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*serving Evangelicals and Catholics seeking to renew the Church in the historic faith*

## Quieter way forward

Bishop Andrew Burnham introduces the  
model of a personal apostolic administration

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Simon Heans returns to Dr Williams' Tokens of Trust

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Some of the finest coal-mines, mills and factories in this country, that had been the economic powerhouses of the nineteenth century and survived through most of the twentieth, became museums not ten years after they finally ceased production near the turn of the millennium. So swiftly can one era be consigned to history by another.

Not ten years ago, there was still in Britain (albeit severely restricted) a married person's tax allowance. Yet, when the Conservative Party suggested in July that this or some similar tax advantage be restored to married couples, it was received with incredulous outrage by commentators, as something from the legislative museum no longer fit for the modern age.

It was presumed that any tax advantage for married couples would, inevitably and unarguably, be unfair to unmarried couples, notwithstanding the fact that at present, a non-married couple, by filling in their tax and benefit forms separately as single people, have a financial advantage over those couples who marry. Even correcting this anomaly is felt by some to be an unacceptable attack on the notion of justice.

The contemporary definition of equality may be a moral imperative for many, but it cannot be allowed to obscure the wisdom of the past; that is mere arrogance. Social institutions need not be consigned to the past, nor closed up in historical display cabinets: they are no worse for not being invented yesterday. Methods of production may be easily superseded as new ones take their place, but methods of sustaining a community are not so lightly set aside.

We must be clear that political parties have every right and duty to support marriage as an institution and, when this is appropriate, to offer it practical support in the form of tax allowances. Government has a responsibility for all vulnerable persons, and for children in particular. It is an entirely reasonable duty and policy to support the institution which best takes care of children (at considerable financial saving to the government and the rest of society).

Furthermore, the Church of England, which shares with government the guardianship of the institution of marriage, has every right and duty to support such moves to give help where it will prove valuable. Fanciful notions of secularism are irrelevant: the guardianship of the institution has been a matter of history, and the support for marriage has been for its own sake, not for any ulterior religious motivation.

Cries that such help for married couples is

unfair are simply misconceived. No judgement is being made about the worth as individuals of those who marry, nor is any discrimination being effected against those who are not married, any more than the age tax allowance discriminates against the young.

Support for an institution that will best care for and nurture our children is for the benefit of all in society, and therefore an entirely worthy aspiration for any political party. No one need apologize for saying so, nor fear the accusation of unfairness. There may or there may not be sound economic and political reasons for re-introducing the married couple's tax allowance, but it should be properly discussed.



There has been some evidence in the pages of NEW DIRECTIONS, though not as much as we would have wished, but it is nevertheless clear that a wide range of important and interesting ideas will emerge from the Forward in Faith College of Deans Working Parties this coming autumn. Whatever structural solution is proposed, so as to allow the majority to pursue the innovation of women bishops, it is clear that there will have to be, for those who remain faithful to the tradition, radically different ways of living the Gospel within the Church of England. For once the word 'challenge' is not over-stated.

The task ahead of us is far greater than we have yet imagined, at least in our shared and public understanding. We have not yet, as a constituency, fully taken on board the implications of remaining faithful to the tradition received, once the innovation occurs. It will be immensely demanding and challenging, and many will fall by the wayside, if Jesus' warnings in Scripture are to be believed.

It is ironic that when the rest of the Church of England seems almost to have lost interest in the need for women bishops – one half suspects that had Synod not begun the process even *Watch* and *Affirming Catholicism* would have shifted it to a back burner – it is up to us to imagine what the future might look like, without the comfort of the established church.

Many of the ideas which emerge from these working parties in the autumn will be unwelcome to some, but let us agree that they should be seriously considered, and the implications equally seriously discussed. If the rest of the Church of England, not to mention the Anglican Communion, is tearing itself apart, it is unlikely that we ourselves will have a quiet and peaceful ride. We are, as we often remind ourselves, living in interesting times. **ND**



# How can Brazil help?

**Bishop Andrew Burnham** asks us to consider what for Anglicans may seem an unusual model, that of a personal apostolic administration, and what it might mean for the life and practice of Anglo-Catholics in the future

here is a  
society,  
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Catholic  
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**W**hat might a scheme for schismatics in Brazil have to do with an arrangement for Anglicans in Britain? The Personal Apostolic Administration of St John Mary Vianney was inaugurated in 2002 in the Brazilian diocese of Campos as an initiative of the then Pope, John Paul II, to provide a home for Roman Catholic traditionalists. These traditionalists had set themselves apart by their insistence on using the so-called Tridentine Mass, replaced after the Vatican Council by the *Novus Ordo*, the Mass of Paul VI. There are Anglican traditionalists also who are concerned primarily for the preservation of the Prayer Book, or even the pre-1962 'Western Rite', but mostly we are a modern lot, more concerned about the breakdown in the Sacrament of Holy Order. What is intriguing some commentators is whether the kind of provision made for Roman Catholics on mainly liturgical grounds might be adapted to make provision for Anglicans whose problems are mainly ecclesiological.

It is tempting to leave all this to the canon lawyers, of either tradition, and we should rely on them to deal with the jot and tittle of it all. In the meantime, generalists can make a certain amount of headway: here I must say that I am writing in a personal capacity and the views here are mine and not necessarily those of my colleagues. It has to be admitted immediately that the category 'personal apostolic administration' is not an Anglican one. Like many other ecclesiological devices – not least our 'provincial episcopal visitors' ('flying bishops') – it has been invented to minister to a need arising from the complexities of modern church life.

History is scattered with these devices: amongst them we might number 'archbishop', 'commissary', 'royal peculiar' and 'the Diocese of Gibraltar-in-Europe', all of which have been invented at one time or another to make specific provision. We have parishes with more than one parish church, dioceses with more than one cathedral and provinces with overlapping jurisdiction. The Roman Catholic 'personal apostolic administration', like 'personal prelature', is designed for similar contingencies, as is the custom of giving assistant bishops the names of now-defunct dioceses *in partibus infidelibus*.

It is a sign of a growing organism (as also of a moribund one) that new developments have to be acknowledged and provided for. The trick is to spot what is growing and what is moribund – new shoots or cankers? – and take appropriate action.

The liturgical quarrel in the Roman Catholic Church is desperately serious. Progressives want the Tridentine Rite to die out and the *Novus Ordo*, the post-Vatican II Mass, to be adapted further to different host cultures. Conservatives want at least a 'reform of the reform', if not a complete restoration of the Tridentine Rite. Both parties claim the high ground as

regards quality of worship, mission and priestly vocations. Rome is exercising centripetal force by damage limitation. Though this might be out of date by the time you read it, the Pope is pleasing progressives by apparently moving slowly on the question of freeing up use of the Tridentine Rite. He is pleasing conservatives (who, because of his past writings as a cardinal, number him as a champion) by putting constraints on translation and enculturation. Thus, the new English version of the Mass is a more literal translation of the Latin and more hieratic in style and tone. (The battle over English is important, English being in many ways the new vulgar tongue, the new Latin of the civilized world.) Moderates also look for a 'reform of the reform': if different ceremonial styles were permitted and the calendars and lectionaries reconciled and renewed, the only real difference between Old and New Mass would be the largely private prayers of the priest, the flowery Gallicanisms of the Old replaced by the bald Romanisms of the New.

An all-too-brief consideration of that liturgical quarrel helps to give perspective to our own Anglican ecclesiological quarrel. Our progressives want nothing less than full equal opportunities in ordained ministry: men and women, old and young, gay and straight, able and not so able. Only then will the ordained ministry live up to Galatians 3.28. Only then will worship, mission and priestly vocations recover verve and panache. Conservatives believe that it is precisely the loss of what was previously held in common – Bible, creeds, sacraments and ministry – that has deflated the Church, enervated its worship, turned us in on ourselves and given us increasingly aged congregations and increasingly non-stipendiary, second-career or retirement vocations.

