



Taste and See...



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Growing in God: Oasis Blessings _____

Laurie-Ann Copple

Tony and I attempted to leave South Africa in April 2020, in order for me to have breast cancer surgery and to re-settle back into Canada. That was interrupted by the first COVID-19 wave, so we were stuck under quarantine lockdowns in South Africa for months. I had my surgery and the rest of the cancer treatment in South Africa. Although many aspects of our ministry closed

down, others opened up BIG TIME. We invested a lot into South Africa, including two published colouring books. I'm not sorry; that was good sowing for the future.

When Tony and I attempted to leave South Africa the second time, in 2021, to care for my elderly father, we tested positive for COVID-19. I had set up a place for us to quarantine in Canada, not in South Africa. We were totally unprepared, with no transport, and no place to stay. We were completely dependent on God. We discovered our health status while sitting at an outdoor table at a restaurant. We

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OASIS, continued

needed negative PCR results to fly to Canada, but the emails and text rang instead as “COVID-19 detected.” Oops! Our host, Kevin, and his friend Andrea were incredibly kind. They both offered us refuge!

We chose to stay at Kevin’s – a lovely old mountain house in Brandwacht, away from Worcester, and not even at a deliverable address. After living in central Worcester for 16 months, this was paradise. It truly became an oasis. We had the house to ourselves. Kind people brought us medications and groceries. Tony had very few symptoms, while I got hit with the cold from hell. It brought sinus pain, extreme congestion, sore throat, intermittent fever and chills, loss of smell, intense brain fog and vertigo. After more than two weeks, most of the symptoms disappeared, but some remained. During this time, Tony caught up on writing and website work. I finally got to write, but did not have the energy to draw.

I prayed, wrote, and asked the Lord about this time. Why was it so difficult to get another flight, even through our professional travel agent? Yes, we knew that some air crews had tested positive and had to quarantine. But surely that’s not the case on all flights? It was like South Africa didn’t want to let go of us. We were concerned about overstaying our welcome with our friend.

I discerned that God was keeping

us in South Africa a little longer just to rest, receive and enjoy the oasis. We weren’t burned out, but we were in recovery. Tony needed rest before going for more treatment, something that he wasn’t looking forward to. In this delay, we had a little pause to breathe and get as well as we could. I had an impression of us travelling with camels. When camels get thirsty, they drink a lot of water, taking a long time. We also need to stop and drink the living water, during these times of oasis.

Kevin’s place in South Africa is filled with the peace of God, the relative quiet of nature, and the call to rest and receive. One of the scriptures that impacted me in the 90s was Isaiah 30:15: “This is what the Sovereign Lord, the Holy One of Israel says: ‘In repentance and rest is your salvation, in quietness and trust is your strength.’” This is insightful during an oasis pause. The pause is not an accident, or like the little circle on your iPad telling you that your video is *STILL* buffering. This is intentional. So, pause. Consider the heavens, and the God who made heaven and earth.

The pause is a way of reflecting on the Sabbath, as Exodus 20:8 commands (“remember the Sabbath and keep it holy.”) The Sabbath is an intentional pause; a space set apart to focus on God and his many wonderful character traits. It is a space to focus on relationship with Him. We need to stop our frenetic running in circles, even for a moment.

Tony and I were forced to stop our activities in times of illness, but although I often took time for soaking prayer, it wasn’t enough. Even when I had cancer, I slowed down and retired from certain ministry, but was still frenetically drawing. Then we were both hit with COVID-19. That hit me hard at first, but during recovery I became grateful for each day and the graciousness of our host.

We finally left South Africa on January 17, 2022. In Canada we quarantined for an additional two weeks, which gave us time to acclimatize from summer to winter, across seven time zones and in the opposite hemisphere. We began to let go of our favourite South African customs and rediscovered Canadian ones. All cultures have beautiful aspects that we can champion. To pause and reflect in quarantine is a good thing. To pause and remember is important.

Many years ago, Rev. John Gladstone of Yorkminster Park Baptist Church in Toronto said the most used verb in the Old Testament was *zachar*, which means “remember.” *Zachar* happens to be my maiden name. To remember is to pause and reflect on something significant. Joshua spoke over a memorial cairn that honoured the Israelites’ journey into the Promised Land (4:21-22). The stones were a reminder of the time when “Israel crossed the Jordan on dry ground.” This was the second such dry crossing,

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Taste and See...

From the Editor

Alison Stortz

Fall is harvest season; a busy season. It's a time of re-focusing and "getting back to business" after the summer break. It is also the season of Thanksgiving - an opportunity to pause and reflect on how God has shaped my life, and the many daily blessings I receive, especially those I am often too busy to fully appreciate. Pausing can take as much energy as doing. As Laurie-Ann Cople points out, stopping at an oasis is work. It's an action. A choice. Similarly, thankfulness is not a passive state.

