the global Anglican Communion, by the Primates of the Global Fellowship of Confessing Anglicans." GAFCON describes itself as "a global family of authentic Anglicans standing together to retain and restore the Bible to the heart of the Anglican Communion."

GAFCON does not have authority to speak for the Anglican Communion as a whole, but it does include primates and other leaders from some of the Communion's most rapidly growing churches and dioceses, including the

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Churches of Nigeria, Uganda, Kenya, and the Anglican Church of Australia's Diocese of Sydney. Many provinces who identify with GAFCON also are engaged with the Canterbury-centered Instruments of Communion. Nine of the fourteen current members of GAFCON's Primates Council notably participated in the recent Primates' Meeting chaired by Archbishop Welby.

ACNA plays a significant role in the global GAFCON movement. Since 2018, Beach has been chairman of the Primates Council of GAFCON — despite the fact that ACNA membership is dwarfed by several of the African provinces.

Ecumenical relationships

"We continue dialogue with numerous church bodies with the goal of healing the Church and working towards Christian unity," the bishops said. This includes church bodies that have never been Anglican, but rather represent other conservative traditions. The statement cited ongoing relationships or discussions with:

- The Episcopal Missionary Church (which left TEC in a 1992 schism and today has a couple of dozen churches in the United States);
- The Independent Catholic Philippine Church (an offshoot of the million-member Philippine Independent Church that split from Rome in 1902, and is now in full communion with TEC);
- The New Day Kingdom Assembly of Churches; and
- The North American Lutheran Church (400 congregations, split from the far-larger Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in 2010).

There is no organized dialogue between ACNA and TEC.

Some benchmarking statistics: For 2018, ACNA reports "134,000 Anglicans in 1,062 congregations across the United States, Canada, and Mexico," while TEC reports 1,676,349 members in 6,423 congregations in the United States and 159,582 members in dioceses outside the United States.

Ordination of Women

The ordination of women is probably the largest source of conflict within ACNA. The recently retired founding bishop of ACNA's Diocese of Fort Worth went so far as to declare his diocese "in impaired communion" with ACNA dioceses that ordain women to the priesthood.

The Bishops' Working Group on Holy Orders reported on their deliberations over the past three years. "During this time, we have discovered again and again that there are layers upon layers of differences in ecclesiology, hermeneutics, theology, and tradition.

"We recognize that there is great pain over these differences both within our working group and throughout the Province," the bishops' statement said. When ACNA was founded in 2009, the Inaugural Assembly embedded the disagreement in its governing documents. ACNA's Constitution and Canons enable each diocese to make its own decision about ordaining women to the priesthood or the diaconate — but bishops' miters are reserved for men.

A 2018 chart prepared by *Anglican Pastor's* Joshua Steele shows that 10 of ACNA's 28 dioceses ordain female priests — including ACNA's largest diocese, South Carolina — but others do not. Several more will license women priests for ministry who have been ordained elsewhere. Steele's chart indicates that the dioceses that welcome women's ministry fully represent about 56% of the church's membership.

Sexuality

Differences on LGBT issues between ACNA and TEC can be seen as the mirror image of the issue of ordination of women. While women's ordination is largely settled on the TEC side, human sexuality is still contested among Episcopalians, despite a growing number of gay priests and bishops. Same-sex marriage is widely accepted now in the Episcopal Church, although a vocal minority still opposes the practice.

ACNA's position binds it closely to traditional Catholic and evangelical Christian bodies. Homosexual acts are considered sinful and incompatible with Scripture. The church, like many within evangelicalism, is currently debating what language to use in describing homosexual desires. Some categorize them merely as temptations to sin, while others feel they are better described as an orientation and identity, which Christians can claim while also choosing not to act on these desires.

"We had an engaging and unified conversation around the opportunity for pastoral care to those within our churches who are same-sex attracted," the bishops' statement said, acknowledging "the church has not always seen and heard" the stories of these people. A task force was assigned to consider "the kind of language that should be employed to describe a faithful follower of Jesus who seeks to live under the authority of Scripture while experiencing the reality of unwanted same-sex attraction."

Conclusion

Unlike numerous "continuing Anglican" churches that broke away from the Episcopal Church over the last fifty years, ACNA has developed into a large and influential institution in little more than a decade.

ACNA is not going away. Neither is

TEC, which despite the perverse cheerleading of certain anti-Episcopal bloggers is still 12 times larger than ACNA. But large-scale migration between the two entities is probably a thing of the past. The conservative Episcopal bishops who might be more at home theologically in ACNA have had plenty of opportunity to leave, and some have explicitly committed themselves to remaining in "communion across difference."

Future growth for ACNA — and any hope of reversing the numerical decline of TEC — will depend on providing an approach to Christianity that can draw in non-Anglicans and non-Christians.

There may be little chance of reconciliation between ACNA and TEC in this generation — there have been too many lawsuits and too many angry words. But new leaders willing to take risks for the sake of unity may be waiting in the wings. In the meantime, there's no reason why both churches cannot continue to make disciples of all nations, each in their own fashion.

A fuller version of this article is available at www.livingchurch.org.

Primates Say They Will Walk Forward Together

By Mark Michael

Archbishop Justin Welby praised the recent Anglican Primates' Meeting as "the most constructive and creative" he had led at a press conference on January 15. It pointed the way for next summer's Lambeth Conference to "draw a line under some of the inward-looking approach of the past," he said, adding that the large number of new primates weren't "bringing along with them some of the baggage of previous meetings."

Welby said there was "a real sense of people trying to walk together, to build up the life of the church and to look forward together." Archbishop Michael Lewis of Jerusalem and the Middle East, the host primate, described it as "a grown-up meeting," adding "it has not been bland. People have spoken from the heart and from the head."

Thirty-three of the leaders of the Anglican Communion's 40 provinces gathered January 13-15 at a hotel near the traditional site of Jesus' baptism in the Jordan. The primates of Nigeria, Uganda and Rwanda refused to attend and the others were not present "by virtue of vacancy, illness or other difficulty."

The primates, Welby said, "accepted and welcomed" a report from a task group commissioned among their members in 2016 to "maintain conversation among ourselves with the intention of restoration of relationship, the rebuilding of mutual trust, healing the legacy of hurt, recognizing the extent of our commonality and exploring our deep differences, ensuring they are held between us in the love and grace of Christ." They commended it for consideration by next summer's Lambeth Conference and by the Anglican Consultative Council's next gathering in 2022.

The report's contents have not yet been released, but Welby said that it "looks at how we can strengthen the bonds of affection across the Communion," and noted that "it enabled different voices to be heard." The primates' communique focused on the task force's summons of churches across the Communion "to set apart the Fifth Sunday of Lent (29 March 2020) as a day to focus on the prayers of repentance produced by the Task Group."

Archbishop Philip Freier of Australia, a member of the task group, told *The Church Times* that the report also recommends "the possibility of a Communion-wide eucharistic liturgy as a way of embodying our unity," and "affirms work that has been done in a number of places to better describe the theological characteristics of Anglicanism."

The Primates' Task Group had taken up its work after the 2016 meeting outlined "relational consequences" for the Episcopal Church after its decision to allow same-sex marriage in violation of Lambeth Resolution 1.10. The determination that the church "should not take part in decision making about issues pertaining to doctrine or polity" or have representation on Communion-wide faith and order bodies, was extended to the Scottish Episcopal Church at the 2017 primates' meeting.

But similar consequences were not handed down by the primates in the aftermath of the Episcopal Church of Brazil's similar actions in June 2018. Responding to a reporter's question, Welby indicated that the primates had not shown much interest in such disciplinary and boundary-defining action. "We didn't specifically discuss the formation of churches like that church," he said. "Funnily enough, there was very little discussion or desire to discuss some of those negative aspects."

In an interview with *Episcopal News Service*, Presiding Bishop Michael Curry described it as "A very good meeting," and said that the report from the Primates' Task Force acknowledged "that we have profound differences on human sexuality but those of us there have committed to walking together as followers of Jesus." He said that the primates have "come a long way since 2016. I think that's significant."

The communique also noted that

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the primates had granted approval to the creation of a 41st province out of what is now the Communion for Anglicans in Egypt, North Africa, and the Horn of Africa. It will be called the Province of Alexandria, taking its name, like its mother province of Jerusalem and the Middle East, from the ancient patriarchal see of the region. Because the creation of the province had already been approved by the Standing Committee of the Anglican Consultative Council, steps toward the inauguration of the province can now proceed.

The communique also highlighted the plight of persecuted Christians was highlighted, and the primates affirmed that "we are, as a body, strengthened by the resilience and faithfulness of these, our brothers and sisters." They expressed particular concern about the unwelcome takeover of the historic Anglican mission foundation Edwardes College by the local secular authorities in the state of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan.

The agenda for the Lambeth Conference was discussed by the primates at length, and they also strategized about how to effectively communicate the conference's themes in their home regions. The communique explained, "We explored how the bishops, gathered together in conference, might 'invite' the church and the world to join us as we collaborate in God's mission of building God's Church for God's world."

Methodists May Avoid Property Litigation While Splitting

By Kirk Petersen

The United Methodist Church is trying to achieve an amicable schism over issues of human sexuality. The 13-million member church is considering a proposal that, if successful, will avoid the years of property litigation that has cost the Episcopal Church untold millions of dollars.

Under the plan announced January 3, each Methodist annual conference (the equivalent of a diocese) would be able to vote on whether to join a new traditionalist Methodist denomination. Churches opposed to the decision made by their annual conference would be able to vote to join the opposite group. Conferences and churches that leave the UMC would retain their property and assets, and clergy and lay employees who leave would retain their pension rights.