Anglicanism has little or no mechanism for exercising centripetal force, but we too have our moderates. Moderates find the analysis by progressives and conservatives naive and unrealistic: post-modern cultural fragmentation, whether real or not, is thought to be real enough to destroy any confidence in particular recipes for recovery. Pluralism and faithfulness is about the best we can manage: to paraphrase a recent fine sermon by the incoming Dean of Worcester, we cannot gather the fragments but we can battle against further fragmentation.

So has 'the Personal Apostolic Administration of St John Mary Vianney' got anything to offer us? It has one particularly useful feature. Whereas a 'personal prelature' (of which there is but one, *Opus Dei*, which was given that status in 1982) maintains a full ecclesial relationship with local diocesan bishops, a 'personal apostolic administration' is effectively a diocese of itself, with its own bishop, priests, deacons and seminaries. Anyone, ordained or lay, can become incorporated into membership of the apostolic administration; indeed, the 'personal' bit of the title means

that the relationship is with a particular bishop and not with an area or region. (Broadly, you don't have to live in Campos to belong to the Personal Apostolic Administration of St John Mary Vianney). Here then is a society, within the Catholic Church, which is ecclesially and ecclesialogically self-contained, but culturally and doctrinally Roman Catholic.

Translating this into Anglican coinage, we might want to refer to a 'society'. Methodism began life as a society: eighteenth-century Methodists were nicknamed 'the Holy Club'. The Methodist Church in Britain could yet be reconciled with Anglicans as a society with its own customs, ethos, history and tradition. Something no less self-contained might well be the Manchester Group's recommendation for traditionalist Anglo-Catholics. Such self-containment would answer the problems of jurisdiction and enable us to remain within the Anglican family, not as a Continuing Church, which has broken away, but as an association within a Church which is inevitably going to be loose-knit. The description 'Common Worship' in parts of the Church of England – and not just Anglo-Catholic parts – is a form of Newspeak. And there is a greater opportunity too. Those of us who are written off as a negative band, opponents of the ordination of women, are, in the end, opposed only to disorder and disintegration, the forces of chaos, the allies of sin and death. If we are conservatives, we are radical conservatives. We remember the vocation of Anglicanism to be a bridge church, and we ourselves are seeking to be and proving to be a bridge *ecclesiola* – (church-within-a-church). We remain loyal to the vision of ARCIC, to the vision of the papal visit to this country a quarter of a century ago and to the prospect in those heady days of restoration of *communio in sacris* with the Holy See. Seen too often by Anglicans and Roman Catholics as a common problem, we traditionalist Anglo-Catholics could yet be discovered as a common treasure. Relating to a particular bishop in, say, 'the Society of St Thomas Becket' (arguably our own St John Vianney) or perhaps, St Gregory the Great, that bishop could be one chosen for his ability to steer us along our ecumenical journey, not from one Church to another but within the rich diversity of the Body of Christ, the company of the baptized.

What would such a society, such an association, such a personal apostolic administration, bring to the fullness of the Catholic Church? Here it may help to look from the perspective of the 2006 International Anglican–Roman Catholic Commission for Unity and Mission (IARCCUM) Agreed Statement. A many-layered answer would include a particular emphasis on the parish eucharistic congregation as a cohesive and supportive community, neither strangers arriving late and leaving early as they fulfil their obligation (a problem in some Roman Catholic parishes) nor a social club meeting resignedly over worship and enthusiastically over coffee, a problem in some Anglican parishes. Another answer would be a habit of mind towards parish and neighbourhood, with a sense of everyone belonging, whether they know it or not. A third would be a concern for the solemn celebration of the parish Mass, still the main focus of Anglo-Catholic worship. To that would be added a heritage of hymnody, liturgy, music, spirituality and theology, Caroline and Victorian, as well as

from the twentieth century, whilst an Anglo-Catholic ecclesiology was the *a priori* assumption of Anglican self-understanding. Anglo-Catholics know about celibacy, but they also bring to the Western Rite the experience of a married priesthood, known also in the Christian East.


Finally, it would be fair to ask whether Anglo-Catholics are truly the radical conservatives they would claim to be. The heady rhetoric of the free province sometimes suggests an evangelical willingness to lay down everything for the Kingdom. In practice, it would not be safe to assume that clergy would be parted easily from handsome houses, predictable pensions and safe stipends.

Some priests still cling anxiously to the freehold and see the move to common tenure as a threat to be warded off. There is little realization that, compared with most of their parishioners, even priests-in-charge enjoy an enviable job security. The old joke about being in communion with the Church Commissioners and the Pensions Board suggests that security, for many, remains paramount. It follows that any corporate provision for a Brazil-type solution, must be based on realism and not romanticism.

One piece of realism is that a pope in every parish – and even a priest in every parish – will not be possible. The Church of England has been Presbyterian in culture, arguably since the Middle Ages. There is a profound sense that, despite the theory, we still have to learn fully to take episcopacy into our system, especially as regards flexible deployment and uniformity of faith and practice.

We Anglo-Catholics are not strangers to uniformity: the English Missal may continue to sell well, but its appearances on the altar are rare. Most liturgies are recognizably and skilfully 'modern Catholic' and all a visiting bishop has to ascertain is whether the Lord's Prayer is said or sung, Holy Communion standing or kneeling. The hand-candle is seldom used, the seventh frequently. Facing east, where it happens, is usually a principled, and indeed architecturally informed choice and the use of traditional language is uncommon. The breviary is used almost universally but the Calendar remains a sport to engage in.

Though the flying bishop is pastor and friend, it would be quite a leap for him to become the Ordinary, let alone an Ordinary who decided how things should be. Painful pastoral reorganization and issues of deployment would have to be tackled; paying a priest a full stipend to distribute fifty or sixty Communion a Sunday will become less and less viable, even in areas of deprivation. Too many parishes still lack good and realistic strategies for evangelization and formation. Too many have still to discover the invaluable – and increasingly irreplaceable – contribution of lay and non-stipendiary ministers.

Essential for any radical plan, is that what is done is done in obedience to the call of the Lord for his Church to be one as he and the Father are one. Anglicanism at this time faces fragmentation. We Anglo-Catholics are not a fragment of Anglicanism but part of the fragment of Catholic faith and practice which broke off when a good half of the vase itself was further broken five hundred years ago. In looking for the glue and urgently seeking to be glued back on, we can but look in faith to the master potter himself. 

those of  
us who  
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only to  
disorder  
and dis-  
integration,  
the forces  
of chaos,  
the allies  
of sin and  
death

# House covenant

**Mark Stevens** is not convinced by the trivializing option

**I**n his speech to the Synod in York the Bishop of Durham compared the proposed Anglican Covenant to a set of rules voluntarily adopted by those sharing a house: no decaying food in the fridge; no dog-ends in the ash trays; and the bath to be cleaned after every use. How banal!

But Tom Wright is not wrong about the draft Covenant: as presently worded it does not amount to much. A medley of vocal gems from various existing formularies, it ominously fails to tackle a straightforward commitment to the mutual recognition and interchangeability of orders.

It does so for the simple reason that the mutual recognition of orders was jettisoned twenty years ago. Which makes some of the statements of the draft sound rather more 'Anglican' than they should. In Section 3 (*Our Commitment to Confession of the Faith*) 'each Church commits itself to uphold and act in continuity and consistency with the catholic and apostolic faith, order and tradition.' In Section 5 (*Our Unity and Common Life*) 'We

affirm the historic episcopate...and the central role of bishops as custodians of faith, leaders in mission and as a visible sign of unity.'

In these statements, fatally, what is not said is more important than what is said. The episcopate is no longer a 'visible sign of unity' among Anglicans, and saying it is will not make it so. Whatever else one might say about Anglican Orders no one could now reasonably affirm that the Communion has acted 'in continuity and consistency with the catholic and apostolic tradition' regarding them.

It is important, precisely because the Covenanters themselves seem not to have grasped it, to outline what is at stake here. At least as significant as the ordination of women itself is the means by which it was accomplished. The Windsor Report (Section A, paras 12–21) is a classic of institutional self-deception. It confuses process and result. It portrays the path to women's ordination (quite contrary to the historical record!) as one of forbearance and consultation. What it

fails to acknowledge is the conclusion of the process: fracture of communion.