The call in Psalm 46:10 to "be still, and know that I am God," is the same "be still," that Jesus said to the storm threatening the disciples on the sea of Galilee (Mk 4:39) - stop what you are doing. The knowing part is also active: acknowledge, surrender, remember and reflect. Like the world of this psalm, our present state - personally, nationally, globally - is far from perfect, or particularly joyful. People are stressed. The world is in turmoil. The church is in turmoil. But God was, is, and always will be, "our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble." It's our job to pause, remember, and be thankful.

In this issue, we give thanks to God for His blessings: for the journeys that have brought us to where we are, for the blessings of today, and the opportunities of tomorrow.

Happy Thanksgiving! I look forward to hearing from you.

Alison ☺

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Introducing... Rev. David Matthews

I've been around the world sharing the good news of Jesus Christ in many contexts and cultures as a missionary with *Youth with a Mission*, and now I lead a Church in Mississauga, Ontario. I've done this all because I believe in the message of the Bible, and the one that it points us to. The Bible to me is THE revelation of the character of God and through it we are invited to know the living God. The Bible is good news because God is ALIVE and ACTIVE. The Gospel message is about bringing LIFE.

I gave my life to Jesus and to his call because I saw the Spirit of God move in my life. I've had opportunities to walk away and choose my own path, but I've

chosen to follow Jesus' way because I've witnessed it leading to life. I've known people healed. I've seen lives transformed.

The mission of the Church is to spread the good news of Jesus Christ. My hope is to equip those who call themselves followers of Jesus with the ability to do that. My goal is to help people see his leading in their lives, to hear his voice, to recognize what he has done and to be able to express to others God's impact and saving grace in their lives.

Revelation says we will overcome the enemy by the blood of the lamb and the word of our testimony. If all

of God's people keep silent due to either inability, ignorance of God's work in their life, or fear of being embarrassed, how will the Church ever succeed in its call?

I have recently had a daughter with my lovely wife, and this has brought new joy, as well as a new manifestation of the importance of building God's kingdom on Earth as it is in heaven.



OASIS, continued

the first one being the Red Sea. Both were of divine origin. The monument was a call to remember.

The Psalms often reflect on Israel's escape from Egypt, likely because people easily forget their origins, heritage and the love of God when they are focused on themselves. When we are reminded who God is and what He has done for us, we can choose to linger, and encounter the living God. Some people run in fear, some shake their fist in self-importance. They have that choice; to love God is something that you willfully, deliberately do. This is like the "selah" pause that

is mentioned again and again in the Psalms.

When we reflect on scripture, we absorb the words into our hearts. The Holy Spirit uses the words of scripture to capture our hearts, as He fills us with love. We can only receive when we pause, submit, or surrender. Coming to the end of self-effort is a good thing. Our identity is not in what we do, but in who we belong to: God. I'm a beloved child of God, and that is enough. It took me long enough to get to that place. I will never forget that journey. But you need to stop at the oasis and be refreshed, especially between assignments.

Lord, thank you that you are there for us when we are in a transition oasis. We choose to receive and learn from this little pause. We are thankful that you were there for us in the past. You are in our present, and you are in our future. We won't run away, but rather, run into your arms.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

Laurie-Ann and Tony Copple, former Iris Missionaries in Worcester, South Africa, now live in Toronto, ON. Find more on her website: www.waystogrowingod.org.

Embracing Spirit and Church

The Very Rev. Dr. Donald P. Richmond

As I was driving the other day, an unusual name caught my attention. Intrigued, I began to dissect and analyze the two-part word. One part was obvious: *kirk* means church. The other part, less obvious, seemed to suggest a rejection of offspring. As such, the word seemed to indicate a church that rejects its offspring. Of course, within the context that this word was publicly displayed, it made no sense. There was no church, and there were no offspring to which this name made reference. But the word reinforced a perspective that I have embraced for many years: except in very precise and nuanced ways, the Church is not entirely “one, holy, catholic and apostolic” and, as such, often rejects its legitimate offspring. And, more often than we would care to admit, we have created artificial (exaggerated or unnecessary) barriers that marginalize many of our brothers and sisters.

A brief examination of Church history clearly demonstrates this practice. To cite just one example, the Coptic Orthodox Church was anathematized for over a millennia because Western Christians asserted that some of their ideas were heretical. However, when examined more carefully, the Coptic Orthodox Church was not heretical at all, but rather had issues with imperial and imperious uses of language and the excessive baggage of culture and country with which Western uses of language were laden. This re-

mains a problem, although cultures and politics have considerably shifted.

Language *remains* an extremely difficult issue, as do the cultures from which our understanding of Christianity has emerged, was shaped, and within which we (often blindly) reside. Put more bluntly, we are Western inheritors of an Eastern Church who, by insisting upon our own structures and systems, have created and advanced division within the Body of Jesus Christ. Our movement away from the biblical Canon into the excesses of Councils, Creeds, and Confessions has complicated and confused the simple gospel of Jesus Christ and, thereby, created boundaries where none, in Christ by the Holy Spirit, exist.