Any church or annual conference that does not hold a vote would automatically stay with the continuing United Methodist Church, which would pay $25 million over four years to the departing congregations, as start-up funds for a new denomination. The new traditionalist Methodist church body would relinquish any further claim to UMC assets.

A nine-page "Protocol of Reconciliation and Grace through Separation" was negotiated over the past several months by bishops and other Methodist leaders representing a broad spectrum of opinion. Kenneth Feinberg, who was the special master of the September 11 Victim Compensation Fund, served as a pro bono mediator for the Methodist negotiators.

For now, the protocol is binding only on the 16 bishops, ministers, and lay leaders who signed it. The quadrennial General Conference will consider the proposal at its scheduled meeting May 5-15, 2020, in Minneapolis.

Just as with the Episcopal Church, the Methodists have weathered decades of conflict over issues such as same-sex marriage and the ordination of openly gay clergy. The Methodist Book of Discipline declares that the "practice of homosexuality" is "incompatible with Christian teaching." In February 2019, a special General Conference voted 53% to 47% to maintain the denomination's traditional stance.

The UMC and the Episcopal Church have been moving toward a full-communion relationship for decades, like the relationship between the Episcopal Church and the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America.

Alabama Elects First Woman Bishop as Coadjutor

The Rev. Dr. Glenda Curry was elected bishop coadjutor on the second ballot on January 18, 2020, and assuming she receives the necessary consents from bishops and standing committees, she will become the XII Bishop of Alabama, and the diocese's first woman bishop upon the retirement of the Rt. Rev. John McKee Sloan at the end of 2020.

Curry

Curry is scheduled to be consecrated a bishop on June 27, 2020, at the Cathedral Church of the Advent in Birmingham, which is also where the election was held. The chief consecrator will be another bishop named Curry, Presiding Bishop Michael B. Curry (no known relation).

She currently serves as the rector of All Saints' Episcopal Church in Birmingham, and is a 2002 seminary graduate of University of the South in Sewanee, Tennessee, Before ordination, she served as president of Troy State University in Montgomery, Alabama.

When a bishop is elected from outside the diocese, which is often the case, the candidate typically greets and thanks the convention via video linkup. Bishop-elect Curry's church is less than five miles from the election site, and she was able to address the gathering in person.

"I'm overwhelmed and I'm humbled," she said. "I know that we can do whatever God points us to do, with God's help. And that's what I'm going to count on, your help and God's help.

Bishop Roundup

Southern Virginia

The Episcopal Diocese of Southern Virginia has dropped plans to hold the February 1 consecration of Bishop-elect Susan Bunton Haynes at a Williamsburg Roman Catholic church, in the face of a firestorm of complaints from Catholic traditionalists.

A Change.org petition urging that the ceremony be barred from St. Bede Catholic Church gathered more than 3,000 signatures. The service will be held instead at Williamsburg Community Chapel.

The petition noted that "Pope Leo XIII solemnly declared Anglican ordinations to be 'absolutely null and utterly void,' and the Church has repeatedly reaffirmed the fact that women cannot receive the sacrament of ordination. Simulation of a sacrament is an excommunicable offense under canon law." Leo XIII was pope from 1878 to 1903.

Haynes wrote a letter to St. Bede's and to Richmond's Catholic bishop Barry Knestout, who had strongly defended the offer of the church as ecumenical hospitality. She wrote, "We have so appreciated and admired your grace and courage in extending this hospitality and abiding by your invitation even under fire from those within your own flocks."

El Camino Real

Lucinda Beth Ashby was ordained and consecrated on Jan. 11 as the fourth bishop of the Diocese of El Camino Real, in a ceremony at St. Andrew's Episcopal Church in Saratoga, California. Presiding Bishop Michael B. Curry was chief consecrator.

Ashby had been canon to the ordinary in the Diocese of Idaho since 2011. She succeeds the Rt. Rev. Mary Gray-Reeves, who served as bishop since 2007. Gray-Reeves has been named managing director of the College for Bishops, a virtual college that provides formation and educational opportunities for bishops, from consecration through retirement.

Minnesota

The Episcopal Church in Minnesota has announced that three additional candidates have joined the slate by petition in the diocese's search for the X Bishop of Minnesota. The three new candidates are:

- The Rev. Kara Wagner Sherer, rector, St. John's Episcopal Church, Chicago, Illinois
- The Rev. Robert Two Bulls, vicar, All Saints Indian Mission, Minneapolis, Minnesota; missioner for the diocese's Department of Indian Work and Multicultural Ministries
- The Rev. Erika von Haaren, vicar/COO, Saint Barnabas on the Desert, Scottsdale, Arizona.

They join the two candidates that were announced in December by the Search Committee:

- The Rev. Abbott Bailey, canon to the ordinary, Diocese of California.
- The Very Rev. Craig Loya, dean, Trinity Cathedral, Omaha, Nebraska.

An election was planned for January 25, with consecration of the new bishop scheduled for June 6.

Bird-Dogging and Bridge-Building: New Hampshire Clergy and the Primary

By G. Jeffrey MacDonald
Correspondent

New Hampshire Bishop Rob Hirschfeld talks with presidential hopeful Pete Buttigieg at a Love 2020 event at St Paul's Church in Concord. | Arnie Alpert photo

CONCORD, N.H. – Every four years, the Rev. Jason Wells gets the quintessential New Hampshire experience of bumping into presidential candidates and campaign staffers who want his vote in the first-in-the-nation primary. Like other clergy, he hopes to be heard on social issues important to him, such as hunger and the death penalty.

But how Fr. Wells and other clergy go about impacting the national debate in early voting states is a far cry from what it used to be. Methods have changed to keep pace with evolving campaigns — and to make clergy feel more comfortable about weighing in.

The landscape was different 12 years ago, when Wells went door-to-door drumming up support for then-candidate Barack Obama. He'd been recruited by a Team Obama staffer, who called on him at East Concord's Grace Church, where he was serving as rector. Joining up meant keeping his clergy profile ultra-low. Example: he never wore his clergy collar while canvassing.

"I made sure to go to neighborhoods where I suspected few of my parishioners would be coming from, just to be sure I didn't cross those boundaries in inappropriate ways," said Wells, who is now executive director of the New Hampshire Council of Churches.

Much has shifted in the run up to this year's Feb. 11 primary. Campaigns aren't targeting New Hampshire faith leaders so strategically anymore, Wells said. Many who minister in this increasingly purple state avoid all campaign events, lest they appear partisan by attending.

Instead they're finding venues where they can steer clear of the partisan fray, personalize issues for voters and improve the quality of political conversations. In taking such approaches, they're able wear their clergy identities visibly and still fight for the issues they care about.

"To engage on a specific issue, rather than a candidate, feels more honest to me as a Christian," Wells said. "When I'm thinking through issues, I'm also thinking through values, thinking through Scriptures and thinking theologically. I feel like I can represent the faith that's in me."

Changes on the campaign trail are part of what's nudging clergy to try new approaches to getting heard. Despite New Hampshire's reputation for retail politics, faith leaders (among other voters) struggle late in the campaign to get close enough to put questions to any major candidate, according to the Rev. Sandra Albom, curate at All Saints' Church in Peterborough and chaplain at Plymouth House, a substance abuse recovery center in Plymouth. When Albom and other clergy advocates in the statewide networks have sought to ask candidates how they'd address the opioid epidemic, staffers have deferred the question, instead saying primarily: "Read the candidate's website."

Accessing presidential hopefuls in New Hampshire wasn't always so difficult. The practice of "bird dogging," or pinning candidates with questions that allow no wiggle room for vague or noncommittal responses, is a New Hampshire tradition. So much so that the Quaker-affiliated American Friends Service Committee still trains clergy and others in how to do it effectively. But the time involved for a minimal payoff can be hard for busy clergy to justify.

Campaigns do all they can to prevent

Photo courtesy of Granite State Organizing Project

Senator Elizabeth Warren (center) with New Hampshire faith leaders in a barn where they discussed policy and values.

unscripted moments with candidates, according to bird-dogging trainer Arnie Alpert, who co-directs the AFSC's New Hampshire Program. He explained that at Senator Elizabeth Warren's events, she takes only three questions, which are allocated by lottery. Then it's on to the selfie line, where it's almost impossible to pose a question and record her answer on a smartphone.

"As soon as she does the selfie line, they turn up the music in the hall," Alpert said. "Then when you get up to the front of the selfie line, her staff people take your phone from you and then *they* take the selfie. What that does is keep you from using your phone to actually record the interaction."

Such obstacles have left clergy in New Hampshire looking for better ways to impact the national debate. Many have found their vehicle in Love 2020, a new program organized by the Granite State Organizing Project, a faith-based community organizing group. Candidates from both parties are invited to have intimate audiences with 20 or 30 faith leaders, who question them about immigration, economic justice, moral values and accountability.

Candidates have jumped at the opportunity. As of mid-January, 12 Democrats had taken part, including all top-tier contenders except Joe Biden, who was reportedly still interested, GSOP director Sara Jane Knoy said. Republican William Weld had participated as well.

For clergy, the format allows for championing what they regard as moral concerns with policy implications, such as keeping families together at the US-Mexico border. It also lets them openly bring their faith convictions and church roles into the discussion.

"We as people of faith have to go back — however you vote — you have to go back and say, 'OK, I voted for this person who I know isn't perfect, but I came as close as I could to what Jesus says,'" said Jonathan Hopkins, pastor of Concordia Lutheran Church in Concord, N.H. "Because Jesus is tough, man. Nobody [who's running for president] is coming anywhere near that."