It would not have mattered if all three 'instruments of communion' (the Primates' Meeting did not exist at the time) had *unanimously* agreed (which they did not) that some provinces could go forward with the innovation. The result would have been the same. So long as other provinces were not prepared to go forward in the same way, the interchangeability of orders had been destroyed.

In the Anglican Communion, as it really is, bishops are a sign of disunity not of unity. The Presiding Bishop of TEC, though a member of their standing committee, is a constant reminder to the Primates of this very fact. Some hold that she is not a bishop, others cannot receive Holy Communion with or from her because of the opinions which she holds. Of the forthcoming Lambeth Conference global south Primates have said: 'To be present but unable to participate in sacramental fellowship would all the more painfully demonstrate our brokenness.'

It is tragic that the Bishop of Durham does not or will not see the damage that has been done. No matter how strident the notices on his imaginary bathroom door exhorting users to leave it as they found it, they will be of no avail. It is the plumbing which is at fault. **ND**

**R**ead and reflecting on poetry is an excellent way to open up the mind and the imagination to the life of the spirit. Poetry makes connections between daily life experiences and seeks to draw meaning out of them. Poetry makes pattern and structure out of random thoughts. It is unifying and often satisfying. It gives voice to questions and anxieties that are often unformed and unexpressed. It can give expression of emotional and spiritual ecstasy in image and metaphor that is almost impossible to express in any other way.

It is no surprise that much Scripture is poetry and song; the Psalms are paramount, but many of the prophets expressed their vision and insight in poetic form. St Paul often recites (or writes) rhythmic poetry or song. The book of Revelation is punctuated with poetry that has found its way into our eucharistic liturgy.

In the same way, many of the great spiritual writers of the Church have been poets, from St Francis' *Canticle of the Sun* to the *Spiritual Canticles* of St John of the Cross. The Anglican spiritual tradition is rich in poetry. The profound theology of the Restoration divines was matched by

## Ghostly Counsel

### Poetry & prayer

**Andy Hawes** is Warden of Edenham Regional Retreat House

poetic creativity as seen in John Donne and pre-figured in George Herbert. Every Anglican generation has produced priest poets, like John Keble, Thomas Traherne and more recently R.S. Thomas. Anglican laity have also been 'spiritual poets' of stature, such as T.S. Eliot or W.H. Auden.

In poetry there is a distillation of thought and experience. Poems can provide a short cut to engagement with the Lord in prayer; they provide a mechanism to trigger conversation with God. Often they are short. This means that it takes less time to draw fruit from them. Often they can be learnt by heart; this means that one can carry them about as aid to prayer and a starting point in intercession or praise. It is not an accident

that many poems have become hymns; think of George Herbert's hymns or those of William Cowper; *Dear Lord and Father of Mankind* is a poem by the American Quaker John Greenleaf Whittier. This last example is a reminder that poetry enables us to draw on the wealth of the Christian Church in every age.

There are countless anthologies of religious verse, the most renowned being that of Oxford University Press, but others include *The Lion Christian Poetry Collection*, *The Rider Book of Mystical Verse* and *The Poet's Christ*.

Many people find it helpful to write poetry to help them reflect on the call and experience of Christ in their lives. This can be so valuable in sharing experience with a spiritual director or soul friend. For some time, I belonged to a Christian writers' group – this too helped in expressing and learning from spiritual experience. Many readers would benefit from a blank piece of paper and the freedom and encouragement to 'let it go' and 'put in down'. That simple exercise says so much; it is a sign of the truth that the Lord is at work transforming the way we perceive the world and our place within it.

# Donner und blitzen

**George Austin** attended last month's session of General Synod in York and listened to the debates on the future reductions in clergy pensions the Anglican Covenant and the Pilling Report on senior appointments

**I**t is more than twenty years ago that Synod's York meeting was marred by the news that on Sunday evening lightning had struck York Minster, destroying the roof of the south transept. Having been consecrated bishop there a couple of days before, poor David Jenkins had to bear the blame for possible divine intervention. Or could it have been the fact that Synod members worshipped there that very morning?

Now as thunder rumbled above the Conference Hall at the opening of the Sunday afternoon debate at the York Synod, sounding like the battle of the Somme, were members to face that same judgement from above? Not that there was much reason for it in the rather tame debates I sat through.

One old Synod hand had warned me that the cutback in numbers of Synod members had damaged the quality of debate. Whether numbers are the reason for decline is questionable, for it could be (and some say is) because Synod is now much more in the hands of the Archbishops' Council in its process of decision-making.

## Pensions debate

The Saturday debate on Clergy Pensions was of concern to all clergy, serving and retired, and it was clear from the start that it was going through regardless of any doubts expressed either in speeches or in amendments, and despite concerns about the differentials which will be created in amounts of pension received by present recipients and new ones and about the amount provided for equity-sharing mortgages in the CHARM scheme.

This had been held at a maximum of £125,000 and, in acknowledgement of the problem, it has been raised to £150,000. As one speaker from the diocese of Blackburn pointed out, this would be enough to help buy a small house in Burnley, so there is some hope for those in need. Though perhaps not much.

As with other institutions, the Church is facing great problems meeting its pensions responsibilities and no one doubts that the present proposals are an attempt to deal with this. But the manner in which they appeared to be steam-rolled through the Synod with some questions

unanswered made me uneasy.

Will current pensioners really find the basis of their pension provisions unchanged? Is it, as one speaker asked, right to take away from pensioners to pay for other demands in the Church such as 'mission initiatives'? Clearly not, but no reply was forthcoming. And would such an action be allowed in non-charitable bodies, either legally or against union pressure?

And is it really the case that the majority of pensioners support the changes?

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## the proposals appeared to be almost steam-rolled through the Synod with some questions unanswered

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It was far from so at the recent AGM of the Retired Clergy Association, where the criticism was vigorous and almost unanimous. Yet it was obvious from the start that the motion would go through as it stood.

## The Anglican Covenant

Sunday tends to be reserved for debates on matters of theology and mission, and this year it was for the report on The Anglican Covenant. Its importance was underlined by the fact that Archbishop Drexel Gomez was invited to give the introduction. It was during his speech that thunder reverberated around the hall for several minutes to the delight of those in the Press Gallery with memories of 1984.

The archbishop pointed out that the Covenant came before Synod at what he described as 'a time of great tension in the Anglican Communion' and no one could dispute that. Even in the last three years since the Windsor Report 'there is less trust now between different parties and different provinces.' 'The language,' he went on, 'has become more strident, and, quite frankly, scare-mongering is commonplace.'

The Report, introduced by the Bishop of Chichester, is full and well argued,

ending with a draft of the proposed Covenant. The affirmation at its beginning is identical to the Declaration of Assent made by the clergy and the commitment to confession of the faith is one to which no orthodox Anglican, Catholic or Evangelical, could dissent. It would not surprise anyone that annexed to the Report was a 24-page document of dissent from the Modern Churchpersons Union.

There were amendments proposed that were certain to be defeated, but with one exception: a request for a response from the Covenant Design Group to be drawn up and brought back to the Synod at the next group of sessions. But the Archbishops' Council now have a little cupboard containing suitable synodical emetics – in this case setting out the £50,000 cost of such an exercise – to be produced so that motions may be passed smoothly and without strain.

## Appointments

The best debate of the three was undoubtedly that of Monday afternoon, Talent and Calling, reviewing 'the law and practice regarding appointments to the offices of suffragan bishop, dean, archdeacon and residentiary canon.'

For clergy in their dotage (like me), it was a little difficult to tune into the new age of advertisements, applications and the rest – forty years ago, to apply for a job would have meant immediate exclusion from consideration, and vocation meant not just a calling to the priesthood but a readiness to wait for an invitation to consider any particular vacancy. However, times have changed and techniques need to be produced or adapted to meet those changes.

It was a fortunate coincidence that on his first day in office Gordon Brown had listed a number of intentions, of which the first was to end the Prime Minister's involvement in Church appointments, but without disestablishing the Church. From now on, the PM will simply recommend to the Queen the person nominated by the Crown Nominations Committee, rather than demanding two names from which the choice (or not) would be his.

