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ON THE COVER

A work by Welsh playwright Non Vaughan-O'Hagan, *Dust*, uses a 120-minute span as the container for unsung characters, actions, and insights that fill approximately 74,825 days of Virginia Seminary's fraught existence (see page 12).

Photos by Karina Carvalho/Six Half Dozen designs



FLORIDA ELECTION

‘We’re Asking for the System to Play Out’

By Douglas LeBlanc

A new public letter in the Diocese of Florida urges the diocese to proceed with its plans for a second episcopal election to elect the successor to the Rt. Rev. Samuel Johnson Howard. The letter appears at letfldecide.com, but the Rev. Matt Marino said Let Florida Decide is a list of signatories, not an organization.



Holt

Marino served on the diocese’s search committee, and has signed the Let Florida Decide letter, as has the Rev. Curt Benham, his associate rector at Trinity Episcopal Church in St. Augustine.

In the diocese’s first election on May 14, the Rev. Charlie Holt was chosen on the third ballot.

Nine days later, an objection signed by 37 delegates challenged the propriety of allowing some clergy to vote through the internet.

Holt, like Howard, opposes same-sex marriage. He has pledged to abide by the 2018 General Convention’s Resolution B012, in which a bishop who opposes same-sex marriage asks another bishop to oversee requests for same-sex weddings. Opponents of Holt’s election have also argued that he is both a racist and a homophobe.

A church court found that the election violated diocesan canons. Holt withdrew his name and said he was open to standing for election again. He was hired to join the diocesan staff, and is now one of three nominees, all of whom stood in the first election, who are standing again in the second election, scheduled for November 19.

The diocese’s Standing Committee has stressed its determination to hold the second election. It has, to date, released two videos and three documents that address frequent questions about the elections.

Critics of the first and second elections post regularly on God Is Love, an “unofficial [Facebook] group relating to the Episcopal Diocese of Florida.” Their letter to the diocese’s Standing Committee appears as a post on the God Is Love page.

Let Florida Decide has more signatures among the laity, to date. The God Is Love letter has 20 clergy (plus one non-canonical priest), and Let Florida Decide has 18. God Is Love has 98 lay signatures, including 14 from delegates and 2 from alternate delegates. Let Florida Decide has 146 lay signatures, including 30 from delegates.

Not every post on God Is Love relates to the letter asking the Standing Committee to postpone the second election. Indeed, Let Florida Decide announced its petition on the God Is Love page.

An unnamed God Is Love representative responded via email to interview requests by THE LIVING CHURCH: “The letter that was sent to the Bishop and Standing Committee is not one with any centralized leadership; some supporters were involved in the earlier objection to the first election, and most were not. There is only some shared concern about the growing division and lack of leadership in the Diocese of Florida.”

The anonymous writer added: “Our focus is on the challenges, and canonical deficiencies, presented by the upcoming scheduled election, and that is where we are focusing our prayers and attention.”

TLC asked more questions, and requested a name of the writer, but received no response to those requests.

Marino and Benham spoke with TLC by phone.

“Our canons are really simple: the bishop calls for an election, the Standing Committee gives consent, and there’s an election,” Marino said.

Benham, who joined the staff at

Marino’s parish two years ago, challenged the God Is Love letter’s description of the Diocese of Florida as lacking trust. “I see an amiable, working together, really healthy diocese,” he said. “I don’t see much division.”

Marino said he expects the God Is Love correspondents to challenge Holt again if he is elected a second time, but that does not mean he has signed on for a protracted conflict.

“Generally, I trust the Episcopal Church,” he said. “We have a system, and we’re just asking for the system to play out.”

Bishop Jo Bailey Wells Oversees Lambeth Calls

By Mark Michael

The Rt. Rev. Dr. Jo Bailey Wells will serve as the Anglican Communion’s first Bishop for Episcopal Ministry, overseeing the implementation of the Lambeth Calls and aiming to “foster a collaborative, engaged, enriched fellowship among the bishops of the Anglican Communion,” said Secretary General Anthony Poggio. She was elected to the post by the Standing Committee of the Anglican Communion during its meeting in London in early October, and will take up the role in January.

Wells, 57, serves as Bishop of Dorking, a suffragan see in the Church of England’s Diocese of Guildford. She was previously chaplain to Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby, director of the Anglican Episcopal House of Studies at Duke University, and a lecturer in Old Testament at Cambridge.

Last summer’s Lambeth Conference was envisioned as a gathering in three

(Continued on page 6)



Wells

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(Continued from page 4)

phases — small online discussion groups that met for about nine months beforehand, the ten-day in-person

Welby said the Lambeth Conference has been “remarkable in renewing friendships, relationships, and connections” across the Communion.

conference in Canterbury, and a series of guided discussions among bishops about receiving and implementing the 10 Lambeth Calls at the local level.

The Archbishop of Canterbury is expected to write soon to bishops across the Communion about this third stage of “the Lambeth Journey,” and overseeing it during the next several years will be an important part of Bishop Wells’s work.

Welby said the Lambeth Conference has been “remarkable in renewing friendships, relationships, and connections” across the Communion, and the new position hoped to build on that momentum for unity. Poggio, who will work closely with Wells, said he hoped her work would inspire “even greater companionship, learning, and exchange between provinces.”

“Having first encountered the diversity and dynamism of the Anglican

Communion as my vocation emerged in the Church of Uganda in the 1980s,” Wells said, “I am full of joy to be working with Secretary General Bishop Anthony, having first met one another in South Sudan many years ago. I greatly look forward to journeying with bishop colleagues across the Communion as we work out how we witness together through the Calls, enhancing the friendships and fellowship forged at the recent Lambeth Conference.”

Bishop Wells is a member of the Living Church Foundation.

Executive Council Starts its ‘Biennium’

By Kirk Petersen

Executive Council concluded its four-day meeting in Phoenix on October 20 with a firehose-thorough orientation for new members, and copious opportunities for relationship-building as they prepare for a truncated two years as the council’s junior class.

The most consequential governance development was another step toward sunseting PB&F — the Joint Standing Committee on Program, Budget, and Finance — which for decades has duplicated the efforts of the council’s Finance Committee in establishing triennial budgets.

To that end, the council is developing bylaws changes to implement Resolu-

tion A048, which was passed by General Convention in July with the enthusiastic support of multiple members of the committee that will be abolished.

PB&F will be replaced by a new Budget Committee, with members drawn from both within and outside Executive Council, which will work with the existing Finance Committee to fulfill PB&F’s role of providing a second set of eyes for the budget.

In committee meetings in Phoenix, it became clear that there are still details to be resolved, and a special online meeting of Executive Council will be called in November to complete the changes before year-end. Nobody on the council has expressed opposition to the broad outlines of the plan.

A council committee heard from Sarah Shipman, the recently installed director of Episcopal Migration Ministries, who provided an update on how the agency is reimagining itself after President Donald Trump slashed the number of refugees allowed to resettle in the United States.

Shipman reported that to date in 2022, EMM has processed 1,533 arrivals from a variety of countries, and 3,739 arrivals from Afghanistan. The Afghan resettlements were in response to President Joe Biden’s abrupt withdrawal of U.S. troops from the country after 20 years of war.

Shipman is an attorney and former state cabinet secretary from Kansas — and a postulant for the Episcopal priesthood. She spoke passionately about “the difference we’re making in real people’s lives.”

In an unusual public-private partnership, EMM is one of nine agencies, six of which are faith-based, that contracts with the federal government to resettle refugees.

The council approved \$115,000 in grants to support creation-care projects in nine dioceses, including Cuba and Ecuador.

But most of the meeting was dedicated to a combination of team-building exercises and in-depth briefings on the workings of church governance. Veteran council members and newbies alike said they benefitted from extensive staff briefings on their fiduciary duties, on their need to

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develop as a board of directors, on church canons and polity, on the church's finances, and on corporate social responsibility.

The orientation takes on special importance this time because the 80th General Convention was delayed for a year, then held under tight pandemic strictures in Baltimore in July 2022.

For more than two centuries, the governance of what was originally the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America has been oriented around the meetings of the General Convention, which normally convenes every three years.

Terms of office for Executive Council are often referred to as six years, but in fact they run from the closing gavel of one General Convention to the closing gavel of the second following General Convention. The new batch of council members will have only two years before their mentors will rotate off the council, and they will serve five years in total.

Julia Ayala Harris, who is vice chair

President Appoints Council of Advice

Julia Ayala Harris, the new president of the House of Deputies, announced the members of her Council of Advice on October 12: Luisa Bonillas, Jane Cisluycis, Michael Glass, the Rev. Angela Goodhouse, the Rev. Charles Graves IV, Bryan Krislock, Ryan Kusumoto, Louisa McKelleston, the Rev. Lester Mackenzie, Kathryn Nishibayashi, the Rev. Steve Pankey, the Rev. Aaron Perkins, Crystal Plummer, the Rt. Rev. Sean Rowe, Sarah Stonesifer Boylan, the Rev. Rachel Taber-Hamilton, and the Rev. Daniel Velez-Rivera.

of the Executive Council because of her election as president of the House of Deputies at GC80 in July, was unable to

attend the first day of the first council meeting in her new role. Delivering her opening remarks on a recorded video, she explained that she had a commitment to participate in a family wedding that predated her election, and would join the four-day meeting in the afternoon of the second day.

She noted that two other council members had family commitments that prevented their attendance in person: veteran Sarah Stonesifer Boylan of Washington and new member Louisa McKelleston of Chicago both recently gave birth, and participated remotely.

After the meeting adjourned, TLC asked various new council members to share their impressions of their orientation.

"As I am about to leave, I'm comfortable knowing that I can do what I need to do, but also realizing that, oh yeah, there's a lot of work to be done," said the Rev. Wilmot Merchant of the Diocese of South Carolina.

"I was surprised at how effective the
(Continued on next page)

The Untold Stories of Faith, Integrity, and Service of George H.W. and Barbara Bush



George and Barbara Bush belonged to and were active members of a Houston church for more than 50 years. The rector of that church, Reverend Russell Jones Levenson, Jr., believes he was invited into private moments with these public individuals so he could serve as a witness: a witness to observe, and a witness to tell.

With never-before shared correspondence, experiences, and personal stories, Levenson offers new insight into the Bushes' wit and wisdom; their commitment to family and friends; their tireless desire to bless the lives of others; and their steadfast loyalty to their church, their faith, and their God. This book is for readers who yearn for our public officials to serve with faith and integrity like the Bushes.

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MEET THE AUTHOR

Reverend Russell J. Levenson, Jr. lives in Houston, Texas, where he has served as Rector of St. Martin's Episcopal Church since 2007. With nearly 10,000 members, St. Martin's is the largest Episcopal Church in North America. Levenson co-officiated and offered a homily at the state funeral for President George H.W. Bush in Washington, D.C. and in Houston. He also officiated and preached at the funeral for First Lady Barbara Bush in Houston.



(Continued from previous page)

community-building portions were,” said the Very Rev. M.E. Eccles of the Diocese of Chicago. “I’m still learning the acronyms. ... I was honored and a little overwhelmed at how much people sort of jumped in the water trusting each other. We talked about some pretty difficult topics, but with what felt like deep honesty, and naming some truths that need to be named.”