With American society sharply divided by political tensions, faith leaders are choosing what type of voice suits them and their ministry settings. Some feel compelled to carve out a prophetic stance that involves supporting candidates who share their values and agendas, according to Connie Ryan, executive director of the Interfaith Alliance of Iowa.

But many avoid that terrain, she said, because of what they think it means to always be clergy, even when they're not working. Many cannot in good conscience provide a clergy endorsement for a candidate. Nor can they set their clergy status aside for a stint of overt politicking.

In deep purple pockets of New Hampshire, where Democrats and Republicans live side by side, clergy focus on helping the faithful understand key issues and one another rather than advancing particular outcomes at the ballot box.

That's the case for the Rev. Jay MacLeod, rector of St. Andrew's Church in New London, N.H. and priest at Epiphany Church in nearby Newport. Both towns are divided politically. Newport went for Donald Trump in 2016 while New London went for Hillary Clinton. Since the 2016 vote, St. Andrew's has been convening a 90-minute Faith & Issues Group every Saturday morning for discussing issues from immigration to mass incarceration and the environment. When the youth group hosted a forum on guns, teens and adults shared the stage in a demonstration of how widely divergent views can be debated respectfully.

It's "not my role as a Christian leader, nor the church's role as the body of Christ, to endorse candidates but rather to encourage people to reflect on how politics can advance God's kingdom and bring us a bit closer to a world without bloodshed, poverty or prejudice", MacLeod said in an email.

The congregation is politically varied, with libertarians singing hymns next to socialists. Enabling many views to be heard helps the congregation maintain its identity and authentic character, according to MacLeod.

"It takes some tending to safeguard this political plurality," MacLeod said.

Sometimes ministering in purple trenches involves healing. At St.

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Christopher's Church in Hampstead, N.H., the Rev. Zachary Harmon, rector, found a flock still nursing its wounds from the 2016 election when he came the next year.

Harmon described the last primary season as "not quite war within the parish but close to it," He added, "The impact on people in the parish, with the politicizing of everything, can be quite pronounced [in New Hampshire]. When people start to see each other as enemies, it becomes very difficult."

Harmon has cultivated opportunities for people on all sides to make personal connections with those directly impacted by hot-button issues. They meet refugee families, for instance, through a resettlement ministry that helps collect basic furnishings and household items for new arrivals settling nearby. Other outreach provides connections with homeless veterans and family members with loved ones battling opioid addictions.

"In a small town in New Hampshire, it can seem like it's just an issue in the big cities sometimes, that it doesn't happen in my neighborhood," Harmon said. "But this makes it clear that this impacts people."

Harmon's wife, the Rev. Kate Harmon Siberine, brings a different approach. She serves as rector of Grace Church in East Concord and is also planting a congregation in Franklin, where Tabitha's Table Dinner Church allows for structured conversation as worship unfolds over a meal.

"I want to have a different political conversation in this country," Siberine said. "The church is one of the last places where people of different political persuasions can get together and figure out, with some facilitation, how to have better conversations so that everything doesn't have to be a debate."

Worshipers at Tabitha's Table learn, through practice, how to listen as issues are framed through the lenses of their neighbor's values — which might be Christian-based but quite different from their own. The ground rules prohibit using worship to discuss particular presidential candidates, but campaign issues can be fair game.

"We're much more able to have an impactful conversation about health care when it's people talking about their insurance not covering a procedure that they need, as opposed to: 'What do you think about Obamacare?'" Siberine said.

As much as clergy are embracing new ways to frame and impact political discourse, old-fashioned campaigning for individual candidates still continues, albeit in evermore low-key ways. One New Hampshire Episcopal clergy family hosted meet-the-candidate receptions at home for Pete Buttigieg and Amy Klobuchar. The priest emphasized that the home is about an hour from the church and the receptions have no link to either the congregation or the priest's role. Nevertheless, the priest requested anonymity, out of concern about possible negative repercussions from hosting the events.

Others meanwhile are glad to be out in the open about their positions on issues and their status as clergy, even if it means they don't get to endorse anyone.

"As a Christian leader, I encourage people to think deeply about the issues from a spiritual standpoint that goes beyond what they're hearing on the news," Hopkins said. "For example: guns. It's not about guns. It's about violence… How does Jesus encourage us to think about violence, which is to be nonviolent? That's my thing. And I always say: then people vote how they vote. And that's between them and the Lord."

Mark Hatch contributed to this story

Via Media Ministry in the Crossfire

A Postcard from Hanover, New Hampshire

By Mark Hatch

The backroads of New Hampshire are lonely, austere and beautiful. Nothing is very far, though the distances can sometimes feel engulfing. Virtually every village or small city is anchored by a church, usually Congregational, joined on the common by a Civil War monument. In some older towns, like Hancock, they list hometown heroes going back to the French and Indian War. New Hampshire's "First in the Nation" presidential primary is a tradition from more recent history, but is fiercely guarded and enshrined in state law. Candidates stream in from around the country, and the buzz can sometimes be overwhelming.

"Parishioners don't want overt politics in the church", said the Rev. Dr. Guy. J.D. Collins, rector of St. Thomas Church in Hanover for 12 years. "We are the church for everyone."

"Parishioners are highly engaged, on both sides of the line", in whatever way they feel," he said. Collins noted that he has only been approached once by a parishioner about having a candidate speak at the church. "We strive to live by the ethos of the 'via media'," he said. In the pulpit and in common ministry, "I am their pastor, not their news machine."

Collins said he invites his congregation to go deeper in their approach to politics, to engage scripture deeply and to find their own way of answering God's call. He cited as an example last year's Lenten study with Dietrich Bonhoeffer's *The Cost of Discipleship.* St. Thomas aims at a reflective approach, waiting to see what kind of service and activism God might inspire within the life of the parish and in the wider world.

Mark Hatch is a priest of the Diocese of Western Massachusetts.

Belonging to Our Place

By Jamie Howison

The Anglican congregation of saint benedict's table (sic) has nearly always shared a building with the Parish of All Saints' in downtown Winnipeg. After 15 years as tenant-partners, our congregation has developed a strong sense of belonging in that place.

We hadn't realized how much the building has shaped us until this past summer, when major restoration work required us to temporarily relocate for about four months. We set about looking for an option suitable to our needs, and settled on Elim Chapel, a local non-denominational congregation which extended us a very warm and generous welcome.

We knew that the differences between the two church buildings would bring some challenges. All Saints' is a designated heritage building constructed in 1926 in the Gothic revival style. It has a high altar, rood screen, high open ceiling, and straight rows of fixed pews described by one of members as "soldier-straight." Aside from the removal of a few rows of pews to make room for a nave altar, the interior of the church looks very much like it did in the 1920s.

Elim Chapel, on the other hand, was built by a Presbyterian congregation at the turn of the 20th century. In the 1970s it was completely gutted by a fire and rebuilt within the old shell. From the outside Elim Chapel looks like a heritage building, but the inside bears few signs of the original church. There are stained glass windows and a pipe organ that replaced the ones lost in the fire, but otherwise it reflects late 20th century evangelical church design. Seating is configured in a semi-circle, with pews set in four wide sections. The floor is gently sloped and the pews upholstered, giving the space a theatre-like feel, which is accentuated by the high platform stage at the front. The entire sanctuary is carpeted. There is almost no acoustic resonance.

st. benedict's table at All Saints' Chuch (top) and Elim Chapel (below).

Interestingly, it was the acoustics we noticed first. It struck us immediately and deeply impacted the character of our worship. At All Saints', voices resound, filling the space, while music ensembles accompany the congregation. At Elim Chapel, musicians moved from "accompanying" from the side to "leading" from the front, relying on the high-quality PA system to compensate for muted voices and instrumental sounds.

During our last few weeks at Elim Chapel, I invited people to share reflections on our experience there. With a touch of wry humor, one person noted that when my associate and I preached, we "sounded rather like evangelical pastors," because of the lack of "'resounding' natural effect of acoustics." Another

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person focused on the way in which the room "shaped" how I presided:

> Because you do not have to wait for the reverb to finish as you do in the massive cavern that is All Saints', you were speaking into a "dead room," and you sped up all of your speech to match the space. It was one of the things I have loved about the way you presided [before]—how clearly and thoughtfully everything was said.

I'd had no idea the degree to which I, as a celebrant and preacher, was responding to the acoustics of a space.

We also felt the difference in the arrangement of the space. At Communion we were used to walking down the center aisle and gathering in circles around the Lord's table. Now, with three aisles and angled pews, we had to negotiate a different way. Describing it as "awkward," one person noted "the laughter, wide eyes and shrugging shoulders" as we fumbled our way into learning a new formation. One person also noted that, at All Saints', "one is conscious of intentionally deciding to step out and come forward to receive, then actually receiving with others," adding that, without a circle, this sense of risk and intimacy was hard to recapture.

More significantly, though (and perhaps paradoxically) was the loss of what several people described as "anonymity" and "privacy." This may seem an odd desire in a gathering of the Body of Christ, but it immediately made sense to me. The configuration of All Saints' makes it possible to slip in the door, take a seat near the back or off to the side, and participate as much — or as little — as desired. We are known as a community that welcomes people to land with us as a "second church home," and many who do are also involved in ministry elsewhere. For such people we are able to provide a resting place and some liturgical and sacramental refreshment, with nothing asked or required. Others come because they've had a hard, hurtful, or exhausting experience in another congregation. More than once we've been told that we were someone's "last chance for the church" congregation.