It was in 1215 that King John was forced to sign the Magna Carta, whose first clause granted freedom to the Church in England. Centuries later, in 1974 at a

York meeting of the Synod, a motion was passed 'affirming the principle that the appointment of diocesan bishops should be that of the Church', and as a result of this the Crown Appointment Committee was established. In 2001, a review group chaired by Baroness Perry presented its findings, in a report that was one of the most scathing ever to come to the Synod.

Those of us who had served on the Commission were astonished and delighted at its frankness and accuracy, and its effect is said to have produced a more accountable and acceptable method of working. One result was that the name has been changed to Crown Nominations Commission, thus avoiding the necessity (common in the time of my membership in the early Nineties) of giving headmasterly reminders to the members that they do not appoint but rather nominate.

However, even as a former member of the Commission, I was surprised to learn from this report that no priest can be included in any preferment list without his bishop's support. Members of the Commission can of course put in names for consideration when a particular diocese is under consideration, but if the candidate is rejected – even if he was first or second choice – he does not remain on the list.

### Under-representation

Now clergy who read NEW DIRECTIONS are unlikely ever to be considered for bishop, archdeacon or dean, but there was one section of the report which is as fierce as anything in the Perry Report – that detailing the under-

representation among such appointments of conservative evangelicals and traditional Catholics.

It is nothing new: ten years ago in the Crockford Preface, Canon Gareth Bennett drew attention to the preponderance of liberals with an Oxbridge and Westcott/Cuddesdon background in such appointments during the Runcie primacy. Since

## since 1994, only two diocesan bishops who are prepared to ordain women have nominated suffragans who do not

the ordination of women, the situation is much worse – worse because the 1993 Episcopal Ministry Act of Synod, passed unanimously by the House of Bishops and by overwhelming majorities in the other two houses, declared that 'no person or body shall discriminate against candidates for ordination or for senior office' on the grounds of their views on the ordination of women.

The Report points out that since 1994 only two – yes, two! – diocesan bishops who themselves are prepared to ordain women have nominated suffragans who do not: Exeter and Manchester (when at Wakefield). Of the 43 deans, 121 archdeacons and 140 residentiary canons, perhaps as few as 10 out of 304 have been appointed from our constituency. Even some who have become residentiary canons are mainly among those

appointed by the Crown, now perceived as being fairer than the majority of diocesan bishops.

As an aid to changing this discriminatory practice, the Report suggests that the preferment list should indicate which of those on it are traditional Catholics, and that bishops should act positively to end the present unfairness.

### Trust

It was this that produced the most unpleasant moment of the debate. The Revd Paul Collier of Southwark (where else?) supported by Christina Rees (who else?) of St Albans proposed an amendment to omit clauses from the recommendations that enshrined these suggestions. In other debates at this July group of sessions, Synod supported motions in favour of ethnic minorities and the disabled, but it is clear that for liberal fundamentalists, non-discrimination does not extend to the orthodox. Much as I love the Church of England, there are times when I am ashamed to be a member. It is little wonder that the Anglican Communion needs the Covenant.

So what stands out from the York 2007 Synod? Probably the word 'trust'. In the matter of pensions, can we trust the Archbishops' Council or will money be taken from pensioners and used for other purposes? On the Covenant, can we trust provinces dominated by the liberal extreme to keep to its provisions? And on appointments, can bishops now ever be trusted to end that kind of discrimination? The trouble is that when trust has once been broken, it can be forgiven. But it can never be restored. **ND**

## To the point

**T**he organist at our church insists on filling every moment in the liturgy with music and will not play anything written since 1958 (the death of Vaughan Williams). Supported by the choir, he says that as he is the only musically qualified person in the church he should decide all matters concerned with music. Is he right? Meanwhile, arrangements are being made for a large wedding next year and the bride's mother says that since she will be paying for the church she will decide the music. Is she right?

**T**he organist must not play the organ before, during or after the service contrary to the directions of the incumbent. So, for example, if the incumbent decides that Holy Communion shall be received in silence, his direction

must be followed.

Canon B20 states that the incumbent must 'pay due heed to [the organist's] advice and assistance in the choosing of hymns, anthems, and other settings... but at all times the final responsibility and decision in these matters rests with the minister.' The incumbent is under a duty 'to ensure that only such chants, hymns and anthems, and other settings are chosen as are appropriate, both the words and the music, to the solemn act of worship and prayer in the House of God as well as to the congregation assembled for that purpose, and to banish all irreverence in the practice and performance of the same.'

If the organist refuses to play a worthy hymn tune written in the last fifty years (such as Guiting Power for the hymn

## VI Ordering of music in church

*Christ triumphant*), he will probably be in breach of his contract and liable to have it terminated. Normally termination can only be by the incumbent with the agreement of the PCC, but the archdeacon may dispense with the agreement of the PCC. This might be appropriate in this case if many choir members are also on the PCC.

The bride's mother cannot dictate the choice of music at the wedding. Where matrimony is to be solemnized in any church, 'it belongs to the minister of the parish to decide what music shall be played, what hymns or anthems shall be sung, or what furnishings or flowers should be placed in or about the church for the occasion' [Canon B38, §5].

*Our lawyers are happy to answer reader's questions about church law - please email [tothepoint@forwardinfaith.com](mailto:tothepoint@forwardinfaith.com)*

# War and secession

*John Shepley considers nineteenth century precedent for the current divisions within The Episcopal Church but suggests a different outcome to its civil war*

If Locke was the intellectual progenitor of the American Revolution of 1776, then John Stuart Mill was the intellectual inspiration of both sides in the Civil War of 1862. In his *On Liberty* (published 1859), Mill wrote of the 'tyranny of the majority'. In practical political terms, his analysis raised two pressing questions: what degree of subsidiarity is appropriate in a democratic body, and what rights do parts of a democratic whole have to secede from it? How binding is the social contract, and at what level is it most binding? These were the conundra of the American Civil War.

## Perpetual civil war

It was by no means obvious, in 1776, that even the thirteen states, not to mention the greater part of the continent, was, or ought to be, 'one nation under God'. Quite the reverse: even George Washington habitually referred to Virginia as 'my nation'. The transition from 'these United States' to 'the United States' only came gradually and was not consolidated until after 1864. 'The United States' was a social contract written in blood.

Lincoln, of course, clothed these democratic ambiguities with mellifluous rhetoric: '...that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.' But the question remains – why did the North reject the right to self-determination of the Southern states? Why was so much blood and treasure expended in order to subdue those who had voted by democratic majorities to leave the Union?

The answer routinely given – that the North went to war to free the slaves – is only partly true (if that). The American Civil War was a conflict in search of a reason: the abolition of slavery was the final reason given. But at no time in the titanic struggle would the majority of combatants have said that this was what they were fighting about. The Thirteenth Amendment came at the end of the War, not at its beginning.

So the question remains, and the answer, it seems, has to be cast in terms of the concept of the 'manifest destiny' of the American Republic, which had grown up in the years before 1776. Americans had come to think of themselves as in a special category – uniquely placed by history to capitalize on, to complete and fulfil, the promise of man's existence. Their rustic blemishes had become the marks of a chosen people. 'The liberties of mankind and the glory of human nature is in their keeping,' wrote John Adams. Only such a quasi-religious vision and conviction can explain all-out war against fellow citizens. Only such an ideology could justify a nation which had its origins in a Declaration of Independence, denying the same independence to others.

## Like state like church

The symbiosis between the polity of The Episcopal Church and the politics of the United States has been frequently remarked. What is now becoming obvious is that the parallels continue. TEC in the early twenty-first century is entering upon its own Civil War. Parishes are voting to leave dioceses and dioceses are voting to abandon their affiliation with The Episcopal Church. The Church authorities, meanwhile, are denying the constitu-

tional right to withdraw. They are suing parishes, and even individual vestry members, for property. In an unfortunate echo of papal language about Anglican Orders, the Presiding Bishop's chancellor has declared any changes in diocesan constitutions 'null and void'.

