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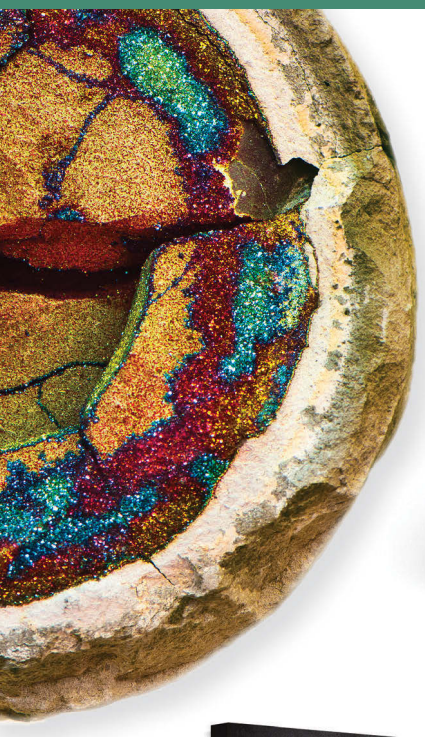

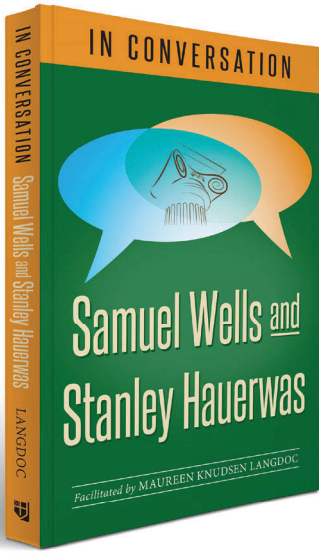

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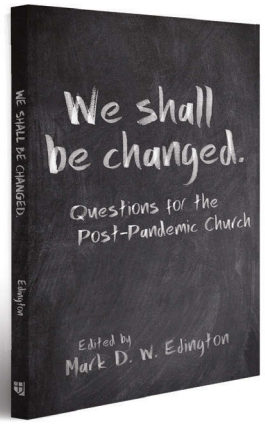

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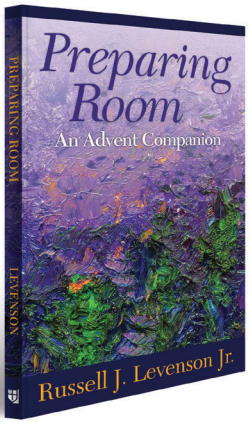

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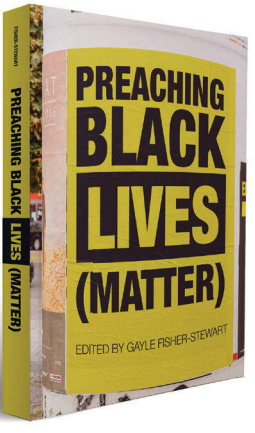

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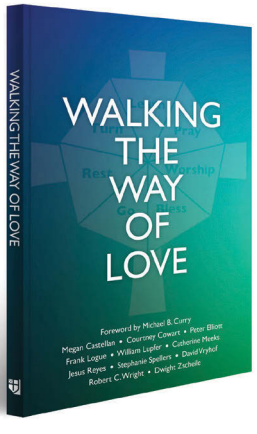

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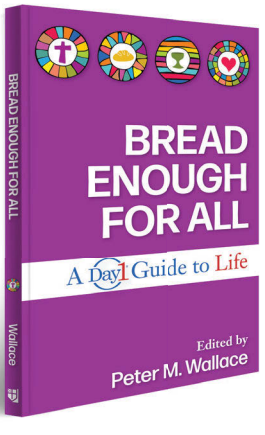

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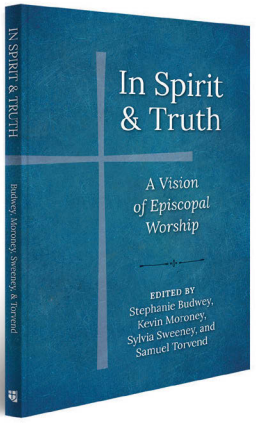

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ON THE COVER

Chip Coakley of Jericho Press: Small and Extraordinary (see page 18).

Photo courtesy of Chip Coakley

The Living Church

THIS ISSUE | September 20, 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.

Oregon Chooses Bishop in First Zoom Election

By Kirk Petersen

Akiyama

The Rev. Dr. Diana Akiyama, currently a parish priest and dean of a diocesan school for clergy formation in Hawaii, was elected the XI Bishop of Oregon on August 29, in the first bishop election conducted virtually.

Akiyama received a majority of the votes in both the lay and clergy orders on the second ballot, out of a field of four candidates. Assuming she receives the necessary consents, she will be consecrated at Trinity Cathedral in Portland on January 30, 2021. She will succeed the Rt. Rev. Michael Hanley, who has served as bishop since 2010.

The Portland-based Diocese of Oregon shares the state with the Diocese of Eastern Oregon, based in Cove, Oregon.

"I am honored and overwhelmed to be elected your next bishop, and I am so looking forward to coming and joining with you in doing the work that is in front of us to do at this time, in our country and in our church," the bishop-elect said in a brief video appearance at the end of the Zoom convention. "We have good and joyful work to do."

The Oregon-born Akiyama grew up in the Japanese-American community in Hood River in the eastern part of the state, and was ordained a priest in 1989 by the then-Bishop of Eastern Oregon, the late Rustin Kimsey. She was the first Japanese-American woman to become an Episcopal priest.

Zimbabwe's Anglican Bishops Back Roman Catholic Colleagues

By Mark Michael

Zimbabwe's Anglican bishops spoke up for their Roman Catholic colleagues, responding to vicious verbal attacks from leaders of the embattled government of President Emmerson Mnangagwa.

"The Anglican Council of Zimbabwe notes with concern the several responses by the Government of Zimbabwe to the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops Conference which seem to dismiss the fact that the Church is called to exercise its prophetic role, which can mean challenging our political leaders on their conduct of affairs, particularly if this affects the people of God," they said in an August 24 statement.

The Catholic bishops' pastoral letter, titled "The March is Not Over," after a quotation from recently deceased American civil rights leader John Lewis, was read in churches across the inflation-crippled country on August 16. The Catholic bishops claimed that Zimbabwe faces "a multi-layered crisis of the convergence of economic collapse, deepening poverty, food insecurity, corruption and human rights abuses."

The price of basic goods and services have doubled in Zimbabwe since the government sought to revalue the nation's currency in June. Fuel prices have increased by over 500 percent since January, and demand for diesel is especially high because businesses must depend on generators to circumvent the government's daily 18-hour electricity cuts.

The Catholic bishops had singled out for criticism the government's violent suppression of protests on July 31, which allegedly included the abduction and torture of activists. "Fear runs down the spines of many of our people today," the Catholic bishops wrote. "The crackdown on dissent is unprecedented … Our government automatically labels anyone thinking differently as an enemy of the country: that is an abuse."

Monica Mutsvangwa, the government's information minister, attacked the Catholic bishops' letter as "evil" and accused them of promoting "regime change" and "civil war" in a statement printed August 16 in *The Sunday Mail*, an organ of the ruling ZANU-PF party.

Mutsvangwa claimed that ethnic tensions between the dominant Shona ethnic group and the minority Ndebele were the real motivation behind the criticism, and accused the Catholic archbishop of Zimbabwe's capital Harare, Robert Christopher Ndlovu, of aiming to "posit as the leader of the righteous Ndebele minority." Citing the complicity of Rwanda's Catholic hierarchy in that country's 1994 atrocities, she said that Ndlovu was "inching to lead the Zimbabwe Catholic congregation into the darkest dungeons of Rwanda-type genocide."

The Anglican bishops claimed instead that the Catholic bishops' letter arose from the Church's responsibility to speak on behalf of the oppressed. "Since time immemorial, the Church in Zimbabwe has spoken against injustices," the Anglican bishops said. "The Church has the biblical mandate to speak without fear or favor, particularly to a government which believes that the 'voice of the people is the voice of God.'"

Conflict over the policies of Zimbabwe's ruling ZANU-PF government is not new to the life of Zimbabwean Anglicanism. The Rt. Rev. Nolbert Kunonga, the former Bishop of Harare, was an ardent supporter of President Mnangagwa's predecessor, the notori-

ously corrupt Robert Mugabe, whom he called "a prophet of God." Kunonga attempted to engineer a secession of his diocese from the Anglican Province of Central Africa in 2005 when he fell under criticism by fellow clerics for his strong support of the long-serving president, and was eventually excommunicated in 2008.

The harsh exchanges between Mnangagwa's government and the Catholic bishops also evoke clashes between Mugabe and the former Catholic Archbishop of Bulawayo, Pius Ncube, who was among his most vocal critics. Ncube, who like Bishop Ndlovu is an ethnic Ndebele, was silenced in 2007 after videos were released by the Zimbabwean press purporting to show Ncube in his bedroom with a married woman. When announcing his decision to resign as archbishop, Nucube said that he had been subjected to a "vicious attack not just on myself, but by proxy on the Catholic Church in Zimbabwe," and that his resignation was meant to shield his church from similar aggression.

Sodor and Man Diocese Faces Financial Crisis

By Mark Michael

The Church of England's smallest diocese could "run out of money" in five years because of income lost during coronavirus lockdowns, according to a strategic review released in mid-August. The Diocese of Sodor and Man is making plans to consolidate congregations and to sell off a significant number of its 41 church buildings, as diocesan income from congregations has fallen off sharply.

"The lockdown triggered by the Coronavirus (COVID-19) from March 2020 onwards with its necessary closure of churches for several months has brought us, along with many other dioceses, to the brink of financial ruin," the review states.

Sodor and Man, whose jurisdiction comprises the historically poor Isle of Man, a self-governing crown dependency located in the Irish Sea, lacks the large stabilizing endowments possessed by some historic English dioceses. It depends on payments from congregations for 75 percent of its income, making it especially vulnerable to fluctuations in parish giving. The diocese plans to rely on funds from the Church of England's central authority to pay for expenses for the remainder of 2020.

The review blames the diocese's financial woes on an overabundance of church buildings, stating that "there is a widespread acceptance both within and outside the church that we can't afford all the church buildings we currently have, and that as in many cases those buildings are seeing a declining attendance and house ageing congregations we do not need all the churches we have. Usually most church members and especially members of Diocesan Synod agree with this — unless they think their church is on a list of those to be closed; then we dis-

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cover a myriad of reasons why that one particular church could never be closed."

Two other Christian denominations with similar numbers of Sunday worshipers maintain fewer than ten church buildings on the 221 square mile Isle of Man, which has a population of around 90,000 people.

The review lays out a plan for allocating each church building to one of five categories: "hub" churches capable of sustaining a full-time ministry, "community mission churches," many of which would be closed in winter; "heritage churches" which would be opened only for special events and financially sustained by "friends groups;" "churches at a crossroads" which require "radical rethinking" that could involve "closure, sale, demolition;" and "marketable churches," which could be sold to raise funds for ongoing mission. Most church halls, it adds, will need to be sold unless they produce "a reliable, substantial and sustainable profit."

When founded in 1154, the Diocese of Sodor was part of the Church of Norway and consisted of all the islands off Britain's Western coast, including the Outer and Inner Hebrides. "Sodor" is a collective description of these islands, from the Old Norse *Suðreyjar* (*Sudreys* or "southern isles"), though the term is best known today as the fictional island home of Thomas the Tank Engine in Wilbert Awdry's children's stories.

Since 1334, the diocese has been part of the Church of England, but its jurisdiction has been limited to the Isle of Man, the southernmost island of the grouping. The Anglican Church has a central role in the history of the island, and is established by law, with the bishop serving as member of the upper chamber of Tynwald, the island's parliament, claimed to be the oldest in the world.

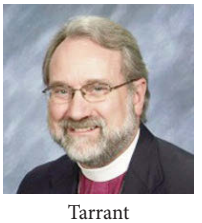
A 2015 survey found that 45 percent of Manxmen, as the islanders call themselves, identify as Anglicans and a 2013 report noted that the rate of religious participation among Anglicans on the island has been relatively high and stable for Church of England dioceses, but Sodor and Man has not been able to plant new churches as the island's population has shifted with new development. Churches across the island continue to largely correspond with the twelfth century *keeills* (places of prayer) established by the Vikings when the diocese was first created, and many are in areas with very small or nonexistent current populations.

Retired South Dakota Bishop John Tarrant Dies at 68

By Kirk Petersen

The Rt. Rev. John T. Tarrant, who retired last year as the X Bishop of South Dakota, died on August 24 of an apparent heart attack. He was 68.

The announcement was made by the Diocese of Western Massachusetts, where Tarrant served several churches earlier in his career. He returned there after retirement.



Tarrant

"His humble ministry among indigenous people made John a wonderful storyteller of God's love for diversity," said the Rt. Rev. Dr. Douglas John Fisher, Bishop of Western Massachusetts. "While this loss is especially local, it is felt churchwide. The House of Bishops mourns John today as we remember a colleague and friend."

Tarrant was elected bishop coadjutor of the Diocese of South Dakota in 2009, and became bishop diocesan in February 2010. At the time of his election, he had been serving for four years as rector of Trinity Church in Pierre, South Dakota.

The Diocese of South Dakota currently lists 78 congregations distrib-

uted across the entire state, many of them small and rural. In a long and poignant interview with *TLC* in June 2018, Tarrant spoke about the challenges of serving a poor and far-flung diocese, where more than half the members are Native Americans.

