

Editor's Notes

Anglicans may take legitimate pride in their tradition's ability to hold together worship, theology, and transformative community involvement. As much as this propensity may stem from the close relationship of church and state in the Western European eras of reformation and establishment, nevertheless William Temple's argument in *Christianity and Social Order* that the church has not only a right but an obligation to "interfere" in matters of public policy still resonates as an indicator of Anglican identity. Anglican theological investigation and reflection characteristically consider what God may be up to in the messy and confusing particularities of human society. This issue of the *Anglican Theological Review* stands firmly in that tradition. Any reader of this journal can easily reel off a long list of issues and concerns that impinge on what we wish to make of our lives, and the essays here offer some guidance for how communities of faith can reframe them into occasions for deepening both the practice of our faith and our understanding of it. That reframing already lightens the burdens of uncertainty and discouragement—at least in theory. In practice? Each of the elements of this issue of the *ATR* illustrates that this also may be the case.

The issue begins with a most timely article, an essay suggesting how the Episcopal Church (and others) might best connect with resistance to racial violence that involves police. **Gayle Fisher-Stewart**, a former captain with the Metropolitan Police Department in Washington, D.C., and an Episcopal priest, reminds us not only of recent events in which African-American men were the targets of violence, but also of the historical connection of policing with centuries of racial oppression in the United States. Given the social influence of the Episcopal Church and of individual Episcopalians, this history is part of our heritage in this country. At the same, the Baptismal Covenant bears directly on reconciliation and transformation of racialized injustice, urging church leaders and members to provide space and structure for discussion and mediation. The church's commitment to confession, repentance, and conversion provides a sound and faithful basis for engaging in active amendment of social systems

and attitudes that warp all lives, but particularly the lives of those who are the targets of covert and overt racial violence.

Fergus King's essay on the revelations of child sexual abuse across decades in the church and beyond draws attention to the tragedy of this history and also to the questions of ethical response that are raised by the fact that such abuse is widespread and continuous across time and culture. Public awareness of abuse has increased dramatically over recent years. Yet it is a complex phenomenon in which much is not clear. The "underlying reasons for the crimes," the range of appropriate public and ecclesial responses to individuals as well as the phenomenon itself, the methods for keeping children safe without fostering fear, the modes of treatment, punishment, and prevention of repetition—all of these raise theoretical and practical questions for churches, particularly at the congregational level. King maintains that "churches need to engage in practices which recognize the severity of the offenses committed, but avoid scapegoating. It would be much easier to operate on a basis of permanent exclusion and isolation." But the biblical witness, he concludes, ultimately runs against exclusion and toward conversion, reconciliation, and the transformation of perpetrators and of colluding practices by church leaders and environments. Finally, King maintains, it may be more helpful to approach response to abuse from the perspective of tragedy. Tragedy—and Sophocles' *Antigone* is particularly helpful here—may underscore the need for care of both victim and perpetrator, prompting responses that keep to the fore the humanity of all involved as a central component of justice.

In the next essay, **Tim Vivian** offers an extended analysis and meditation on the poetry of Rowan Williams. Vivian draws particular attention to Williams's use of language in his choice of vivid and often earthy images as expressing spiritual urges and desires. Williams's poems are also marked by careful development of images from stanza to stanza, so that the initial meaning is emptied, re-filled, and transformed. In this way, Williams expresses the kenotic movement of human lives that continue to en flesh the kenotic life of God manifested in the Incarnation. Thus, Williams's poetry and Vivian's reflections on it not only speak about the central role of self-emptying but also provoke it. As Vivian writes, "Just as incarnation requires self-emptying, self-emptying brings incarnation, especially in the sense of rebirth."

The extent to which we are able to empty ourselves of self-concern in order to turn toward others with justice and care is something shaped by our common prayer, which forms us as persons and communities and instills in us a longing to participate in God's mission of healing, reconciling, and transforming the world. These matters feed into consideration of revision of the 1979 *Book of Common Prayer*, an important agenda item for the Episcopal Church's 2018 General Convention. In preparation for that meeting, the Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music has proposed four possible paths forward and asked for responses to them. **Ruth Meyers** and **Louis Weil** unfold their reasons for favoring a slow, deliberate approach, in a discussion moderated and summarized by **Scott MacDougall**. Because of the centrality of the Prayer Book, the possibility of revision leads to significant ferment—and it should. All the more reason, then, to give time and space for discussions informed by liturgical and ecclesiological scholarship, certainly, but also by discernment in all quarters of how words, rituals, and rites deepen our connections with God, each other, and the world. These connections are far more than conscious and cognitive, so processes which encourage care-filled and respectful reflection are needed.

An October 2016 conference on climate change at the Church Divinity School of the Pacific in Berkeley, California, included two addresses that place contemporary climate change within the biblical framework of creation as a gift of God for the furthering of life of all sorts. **Katharine Jefferts Schori** and **Cynthia Moe-Lobeda** discuss how the biblical narrative counters the still-prevalent notion that creation is properly subject to humanity's subduing through maximal exploitation of material resources. This narrative also informs how contemporary people and organizations respond to disruptions of carefully made and closely defended human ordering, as we see with concerted protest and resistance (as at Standing Rock and elsewhere), as well as with increased migration, refuge-seeking, political instability, and armed conflict. Whatever one makes of the causes and consequences of these complex realities, all of us are faced with the need for alternatives to discouragement and despair, frequently masked as complacency. Seeing ourselves as firmly within the story of creation that is fulfilled in redemption provides opportunities and occasions for hope and trust that the promises of God will be made real even in the midst of our confusion and conflict.