But why? Why does a Church which, since the days of its inception, has been a federation of pre-existing entities (and even now is an association of dioceses each with its own constitution) deny self-determination to those dioceses when they in conscience seek to withdraw from it? And what is to be done when dioceses do part company?

Will The Episcopal Church declare those sees vacant, seek to appoint new 'bishops' for them and reconstruct their diocesan conventions much as Lincoln planned the 'reconstruction' of Louisiana, Tennessee and Arkansas?

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**though eleven bishops  
are not an army they are  
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It is hard to say what is in the minds of those who represent the episcopal majority; but one thing is certain. This ecclesial Civil War will be fought with all the determination which marked that greater conflict. 'My aim,' said William Tecumseh Sherman, 'was to whip the rebels, to humble their pride and to make them fear and dread us.' After burn-

ing most of Georgia, he had all but achieved his aim. Katherine Schori, Bonnie Anderson and their legal cohorts show every sign of being prepared to act similarly.

Like the US itself, TEC has a vision of its 'manifest destiny'. Like the revolutionaries of 1776, the present management of The Episcopal Church believe that 'the liberties of mankind and the glory of human nature is in their keeping'. More than that: they have mistaken the decisions of their General Convention for the doctrines of the faith, and themselves for the Catholic Church.

But, *pace* Karl Marx, history never repeats itself, either as tragedy or farce. The factor which distinguishes this ecclesial Civil War from its secular predecessor is the involvement of foreign troops. Napoleon III's sympathies for the Confederacy were well known; but he never sent soldiers. The provinces of the Anglican Communion have not followed him in avoiding the fray. Quite the opposite: soon there will be no less than *eleven* bishops owing foreign allegiance operating within the territory of The Episcopal Church – more than the 'autonomous' provinces of Scotland or Wales.

We need to take full cognizance of this unprecedented fact. Left to themselves, the outcome between the American combatants would not be in doubt. The liberal divisions far out-number the rebels, and they have, in any case, the treasure to pursue their course relentlessly. The traditionalists would naturally lose. But the involvement of outside forces changes the dynamic. Though eleven bishops are not an army, they are a powerful witness denying the claim of TEC to have sole franchise on Anglicanism in the United States. They witness to the fact that Anglicanism is bigger than and other than 'the polity of this Church'; to the fact some things in the life of the Church are given, not voted, into existence.

The overseas bishops are in the midst of the fray to ensure that, unlike the Civil War, the argument will not become a fight to the bitter death. **ND**

# Re-organize now

*Declining numbers of church attenders pose an ongoing problem for the Church of England. **Scott Anderson** calls for a dramatic diocesan re-organization in order to address this issue*

**L**ondon diocese has a number of large evangelical churches. These congregations usually meet during the week in small, dispersed groups. The groups, or pastorates, are run by lay people, and provide Bible study, prayer, nurturing and pastoral care for people who live in the suburbs but work and worship in central London. This practice has been frowned on as drawing mainly professional people away from their parish churches, where their skills and money would be useful. Perhaps the time has come to recognize that this could be the model for the emerging church which Anglo-Catholics seek.

## Pastoral re-organization

The Church of England has seen continuous decline in numbers for about 150 years. If it were to learn from the world of business, it would be rapidly retrenching in order to define and resource its 'core activities'. Many are now convinced that the Church of England as a body has neither the will nor the ability to do this. The attraction, then, of the free province is that it will allow Catholics to concentrate on these core activities, freed from the bureaucracy and constant compromises of the synodical Church.

Bishop's Staff Meetings and Pastoral Committees frequently have to consider the plight of tiny, ageing congregations, worshipping in immense buildings with no money. There seems to be no solution to their problems except slow attrition, until the priest retires or moves. Then the parish is suspended. Finally, after several years, the building is closed, and the remnant of the congregation disperses. A few will go to a neighbouring church, and several will never go to Mass again.

## Theory of church growth

By the time the process is completed, the next parish along will have declined, and so it all begins again. Money from the sale of the buildings goes to the Commissioners and the diocese, unlike in Scotland where it is sensibly ploughed into making sure that the neighbouring parish is repaired and resourced. The money lost and wasted in this interminable process would pay the salaries of several priests for several years. The cost in souls – of people lost to the sacraments – is incalculable.

There must be a better way.

There is a useful analysis of function and size in the theory of church growth. This identifies three levels at which each Christian must function in order to be properly nurtured in the faith. The Congregation is a gathering of 80–150 people and is the sort of number which can be pastored by one priest, and where he and the people can reasonably know each other by name. But it is too big for personal growth, and for this, each member of the congregation needs a Cell. The Cell group consists of perhaps 10–15 people,

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**they are fighting for the wrong thing – in struggling to be a congregation, they are committing suicide**

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and it is here in the weekly meeting that teaching, prayer and pastoral care are effectively given. The congregation needs occasions of worship and praise and so combines with other congregations for the Celebration level, where 'the more the merrier' is the best guide to numbers.

## Theory of church growth

Each of these levels has its own scale and way of working. There are things which the Cell can do which are impossible for the Congregation, and the Celebration has a power which is simply not available to the Cell. Yet we are bewildered by changes in the parish because we do not understand which level we are functioning at. Confusion leads to inappropriate demands being made on laity and clergy, and inevitably to decline.

Many congregations in both city and countryside now are actually Cells. They share a common age profile, which is usual for such groups. But they have to function as Congregations, which is disastrous for their life. They must elect churchwardens and a church council. They must raise funds for their own building (instead of meeting in a large living room as a Cell would). Most curiously, they are being pastored by a full-time priest, and the

relationship is stifling, for both priest and people. Their resources are stretched. They are not attracting middle-aged or young people or children, which is limiting to worship and life. If they were able to function as a Cell, they would probably be successful in attracting other retired people. They may be full of fighting spirit, but they are fighting for the wrong thing. In struggling to be a congregation, they are committing suicide.

## Radical change needed

The challenge is to the bishops and the laity who must tackle – and change – the way that the Church of England lives its life. Nobody will believe that the church is serious about being mission-shaped while she retains the current number of dioceses and parishes. Both the present numbers of Anglicans at Mass on Sundays, and our mission to re-convert England to Christianity, require a leaner, fitter church. The call for diocesan re-organization must become deafening.

While the bishops are tackling closure and amalgamation of dioceses, the laity will be asking how they prepare to be a missionary force to re-establish the Christian life here. The key question for many of them is whether they love their building more than the Lord Jesus. For the simple fact is that when you close a church building, significant numbers stop worshipping God on Sundays. The creation of congregations of appropriate size and with adequate resources for growth is of paramount importance. Yet all the signs are that we shall give in to the cries of the building preservationists about the Church's 'responsibility for the nation's heritage', and to the threats of the nominal Anglicans that 'if you close our church, we will stop coming'.

There is a better way. It begins with realism about the nature and mission of the Church in England. We no longer have the luxury of the Commissioners' money paying the clergy.

The Forward in Faith working parties are looking for a better way of being church to and for the people of Britain. They will speak, not just to the Catholic constituency, but to the Anglican Church of the four provinces of England, Wales and Scotland. Whether they will be heard remains to be seen. **ND**

# devotional

## Transfiguration

Arthur Middleton

**T**o see the life of prayer as a re-enactment of the Transfiguration is not to project a fantasy. The reality of what the Transfiguration professes is what we experience in prayer over a long, gradual process of being transfigured in Christ as we partake of the divine nature. It is to let the self, the real and true self, be transformed and transfigured in the milieu of divine life God invites us to share. Prayer and life become integrated as we bring the personal and communal life in which we participate into the larger context of the divine milieu.

There is always the temptation to return into the security of life's earlier experience or escape into pseudo-reality. The implications of the Transfiguration mean taking the total, real and actual circumstances of life, as they are being lived and experienced, into the glory that will give meaning to it all. The experience will not be in terms of some other world, but of life as it is, renewed and transformed in Christ.

## A new reality

It is an experience radically new, because it is 'not of this world', but whose gift and presence, continuity and fulfilment in this world is the Church. So it is not a private experience in the subjectivism of individual religious experience. What one is concerned to describe here is the unique experience of the Church as

new reality, new creation, new life.