Recently I was privileged to attend a Roman Catholic Confirmation of numerous young people. During this Rite, at least two things deeply impressed me. First, I was impressed by the liturgical similarities between Roman Catholic, Anglican, Episcopal and Lutheran practices of Confirmation. Second was the Homily. The speaker, the appointed representative of the bishop, preached an Evangelical message that would have been welcome in any of the denominations noted above. And yet we remain divided, all too frequently over issues that really do not matter.

To be sure, every church falls

short of the glory of God. We are not perfect, and in this life may never be – except, I pray, for perfection in love. But let’s be clear and honest: we are *one* only in as much as we are in God through Jesus Christ by the Holy Spirit. A “spiritual” communion is what we actually enjoy. We are *holy* only in our calling. The call to sanctity will only be seen and experienced as we embrace mercy and exercise love, and we are often devoid of the mercy and love to which we aspire. We are *catholic* only in our charismatically-inspired canonical commitments. Catholicity is only catholic as far as we are truly “universal,” and as we carefully nuance our understanding of having a pure Church. This must be established upon what is sure, and thus received and accepted by all, always and everywhere. We are *apostolic* only in our conformity to apostolic priorities, principles and practices as found in the Acts 2:42-46 experience: apostolic preaching, prayer, fellowship, the breaking of bread within a common life. Although this analysis is rather simplistic, it is also spiritually sound.

Over the past decade, and likely more, I have devoted a great deal of attention to the question of what makes the Church the Church. What truly makes us *one, holy, catholic* and *apostolic*? And, related to this, what prevents us from being what God has

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called, challenged and commissioned us to be and become? My conclusion is that, apart from sin, frailty and human failure, we have elevated institution above inspiration, structure above Spirit, program above Paraclete, Confessions above Christ-affirming charismata.

The Apostles' Creed appropriately unites four priorities, which we have often neglected: the *Holy Spirit*, the *holy catholic church*, the *communion of saints* and the *forgiveness of sins*. Each contributes to our understanding of an ecumenism that is reasonable and responsible.

THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit, the third Person of the One, Holy, Blessed and Glorious Trinity, has been active, is active, will continue to be active, and is actively seeking people who wish to serve God in Christ *in both Spirit and in truth*. As a member of this Trinity, this One in Three, this Unity in Diversity, the Holy Spirit moves upon the turbid waters of our own lives in order to create cosmos from chaos, a unity amid diversity. That is, the Holy Spirit actively seeks to move and motivate us toward a unity amid diversity that is evidenced within the Holy Trinity. He is acting to make us "like God," who is a Unity in Diversity.

This means that both our diversity and our unity must equally be honored and affirmed. Luke

Timothy Johnson, in Scripture and Discernment: Decision Making and the Church (Abingdon Press, 1996), contextualizes our own unity amid diversity when he rightly suggests that the four Gospels themselves assert a diversity of experience and expression centered upon the unifying gospel who is Jesus Christ. Put differ-



ently, the Church, I believe under the influence of the Holy Spirit, decided against having only one gospel narrative in favor of having four, representing both a unity of vision within a diversity of community understandings and expressions. Johnson's text drives this home with inspirational, and yet at times troubling, clarity.

Saint Paul also affirms this orientation when, while clearly centering himself within gospel unity (1Cor. 15:1-8), also asserts that we are members of a diverse body

where each part is unique and has a role to fulfill. We share diversity while we celebrate having one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is over all, through all and in all (Eph. 4). This is accomplished through the exercise of love (Gal. 5:14), which exhibits the fruit of the Holy Spirit (Gal. 5:22-25). Similarly, Saint John affirms this emphasis in his three letters and, quite provocatively, in the book of Revelation, where a returning to our first love is commanded. As such, any lack of concrete unity is rooted in an unwholesome imbalance - either asserting too much emphasis upon unity or too much emphasis upon diversity.

Although C. S. Lewis is correct in his *Latin Letters* about people being often separated by their virtues and not by their vices (in his illustration, Tyndale and More), it is equally true that it is our vices (the fruits of the flesh in Galatians 5) that often keep us from enjoying unity without exacting unanimity. So, what are we to do? What perspective must we embrace in order to move more productively forward?

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

Being raised and educated Roman Catholic, commissioned Lutheran, ordained Anglican (and Lutheran), and serving with more than a half-dozen different denominations, gives me a unique perspective. I have enjoyed real

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fellowship, Spirit-inspired fellowship, with those whose perspectives are far different than my own. FAR different! This experience is so pronounced that I have said, "I belong everywhere and I belong nowhere." I fit and I do not fit.

One of my chief criticisms of certain Catholic bodies is that, to varying degrees in various denominations, they are prone to exaggeration. They assert and expect far too much, while claiming to affirm a Bible-based frame of reference, demanding a unity that really does not come from concord or move toward concord. Their perspectives are often institutional and not inspirational although, properly understood, the institution of the Church is God's idea. Some Catholic groups affirm any Trinitarian Baptism, and thus affirm us as "brothers and sisters in Christ," but absolutely refuse to feed us at the Altar. In my opinion, they (and we) focus far too much on punctuation and neglect the Paraclete. We want institutional agreement with our own self-determined "jot and tittle" and, upon doing so, neglect and reject our brothers and sisters who are genuinely "in Christ," but express and exist within reasonable divergent opinions.