To enter the Elim Chapel sanctuary, you have to come through a large atrium, ascend to the second floor, walk through a reception area, and finally enter the worship space through a door in full view of most of the people already seated. From the door to the sanctuary, it isn't exactly possible to enter anonymously. It was a harder space for some people, who just wanted to slip in and test the safety of worshipping with us. But we were certainly *seen*. This positive take was nicely articulated by one congregant: "There's a transparency. A new vulnerability... It's not always a bad thing to have no place to hide."

Now that we're back at All Saints,' we haven't sunk into our private devotional silos. We sing as a congregation — and "lustily with a good courage," in Coverdale's words (Ps. 33:3). We exchange the peace. We receive Communion in circles, where we can see each other, and eucharistic ministers are encouraged to look into the eyes of each communicant as they speak the words of administration. For all that, it does remain possible for people to enter quietly and engage at their own level. That has been a defining part of our congregational life and ministry, part of our cultural DNA from the earliest days. Elim made us more aware than ever of the benefits — and perhaps the drawbacks — of living out our particular vocation.

Do our buildings shape us? How much difference does a physical space make to the worship and life of a congregation? We learned last year that our buildings do shape us, and give concrete shape to what we can do together. We also emerged with a strong reminder that before all else a church is a people, gathered together—to pray, sing, listen, reflect, worship, and break bread together—and then sent out, beyond the walls of the church building, as witnessing disciples of Jesus. Much as we longed to return to our creaky and familiar home, at Elim Chapel we learned more about who we are and how to remain that local manifestation of the Body of Christ called saint benedict's table.

The Rev. Jamie Howison is the founding pastor of saint benedict's table, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada.

Hearing God's Voice

By Jerry F. Davidson

This is my Father's world, and to my listening ears
All nature sings, and 'round me rings, the music of the spheres.
This is my Father's world: I rest me in the thought
Of rocks and trees, of skies and seas; his hand the wonders wrought.

This is my Father's world, the birds
their carols raise,
The morning light, the lily white,
declare their maker's praise.
This is my Father's world: he shines
in all that's fair;
In the rustling grass I hear him
pass, He speaks to me everywhere.

—Maltbie D. Babcock, 1901

Humans are never without sound. As I sit typing on a computer, I am aware of the tick-tick of the timer that will remind me of a cooking chore, the sounds of my fingers depressing the keys, the continuous whoosh of the traffic some distance away, and the gentle sound of the wind through the nearby trees.

We are also bombarded by loud, persistent, and frantic sounds. Cars pass by with throbbing sound systems. Our attention is riveted by pings, alerts, videos, and GIFs on our phones. Our ears are stuffed with ear buds. Authentic communication shrivels in this over-noisy world. Exchanges happen most easily over text.

We believe that God spoke, sometimes audibly, to biblical peoples, and I believe that God continues to speak to

us. We believe that God hears us when we pray, but have we failed to *listen* for him?

Careful listening as a skill was critical to primitive humanity. Auditory cues were often the difference between life and death. I often wonder when it was in the history of mankind that allowed us to begin to listen for pleasure. At what point did people begin to differentiate pitches and organize them? Who first beat on a hollow log, mimicking the "lub-dub" of the human heartbeat? Who made the first primitive flute? Who stretched a horsehair or catgut across a resonating body and plucked it? Or used the bow (minus its arrow) to sustain the sound?

After more than 60 years of being a musician, listening for pleasure has become a challenge. When it was a part of my job to go to concerts and recitals — sometimes as many as three a day — much of the pleasure evaporated. Now when I listen, I have to be very careful that I am not listening primarily to be critical. Even as a musician, I have to train and retrain myself for listening.

Many years ago, a humor magazine offered "music to listen to records by." Now music has too often taken the function of white noise. It spurs us to shop longer, and energizes or relaxes us at work. But it is not listened to.

Yet there is also something almost "automatic" about music. Alzheimer's patients who can no longer recognize their loved ones can to sing many hymns from memory. I have taught generations of children the names of Jesus' twelve disciples and the books of the Old and New Testaments with simple songs. Some sounds, once ingrained, are easy to recall.

Being surrounded by sounds is not always negative. It depends on what they are and what effect they have. Do they sharpen us, connect us? Do they teach or transport? Or are they doing the opposite?

Listening for God

How can we separate the noise and turn our attention to the important sounds that sharpen our ear for God? The liturgy is a festival of such sounds (and silences). It enables our spiritual survival, and bringing joy and deep pleasure. As it permeates our minds and hearts by repetition, it teaches us God's ways and attunes us to God's voice.

As a long-time church musician, I constantly ask, "How can we hear the voice of God in the liturgy?" Here are three pointers.

1. Attending to the readings

The archaic language of scripture can pose barriers, as can the reader's skills. Some parishes provide a printed copy of the text to help reduce the chance of distraction or mishearing. I think this is generally wise. With printed readings, worshipers are more likely to follow along closely as the lessons are read.

I prefer, though, only to listen, especially when the reader is one who can make the words come alive. The extra effort to listen with the ears and untether the eyes creates unique opportunity for inner illumination. Frequently as the lessons are being read, the words explode with meaning, and I hear God's word to me: an answer to a problem, a message of encouragement, consolation, or pure joy.

2. Attending to the music

I learned to play hymns at a very early age. They are a part of me. The lyrics have ministered to me at various crucial points in my life. We should never sing with more attention to the pitches and melody than the meaning of the words.

An interesting opportunity for listening arises when text and music don't agree. In Wagner's *Ring* cycle, only the use of leitmotivs tells us when Alberich, the dwarf, is lying. Noble ideas like "God is good," "love one another," or "peace on earth," can be minimized, diluted, or even negated by poor melodic construction, banal repetition, and minimal harmonic content.

Carefully considering the needs of one's audience is crucial for church musicians as they make decisions using music to help people listen to God. Worshippers may not be able to explain subtleties in tempo, key, texture, or medium, but God can still use them all to profound effect.

3. Attending to the sermon

One may prefer any number of thoughts, experiences, or distractions to a sermon. One may be hungry or tired. Young people—and plenty of their elders—often turn to a digital device or, failing that, sit there radiating an aura of sleepy boredom or ill will.

But this may be one of the prime ways in which God speaks to us in any given week. How many times have you heard a sermon in which a word, a phrase, or a sentence leaps out with an emphasis which maybe even the speaker never intended? After the service, I have heard more than one worshiper comment to the homilist, "You seemed to be speaking to me directly."

Listening to God in a sermon must go head-to-head with our ever-decreasing attention spans. Homilists must ask how much to accommodate or challenge. Like musicians, homilists must read their audiences like a classroom of students. How can my hearers be practically prepared not just to hear, but to listen?

Learning to Listen

Our leaders can only do so much to help us. Hearing God depends on whether I make a habit of opening my ears. In Susan Howatch's novel, *Ultimate Prizes* (something like a combination of Anthony Trollope's *Barchester Chronicles* and Grace Metalious's *Peyton Place*), one of the characters speaks as a spiritual advisor to a troubled priest:

> In your distress you were making so much noise that you wouldn't hear a communication from God even if He were transformed into an anthropomorphic deity who could thunder instructions to you in impeccable BBC English. The way forward at this moment, I assure you, is not to thrash around making a noise. What you have to do is listen — to listen to the silence and be calm.

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The Bishop Who Foretold Dresden

By John D. Alexander

Dresden, 1945, as viewed from the city hall. Wikimedia Commons

On February 4, 1944, a prominent Anglican bishop addressed Britain's House of Lords. He deplored the devastation wrought by the Royal Air Force (RAF) in nighttime raids on dozens of German cities: Lübeck, Rostock, Cologne, Hamburg, and Berlin, among others. His name was George Kennedy Allen Bell of Chichester.

Bishop Bell warned that not just military and industrial targets, but museums, libraries, churches, hospitals, schools, and architectural monuments were being destroyed indiscriminately along with residential areas. While apartment blocks could be rebuilt, cultural treasures were being lost forever that would be needed for the Germans' cultural renewal after the war.

He mentioned cities that had not yet been bombed: "Dresden, Augsburg, Munich are among the larger towns…." He hoped that RAF Bomber Command would restrict future attacks to the military installations and arms factories generally situated in such cities' outskirts, while avoiding town centers full of cultural monuments.

Biblical scholars remind us that "prophecy" involves much more than just foretelling the future. But Bell was speaking prophetically at multiple levels. All the cities he mentioned were eventually subject to devastating air raids before war's end. Dresden's bombing, in a series of attacks on February 13-15, 1945, has become infamous.

Bell was neither a pacifist nor a sentimentalist. He had been a committed anti-Nazi since the early 1930s. He fully supported the Allied war against Hitler even as his extensive ecumenical friendships with Germans such as Dietrich Bonhoeffer made him draw a crucial distinction between the Nazi regime and the German people.

Nor was Bell militarily naïve. In preparing his speech he relied on the advice and assistance of his friend Captain B. F. Liddell Hart, the noted military historian and strategist. Bell accepted the necessity of air raids on Germany, provided that they were directed at targets like military bases, airfields, arms factories, railroad yards, naval docks, radio stations, radar installations, and oil refineries.

However, in 1942, responding to effective German air defenses and limitations in navigation and targeting technology, Bomber Command adopted a policy of "area" or "obliteration" bombing. Instead of aiming at specific targets, the strategy was to mass as many bombers as possible over an urban area by night and to drop as many bombs as possible. The hope was that at least some assets of military, industrial, or administrative significance would be engulfed in the general devastation below. The violence was indiscriminate. In each raid, vast residential areas were destroyed, and thousands of civilians were killed.