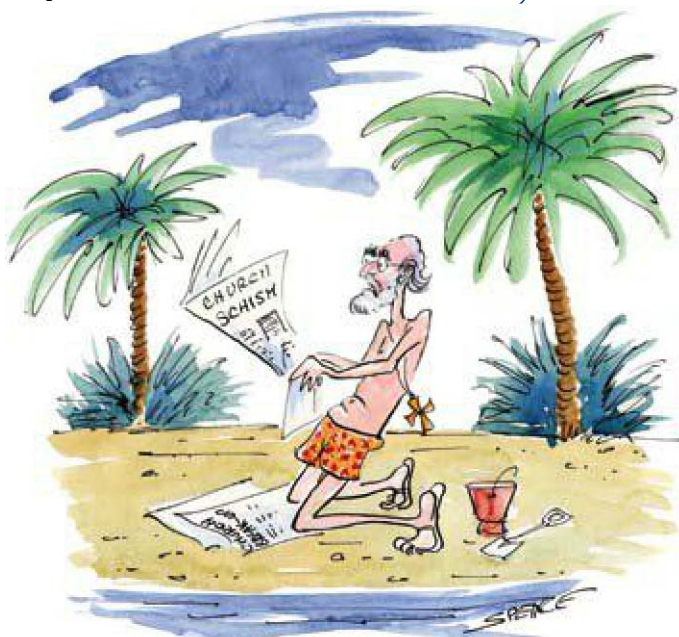
Each of us in baptism becomes a seed implanted into this new reality that we might grow to full maturity as children of God. We are endowed with the power of the Trinitarian life, whereby God's interior activity in us and our cooperation with him leads us into the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. Such growth is a movement in assimilating love, which prayer deepens, as it leads us into a long, gradual process of transfiguration in Christ.

## Loving presence

As prayer and life are integrated, and we begin to respond to the re-integration of our inner being, so we become more sensitive to God's dynamic presence breathing his life into us, that faith be deepened and ourselves purified. In the words of St Irenaeus, 'the two hands of God', Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, are continuously touching the soul. This loving presence of God penetrates our whole being, creating, redeeming and transforming us into a greater oneness with Christ. 'The light which is the life of men is experienced as a transfiguring power.' In this experience of the fullness of baptism, we are moving out from the darkness of self-centredness into the light of God's presence.

The discipline of Christian life is like climbing a mountain and is never easy. Yet the conviction of that 'loving presence', that Our Lord is leading, has always been certain. His concern is to lead us into following him, that we might imitate him, put him on in the sense of representing him; to follow him that we might worship him and find in him that he is always the Way, the Truth and the Life. **ND**

*From his Prayer in the Workaday World*



*'And I ask myself: why go back to it all?'*

## Face 'em down

**W**hen Mark 'Shirty' Shirtliff took on the *Hare & Hounds* on Church Street, Booty Bridge, the pub was in the doldrums. It had acquired a reputation as a drugs' den and was subject to several police raids during the 1990s. Shirty's predecessor had tried to clean things up, but didn't stay long enough to make a real impact. The pub had become increasingly dependent on the very in-crowd who were keeping everybody else out.

Until Shirty arrived. The man with a penchant for wearing rather rude T-shirts over his ample girth had made all the difference.

One evening a few months ago, I brought a group of men down from the church for the quiz night – I noticed the sign advertising it outside the pub and thought that would do very nicely for our outreach amongst men. Free grub was on offer and our little church team won the quiz – £10 worth of drinks behind the bar.

The whole feel of the *Hare & Hounds* was different; it had a happy atmosphere; people were laughing and joking and tucking into the food laid on. I got chatting with Shirty at the bar and heard his story.

Shirty realized what he had to do after only a few weeks in the pub. He had to face down the old crowd. It came to a head one night. He told them straight, 'I don't want you and I don't want your money,' and they left. Of course, Shirty took a serious short-term financial hit, but gradually things began to turn around. The new initiatives were paying off, new people were coming in, and word got round the village that the *Hare & Hounds* was worth bringing your girlfriend to.

I pondered Shirty's tale as I walked back up Church Street and contemplated the church silhouetted against the evening sky – the parish church called to bear witness to the Saviour who 'came not to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many.' Substitute bullying and snobbery for drug abuse, and the parallels with the pub were uncanny. How humbling for a card-carrying member of Reform to learn lessons in church growth from a publican with a bad taste in T-shirts!

*Julian Mann*

# Transfiguration

There are significant differences in the accounts of the Transfiguration in Matthew and Mark  
**Patrick Henry Reardon** is a Senior Editor of *Touchstone: A Journal of Mere Christianity*

**A**lthough Matthew's account of the Lord's Transfiguration seems at first to differ only slightly from that of Mark, closer inspection of its details, especially considered in the light of Matthew as a whole, shows a very different presentation of the event.

I want to start with what at first may appear to be an unimportant difference – namely, in Matthew's narrative Simon Peter does not address Jesus as 'Rabbi' (as in Mark), but as 'Lord' – *Kyrie* [17.4]. This change is significant in two ways.

First, it conforms to a pattern found all through Matthew, who avoids the title 'Rabbi' with respect to Jesus. While Jesus was surely called 'Rabbi' (teacher) during his earthly time with the apostles, and although we do find him addressed thus in Mark and John (never in Luke), Matthew is more circumspect in his use of this title. Indeed, in Matthew the only person to address Jesus as 'Rabbi' is Judas Iscariot [26.25, 49]. Thus, when Jesus is addressed as or refers to himself as 'teacher' in Matthew, it is always through the Greek word *didaskalos*. In the Transfiguration scene, Matthew avoids the term 'teacher' altogether.

Secondly, in this scene Jesus is vastly more than a teacher. He is the 'Lord,' *ho Kyrios*, the name signifying the Church's fully articulated faith in the risen Christ. As *Kyrios*, Jesus is the object of worship, and Matthew describes the Transfiguration as a scene of worship, which is why Jesus is addressed in his full, post-Resurrection title [Acts 2:36; Phil. 2.11].

This theological intent is the key to understanding other features in Matthew's portrayal; for example, the posture of the apostles. Only in Matthew's account do we read, 'And when the disciples heard [the voice from the cloud], they fell on their faces and were greatly afraid.' This is an important detail, because throughout Matthew this full prostration is the proper Christian response to the revelation of God's Son. Indeed, this is a distinguishing characteristic of Matthew's Gospel, where the life of Jesus begins and

ends with believers prostrate before him [2.11; 28.17].

This intent also explains Matthew's omission of Mark's comment that Peter 'did not know what to say' [Mark 9.6]. His omission here is consistent with Matthew's sustained emphasis on 'understanding' as a component of the Christian life. For this reason, Matthew habitually leaves out Mark's references to the apostles' lack of understanding [e.g. Mark 6.52; 9.10, 32].

This preoccupation also explains why Matthew leaves out Jesus' questions found in Mark [4.13]: 'Do you not understand this parable? How then will you understand all the parables?' The parable in question is the parable of the sown seed, and it is significant that Matthew alone refers to 'understanding' in connection with that parable: 'When anyone hears the word of the kingdom, and does not understand, then the wicked one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart' [13.19; contrast with Mark 4.15].

At the end of the parable, Matthew writes, 'But he who received seed on the good ground is he who hears the word and understands, who indeed bears fruit and produces: some a hundred-fold, some sixty, some thirty' [13.23; contrast with Mark 4.20]. Finally, at the end of the series of parables, Matthew writes, 'Jesus said to them, 'Have you understood all these things?' They said to him, 'Yes, Lord' [13.51; no parallel in Mark]. True discipleship, that is to say, includes understanding.