The gospels, Saint Paul and Saint John all assert the essentials, what is necessary. But let me take this one step further. Saint Vincent of Lerins tells us that the Catholic faith is that which is believed by all, everywhere and always. If we

are rigorously honest, we must admit that these three vistas of faith present a very small window of universal agreement and commitment. In fact, it might be said that if we want to be a Catholic of this sort, we should all become Messianic Jews. I, for one, would not entirely reject such an idea. Christianity is decidedly and devotedly Jewish, and the Church would be far better off if we embraced our roots. This said, however, the first Jerusalem Council extended this understanding of Covenant and, consequently, the "all, everywhere and always" also needs expansion. For good or for ill, the three vistas of faith seem to embrace (at best) what we later refer to as the Lambeth Quadrilateral.

Will only overt secularist persecution of the Church and martyrdom of its people put an end to our infernal inclination to isolation? I certainly hope not, but I think history does not support my hope. In short, *catholic*, in the best sense of the word, is where God in Jesus Christ is, where the Spirit moves, where the essentials of belief and behavior are upheld, not all Creeds, Councils, Confessions and other dysfunctional fences (temporal artifices?) we all-too-often build in order to make us feel safe.

THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS

I would suggest, as our divisions also suggest, that all of our "Christian" baggage keeps us on

the other side of the Jordan where, sadly, we all dwell on the hungry edges of the Promised Land. Now, of equal sadness, we "bite and devour" one another, something which both Saint Paul and Saint James loudly denounce.

Creating communion, creating and sustaining communion in God by Christ through the Holy Spirit, is what the Gospel is all about. Lest this sound a bit self-centered, or far too "toleration" oriented, let me state this more clearly: the church abides in God only in so far as we seek to abide in a community that embraces unity in diversity. If we are to be "like God," we must embrace our unity in diversity. If being a truly catholic Church means "here comes everybody," we must be extremely careful about drawing lines and building walls when and where they need not exist.

But, of course, this requires **SAINTS!**

And this is both our problem and our solution. Leon Bloy once wrote that the greatest sorrow is not to be a saint. I want to be a saint. I have always wanted to be a saint. And, if you are a follower of Jesus Christ, you also want to be a saint. The inclination is planted within us by God. If we have no hunger for holiness, we should question whether the Holy Spirit lives within and among us.

But I am not a saint. We are not

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Thoughts from my Bay: Bearing Much Fruit

Lois Martin

The nice part about being a senior is you get to go on bus day-tours. Recently, our group visited the Over the Hill Orchard, just north of our city in the beautiful Wascona Hills.

While orchards flourish across Canada, in the Annapolis Valley in NS, Niagara ON, the Okanagan Valley in BC, and other gentle climates, they are not known to survive on the Prairies. Our harsh



environment of wind and extreme temperatures (from 40C above to 40C below) does not provide a welcome home for delicate fruit trees. However, the Agriculture Department at the University of Saskatchewan has developed hardy strains of fruit trees that will

survive our prairie landscape. And so we, too, can have cherry trees, apples, plums, pears and apricots. Imagine that!

Our tour group enjoyed this trip. We ate cherry pie and ice cream. We sampled the tasty fruit wines. We gazed across the lovely valley, admired the beautiful green hills, sat outside to visit in the fresh air, and went home declaring it had been a wonderful day.

Sometimes, as Christians, we encounter harsh environments, too. Life often brings unexpected challenges, which we need to face. Thanks be to God, we have the Holy Spirit's help. I was reminded of that in my reading from the Our Daily Bread devotional: "As the Holy Spirit operates in our lives, He generates His fruit." Yes! The Spirit provides us with life-sustaining fruit (Gal. 5:22), and we can survive!

Lord, help us to bear much fruit. Amen.

Lois Martin attends St. Mary the Virgin Anglican Church in Regina, SK.

CHURCH, continued

saints. We fail. We sin. At the very best, therefore, we can only hope and pray and labor for (returning to Lewis' *Latin Letters*) divisions that are rooted in virtues and not in vices. Let us hope. We must strive to be saints who, according to the unfolding of the sequence of the Beatitudes (Matt. 5:1-12), are experts in the exercise of mercy. Or, as I like to say, "the road from the hunger for holiness to the realization of heart-purity always passes through the exercise of mercy." Read the text. That's what it says. As such, saints are those who exercise mercy, not

those who must *always* draw and enforce boundaries, although boundaries are sometimes important. If we want a Christian "society," we must become merciful saints. Here, in our pronounced brokenness, is true communion that is exercised through...

THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS

How are we to attain this unity in diversity? In fact, we cannot attain or achieve anything. Unity in diversity is a gift - a gift that is only opened and enjoyed when all of the ribbons and bows and excess

of wrapping are disposed of and we get down to the gift of God in Christ by the Holy Spirit. And here is love. And here is mercy. And it is here where we must abide, with Christ and each other, as the great reverberating echo of the Great Amen.

Forgiveness is our daily cross. We hang, all of us, recipients of the Divine Mercy - together.

Donald P. Richmond, DD, a widely published author and illustrator, is an Anglican Priest serving in the USA.

NEW BOARD MEMBER

You will note elsewhere in this issue that we have a new ARM Canada board member, The Rev. David Matthews. David is the Incumbent at St. Thomas à Becket in Mississauga, Ontario. I first met David in the Diocese of Calgary twenty-plus years ago, when we were involved with Teens Encounter Christ. As he wrote in his introduction, he has seen the Spirit of God move in his life. He wants everyone else to see the Holy Spirit moving in theirs, too. He shares our ARM Canada vision and hope for all Christians, and especially Anglicans, to be even more delightfully and obviously filled with the Holy Spirit.

David Matthews and Daniel Joseph, our two newest (and youngest) board members, bring a welcome new energy, generational flavour and point of view into our stalwart, albeit aging, little band of saints. Please pray for them and that, together, we will please God as the ARM Canada teaching and message goes beyond just plausible words of wisdom to unmistakable demonstrations of the Spirit and power (1Cor. 2:4).

OFFERING ENVELOPES

Until now, for your convenience, each issue of *Taste and See...* has come complete with an addressed offering envelope. We've appreciated the generosity and support

you've expressed as you've filled them and sent them in. Your prayers and financial support have made it possible for us to engage in our ministry work thus far, and without it we will not be able to continue.

Unfortunately, the inflation we've all been experiencing these days has made itself known to us in the form of a substantial increase to the cost of having these envelopes printed. Next year, unless the situation changes dramatically, we will be forced to discontinue the practice. We hope those of you who are still supporting us by mail will consider using your own envelope to continue blessing us. You'll find our office address in the editorial information section on page 3, and also on the back of each magazine in the section titled, "How to Subscribe to *Taste and See...*". You can also renew your subscriptions and support us financially by sending an e-transfer to arm@armcanada.org, or donate online using PayPal or Canada Helps through our website: www.armcanada.org.

Thank you and God bless you!

LAMBETH and EMBER DAYS

As I write this, the Lambeth Conference is just beginning. By the time you read this, it will all be over by a month or so. Unless The LORD has intervened, I suspect we are still a fractured communion — maybe even more so.

Therefore, the Fall Holy Cross Ember Days coming up on Wednesday, September 21, Friday, September 23 and Saturday, September 24 will be especially important opportunities for solemn fasting and prayer. The Anglican Church of Canada Online Lectionary page notes the following:

The Ember Days of solemn prayer are traditionally kept at the turn of the four seasons (Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday after Advent III, Lent I, the Day of Pentecost, and Holy Cross Day). Over time Ember Days came to be associated almost entirely with solemn prayer for ordinands. The Ember Days, like Rogation Days, have been de-emphasized in liturgical revision since the 1970s, but there seems to be a revived sense of their pastoral usefulness. They can be helpful in engaging the church in intentional and deep prayer for its whole ministry: for the mission of the Church, for the ministry of the Church, for peace, and for the unity of the church.

"Engaging the church in intentional and deep prayer for its whole ministry," sounds about right. You'll find the appropriate readings and prayers in *The Book of Common Prayer* on pages 210 and 245, in *The Book of Alternative Services* on page 395, and at <http://lectionary.anglican.ca> (the

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“FAS” you see there stands for *For All the Saints*, a Canadian Anglican publication which provides notes, readings and prayers for Saints Days in the Church calendar).

Here’s an adaptation of the Prayer For General, Provincial, or Diocesan Synods in *The Book of Common Prayer* (p42):

Almighty and everlasting God, by your Holy Spirit you presided in the Council of the blessed Apostles, and you promised, through your Son Jesus Christ, to be with your Church to the end of the world: ...Save us from all error, ignorance, pride, and prejudice; and of your great mercy direct, sanctify, and govern us in our work, by the mighty power of the Holy Spirit; that the order and discipline of your Church may be restored and maintained, and that the Gospel of Christ may be truly preached, truly received, and truly followed in all places, breaking down the kingdom of sin, Satan, and death; till all your scattered sheep, being gathered into one fold, become partakers of everlasting life; through the merits and death of Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.



A good prayer for our church, on Ember or any other days.

HOLY GHOST COLLECTS COMING UP

As we hope and pray for more of The LORD and his life-giving Spirit, here are some Collects to anticipate and pray into over the next few weeks:

Sunday, September 25, 2022

Grant, O merciful God, that your Church, being gathered by your Holy Spirit into one, may show forth your power among all peoples, to the glory of your name; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

Gathered into one so God’s power may be shown forth! Amen!!