Bell understood that this policy violated the Christian just war tradition's *jus in bello* norms of discrimination, noncombatant immunity, and proportionality. He granted that unintended civilian casualties were inescapable in necessary raids against military targets. But the sheer extent of noncombatant suffering and death caused by area bombing was entirely out of proportion.

"I fully realize," Bell declared, "that in attacks on centers of war industry and transport the killing of civilians when it is the result of bona-fide military activity is inevitable. But there must be a fair balance between the means employed and the purpose achieved. To obliterate a whole town because certain portions contain military and industrial establishments is to reject the balance."

By early 1944, technological innovations and Allied air supremacy could have made a switch to "precision bombing" feasible. But under Sir Arthur ("Bomber") Harris' obstinate leadership, the RAF continued area bombing through the war's end. Bell's speech had not the slightest effect on military policy. But some suggest it cost him any prospect of becoming Archbishop of Canterbury when William Temple died suddenly eight months later.

The speech's real value lay in putting a statement of prophetic Christian witness on record. Future generations could to look back see a clear voice of conscience raised to protest this immoral strategy.

The bombing's 75th anniversary raises the question of why the name "Dresden" has taken on iconic significance. Using the same strategy, Bomber Command undertook similar attacks over a four-year period against dozens and dozens of enemy cities.

True, the Dresden raid was horrific. Swollen with refugees fleeing advancing Soviet armies on the Eastern Front 80 miles away, the city was largely undefended, with inadequate air-raid shelters. The RAF's aiming point was the town center, where the ancient timbers of medieval buildings quickly caught fire when pummeled by high-explosive "blockbuster" bombs and a rain of incendiary devices. The resulting firestorm killed an estimated 25,000 civilians.

It was, however, neither the first, last, nor deadliest raid of the war. The British bombing of Hamburg on July 27, 1943 caused a similar firestorm, killing about 42,000 civilians. Less than a month after Dresden, the American firebombing of Tokyo (March 9, 1945), killed about 100,000 and left over a million homeless. It was the single most destructive bombing raid in human history. Then came the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

What may be special about Dresden, however, is that it was the first city whose destruction awakened significant numbers of consciences on the Allied side. The Nazi propaganda machine disseminated hundreds of photographs documenting the carnage, which soon appeared in British and American newspapers.

Public revulsion ensued, heightened by Dresden's cultural significance as home to a vast collection of artistic treasures, and led to widespread questioning of the city bombing. Bishop Bell's House of Lords speech of a year earlier may have sown seeds of conscientious doubt that began to blossom.

The questioning reached the highest levels of government. In a memo of March 28, 1945, Prime Minister Winston Churchill wrote: "It seems to me that the moment has come when the question of bombing German cities simply for the sake of increasing the terror, though under other pretexts, should be reviewed. Otherwise we shall come into possession of an utterly ruined land. … The destruction of Dresden remains a serious query against the conduct of Allied bombing." After vehement RAF objections to the word "terror" as the bombing's objective, Churchill removed the offending phrase in a revised draft. By then, however, the point was moot with the European war almost over.

Historians and ethicists continue to debate whether the Dresden raid was militarily and morally justified.

Historians and ethicists continue to debate whether the Dresden raid was militarily and morally justified. Some defend it as a legitimate attack against a vital center of administration, communications, transportation, and industry crucial to the enemy's efforts to resupply the Eastern Front. Others condemn it as a moral outrage that killed tens of thousands of civilians for negligible military gains.

In the years since, the Dresden bombing has become something of a political football. Until 1989, the city was located in Communist East Germany, whose government pointed to the city's destruction as an instance of Anglo-American terrorism. Since German reunification, far-right and neo-Nazi groups have appropriated that rhetoric, using the controversial and offensive term *Bombenholocaust* (holocaust by bombing) to describe the conflagration. At the opposite end of the political spectrum, German Antifa groups annually celebrate Bomber Harris for killing hundreds of thousands of Germans that they regard as complicit in Nazi crimes.

In today's polarized political discourse, the memory of Dresden all too easily becomes a symbol and catalyst of division. A more hopeful and ultimately Christian approach looks instead to its potential as a signpost of reconciliation.

One of the most beautiful buildings destroyed in the Dresden firestorm was the baroque *Frauenkirche* — the Lutheran Church of Our Lady. For 60 years following 1945, its ruins stood in silent witness to the war's devastation. But in 2005 it was painstakingly reconstructed and returned to service as a home for a worshiping community.

The gold orb and cross on the church's dome were forged by Alan Smith, a London goldsmith whose father participated in the RAF raid on Dresden. On the main altar stands a cross of nails given by Coventry Cathedral in England — itself destroyed by the Luftwaffe on November 14, 1940 and rebuilt after the war. In the past 15 years, the Dresden *Frauenkirche* has become a center of worldwide ecumenical pilgrimage, hosting, among others, Catholic groups from neighboring Czech Republic and Poland, early victims of German wartime aggression.

Such symbolic gestures of repentance, reconciliation, and forgiveness testify to shared hope for a future free from such mass atrocities. In a world where war itself is unlikely to be abolished anytime soon, the urgent work continues of trying to limit noncombatant suffering and death as far as possible. Bishop Bell would approve.

The Rev. John D. Alexander, a priest of the Episcopal Diocese of Rhode Island, is writing a book on the Church of England in the Second World War.

EDITORIAL

Farewell, Methodist Catholicism

We Anglicans like to take credit for starting the ecumenical movement, but the real human dynamo behind the work was a Methodist layman. John Mott (1865-1955), a former Iowa farm boy, was the longtime leader of the college student wing of the YMCA, an organization then more focused on Bibles than barbells. Mott built connections with student Christian movements around the world, travelling an estimated 1.7 million miles in the days before air travel. He preached Christ to unbelievers and called the half-convinced to total consecration. Along the way, he came to see that Christian division stood in the way of the Spirit's work.

Mott chaired the 1910 Edinburgh World Missionary Conference that issued a bold call: "The world for Christ in a generation." The ecumenical movement was born out of the delegates' common conviction that expanded mission demanded fuller unity. Mott was a movement builder, forging relationships between young leaders through associations and conferences and building consensus around the gospel's call to conversion, social transformation, and Church unity. When the World Council of Churches first met in 1948, three-quarters of the delegates had been formed by the student Christian movements Mott had shaped.

Mott brought his ecumenical passion and his gifts as a parachurch ministry organizer to his own fervent Methodism. Somewhat unusually for movement leaders, he was deeply committed to the institutional Church, and shared his talents in gathering up the scattered limbs of American Wesleyanism. As part of the 1939 Unity Conference, Mott chaired the meeting which fused the three main mission boards of the Methodist church. Well into his eighties, he helped create the World Methodist Council in 1955.

In 1968, the United Methodist Church brought together English and German-descended church bodies. They did so by holding hands in a Dallas convention center and praying in words that speak from the heart of Mott's vision: "Lord of the Church, we are united in thee, in thy Church, and now in the United Methodist Church."

Methodism began as a movement, a voluntary association in a great age of such societies. It initially gathered members of different churches for gospel preaching and mutual encouragement. It had no ministry or sacraments, little need for dogma or canon. Early Methodism was much like Mott's YMCA, with room for freedom and flexibility, and only as much mutual loyalty as its members found necessary.

At Baltimore in 1784, Methodism took on the functions of a church almost accidentally. The decision can be parsed as a genuine call to mission or a burst of wearied impatience. But a few ordinations do not automatically transform a group of people used to living as a movement into a church. A church ethos takes time, and Methodism's early controversies and resulting tendency to easy — almost natural — division show a movement's old habits dying slowly.

Mott's great ecumenical project pushed Methodism in a different direction. Across the decades of the twentieth century one can trace a clear catholicizing trajectory, fostered alongside an enduring zeal for soul-winning and "social righteousness." The whole gospel, Methodists increasingly believed, must be shared by a united Church — multiregional, multilingual, even multinational, as United Methodist missions in Africa grew rapidly in the late twentieth century.

The drive toward unity was accompanied by a liturgical awakening that resulted in the current Book of Worship's rich anthology of eucharistic prayer. Thomas Oden's mid-career conversion to the great tradition sparked a renewal of orthodox doctrinal scholarship. Bolstered by institutions like Duke Divinity School, United Methodists increasingly claimed the fulness of their Wesleyan heritage — not just John Wesley's vigorous preaching and penchant for social reform, but his indebtedness to Greek patristics and Charles Wesley's eucharistic spirituality.

The various attempts at Methodist-Anglican unity have all failed, mostly because Anglicans got cold feet. Though often castigated as timid rigorism or imperious snobbery, thoughtful Anglican reluctance came armed with lots of reasonable questions about how far along the trajectory from movement to church Methodism had actually advanced.

Movements towards structural unity between churches, as opposed to open-ended dialogues, demand deeper consensus about intention, the setting aside — or careful codifying — of former flexibility. Inevitably we come down to the enduring brass tacks that anchor Catholic Christianity in place. Are Methodists actually

committed to the apostolic creeds? Do they share common commitments to a robust doctrine of sacramental efficacy? Is their understanding of ministry ontological or purely functional? The answers to such questions remain troublingly unclear, as demonstrated by the 2010 United Methodist-Episcopal dialogue text, "Theological Foundation for Full Communion."

Until very recently, though, a conscientious Catholic Anglican had to marshal his qualms against a breathtaking trajectory of incipient Methodist catholicism. Perhaps they were vague on the creeds and contradictory on baptismal regeneration, but United Methodists had a book of discipline full of ancient ascetical wisdom and a treasury of robust sacramental liturgy. They had knit together all those old denominations. That must surely count for a great deal.

