

## Editors' Notes

We often find, in our teaching, that beginning students have a sense that theology is overly abstract, divorced from what one might call “everyday life.” In response, we suggest both that theology has an integrity of its own that might be pursued by its own lights, sometimes without explicit reference to the issues of the day, though never without such concerns operating in the background, but also that theology is often very fruitfully brought into consideration or conversation with the cries, upheavals, sufferings, and joys of life. It is this latter theological fruitfulness that is particularly on display in this issue of the journal, in work that ranges over the environmental crisis, the power of “mammon,” the role of the deacon, and ministry in prisons and cathedrals.

**Peter Kline** explores the image of God in human creatures through a reading of Søren Kierkegaard’s “upbuilding discourses” on Matthew 6:25–34. This passage might be a surprise as it does not mention the *imago Dei*, but presents Jesus’ teaching on the birds of the air and the lilies of the field, and how they do not worry. They are “entirely abandoned to the joy of existing today” (p. 699). This relates to the image of God, as the birds and lilies are outwardly what the human is meant to be inwardly.

This inward, invisible image of the unseen God interrogates our usual conceits: that we humans—often in the past, specifically men—hold the image as a possession, atop a pyramid of being or rationality. This privileges planning and calculation, a self founded on the self, ever grasping for grounding. But God’s image demands dispossession of the self, renunciation of the economic realm, and shunning “dependence on structures of meaning,” resulting in a “liberating annihilation” (pp. 712–713). This is a joy rooted in nothing beyond the gratuity of God. Thus, one is left to choose between God and wealth. On the one side is reflecting the image of the invisible God who gives “for nothing,” and whose kingdom Jesus bids us seek first, a joyful, groundless affirmation of existence. On the other side is snatching at permanence and dominion in the world of the fading and

unmasterable. Kline, through Kierkegaard, provides us with a bracing challenge to the shape of much contemporary life.

**John L. Kater** and **Lillian C. Woo** provide a two-part theological engagement with ecology, conservation, and human-caused climate change. The two pieces can be read as a pair, although each stands on its own as well. First, Kater explores Pope Francis's encyclical *Laudato si'*, which critiques environmental predation and the throwaway culture that underlies it. Kater summarizes the document. He highlights the extent to which its theology is rooted in Catholic Social Teaching, with particular emphasis on scripture and the ecclesial pronouncements of Vatican II, as well as detecting some echoes of Latin American liberation theology. Pope Francis finds our predicament rooted in the "dominant technological paradigm," underwritten by a relativism that places the self at the center (p. 726). Against this, Francis recommends an "integral ecology," a spirituality that sees all of creation as connected, and that embraces care for the poor, dignity for the outcast, and protection for nature. The healing of nature is not solely environmental, but economic, social, cultural, and spiritual: it is about the healing of humans as well, including being an element in our proper relationship to the creator.

Having set out Francis's case, Kater turns to historical Anglican luminaries such as Richard Hooker, F. D. Maurice, and Charles Kingsley, alongside contemporary articulations in liturgy and "A Catechism of Creation," to show how the pope's concerns dovetail naturally with Anglican perspectives and how an Anglican ecclesiology may even extend them.

Woo takes up the challenge that Francis sets in *Laudato si'* of addressing the urgent matter of climate change by setting out one particular perspective on human design and settlement, ecomimesis, which uses nature as a template for design. Other such perspectives either focus on one particular aspect of the environment, greenhouse gases for example, or else tend to set human habitats over against natural ecosystems. Unlike these, ecomimesis thinks in terms of an entire ecosystem, including the human within it. Theologically, the focus is on "preserving the 'garden of God' as it was created" to be (p. 748).

There is wisdom in thinking in terms of ecosystems. After presenting data showing the impact of humans on ecological health, Woo presents a wide variety of ecomimetic-inspired, scientifically grounded design solutions for both the built and unbuilt environments.

If these were taken up, they would serve to slow the rate of humans' negative impact on nature and help to repair existing ecosystems. They would also assist in the cultural change that Pope Francis suggests is needed, and provide a basis for the "integral ecology" he commends.

These three articles are joined by a robust Practicing Theology section. **H. Peter Kang** reflects on his work as a prison chaplain, teaching prisoners theology, and how this experience has transformed his own perspective on prisoners and the Christian life. His account questions many of the assumptions in the Episcopal Church's implicit theology of prison and prisoners, as found in its historic "Form of Prayer for the Visitation of Prisoners," one that is still tacitly present in much of its prison ministry. In particular, Kang questions the usual binary: that the church represents moral and upstanding citizens, while the prison represents immoral and dubious characters, and that "we" may help, rehabilitate, and transform "them." Contrary to this, Kang finds that in relationships with prisoners, he always received as well as gave; that the prisoners engaged thirstily with theology; and that "some of the best Christians I know are serving life sentences in a maximum security prison" (p. 772).

**Kevin J. McGrane** ruminates on images for the deacon beyond the task-focused "doing" that so often marks their ministry. He suggests that deacons might be best understood using the image of the "wise fool," a persona developed by Alastair V. Campbell and Donald Capps. McGrane spells out the diaconal "wise fool" through three character traits: simplicity (living without artifice); loyalty (a sacrificial commitment to others); and prophecy (speaking the truth boldly). McGrane goes on to suggest that this persona may give diaconal ministry a shape that owes much to St. Francis of Assisi.

Finally, **John P. Downey**, dean of the Episcopal Cathedral in Erie, Pennsylvania, reflects on the life of the smaller cathedral in America's Rust Belt, as part of our continuing Cathedral Series. Downey presents a brief history of the development of cathedrals in the Episcopal Church, and then shows how cathedrals are companions to the cities and dioceses in which they are situated. In the American Great Lakes, this does not equate to power, security, or privilege: it may mean the cultivation of resilience in the face of loss, and holding out hope to the broader community through the cathedral's presence and ministry.



With this issue we say a sad but fond farewell to our longtime managing editor, Jackie Winter, who is retiring after twenty-nine years of dedicated service. Jackie has labored tirelessly on behalf of the *ATR*: ensuring production of the highest quality publication, maintaining a steady presence through editorial transitions, and cultivating relationships throughout the church and beyond to secure the journal's sustainability. Having just marked the *ATR*'s centenary, we can say with confidence that the journal has grown and improved substantially over the last century, and particularly over the last three decades. Jackie has contributed quietly but unmistakably to this. Her sharp eye, spirited conversation, and unwavering persistence will be sorely missed in the journal's offices. We wish her all the best on this next phase of life and are deeply grateful for her many contributions to the *ATR* as we begin a new century.

JASON A. FOUT AND SCOTT MACDOUGALL  
*Co-Editors in Chief*

*A note from the ATR President:*

In our summer centenary issue, we included an expanded list of donors who make possible the continued publication of this journal as we begin our second century. We extend our thanks to two donors whose contributions arrived after we went to press: Carlye Hughes and Steven Holmgren. We also discovered that Christopher Brittain's name was inadvertently omitted from the listing. We regret the error. Our thanks to Christopher and, again, to the hundreds of subscribers and supporters whose financial contributions ensure the future of the *Anglican Theological Review*. Thank you all!

ROGER FERLO