Sunday, October 9, 2022: Harvest Thanksgiving

Almighty God, in our baptism you adopted us for your own.

Quicken, we pray, your Spirit within us, that we, being renewed both in body and mind, may worship you in sincerity and truth; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns

with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

Enliven and galvanize our worship, LORD, please!

Sunday, October 23, 2022

Lord God our redeemer, who heard the cry of your people and sent your servant Moses to lead them out of slavery, free us from the tyranny of sin and death, and by the leading of your Spirit bring us to our promised land; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

Then we will enjoy that lovely passage from Joel:

And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions. Even on the male and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit. (Joel 2:28-29)

Prophecy, dreams and visions. Female and male. All ages. With the Holy Spirit’s leading.

Yes, please, God!

Gene+

What the Pentecostals Taught Me

Rev. Jonathan Turtle

Pentecostals have taught me a lot. You see, despite being born to a Presbyterian father from Belfast and a Roman Catholic mother from Dublin, being baptized in the Church of Ireland (a compromise?!), and currently serving as a priest in the Anglican Church of Canada, I spent those crucial and formative teenage years (and then some) in the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada (PAOC).

To be honest, for much of my 20s I was downright angsty with the faith of my youth. The language of “exvangelical” didn’t exist then, but yeah. However, during my studies at Wycliffe College at the University of Toronto, in fellowship with some tremendous professors and classmates and with my wife’s enduring patience, I discovered the Great Tradition. It saved me.

Fast forward one decade and I am finding that the longer I serve within the rubble of Anglicanism in the West, the more important some of those gifts I acquired during my foray into Pentecostalism become, and the more I am able to see that part of my pilgrimage as a tremendous blessing and gift. And the more I come to realize that those gifts are quite at home in the Great Tradition.

This could be a much longer list, but for the sake of brevity here are three of the most important things that I have learned from

Pentecostalism. I do not foresee a renewal of Anglican faith and identity in the West apart from these.

1) A personal and intimate knowledge and experience of God is available to believers through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

Pentecostalism is based on the premise that one can know and experience God personally and intimately. This knowing involves the intellect, but it is not primarily intellectual; in fact, sometimes the role of the intellect can be obscured or even minimized. The point is that there is something more important than a rigorous, seemingly cold and disconnected, intellectual knowledge of God; and that is a personal, warm, and intimate experience of God.

And this experience is available to each and every believer. God knows my name and the number of hairs on my head. He knows me better even than I know myself, and yet he loves me, as if I were the only person in the whole wide world. And I – even I! – can know his kindness and mercy and have a relationship with him as I would any other friend, but even more so.

This closeness with God is a gift made available to believers by the Holy Spirit, who has been poured into our hearts. For Pentecostals,

this one-time baptism of the Holy Spirit works itself out in a more regular infilling of the Holy Spirit, a new reality that is available to us each and every day and ought to be pursued vigorously and with faith. It is true that this has, at times, been a matter of some controversy even within Pentecostal circles. For example, is the gift of tongues the initial evidence of Spirit baptism, or merely the initial physical evidence? In 2012, I was denied ordination with PAOC because of a disagreement on just this point.

On the other hand, I remember a conversation with a friend and colleague many years ago in which he joked that Anglicans are functionally binitarian (rather than trinitarian). We’re good with the Father and the Son, but not quite sure what to make of the Holy Spirit. I think he was onto something.

At any rate, an important and developing aspect of my own ministry is to remind people of the abiding and indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit. He is to be worshipped and glorified along with the Father and the Son. He is the Lord, the giver of life, who gives good gifts to the Church and brings the truth of the gospel to fruition in believers. He equips and animates believers to bear witness to the crucified and risen Jesus in the world. Apart from

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him we have no life at all. But we are never apart from him.

Anglicans know, or ought to, that the Holy Spirit is given to us in the sacrament of baptism. Or so we pray: “Give thy Holy Spirit to this Child, That he may be born again, And be made an heir of everlasting salvation” (Canadian BCP, 525). Born again. That’s the language of the prayer book!

At the same time, the Holy Spirit is the gift that keeps on giving.

Roman Catholic theologian Mary Healy says that to be baptized in the Holy Spirit is, “to come alive to the grace received in sacramental baptism.” I quite like that way of putting it. In other words, the grace received in baptism can (and must!) be relied

upon continually. Each day we may (and should!) ask him to fill us up and flow through us, sustaining us as sap does a tree. What life and vigor can we have apart from this?

2) Believers are called to holiness of life.

Sunday morning, Sunday evening, and Wednesday evening. Youth group, youth rallies, and summer camp. There was hardly a gathering that did not include a call to repentance and faith. Backslid-

ing. The altar call. If you know, you know. Let’s just say that, in those days, I got saved a lot.

The goal was holiness of life, and any sin that inhibited this was to be dealt with as soon as possible. Yes, these altar calls were sometimes accompanied by emotive music and manipulative preaching. Nevertheless, the Holy Spirit was at work, convicting me (and others, evidently) of my own personal sin and the need to confess it.