Most importantly, Methodists were committed to living together across the divisions over biblical authority and sexual morality that have shaken all the churches in recent decades. Anglicans can invoke provincial autonomy to hive off the challenge, but Methodists had Africans in their own church. Slowly, they were even granting non-domestic conferences proportional representation in their governing bodies. Progressive Western Christians never surrender their power to conservatives from the Global South. Surely this is an axiom of modern ecclesial geopolitics. There's still never been an African pope or archbishop of Canterbury. But those catholicizing Methodists would heed the word of the poor. They would obey the voices rising from the continent of evangelists and martyrs. Despite it all, Mott's enduring witness would hold true: "Lord of the Church, we are united in thee, in thy Church, and now in the United Methodist Church."

Or maybe not. The United Methodist Church has heaved with anguish since its General Conference voted last summer to maintain and enforce the traditional definition of marriage in the *Book of Discipline*. Church leaders hired an experienced mediator, and plans were announced a few weeks ago for an amicable separation, the final decision to be made at a General Conference later in the year.

It's a clean and tidy plan, with the progressives taking up the now deeply ironic "United Methodist" name and most of the financial resources. The conservatives, mostly from the Global South, will depart with a promise of $25 million to start their own denomination. They hope that the resulting churches will relate to one another ecumenically, that is, amicably. "The United Methodist Church and its members," the agreement says, "aspire to multiply the Methodist mission in the world by restructuring the Church through respectful and dignified separation." Mott's vision hits the ground with a thud.

Plenty of Episcopalians and ACNA Anglicans rose in rare chorus on social media to sing the praises of the deal. "If only we had done it this way," they say, "think of all the money that we would have saved." Indeed, had we set aside the Dennis canon, the angels would have rejoiced. If only we had found a way to heed St. Paul's probing question, "When one of you has a grievance against a brother, does he dare go to law before the unrighteous?"

Despite these real sins, and the consequent scandal of good money squandered, it's also true that we Anglicans have never managed anything like the "dignified separation" envisioned by the United Methodist settlement. We call one another schismatics, but those who break away do so only to cleave closer to another part of our common, dysfunctional Anglican family. There are plenty of impaired communion declarations, boundary-crossing bishops, and rival instruments binding different parts of the same would-be communion. It's a mess to be sure, but the Archbishop of Canterbury has still broken bread in every primate's kitchen and all of the dioceses end up one day on the Anglican Cycle of Prayer.

Maybe, as an Anglican Communion official suggested recently, we're crossing a line from the end of the war to the beginning of the peace. Maybe a new generation will lead with more patience and charity, as they do already in places like Nashotah House and the Diocese of Pittsburgh, where doors have been carefully left open just a little, and the light still burns in case there are second thoughts.

Maybe we're learning to "walk together at a distance" (in current Anglican parlance), in hopes that our paths may eventually converge again. Maybe there are possibilities, like the new Cairo Covenant, which can help us make real commitments to each other, building what Ephraim Radner calls a "thicker Communion" to address the undeniable "ecclesial deficit" in our mutual relationships.

At least, thanks be to God, we have left it all a tangled mess, evidence of our sin and of God's sole capacity to sort it out properly. Catholic churches, and churches that hope to be catholic, unlike voluntary associations, cannot cleanly divide.

The United Methodists still have time to settle their troubles. May God grant that such a splendid catholic trajectory won't end in those cold words: "I have no need of you."

Zion Episcopal Church, Talbotton, Georgia

Halston Pitman | MotorSportMedia photo

The Gnat Line's Gothic Treasure

By Stephen Herbert

The impious simile "hot as hell" really doesn't apply to Talbotton, Georgia, in August. Not because it isn't hot, but because hell's heat can't possibly be this humid. All those fires in the netherworld must dry the air out a little.

Your correspondent is standing in front of Zion Episcopal Church in Talbotton, having just tried a front door he knew would be locked, in spite of the cardinal virtue of hope. It was not just locked, incidentally, but locked with a hand-forged lock on a door original to this remarkable church, built around 1848.

A horsefly the size of a bus has been waiting for my arrival. As it descends from the darkness of the portico ceiling I decide to amble around the church, which is a remarkable example of rustic "Carpenter Gothic" architecture: easily the most remarkable in Georgia, not only for its design, but also for its location and context.

Talbotton is in a poor region. The economic boom that has blessed metro Atlanta and some other areas in Georgia has reduced the poverty rate in the state for the first time in decades, by a substantial 3%. Talbotton has missed that boom, as have many rural parts of the Piedmont of Georgia, the belt of farmland that was mythologized by a certain Book That Shall Not Be Named. Talbotton's central streets are named for the first ten U.S. presidents, the sum total the country had inaugurated at the time of the town's founding. A Harrison or Polk street is rare enough, but Talbotton may have the only Van Buren Street in Georgia.

In the 1840s, Talbotton was the frontier. The land had just been purchased from the Creek Indians who had wanted to leave, and wrested from those who did not. Offshoots of South Carolina planters came this way to invest their fortunes in Georgia's frontier. Zion was built at some point at the end of the decade. The Diocese of Atlanta lists its consecration date as 1853, almost certainly a few years after its construction.

Talbotton is as far south and nearly as far west as one can go on Piedmont soil. It lies just north of the Fall Line, the border between the upland granite

and clay lands of the Piedmont, and the sandy southern Coastal Plain. Some Georgians equate the Fall Line to the Gnat Line, north of which the little critters are not supposed to travel. Someone has not told Talbotton's gnats that they are trespassing in north Georgia.

Back to Zion, and my gnat-accompanied perambulation. Your correspondent is not an architectural historian, but he knows a classy church when he sees one. Even an untrained eye can tell that the proportions and details of this church are Just Right, although a few details, like the "crenellated parapets" (quoth the National Register nomination) are looking a little raggedy.

Although apocryphal literature references Zion alongside the work of British neo-Gothic architect Richard Upjohn, it was almost certainly built before the 1852 publication of his book *Upjohn's Rural Architecture.* South Carolina planters had fashionable and discriminating taste. Leaving moral judgments aside, if only for a moment, Zion demands that the observer conclude the following, whether we like it or not: antebellum Southern Episcopalians were aristocrats, and like all aristocrats, they had no tolerance for the second rate. They also had no tolerance for poverty, so when the land had exhausted its riches, they left — most often for Atlanta and the comfort of professions not tied to agrarian economics.

Poverty can be a worthy preserver of buildings, but only to a point. Zion's exterior is at that point. The hellish heat and humidity of Georgia is tough on exteriors. An expensive and preservation-worthy re-roofing was done some years ago so that the usual slayers of buildings — gravity and water — have been kept at bay. The formidable lock and equally formidable horsefly are keeping me from the interior, but I've heard that for the moment it is safe.

On a visit more than a decade ago, I saw the interior, virtually unaltered. If you know organs, then you'll appreciate that Zion's is an original Pilcher, circa 1852. The roof beams are white cedar, the box pews, floor and walls are heart pine, and the pulpit is walnut, all from local forests. All the ironwork was locally forged. Also preserved is a moral rebuke in architectural form: a slave gallery supported by Tudor arched aisles. When I saw it, I thought of Psalm 137:

> For there they that carried us away required of us a Song;
> and they that wasted us required of us mirth, saying
> Sing us one of the Songs of Zion.

What does one do with a church like this, sited where history is as thick as the humid air? On my past visits the church seemed like an intact ruin. Like the Parthenon, the descendants of the builders were present, but seemed to have lost the religious narrative for the building's existence. Few went near it, as though they were waiting for its inhabitants to return from some quasi-mythical past to take possession, and fill it with mysterious, unknown rites.

Now, at least, an enterprising group has taken custody of the church: Zion Restoration Group was formed earlier this year to raise the $200,000 necessary to restore the church exterior. My gnat-clouded eyes didn't deceive me — the tower is beginning to lean; Zion Restoration has made its repair an urgent priority.

Earlier this year the Diocese of Atlanta generously deeded the church to the Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation, which, in turn, generously deeded it to Zion Restoration. The Georgia Trust maintains a conservation easement and is giving the Restoration Group valuable help and advice. Talbotton residents are involved as well, helping ensure that the church will remain a source of local pride rather than a neglected curiosity.

Zion Restoration Group has a Facebook page. Donations may be sent to David Jordan, Treasurer, PO Box 66, Talbotton GA 31827.

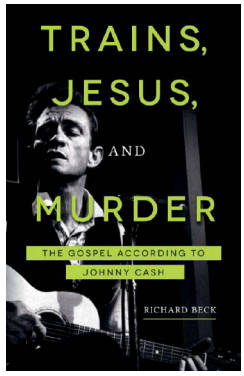
Stephen Herbert serves the church in rural Eastern Alabama.

BOOKS

Johnny Cash's Rooted Gospel

Review by Jody Howard

"We are from Germany and we are looking for the grave of Johnny Cash." I was bemused when the visitors outside our church office said these words to me, but it was not the last time I would hear them.



Trains, Jesus and Murder
The Gospel According to Johnny Cash
By **Richard Beck**.
Fortress, pp. 205, $13.99.

In 2010, I was called to St. Joseph of Arimathea in Hendersonville Tennessee. The church sits at the corner of Country Club Drive and East Main Street. But that stretch of Tennessee 31E has another name in Hendersonville: Johnny Cash Parkway. A storied resident of the community, arguably his fame has spread — or at least deepened — since his death in 2003. By the time I moved to Hendersonville, his grave, which is six tenths of a mile from the church, had become a pilgrimage site for many people, remarkably for some from Germany and Eastern Europe, as well as others.

