

## Editor's Notes

While this issue of the *Anglican Theological Review* has no specific or intentional theme, there is a bright thread running through much of it: the kind of community and politics (in the broadest sense) toward which Christian faith impels us here and now. There are many ways of understanding the commandment that we love our neighbor as ourselves, and even more ways of enacting that love in the concrete and changing situations of our daily lives. Yet the process of moving from commandment to specific practice, or from practice to commandment, is not as simple as we might wish. What do we mean by *love*? Who is our neighbor? How a community of faith might move a larger society toward a greater commonweal is an even more complicated set of questions. How is a particular neighbor to be loved in the context of complex social systems and institutions that also, in some sense, are proper recipients of neighbor love? Following from these questions, intermediate considerations and proposals—middle axioms in Anglican moral theology—are needed. For example, in contexts of deeply engrained racism, love of neighbor is appropriately expressed corporately as—what? Engagement in effective communal efforts for widespread social and cultural change, many would say, and with strong backing from scripture, tradition, and reason. Then, how do we, in this particular community, embody that engagement? And how might this change be expressed, celebrated, critiqued, nurtured in our corporate life of faith?

In his essay on prayer and accompaniment, **Douglas E. Christie** reflects on the feeling of intimate connection with the divine created and expressed in a celebration of the martyrs of the University of Central America in San Salvador. While this profound sense of connection is expressed and nurtured through ritual action and gesture, it is also an outgrowth of and response to “the fabric of embodied, social-historical reality.” In the framework of Christian faith, both recognition of and response to social-historical reality entails “a willingness to live beyond oneself, on behalf of others,” a disposition that is developed through practices such as paying attention in a particular way not only to one’s inner life but also to the actual lives and situations

of others. Latin American and other liberation movements speak of such attention as solidarity and as accompaniment, exemplified by the daily lives of the martyrs of San Salvador (for example). Such lives entail concrete, sustained practices of love of neighbor through which we may move beyond the self's habitual senses of how things are best done, understood, or changed. Through this kind of renunciation, we may find ourselves bound more deeply by God into the fabric of social and political healing and renewal.

**Lyndon Shakespeare** draws out some elements of a theological response to mass shootings and the proliferation of civilian-owned militarized weapons, through the writings of Aristotle, Aquinas, and some of their contemporary interpreters. These thinkers take us beyond the conventional wisdom that the basis of society is a social contract to the view that communities are properly based in and ordered to *philia* and *koinonia*, the failure or weakness of which is expressed in indifference, self-preoccupation, and heedlessness of the well-being of others. Shakespeare argues that there are certain activities which in and of themselves are outside of what is involved in "living humanly well." On this view, anything designed to guarantee maximum destruction (as assault weapons are) is outside of these bounds because the purpose of such things is contrary to and destructive of *philia* and *koinonia*. From this point, Shakespeare explores the theological bases of configuring the church as a community that advocates and makes a space for reconciliation and friendship in the fullest sense possible.

The ongoing debate in the church about human sexuality has always been about more than appropriate moral norms for individual and privatized lives. It has also always concerned what kind of community the church is called to be. And of course the biblical material here is rich, and it is varied. In an article published in the Summer 2012 issue of the *ATR*, Kathryn Reinhard argues that questions of human sexuality are properly framed within the realm of conscience rather than sin or rights. If so, then Paul's discussion of food offered to idols is more salient than his much briefer discussion of human sexuality. In this issue, **Jon C. Olson** challenges four of Reinhard's key assumptions, arguing that if any of these assumptions were altered, her argument would be rendered invalid. Key to Olson's challenge is his claim that the church as a community of faith in Christ must have ways of distinguishing between allowable diversity and transgressive sin. He reads Paul as doing both, and he stands with Oliver O'Donovan in urging a rigorous use of scripture to address ecclesial

disagreements—scripture being, of course, foundational in Christian communities and their approach to love of neighbor, individual and corporate.