> *At least 20 of our buildings do not have indoor plumbing or water. Most of them have pretty good outhouses. When people hear that, at first, they say, Oh my gosh, all the wealth in the Episcopal Church, we should get 'em bathrooms! Only if you're going to pay the propane bills all winter long so the pipes don't freeze. Sometimes, that's the complexity of poverty that people do not understand. …*

Tarrant said the introduction of the 1979 prayer book placed an increased emphasis on the Eucharist, which requires the physical presence of a priest.

> *What we did, we said that worship needed to be clergy-focused. And I think when we did that, we really lost that lay leadership that was pretty normative in much of the church. You can be the body of Christ in the Episcopal Church without indoor plumbing. You can be the body of Christ within the Episcopal Church having one priest serve seven or eight congregations. You can be the body of Christ within the Episcopal Church and not actually be able to afford insurance on your building, knowing if it burns down it's gone. You can be the body of Christ if you choose to be the body of Christ.*

Bishop Robert Shahan of Arizona Dies at 80

The Rt. Rev. Robert Reed Shahan, the fourth Bishop of Arizona, died in Kansas at the age of 80 on August 14, 2020, after a long battle with Alzheimer's Disease.

Bishop Shahan was consecrated as bishop diocesan in December 1992. He retired in 2004.

He served on the General Convention's influential Joint Standing Committee on Program, Budget, and Finance, and made a November 1994 unity pilgrimage to Canterbury and Rome with four other Episcopal bishops, where they met with Archbishop of Canterbury George Carey and Pope John Paul II.

Shahan

The Rt. Rev. Jennifer A. Reddall, who currently serves as the VI Bishop of Arizona, said "We are keeping Bishop Shahan and his family in our prayers. Many Arizona Episcopalians remember his years as bishop, and we are still benefiting from his wise stewardship of our diocese."

Shahan was a lifelong Episcopalian, and served for eight years in the U.S. Navy after graduating from the University of Kansas. When he felt a call to ministry, he prepared for ordination at Nashotah House, which awarded him the Master's of Divinity degree in 1973.

Before being elected bishop, Shahan served at churches in Michigan, Chicago,

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South Carolina, and Kansas, where he was dean of Grace Cathedral in Topeka. He served several years on the faculty and administration of Seabury-Western.

— *Kirk Petersen*

TEC Leaders Support Philadelphia's LGBTQ Anti-Bias Policy

The two top officials of the Episcopal Church have signed separate *amicus curaie* (friend of the court) briefs with the U.S. Supreme Court in support of the City of Philadelphia's nondiscrimination policies regarding foster care by same-sex couples.

Presiding Bishop Michael B. Curry joined a brief filed by the Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty. The 38-page brief was also joined by the United Church of Christ and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

President of the House of Deputies Gay Clark Jennings was the lead signer on a brief joined by more than 400 other faith leaders, including 35 Episcopalians.

In *Fulton v. Philadelphia*, Catholic Social Services (CSS), a foster-care agency, has refused to place children with same-sex couples, maintaining that being forced to do so would infringe on the agency's right to free expression of religion. In 2019, the Third Circuit Court of Appeals ruled against CSS, which appealed to the Supreme Court.

The brief signed by Curry supports the participation of faith-based groups in governmental programs addressing child welfare, but says "no organization — religious or secular — is entitled to veto the government's choices on how a public program is to be run."

Both leaders noted that support for LGBTQ rights is consistent with more than a dozen resolutions passed by General Conventions going back to 1976.

The Trump Administration has weighed in on the other side, submitting its own *amicus* brief in June, supporting CSS. Oral arguments are set for November.

— *Kirk Petersen*

Housing-Repair Progress in Southeast Florida Diocese

The Bishop of Southeast Florida has told residents of a senior housing facility that some of them may be able to return to their homes soon. The 182-unit facility had to be evacuated in mid-June after a fire damaged the building's electrical system.

In a letter dated August 26, the Rt. Rev. Peter Eaton, who is president of the board of the 15-story St. Andrew's Residences in West Palm Beach, told residents "we anticipate we will be able to begin phase one of the re-entry plan in the next one to two weeks."

The electrical supply system for the entire building was rendered unusable by the June 14 electrical fire, which also caused smoke damage. In addition to needing to replace the "bus duct," which distributes large amounts of electrical current throughout the building, substantial cleaning has been completed, and air-quality tests are ongoing. "Full results of these tests will ultimately determine what, if any, additional work is needed and if that work can occur while the space is occupied," Eaton wrote.

— *Kirk Petersen*

The Diocese of Southeast Florida is one of dozens of dioceses, churches and organizations that support The Living Church *financially.*

Bishop Budde: 'Too Dangerous for Anything but Truth'

The Rt. Rev. Mariann Edgar Budde came to the attention of the Joe Biden presidential campaign when she rebuked President Donald Trump for using tear gas to stage a photo op at a church.

She was invited to give the benediction for the second night of the Democratic National Convention, and appropriately took a nonpartisan approach. She began her 1:03-minute prayer by quoting pastor and peace activist William Sloane Coffin:

May God give you the grace
never to sell yourself short;
grace to do something big
for something good;
grace to remember the world is
too dangerous now for anything
but truth
and too small for anything but love.

She continued with aspirations for peace, justice and unity. There is no way to know how many people were watching it live, as many networks apparently cut away in favor of commentary. But her local CBS affiliate, WUSA of Washington, has posted the video, and you can watch it on their website at WUSA9.com.

— *Kirk Petersen*

The Codes of Chosenness

By Walter Brueggemann

Starting from the identity of ancient Israel as God's chosen people in the Bible, it was easy to recast Western whites as God's chosen people. This move was accomplished by an imaginative retelling of the biblical narrative of the "promised land" and "conquest."

The Puritan minister Cotton Mather provides an example in his 1702 book *Magnalia Christi Americana*, translated as "The Glorious Works of Christ in America." Mather rereads the biblical narrative with Western whites as the blessed protagonists. It was an easy interpretive move; at the same time, it was a deeply pernicious move that has become the basis for a long history of exploitation and violence in the service of rapacious greed.

The conviction that Western whites are God's chosen people is a grounding for white supremacy.

And once such chosenness is affirmed, two claims follow:

- Whites are "normal" and normative. Consequently, anything other than white is abnormal and sub-normal.
- Whites are entitled to the most and the best, a claim that has long validated the violent colonialization of the West, the forcible seizure of the land and the removal of Native Americans, and then the enslavement of Black people kidnapped from Africa.

This triad of *chosenness, normal, and entitlement* constitutes the long painful history of the Western world that, wherever and whenever possible, has been extended to the rest of the world through colonialization, militarism, and imperialism.

Thus, we can read forward from the chosen people of the Bible to the chosen people of the Western world. We can also, however, read backward from the sorry tale of the Western world to the chosen people in the Bible to see that in both instances a conviction of chosenness creates a sense of monopoly with God and a warrant to seize land violently that is already occupied.

The claim of chosenness that pervades the Bible, the history of the West, and quite specifically the history of the United States is everywhere an impetus for brutalizing self-regard that can readily make a claim to divine sanction.

U.S. "domination" (a favorite word of President Trump) was already expressed by President Andrew Jackson with his policy of Indian removal. He was elected in 1828 with a platform of "Indian removal today, Indian removal tomorrow, Indian removal forever" (Walter Johnson, *The Broken Heart of America,* 48). It is a slogan familiarly echoed by Governor George Wallace as "segregation today, segregation tomorrow, segregation forever." The same theme was pursued by President Theodore Roosevelt in his expansive American imperialism, with the judgment that the peoples of Asia were incapable of governing themselves and needed U.S. presence and governance (see James Bradley, *The Imperial Cruise: A Secret History of Empire and War*). The status, warrant, and sanction of chosenness, normativity, and entitlement are carefully guarded, maintained, and legitimated by "protocols of holiness" that we may term "the codes of chosenness."

The preacher has as her task the exposure, undoing, and dismantling of the deeply held and silently affirmed claims for chosenness that function as a basis for white supremacy and the derivative claims of normativity and entitlement. One text for this dangerous and urgent task is the rich narrative in Acts 10. Peter, the lead apostle, is reported to have had a vision in a trance. Such a vision freely violates and undermines common assumptions that have immense authority in our wakeful hours, but are vulnerable and open to assault in our sleep.

In his vision Peter was commanded by "a voice," a voice from "elsewhere," to eat "four-footed creatures and reptiles and birds," all of which are prohibited as "unclean" by the holiness codes of Israel. They are forbidden to the faithful because such "uncleanness would jeopardize Israel's access to the holy God. The holiness codes thus separate Israel from other peoples who might be willing to eat such creatures that they might not take to be "unclean." Deeply grounded in Israel's holiness codes, Peter refuses and resists the command (10:14). But the voice from elsewhere is insistent:

> The voice said to him again, a second time, "What God has made clean, you must not call profane" (10:25).

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This triad of *chosenness, normal, and entitlement* constitutes the long painful history of the Western world that, wherever and whenever possible, has been extended to the rest of the world through colonialization, militarism, and imperialism.

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Three times Peter is commanded to break the holiness codes of his people to which he had been deeply committed! But Peter is a quick study. The next day he shares company with a Gentile, Cornelius. He declares, perhaps wistfully,

> "You yourself know that it is unlawful for a Jew to associate with or to visit a Gentile; but God has shown me that I should not call anyone profane or unclean (v. 28).

He declares his understanding of the mandate from the God of Israel, a new mandate that deeply displaced his previous life and opened for him a new vocation and a fresh vision of his life in obedience to God. He readily goes public with the daring implications of his new understanding:

> I truly understand that God shows no partiality (v. 34)!

This in the face of Jewish chosenness! This in the face of white supremacy! This in the face of U.S. exceptionalism! Peter discerns that the treasured codes of his people have been wrong and must be voided. They have misrepresented God's will for holiness and uncleanness. Peter discerns, in this moment, that he must contradict his education and violate the usual assumptions of his people. In this moment he recognizes that the codes of chosenness cannot be sustained. God wills the full and welcome inclusion of the "unclean" Gentles in the new community of the Gospel that is the wave of the future. The mandate of the Gospel requires a violation of the old codes!

We preachers might linger over the notion that Gentiles are "unclean." The codes by which we whites live have often held that Blacks are "lazy," "sexually dangerous" (rapists!), and above all "unclean." Just now a congressman from Ohio opines that Blacks may get more of the coronavirus "because they do not wash their hands enough." Blacks who are lazy, dangerous, and dirty are on all accounts unlike whites. Because they are so unlike whites, they are abnormal, without any entitlement,

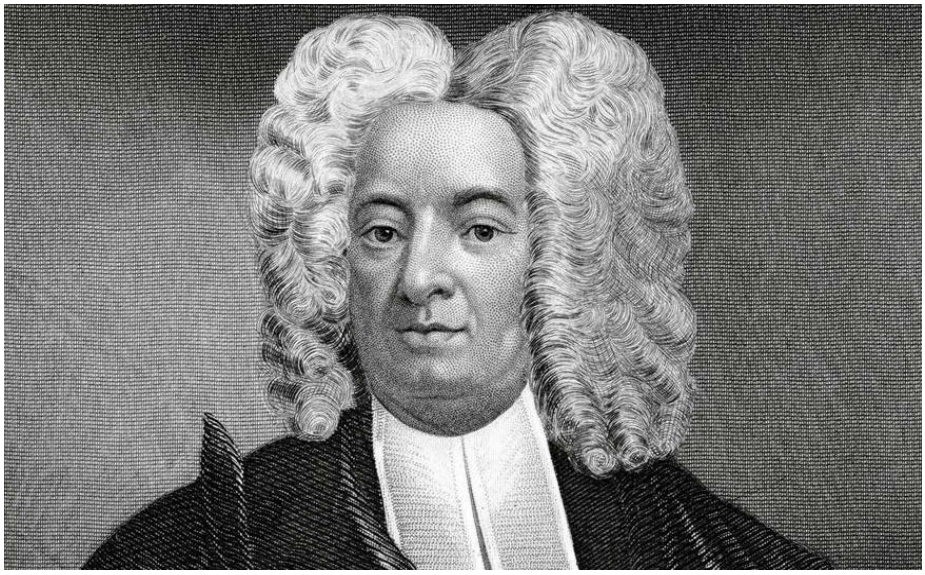


Photo: Wikimedia Commons

Cotton Mather

and therefore subject to exclusion (redlining!), not "deserving" of good schools, or good housing, or good jobs. It all follows from "chosenness"!

We preachers might linger over the codes that are mostly tacit but nonetheless immensely powerful. The most obvious of such codes is "whites only," and the most familiar of such codes is "We reserve the right to refuse service…." In my growing up in a small town that upheld the codes, my teacher "explained" to me that "Blacks like to live in unpainted houses," and "Blacks are offended to be called 'Mr.' or 'Mrs.'" My teacher, I have no doubt, simply took the codes for granted.

The codes then and always seem like givens; they function to maintain and legitimate by regular reiteration in the familiar liturgies of state, church, and market. Because the codes are so closely treasured and so deeply trusted, it takes a risky daring extremity like a *dream* or a *trance* or a *vision* to see differently, to see that God is no respecter of persons but is evenhanded to all and not partial, not even to those who claim to be chosen, normative and entitled.

It will not do for the preacher simply to speak of "equality" or our need to "love each other." The preacher may and can assert that the God of the gospel refuses to be contained in the codes that are enunciated in the name of God. Thus, Peter is summoned in a trance to move outside the codes of his people that he had been taught were the "codes of holiness."