Canon Annette Buchanan of the Diocese of New Jersey said she is looking forward to working with colleagues to determine how to make church governance more effective. “I’m certainly not interested in maintaining the status quo, to the extent that the status quo does not benefit the church.”

Tom Chu of the Diocese of New York said he previously had interacted with the council as a member of the Church Center staff under three presiding bishops, ending in 2008. “I found that this was the most racially and ethnically diverse council that we’ve ever had.”

On the first day of the meeting, the council heard from Bishop Jennifer Reddall of the host Diocese of Arizona, who said, “November 9th is going to be a very interesting day for us,” referring to the day after the election. “Pray for us.” Arizona was ground zero for claims of fraud in the 2020 presidential election, and the Republican candidate for governor this year has pointedly refused to say she would accept the results if she loses what is expected to be a tight race.

The Rev. Canon Michael Barlowe,

executive officer of the General Convention, told council members they will need to make decisions about how future General Conventions will be run. He and his eight-member staff had the herculean job of twice renegotiating “literally hundreds of contracts” because the event was first postponed, then cut in half on short notice.

He said the church should look for ways “to leverage the, in my opinion, irreplaceable benefits of face-to-face gatherings ... through technology, by having online meetings,” including by legislative committees. He told the council that 2,476 people had attended 155 online meetings of legislative committees before General Convention.

The council continued the COVID precautions in place at General Convention, with vaccinations required of all attendees, and mask-wearing except when eating or addressing the council. Virtually nobody else at the hotel was wearing a mask, and one wag suggested the presence of Executive Council may have measurably increased the percentage of people in Arizona wearing masks.

Bishop Hunt, 1931-2022

The Rt. Rev. George Nelson Hunt III, who served as the 11th Bishop of Rhode Island from 1980 to 1994, died October 23 in California after a long illness, surrounded by his family, the diocese announced. He was 90.

Hunt took an active role in secular affairs, according to a history on the diocesan website. “Bishop Hunt is perhaps best noted for his long struggle to call the state’s government to accounta-

bility, crusading fearlessly against corruption, organized crime, and gambling, and for his insistence that the process for ordination in the Diocese would not discriminate against anyone on the basis of gender or sexual orientation.”

His secular activism extended to international relations. THE LIVING CHURCH reported in May 1983 that Hunt was one of three bishops who took a fact-finding trip to Nicaragua, and on their return they urged President Ronald Reagan to initiate a dialogue with the country’s Marxist Sandinista government.

Hunt chaired what became known as the Hunt Commission, which recommended to the 1991 General Convention “that the ordination of gay candidates to the priesthood should be left to the discretion of local bishops,” Episcopal News Service reported in 1991. The commission also recommended “that the church consider blessing the relationships of committed gay and lesbian couples.”

Hunt was born in Louisville on December 6, 1931, and graduated from the University of the South: Sewanee in 1953. In 1956 he received a master of divinity degree from Virginia Theological Seminary, and was ordained a priest.

He served several churches in Wyoming and California, and was the executive officer of the Diocese of California before being consecrated as Bishop of Rhode Island in 1980. In 1994, he retired in Rhode Island and served as interim Bishop of Hawaii from 1995 to 1996.

He married Barbara Noel Plamp in 1955, and the couple had three children.




Hunt

Bishop McLeod Dies at 84

The Rt. Rev. Mary Adelia Rosamond McLeod was a daughter of the South — a native of Birmingham, Alabama; graduate of the University of Alabama and Sewanee; and archdeacon of West Virginia — before she made history on a snowy All Saints Day in Vermont. McLeod was consecrated in 1993 as the ninth Bishop of Vermont and the first woman to lead a diocese.

McLeod, who returned to West Vir-



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ginia in her retirement, died in the state's capital city, Charleston, on October 12. She was 84.

"I really just bring myself, warts and all," McLeod said at a news conference after her consecration. "I think people are ready to accept me for who I am."

Her consecration service included a challenge that ordaining women to the priesthood and episcopate was "contrary to Holy Scripture and the tradition of the Episcopal Church."

McLeod served for eight years, and the small diocese registered growth at 49.5 percent from 1991 to 2001. She served as secretary of the House of Bishops from 1998 to 2001.

In 2000, as Vermont's legislature was debating same-sex marriage, McLeod released a pastoral letter, "Let the Church Be the First to Issue an Emancipation Proclamation." She wrote that "homosexual persons choosing to live together in a life-long union are not committing a sin" and that

"God's great gift of love and expressing that love cannot and should not be denied for those among us who happen to be homosexual."

"She was always encouraging to me," said the Rt. Rev. Shannon MacVean-Brown, Vermont's 11th bishop. "I'm trying my best to continue her work of empowering and supporting lay ministry, promoting inclusion, strengthening our stewardship, improving transparency around our financial resources, and encouraging the ministry of women."

She contributed to the books *A Voice of Our Own: Leading American Women Celebrate the Right to Vote* and *Women's Uncommon Prayers: Our Lives Revealed, Nurtured, Celebrated*.

The bishop is survived by her husband, the Rev. Henry (Mac) McLeod III, who studied alongside her at Sewanee and served with her as co-rector of two churches; as well as five children; and eight grandchildren.

One of the couple's sons, the Rev. Dr. Harrison M. McLeod, has been rector of Christ Church, Greenville, South Carolina, since 2008. He stood at his mother's side in 1993 when she blessed the congregation as Vermont's new bishop.



McLeod

Allison Moves to ACNA

The Rt. Rev. C. FitzSimons Allison, longtime bishop in residence at a parish of the Anglican Church in North America, has left the Episcopal Church's House of Bishops for the ACNA.

Allison was ordained to the priesthood in 1953. He was rector of Grace Church in New York City and taught at Sewanee's School of Theology and Virginia Theological Seminary before his election as Bishop Coadjutor of South

Carolina in 1980. He served as bishop from 1982 to 1990.

Allison, the elder statesman of evangelical Anglicanism at age 95, is writing a new book about the theological meaning of freedom.

"People believe that 'freedom' is when we are free from all restrictions and restraints," Allison told syndicated religion writer Terry Mattingly. "But that just can't last. ... If we have no sense of sin anymore, why do we need a Redeemer?"

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Working Together for Lasting Change

By Grace Sears

TLC Honors Wells for His Service

The Living Church Foundation honored executive director Dr. Christopher Wells and elected new members to the board of directors and foundation at meetings in San Antonio on October 19 and 20. Longtime partners Christ Episcopal Church and the Episcopal Diocese of West Texas hosted the gatherings.

The Rt. Rev. John Bauerschmidt, president of the board, gave thanks for Wells and his 13 years of leadership, noting the great progress made in helping TLC shift from a struggling publication on the verge of financial collapse to “a movement that also happens to publish a magazine.” Wells became the Anglican Communion’s director of unity, faith, and order on November 1.



Howard

The Rev. Canon Jody Howard, the Rev. Nathan Humphrey, and Richard Kennelly are new members of the foundation.

Howard is the Diocese of Tennessee’s canon to the ordinary. A longtime contributor to TLC’s weblog, *Covenant*, Howard has led several churches in the Diocese of Tennessee, and has served twice as a deputy to General Convention.

Humphrey, the rector of St. Thomas’s Church in Toronto, also writes for *Covenant*, and contributed to a TLC book project, *Pro Communion: Theological Essays on the Anglican Covenant* (2012). Before moving to Canada, he



Humphrey

was rector of St. John the Evangelist in Newport, Rhode Island.

Kennelly is chief team-building officer at Team Concepts Inc., a leadership development and executive team coaching company.

He was a founder of BigBelly Solar, a cleantech startup, practiced environmental law in Boston, and is an Olympic silver medalist in rowing. He has served on numerous vestries and church committees and is a member of St. George’s Episcopal Church in Nashville, which his wife, the Rev. Margery Kennelly, serves as an associate rector.



Kennelly

Three current foundation members — the Rev. Dr. Kristine Blaess, Canon Carrie Boren Headington, and the Rev. Dr. Canon Justin Holcomb — were elected to three-year terms on TLC’s board of directors.

Blaess is rector of St. Paul’s Episcopal Church in Murfreesboro, Tennessee; Headington is canon for evangelism in the Diocese of Dallas; and Holcomb is the canon to the ordinary of the Diocese of Central Florida.

Three board members — Marie Howard, the Rt. Rev. Daniel Martins, and Dr. Grace Sears — have reached the end of their terms. Martins, the board’s secretary, and Sears, its vice president, will continue as members of the foundation.

This text is excerpted from a sermon at the annual requiem Mass of the Living Church Foundation at Chapel House, San Antonio, on October 20.

In recent weeks, towns all over Kentucky were celebrating the harvest season. My city, Berea, boasts a “Spoonbread Festival”; others offer Oktoberfests and Pumpkin Festivals, the Casey County Apple Festival, Daniel Boone Days, and even a Woolly Worm Festival. Like many other Americans, people in my state revel in heaps of pumpkins, baskets of apples, and jugs of cider.

I submit that when the Living Church Foundation celebrates a requiem Mass each fall, we are celebrating another kind of harvest: a roll call of Christians whose lives have been fruitful in ways that nourish God’s people today.

When Samuel Harris and John Fulton began a 24-page weekly publication in 1878 and named it THE LIVING CHURCH, they could not foresee an enterprise that includes a full-color magazine, online news of the Anglican Communion, the *Covenant* blog, podcasts, *The Episcopal Musician’s Handbook*, *Daily Devotions*, and conferences with multiple partners. Harris and Fulton were bold entrepreneurs, and their work bore fruit.

THE LIVING CHURCH is heir also to the Morehouses, father and son; Boone Porter and others who invested their lives in this ministry; to the donors, great and small, who have undergirded the ministry through times of war, depression, inflation, and controversy.

Although the requiem liturgy contemplates death and sorrow, our annual remembrance should also be a thanksgiving, celebrating all that we have received from those who sustained and handed down a faithful witness called THE LIVING CHURCH for the past 144 years.

In the gospels, Jesus urges his followers to open an investment account in heaven, an account that will not



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plummet in hard times, or be siphoned away by fees or fraud. To us, there seems to be an impenetrable barrier between our mortal lives and heaven, but to Jesus the barrier is porous and interactive. Our efforts to spread Christ's kingdom register on the other side of that barrier as "treasure" that cannot be stolen (Luke 12:33). The prayers of the saints rise as incense. And God is actively providing daily bread for us, as well as food for the birds.

We gather in a sacred space each year, remembering saints who are gone from us but alive to God. Quantum physicists tell us that subatomic particles that once were together still reflect each other's movements when they are far apart. It makes me wonder if we are more connected than we realize to the people and places that preceded us. It is at the table of the Lord that I am trans-

ported over and over to a table in Jerusalem 2,000 years ago, and all the iterations of that table.

Isaiah promises another table: a great thanksgiving feast, with wine and rich food, when all God's people will be united, and death will be swallowed up forever (Isa. 25:6-8). In St. Paul's great exposition of the resurrection in 1 Cor. 15:54, he echoes Isaiah: Death is swallowed up in Christ's victory.