Finally, Matthew alone mentions the gentle detail that 'Jesus came and touched them and said, 'Arise, and do not be afraid' [17.7]. Here we are presented with another component of the Christians' relationship to the transfigured Son of God – intimacy. The disciples are not only prostrate in fear; they are reassured in faith. This combination of transcendence and communion pertains to Matthew's understanding of the Transfiguration, in which he portrays the response of the Church to God's glorious revelation of his Son. **ND**

## Sacred vision

'Near the cross...stood his mother' [John 19.25]. It was in response to Protestant criticisms of depictions of the melodramatic swooning of the Virgin Mary – which characterized for them the sensationalized and cultic images of the corrupt Catholic Church – that the Council of Trent recommended to artists a closer adherence to these words of John's Gospel.

A *standing* Virgin thus came to replace a collapsed or fainting figure; a change which in turn was more congruous with the courageous, triumphant image of the Counter-Reformation. In this panel showing the *Deposition* from Rubens' Antwerp altarpiece, the figure of the Virgin Mary shows little sign of physical weakness as she reaches up towards her Son, all her anguish concentrated in her pale face and pleading gestures.

The work of Peter Paul Rubens is instrumental in defining the



## Rubens – The Deposition

emotional fervour and intense religiosity of the visual language of the Counter-Reformation in the Spanish Netherlands. Himself a convert Catholic, Rubens worked in Antwerp at a time when the Catholic Archdukes Albert and Isabella were supervising projects of religious and economic revival in the city.

It was as part of this widespread resurgence of religious imagery, placing an emphasis on the glorification of the Virgin and the saints after the destructions of iconoclasm, that Rubens was commissioned to paint this altarpiece between 1610 and 1614 for Antwerp cathedral.

Despite its sweeping diagonal composition and dramatic deep shadows, the new figure of the courageous Virgin reminds us of the Counter-Reformation Church's staunch and transcendent defiance.

*Rosie Razzall*

# Seeking holiness

After reading Rowan Williams' *Silence and Honey Cakes*, Paul Griffin considers the role of evangelism in the life of a Christian and disagrees with the apparent consensus

**T**he first duty of a Christian,' said our eminent Father in God, 'is to pass the good news on to others.' His superior nodded agreement. No, sorry, Fathers: not true. We all hear at every Eucharist what Jesus said when he was asked for the first duty of a Christian. Priests talk like that because they want to charge us with energy, to encourage us to make more impact locally, and because our Lord later vigorously told us to spread the message.

Even so, the words Mission, Outreach, and Fellowship have come to set the teeth of many on edge. Why? Because guests are welcome only if they do not turn up too often. Probably also because we are lazy. But it is important that every minister speaks the absolute truth, and does not drift into the wordy overstatement that pours out from every pulpit, journal, and article such as this one. What I tell you three times may or may not be true; but what I tell you thirty times begins to raise instinctive doubts.

There are of course numerous duties of a Christian that follow from the two great commandments, and evangelism is a pre-eminent one. Only *some* consolation for those Fathers in God.

## Search for truth

I raise this topic because I have been reading the book by Rowan Williams entitled *Silence and Honey Cakes*, recommended by our suffragan. It is a defence of the Desert Fathers, and, like most of the Archbishop's writings, it is not easy to follow. On page 51, I came across a sentence that seemed at first glance to be making this same remark: '...we can think of what the church would be like if it were a community not only where each saw his or her vocation as primarily to put the neighbour in touch with God, but where it was possible to engage each other in this kind of quest for the truth of oneself, without fear, without the expectation of being despised or condemned for not having a standard or acceptable spiritual life.'

As so often, we have the feeling that we are eavesdropping on the Archbishop's colloquy with himself, without having the mental equipment quite to follow it. In conversation he can speak with the utmost simplicity and clarity on diffi-

cult topics. The truth, I suppose, is that the majority of speeches and sermons inevitably contain broad generalizations that Rowan knows he lets slip orally, but which on paper he cannot allow to pass without qualification; or without seeing that the qualification needs qualification. We end up with something that may be comprehensible to theologians, but leaves us longing for the warm fire and hot toddy of our home truths.

Here I suspect the Archbishop catches himself writing something not completely true, and then admitting that the spiritual life really has prior claims over evangelism. He is defending the Desert

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**our product is fully developed, but it needs understanding by its marketers if it is to be trusted**

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Fathers against accusations of ratting on society – accusations familiar to the monastic orders. He defends what he calls 'fleeing', saying that there are times when our search for truth must take us away from current people and fashions. In the process we may act as better evangelists than if we were desperately trotting along with the world.

## Need for expert guidance

This sounds just an excuse for lazy people like me. Yes, but we are in a very different world. The congregations we know may be very good Christian people, but they are not like those fiery creatures who preferred lions to disloyalty. When we suggest to lay people that they should try to persuade their neighbours to come to church, Mrs Snooks will say to them something like 'It's good fun really' or 'You don't have to believe in all that stuff about the Resurrection.' You may say that if that brings newcomers to church, the details can be sorted out in time; but I feel that our Snookses should know more about their faith before they start. I would really rather see them being a practical help for their neighbours than

misleading them.

Their neighbours show their mistrust of them by persisting in the old preference for giving questions or doubts to a priest. At a time when expert guidance is increasingly necessary in a Church so varied in belief (or 'inclusive', as we are taught to call it), Screwtape and his friends seem to have reduced the Church's ability to provide it. At the same time, the media stir interest in our disagreements, so that we have to face questions more complicated than ever before. Any minority view, such as ours, is subjected to currently fashionable axioms, and devalued even within the Church, so that we are generally condemned for letting the side down. I suspect most other members of our deanery regard our Forward in Faith parishes as dominated by a divisive sexist hostility, and it is hard publicly to explain the falsity of this view without causing more public dissension.

## The real priority

What Rowan Williams in his great honesty shows is that the way of goodness is more important than any of this; that public relations, meeting targets, and treating the Church as a product to be sold all have their place, but that they are not 'the first duty of the Christian': they are secondary to our search for truth, and to the process of becoming, as Rowan puts it, naturally rather than unnaturally good.

Those who find this too easy prefer the constant pressure for more and more evangelism. Ignorant marketing may be conspicuously successful, as with some of the common medical remedies of my youth, since revealed to be virtually useless. Our product is, or should be after two thousand years, fully developed, but it needs understanding by its marketers if it is to be trusted. The search for sanctity truly is their number one priority, and comes before evangelism.

This is not to undervalue a Parish Mission, or any other special effort (except perhaps a ten-year one!) but for us ordinary workhorses, the daily task is less spectacular: to become holy and to seize our evangelism opportunities when they come. Also, perhaps, to trust colleagues to deal with situations they know better than we do. **ND**

**An atheist writes:**

'Responses to Some Questions regarding Certain Aspects of the Doctrine on The Church' published by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith on the Solemnity of Sts Peter & Paul has provoked indignation from any number of quarters.

Anxious as ever to climb on the liberal bandwagon, *The Guardian* sought in particular to analyse the statement that *these ecclesial Communities which, specifically because of the absence of the sacramental priesthood, have not preserved the genuine and integral substance of the Eucharistic Mystery cannot, according to Catholic doctrine, be called 'Churches' in the proper sense* and so naturally enough turned to an expert on 'Churches'.

As the author of the best-selling book *England's Thousand Best Churches*, Simon Jenkins was obviously their man and he cannot have disappointed the Farringdon Road trendies. Two or three sentences will suffice to give the flavour: *Who is this joker in Rome claiming supremacy via the greatest con in Europe's intellectual history, the 1870 Vatican council's invention of papal infallibility... In saying that only Roman Catholicism is a 'church', the Pope is merely redefining the word to suit his position. He is climbing to the top of Michelangelo's dome and beating his chest like King Kong.* Measured argument, you'll be pleased to note! Jenkins, who describes himself as 'an atheist who loves churches', inexplicably received a knighthood for 'services to journalism' in the New Year's Honours in 2004.

**Value Added Staff**

Soon we shall be able to announce this year's Golden Mitre awards for the highest episcopal expenses. Meanwhile appetites can be whetted by a comparison between archdeacons and suffragan bishops. In 2005, the three archdeacons in the diocese of York netted total expenses of £23,487 – this is, each of them cost the diocese £21.44 per day. However, the three suffragan bishops' expenses cost a total of £108,995 or £99.50 a day for each bishop.