I have come to think that the narrative in Acts 10 is the most important text for the way in which God breaks open our codes that skew the reality that God would have us live. The inclusion of Gentiles into the early church radically changed the nature of the Church, its message, and its life. In the same way serious full inclusion of people of color into our common life changes everything and requires whites to move beyond our comfort zones of control and privilege. God's expansive reach and intent are beyond our preferred chosenness, normality, and entitlement. Peter is a model for the disruption of our comfort zones, as is Paul on his way to Damascus. The force that broke the codes of the early Church was staggeringly demanding; it opened to the Church a vision concerning the new world of God's intent.

When the preacher takes up the code-breaking narrative of Acts 10, she has behind her the Pentecost narrative in Acts 2. In that dazzling moment of the rush of God's Spirit, all the old delineations are transgressed:

> Amazed and astonished, they asked, "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear,

each of us, in our own language? Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea, and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs — in our own languages we hear them speaking about God's deeds of power." (Acts 2:8-11)

Note: The preacher, in reading this paragraph, should not skip any of these names, but sound them all because the effect is cumulative, surely intended by the author to be so.

The Spirit does not respect our social arrangements. The vision of Paul and the trance of Peter are instances of the Spirit's work of code busting. The Spirit that shatters the codes makes a new community possible.

The preacher who lingers with Acts 10 has in front of him the grand vision and anticipation of the coming world that God will bring that will displace the weary empire of Rome and every other human contrivance of deeply coded entitlement. We may for that reason sing a new song:

> From every tribe and language and people and nation you have made them to be a kingdom and priests serving our God (Rev. 5:9).

The grand inclusiveness of "every tribe, language, people, and nation" is like a recurring mantra in this vision of the coming world (see 7:9, 13:7, 14:6, 17:15). This envisioned world is not to be governed by our codes of fear, but by the self-giving of the Lamb. The result of this lyric is a radically altered human community. It is this reconstituted human community that stands before us as we face a move beyond our racist delineations of human reality.

The preacher, situated in Acts 10 with Pentecost behind her and the coming new world of barrier crossing in front, has the hard work of de-coding to do. That work includes the discovery that the Gentiles are also chosen for participation in normality and entitlement. Among us those excluded by the old codes are now fully participant in the new world of normality and entitlement. It is no wonder that the Book of Revelation teems with doxology. The singing of the new world is a powerful echo of the singing of Miriam as the newly freed slaves "saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore (Ex. 14:30). The stubborn adherents to the old codes are left behind!

Now to finish with a poignant note of humor. Joseph Lowry, the great Methodist advocate for social justice who died recently at a ripe age, was once at a sit-in at a lunch counter. Finally, the waitress said to him, "We don't serve colored people." Lowry responded, "I did not order colored people. I ordered chicken salad."

The Rev. Dr. Walter Brueggemann is professor emeritus at Columbia Theological Seminary. A version of this essay first appeared on the weblog, Church Anew*, churchanew.org/blog.*

Churches Seek Technological Solutions During Pandemic

By G. Jeffrey MacDonald

Photo by Sara Elizabeth, courtesy of Tech Chaplaincy Institute

Tech Chaplain Shamika Goddard helps congregations utilize church management software.

When the pandemic erupted in March and virus-wary congregations scrambled to "do church" online, leaders raced to go digital with two primary tasks: streaming worship services and receiving online donations.

But tech enhancements didn't end there. Behind the scenes, church management software (ChMS) has been playing a larger role in parish administration. It's helping keep congregants connected, boost efficiencies, and facilitate ministries that weren't needed back when every church was gathering weekly in person.

From organizing small neighborhood clusters to following up with first-time visitors to online worship, administrative teams are exploring how ChMS can enhance ministry – and how it can offer more than is being utilized now.

"A lot of churches have actually reorganized" during the pandemic, said David Rogers, senior vice president of marketing at Ministry Brands, maker of Shelby Systems and other ChMS products. "They've taken their old brick-and-mortar structure and used our system to organize around the needs of the church in terms of outreach to congregation members and to new people coming into the church."

Work flows have changed, Rogers observed. What's needed now might be electronic reminders to call someone who's isolated or to plan a Zoom gathering for prospective new members. With no physical guest book for worship attendees to sign, a digital welcome card is needed to track who's been streaming worship services and to capture their contact information for clergy follow ups. ChMS systems provide such tools among others.

Though ChMS is hardly new, it's drawn a wave of new interest from curious, sometimes panicked congregations during the pandemic. A Ministry Brands webinar introducing newcomers to its tools in mid-March drew a surprising 3,500 participants, Rogers said.

Churches have flocked to other platforms, too, as a competitive marketplace vies for their business. About 75 percent of congregations in the Diocese of Colorado now run some type of church management software, up from 60 percent before the pandemic, according to Missioner for Development and Financial Stewardship Paul Alexander. He said most use Realm, a cloud-based system that's discounted for Colorado congregations through a package deal with the diocese.

Later this year or early in 2021, the Episcopal Church Foundation plans to begin offering a ChMS system of its own. ECF 360, now in a pilot phase, will be tailored for Episcopal congregations and priced competitively, according to Vice President Bill Campbell. ECF 360 will give Episcopalians tools that meet their specific need, such as organizing acolyte schedules or staffing food pantries. ECF aims to keep the cost low and provide a format that's easy for even the tech-phobic to use. Built on a Salesforce platform, ECF 360 will be geared toward fostering relationships with existing congregants and prospective new members alike.

"Our denomination is so far behind the rest of the world on this stuff that we don't have a way of understanding who's coming to our websites," Campbell said, noting that demographic insights such as age, gender and zip code can make marketing more targeted and effective. "One the things that a Salesforce-based database will be able to do is take that pixel tracking and start turning that into lead development. Then you start to develop a picture of who are the types of people coming to your website."

Congregations using ChMS have been branching out to see what more it can do. At St. Mark's Church in Houston, administrators have for years used Shelby, which allows for integration of the church's databases: membership, giving, and financial management. Having databases linked makes it easy to prepare year-end donor statements and to take pledging into account when preparing budgets, according to Rector

Patrick Miller.

Since the pandemic began, Miller has been using Shelby more for managing congregational life at St. Mark's, which drew 300 on an average pre-pandemic Sunday and has a staff of 10. The system gives him proxy signs for pastoral concerns, he said. Example: a sudden drop in a parishioner's giving can be an indicator of personal problems such as a job loss and might warrant a pastoral call.

St. Mark's has also started using the database to sort parishioners by neighborhood, which the church hadn't done in the past. That's useful now, Miller said, for organizing small outdoor prayer clusters among neighbors.

"I can create home churches" while in-person worship at St. Mark's is suspended, Miller said. "There's an opportunity to say: 'You families live within eight blocks of each other. If you're comfortable, go have evening prayer together. Or invite me over and I'll come with my mask on to do evening prayer where you are'."

In Oakland, California, St. John's Church has been using Realm in new ways during COVID. Example: parishioners are increasingly using the online directory to stay connected. Many also using Realm features such as Text 2 Give or QR code scanning to make their offerings.

"During COVID, we've had some very big successes because we were intentional about teaching people about Realm and showing [parishioners] all the updates of what they can do with Realm," said the Rev. Jon Owens, a deacon and associate for ministry development. "Because of online giving during this time, our pledges are up more than they've ever been. It's more than covered what we would have had in the plate" if in-person worship had continued.

Congregations exploring ChMS options will find they're no longer courting risks that come with software that lives on a staffer's laptop or a desktop at the church. ChMS systems tend to be cloud-based, which means they're offered as software as a service (SaaS), available for a monthly access fee. The software is updated regularly as part of a subscription.

Prices vary depending on church size and levels of service. Most in the Diocese of Colorado pay $50 to $100 per month, Alexander said. With Ministry Brands, a small Episcopal congregation might pay $35 to $50, Rogers said, while one with 500 members would pay closer to $95.

Large vs. Small Congregations

Church IT consultants say ChMS has become a must-have for large congregations with lots of groups and programs to manage, but smaller congregations have reasons to use it, too. Take security. Congregations of all sizes need secure data so nothing is lost, for instance, if a staffer's laptop is stolen, according to Nick Nicholaou, a church IT consultant with Ministry Business Services in Huntington Beach, California. Cloud-based systems can provide more security, he said, though he cautions that some provide better safeguards than others.

"The first step is to encourage the vestry to think of this data in terms of being corporate data" belonging to the church, Nicholaou said. "Because if anything ever goes wrong, sure, the individual is held accountable, but so is the church. If the church had no control and no knowledge, they might think they have the ability to hide behind that in a liability situation, but that's not the case. The church is required to govern the data and shepherd the data."

Nicholaou advises clients to make a list of the features they need. For example: could you use an app that checks in children when they arrive and leave and mark who picked them up? How about an app that keeps a log of small group attendance? Or one that lets parishioners download small audio or video clips from a worship service?

With criteria in hand, query software makers to see which ones have the desired features. When you think you've found the best fit, request a free trial before committing.

Congregations with ChMS are exploring what more the terrain can do for them. The Diocese of California has signed up the Tech Chaplaincy Institute, a Boulder, Colorado-based consultancy, to offer its congregations a technology checkup for the pandemic. Doing more with ChMS is often part of the process.

Founder Shamika Goddard offers several tips: consider managing volunteers and engaging with donors through an easy-to-use platform like Planning Center. Use Capterra to search for ChMS systems on the basis of which features they offer. If the church budget has no room for new software, consider a free entry-level version of Tithe.ly or Planning Center. Perhaps upgrade to a more advanced, fee-based version later.

"Every faith community doesn't need to get Planning Center, but every faith community does need to have a plan for their data and a way to store that information so it can live beyond the people who are currently serving as that faith community," Goddard said. "Even if it just a Google sheet with everybody's contact information on it, there needs to be workflow so that you can be adding to it and updating it every year."

Getting the right fit can involve some evolution. Campbell cautions that some churches might have more software than they currently need, for instance if their system is designed for managing dozens of small groups. But they might not have to scrap what they have. Software that allows for Application Programming Interface (API) integration will be able to tie into ECF 360, which means a church can keep using its familiar database and simply add onto it.

Meanwhile congregations see room to do more with management tech. St. Mark's has ambitions to use Shelby's mobile application to a greater degree in years ahead. St. John's sees potential in what Realm can do for managing small groups. For now, they're happy to see what the tech has already delivered, even where congregants bring a mix of comfort levels with technology.

Realm "has group features, event calendars, all sorts of things you could do," Owens said. "We don't use a lot of those functions. Like a lot of Episcopal churches, we're an aging congregation so you do have a technological divide on some things for the older demographic. But what we do use Realm for is quite effective."

Episcopal Cathedrals Adapt to Pandemic

"My first Sunday during shut down was a Facebook live service from my kitchen table."

The Rev. Dana Corsello leads worship in Washington National Cathedral's St. Joseph Chapel. Danielle Thomas, Washington National Cathedral

By Neva Rae Fox

Recently, *TLC* asked cathedral deans around the country: *what is one major change that has been implemented as a result of the pandemic in the cathedral's operations — worship, visitors, outreach, ministries or other area — that is not going to be rescinded in the near future, or has become a permanent change?*

The Reach of Online Worship

Most agreed online worship is not only staying, but expanding!

The Very Rev. **Miguelina Howell**, dean of Christ Church Cathedral in Hartford, Connecticut, summed up the feelings of many of the deans. "A permanent change is definitely the option of offering virtual worship services even when we return to in-person worship. This has been a profound eye-opening experience about the need to serve God's people using the technology available to us."

The Very Rev. **Kristina Maulden**, dean of the Cathedral of St. John in Albuquerque, New Mexico, agreed. "I think the most significant permanent change is our move to online worship services both for Sundays and every day during the week. I heard today from a parishioner that she has never been to church so much! It's increased our reach in a substantial way."

In the Diocese of Western Kansas, the Very Rev. **David Hodges** of Christ Cathedral in Salina said online has offered new ways to reach out to the community. "We have significantly enhanced our technology and made equipment purchases that have given us the ability to offer quality online worship. In addition to what we do on Sunday, we have also begun broadcasting Noonday Prayer each weekday through our YouTube channel. When we are able to safely resume in-person worship, we plan to continue to make our Sunday and weekday services available online."

"We immediately began to live-stream our services, which was new to us," said the Very Rev. Dr. **Andrew C. Keyse**, who started as dean of Grace and Holy Trinity Cathedral in Kansas City, Missouri on December 1, 2019. "My first Sunday during shutdown was a Facebook live service from my kitchen table. After that, my staff mobilized quickly, and we have been able to live-stream from the cathedral ever since on both Facebook and YouTube. I felt it was important to live-stream from the cathedral so people would see the sacred space they miss so much. I felt it would add a bit of comfort during this uncertain time."

The Very Rev. **Randolph Hollerith** of Washington National Cathedral noted, "A longstanding goal of the cathedral was to provide more spiritual content beyond Sundays and fairly limited attendance at noon Eucharist. Within days of the COVID closures, the Cathedral launched twice-daily prayer services to help people find their bearing in this strange new land, via video. After Easter, that shifted to a daily video service of morning prayer, and the Cathedral will keep doing that for the foreseeable future."

Hollerith added, "We also launched a weekly online memorial service (on

Saturdays), where we pray over the names of people who have died in the pandemic, via cathedral.org/covidmemorial. We post the names on the walls of St. Joseph's Chapel, and we will continue the services for as long as people keep sending us names."

Physical Changes

Cathedrals are also undergoing physical changes.