Then he adds a corollary: "Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain" (1 Cor. 15:58, NIV).

Jesus pleads with us down the centuries to let go of our obsessions with food and clothing and other goods and instead trust in God's care, for "your Father knows that you need them. But

seek God's kingdom, and all these things will be given you as well. Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom" (Luke 12:30-32).

Thus we give thanks for God's provision now, yet yearn for a greater festival:

Even so, Lord, quickly come
To thy final harvest home.
Gather thou thy people in,
Free from sorrow, free from sin.
There, forever purified
In thy presence to abide:
Come with all thine angels, come,
Raise the glorious harvest home.

The Hymnal 1982, No. 290

Dr. Grace Sears is retiring vice president of the Living Church Foundation, past president of the Order of the Daughters of the King, and editor of its magazine, The Royal Cross.

Meet Hong Kong Province's New Diplomat

By Neva Rae Fox

It's been a busy 2022 for the Rev. Kenneth Lau as he welcomes an increased workload in Hong Kong. Lau was selected in June as general secretary of the ninth General Synod of Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hu. Then in July, Archbishop and Primate Andrew Chan appointed him as the provincial secretary general.

Lau is well-prepared for his new duties. Previously he served as assistant provincial secretary from 2013 to 2022.

He succeeded, and worked closely with, the previous provincial secretary, the Rev. Canon Peter Koon, who resigned in December 2021 to assume a position with the Hong Kong legislature and governing council.

"The provincial secretary was responsible for the external affairs, such as dealing with the government

bodies, ecumenical partners, other religious and faith leaders, public relationship, and was the ex-officio board member of the social services and education run by the church," Lau said at that time.

"On my side, I looked after the internal affairs of the province, such as administration, publication, ministries, conference and project management, etc."

Lau foresees a wider focus. "My new role will be inevitably involved with more external affairs, which were previously handled under the capable hands of Peter Koon," he said.

"Now I have to take up both internal and external affairs of the province; it is definitely the greatest challenge for me in terms of the complexities and the amount of workloads," he said. "Moreover, my predecessor was superb in diplomatic and public relationships, while I am more an introvert person. I

have to catch up, and there will be a lot for me to learn and grow in the future."

Lau has other responsibilities as well. "Besides the new role as provincial secretary general, I shall be the associate priest at St. Mary's Church effective September 1."

A graduate of HKSKH Ming Hua Theological College, he was ordained deacon in 2009 and priest in 2010.

"I look forward to accomplish a balanced work life and ministry of priesthood on both the administrative and pastoral horizons," Lau said, "and most importantly to be a humble servant of our Lord God."

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The Dust Is Far From Settled

Non Vaughan-O'Hagan's inventive historical drama both spurs and models meaningful contemplation.

By Louis G. Smith

Sitting in a packed, open-air “house” — the remains of the Virginia Theological Seminary’s Immanuel Chapel, which burned in 2010 — I had the good fortune to witness *Dust*, an ambitious theater project by Welsh playwright Non Vaughan-O’Hagan and staged October 13-16 as part of the seminary’s bicentennial celebrations.

Directed and produced by Ryan Rilette, artistic director of Bethesda’s Round House Theatre, with guidance

by VTS scholar Riley Temple, the play uses a 120-minute span as the container for unsung characters, actions, and insights that fill approximately 74,825 days of the seminary’s fraught existence. Our guide is the Maker, Vaughan-O’Hagan’s omniscient narrator played with an engaging balance of gravity and everyman humanity by Craig Wallace. Production manager Beth Ribar created a breathtaking set, plus stadium seating, from the roofless, two-and-a-half-walled red brick chapel remains known to seminarians

as “the chapel garden.”

As might be expected of a performance about a seminary’s history, the scriptural references are copious. Such references range from the play’s title to the slices of apple the Maker dispenses to other characters, carving them from fruit he carries in his pocket. And yet the writing is seldom heavy-handed, with the apple-divvying moments delivered more as a winking aside to the audience than as a forced injection into the characters’ exchanges.

The most historically and reflectively exciting moments of the play — and there were many — involve Wallace’s ability to move the Maker from wistful, aw-shucks soliloquies that belie the seriousness of topics like disenfranchisement to direct conversation with the play’s characters. The sense that this production was conceived as part of an institutional reckoning of sorts was inescapable throughout the performance, evinced by everything from the setting to the plain introduction offered by the seminary’s Dean, the Very Rev. Dr. Ian Markham, to the Maker’s initial, orienting soliloquy: “This is all borrowed time, all borrowed land.”

The conversations between the Maker and the characters revived by Vaughan-O’Hagan, from Jim Crow-era laborers to luminaries of the seminary’s histories, introduce and inspire imagination in the best tradition of theater. One example occurs when the Maker visits during the seminary’s 1923 preparations for its centennial to converse with the unwitting Dean Berryman Green, portrayed by Nick Fruit with the contained freneticism appropriate to a leader on a divine mission. As Green’s aloofness and self-importance evolve during the conversation, we are forced to ask ourselves how often we, in our daily lives or most trying moments, overlook the spark of divinity in others.

At the same time, we are forced to imagine how we might best share our wisdom, our righteousness, or whatever light of God shines within us, with the humility and patience of the Maker. When the Maker shares his country anecdotes about his Aunt May, they lead to universal aphorisms that



Photos by Karina Carvalho/Six Half Dozen designs

been able to ordain George Freeman Bragg, a Black man, as a deacon in 1887 and as a priest in 1888.

On the one hand, this moment therefore seems to mark an unusual deviation from Vaughan-O'Hagan's otherwise characteristic subtlety. We are forced to choose between two poles: was Whittle indispensable to the advent of Black clergy within the church, as previous accounts would posit, or was he an agent of racism and Jim Crow? Perhaps a little of both, but *Dust* doesn't give us that option, and in that way catches a snag on the thorny impediments marking the polarization of contemporary discourse. On the other hand, the starkness of Faith's assessment may be exactly the point — maybe the voice and perspective that's been missing for so long needs to drown out others to restore a sense of balance. But it seems more likely to lead to continued entrenchment.

The rare, momentary strains aside, the play does so very much — some might deem its aspirations unattainable — so very well. Vaughan-O'Hagan, Rilette, Ribar, and cast and crew get us from then to now, from there to here, and do so with fluidity and grace for the most part, and with substantially meaningful effect. As plainly stated during the welcome and introductory soliloquy, the play sets out to hold the good and the bad at the same time, and to tell a gigantic story in two short hours. By and large, it succeeds in wonder-inspiring style.

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similarly connect us to real debates about the world we live in. Green's exchange with the Maker at the end of one such allegory (Green: "Are you saying God's Word changes?" The Maker: "No, but perhaps our eyesight needs refining") urges us to rethink precepts we take for granted.

Indeed, much of the play's magic lies in Vaughan-O'Hagan's choice of which unlikely conversations her script should ask the cast to bring to life. The unabashedly caustic racism of a Union soldier who receives care, during the seminary's stint as a Union hospital, is jarring — all the more so given his obliviousness that his survival is dependent on the people he reviles — but it is not entirely unexpected or instructive.

The cast uses a variety of techniques that might come off as kitschy in less able hands: unabashedly ignoring the fourth wall; presenting a litany of tribulations in the context of a game show; using a circus big-top theme to illustrate the mind-boggling feats of life-juggling that VTS's "firsts" — Bishop John Thomas Walker, the first Black VTS graduate, and Allison Cheek, who as part of the Philadelphia 11 was among the first women to be ordained — had to pull off.

The subtleties of the script, such as Vaughan-O'Hagan's artful wordplay, do well to center stories heretofore left untold. Green's humorous conflation of "millstones" with "milestones," for example, takes an elucidating turn

when the script journeys to Bishop Francis McNeece Whittle's 1878 establishment of the Bishop Payne Divinity School, created so that Black men could be educated for the ministry. Seen from another angle and articulated by the character of Faith (played with straightforward authenticity and power, without cliché or sentimentality, by the talented Afua Busia), Bishop Whittle "used his position to disenfranchise and segregate."

In other words, Faith asserts, Bishop Whittle's efforts to ensure that African American men not be excluded from the ministry was less than a half-measure; it was a perpetuation of existing ills because Whittle did not insist that Black candidates simply be admitted to Virginia Theological Seminary. Without question, Whittle would have been a heroic figure had he done so, but it's unlikely he would have



COVENANT

Why Study Biblical Languages?

By Paul D. Wheatley

This essay is a condensed version of one published October 5 at Covenant, the weblog of THE LIVING CHURCH.

As an earnest missionary years ago, I had worked full time for almost 10 years in lay ministry before I seriously considered seminary. I had taught Bible lessons on three continents, with groups ranging from a few freshmen in a dorm room to a hall full of refugees and migrant families hearing my message translated into Arabic, Farsi, and French. I knew there was more to learn, but an early mentor had advised me to do what I could with the knowledge I had before I went off filling my head with books I had no idea how to use. So off I went to do what I could.

A fellow missionary changed my perspective in two sentences. She was

reaching out to sex workers, providing little more than a cup of hot tea on a cold night and a listening ear. Her ministry took place mostly in the streets through those small acts of kindness. She led a support group and Bible study for those who had left sex work, and on the side, she mentored a few other missionaries. Her ministry was very personally demanding, but I could not perceive what about it required specialized theological training.

I asked her if she ever “used” her three-year seminary degree. “It’s not about use, Paul. If I had it to do over again, even if I only had five years of life to serve God, I would spend the

first three in theological education, so I could spend the last two with focus.” Despite the many people who fruitfully serve in similar ministries with no formal education, her perspective goaded me ahead. I enrolled in seminary the next term.

As a new school year begins at seminaries, theological colleges, and other houses of formation, I want to interrogate a part of ministerial preparation that many find the most tedious and least necessary of the core theological disciplines: learning the biblical languages of Greek and Hebrew. Much of seminary involves acquiring practical skills: pastoral counseling, sermon preparation, liturgics. Most of the rest

is filled with instruction in disciplines that undergird formation for a lifetime of ministry: historical and systematic theology, church history, ethics and pastoral theology, exegesis.

Biblical languages fit somewhere between these. Learning the Greek and Hebrew alphabets, drilling vocabulary words and verb conjugations, these are disciplines that form the mind of a learner in unique ways. The discipline of learning Greek does not form the mind of a minister in the same way that historical theology or ethics would. Knowing the meaning of all the Greek words that occur more than 50 times in the New Testament is not the same kind of discipline as learning to reason with the great tradition of christological thought. Analyzing a Hebrew verb also does not fall under the category of purely practical knowledge, like knowing how to write and deliver a homily.

Learning a biblical language is a practical skill that opens the possibility of a different type of formation for a minister or lifetime student of the biblical text: acquiring patterns of thought not easily perceived in translated texts. If you've ever learned to speak in a foreign language, you likely know the joy of discovering different expressions and ways of speaking that are unique to your adopted tongue. Phrases sparkle with the brilliance of the thought world of native speakers, offering you a glimpse of the wit, humor, and charm of their culture.