It is true that this sort of thing can be weaponized and used to shame people and weigh them down with burdens that are impossible to carry. But we needn’t throw out the good with the bad. Sin is real. Sin has real consequences. We all sin. And yet it is possible, with the help and grace of the Holy Spirit, to find sin less appealing and to sin less. Grace gives our lives a new orientation, and opens us up to a new moral horizon that had previously been unimaginable to us.

So, on the one hand, don’t minimize, obscure, or deny your sin. This benefits no one, least of all you. Jesus loves sinners so much that he died for them. When you minimize your sin, you minimize the extent to which you can know the joy of forgiveness. On the other hand, flee from sin and avoid it. The Holy Spirit wants to make you holy. That means more than not sinning, but it doesn’t mean less. St. Bernard of Clairvaux put it better than I: “A saint is not someone who never sins, but one who sins less and less frequently and gets up more and more quickly.”

Of course, this is written into the DNA of Anglicanism. Morning and Evening Prayer, the Litany and Supplication, Holy Communion, the propers of the church year, the Psalter, baptism, the Catechism, Confirmation, matrimony, Thanksgiving after Child-Birth, Ministry to the Sick, Burial of the Dead – good luck finding a page of the prayer book that doesn’t also contain a call to turn to Jesus Christ, who “has brought us out of error into truth, out of sin into righteousness, out of death into life.” This is the gift and vocation of holiness that encompasses the span of our life from beginning to end.

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3) Enthusiasm in worship is good, actually.

Worship in Pentecostalism tends to be marked by enthusiasm and energy. Yes, this can vary from church to church, but as a general rule it holds. In my home church, it was not uncommon to see people singing along, eyes closed and hands raised. Another church I attended in my 20s had three-hour long services with people dancing in the aisles. Worship is a matter of the heart, as well as (if not more than) the mind. Just look at how many popular worship songs from the 1990s mention the words “heart,” “love,” and so on.

I am not suggesting that Anglicans should start dancing in the aisles – Lord knows we can hardly clap on beat – but it is not difficult to see how Anglicans can be prone to erring in the opposite direction. After all, we have a prayer book. This can give the impression that worship is primarily about reading words on a page. And, to be fair, there will be seasons when that is all we can offer, and that is more than enough of a mustard seed for God to work with.

Better yet – allow the prayers of the liturgy to work themselves into our hearts and souls so that they become, truly, our own prayers. The prayer book exists to orient our hearts and minds toward this reality, and open us up to the grace of God in a way that touches us personally and transformatively. Only then can

we rightly offer our own sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, let alone with enthusiasm.

To worship with enthusiasm isn’t necessarily to be swinging from the chandeliers, nor does it entail a particular physical posture or action. Indeed, some of the more charismatic expressions of worship can be distracting, if not mortifying, for others. Rather, to worship with enthusiasm, as I am using the phrase, is to pour your heart out to the living God. To bear your soul to him. To hold nothing back. All of which can be done (or not) in silence.

To worship with enthusiasm is, “to enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise! To give thanks to him and bless his name!” (Ps. 100:4) It is to recognize in God the desire of your soul (Ps. 42:1), indeed the one who is your true home: “O how lovely are thy dwellings, thou Lord of hosts! My soul hath a desire and longing to enter into the courts of the Lord: my heart and my flesh rejoice in the living God” (Ps. 84:1-2).

For goodness’ sake, the daily office, which it could be argued is the backbone of Anglican spirituality, practically kicks off with this: “O come, let us sing unto the Lord: let us heartily rejoice in the strength of our salvation. Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and show ourselves glad in him with psalms” (Ps. 95).

It is good to let your heart be

strangely warmed in worship! To sing with vigor like you mean it, to pray the words of the liturgy rather than merely read them. Heartily rejoice!

Intimacy with God, holiness of life, and enthusiasm in worship: three lessons Anglicans in the West can learn from Pentecostalism. And the beauty is that none of this is ultimately foreign to Anglicanism. It’s all right there in the prayer book!

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Pentecost in the Pentateuch: Joshua

Rev. Canon Gene Packwood

As we come to the close of our look at Pentecost in the Pentateuch, it is instructive to look at the “career path” of Joshua. He first appears, seemingly out of nowhere, when Moses tasks him with choosing some men and going out to fight the Amalekites, which he did successfully (Ex. 17:9-13). In the seven chapters that follow, Joshua is promoted to be Moses’ assistant (Ex. 24:13). Then in Numbers, Joshua and Caleb were the only two of the twelve men chosen to spy out the land of Canaan who didn’t lose their nerve, and the only two of that group who God allowed to live long enough to enter the promised land.

In Numbers 27:18, we find the last occurrence of the word *Spirit* with a capital S in the Pentateuch: So the Lord said to Moses, “Take Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is the Spirit, and lay your

hand on him.” And so Joshua was promoted again from Assistant to Successor.