"Another change that we are contemplating, and that many cathedral communities are contemplating, is taking advantage of this time to replace pews with more flexible seating," the Very Rev. **Penny Bridges** of the Cathedral of St. Paul in San Diego said. "I've been working with the congregation on this idea for years… I don't know a clergy person who wouldn't switch from pews to chairs in an instant, given the opportunity."

The Very Rev. **Kate Moorehead,** dean of St. John's Cathedral in Jacksonville, Florida spoke about the flurry of prayer flags, a borrowing from Tibetan religious tradition, at the Cathedral. "Prayer is simply communication with God. Prayer can and should take many forms, embracing all the senses and offering many avenues to approach our maker. We pray through music, silence, the reading of scripture, icons and many more avenues. Prayer flags are a brilliant artistic and visual way of drawing nearer to God with our pain, our joy, and our desires. We paint or write our requests and then hang these flags, so they blow in the breeze creating a kind of continual supplication of beauty and love," she said.

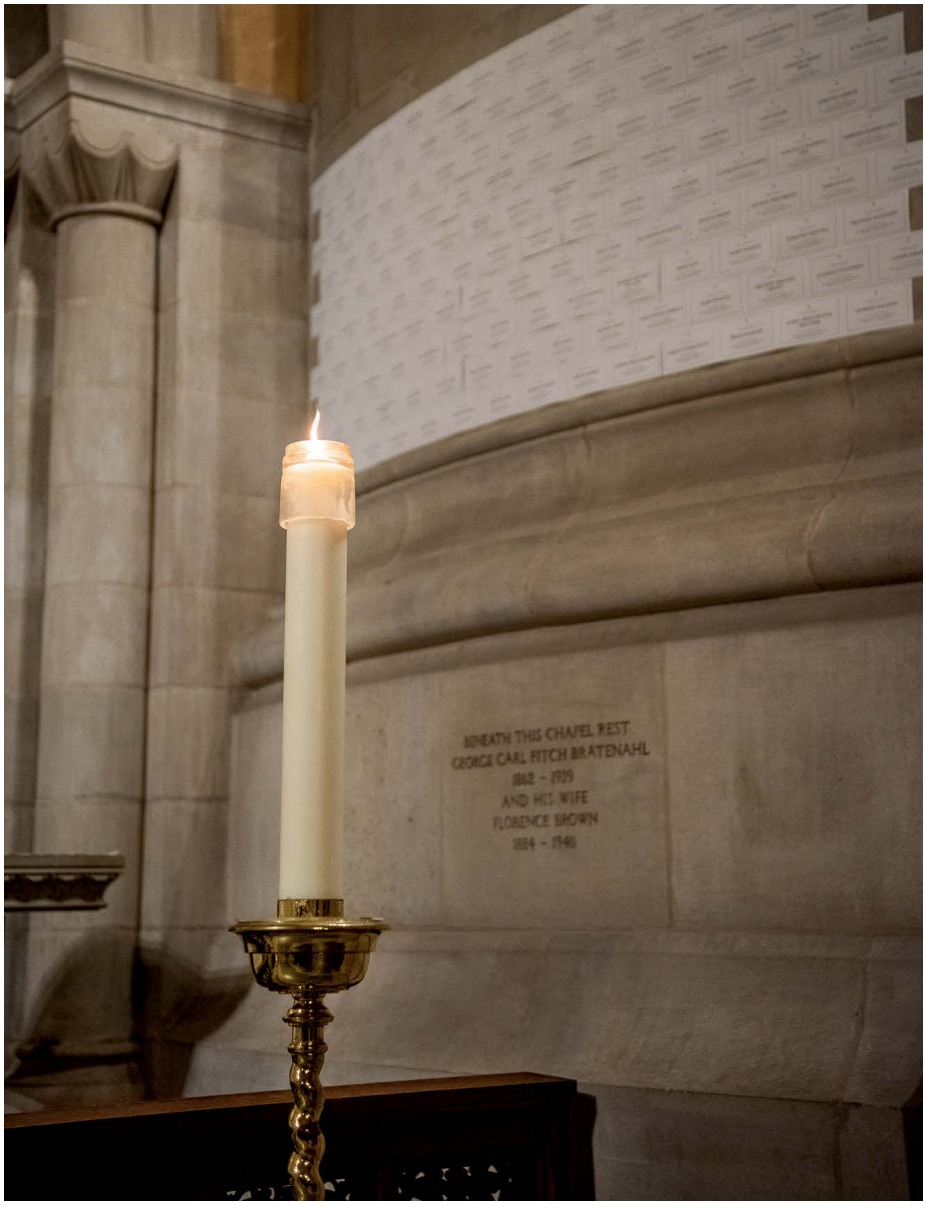
Affecting the ministries

"The area most affected for us is our engagement with the arts," Howell said. "Our Cathedral has strong roots within the city of Hartford as a place for art engagement. We transitioned our concerts to virtual experiences, supporting our local and international artists and partners. Christ Church Cathedral, Hartford, co-founded the first street choir in the Northeast. … We are in the process of rethinking how we can safely host our street choir members in the Fall."

Howell also addressed feeding programs: "We continue to serve our brothers and sisters in the margins through our Church Street Eats Program. Meals are distributed outside of our Cathedral House building. Pre-COVID, our feeding program provided community and other services such as clothing and health screening. Unfortunately, we are not able to provide extended services until it is safe to do so. This is one of the most challenging realities of COVID-19 for us as we understand our discipleship and apostleship beyond outreach. Nurturing relationship with our house and food insecure guests is at the core of our calling."

The Very Rev. **Steven L. Thomason** of Seattle explained, "Of course, the buildings and campus of St. Mark's Cathedral in Seattle have been closed for nearly five months now, but the community is very much alive, thriving and open for business…We are supporting a family in sanctuary on our campus, and some 60 souls experiencing homelessness in Tent City, and we are the richer for it. While we refrain from physical contact or exchanging the peace or receiving communion in traditional ways, this wonderful community has found creative ways to remain connected, and many more have found their way into this virtual community during this time."

Howell concluded with an upbeat observation. "A positive to all this? We have become even more creative in how we serve God and God's people in the midst of this global health crisis."



COVID Memorial Wall, Washington National Cathedral Photo Credit: Danielle Thomas, Washington National Cathedral.

Courage, Integrity, and Presence: The Ministry of Father Aleksandr Men (1935-1990)

By Charles Hoffacker

The courtyard of the State Library for Foreign Literature in Moscow features a statue of Father Aleksandr Men, a prominent Russian Orthodox priest murdered in 1990. Its fourth floor houses the Center for Religious Literature and Russian Publications Abroad, which includes a room dedicated to him. Although he rarely traveled outside his native Russia, none of Men's books were published inside Russia during his lifetime. Instead, they were published elsewhere under pseudonyms and smuggled into the country from which he wrote them.

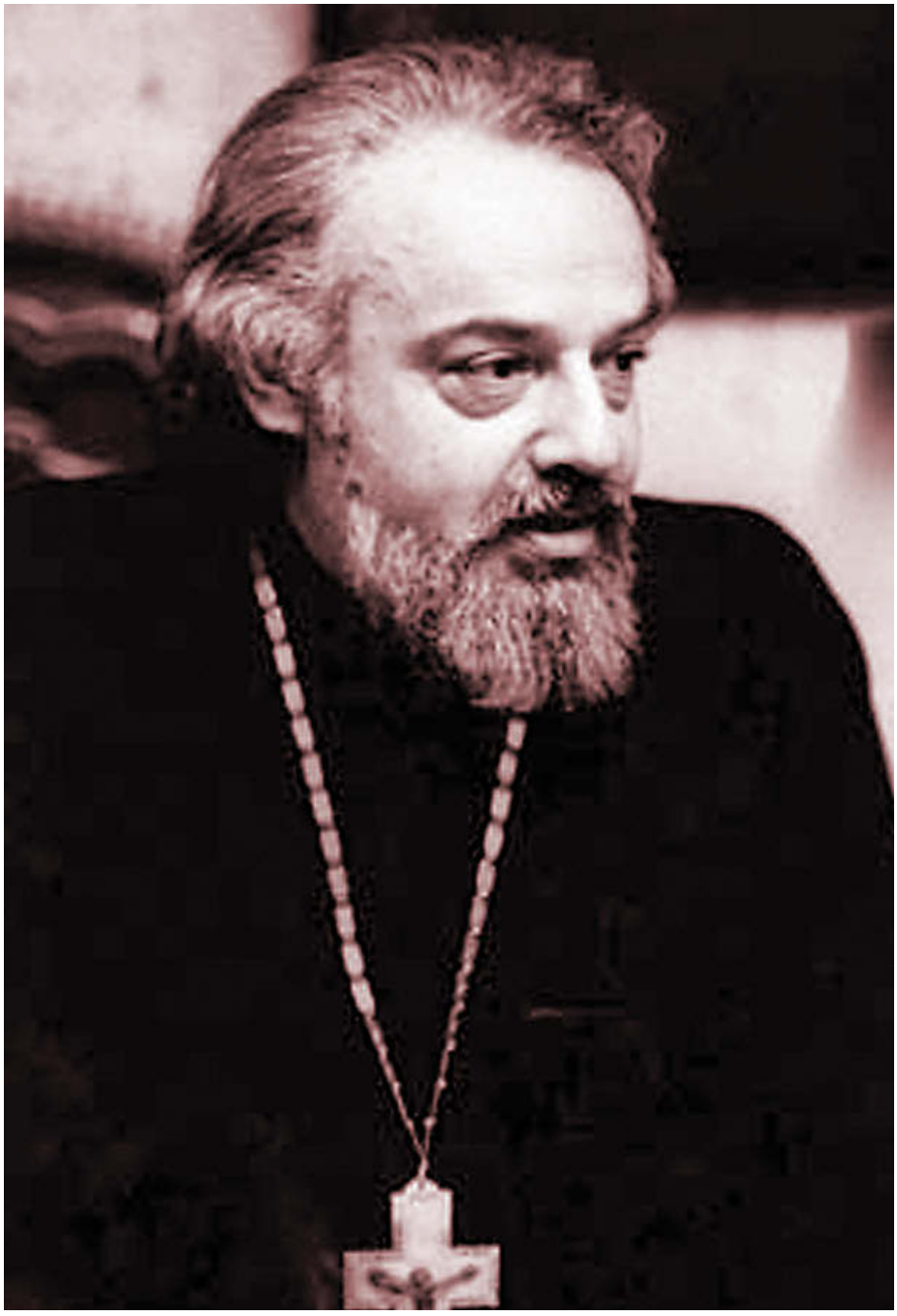
Limitations on publishing were not the only way the state opposed his ministry. The KGB subjected him to interrogation on many occasions and may have been responsible for his death. Fittingly, the library room named for him faces away from the Kremlin.

Born in 1935, Aleksandr Men grew up during Stalin's regime and lived through periods in Russia when religion of all kinds was savagely repressed. He served as a priest for 30 years, from 1960 until his death. This year is the 30th anniversary of his murder, regarded by many as his martyrdom. Although not yet canonized, several icons of him have been written.

Men's influence continues to spread, both in Russia and in other countries. In the first two decades after his death, the Russian public bought more than 5 million copies of his books, sermons, and lectures. His works are now available in several languages, including English. His message remains of vital importance for Christians everywhere, and perhaps the period of his greatest influence is still to come. After all, Men believed that Christianity itself was still in its infancy.

Men's theological vision was shaped by some of his era's most notable Orthodox exponents, including the elders of the Optina Pustyn monastery, parish priests Aleksei and Sergei Mechev, and theologians Vladimir Solov'ev, Sergei Bulgakov, and Nikolai Berdiaev. Largely self-educated, Men also gained an expansive understanding of Russian cultural heritage, at a time when it was devalued and ignored by those in power.

Wallace L. Daniel, a scholar of Men's work, has observed: "Throughout his school years, Aleksandr read voraciously, having already gained access to a wide variety of books. For him, books played a large part in creating a parallel existence to the political and ideological world surrounding him, a pathway into a world much different from the one to which his schooling exposed him. During a time when the state assaulted ways of thinking that lay outside the Marxist-Leninist mainstream, books kept alive older traditions and



Father Aleksandr Men

Photo Credit: pravmir.com

perspectives."

Men's studies as a biology student at the Fur Institute, first in Moscow and then in Siberia, strengthened his appreciation for the sciences and exposed him to a wider view of the Soviet Union, including its diverse faith communities. He took correspondence courses from the Leningrad Seminary and the Moscow Theological Academy, graduating with a master's degree in theology.

His passion for books did not prevent him from manifesting a deep interest in the people around him. While he became well known as an apostle to Russia's intelligentsia, he connected effectively with people of every background. His popular and energetic style as a speaker and teacher engaged both the small parish-based groups of his early ministry and the large audiences he addressed in his final years.

Any survey of Aleksandr Men's life must recognize that his level of activity was extraordinary. Despite official hindrances on religious activity, he wrote countless books, engaged in a vigorous pastoral ministry, guided numerous small groups within the Russian Orthodox Church, and served as a supportive husband and father. Men's sheer productivity recalls Thomas Aquinas and Thomas Merton. Like them, he encountered serious opposition as he restored and renewed the inherited faith and died while still relatively young.

Men's *Son of Man,* a life of Jesus, sold over a million copies. It addresses the questions of non-believers, who were often taught that Jesus Christ never existed. At one time the police considered this book to be anti-Soviet and possession of a copy was extremely dangerous. His most ambitious work is *History of Religion,* a seven-volume opus incorporating modern scholarship, ancient texts, and Russian sources. In the work, Men distinguished between a dynamic, creative spirituality marked by reverence for God, and a spiritual tendency characterized by static, repressive attitudes toward the world.