All three pieces in this issue's Practicing Theology section consider how basic, familiar representations of the love of God in Christ may be changed in ways that challenge our comfort. The first two essays concern the basic human acts of sharing food and how those acts express Christ's sharing of himself in the eucharist.

Ebenhaizer I Nuban Timo, a minister of the Evangelical Church in West Timor, describes a communion service in which Indonesian *daun kelor* (or moringa pod) stew is served rather than bread, and palm wine rather than "the fruit of the vine." The elder of the congregation explained, "We know that bread and wine in Holy Communion serve as symbols that represent Jesus Christ's flesh and blood. Bread is a symbol of Europe. For us, the symbols may be replaced with local foods we have here, but there is one thing that we cannot replace: our faith in Jesus as God." The contextualization of the eucharist in this way connects the daily life of believers with the Last Supper and the great traditions to which it has given rise. This particular service, in which participants ate and drank more than once, prompts questions about the extent of inculturation. **Nuban Timo** views this particular service in light of the Lukan narrative which portrays the institution of the eucharist as part of a celebratory feast, a feast that is subsequently turned into formal liturgy. That the feast celebrates freedom from domination so that the people may be faithful to God adds particular resonance in this postcolonial context. What we make of this prompts consideration of our own familiar practices.

Less startling, perhaps, is **Sarah Woodard's** account of A Movable Feast, a ministry started by the Episcopal Center at Duke University. While A Movable Feast gives college and university students ways to volunteer outside their comfort zones, it also provides for the physical and social needs of a wide range of people living in the larger community: people who need food, people who need companionship and prayer. The Movable Feast truck trailer has room for both food and a chapel, and it is taken to various community events as a way "to go out into the world to love others by serving food for the mind, body, and spirit." A Movable Feast has woven itself into a network of care made up of congregations and community groups that value the symbolic and real centrality of food. The Bible study, prayers, and conversations that spill out of the truck are a continuation of the Sunday eucharist. They also provide participants with ways to give thanks, to remember those who are separated by distance, and

to cross economic and social differences that Christians proclaim are overcome by Christ's self-giving without restraint.

Christ's self-giving is also evoked in visual representations of his suffering and death, but what forms are in fact transparent to the Crucified One is never entirely clear. **Patrick Malloy** writes about the installation of *Christa* at the Cathedral Church of Saint John the Divine in 1984, and again, permanently, in 2016. Edwina Sandys's sculpture of a naked, tortured woman wearing a crown of thorns prompted strong responses from all sides when it was first displayed in the cathedral, with the focus primarily on gender and secondarily on the appropriate role of art in sacred spaces. *Christa* certainly presses the question of how "Christian religious images not only project but also enforce a norm." Yet art also provokes. At issue here is not just the extent to which maleness is the form of the ideal human. Also involved are the limits of our ability and our willingness as Christians to encounter the divine as unlike ourselves. As Malloy notes, in the biblical accounts, "The risen Christ is generally unrecognizable and surprising, even to those closest to him. They must let go of their expectations so they can encounter a Christ who is both continuous with yet not identical to the Jesus they knew." Where are we able to encounter both?

Contemporary theological work on migration frames this question in a different way, highlighting the deep reality that Christians are always "on the move," on pilgrimage, constantly dispersed in the expectation of being regathered in a new world. This is a literal reality for many Christians in this time of unprecedented mass migration. And this suggests that images of crossing borders, of being called (or pushed) out and regathered might well serve as focal points for theology and ecclesiology as well as pastoral practice. In her review of *Church in an Age of Global Migration*, **Jennifer Aycock** looks at how one set of essays develops such a focus. Solidarity with migrants, refugees, and the displaced challenges churches to cross their own borders in order to be open to renewal by receiving what migrants bring with them. On this view, the church already is transnational, ecumenical, hybrid, though this intersectional reality may encounter resistance from "static ecclesial structures and liturgical practices." The pilgrim—migrant—church practices its faith in the midst of fragmentation, fear, and territorialism.

In addition to these rich and provocative essays, the issue includes a plethora of reviews of books that are bound to pique your

interest, as they always do mine. And, it being summer, we are happy once again to offer an expanded poetry section, including a poem by Frederick H. Borsch, a great friend of this journal, who died in April.

With this issue we say farewell to our copy editor, the Rev. Deacon Vicki K. Black who is moving on to new ventures. For nearly a decade, Vicki has done the careful and demanding work of making sure that everything said in the journal is as clearly stated as it can be, helping author and editors alike make sure that the ideas we present in *ATR* are accessible and understandable. Vicki's gifts as a writer and designer are evident in *ATR*'s electronic newsletter as well as in the journal's design and contents. I am more grateful than I can say for her generosity of spirit and her wisdom, from which we have all benefited in ways we may not know. Thank you, Vicki.

Coming up: the *Anglican Theological Review* will publish two themed issues this year that gather distinct and differing voices into a single conversation focused on pressing cultural and theological concerns of our day. "The Theological Interpretation of Scripture" (Fall 2017) will bring together academic theology and scholarly biblical exegesis. This issue has particular relevance for preachers and pastors, leaders of Bible study and teachers, theologians and biblical scholars, and all who value the interplay between theology and scripture.

The Winter 2018 issue of the *ATR* will focus on raising awareness and encouraging activism for water justice. The issue will bring together material from the 2017 Trinity Wall Street conference and London's St. Paul's Cathedral year-long project, planned in cooperation with St. George's Cathedral (Cape Town) and St. James' Cathedral (Melbourne)—a truly global effort. We look forward to bringing them to you.

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