

## Editor's Notes

Part of the mission of the *Anglican Theological Review* is to foster learned conversations concerning important matters facing Christ's church in our time. This issue of the *ATR* touches on a number of these matters directly and indirectly.

In the first essay, **Scott MacDougall** examines the proposed Anglican Covenant in light of what we look toward in hope and the way in which that eschatology shapes our understanding of the church in its current life in many, often quite different contexts. *Conflict, Communion and Hope*, the 2008 report of the Inter-Anglican Theological and Doctrinal Commission, connects ecclesiology and eschatology quite directly. But, MacDougall argues, this connection is not adequately made in either the *Windsor Report* (2004) or the most recent iteration of the Anglican Covenant (2009) that is being considered now in provincial synods around the world. The Covenant highlights five types of relationship—confessional, contractual, conservative (or conservatory), centralizing, and punitive—and is ambivalent about each of them. Incorporating “anticipated eschatology” into the debate on the nature of ecclesial communion highlights five other aspects of relationship: tensiveness, openness, risk, trust, and hope. This lens then shifts the focus to “the arduous task of engaging in the untidy, contentious, and costly—yet open, trusting, and joyful—relationality that is the hallmark and gift of Anglican Communion ecclesiology.”

The second essay examines the ecclesiology that is the foundation of *Holy Women, Holy Men*. **Daniel E. Joslyn-Siemiatkoski** and **Ruth A. Meyers** examine how this new liturgical resource reflects the focus on baptism of the 1979 *Book of Common Prayer*, which puts to the fore the fundamental theological affirmation that all baptized Christians are part of the company of saints. *Holy Women, Holy Men* manifests this theology through its inclusion of individuals from all walks of life, many of whom may be unknown to most Episcopalians. Thereby it also highlights the innumerable ways in which even those not necessarily considered “heroes of the faith” live holy lives—ways that “ordinary folk” may find inspiring. In its abundance of commemorations, *Holy Women, Holy Men* stands in line with the Anglican

claim that “holiness . . . does not come as a separate gift of the Holy Spirit that only a few may attain, but rather is an implicit quality of all the people of God.”

**Eugene R. Schlesinger** takes up the ethically and pastorally thorny matter of abortion in his response to an earlier *ATR* article, “The Breath of Life: Christian Perspectives on Conception and Ensoulment” (Spring 2010). In their article Lindsey Disney and Larry Poston reclaimed the idea of “ensoulment” as a key theological marker of the beginning of properly human life, while noting that “Christians historically have been characterized by a marked lack of unity concerning the teachings of the Bible and tradition” on matters related to human reproductivity. Schlesinger’s article responds by proposing a “eucharistic account of the body as indefinable and ungraspable,” thus bypassing the contested question of identifying a single clinical moment at which point human life begins. This approach is “oriented away from the practice of abortion” while not, Schlesinger argues, impinging upon or coercing conscience. Schlesinger holds out the hope that the practice of and reflection on the Eucharist focuses us on what is beyond this fraught debate to a shared future of “joyful unity.”

In the next article, **Owen C. Thomas** revisits Søren Kierkegaard’s critique of the established church in his *Attack upon “Christendom.”* Though there are notable differences between the Danish Lutheran Church of Kierkegaard’s day and today’s Episcopal Church in the United States, there are also significant similarities in fact and in perception. For every “mainline” church in the U.S. today there are challenges posed by the increasingly evident fact that we live in a post-Christendom if not outright post-Christian environment. For Anglicans, establishing a post-Christendom ethos is proving to be quite a challenge, especially as we attempt a missional orientation. Throughout his work, Kierkegaard underscored the differences between “culture Christianity” and true faith. His observations and polemics are still a salutary reminder to those today who want to follow not the Christ of culture, but the Christ who is the transformer of culture.

Our final article deepens the church’s discussion of the holy life by exploring how relationships of erotic love may mediate the human experience of God. **Andrea Hollingsworth** looks closely at two poems by John Donne that “highlight eros’s power to give rise to experience of the hiddenness and revealedness of God with(in) the absence and presence of the beloved.” As is the case with the Song of Songs, this poetry speaks simultaneously of two different types of love, reminding us that the most intimate of human relationships can be revelatory

of the relationship of God and the corporate beloved, as well as of God and the individual beloved. At the same time, this simultaneity also brings into sharper view the impossibilities of love that exist for many reasons, not least of which is our difficulty of receiving the other—human and divine—on the other's own terms rather than our own. Donne's poems also make visible aspects of the absence of the beloved, during which the experience of "eternal, absolute darkness" may at the same time be "a space of testimony and expectancy." Read with the other articles in this issue, Hollingsworth's essay suggests alternative ways of framing the distress that accompanies the turmoils and uncertainties of the church as it lives in a tumultuous and changing world.



By the time you receive this issue, the offices of the *Anglican Theological Review* will have moved from our long-time home in Evanston to Seabury Western's new location at 8765 W. Higgins Road, Suite 650, Chicago, Illinois 60631; phone (773) 380-7046. Some of you will recognize this as the address of the Lutheran Center, the ELCA's churchwide office, and we are looking forward to exploring the many new possibilities that emerge when one moves into a new physical space. Please see our website, [www.anglicantheologicalreview.org](http://www.anglicantheologicalreview.org), for more information. And when you have a layover at O'Hare, come see us: We're just two stops away on the "L."

I want to conclude these notes by thanking our many donors, who are listed in this issue. Some support the overall work of the journal, while others contribute to one or more of our thematic issues; all of these donors ensure the continuity of the journal and its ability to focus on particular conversations, topics, and matters of interest. Those who support the Seminaries Abroad Gift Program and the Overseas Subscription Fund are part of the very important work of strengthening global communion. To put it another way: Each and every donation supports the production and distribution of the journal. Each and every donation also signals commitment to and participation in the "thoughtful conversation in and for the church" that *ATR* seeks to foster. I am grateful for the rich and varied companionship of this part of the whole company of saints.

ELLEN K. WONDRA  
*Editor in Chief*