A bibliography, however extensive, does not exhaust the influence of Aleksandr Men in our time. Even more important than the books he produced are the lives he touched, whether directly or through intermediaries. Thousands of people alive today can testify to his work as an apostle and prophet.

He worked to build bridges, restoring connections between contemporary Russia and its traditional faith and culture. However, unlike many of his fellow citizens, he had no interest in nostalgia, sentimentalism, or nationalism. He believed that Russia needed to be enriched by the best of its cultural heritage and to recover Christian faith in order to live that faith amid new and ever-changing circumstances.

His teaching emphasized the importance of freedom, drawing on the Christian gospel, and the work of late 19th-century and early 20th-century Russian philosophers. Men contrasted true freedom with both the control exercised by the Soviet Union over its citizens' interior lives, and Western individualism, which he believed was frequently atheistic in practice.

His message remains of vital importance for Christians everywhere, and perhaps the period of his greatest influence is still to come.

Men recognized that churches, including the Russian Orthodox Church, often favored power over freedom. He called for his church to demonstrate an openness to the world and a commitment to dialogue, relating to other religions with respect. Yet he firmly rejected any notion of blending religions or even different Christian traditions in a way that would dissolve their distinct identities.

Father Aleksandr Men faced many opponents during his lifetime and continues to have vociferous critics three decades after his death. Those functioning as agents of the militant atheism of the Soviet Union saw it as their duty to oppose a priest who served as an effective catalyst of faith for many people within his parishes and beyond. His life and ministry also rebutted official propaganda that Russian Christianity was on death's door, of interest only to uneducated old women.

Aleksandr Men was a Christian. He was also a Jew. Thus, he drew the hatred and contempt of the substantial portion of the Russian population that was to one degree or another anti-Semitic. He also drew hostility from more nationalist and fundamentalist clergy within his own church, who criticized his openness to Western thought.

Once the Soviet Union collapsed, Russia faced the supremely difficult task of relating anew to culture, history, and faith without falling prey to extreme nationalism. The results to date are mixed at best. But Aleksandr Men lived and died in an effort to show that national life could be reborn through both an authentic and open Russian Orthodoxy and a fresh embrace of Russia's cultural and historical riches. Killed by the blow of an axe on September 9, 1990, his funeral occurred on the Orthodox feast of the Beheading of St. John the Baptist. Like the forerunner, Aleksandr Men bore prophetic witness to Russians and to all people. Men scholar April French sums up his ministry with three words: *courage, integrity,* and *presence.*

In his homeland and around the globe, new generations can take up this work.

The Rev. Charles Hoffacker is an Episcopal priest who lives in Greenbelt, Maryland.

The literature about Fr. Men is large and growing. Much useful material can be found at alexandermen.com.

These titles are in print and especially recommended:

Wallace L. Daniel, *Russia's Uncommon Prophet: Father Aleksandr Men and His Times.* Northern Illinois University Press, 2016.

April French, editor. Christa Belyaeva, translator. *An Inner Step toward God: Writings and Teachings on Prayer by Father Alexander Men.* Paraclete Press, 2014.

The Jericho Press: Small and Extraordinary

By Charles Hoffacker

In 2019, Syriac scholar J.F. "Chip" Coakley and theologian Sarah Coakley, after teaching for years at Cambridge University, relocated to the United States, where their two daughters are living. This trans-Atlantic move to Alexandria, Virginia also resulted in a new home for the Jericho Press, J.F. Coakley's private press that dates back to the 1980s. In addition to a press, related equipment, and stocks of publications, the assets of the Jericho Press include over a hundred cases of metal type.

How did this publishing enterprise get started? Chip Coakley was an undergraduate at Cambridge University in the early 1970s. Along with about nine other students, he took a course on books not their content, but how they are constructed. Most every member of the class went on to become involved in printing in a small way.

This was a period when printers were starting to abandon letterpress in favor of newer technologies. Substantial collections of type were available for the asking. Oxford University Press gave Chip part of its treasury of type, including Syriac fonts. Already deeply interested in the ancient Syrian language, Chip found its alphabet to be alluring in its beauty — "halfway between Hebrew and Arabic" is how he describes it.

Chip Coakley and the Jericho Press, Ely.

Photo Credit: Chip Coakley

This acquisition was a fortuitous beginning, but only a beginning. In time he acquired many other cases of type, not only the Latin type used for English, but type for Armenian, Greek, Hebrew, and other languages important in the world of historical scholarship.

Over the years, the Jericho Press has produced some 30 publications, about half of which remain in print. They are brief, well under a hundred pages. Each is a letterpress product incorporating distinctive typefaces, fine paper, and in some instances, small illustrations. Each is distinctive, intended to delight the hand and the eye, and generally fewer than a hundred individually numbered copies are produced. The Jericho Press is not preoccupied with commercial success. Every product is a work of craft and a labor of love.

A list of titles in print and a list of titles out of print appear on the Jericho Press website (www.jericho-press.com). These lists at first seem eclectic, but the titles reflect the varied interests of Chip Coakley and his associates.

As one would expect from a Syriac scholar, there are Syriac texts and translations. These include Sebastian Brock's translations of hymns on the Nativity, the Epiphany, and the Eucharist, and Chip Coakley's own *Six Syriac hymns in English with their English versions and music.*

Some publications recount adventures. *An Ancient Colophon* describes how William Cureton (1808-1864) encountered the most famous Syriac manuscript, now in the British Library, which is also the oldest dated codex manuscript in any language. In *A Frag-*

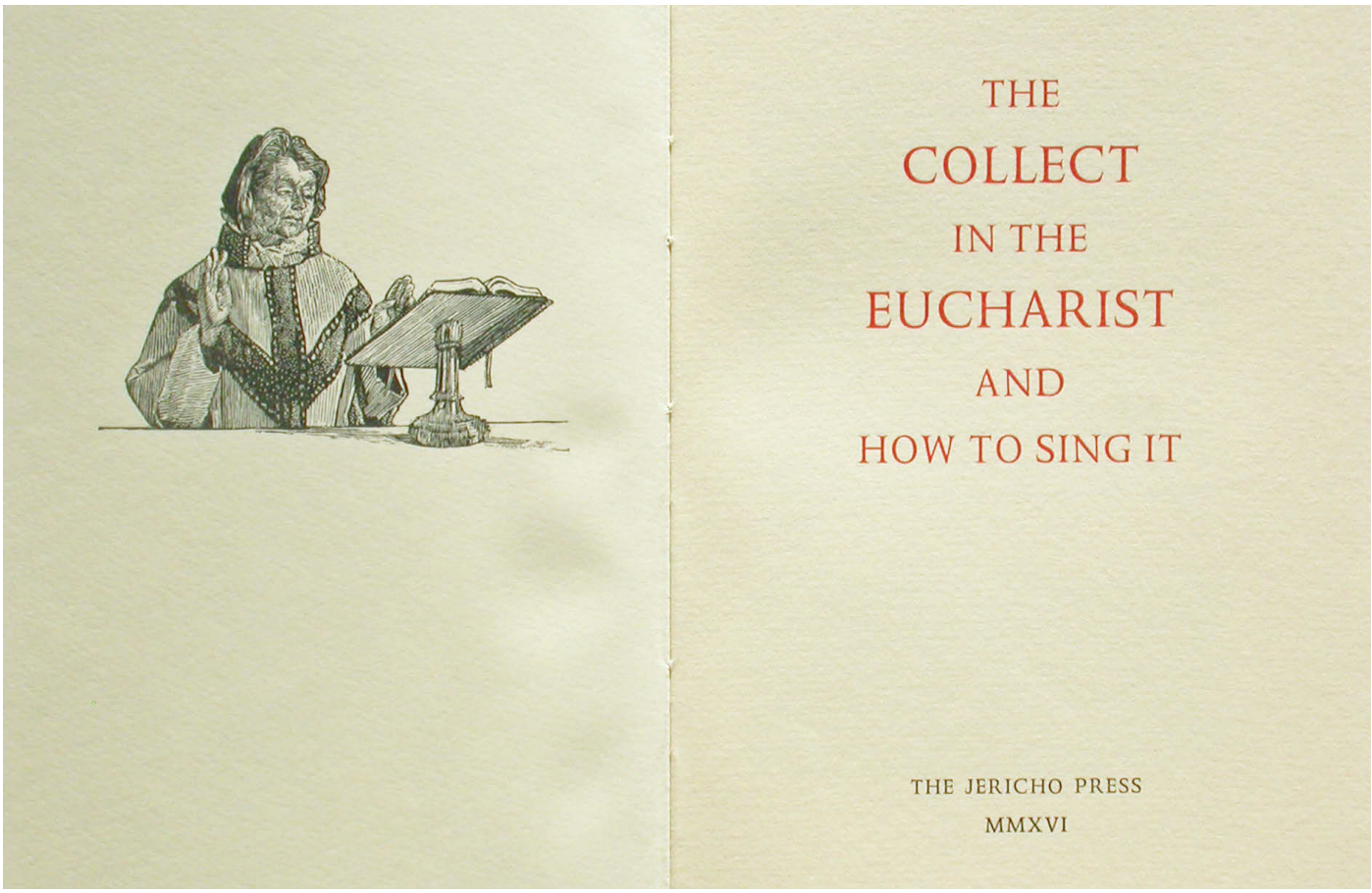


Photo Credit: Chip Coakley

The Collect in the Eucharist, (Jericho Press, 2016), wood engraving by Simon Brett. The subject is the printer's wife, the Rev. Professor Sarah Coakley.

ment of Autobiography, W. A. Wigram (1872-1953), recalling Middle Eastern travels, describes himself as the only Church of England cleric to have "a record of three imprisonments (all quite justified) and a sentence of death which he only escaped through a pardonable blunder of the police."

Collects are the subject of three works. Latin psalter collects (Roman, African, and Spanish) in collections many centuries old are explored by Bridget Nichols. Chip Coakley's own work, *The collects of the first English prayer book 1549* includes the Latin original of each prayer (if any) and a note about its transmission to the 1662 English *Book of Common Prayer* and the 1979 American BCP. *The Collect at the Eucharist and How to Sing It* is a practical resource for priests.

The Epistle of Secrets is an English translation of one of the earliest texts of the mystical Christian kabbalah movement, and the first to be printed, in 1487 or 1488. The Latin text, the only one available, may be the original or a translation from Hebrew. Despite its importance, this document has not been reprinted in more than five centuries, and this is the first translation into any modern language.

Several works deal imaginatively with people and places in Christian England. *St. Hilda of Whitby,* a cantata by Wendy Cope, was written for the 125th anniversary celebration of St. Hilda's College, Oxford in February 2018. *In praise of Ely* is a portion of an early 12th-century Latin poem by Brother Gregory, translated by Janet Fairweather. Another work connected with Ely is *The Ship of the Fens,* 17 striking engravings of Ely Cathedral. The artwork in these three publications is by Andy English.

Two poets published by Chip Coakley are Thomas Heyrick and A.N.L. "Tim" Munby. Heyrick, a seventeenth century English parish priest, was known for his poems on the natural world. *A Heyrick Bestiary* is the first edition of his shorter poems published since 1691. Munby (1913-1974), a librarian of King's College, Cambridge, wrote cheerful and clever verses while a prisoner of war in Germany (1941-1945). The verses later appeared in *Lyra Catenata,* "a chained song."

The latest Jericho Press publication is a portion of a letter by Adrian Fortescue, Roman Catholic parish priest and historian, best remembered for his *Ceremonies of the Roman Rite Described,* a detailed liturgical manual first published in 1918 that has gone through 15 editions. Many have assumed that he was obsessed with minute details of the Tridentine liturgy. In this letter to a friend, he makes abundantly clear his utter lack of interest in such matters!

The rising popularity of craft beers and local wines attest to the attraction of small-scale enterprises that do something familiar in an intriguing way. For almost 40 years, Jericho Press has produced attractive publications that fascinate and delight their dedicated readership. The next selections will be Chip Coakley's choice — and anybody's guess!

The Rev. Charles Hoffacker is an Episcopal priest who lives in Greenbelt, Maryland.

Hopeful Movies During a Pandemic, Part II

By Paul F.M. Zahl

Every time my wife and I think that things are getting better, the metrics change and the cases go up (or down), and we feel like we're back in May. Guess we *thought* we had done every previously postponed domestic task and tried every possible new interest and basically come to the end of our resources. And then it all started back up again.

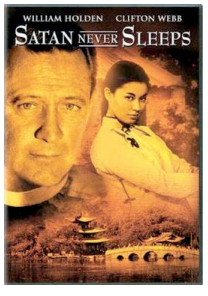
We even thought we had watched every movie we could imagine ever watching.

But wait! At least *there* — in the matter of movies — we weren't done yet (see "Hopeful Movies for Episcopalians in Self-Quarantine," *TLC*, April 5). Turns out there were more good ones, at least good vintage Hollywood ones, and our supply had not, in fact, run out.

So, I'm giving you some new leads, some new "forgotten" classics, to keep us going for at least a month or more. These are all movies you can find and watch, and they are all movies with a hopeful message. They even contain some nice priests and ministers, some wise and altruistic religious people (including two exemplary Episcopal bishops), and some definite new beginnings.

Here are four of them, with info at the end of each entry for how to access them. Each of these modest little films can light up your night — and maybe take you one more step along the way to our lasting re-opening!

***Satan Never Sleeps* (1962)**



This one, directed by the same man that made *Going My Way* and *The Bells of St. Mary's*, tells the story of two Roman Catholic priests arrested by the Red Chinese, one of whom, the older one, becomes a stunning, martyred witness, like St. Polycarp, to faith in Christ. The younger priest, played by William Holden, survives, and must navigate both the Red Guards and an obsessed young parishioner. Warning: the first 20 minutes of *Satan Never Sleeps* are boring. But it heats up wonderfully.