Immigration to the United States raises questions of neighbor love of a different sort. **David L. Danner** traces here the record of how the Episcopal Church has responded to immigration in its official statements and structures. This response has varied in kind and in quality, whether it has had to do with welcoming Christian immigrant groups into relationship with the Episcopal Church, or reaching out to assist arriving immigrants, Anglican and not. While the church's views have not exactly mirrored those of American society, the influence of society on church seems clear. The Episcopal Church's current efforts to build community with Latino/a and Asian immigrants build on views and practices from the nineteenth century and turn away from the attitudes and policies of isolation prevalent in the middle of the twentieth century. Particularly in being a strong advocate for immigrants' rights, the church is moving toward being, in reality, more nearly a church for all people.

In the first of the Practicing Theology essays in this issue, **Margaret Bullitt-Jonas** looks at how the Episcopal Church has tried to approach climate change as a matter of pressing social concern—that is, concern for all human community understood as profoundly interdependent with the earth itself. The record here includes actions of General Convention, engagement with multiple forms of ministry, advocacy in the realm of policy, and pastoral teaching at every level. In a way Bullitt-Jonas's essay recasts and answers a question once put to her: "What does religion have to do with ecology?" In many cases, the answer entails the leadership of very particular people and organizations that have developed to help congregations and communities act in ways that contribute to overall sustainability in relation to the environment *and* in relation to the concrete needs of human communities, especially those with minimal resources. Bullitt-Jonas also highlights the work of educators who interweave theological understanding into practical knowledge and ethical discernment. There is much to be done, and urgency in doing it. Believing, as Christians do, that all that is, seen and unseen, is created and beloved by God, the need for Christian communities to practice theology in this way is clear.

In the second Practicing Theology essay, **James P. Bartz** discusses some distinctively Christian practices that counter the cultural

trends away from relational intimacy and toward radical individualism, trends evident in so-called Reality Television and other phenomena of popular culture. Reading scripture makes it clear that the kingdom of heaven is constituted in relational intimacy. Scripture, then, is not primarily a source of behavioral directives for self-help, but an instrument of healing and new life oriented toward God and others. Bartz believes that the particular interrelationship of word and sacrament in the Prayer Book and its patterns of worship generate experiences of a God who is found not on one's own, but in and through the practices that make up communities. Bartz calls for recreating communities of practice that focus intentionally on the word read and the word enacted in communal sacramental life. In such communities, believers may experience that the kingdom of heaven is indeed at hand.

Finally, in an essay in our ongoing series *On Poetry and Theology*, **Roger Ferlo** explores the words and imagery of the three top poems in *ATR's* recent poetry contest, looking at how these poems school the religious imagination beyond the necessary work of formulation and a certain degree of systematization. As Ferlo notes, in the *ATR* discursive theologizing and poetic intensity are reciprocally interactive, so that our readers find their worlds and their senses of the holy expanded and deepened.



With this issue I am concluding my time as Editor in Chief of the *Anglican Theological Review*, and I look forward to being first and foremost a reader and occasional contributor. It has been a great honor for me to serve as Editor, and a huge privilege. It has also been great fun. I am more grateful than I can say for this opportunity, which has certainly expanded and deepened my own knowledge and understanding of matters theological, as well as given me a greater appreciation for the mission of scholarly journals.

And I look forward to the further development and enhancement of the journal with the leadership of Richard G. Leggett as Editor in Chief. *ATR* readers know Richard's work through his book reviews, articles, and, most recently, his stint as guest editor of the Summer 2013 issue, "What Is Common about Common Prayer?" Readers and scholars in liturgics and sacramental theology know of Richard's long and conscientious involvement in conferences and organizations in

those areas. Richard is a veteran member of the *ATR* Board and has served as Vice President, as a Book Review Editor, and as convener and member of a wide variety of *ATR* committees, working groups, and the like. Welcome, Richard, to this new role. I trust you will enjoy it as much as I have.

I also want to thank the *ATR* Board, all of our authors, and all of our readers for your support and your trust. Special thanks also to the fabulous editorial team: Tony Baker, Associate Editor and Chair of the Editorial Committee; Assistant Editors Roberto Pamatmat and Vicki Black; and most especially our extraordinary Executive Director and Managing Editor, Jackie Winter. It is a cliché to say that without them, none of this would be possible. It's also true.

ELLEN K. WONDRA  
*Editor in Chief*

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*Erratum*

We regret the misspelling of Shintaro David Ichihara's name on page 416 of the Summer 2013 issue of the *ATR*.