Seminary education in many places is in decline. In the wake of the challenges and shakeups of the COVID-19 pandemic, coupled with the fracturing of our societies, seminary education may seem too costly for many, in finances as well as time. Many seminaries in turn respond by making their curriculum more practical and flexible, pioneering courses aimed at equipping students for whatever may be next in our tumultuous and changing world. Much of this can be for the good, if not at the expense of giving students the opportunity to be transformed by an encounter with the languages and thought patterns of those who wove the warp and woof of those stories, laws, letters, and songs that make up

the narrative of God's saving work in the world.

Learning biblical languages also opens the range of meanings possible in a given text. It introduces readers to tools that can aid in clarifying these meanings. In my academic work as a New Testament exegete, I am surprised

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how often heated discussions in scholarly interpretations of the Bible come from analyzing words that have more than one meaning. Does faith in Christ justify, or is one made righteous through the faithfulness of Jesus Christ (see Gal. 2:16)? While it may take years of dedicated study to marshal the relevant comparative texts to make such an interpretive choice wisely, a novice student can discover the breadth of possibilities for this verse simply by looking up two terms in a good Greek lexicon.

Students often come to me in their first year, confident of the relative clarity and simplicity of the Bible and their familiarity with it, eager to move past my introductory New Testament courses and Greek instruction to get to the "meat" of theology and liturgy. Some who are interested in biblical interpretation would just as soon skip

Greek in favor of a theological or typological reading of the Bible that they deem superior to the slow, plodding work of conjugating verbs and diagramming sentence structures. Yet this separation of historical, grammatical, exegetical interpretation from theological and typological readings presupposes that one can achieve one without the other.

Rich theology, effective preaching, and incisive moral reasoning are not goals to be attained without first encountering the Scriptures as they are given to us in the nouns, verbs, prepositions, and sentence structures of the text. Learning Greek and Hebrew brings us into contact with those very nouns and verbs and their ways of conveying information within the boundaries of human language that we must deal with before we jump to whatever ethical or theological import these texts convey.

The Church would indeed be impoverished by preachers so fixated on the intricacies of Greek and Hebrew grammar that they neglected meditation on the character of the God to which these texts point. However, in more historic traditions such as Anglicanism, Catholicism, and Orthodoxy, as well as other mainline Protestant denominations, the opposite is more common: the Church can also be impoverished by ethical and theological preaching that makes cursory "use" of the Bible as it is.

Our knowledge of the Scriptures and the world from which they come can be neglected in our homes, parish halls, and even sermons, to the extent that it could be obscured or even lost. Preaching, teaching, and ministry in word and sacrament — or even in the small kindnesses of a smile and a cup of hot tea to a lonely person on a cold night — are enriched by a close, meditative encounter with the Bible in all its strangeness and difficulties, made possible by learning to read it as it was first written. Learning biblical languages deepens this encounter.

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Celibacy and Full Humanity

By Victor Lee Austin

To be celibate is, in apparent etymology, to live alone; in more specific definition, a celibate is one who abstains from marriage and sexual relations. (Obviously, despite etymology, such a person need not live as a solitary.) The problem here with both etymology and definition is that the truth is thereby obscured.

If we think of celibacy as the absence of something — marriage, sexual congress — our thought has not pushed through to a positive picture of what this state of celibacy is. It's as if I asked you who the New York Giants were, and you told me they weren't the Buffalo Bills, and they weren't the Arizona Cardinals, and so on, but you never came around to telling me who the Giants are.

Christian moral teaching is clear that sexual relations are essential to the marriage of a man and a woman who also, other things being equal, are open to the conception and rearing of children. (For more on this, see my "Why Have Children?" earlier in this series [TLC, Oct. 17, 2021]) Furthermore, that same teaching holds that sexual relations are wrong when they are not in a marriage; the wrongness is either infidelity or a failure to achieve fidelity.

Therefore I say: *Celibacy is for everybody*. None of us is married for our entire life. Prior to marriage, we

are called to celibacy. Following marriage, should we outlive it, we are called to celibacy. And furthermore, some of us are never called to marriage.

The teaching that celibacy is for everybody is handicapped in its presentation if we have nothing more to say than that celibacy is the lack of marriage and sexual relations. Must something that is a universal call be described in negative terms? To do so seems extremely problematic, and all the more so if we hold to the canonical picture of Jesus. He is held to be both celibate and completely human. But to say that Jesus lacked marriage and never enjoyed sexual union does strike our imaginations as saying that he failed to experience something that is central to being human. However, it is our imaginations that are at fault here. Jesus cannot be said to lack anything that is human.

We need a positive understanding of celibacy in terms of what it is, not in terms of what it isn't.

We return to the biblical understanding of marriage. But where in the Bible do we have the deepest probing of the mystery of marriage? To my mind it is neither in Genesis nor in the New Testament, but in the Song of Songs. Here we see the love of God for us and us for God depicted as the love between a groom and a bride. It is sensual, bodily, erotic, and located in a garden that reminds us of both Eden and the temple.

In addition, as Ellen Davis and others have noted, the text of the Song of Songs shows cognizance of the rest of the Hebrew canon — from all of which Robert Jenson concludes that the plain, literal sense of the book is allegorical. That is to say, it is no imposition upon this remarkable love poetry to say that it is at once a story of marriage and a story of God's love.

For more on this, I recommend Jenson's commentary on the Song (Interpretation series, Westminster

John Knox, 2005) and his essay "Male and Female He Created Them" in *I Am the Lord Your God*, edited by Carl E. Braaten and Christopher R. Seitz,

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friendship is
either a repressed
or a realized
sexual union.*

(Eerdmans, 2005). Here I will (only and all-too-briefly) draw out two implications from that latter essay.

(1) God's love for us is properly described as erotic: God has made the decision to desire us even though there is no reason for God to have any desires and much less any reason for him to desire us in particular. This desire is what we see in marriage — and, if married, is part of the reality of sensuousness, longing, preparing, living, enduring, and so forth.

(2) Celibate people are not removed from this eroticism, nor are they deprived of an essentially human experience. To the contrary: they are pushed to its very heart. Jenson says that celibacy can be "a pressurized form of [sexuality], a reduction [concentration] of eroticism to that eros between God and his people that is the enabling archetype of all eroticism." This works in reverse also. The tradition of celibates writing about the Song of Songs — and there is a great tradition of this! — has insight for married love; "spousal eroticism is a discipline at least as rigorous as that of the monastery."

Our age is hyper-sexualized; more so, it seems to me, than at any previous time in my life. It is simply assumed that human beings engage in sex, and it is often further assumed that lack of sex in one's life is a failure. This is a situation that should grieve our pastoral hearts. But what beyond sympathy can we offer? It is hard to offer the old Christian teaching of celibacy outside of marriage in a way that has even a slight chance of making sense.

What we need is to develop our imaginations so that we do not see celibacy as a lack of something. Before and after marriage, and possibly for long stretches of life, and in some cases possibly for all of life, all of us are celibates, and our periods of celibacy are opportunities to draw close to God's immediate erotic love for ourselves. How can we imagine and share that truth?

It will obviously take some courage to stand athwart strong cultural assumptions. But the need is even greater for Christian artists, playwrights, novelists, storytellers, and the like to help us all imagine what celibacy positively is. What, for instance, is the felt experience of sexuality pressurized and boiled down to that intense love God has for us, unmediated by sexual union with another body? Only then will we start to grasp the fullness of Jesus' humanity. And only then will we start to grasp the fullness of our own humanity.

We need, also, to have our imaginations enlarged so that we do not assume a close friendship is either a repressed sexual union or a realized one. Close friendships — with people and with God — are of the essence of human flourishing. To become clear about celibacy is to open the door to more intimate friendships.

The Rev. Canon Dr. Victor Lee Austin is theologian in residence for the Diocese of Dallas and Church of the Incarnation, Dallas.

God, All the Time and Everywhere

Review by Russ Levenson Jr.

The Rev. David Beresford — Episcopal priest, poet, artist, former prison chaplain, retreat leader, and spiritual director — has pulled together his rich variety of gifts to offer readers a beautiful tapestry of comfort and inspiration.

“With God, you are being oriented to a life filled with grace, where your natural gifts are places in the service of your supernatural creator,” he writes. “A goal of our spiritual life is to surrender to God and assent to this new orientation.”

As a fellow pastor once wrote, “If you are looking for God, you will find him; and if you are not, you will still find him.” Beresford gently tugs his reader along to say, “Look, here is God. He’s got you hemmed in on every side.”

Above and Below is a collection of more than 30 meditations, which Beresford wrote while serving at St. Barnabas, Wilmington, and St. Martha’s, Bethany Beach, Delaware. His contagious enthusiasm for the Christian faith is obvious: “I am continually inspired by the world God has created. I hope you will take inspiration and pleasure from reading these reflections.”

The author pours his words into a

rich amalgamation of characters, from William Shakespeare, D.H. Lawrence, and Judy Collins to Luis Buñuel, Cyril of Alexandria, St. Paul, and our Lord. He takes readers into the forest on a hike, into a courtroom where he was

Above and Below

Reflections on the Spiritual Journey

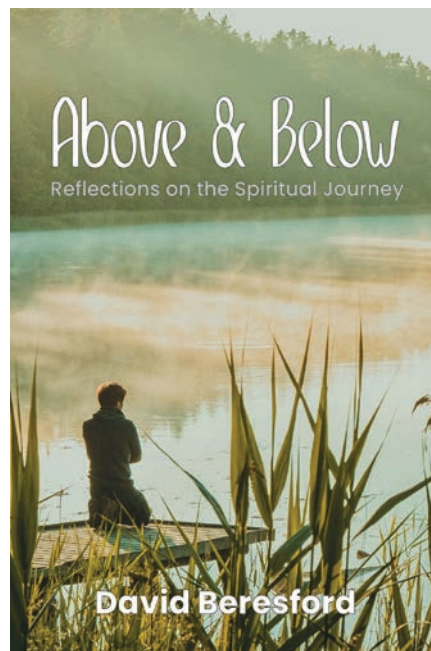
By David Beresford

Cedar Tree Books, pp. 148, \$20

welcomed as an American citizen, into a Mexican restaurant, and into his study, where we are introduced to a living icon — his cat named Mani.

Beresford teaches valuable and enduring lessons about the omnipresent nature of the God who created us, redeemed us, and helps us live the fullness of the Christian life, which he describes as “a special kind of freedom, rooted in faith, where we are born aloft by the spirit of God.”

The essays are brief but poignant, and at the end of each you might take a deep breath of gratitude. Here is a



favorite of mine, from a meditation on “Spaciousness”:

One of the insights from my own experience was to see how God was present at a particular time in my life, even though I wasn’t aware of it then. Perhaps in the silence, God was generously sharing his own memory with me? I don’t pretend to understand how it works, but I am reassured by the knowledge that God is present throughout our lives and we are carried through by his unfailing love and care.

That is one word, among many, that the ache of the human heart needs to hear. I commend the time and space you would give to *Above and Below*. It will be time well spent.

The Rev. Dr. Russ Levenson Jr. is rector of St. Martin’s Episcopal Church, Houston.