Not to worry though: bishops' expenses are paid by the cash-strapped Church Commissioners who are proposing to save £5.2 million 'for other purposes' by

reducing by that amount the pensions of the retired clergy. Little wonder that suffragans have always resisted with vigour any attempt to transfer responsibility for their expenses to the diocese.

**No match for the law**

Full marks to Fr Anthony Carr, Rector of Holy Trinity, East Peckham and Nettlestead in the diocese of Rochester, for lighting his pipe in a Kent police station as a protest against the smoking ban. He walked into the nick at Tonbridge, and according to the BBC, said to the officer: 'I want to report a crime,' took out his pipe and lit it.

Fr Carr went on: 'The officer said 'Will you please put that out as this is a no smoking area' and I said 'I will not.' When officers told him he would not be 'bundled into' the back of a van, he replied 'what a pity'. A spokesman for the Bishop of Rochester said: 'We regard this as a personal matter – the church would not wish to comment on the incident. Officially, the church doesn't condone breaking the law.' (What it does *unofficially* may of course be a reasonable cause for speculation.)

**Ground (and heart) breaking**

A recent report in the *Evening Standard* caught our eye: 'Suzanne Mitchell has appeared in court accused of being the country's first lesbian 'bigamist'. The mother of five admitted making a false statement to the registrar at her civil partnership ceremony by failing to mention she was already married. The saga started when Mrs Mitchell's marriage hit the rocks two years ago. She began a relationship with a younger woman she met at a bus stop, moved her girlfriend into the family home and then 'married' her in a civil partnership ceremony at Shrewsbury Register Office (the same place where she had married her husband) in February last year, three months after they met. Meanwhile, her husband Charles was forced to sleep on the sofa downstairs.

The Mitchells met seven years ago at the dessert factory where they worked. Both had three sons from previous relationships. Within weeks they were engaged

and living together. But it is understood they are planning to renew their wedding vows – once Mitchell 'divorces' her lesbian lover. Mitchell was arrested in November last year when police called at the house following a tip-off. A spokesman for the Ministry of Justice said: 'We do not keep records of ground-breaking court cases but this is the first case of its kind that I'm aware of.'

**Only joking**

A church in a comedy club is no laughing matter, the managers of a shopping mall have decided. Allowing a church to hold services at *The Hartford Funny Bone Comedy Café & Restaurant* in Manchester, Connecticut would violate the club's lease, a spokeswoman for *The Shoppes at Buckland Hills* explained. A manager broke the news to Ben Dubow, lead pastor of St Paul's Collegiate Church, which announced last month that it would hold services in the comedy club.

St Paul's Collegiate Church is apparently 'a post-denominational community church' – and therein lies the problem. Obviously, it just wouldn't have been funny enough! Now, if it had been The Episcopal Church (proprietor: Katharine Jefferts Schori), that would have been an entirely different ball game, as our colonial cousins might put it!

**Inter-faith relations**

A doctor prescribed an exorcism for a Muslim woman with stomach pains during a routine consultation, a recent General Medical Council misconduct hearing was told. The aptly-named Dr Joyce Pratt allegedly said she could feel 'something moving inside' her patient, whom she believed was possessed by an evil spirit. Pratt, who claimed 'black magic powers', said her patient's mother was a witch, made her drink holy water, said prayers over her stomach, gave her crucifixes to ward off the demon and told her to visit a priest to be exorcised. Dr Pratt could be struck off if found guilty.

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# The God we trust II

**Simon Heans** continues his examination of the limitations and dangers of the idea of general divinity that he finds expressed in Rowan Williams' *Tokens of Trust*

**T**he present article is a sequel to one that appeared in last month's **NEW DIRECTIONS** which looked at Rowan Williams' recent book on the Catholic creeds, *Tokens of Trust*. At the end of that article I made a promise: that I would show that in Dr Williams' general divinity, the doctrine of Christ's divinity cannot be properly expressed. But first I want to clear up a possible confusion about what I called general divinity in the first essay.

## General divinity: old and new

The passionate effusions of Messrs Dawkins, Hitchens et al. have made the question of God's existence quite topical, so we Christians probably ought to know whether our faith starts with an affirmative answer to it. In the previous essay I referred to Eric Mascall's *He Who Is* and contrasted its approach with that adopted by Dr Williams in *Tokens of Trust*. In the introduction to that great work, Mascall has some helpful comments on just this subject. He begins: 'Logically and essentially, the doctrine of God is the fundamental doctrine of the Christian religion.' So does that mean, contrary to what I claimed in the previous article, that traditional theism, as represented here by Mascall, says that 'Christian faith begins as a general belief in the existence of God'?

The answer is in the next sentence containing a quotation from the Athanasian Creed (which incidentally Rowan Williams does not choose to discuss in *Tokens*): 'The Catholic Faith is this, that we worship one God in Trinity and Trinity in Unity.' Certainly we have here a statement of belief in God's existence, but it is one which is *specific* rather than general. It is a statement of belief in the existence of the God specified by the articles of the Creeds. And it is here, with that specific belief, that Christian faith begins.

## A typical experience

But did it for you? Probably not! As Mascall says: 'This does not mean, however, that the truth of the triune being of God is the first thing of which most of us become conscious as Christians.' And he goes on to distinguish between 'the order in which things ultimately exist' and 'the order in which we come to know

them.' Thus, as he says, the usual Christian experience is not of beginning where the creeds do, with 'God himself...then Christ, who is God incarnate in human flesh; and last of all the faith and devotion of the Church which Christ founded'; it is rather the reverse, since it begins with 'the practices and objects of Christian devotion' followed by learning 'about the events of our Lord's life' while it is 'only – if ever – when we begin to study the Catechism were we given any systematic instruction about the nature of God.'

Mascall then goes on to explain why this matters. First of all, it makes evangelism difficult: 'we find ourselves trying to persuade people that Christ is God

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**according to Dr Williams,  
God is already the whole  
of the world before he  
enters it as man**

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when their knowledge of God is practically non-existent.' The second reason is directly relevant to the subject of this article: 'any error that has been allowed to creep into a man's belief about God will distort his understanding of every other Christian truth. If his idea of God is wrong, his idea of Christ will be wrong.'

## Trust and existence

Right at the beginning of *Tokens*, Dr Williams asks us to consider the example of the blind man in St John's Gospel (chapter 9). He writes: '[Jesus] is certainly not asking...whether the man is of the opinion that the Son of Man exists; he wants to know whether the former blind man is ready to *trust* the Son of Man.' But this is surely wrong: Jesus is indeed asking him whether the Son of Man exists. He wants to know if the man believes *he* is the Son of Man. Dr Williams then proceeds to explain the meaning of the title as 'Jesus in his role of representative of the human race before God.' In Dr Williams' interpretation of Son of Man, there is a clear distinction between God and Jesus, but that is not so in the Gospel passage. For when Jesus reveals himself to be the Son of Man ('You have seen him and it is

he who speaks to you'), the man replies 'Lord, I believe; and he worshipped him.' In Dr Williams' account of the man's words, the form of address ('Lord') is omitted, as is reference to the act of worship which followed.

A similar reluctance to speak of Christ's divinity is evident in chapter 3 of *Tokens* in which the credal statements about him are discussed. Dr Williams consistently uses language which avoids any hint of identity between God and Jesus. 'Here is a human life,' writes Dr Williams in typical fashion, 'so shot through with the purposes of God. So transparent to the action of God, that people speak of it as God's life 'translated' into another medium.' Why the inverted commas around 'translated'? Is it supposed to indicate that this was what was said at the time about Jesus' identity? If so, it is an odd way to refer to the Messianic hope among first-century Jews. Or is it supposed to express a distancing on the part of the author from a word that might seem to suggest the doctrine of the Incarnation?

## The Incarnation

No doubt Dr Williams believes the article of the creeds relating to Our Lord Jesus Christ. So why does he not say so? The answer is that 'his idea of God is wrong'. Mascall identifies the root of the problem: 'One of the drawbacks of being a mere creature is that you see everything the wrong way round; you look at things

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