

Editors' Notes

SCOTT BADER-SAYE* AND BARBARA RIDPATH**

What a thrill to see several years' work on an international effort around the theme of water culminate in this issue of the *Anglican Theological Review*! It seems apt to begin by using one of many water analogies (or puns) that you will find sprinkled throughout this edition. The idea started as a simple drop, took shape as a puddle, gathered force as a stream, and began to rush like a river as we gathered to collaborate to speak about water stewardship, the theology of water, and water justice through churches and cathedrals on four continents. This edition will not only preserve a record of all those efforts; it will hopefully also act as a water mill to power and encourage readers both to do more on the subject and to collaborate more with others in order to raise our voices together on issues of mutual concern.

We are grateful that two of our key partners in the Just Water program, **David Ison**, Dean of St. Paul's Cathedral London and **William Lupfer**, Rector of Trinity Church Wall Street, have provided forewords to this issue. Their support was crucial in bringing the program to life.

The sermons included here each demonstrate a very distinct approach to the subject of water. The first, from **Winston Halapua**, is a poetic demonstration of the difference of perception that comes from living surrounded by water, by being entirely dependent on the sea for transport and nourishment. The three that follow were all part of a Lenten sermon series on water at St. Paul's Cathedral, London during Lent 2017. Each preacher speaks very personally about his or

* Scott Bader-Saye is academic dean and Helen and Everett H. Jones Professor of Christian Ethics and Moral Theology at Seminary of the Southwest in Austin, Texas. He is the author of three books: *Formed by Love*, *Following Jesus in a Culture of Fear*, and *Church and Israel after Christendom*. He is also a contributor to *The Blackwell Companion to Christian Ethics* and *The Cambridge Companion to the Gospels*.

**Barbara Ridpath is director of the St. Paul's Institute, St. Paul's Cathedral London. Having spent most of her career in finance in New York, London, and Paris, she is honored to have the opportunity to serve and to build bridges between the church and the private sector.

her individual experience. **Lorraine Kingsley** brings alive the issues of sanitation and her own calling to act on the lack of sanitation by starting the charity Toilet Twinning. Several authors mention that the word *water* is used 722 times in the Bible, and **John Rodwell** and **James Jones** both focus on just a few of these as they remind us of our obligation to be stewards of gifts God gives us.

The basics of these core theological concepts are laid out in an opening piece by **Scott Bader-Saye**. His article explores the Christian metaphor of stewardship as a way to address the growing and unprecedented crisis of fresh water scarcity. **Edmund Newell** examines the mystical relationship between the sea and our ability to sense the numinous. **Ched Myers** introduces the concept of “watershed discipleship,” drawing on baptismal theology to address the restoration of healthy watersheds. **Mick Pope** looks at the tragic consequences of sea level rise for the Carteret Islands as a way into the question of flood and chaos as biblical signs of sin and judgment. And, finally, **Jame Schaefer** calls attention to the plight of small island nations and gathers voices from around the church speaking out on water justice.

Having looked at the theology and ethics of water, we turn to action, to testimonies and lessons we learned from this project. The beauty of the effort was that each of us learned about aspects of water that were new to us, whether it was the theology, the logistics, the local geographic issues, the use of food imports to replace water supply deficits, or the personal stories of hardship and access. We have used as many of the pieces as possible from the conferences in order to share this learning and help bring these experiences to life for the reader.

Thabo Makgoba’s talk at the launch event in London surveyed the landscape of water issues, theological and ecological, and set the scene beautifully with his very personal experience of South African drought and Southern Africa’s water inequality issues. Like most of the testimonies, his talk brought hope as well, and his example of an effort in Zimbabwe is one we could all take to heart: Reduce, Re-use, Recycle, and Rejoice!

Next in this section is an article by **Heather Patacca**, who used the international water program as a first experiment in bringing issues-based programming to St. Paul’s Cathedral Melbourne. Her lighthearted story of what she learned in the effort should be heartening to all clergy and church volunteers with ambitions for their congregations.