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A Colorful Parade

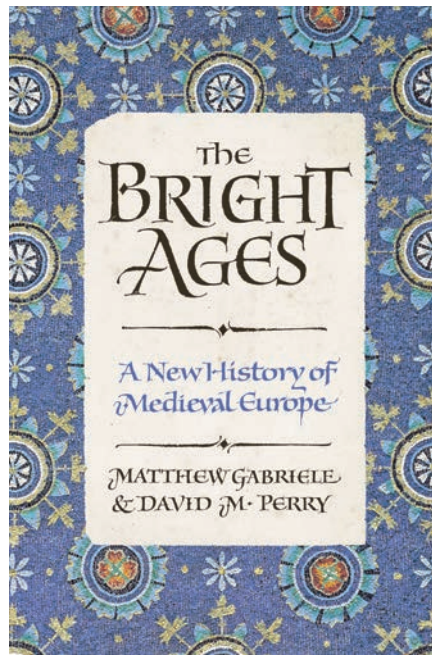
Review by Lawrence N. Crumb

Interest in the Middle Ages is nothing new, but it has more often been about the High Middle Ages, as in James J. Walsh's *The Thirteenth: Greatest of Centuries* (1920), or its decline, as in Johan Huizinga's *The Waning of the Middle Ages* (1924). In this book, Matthew Gabriele, professor of medieval studies at Virginia Tech, and David M. Perry, professor of history turned journalist, devote ample consideration to the early period.

The book's title is a dig at any who would use the term "Dark Ages," even before the Carolingian Renaissance of the eighth century. Even to use that phenomenon as a turning point would be Eurocentric, something avoided by these authors, who give extensive coverage to Constantinople, Jerusalem, and the Arabian Peninsula, with appropriate mention of Asia and Africa. Their recognition of the importance of Eastern Christianity, including the Nestorians, is reminiscent of Philip Jenkins's *The Lost History of Christianity* (2008).

The book begins in 430 with Galla Placidia, Visigothic queen and Roman empress dowager and regent, building the church in Ravenna that still dazzles tourists. The date is somewhat arbitrary, since the authors insist that the Roman Empire did not fall in the fifth century but simply evolved into different forms in different places, all claiming continuity with the ancient Roman Empire as their heritage. In fact, the people of Constantinople did not call themselves Byzantines, but Romans.

There follows a colorful parade of monks and missionaries, kings and commoners, Vikings and Mongols, intellectuals and illiterates, Eleanor of Aquitaine and Hildegard of Bingen;



The Bright Ages

A New History of Medieval Europe

By Matthew Gabriele and David M. Perry

HarperCollins, pp. 307, \$29.99

and there are various types of Christians, Jews, and Muslims from Iraq to Iberia. There is even an elephant, brought to Charlemagne from Central Africa via Baghdad, Northern Africa, and Italy. The story ends 900 years later back in Ravenna, where Dante lived in exile and died in 1321.

Of special interest to Anglicans will be the chapter "Sunlight on a Northern Field." It gives deserved credit to Bertha and Emma, queens of Kent, for their role in the conversion of England; and to Hilda, abbess of Hartlepool, whose importance extended beyond

presiding at the Synod of Whitby.

The arrival of people (including Theodore of Tarsus to Canterbury) and objects (including those discovered recently by archeologists) from elsewhere in Europe and the Near East attests to the geographical interconnectedness of the far-flung island. The Venerable Bede's story of Pope Gregory and the British boy slaves ("*non Angli sed angeli*"), written long after their time, is interpreted as a desire to legitimize the conversion of England by connecting it to the ancient seat of empire.

The next chapter shows how church and state supported each other under Charlemagne; his coronation as emperor by the bishop of Rome, with the blessing of the patriarch of Jerusalem, gave the newly anointed a claim to being the successor of David and Solomon as well as of Augustus, Constantine, and Justinian.

The chapter on the Black Death, with its attendant conspiracy theories and scapegoating, is timely.

Color plates illustrate the art and architecture discussed in the text; a concluding section, "Further Reading," organized by chapter, is the equivalent of bibliographic footnotes.

The method of the authors is to "work from the inside of these all-too-human medieval people [and] try to see the universe as they saw it." The result is to show "a complex interaction among diverse cultures that reflects the drive toward both coexistence and violence." For those who have studied the Middle Ages in the past, the book will be both a review and a corrective; for others, it will be a highly readable introduction.

The Rev. Lawrence N. Crumb is vicar of St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, Cottage Grove, Oregon.

Reading Ruth Globally

Reading Ruth in Asia

By **Jione Havea** and **Peter H.W. Lau**
SBL Press, pp. 158, \$24.95

Losing Ground

Reading Ruth in the Pacific

By **Jione Havea**

Wipf and Stock, pp. 296, \$33

Introducing Feminist Cultural Hermeneutics

An African Perspective

By **Musimbi R.A. Kanyoro**

Pilgrim Press, pp. 144, Price varies

Review by Grant LeMarquand

It is a truism to say that the Bible must be read “in context.” In recent years, however, the meaning of *context* has been raised quite sharply. Does one mean that a passage must be read in light of its historical background? Or does one mean a text’s literary or narrative context regardless of one’s perspective on the historical value of a text? Or, perhaps, context refers to reading a biblical text in the light of its place in the entire canon of Scripture, or even in the light of the creeds or the tradition of the Church (or synagogue)?

In recent years, the issue of the context of the reader or the community of readers has drawn the attention of scholars. What difference does it make, if any, that I read as a straight white male who was born in Canada? If I were an Asian man, would the biblical text speak to me in a different way? If I were an African woman, would I notice things in the text that a North American white male would not notice? These questions are relatively new in the biblical scholarly guild.

My first exposure to academic biblical studies (more than half a century ago) presented a far different picture. I was instructed as an undergraduate in religious studies that the historical-

critical method was the great leveler: “Learn and use these methods,” I was told, “and it does not matter whether you are a Christian, a Jew, a Buddhist or an atheist — you will come to the same conclusions.”

So said my first instructors in biblical studies, and so I was introduced to the science of so-called objective, neutral, biblical studies. It was all about the text’s history, about what the text *meant*. To be sure, I discovered that historical-critical readers were very careful and raised many enlightening and interesting questions. But these methods left much to be desired. In short, they left me asking “So what?”

But there were already other voices on the scene asking different questions. The great literary critic and Anglican apologist C.S. Lewis, for example, put these words into the mouth of one character in his children’s story *The Magician’s Nephew*: “What you see and what you hear depends a great deal on where you are standing. It also depends on what sort of person you are.” Context, in other words, includes *place* (where you are standing) and *identity* or *character* (what sort of person you are).

I discovered the reality of this when I first went to Kenya, ostensibly to teach the New Testament to African theological students, and on the first day discovered that my students understood things about the Bible because of their African context that neither I nor my teachers in Canada had ever imagined. I found their understanding of Scripture amazing. Their African traditional religious background, their lives in predominantly rural agricultural settings, their experience of suffering, and their vibrant Christian faith gave them

access to the biblical text that I did not have. I became their student (but I still had to grade their papers).

Three books on the small Book of Ruth highlight the shift to an interest in the ways various readers encounter the biblical text. For studies of Ruth, these three are merely the tip of the iceberg.

Reading Ruth in Asia is a volume of nine essays conceived at a conference of the Society of Asian Biblical Studies in 2012. The authors are from various regions around Asia and the Pacific: Oceania, Australia, Myanmar, Taiwan, Hong Kong, China, India, and Malaysia. The authors are aware that the word *Asia* is problematic. Is Australia part of Asia? In addition to the multiplicity of countries, there is a plethora of religions and religious texts. Christi-

anity is one religious voice among many others — and a minority voice. The Bible is one scriptural voice in conversation with many other texts.

What does Ruth say when read in Asia? Several themes predominate these essays. It does not escape Asian readers that both Naomi and Ruth are migrants. At the beginning of the book, we learn that Naomi and her family were forced out of Israel into Moab by a famine. After the death of her husband and her sons, and now that the famine is over, Naomi returns to Israel.

Ruth, Naomi’s daughter-in law, also migrates. Having lost her husband, she clings to Naomi and seeks a new life in Israel. Much of the story involves Ruth’s struggle to integrate into a foreign culture. Several of the essays in *Reading Ruth in Asia* draw implications for today’s Asian situations from Ruth’s story of migration.

Sin-ling Tong re-reads Ruth’s confession (1:16-17) not merely as an act of submission but also as a way of asserting her identity as a survivor: “Ruth’s submission is part and parcel of her successful migration. ... [H]er con-



fession and her deeds of loyalty also allow her to reclaim her subjectivity and pose challenges to the hegemon [i.e., the dominant authority]" (36).

From Australia, Anthony Rees also reads Ruth through the reality of migration. Ruth, like most refugees, is "invisible upon her arrival in Bethlehem and has to struggle to find favor." Ruth's invisibility highlights her powerlessness and vulnerability in a foreign culture.

Roi Nu's article from a context in Myanmar, "A Reinterpretation of Levirate Marriage in Ruth 4:1-12 for Kachin Society," draws attention to a different issue. Levirate marriage is the practice outlined in the Torah of a man inheriting the wife of a relative who has died, for the purpose of producing offspring for the dead man (see Deut. 25:5-10). Similar practices are found in Asian (and African) cultures.

Nu's article tells us that the practice in Kachin culture is an "unavoidable responsibility" (57) of the male relative and that widows are forced into these arrangements (59). Among Christians in Kachin society, the Torah legislation and Ruth 4 are often used to pressure widows into accepting marital relations against their will.

Nu argues that neither Deuteronomy 25 nor Ruth 4 forces women into any marriage against their will. There is a right of refusal in these texts that could be extended to Kachin society. Nu hopes his study "will encourage Kachin women to resist abuses" and help readers understand that "the union depicted in Ruth ... should not be used to support the Kachin custom" (71-72).

Jione Havea's essay in *Reading Ruth in Asia* is another valuable contribution, but since he has written an entire book from his context in Oceania, we turn now to that volume. Havea's *Losing Ground: Reading Ruth in the Pacific* is methodologically interesting because it purports to be based on

Bible studies conducted across islands of Pacifika, including Solomon Islands, Fiji, Nauru, Māohi Nui French Polynesia, Tonga, Aotearoa New Zealand, and Australia.

Havea's method is to invite those in his Bible studies to read the text twice, to read and reflect on notes he has provided — feeling free to "push back with alternative reading," to reflect on his "takeaway" questions and "prompts," and then "allow time and reflections to flow." I strongly affirm the idea of allowing readings from local people who are not professional biblical scholars to allow the text to speak to them in a communal context. I have serious doubts, however, about how much these voices were predisposed to listen to the voice of the expert providing the questions and prompts.

Among the many local issues raised in Havea's book (including issues of migration, and of marriage and gender relations), one issue stands out as a significant contribution. The book's title telegraphs the issue: Ruth is partly about the issue of the "ground," the earth. Ruth and Naomi are characters who have lost ground, lost territory, and seek to reclaim their place in the world.

The island nations of Pacifika have been robbed of ground through the colonial projects of Western and Japanese powers. For example, in Banaba people have lost their homes to the pollution caused by phosphate mining; natives from Nauru were moved by the Japanese "in order to make room for its war against the alliance led by the USA," and after the war few residents were allowed back to an island devoted to war; numerous islands were devoted to British, French, and American nuclear weapons testing between 1954 and 1964 (109-110). And now, due to climate change, much

of Pacifika is in danger of "losing ground" permanently. Naomi and Ruth had both lost ground, but the Book of Ruth provides some hope that ground can be regained.