Available on DVD and Amazon Prime

***Mr. Belvedere Rings the Bell* (1951)**

Here is the tale of a depressed Episcopal nursing home, into which a semi-Christ figure named 'Mr. Belvedere' enters and changes the chemistry of the place. We meet the rector, who is kind but defeated; the resident nurse, who is looking for love; and the residents themselves, who have all basically given up. *Mr. Belvedere Rings the Bell* is about the power of imputing love to activate optimism. The movie assumes the entirely good intentions of the Episcopal clergy, including the local bishop.

Available on DVD and You Tube

***It Started with Eve* (1941)**

Here is a delightful and fast-paced comedy starring Deanna Durbin, Bob Cummings, and Charles Laughton. It's a love story based on a kind of mistaken identity, with snappy dialogue. *It Started with Eve* was directed by Henry Koster, who also directed *The Bishop's Wife* and *The Robe* – and … *Mr. Belvedere,* above. Henry Koster once went on record asking why a Jew like himself seemed to get religious *Christian* movies just right. His several movies like this one are pitch perfect.

Oh, and a wise and kindly Episcopal bishop plays an important role in *It Started with Eve.*

Not on DVD but can be watched for free at: https://m.ok.ru/video/281684544070

***The Space Children* (1958)**

This is a quiet gem within the broad terrain of 1950s Hollywood science-fiction.

A group of scientists' children at a US Army rocket-launching site come under the benign influence – you don't know this at first – of an amoeba-like alien creature.

Turns out the creature has noble intentions and quotes the New Testament.

The anti-war message of the movie is soft but memorable, and the conclusion brings in a Martin Luther chorale. *The Space Children* is an un-ending delight.

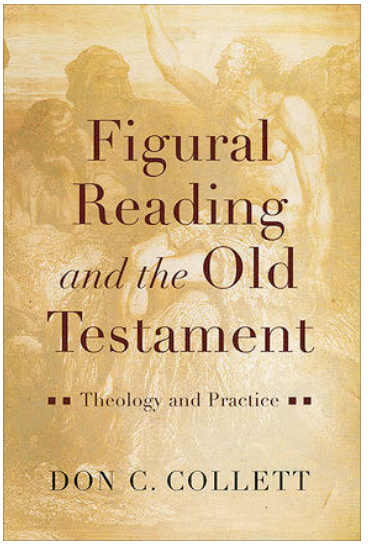
Available on DVD, Blu-ray, and Amazon Prime

There they are. Four diverting, optimistic and cool retro classics from Hollywood's Golden Age. Maybe they can "Give You Just a Little More Time" (Chairmen of the Board, 1970), so that when you've seen them all, you can... maybe... start going to church again.

The Rev. Dr. Paul F. M. Zahl is a retired priest, and was formerly rector of All Saints' Church, Chevy Chase, Maryland, and dean of Trinity School for Ministry. He is the author of many books.

Regaining Our Senses

Review by Matt Erickson



Figural Reading and the Old Testament

By **Don C. Collett**

Baker Academic, pp. 208, $22.99

The usual story about the history of modern biblical interpretation tells us that Martin Luther and the Reformers saved Scripture by returning to its plain sense and meaning. They liberated Scripture from distortions associated with far-fetched medieval allegorical reading which led to widespread error in the Church. This is, alas, not quite the whole story.

A truer story is that Luther and other Reformers pushed against abuses of the fourfold sense of interpretation, known as the *Quadriga*, to clear the way for what they saw as a more accurate reading of Scripture. The fourfold method includes the *literal* sense (the face-value meaning), the *allegorical* sense (the theological meaning derived from the literal sense), the *tropological* or *moral* sense (ethical instruction derived from the literal sense), and the *anagogical* sense (the text's eschatological meaning). With roots in the early Church, the fourfold sense of interpretation was most widely popular in the early Middle Ages. It became negatively associated with wild allegorical fancies that distorted the literal meaning of Scripture. Many today see value in its project, and aim at recovering a more nuanced understanding of allegorical, or figural, reading of Scripture.

Such is the case with the masterful and densely packed work by Don C. Collett of Trinity School for Ministry, *Figural Reading and the Old Testament: Theology and Practice*. While leaning upon historical figures like Augustine, Aquinas, and Luther, along with more recent work by Christopher Seitz and Ephraim Radner, Collett lays out a clear and compelling case for the importance of figural reading.

An Old Testament scholar himself, Collett brings attention to how "the loss of an Old Testament consciousness with respect to theological issues … lies at the heart of many of the Christian church's problems in our day." He says we must recover not only Old Testament consciousness, however, but the ability to read Scripture *figurally*, or allegorically (the terms are basically interchangeable for Collett), to recover "Scripture's ongoing theological significance through the changing contexts of history."

He gives attention first to biblical models of figural meaning and the relationship between the literal sense and figural reading. He then offers an invaluable evaluation of Reformation models of Scriptural interpretation.

Part 2 begins with a short engagement of Augustine and Aquinas on the distinction between metaphor and allegory, and calls for a serious rethinking of interpretation that would "take the exegetical practices of the fathers (including Aquinas) more seriously." The meat of this section are case studies in figural exegesis from Job 28, Proverbs 8, and Hosea 1. Collett takes us into the workshop of figural exegesis with these pivotal texts about wisdom, a gift worth the price of this book. His keen attention to historical, grammatical, and theological issues within each text is thorough and profound.

The final part of the book assesses figural reading in relation to prevailing modern models of interpretation. Collett's ability to convincingly reframe stereotypes of pre-modern, Reformation, and modern interpretation offers strong support for his aim of recovering the figural reading of Scripture today. He makes clear how the early and medieval interpreters gave attention to literal-historical matters, while also displaying how Luther and Calvin utilized allegorical or theological interpretation. In fact, Collett suggests that the manner in which the Reformers engaged with the literal sense of Scripture is dramatically different from the approach employed by most modern interpreters which tends to, as he puts it, "deform the literal sense."

Figural Reading and the Old Testament is an important book because it provides a concise and clear outline for recovering the true literal sense of Scripture through the necessary and valuable approach of figural reading. Where modern interpretive models lead to the dead-end of the self, the figural or allegorical reading of Scripture recovers the overarching theological framework that God in Christ has woven into both creation and the history of Israel for the Church. With this volume, Collett sets us on the path of regaining our senses when reading Scripture so that we neither veer into the dead-end of modernity nor lose our footing into rootless imaginative eisegesis. Instead, as we give attention to the Old Testament Scriptures with a figural reading we can truly "read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them."

Matt Erickson is the senior pastor of Eastbrook Church in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. He is married to Kelly and the father of three sons. Matt writes regularly at his blog, Renovate *(mwerickson.com).*

One and the Same: Identity and Difference in Christology

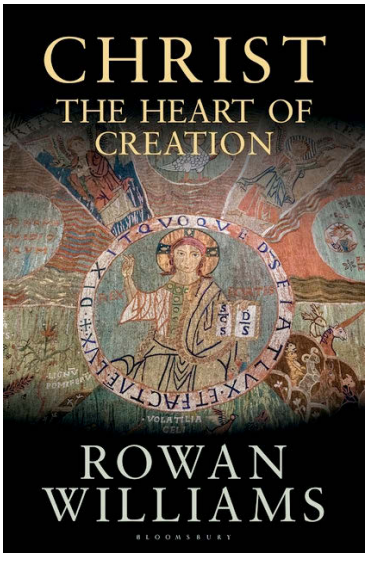
Review by Joseph L. Mangina

Christ the Heart of Creation is a typically learned, erudite, and elegant piece of theological writing, of the sort we have come to expect from the former Archbishop of Canterbury. It is also not a book for the faint of heart. Rowan Williams finds it impossible to do Christology without engaging in some hard — even scholastic — thinking. The reader should be prepared to be philosophically as well as theologically educated. But the scholasticism is in service of a Christianly serious and prayerful approach to the subject matter. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who receives sustained attention in these pages, famously asked "Who is Jesus Christ for us today?" This book is Williams's own attempt at a response.

Like many theologians, Williams presents his argument in the form of a story. He begins in the middle, with Thomas Aquinas, whose nuanced account of Christ's person synthesizes many of the insights of his predecessors in both East and West. From this high point, he moves backward to examine the roots of Christology in the New Testament. He effectively argues that, for the first Christians, the puzzle that was Jesus resisted solution in terms of merely human or even angelic categories. It used to be fashionable to see ecclesial dogma as the story of how "a blameless Galilean rabbi got into bad company and acquired an embarrassing cluster of metaphysical or mythological attributes." Williams shows how wrong this is; high Christology developed early on, in response to the "data" set before the earliest Christian assemblies.

From the New Testament Williams proceeds to patristic thought, offering an analysis of Christological developments leading up to the Council of Chalcedon in 451, and beyond. Although Cyril of Alexandria — not one of Williams's heroes, for reasons that will become apparent — receives rather cursory treatment, there are substantial discussions of both Maximus Confessor and John of Damascus. Williams narrates the story of medieval Christology after Thomas Aquinas as one of decline, as nominalist philosophy increasingly drives a wedge between God and creation and between the two natures of Christ. He treats Luther's Christology as a well-intentioned if clumsy effort to compensate for this loss: hence Luther's penchant for crass formulations like "'There goes God down the street!' and 'The man Christ created the world and is almighty.'" Williams is far more favorable to John Calvin, who, he argues, retrieves and even expands the classical synthesis by exploring the unity of Christ's person with his work. No less than Thomas, Calvin affirms "the fullness of creative and created action together in Christ without competition."

By the time he has finished with Calvin, Williams has the materials in hand to make judgments about various modern theologians. He favors (rightly in my view) a traditionalist reading of Karl Barth's thought, as over against Bruce McCormack's insistence that, for Barth, God's decision for incarnation constitutes God as the Trinity. He struggles to make sense of Robert Jenson's blunt Lutheran insistence that Jesus just *is* God, finally deciding that not even Jenson can avoid affirming some version of the *logos asarkos*, the pre-incarnate Word. But it is Bonhoeffer for whom he reserves his highest praise. Although allergic to scholastic definitions, Bonhoeffer's searching meditations in his *Christology, Ethics*, and *Letters and Papers from Prison* issue in a picture whereby "the Word abandons any resort to proof or force and renounces the possibility of external confirmation to endorse its divine authority." In a tantalizing postscript, Williams discusses how the thought of the great Jesuit theologian Ernst Pryzwara offers a sort of metaphysical complement to Bonhoeffer's ideas.



Christ the Heart of Creation
By **Rowan Williams**
Bloomsbury Continuum,
pp. 277, $35

As the title of the book indicates, Williams lays emphasis on the way Christology displays the "grammar" of created life. If the hands here are the hands of Aquinas, the voice is the voice of Austin Farrer, the 20th-century Anglican divine and author of works like *Finite and Infinite* and *The Glass of Vision*. As Williams sees it, Farrer's signal contribution lay in clarifying the "logic of createdness": that is, the idea that God's action in the world is never an interruption of finite causes, given that God is radically other than these. Rather, God's action and creaturely action simply occupy different ontological spaces, making the relationship between them radically non-competitive. Although Williams is hardly the first contemporary theologian to make use of

Bridging Differences in Scriptural Interpretation

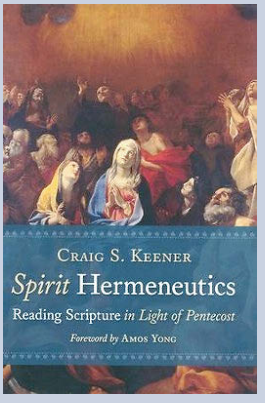
Review by Paul Wheatley

The interpretation of Scripture in the 21st-century church springs from numerous fountainheads. Historical-critical exegesis, taught to many a pastor and teacher in the late 20th century, permitted a staid neutering of the Bible's theological and spiritual senses in exchange for an air of sophistication in hermeneutics. In contrast, theological and pietistic modes of interpreting scripture can equally suffer from a neglect of the many gains historical-critical methods offer.

In his lengthy, nuanced book *Spirit Hermeneutics: Reading Scripture in Light of Pentecost*, Craig S. Keener, professor of biblical studies at Asbury Theological Seminary in Kentucky, attempts to close the gap between these two modes of biblical interpretation. Keener offers a corrective to both extremes, suggesting that attention to historically-situated meaning should be coupled with an acknowledgement that the Spirit who inspired the scriptures can illumine their meaning and application for individuals and Christian communities.

For readers skeptical or predisposed against charismatic forms of Christianity, Keener articulates ways in which Pentecostal methods of interpretation can be valuable to the wider church. He also suggests ways in which attention to charismatic interpreters of Scripture in the majority world can enlighten readers in the global North to unnecessary biases in their reading. In so doing, Keener aims at advocating in *Spirit Hermeneutics* an ecumenical, global, and historical mode of reading the Bible.

Keener's intended audience is primarily free-church evangelical readers who are skeptical of charismatic and Pentecostal Christians favoring a "Spirit-led" illumination that foregoes deep engagement with the text's historically situated meaning. However,



Spirit Hermeneutics
Reading Scripture in Light of Pentecost
By **Craig S. Keener**
Eerdmans, pp. 550.,$40

Anglicans may learn from Keener's book a way to find common ground across the differences in our Communion, by reading our Scriptures through common prayer.

The Rev. Paul Wheatley is instructor of New Testament at Nashotah House.