I've been a fan of Cash since I picked up *American II: Unchained* in my senior year of high school.

(Continued on next page)

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Over the years it's been intriguing to see the staying power of his music. I've observed younger people find their way to it, as I did, and then work their way backwards in his catalogue. You never know who'll say "I love Johnny Cash."

In *Trains, Jesus, and Murder: The Gospel According to Johnny Cash,* Richard Beck reflects on what makes Cash's music enduring, but more specifically, how his music embodies and furthers a particular understanding of the gospel. Beck, a professor of psychology at Abilene Christian University who also studies and writes theology, finds Cash's gospel faithful, attractive, and relevant for people today.

Beck's affinity for Cash is experiential. From the beginning of the book, it is clear that Beck and Cash are connected by their concern for and ministry to those in prison. Beck leads a weekly Bible study for inmates at a maximum-security prison. This prompted him to purchase his first Cash album, *At Folsom Prison*, "figuring it would be a great thing to listen to as [he] drove out of town on country roads toward the prison each week"

Trains, Jesus, and Murder is divided into four parts, treating the themes family and faith (part 1), sinners and solidarity (part 2), nation and nostalgia (part 3), and suffering and salvation (part 4). An epilogue, "The Gospel Road" closes out the book. The themes lifted up in the four sections are examined in fifteen chapters, each titled with the name of a Cash song, which provides a scaffolding for the chapter.

Songs introduce opportunities to reflect on Cash's personal history, the song origins, and the ways that Cash's writing was inspired by and reflected on his faith. Beck also offers interesting parallels between Cash's songs and scripture. Beck unearths from Cash's music and life, a series of recurring themes, including a focus on regret, solidarity and compassion, the dangers of nostalgia, and most significantly, the deep hope of faith in Jesus.

One flaw in Beck's analysis is that he overestimates Cash's uniqueness in writing songs shaped both by Gospel hymns and murder ballads. I immediately thought about the recently released podcast *Dolly Parton's America*, in which this other legend of country music characterizes many of her early works as "sad ass songs." Some of those, including murder ballads, were traditional, while others are original compositions. I think that's a fair appellation for much of Cash's music as well. Indeed, "trains, Jesus, and murder" could summarize swaths of bluegrass, old time, folk and Americana music. And yet, Beck does have a point. Cash may not be the only artist to sing about these things, but as an artist he's more fully defined by them than anyone else, distilling, and perhaps perfecting, this broader lyrical tradition.

Cash's association with these themes evokes a kind of nostalgia, but one shot through with solidarity, and pointing toward the Christian hope. Parton and Cash are different in this. While Dolly mostly left behind her "sad ass songs," connecting with new audiences through a more jubilant vision of hope. But as his life and career advanced, Cash seemed to double down on the tradition. He delved ever deeper, especially in his late career revival with American Recordings, plumbing his history, his identity, roots and place, and especially his faith, offering a sometimes apocalyptic hope *from within* that context.

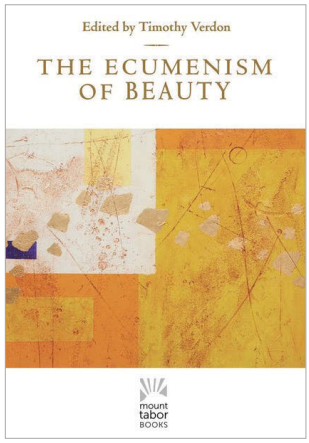
In *Dolly Parton's America,* Dolly is asked by the host Jan Abumrad where home is. Her answer (paraphrased) is that she lives all over—that the world is her home. It's hard to imagine Johnny Cash offering the same response. Both Parton's and Cash's work seems to pour forth like a spring from the rocks of the places where they're from, but the streams flow in different directions. And yet, Germans and Poles still show up in Hendersonville looking for Johnny Cash's grave. For all its rootedness, Cash's music clearly tapped into deep human experience.

Jody Howard is canon to the ordinary of the Diocese of Tennessee.

Rekindling the Desire to See More

Review by Stephen Platten

It may seem more than perverse and unusual to recommend reading a book backwards, but this is a most unusual book! The book is beautifully produced in hardback with superb illustrations, and edited by Monsignor Timothy Verdon, a priest and art historian, and academic director of the Mount Tabor Centre for Art and Spirituality in Barga, Italy. But alongside this, the book is unusual in approaching ecumenism through art and in doing so, producing a volume with a multidisciplinary integration of theology, spirituality and aesthetics.



The Ecumenism of Beauty
Edited by **Timothy Verdon**
Mount Tabor Books/Paraclete Press,
pp. 120. $22.00.

The suggestion of beginning to read from back to front is serious. Having read the introduction, it is Verdon's final chapter that superbly crystallizes the argument of the book. The earlier chapters can then be seen as commentary and worked examples

of the main theme of the entire volume.

In his final chapter, Verdon argues that Exodus 36:1 can be seen as the basis for the Judeo-Christian concept of art. On p. 85, quoting from Exodus, we read: "the artists whom the Lord had blessed with wisdom and intelligence so that they might execute the works required for the construction of the sanctuary" were guided by Moses himself to make "everything just as the Lord commanded." From here onwards Verdon extrapolates his argument, based on the notion of "art as a sign of covenant." Although, as he indicated, Christ was critical of the Temple and its traditions, nonetheless Christ himself and the New Testament more generally build upon this. Using material from the Gospel of John and later the Letter to the Hebrews, Verdon, seeing Christ as the "new temple," weaves together imagery, ritual and the liturgy into a convincing and attractive integrity.

Throughout, he uses beautifully presented images from several Italian sources including Sant'Apollinare in Classe in Ravenna; the Sanctuary at Greccio; and the Capitoline Museum in Rome. Earlier chapters explore these themes from different angles. The volume issues from a symposium in 2017 commemorating the 500th anniversary of the Reformation. The symposium was promoted by the ecumenical monastic family, the Community of Jesus, and the book engages significantly with the community's gathering place, the Church of the Transfiguration at Cape Cod. So, there are essays by Protestants, Orthodox, and Catholics, and from theologians and artists.

Jerome Cottin reviews Calvin's attitude to imagery. He argues that Calvin still had a developed aesthetic theology and he points to the art of celebrated Calvinist artists: Rembrandt, Van Gogh and Mondrian. He indicates also the influence upon Le Corbusier, Giacometti and Klee, even where they were acknowledged unbelievers. William Dyrness argues for an increasing openness of Protestantism to beauty.

Susan Kanaga was raised as an Episcopalian and is a member of the Community of Jesus. As an artist, she has contributed significantly to the artwork in the Church of the Transfiguration and some of her work is included in the book. Vasileios Marinis from the Orthodox tradition introduces the work of Fotis Kontoglou, again including images within his chapter. Martin Shannon focuses on the Church of Transfiguration itself but begins with the famous quotation from Gregory of Nyssa on imagery: "One must always, by looking at what he can see, rekindle his desire to see more." Beauty draws us out to perceive more, and notably, spiritually.

All this is enfolded into a plea to see theology and aesthetics as drawing Christians closer together, making them key elements within ecumenical theology. The brevity of the book makes it tantalizing and it would also have helped to have been given some background on the contributors. This is, however, an original and stimulating way into advancing the search for Christian unity while at the same time enriching our understanding of theological aesthetics.

Stephen Platten is honorary assistant bishop in the Dioceses of London, Newcastle, and Southwark.

Hearing God's Voice

(Continued from page 17)

Later in the same book, another character serving as a spiritual advisor says,

> Watch out for the phrase which keeps recurring on the lips of different people; watch for the incident which strikes the court of memory… Examine every event which occurs in your life and ask yourself if there's something to be learned even from the most apparently irrelevant occurrence.

Begin listen carefully today, and help others do the same.

Jerry Davidson has served as a professor of music and parish music director in Arkansas, New Jersey, Texas, Louisiana and Connecticut. He is chair of the Committee on Continuing Education for the American Guild of Organists.

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The Rev. Dn. **Eugene A. Bourquin** is deacon of Holyrood-Santa Cruz, New York.

The Rev. **Matthew Bradley** is dean of Christ Church Cathedral, Louisville, Ky.

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The Rev. **Rosa Brown** is associate for Hispanic Ministries at Trinity Cathedral, Phoenix and vicar of Santa Maria, Phoenix.

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Mr. **Christian Gilette** is canon for evangelism and discipleship in the Diocese of San Diego.

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The Rev. **Margaret Shepard** is priest-in-charge of St. Mary's, Milton, Fla.

The Rev. **Katherine Walker** is missioner for black ministries in the Diocese of North Carolina.

The Rev. **Clint Wilson** is rector of St. Francis-in-the-Fields, Harrods Creek, Ky.

Retirements

The Rev. Dn. **Gerri Aston** as deacon of St. Andrew's, Birmingham, Ala.

The Rev. Canon **Zabron "Chip" Davis** as canon to the ordinary of the Diocese of West Tennessee.

The Rev. Dn. **Cindy Obier** as archdeacon of the Diocese of Louisiana.

The Rev. **Jim Reed** as rector of St. Peter's, Washington, N.C.

The Rev. **John Robertson** as vicar of the Bishop Whipple Mission, Morton, Minn.

The Rev. **Bruce Robison** as rector of St. Andrew's, Pittsburgh.

The Rev. **Robert L. Van Doren, Jr**. as senior associate of St. John's, Memphis, Tenn.

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Florida: **Christopher Dell** (associate chaplain, Episcopal School of Jacksonville, Fla.).