Havea's book, however, is not characterized by hope. It offers more cynicism than hope. The predominant mode is suspicion — not just of colonial powers, but of the biblical text. I fear that I may have learned more about the author's anger than I did about the Book of Ruth.

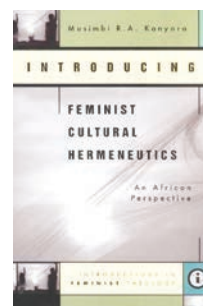
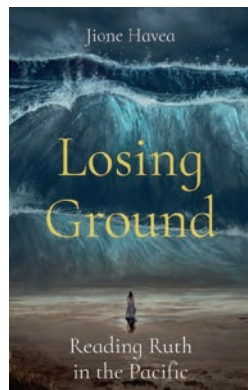
Musimbi Kanyoro's *Introducing Feminist Cultural Hermeneutics: An African Perspective* is not about Ruth. Kanyoro's study is a brief explanation of feminist biblical interpretation that can and sometimes does function in Africa. Although her book is not *about* Ruth, the Book of Ruth is Kanyoro's test case.

One of the strengths of this book is its honesty. Kanyoro admits that her education, Westernization, and urbanization have distanced her to a large degree from the world of the Kenyan village in which she was raised. And, although clearly writing as a feminist, Kanyoro is not uncritical of much Western feminism that she considers too individualistic.

African theologians, especially male African theologians, have for years tried to rehabilitate African religion and culture after it had so often been denigrated by Western missionaries. Kanyoro notes that African women theologians and biblical exegetes are not as quick as many male African scholars to consider everything African as necessarily commendable: "Using their lives as examples, African women question the premises that celebrate all cultural practices regardless of their negative impact on women" (25-26).

It is in this context — of African culture, of African religion, of Western missionary work, and of (predominantly male) African theology — that

(Continued on next page)



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Kanyoro approaches the Book of Ruth. The fourth chapter of her work tells the story of Kanyoro's research project in her home village. The project was a

Kanyoro reports and reflects on a creative process that enabled the text of the Bible and the real-life experience of rural African women to interact.

three-day retreat/Bible study of Ruth in 1996 with 150 women, virtually all of the women of her small western Kenya town.

Kanyoro reports and reflects on a creative process that enabled the text of the Bible and the real-life experience of rural African women to interact. This section is worth the price of the book. Kanyoro has done a real service in providing an introduction, not so much to what has been done in African feminist hermeneutics (although there is some of that in her discussion of the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians in chapter three) but to what can be done by and for African Christian women.

Early in chapter four, Kanyoro reports on her meetings with the women of her village in western Kenya. She gathered young and older women for a retreat and gave them time to study the Book of Ruth. They then created dramas based on their reading of Ruth. They retold the story through their own eyes.

Some of the observations may strike Western readers as unusual. For example, the Kenyan women noted,

with some surprise, that Naomi and her husband, Elimelech, settled in Moab peacefully and even allowed their sons to marry Moabite women. When trouble came and Naomi's husband and sons all died, the women wonder whether Naomi realized that she had been put under a curse because she had neglected the customs and traditions of her people. The suggestion of a curse was reinforced because the sons had been married to Moabite women for 10 years and yet they had no children. Returning to Israel was a way for Naomi to cleanse the family.

Maybe [it was suggested] they migrated and did not tell people where they were going, and they could have disappeared without paying their debts. If you don't pay what you have borrowed from someone, a curse will follow you wherever you go. Maybe they neglected going back to their home from time to time to pay homage to those who died and the curse of death wreaked revenge on them.

Traditional Africans live in a world well-populated by spirits. In their retelling of the story of Naomi and Ruth, the spiritual world provides an explanation for the pain of Naomi's family. The women wondered what Naomi and Ruth had done to anger their ethnic group or the spirits. Since the whole experience of losing a husband and two sons was devastating, there had to be a logical and spiritual explanation.

The women supposed there could be a curse for leaving one's tribe, for individualism, and not paying your debts. The women did empathize with Naomi and her family for the famine that led to their migration. Many know firsthand what it is to have no food to feed their families. Many have known hunger, starvation, death of family members. They know the difficulties of moving to an area where the culture and language are different.

In African culture, marriage and childbearing are considered an essential part of being human. They are also aware of marital taboos, and so some of the Kenyan women were concerned when they read that Boaz called Ruth his "daughter" — but then slept with her and married her. "This seems wrong to us, because once a grownup calls a young person 'daughter,' a kin's relationship has been established which prohibits sexual relations." They also saw Ruth needed a rich man to support her and Naomi. They speculated that Naomi wanted Ruth to marry Boaz because he was rich. They also thought Boaz was a clever man because he tricked the poorer man, who was the right one to inherit Ruth. "It is often the case that the rich can get anything."

Kanyoro's village women read carefully, but they read within their culture. Their culture raised questions for them about the meaning of the text. Perhaps this is one of the most important things that we can learn from cross-cultural readings of the Bible. Our differing perspectives force us to think about the meaning of the text, to question the text, to wrestle with its importance in our lives and in our cultures. The application of a biblical text does not usually simply jump off the page. If we are commanded to love God with all our mind (Matt. 22:37), this certainly implies that we should read the Bible with all our mind.

Reading from and for a particular context does not mean all readings are equal. Some readings are mistaken, or limited. What Asian and Pacific and African readings should help us see is that Western ways of reading are also culturally conditioned. To understand the Bible and its message of life in our global culture, we need each other. Reading *with* others, reading across cultures, has the potential to open us to more of God's truth for a hurting planet.

The Rt. Rev. Dr. Grant LeMarquand is professor of New Testament at Trinity School for Ministry.

Words of Power and Hope

Review by Cody E.B. Maynus

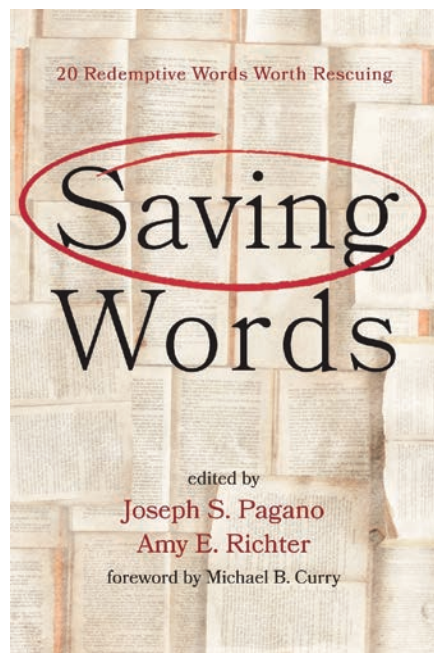
Words have power and import in the Christian tradition. “Words can indeed break down and hurt, but by God’s grace and our choices they can also build up and heal,” Presiding Bishop Michael B. Curry writes in his foreword. “Words can save. And so we need to save, and give new life, to such words.” This volume of essays is an attempt to save words vital to our shared life together as Christians.

Joseph S. Pagano and Amy E. Richter — and the authors they have chosen — are keenly aware of the important issues that occupy the time and energy of the Anglican Communion. They know the divides on human sexuality. They know the debate surrounding the sacraments of initiation. They know the wounds caused by abuses and indiscretions. They know these issues are not likely to be sorted out in a lecture hall or on a cathedral close.

Reading this lovely volume feels like sitting around a living room after a shared meal among friends— swapping stories, discovering resonances. Pagano and Richter have gathered leading voices throughout the Anglican Communion — from bishops to poets, theologians to parish priests, laypeople and clergy alike — and this volume is profoundly approachable.

The essays address words that need fresh interpretation, both for the unity of the Church and to speak to a world in need. In a Communion known more for its division than for its unity, the work of Christian reconciliation is fundamentally a project of reclamation, of recognizing the oneness that exists and choosing to embrace it.

In his chapter on Communion, John



Saving Words

20 Redemptive Words Worth Rescuing

Edited by Joseph S. Pagano

and Amy E. Richter

Cascade Books, pp. 214, \$26

Gibaut underlines the fullness of this reclamation project: “while human beings may reject, distort, and deny God’s gift of *koinonia*, we can neither create nor destroy it. For all churches, and for the Anglican Communion, this means that we are never out of communion with one another, however costly ecclesial communion may be experienced, or however limited that communion may be received.”

Jesse Zink further underscores this plea for unity in his chapter on

catholicity. He links catholicity not to liturgical or aesthetic matters but to wholeness and particularly to the Hebrew word *shalom*. Catholicity “reminds us of how God acts to create wholeness for God’s people.”

Amy Peterson reflects on the Eucharist as a prayer of expansive unity, encompassing not only “all types of people,” but all of creation itself. She hears unspoken invocations between the lines of the eucharistic prayer, invocations that speak of the wholeness of God’s creation and expand our sense of community.

Redemption is personal and collective, fundamentally accessible and yet somehow mysterious, present and yet still forming. Whereas most books of theology speak from a place of relative certainty, these essays speak from a place of hope and resolution. Our world is clearly hurting and our Communion seems to be teetering constantly on the edge of collapse. The future of Christ’s Church — against which not even hell may prevail — is certain, and yet the sustainability and health of our individual churches remains unclear.

Our work is, as Malcolm Guite writes, to “acknowledge our mutuality, to partake of the goods of this world with and for and through one another, and to acknowledge one another again as ‘partakers of the heavenly kingdom,’ partakers whose part has been taken by the King of Heaven himself.” Words have the power to unite or to divide. Which words will we use?

The Rev. Canon Cody E.B. Maynus is the canon for formation in the Episcopal Diocese of South Dakota and is priest in charge of St. Andrew’s Church in Rapid City.

Building Upon the One Foundation

Jesus and the Church

The Foundation of the Church in the New Testament and Modern Theology

By Paul Avis

T&T Clark. pp. 235 + xiv, \$40.95

Reconciling Theology

By Paul Avis

SCM Press. pp. 260 + xiv, \$48

Review by Eugene R. Schlesinger

As churches face down the related realities of decline and of the current reckoning regarding various scandals connected to unfaithfulness within and by the Church, we must ask ourselves anew what the purpose of the Church is and whether it is in fact worth all the trouble. Given the harms caused by churches, might the proper response to decline be letting nature take its course as churches go gentle into that good night? These two volumes by Paul Avis — the fruit of 40-odd years of ministry and reflection — serve as complementary responses to that question, and can be read as a pincer movement of sorts, whereby we are invited to sit at the feet of this elder statesman of Anglican ecclesiology and ecumenical theology and recover a vision of what the Church is for and what it can be again.

Jesus and the Church is concerned with foundations, digging deep into historical and biblical scholarship to find how the Church arose from the ministry of Jesus. While historical research has disallowed the naïve assumption that Jesus founded the Church in any direct fashion — Avis cites Alfred Loisy's observation that Jesus announced the kingdom, yet it

was the Church that came, in a positive fashion, devoid of irony — we can nevertheless discern a foundational relationship between Jesus and the Church.