Farrer's insight, he develops it in a novel way, arguing that it emerges out of and is clarified by the Christological tradition.

In order for this to work, a particular sort of Christology is needed, in which the divine Word leads and the human Jesus follows. Thus Williams can write that, for Bonhoeffer as for Augustine, the "Word is identified in principle quite independently of Jesus in the sense that nothing in human history makes the Word to be anything that the Word is not eternally." To be sure, Williams immediately goes on to qualify this claim, acknowledging that in practice talking about the Word always means talking about Jesus. But having said that, he doubles down on the main point: "this emphatically does not mean that there is anything but a wholly one-sided relation between Word and Jesus … [T]he life of Jesus is not simply 'the same thing as' the life of the Word, since it is what it is because of the inexhaustible action that pervades and structures it."

I admit that I become nervous whenever anyone speaks about the second person of the Trinity and Jesus of Nazareth as if they were two different people. To be fair, there are other passages where Williams asserts their identity, writing for example that "there is no 'alterity' — no sense of 'one and then another alongside' — between Creator and creation, between Word and humanity in Jesus." Again, the radical difference between Creator and creation means that they do not need to compete for space. On balance, however, this is a decidedly Antiochene and Reformed Christology, in which the human life of Jesus of Nazareth serves as analogy, parable, or creaturely performance of the "filial relation" (a favorite Williamsian term) that exists eternally in the Trinity. The fact that the Father eternally brings forth his beloved Son is seen as the enabling possibility of our own adoption as beloved sons and daughters in Jesus Christ.

Williams's motivations in advocating this Christological model are several. He is convinced that it alone preserves God's independence from and freedom toward the world. He thinks that if the eternal Word depends on Jesus to be the Word, then the Word itself becomes some abstract thing that must "wait around" for the incarnation in order to become real. His chief worry, though, seems to be about the integrity of creaturely agency. A theology in which God simply *wills* to be God in Jesus — William has in view thinkers like Eberhard Jüngel and McCormack, with their strong doctrines of election — "risks leaving humanity as simply the passive object of divine will rather than a subject in its own right, a subject which is being transformed by grace into a subject of divine love and relational freedom — into a filial liberty." This last phrase comes close to articulating the heart of the book.

Williams is right to affirm the difference of God from creation. He also rightly insists that Jesus' identity as the Son is eternally prior to his existence in time. In my view, he is wrong to think these particular goods can only be

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secured by an exaggerated Antiochene Christology, in which premature judgments about divine and human natures get in the way of clear thinking about the one *hypostasis*. "Even" Chalcedon (which has often been accused of tilting toward Antioch) asserts that the eternal Word and the Word born of Mary and the Word crucified are *the very same one.* It is arguably the God-man in his duality of natures that Chalcedon *means* by *hypostasis*. In short, I'm much more inclined than Williams is to follow the lead of Cyril and Luther, beginning with the one figure of Jesus as narrated in the gospels, and puzzling out what it means to say of this one that he is both truly human and truly divine. As I like to tell my students, Jesus in the gospels prays not to the Word — for he just *is* the Word — but to his Father in heaven.

But theologians will have their Christological disagreements. A sufficiently generous orthodoxy should have a place at the table for Antiochene as well as Alexandrian doctrines; we can now add Williams's to the mix. The convergence he discovers between Aquinas and Calvin opens up especially rich ecumenical possibilities. My deeper concern with the book, though, is the way it allows a particular insight about metaphysics — Farrer's rule of non-competition between the divine and human — to set the theological agenda as a whole.

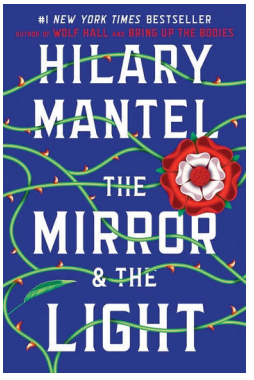
Non-competition, after all, seems a rather anemic way of characterizing the biblical drama. Stories such as Jacob wrestling with his mysterious opponent, Aaron's sons struck down for offering "strange fire," Job cursing the day of his birth, Rachel weeping for her children, Jesus crucified and crying out "why?" to his Father, all point to the fraught and complex relationship between human beings and God as described in the Bible. At times, God's answer to human sin often seems to be very much a matter of competition and conflict. God's Yes to us always implies a very real No; this is one — certainly not the only — meaning of the Law.

I can agree with Williams that Farrar's logic of createdness makes a crucial point concerning the God-world relationship. But like any theological rule, it should not be asked to do too much. If Williams over-extends the rule, it is because he seems determined to obliterate the last vestiges of any picture of God as abstract and arbitrary Will, and — as a corollary — to affirm the reality of creaturely freedom and responsibility. It is with a desire to open a space for such freedom that Williams insists on both the non-competitive relation and Christological asymmetry. In a revealing passage late in the work, Williams writes that we can speak of God only in the mode of "the dereliction of the cross, and therefore, for us as believers, in the radical dispossession summed up so austerely by Bonhoeffer as 'prayer and righteous action in the human world,' in the taking of human responsibility for human justice and flourishing and in the labour of a prayer that moves in and out of words and images."

Readers of Rowan Williams will recognize this particular austere, apophatic, and ascetical style. We must not claim to say too much about God. It is better to practice justice and pray in secret than to engage in all sorts of empty talk. Fair enough; except that too much apophasis leads to a kind of naturalizing of the gospel, whereby our righteous action simply fills the vacuum left by the God about whom we may not say too much. It was John F. Kennedy, not ordinarily considered a major Christian thinker, who said that "here on earth God's work must truly be our own." Williams is too wise to endorse that sort of secular, Pelagian reduction of the gospel; but to avoid it, much more needs to be said. As I have indicated, greater attention to Chalcedon's "one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ" would be a good place to begin.

But having said that, I commend this work to anyone, lay or ordained, interested in contemporary Christological questions. That Jesus Christ lies at the heart of creation is among the chief mysteries of the apostolic faith. Rowan Williams's wrestlings with it will nurture and challenge your own.

Dr. Joseph L. Mangina is professor of systematic theology at Wycliffe College, Toronto.



The Mirror & the Light

By **Hilary Mantel**

Henry Holt & Company. pp. 757. $30

Through Cromwell's Eyes

Review by Christine Havens

Recently, I have wondered about the continued fascination with the English King Henry VIII, his six wives, and all the intrigue of his court. Why all the focus on a patriarchal culture with deep class divides, where kings squabbled sordidly while claiming divine sanction for their deeds? Why the allure of an era when women were blamed for original sin, and heretics, such as those who first translated the Bible into English, were hanged, or burned? Why so many books, when countless stories about people of color and indigenous peoples go unheard? Where is our perspective?

Perspective is a key word for Hilary Mantel's latest addition to the annals of Henry's reign. It makes me feel guilty, but I have found all three of her narratives about the era enthralling. Once I started reading *The Mirror and the Light*, the final book of the award-winning Wolf Hall trilogy, I could not put it down. The author chooses the perspective of Thomas Cromwell, a former commoner who became Henry's chief minister. With compelling prose, close attention to historical detail, and carefully wrought characterization, Mantel makes it addictive to get inside Cromwell's head.

This account of Cromwell's last four years strips much of the sentimentality

and romance away, and the tale is stronger for it.. The book begins the moment after Queen Anne Boleyn's death in May 1536, with a striking opening line: "once the queen's head is severed, he walks away." It ends with Cromwell's own beheading on July 28, 1540. In between, the author moves the story along, through Henry's marriage to Jane Seymour, the Pilgrimage of Grace, the death of Henry's illegitimate son, the birth of the king's only legitimate son, and Henry's marriage to Anna of Cleves, (mis)managed by Cromwell himself.

Although the book gets bogged down at times with memories from Cromwell's early life, the blending of his past and present is essential. Readers are shown a man whose history haunts him and guides his conscience, as he seeks to serve the mercurial ruler and to ameliorate the damage done to England. Adding in a desire for self-preservation and self-promotion, Mantel gives readers a complex, very human figure whose downfall results from his unique combination of hubris and humility. Along the way, she skillfully demonstrates how the stories we tell ourselves can be deceptive.

Cromwell's reflections on his life and the events of his era, as presented by Mantel, shed light on subsequent history – including present-day political and social justice issues, and Western attitudes about the COVID-19 pandemic. She alludes to fake news, for example, and discusses Tudor precautions in response to the plague, which basically amount to social distancing.

Much of the political grumbling from nobles and the common people springs from a desire to recover England's life prior to its break with Rome — in essence, a desire to "Make England Great Again." Through Cromwell, Mantel also chronicles the theological developments of the Reformation, both in England and on the Continent, while keeping their effects in sharp focus. While historical fiction, this book hides none of the messiness and barbarity of the birth throes of the Church of England.

I do not have a quick answer to why the era of Henry VIII and Thomas Cromwell remain fascinating to so many, though part of the appeal may be for new perspectives to help us better envision the future. Regardless, Hilary Mantel's *The Mirror and the Light* leaves readers with greater insight into a past that still shapes our present views.

Christine Havens graduated from the Seminary of the Southwest and is administrative and communication assistant at St. Michael's Episcopal Church, Austin, Texas.

An Ice Core of the Benedictine Tradition

Review by Hannah Matis

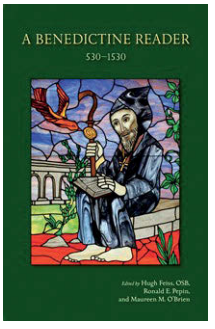
In the Middle Ages, the Benedictines were not so much a unified order as we moderns might understand the concept — a monastic federation with some shared form of governance — as the broad bedrock on which other, later orders were erected, and against which they reacted and defined themselves.

Benedict's own historicity has been questioned. His *Rule of St. Benedict,* a set of precepts for monastic living, dates to A.D. 513, but the Rule is often linked to the reputation of Gregory the Great, whose papacy began nearly eight decades later. Gregory was something of a monastic aficionado, and he recommended the Benedictine Rule precisely because its moderation, pragmatic approach, and central emphasis on humility represented a necessary corrective to the charismatic monastic experiments of the time, which were marked by ferocious asceticism, or severe self-discipline.

Widespread adoption of the Rule did not really occur, arguably, until the Carolingian Reform in the ninth century, and even then, the imposition of the Rule on individual monastic communities was a complex process that often ended in failure. The reforms of St. Benedict of Aniane (the "Second Benedict") relied on a certain amount of coercion and support from Carolingian rulers, who believed that greater uniformity in monastic observance would bring about divine favor.

By the 12th century, however, Benedictine monasticism was the lingua franca, or *lingua monastica*, of the Western church, and the very moderation, flexibility, and local adaptability which led to its success arguably had succeeded too well. In the eyes of later reformers, the Benedictine houses were wealthy, well-connected, and complacent, with lists of exemptions from their own Rule to soften their lives even further.

From the point of view of later historians and academics, what the Benedictine tradition lacked was an obvious charismatic founder or intellectual — a Bernard of Clairvaux, a Thomas Aquinas, or a Bonaventure — to engage with the new learning of the universities, and to stimulate scholarly inquiry in the present. The "Benedictine tradition," if such a thing can even be said to exist, often has been shrouded in anonymity and a lack of modern critical editions.



A Benedictine Reader, 530-1530
Ed. **Hugh Feiss, OSB**, **Ronald E. Pepin** and **Maureen M. O'Brien**.
Cistercian Publications, pp. 736. $49.95

A Benedictine Reader, 530-1530, which was 20 years in the making, is a collection of important texts to the Benedictine tradition, many of which are appearing in English for the first time. Taken together with their introductions by various scholars, they provide an important sampling across the millennium of Benedictine observance — a kind of ice core indicative of the major figures and developments within the tradition. All texts have been indexed for scriptural references to support biblical exegesis, which can

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BOOKS

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be said to be the main intellectual product of the Benedictine tradition. The concluding secondary bibliography is a good guide for anyone interested in further research in the area.

My only concerns lie in the modern reader's propensity to generalize, and to make of the Benedictine tradition a more unified discourse than, in fact, existed. But if this volume can introduce students and seminarians to a tradition so foundational — and, paradoxically, so easily forgotten — it will be all to the good.

Hannah Matis is an associate professor of church history at Virginia Theological Seminary, and the author of The Song of Songs in the Early Middle Ages.

PEOPLE & PLACES

Appointments

Ms. **Gabrie'l J. Atchison** is missioner for administration of the Dioceses of Northwestern Pennsylvania and Western New York.

The Rev. **Matt Babcock** is associate rector of Christ Church, Winnetka, Ill.

The Rev. **Noah Campbell** is vicar of Good Shepherd, Memphis and college missioner of the Diocese of West Tennessee.

The Rev. **Lee Davis** is rector of St. Mary Magdalene, Coral Springs, Fla.

The Rev. **Maggie Foote** is associate rector of All Souls', Berkeley, Calif.

The Rev. **Anny Gennato** is rector of St. Augustine, Rocklin, Calif.

The Rev. Dr. **Mark Chung Hearn** is director of contextual education at Church Divinity School of the Pacific.

Ms. **Alisa Kelly** is canon for finance and administration of the Diocese of West Tennessee.

The Rev. **Betty Long** is priest in charge of St. John the Evangelist, Yalesville, Conn.

The Rev. **Amy Dafler Meaux** is dean of Trinity Cathedral, Little Rock, Ark.

The Rev. **Stephen Nagy** is missional curate of St. Mark's, Bridgewater, Conn.

The Rev. **Grace Pratt** is lower school chaplain of St. Stephen and St. Agnes' School, Alexandria, Va.