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SUNDAY'S READINGS | 5 Epiphany, February 9

Isa. 58:1-9a, (9b-12); Ps. 112:1-9, (10); I Cor. 2:1-12, (13-16); Matt. 5:13-20

Lose Yourself in Christ

In today's collect, we ask, "Set us free, O God, from the bondage of our sins, and give us the liberty of that abundant life which you have made known to us in your Son our Savior Jesus Christ." We have the solemn promise, "he that the Son sets free is free indeed" (John 8:36). This freedom, however, is offered in the fragility and temptations of every moment, a freedom which, in Christ the head of the Church, is secure; but, which, in the all-too-human members of the church, in their weakness and exposure to surrounding evils, is often lost. This loss is not permanent, to be sure, but we find it again and again in what is and feels like "the bondage of our sins." "We have," thanks be to God, "an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the perfect offering for our sins, and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world" (I John 2:1-2).

Consider for a moment the plural form of the word *sins,* and then consider *your sins.* Are they not, both in flesh and spirit, the same sins over and over? Are we not addicted and trapped by ingrained patterns of thinking and behaving? The sins may be different from person to person, but the repetition and predictability is remarkable and depressing. What are we to do? Who will deliver us from this body of death? We confess and Christ forgives; we avail ourselves of his grace and press on in hope. This is one way. There is another. We loosen, by God's augmenting help, our bondage to our own sins by obsessing less over our failure and focusing more on relieving the pain of others. We help ourselves by helping others; that is, by helping one another.

The prophet Isaiah, speaking for God, cries with the voice of a trumpet, "Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover them, and not to hide yourself from your own kin?" (Isa. 58:6-7). Jesus calls sinners to be the salt of the earth and light to the world. It is by going out of ourselves that we meet the transforming power of Christ in "the least of these." We also find occasions, in the hard and beautiful work of love, to reexamine our priorities. What really matters? Though still beset by our failures, we go on in the important work of mercy and compassion (Ps. 112:4).

Life becomes more abundant when we surrender to Christ in all our weakness. Indeed, we preach the weakness of Christ, his cross and his pain. We are weak with him and we tremble with him. And yet this weakness gives way to "a demonstration of the Spirit and of power" (I Cor. 2:4). When I am weak, then I am strong; that is, I am strong in the Spirit and power of Christ who conquered sin and death. The less we obsess over ourselves, the more we may find the secret and hidden presence of Christ in both our own hearts and in the world awaiting our arrival. Go out from yourself. Die to yourself. Live for Christ who gave himself for the life of the world. Doing so, the grip of the old self will weaken. It may seem imperceptible, but we are being transformed into the image of Christ.
Do not let your sins stop you from showing mercy and compassion.

Look It Up

Read I Corinthians 2:9.

Think About It

Such great love.

Deut. 30:15-20 or Sir. 15:15-20; Ps. 119:1-8; I Cor. 3:1-9; Matt. 5:21-37

Overabundant Righteousness

Today's collect says that in our weakness we can do nothing good without the help of God's grace. But there is something deeper implied in these words. We would not even exist without God. We are the earth-creatures into which God breathed the breath of life. When we had fallen into sin and become subject to evil and death, God sent his Son who recreated us by giving his life-giving Spirit. If this were withdrawn, we would not merely die, we would cease in any sense to be. Our life minus God is a formless void, the dark emptiness of nothing. We need the grace of God to be, and the grace of God both to will and carry out the good we are called to do.

There is no escaping the impression that God has a work in mind for every person, a vocation, a calling, a mode of living in which everything is consecrated to the love and service of God. We are called to love God, walk in his ways, observe his commandments and keep his decrees. We are warned not to turn our hearts away, not to be deaf to God's call, not to be led astray to other gods. All of this might, though wrongly, be dismissed as an Old Testament burden from which those who are free in Christ have been delivered. To be sure, every word of Scripture stands under the interpretive authority of Christ, but one is struck by Jesus' adding to outward observance an internal appropriation in the realm of thought, feelings, and motives. It is not enough to do the good, one must will the good. It is not enough to refrain from evil actions; one must refrain from evil thoughts and feelings (anger, lust, jealousy) which likewise damage human community. Jesus is speaking of an overabundant righteousness, a righteousness that includes command and probation in the realm of both action and one's inner life.

God provides the grace both to will and to do what God commands. In our weakness, we often fail, and in failing we have occasion again to sense our need for God. Forgiveness is a grace and grace is a call to go on in hope that all of life will again be consecrated utterly and wholly to God. We have not yet arrived, but we press on toward the upward call of God in Christ.

Consider Christian living gone wrong. The Church in Corinth was blessed with many spiritual gifts. Even so, St. Paul found jealousy and quarreling among these believers, the first an inner disposition and the second the expression of destructive behavior. Paul called them "people of the flesh" who behave according to "human inclinations." Being "merely human" they lived lives of discord and bitterness. God in Christ wants something altogether different, to plant and water them, so that they become "God's field," the soil in which a new being bursts forth so that all are "working together." This new life cannot exist merely by the force of external obedience. It must extend to the deep places of thought and feeling, disposition and motive.

"Our name is legion," for our problems are many. Our inner lives and our actions are informed by the incessant noise and rattle of a mass media culture. We are pushed this way and that. We live in a state of constant attention-deficit. Our opinions are largely a reactive reiteration of what we have just heard or seen. We are not, in any deep sense, free.

We need long contemplative silences in which to retrain our minds and bodies — by God's grace, of course.

Look It Up

Read Psalm 119:1-8

Think About It

Observe His Ways in *your obligations* and dispose *your thoughts and feelings* to Christ.

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RECTOR: St. Stephen's, historic Anglo-Catholic Episcopal parish in the heart of the Brown University campus, seeks next rector. Our small, diverse parish draws from Providence, suburban Rhode Island, and neighboring Massachusetts. Proud liturgical tradition, renowned music program and organ, historic 1860 Richard Upjohn edifice, daily Mass, active soup kitchen ministry, friendly and welcoming coffee hour and active committee structure. Excellent opportunity for next rector to maintain traditions and also help grow the parish. Campus ministry also ripe for further development! For information, please contact **the Rev. Canon Dena Cleaver-Bartholomew**, canon to the ordinary. **Dena@episcopalri.org**

PART-TIME RECTOR: St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Quincy, FL, is searching for our next rector. We are a small, historic church in transition. We benefit from over 180 years of tradition but are currently aware of, yet anxious and concerned about, the changes necessary to have a viable future. Quincy is less than 15 miles west of Tallahassee, boasting both small town charm and big city advantages, a veritable "Metropolitan Mayberry." It is perfect for young families and youthful retirees alike. This position is part-time but may expand as we step out in faith. The ideal candidate will have a minimum of 6+ years experience as an ordained Episcopal minister as well as a loving, outgoing personality that attracts all kinds of people; a respected leader for our community, skilled at boldly preaching the Word of God to a diverse and expanding circle of care and concern. A full salary and benefit package is offered including a handsome 3-bed, 3-bath Rectory. Application Deadline: February 14, 2020. All inquiries should include a cover letter, resume and OTM profile forwarded to St. Paul's Search Committee C/O **louarmesto@comcast.net**.

POSITIONS OFFERED

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The University of the South invites applications and nominations for the position of Dean of its School of Theology. The University seeks a creative and visionary leader who understands the challenges that the Church is facing at the present moment to guide the School in offering theological education for lay and ordained ministries. The ideal candidate will preferably have a record of scholarly achievement, pastoral leadership, effective administration and effective donor relations; have an academic doctorate; and be ordained in the Episcopal Church or a church with which we are in full communion. As the head of the School of Theology, the Dean works closely with the University's Vice-Chancellor (the University's president) and is a member of the senior staff. It is expected that the Dean, as a tenured member of the faculty, will teach on a regular basis.

The School comprises the Seminary and the Beecken Center. The seminary educates about 125 students on campus through masters and doctoral degree programs during the academic year or the summer. A $1 million grant from the Lilly Foundation funds the Sewanee Ministry Collaborative, a mutual-mentoring project for clergy in specific ministry contexts: Black ministries, Latino/Hispanic ministries, rural ministries, and clergy formed in alternative theological education programs. The Beecken Center provides spiritual development for lay ministry through programming such as Education for Ministry; Invite Welcome Connect; and its SUMMA high school summer theological debate camp.

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Founded by leaders of the Episcopal Church in 1857, the University of the South is located on a striking 13,000-acre campus atop Tennessee's Cumberland Plateau between Chattanooga and Nashville. The School of Theology grants the degrees of Doctor of Ministry, Doctor of Ministry in Preaching, Doctor of Ministry in Liturgy, Master of Sacred Theology, Master of Divinity, and Master of Arts in Theology, as well as a Diploma in Anglican Studies and a Certificate of Theological Study.

Applications will be accepted until the position is filled; however, only candidates whose materials are received by February 15, 2020, can be assured of receiving full consideration. A cover letter with your vision for the future of theological education and relevant experiences, a résumé and contact information of three references should be sent to:

The Rt. Rev. Robert S. Skirving, Chancellor
Dr. Nancy Berner, Provost
nancy.berner@sewanee.edu

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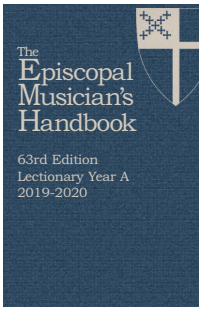

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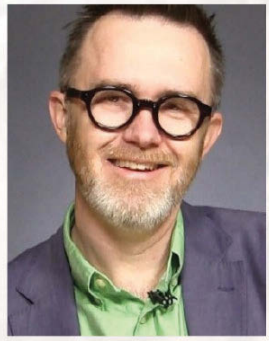

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