In this last occurrence of *Spirit*, I’ve discovered a delightful thing about Joshua. The word translated as Spirit with a capital S in the Old Testament is usually the Hebrew word *ruach*, which means breath, wind, spirit. But for this occurrence, the *Hebrew-Aramaic Dictionary of the New American Standard Exhaustive Concordance* (Updated Edition) in my Logos Bible app tells me that, in this case, it is related to the word, *riach*, which means and is rendered as follows: to smell, perceive odor;—accept(1), delight(2), scents(1), smell(3), smelled(2), touches(1), use as perfume(1).

In other words, not only was Joshua a fitting successor to Moses as a gifted and anointed leader, he must have had a sweet

smell in the Spirit about him. I don’t think it is stretching things too far to say he was a man who, even then, must have been being led in triumphal procession (think of Jericho) as he spread the fragrance of the knowledge of The LORD (think of Jesus) everywhere (2Cor. 2:14). There are people in the world who spread such a fragrance still. Not a bad example to which Spirit-filled Christians might aspire. So...

Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go. (Joshua 1:9)

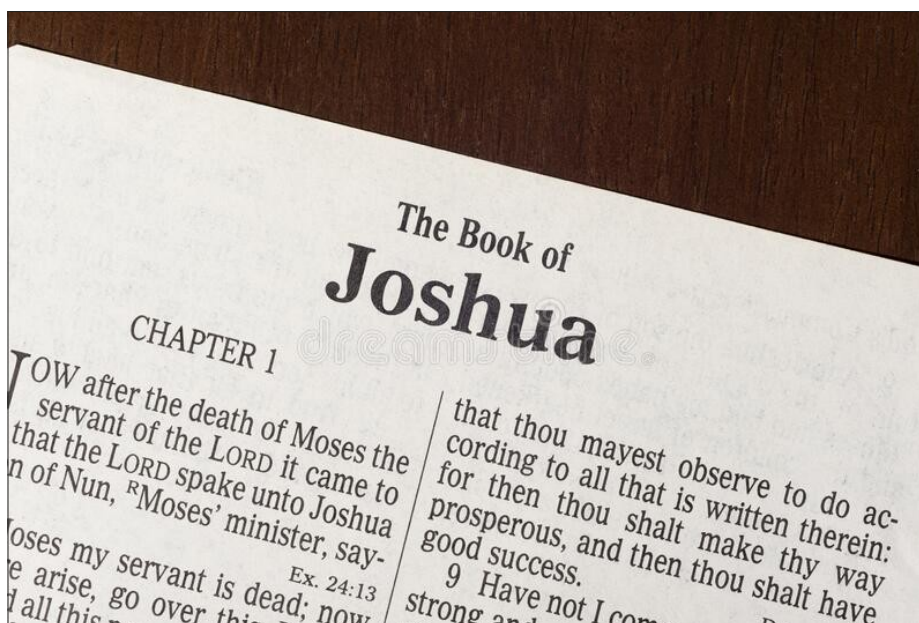
Another thing about Joshua: here is a Biblical example of how to choose and commission Christian leaders. Before laying hands on them and commissioning them:

- Look for signs that the Holy Spirit is in them.
- Look for active gifts (see 1Cor. 12:7-11, Rom. 12:6-8 and Eph. 4:11-13).
- Look for the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23) to be in evidence.

There are two more references to the spirit in the Pentateuch, both rendered without a capital S.

The first is when Moses was asking permission to pass through Heshbon: “But Sihon the king of Heshbon would not let us pass by him, for the Lord your God hard-

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PENTATEUCH, continued

ened his spirit and made his heart obstinate, that he might give him into your hand, as he is this day.” (Deut. 2:30)

Spirits can be hardened. The Lord hardened Sihon’s spirit (*ruach*) for a purpose. The Lord is able to harden ours if he wishes (Rom. 9:18). The Spirit can also be resisted (Acts 7:51) and ignored. Psalm 52, verses 10 to 12 are a good prayer for keeping our spirits open, soft and available:

Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and renew a right spirit (*ruach*) within me.

Cast me not away from your presence,
and take not your Holy Spirit (*ruach*) from me.

Restore to me the joy of your salvation,
and uphold me with a willing spirit (*ruach*).

The second refers to Joshua, so let’s give him the last word: “And Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit (*ruach*) of wisdom, for Moses had laid his hands on him. So the people of Israel obeyed him and did as the Lord had commanded Moses.” (Deut. 34:9)

To be filled with the Holy Spirit and of faith, to be earnestly desiring the Gifts of the Spirit, especially that we may prophesy (1Cor. 14:1), is a Christian good. Worth striving for. After all, as St. Paul wrote in one of his

“splendid outbursts” to the Ephesians:

Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ. (Eph. 5:15-21)

All together now!!

Gene+

Gene Packwood blogs at GENERALities www.kiwirev.blogspot.ca and can be found on Facebook and Twitter (@kiwirev).

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