The Rev. **Karen Rezach** is priest in charge of Grace, Rutherford, N.J.

The Rev. **Wes Sharp** is associate of Cathedral of the Advent, Birmingham, Ala.

The Rev. **Danielle Thompson** is rector of Grace, Sheffield, Ala.

The Rev. **Rebecca Watts** is associate rector for formation of St. Stephen's, Birmingham, Ala.

Ordinations

Diaconate

Alabama: **Lucy Stradlund**

Albany: **Jennifer Hull Dorsey, Paul Arthur Guilmette**

Los Angeles: **Andrea Lee Thornton Arsene, Elizabeth Ann Piraino, Greta Ronningen, Steven Phillip Swartzell, Courtney Ann Urquhart Tan, Walter Joseph Thorne**

Texas (for Western Louisiana): **John M. Campbell**

Priesthood

Central New York: **Shelly Banner** (assisting priest, St. Matthew's, Liverpool, N. Y.)

Chicago: **Jaime Briceño** (priest in charge, St. Michael and All Angels, Berwyn, Ill.) and **Lydia Gajdel** (assistant rector, St. Paul and the Redeemer, Chicago)

Georgia: **Leeann Culbreath** (assistant rector, St. Barnabas, Valdosta, Ga.).

Indianapolis: **Samuel Vaught** (curate, All Saints, Indianapolis, Ind.), **Alan Wallace** (curate, St. Francis, Zionville, Ind.)

Iowa (for Hawaii): **Jennifer Briggs Latham** (associate rector, St. Matthew's, Waimanalo, Hawaii).

Northern California: **John W. Heidel** (assisting priest, Trinity Cathedral, Sacramento, Calif.), **Karen Joyce Lawler** (assistant priest, St. Matthew's, Sacramento, Calif.)

Receptions

Southern Virginia: The Rev. **Vincent Connery** (from the Roman Catholic Church)

Retirements

The Rev. **Liz Anderson** as interim rector of Faith, Cameron Park, Calif.

The Rev. **John Atkins** as rector of St. Paul's, Dayton, Ohio.

The Rev. **John Baker** as rector of St. Aidan's, Alexandria, Va.

The Rev. **Rosemary Beales** ss lower school chaplain of St. Stephen and St. Agnes School, Alexandria, Va.

The Rev. **Edie Bird** as rector of Christ Church, Cape Girardeau, Mo.

The Rev. **Timothy Boggs** as rector of St. Alban's, Cape Elizabeth, Maine.

The Rev. **Andy Dunks** as rector of St. Bartholomew's, Richmond, Va.

The Rev. **Marvin Foltz** as rector of St. Timothy's, Creve Coeur, Mo.

The Rev. **John Frazier** as rector of St. Paul's in the Pines, Fayetteville, N.C.

The Rev. **David Green** as rector of St. Luke's, Marianna, Fla.

The Very Rev. **Gail Greenwell** as dean of Christ Church Cathedral, Cincinnati, Ohio.

The Rev. **Nancy Hardin** as rector of Trinity, Troy, Ohio.

The Rev. **John Hayes** as rector of St. Luke's, Carey Street, Baltimore.

The Rev. **Jennifer Holder** as rector of St. Christopher's, Lubbock, Texas

The Rev. **Ralph Howe** as senior associate rector of St. James, Baton Rouge, La.

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Deaths

The Rev. **Virginia Page Dabney Brown, RC**, a pioneering female priest who founded the Rivendell Community, died August 12, aged 72.

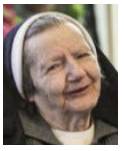
Brown was born in Savannah, Georgia, and grew up in Albuquerque, New Mexico. She studied psychology at Michigan State University, where she was known to take class notes in J.R.R. Tolkein's invented language, Elvish. She joined the Peace Corps in 1969, and taught math and science in a girl's school in Uganda. Returning to the U.S., she attended Seabury-Western Seminary, and was ordained as a deacon in 1974.

She returned to her native Albuquerque, where she founded St. Chad's Church. She was ordained to the priesthood in 1977, the first woman to be ordained in the Diocese of the Rio Grande. Hers was reportedly the first priestly ordination of a woman in the Episcopal Church during which no public objection was raised. After serving at St. Chad's for three years, she became chaplain to New Mexico State University. She also joined her husband, the Rev. Bruce Brown, in establishing the Preacher Lewis School for Ministry, a training center for lay ministry and local ordinands.

She later served St. Mark's Church in Albuquerque, as well as congregations in Roswell, New Mexico; Memphis, Tennessee; and Springfield, Kimberling City, and Branson, Missouri. In 1998, she founded the Rivendell Community, which took its name from the "homely house" in Tolkein's *Lord of the Rings* novels, of which "merely to be there was a cure for weariness, fear, and sadness." The community, which became a canonically recognized order of the Episcopal Church in 2002, includes members who live in common and others who are dispersed. It focuses on providing ministerial support to small and struggling parishes and offering space and hospitality for retreats. The Rivendell Community has houses in Missouri and Tennessee, and dispersed members living in several additional states.

Brown was preceded in death by her husband, and is survived by her three children, Benjamin Brown, Rebecca Brown, and the Rev. Elizabeth Dabney, as well as four grandchildren and the members of the Rivendell Community.

Sister **Barbara Louise Drell, OSA**, a nun who served as a teacher in Chicago's schools for decades, died on August 12, aged 88, in the 44th year of her profession.



A native of Chicago, Sister Barbara Louise was raised as a Jew. She was baptized on July 27, 1955, in the city's St. James Cathedral, and later reflected that "this was, is, and always will be the greatest event of my life." She earned degrees in education from Roosevelt University and DePaul University, specializing in teaching the deaf and those with special needs. She taught in schools on Chicago's West Side and at Malcolm X College.

In retirement, Sister Barbara Louise spent much of her time writing plays and stories for children, volunteering at the DePaul Settlement Preschool, teaching English to immigrants, and participating in the life of the Church of the Ascension, which shares its grounds with the Convent of St. Anne. Remaining confined to the convent during the pandemic she especially enjoyed sitting in the garden beneath an apple tree that her father had planted when she entered the order.

Father Patrick Raymond, rector of the Church of the Ascension said of her, "Though so often quiet, attentive and intently listening — to one or more of us, or to a student, and always, seemingly, to God — she was also capable of feisty, prophetic moments. Her presence, prayers and witness permeated the Church of the Ascension as much as the next-door Convent of St. Anne."

She is survived by Sister Judith Marie, OSA, the last remaining member of the order.

The Rev. Dr. **Billy Wilson Rodgers**, a New Testament scholar and university administrator, died August 22, aged 87.

A native of Okahoma, he graduated from California State University, and then the Episcopal Divinity School. He served as fellow and tutor in Greek at General Seminary while studying for a Th.D, writing about the Christology of the Book of Revelation.

Rodgers developed his understanding of Latino culture and the Spanish language while serving as assistant for Spanish ministry at St. Augustine's Church in New York City, and moved to Puerto Rico in 1961 to be part of the founding faculty of the Episcopal Seminary of the Caribbean in San Juan.

He later served as professor of philosophy and religion at the Interamerican University of Puerto Rico, and then moved back to the U.S. to become professor of humanities at Frederick Community College, remaining there until his retirement in 1995 as vice president for academic affairs and dean of the college.

Rodgers was the author of a study of the Christology of the Epistle to the Hebrews, and of numerous academic articles, and was working at the time of his death on a translation of a commentary by Theodore of Cyrus, a fifth-century Syrian church father. He also served on the Episcopal Church's Commission for Theological Education for Latin America and Caribbean, and on the Maryland Governor's Commission for Hispanic Affairs.

In retirement, he was active in ministry at St. Paul's Church in Point of Rocks, Maryland, and St. Mary's in Belleview, Florida, leading Bible studies. He also became a competitive swimmer in retirement, making the national Top Ten list in his age group 15 times, and competing in several national and world championships for senior swimmers.

He was preceded in death by his wife of 67 years, Helen, and is survived by three children, six grandchildren, and six great grandchildren.

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SUNDAY'S READINGS | 16 Pentecost, September 20

Ex. 16:2-15 [Jonah 3:10-4:11]; Ps. 105:1-6, 37-45 [Ps. 145:1-8]; Phil. 1:21-30; Matt. 20:1-16

Sacramentals

We pray "not to be anxious about earthly things" because we are often riddled with anxiety. We pray "to love things heavenly" because often, we neither love them nor sense them. We ask for help that our restless lives may repose in God and that we may hold fast "to those things that shall endure." In this hope and prayer, we often fail, for which God's assisting grace and our religious earnestness are an appointed corrective.

We were made for God. "For God alone my soul in silence waits; from him comes my salvation" (Ps. 62:1) God is everything. "For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life?" (Mark 8:6) "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away" (Matt. 24:35). "For here we have no lasting city, but we are looking for the city that is to come" (Heb. 13:14). "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me" (Matt. 16:24). "Look, we have left everything and followed you" (Matt. 19:27). Again and again, we are called to a singlehearted devotion to God. Cardinal Newman put it this way, "To every one of us there are but two beings in the world, himself and God" (Sermon 2, *Parochial and Plain Sermons*).

This sharp contrast exhibits a divine truth of extraordinary importance. We come from God. We were made for God and are destined to repose eternally in a divine community of love. The present time is short, and we are to deepen our devotion by watchfulness and prayer. In this present life, we ought, as St. Paul says, "to live in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ" (Phil. 1:27). Living for God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit, One God, is, however, to live for a heavenly kingdom whose metaphors and parables are, strikingly, *about earth*. Alas, wedged between God and oneself is a universe of beings, all of which are sacramental signs, and, closer to home, there are bonds of human affection and obligation intrinsic to one's vocation and an instrumental cause of one's growth in holiness.

How do we know and love God? Every day we take our daily bread as a gift that has fallen from heaven. Every day we greet the gift of sustenance with surprise and gratitude. "What is it?" the children of Israel asked when they saw a fine flaky substance on the ground. "Moses said to them, 'It is bread that the Lord has given you to eat" (Ex. 16:15-16). Every day we contemplate the mercy of God not only upon those who may seem to deserve it but upon ourselves, who most certainly do not. We are, in some sense, the city of Nineveh, to which God sent Jonah. "Should I not be concerned about Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand people who do not know their right hand from their left, and also many animals?" (Jonah 3:11) God's mercy is as beautiful as it is perplexing. "So, the last will be first, and the first will be last." We may protest the "injustice" of God's extravagant mercy, but we ought not. God speaks, "Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what [mercy] belongs to me?" (Matt. 20:15) Every day we face moral obligations and duties of love that are necessary both for ourselves and those to whom we are committed. (Phil. 1:24).

In these "earthly" ways, and many others, we turn wholly to God as our hope and salvation.

Look It Up

Read Romans 1:20.

Think About It

Love God among "things that are seen."

Ex. 17:1-7 [Ex. 18:1-4, 25-32]; Ps. 78:1-4, 12-16 [Ps. 25:1-8]; Eph. 2:1-13; Matt. 21:23-32

Creeds

The recitation of the Nicene Creed is a blessing to the church to have its universal faith announced in unison every week at the Eucharist. There are also creedal-like texts, here and there in Scripture and the Christian tradition, that articulate the deposit of faith in short, memorable passages. Two such examples merit attention today, the first from the Psalter and the second from Paul's epistle to the Ephesians.

God has noticed the affliction of his people and has heard their cries. God is the great liberator. Even of the Old Testament, we may say, "He that the Son sets free, is free indeed" (John 8:36).

> "Hear my teaching, O my people; incline your ears to the words of my mouth.
> I will open my mouth in a parable;
> I will declare the mysteries of ancient times.
> That which we have heard and known,
> and what our forefathers have told us, we will not hide from their children.We will recount to generations to come the praiseworthy deeds and the power of the Lord, and the wonderful works he has done (Ps. 78: 1-4).

We are called to listen and then recite the mysteries of ancient times, praiseworthy deeds, and wonderful works. What are they?

> He worked marvels in the sight of their forefathers, in the land of Egypt, in the field of Zoan. He split open the sea and let them pass through; he made the waters stand up like a wall. He led them with a cloud by day, and all night through with a glow of fire. He split the hard rocks in the wilderness and gave them drink as from the great deep (Ps. 78:12-15).

This story is ever ancient, ever new. God liberates his people and gives them nourishment in the wilderness. So, Christ sets us free and says, offering bread and wine, "The Gifts of God for the People of God" (BCP, Holy Eucharist).

Our liberation has come at a high price, not to us, but to Christ, who humbled himself.

> Who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death — even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee shall bend in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Phil. 2:6-11)

The humility and obedience and the death of Christ are the means by which he gathers all things in his exaltation. "For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven." "For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again!"

This is the Christian story. God liberated the children of Israel from their captivity in Egypt and fed them with manna and gave them water from the rock. God in Christ frees us from sin, the flesh, and the devil, and sustains us with sacred bread and wine. God has done this at the cost of the humiliation and death of Jesus Christ, our Lord. Having gone even to the depths of hell, Christ rose victorious to the throne of heaven.

Tell the ancient story briefly and memorably. Christ frees you and feeds you by the sacrifice of his flesh and blood. What can you do, but love him?

Look It Up

The mystery of faith (BCP, p. 363)

Think About It

Creeds are Christian shorthand.

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TLC plugs me into relationships and dialogue with Anglicans from around the globe and just down the road. Listening to their voices helps me and my parish understand how we can seek and serve the kingdom of God together.

— The Rev. Dr. Kristine Blaess
St. Paul's Episcopal Church,
Murfreesboro, TN

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