The devastating account by **Catherine Flowers** of how the richest country in the world can ignore whole segments of its rural population living with raw sewage reminds us that issues of water justice are not just emerging world issues. Her story of the tireless work to bring attention to this issue and improve the lot of those living in rural Alabama deserves to be widely shared. The three testimonies by **Sam Brannon**, **Brandon Mauai**, and **Nakiya Wakes** each look at a North American issue of water justice: the story of the river that forms the border between the United States and Mexico as a symbol of both hope and desperation; the story of efforts to fight against a polluting pipeline in North Dakota, inspired by God's vision of our responsibility to be stewards of this earth; and the appalling story of Flint, Michigan, where the world's richest country failed to provide potable water to its residents.

Putting together international water conferences and this *ATR* issue taught us that everyone comes to this subject differently, and each is moved to express him- or herself by a variety of means. Moreover, by varying the medium used—talks, sermons, articles, art, and poetry—we can reach, move, and touch more people than by using only one method. Visually, we are delighted to be able to share stunning work from **Pablo Genovés**, whose work hung in St. Paul's Cathedral from Lent through August 2017, commissioned specifically for the Just Water program. The stark contrast between the London work and the two photographs by **Latoya Ruby Frazier** provides a visual demonstration of the diversity of expression on the subject. Frazier's photographs from her series, *Flint Is Family*, are a poignant complement to Nakiya Wakes's testimony. In addition, the seven poems included here all reference water. **Imtiaz Dharker's** "Blessing" was featured in the program at St. Paul's London.

Among our many book reviews in this issue are several on the subject of water. For those interested in further reading, a list of materials can be found under the Resources tab of the JustWater website at www.justwater2017.org. We are grateful to the many reviewers who have contributed insightful reviews of books across a wide range of topics.



As we were working on this issue, Hurricane Harvey flooded Houston and other areas of East Texas. Water became a source of

danger and destruction. During and after the storm, Christ Church Cathedral in Houston has led efforts to care for the victims. Dean Barkley Thompson writes, “Harvey’s devastation is enormous, but it is not the main story.” The main story, he says, is about the experience of God’s grace in the abundant outpouring of assistance that has followed the storm. The churches of the city have served as Christ’s hands and feet, providing housing, transportation, food, clothing, and legal counsel. Thompson shares one particularly poignant encounter:

On Wednesday morning, I worked the breakfast shift at the George R. Brown Convention Center. As I visited with people, hearing their experiences, a man in street clothes named Bob Merrill approached me to tell me that he is a bivocational Episcopal priest. The Red Cross is afraid that clergy volunteers will try to proselytize (even though I explained to them that Episcopalians don’t really do that), and I said to Bob, “You were smart not to wear your collar; the Red Cross won’t question you.” To which Bob responded, “Oh, I don’t have my collar. I was flooded out. I’m mainly here as an evacuee, but I’m also trying to help.” He’d lost everything, and his first instinct was to his calling.

The theology of water is a rich subject with deep biblical and practical resonance. As we see throughout this issue, water can represent God and chaos, judgment and virtue. Water can be ritually purifying and physically destructive. Water is both an expansive symbol for theology and a very practical requirement for life.



Finally, we would like to add a note of thanks to the *ATR* team—Ellen K. Wondra, Jackie Winter, Jason Fout, Sofia Starnes, and Travis Ables. Your support, guidance, and hard work have made this issue possible. It has been a pleasure to be guest editors, working to make this edition a joint and international effort across oceans and time zones, and a testimony to how fruitful, collaborative, and creative virtual teamwork can be. Thanks also to the generous people who

supported this issue, including those who let their works be included without royalties. It is thanks to our donors that we are able to publish an expanded issue and send it to our sisters and brothers throughout the Anglican Communion.