A survey of biblical imagery and what we might call proto-ecclesiological language, most especially the Pauline trope of being “in Christ,” leads into engagement with Protestant, Catholic, and Anglican theorizing about how we've moved from the historical Jesus to the Church, all of which culminates in an articulation of the Paschal mystery of Christ's life, death, resurrection, ascension, and gift of the Holy Spirit as the foundation of the Church.

While *Jesus and the Church* is intended to inaugurate a multi-volume series on the Church and its theological foundations, *Reconciling Theology* can also be read as an exercise in building upon that foundation, even though it is not part of the envisioned series. Given that the Church is founded upon the Paschal mystery, how are we to understand its vocation,

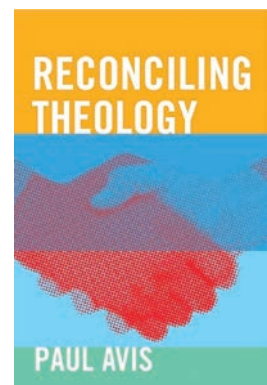
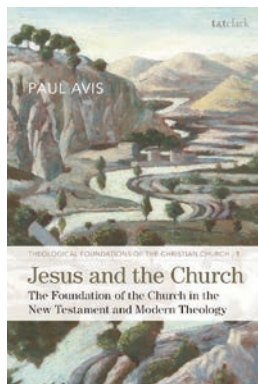
and how are we to account for the ways it deviates from that vocation? Avis begins with a winsome commendation of what he understands by a “reconciling theology,” one that can serve a reconciling community on its way to becoming a reconciled community. A reconciling theology will be motivated by love and marked by irenicism and undefensive receptivity, not threatened by difference, but rather expecting to be enriched by it. A reconciling theology recognizes one's fellow Christians as belonging to Christ, and therefore as those with whom one ought to be in communion. Would that such a theology characterized our churches, their theologians, and their authorita-

tive teachers.

Reconciling Theology is marked by an ecumenical realism, one that deflates any triumphalist ecclesial chauvinism, whether in the form of exclusive claims or self-aggrandizement by way of self-effacement. Avis's ecumenical playing field is level, yet its terrain is differentiated, as different churches face different challenges in seeking unity. Three initial chapters provide something of the state of the question in ecumenism, including engagements with the challenges posed by denominationalism, which would reduce any given church to just one option among many, and by the Catholic Church's uneven reception of and internal strife regarding Vatican II.

These are followed by a consideration of the Church's polity in a chapter that breathes with the spirit of Richard Hooker, both commending polity as a church's enacted ecclesiology and commending a flexibility in local adaptations due to historical change. Not all churches need have the same polity, but neither can we regard it as something that is up for grabs, willy-nilly. This measured, generous, realistic approach exemplifies the reconciling theology Avis commends.

The next two chapters, “Unreconciled Church: Countersign of the Kingdom” and “To Heal a Wounded Church,” make up the centerpiece of the book. Here Avis's ecumenical generosity meets a forthright refusal to acquiesce to division as he issues a striking challenge for the Church to realize that its unreconciled state is no mere inconvenience or shortcoming, but rather a contradiction of its very nature, an existential threat:



What has happened to the Christian church over 2,000 years — the progressive dismemberment of the body — does not trouble our conscience overmuch; it does not keep us awake at night; it does not make us tremble before the altar. That is an intolerable fact — theologically, spiritually and morally intolerable (126).

He further attempts to articulate an original and essential unity for the Church, which is rather difficult, as the historical evidence seems to indicate that such pristine unity never existed. Avis suggests Pentecost as a singularity at which the Church was indeed united. He suggests this as analogous to the Resurrection and the beginning of Genesis, events that are beyond mere history, even as they are the very foundations and inaugurations of histories. I think I locate the solution to the quandary in a slightly different place (with the community of the faithful reduced to one as Jesus underwent his Passion, following the suggestion of Michael Ramsey), but Avis's proposals are generative, and have allowed me to refine my thoughts on the matter considerably. My future work on this theme will be directly better for my engagement with him.

Reconciling Theology culminates in a vision of the Church as a reconciled and reconciling community, indeed in a contemplative meditation upon reconciliation in Christ and the demands it makes upon us. It makes for stirring, inspiring reading.

As I read *Jesus and the Church*, I found myself frequently wishing for more evaluation from Avis. Instead, we often get summaries of figures' views with a quick statement of whether Avis finds them persuasive, but very little by way of the evidence-weighting that leads to that conclusion. *Reconciling Theology* speaks with a far clearer evaluative voice, perhaps because Avis has moved from a historical to a theological register, though some of the chapters can read more like a survey of the literature than as a

constructive argument *per se* (hence my great appreciation for the chapters on the unreconciled and wounded Church). Throughout these volumes, Avis demonstrates an impressive command of Protestant and Catholic theologies and a seemingly encyclopedic grasp of the Anglican tradition. While the nature of my work tends to have me almost exclusively engaged with Catholic theology, whenever I read Avis, I am reminded of why I am and remain an Anglican.

To return to my opening observations, Avis is particularly to be commended for his emphasis upon the Paschal mystery in both books. In these troubled days for the Church, it is more or less only the redemptive love of God in Christ that provides any cogent reason for why we should continue with the bother. Perhaps we

should always have thought thus; St. Paul seems to have. But it's far more unmistakable now. And Avis's articulation of the Church's foundation in the redemptive love of God in Christ provides a cogent, compelling reminder of precisely why this troubled, troubling community is worth the trouble.

Dr. Eugene R. Schlesinger is lecturer in the Department of Religious Studies at Santa Clara University, editor of Covenant, and the author of Salvation in Henri de Lubac: Divine Grace, Human Nature, and the Mystery of the Cross (forthcoming from University of Notre Dame Press), Sacrificing the Church: Mass, Mission, and Ecumenism (Fortress Academic/Lexington Books, 2019), and Missa Est! A Missional Liturgical Ecclesiology (Fortress Press, 2017).

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PEOPLE & PLACES

Appointments

The Rev. **Javier Arias** is rector of Christ's Beloved Community/Comunidad Amada de Cristo, Winston-Salem, N.C.

The Rev. **Andrew Armond** is associate rector of St. Alban's, Waco, Texas.

The Rev. **Andrea Arsene** is rector of All Saints, Indianapolis.

The Rev. **Susan Astarita** is interim priest in charge of St. David's, San Diego.

The Rev. **Mark Atkinson** is interim rector of St. Mark's, Starke, Fla.

The Rev. **Jamie Barnett** is vicar of Epiphany, Oak Park, Calif.

The Rev. **Christian Baron** is rector of St. John's, Crawfordsville, Ind.

The Rev. **Johanna Barrett** is transition bridge priest at St. John the Baptist, Sanbornville, N.H.

The Very Rev. **Dominic Barrington** is dean of York Minster, York, England.

The Rev. **Brian Barry** is supply priest at St. Thomas Bellerose, Floral Park, N.Y.

The Rev. **Jon Baugh** is rector of St. George's, Jacksonville, Fla.

The Rt. Rev. **Nathan Baxter** is interim rector of St. Paul's, Harrisburg, Pa.

The Rev. **David Beadle** is curate of St. Matthew's Cathedral, Dallas.

The Rev. **Julie Beals** is parish priest at Christ Church, Redondo Beach, and St. Andrew's, Torrance, Calif.

The Rev. **Catherine Connolly** is associate rector of Holy Comforter, Charlotte, N.C.

The Rev. **Ryan Cook** is rector of Ascension, Orlando, Fla.

The Rev. **Sandra Cosman** is priest in charge of Christ Church, Pomfret, Conn.

The Rev. **Liz Costello** is rector of St. Thomas, Medina, Wash.

The Rev. **Dorian Del Priore** is rector of Holy Cross, Simpsonville, S.C.

The Rev. **Ashley Dellagiocoma** is associate rector of St. Stephen's, Houston.

The Rev. **Seth Donald** is rector of Christ Church, Covington, La.

The Rev. **Timothy Kroh** is vicar of Holy Trinity, Brookeville, and Our Saviour, DuBois, Pa.

The Rev. **Lonnie Lacy** is rector of St. John's, Tallahassee, Fla.

The Rev. **Laura Murray** is rector of St. Andrew's, Port Angeles, and St. Swithin's, Forks, Wash.

The Rev. **Maggie Nancarrow** is interim rector of St. Matthew's, St. Paul, Minn.

The Rev. **Michael Nchimbe** is priest associate at Trinity, St. Charles, Mo.

The Rev. **Zac Neubauer** is interim priest in charge of St. Clement's, Rancho Cordova, Calif.

The Rev. **Michael Newago, CFC**, is rector of Christ Church, Yankton, S.D.

The Rev. **Ryan Newman** is executive director of the Commission on Schools in the Diocese of Los Angeles.

The Rev. **David Nichols** is curate of St. Michael's, Raleigh, N.C.

The Rev. **Caroline Osborne** is rector of St. Philip's, Nashville, Tenn.

The Rev. **Sarah Oxley** is interim rector of St. Mark's, Cocoa, Fla.

The Rev. Dr. **Joseph Pagano** is interim associate rector at All Saints', Frederick, Md.

The Rev. **Jorge Pallares** is priest in charge of St. Michael's, Ridgcrest, Calif.

The Rev. **Perry Pauley** is associate rector at Trinity Cathedral, Phoenix.

The Rev. **Margaret Peel-Shakespeare** is priest in charge of St. John Chrysostom, Golden, Colo.

The Rev. Canon **Fran Tornquist** is an honorary canon of the Diocese of California.

The Rev. **Debra Trakel** is interim rector of St. Boniface's, Minoqua, Wis.

The Rev. **Robby Trammell** is rector of St. James, Oklahoma City, Okla.

Ordinations

Diaconate

Bethlehem: **Maryann Kathryn Philbrook**
Central New York: **Lynne A. Walton**
Central Pennsylvania: **Jennifer Lynn Trenary**

Chicago: **Qiana Johnson, Bradley Scott Osborne**

Colorado: **Kristina Lewis, Katherine Grace Snyder, Robin Douglas Tems**

Connecticut: **Dinushka Marian De Silva, Erika Plank Hagan, Louis Jett McAlister, Jillian Browning Morrison, Joseph John Rose, Jonathan Robert Smith, Margaret Mary Stapleton Smith**

El Camino Real: **Jennifer Anna Crompton** (community trailblazer, St. Benedict's, Los Osos, and chaplain, San Luis Obispo Canterbury at California Polytechnic University)

Florida: **Sara Rich**

Priesthood

Southwest Florida: **Amy Matthew Feins** (associate priest for worship and liturgy and youth ministry at Trinity by the Cove, Naples), **Anne Elizabeth Hartley, Brian Poul Cleary**

Texas (for Virginia): **Leah Caitlin Wise** (curate, Grace, Houston)

Virginia: **Paul Evans** (associate rector, Grace & Holy Trinity, Richmond), **Stacy Carlson Kelly** (priest associate, St. Paul's, Cary, N.C.), **Kevin Laskowski** (assistant rector, Holy Cross, Dun Loring), **Kevin Newell** (priest in charge, Emmanuel, Brook Hill, Richmond), **Natalie Perl Regan** (associate rector, Good Shepherd, Burke), **Julius Rodriguez** (lower school chaplain, National Cathedral School, Washington, D.C.), **Winnie Smith** (assistant rector, Redeemer, Bryn Mawr, Pa.)

West Missouri: **Rita Jo Carson Kendagor** (associate rector, St. Andrew's, Kansas City)

Wyoming: **Susan McEvoy** (parish priest, St. John's, Powell)

Receptions

Arizona: **Henri Capdeville** (from the Roman Catholic Church)

Louisiana: **Charlie LaTour** (from the Roman Catholic Church, head of the upper school at St. Martin's Episcopal School, Metairie)



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Parliament Didn't Call the Shots

Unfortunately, your report of comments by Ben Bradshaw MP on same-sex marriage [TLC, October 30] included an inadvertently misleading summary of events ten years ago. Parliamentary pressure did not cause the Church of England's General Synod to approve in 2014 the women bishops measure (legislation) that it rejected in 2012. The 2014 measure succeeded because it was radically different from the one that failed in 2012.

The 2012 measure had two aims: to introduce women bishops and to replace the 1993 arrangements for the traditionalist minority with much weaker and less secure provisions. There was to be no recognition that minority positions were rooted in theology. The framework was complex yet uncertain: a draft code of practice, its content to be determined only after the measure passed, ran to 49 pages. Disputes, exacerbated by a requirement only to "have regard" to the code, were to be resolved by litigation in the secular courts. Diocesan arrangements, decided by the bishop and reviewed every five years, would differ. A parish's stance would no longer be decided by its church council: the priest would now have a veto.

Twelve lay women and men, not themselves opposed to women's ordination, voted against the measure because, in their view, it "failed to honor the inclusiveness which we believe fundamental to the future of Anglicanism." Had even six of them voted in favor, the measure would have passed.

Parliament did not summon the Archbishop of Canterbury and church officials, but did hold an informal meeting with concerned MPs and peers. Mr. Bradshaw led a House of Commons debate, and Prime Minister David Cameron called on the church to "get with the programme."

This parliamentary pressure may have helped concentrate minds, but it did not determine the outcome.

Catholic and conservative Evangelical leaders immediately requested "talks to break the deadlock" with a view to "fresh legislation" being "fast-tracked." As they explained, "It has never been our intention to prevent the consecration of women as bishops; our concern has always been for legislation which also made clear and fair provision for the substantial minority."

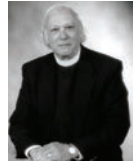
Dialogue resulted in an ingenious jointly formulated package, combining a very simple measure (just four clauses) with new non-statutory but entrenched provisions, including a binding disputes resolution procedure that secured the position of the minority. In 2014 the new measure and other provisions were easily passed.

*Dr. Colin Podmore
London*

at St. Mary the Virgin in Falmouth, Maine. She later became chaplain to Dartmouth College, and served for 34 years as vicar of Faith Episcopal Church in Merrimack, New Hampshire. She was an adjunct professor at Notre Dame College in Manchester, New Hampshire, Nashua Community College, and St. Anselm College. She also served for a time as president of the Standing Committee in the Diocese of New Hampshire, and was a member of the Commission on Ministry in the Dioceses of Maine and New Hampshire.

Henking is survived by her partner of 25 years, Lise Mailloux, and by her sister, Susan.

The Rev. **Kenneth Wayne Paul**, who served for 27 years as rector of the Church of the Holy Cross in Shreveport, Louisiana, died October 9 at 87.



Born on the edge of a cotton patch in Rapides Parish, Louisiana, Paul studied at Asbury College, and then at Perkins School of Theology, Oxford University, the University of the South, and General Seminary. After five years of ministry in the Methodist Church, he was ordained to the diaconate and priesthood in 1965, and served for three years at St. Mark's Church (now St. Mark's Cathedral) in Shreveport.

In 1968, Paul became rector of Holy Cross Church in downtown Shreveport, a position he held until retirement. He also served for 27 years as Episcopal chaplain at Centenary College, and assisted in the formation of 19 men and women for ordained ministry.

Under his leadership, Holy Cross established several institutions focused on care for the needy in the surrounding community, including the Endowment for Community Services and Holy Cross Hope House, a day shelter for the homeless, as well as Holy Cross Villas, low-income housing communities in Bossier City and West Shreveport.

Paul is survived by his wife, Virginia, two sons, and three grandchildren.

The Rev. **James William Henry Sell**, a long-serving parish priest who led initiatives in communications and youth ministries, died September 30, at 79.



A native of Charleston, West Virginia, Sell studied history and law at West Virginia University before answering a call to ministry. He graduated from Virginia Theological Seminary in 1969, and began his ministry at several small parishes in his native West Virginia. He became rector of St. Mary's Church in Sparta, New Jersey, in 1980. Five years later, he became archdeacon of the Diocese of Newark. He edited *The VOICE*, Newark's diocesan newspaper, and coordinated several youth programs, as well as serving on numerous committees.

He served for rector of Christ and St. Luke's Church in Norfolk, Virginia, for 15 years, and in retirement he was interim rector at churches in Severna Park, Maryland; Princeton, New Jersey; New Haven, Connecticut; and Virginia Beach, Virginia. He is survived by his wife, Ellen, two children, and five grandchildren.

New York: **Stephen Morris** (from the Orthodox Church in America, assistant rector, Christ and St. Stephen's, New York)

Retirements

The Very Rev. Canons **Daniel Ade** and **Mark Kowalewski** as co-deans and rectors of St. John's Cathedral, Los Angeles

The Rev. **John Ball** as rector of Trinity, St. Mary's City, Md.

The Rev. **William Beckles** as supply priest at Atonement, the Bronx, New York

The Rev. **Bruce Bonner** as rector of St. Cuthbert's, Houston

Deaths

The Rev. **Patricia Ellen Henking**, who served as a college chaplain and professor, as well as a parish priest in Maine and New Hampshire, died August 18 at 67.



Henking studied at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute and at General Seminary, and was deeply formed by later studies with Elie Wiesel at Boston University and President Jimmy Carter at Maranatha Baptist Church in Plains, Georgia.

Ordained in 1980, she began her ministry

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Tribulation and Glory

The close of the church year dovetails into the coming year. Already, the theme of Advent shows itself, the announcement that the end of all things is soon to arrive, and something altogether new and marvelous and beyond all knowing is about to break in upon human existence and the whole created order. "Very truly, I tell you," Jesus says, "unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit" (John 12:24). "Those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it" (Mark 8:35). We will not bear fruit, we will never know salvation, we will not find joy until we fall to the ground, die, and make peace with bitter sorrow. The way of the cross is the way forward.

Whatever hardships we face in life, we have as our defense a forewarning from the Lord of heaven and earth and a promise of final victory. We are warned of persecutions: "they will arrest you and persecute you; they will hand you over to synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors because of my name" (Luke 21:12). This is no less true today for Christians who bear their faith at great personal risk. Jesus warns of betrayal: "You will be betrayed even by parents and brothers, by relative and friends; and they will put some of you to death" (Luke 21:16). Such betrayals still occur. Jesus warns of war, natural disasters, famine, disease, and great portents in heaven (Luke 21:10-11). Jesus speaks of the temple, perhaps meaning every human creation: "[N]ot one stone will be left upon another; all will be thrown down" (Luke 21:6). He is describing the dangers of the world in the time of his earthly existence and every succeeding age.

How do we go on from day to day? Strangely, Jesus advises that we do not prepare for the crisis. "Make up your minds not to prepare your defense in advance" (Luke 21:14). Indeed, real

and ravaging crises always seem to come unexpectedly and sabotage preemptive planning. Instead, we are to wait upon the Lord. "I will give you words and a wisdom that none of your opponents will be able to withstand or contradict" (Luke 21:15). Jesus summons us to the long road of endurance. "By your endurance you will gain your souls," Jesus says (Luke 21:19).

While there is so much about suffering we do not understand, we may at least notice that sometimes good comes out of evil. Anguish may burn away what is unnecessary and even open a new world. "See, the day of the Lord is coming, burning like an oven, when all the arrogant and all evildoers will be stubble" (Mal. 4:1). Is there not arrogance and evil, pettiness and cruelty in our hearts, stubble for the flame? We endure and gain our souls by shedding what is unnecessary and through a purgation of the evil that threatens our lives. The cross of Christ is the purgative way, and it is with us every day of our lives.

Now we come to the promise. Judgment comes, and then something new and beautiful. "For I am about to create new heavens and a new earth; the former things shall not be remembered or come to mind. But be glad and rejoice forever in what I am creating; for I am about to create Jerusalem as a joy, and its people as a delight" (Isa. 65:17-18). In this life, we have tribulation; we also have a foretaste of the fathomless joy that will, in God's time, fill the cosmos from end to end.

Look It Up
The Collect

Think About It

Endure and hold fast to the blessed hope of everlasting life.

Jer. 23:1-6 • Cant. 16 or Ps. 46 • Col. 1:11-20; Luke 23:33-43

He Reconciled All Things

In many depictions of the crucifixion, a Latin inscription is placed above the head of Jesus, abbreviated by four letters, INRI: *Jesus Nazareus*, Jesus of Nazareth; *Rex Iudaeorum*, King of the Jews. He is indeed the King of the Jews, but not merely of the Jews. He is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords to whom are subject all things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, all dominions, rulers, and powers (Col. 1:16). The kingdom over which Jesus reigns is no less than the cosmos. He is the Christ-Pantocrator (*pantokratwr*, Ruler of all) who, hidden under his human features, rules majestically and yet compassionately over heaven and earth.

This great and glorious king is presented today not as the one seated upon a throne but as the one crucified, scoffed at, mocked, and derided. The people stood by and looked at him with bloodlust and for their personal amusement. Meditating on this image, St. Paul says, “For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and him crucified” (1 Cor. 2:2). Why?

We glory in the cross because the Lord’s passion, death, and descent among the dead are the instruments by which we are rescued “from the power of darkness” (Col. 1:13). Leave aside the cross of Christ, and there is no salvation. An early Christian hymn makes precisely this point. “Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, 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 given him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that

Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Phil. 2:5-11).

The cross is the full interpretation of the Incarnation. He became what we are even unto death — our death, every death. He entered the hell where we are trapped, taking the hands of our first parents, Adam and Eve — and, with them, all our ancestors shackled by the power and fear of death. Jesus redeems and reconciles all humanity and all things to himself. As St. Paul says, “He has rescued us from the power of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sin” (Col. 1:13-14). “For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross” (Col. 1:19-20).

There is no moment of pain and loss, sorrow and death, agony and betrayal, which is unknown to Jesus. He knows it all, feels it all, and bears it all. He is our wounded Savior, yet he is not trapped as we are by suffering. In the power of his divinity, he transfers us to a new realm in which he is King forevermore, and we his beloved children.

Two truths: (1) We suffer and die. (2) The curse and sting of death are removed by the victory of Christ. Thus, we live confidently and joyfully in Christ, our Lord and our God.

Look It Up

Colossians 1:17-22; the Collect

Think About It

Not personal salvation but cosmic redemption — “all things.”

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