

## Editor's Notes

Over the space of three weeks this summer I drove 8500 kilometres into the future, into the past, and back to the present. My trip into the future was a 2500-kilometre three-day round trip to Fort St John, the oldest European settlement in British Columbia, located on the Peace River just west of the border between Alberta and British Columbia, to settle our older son into his new life on the staff of a small multi-campus college serving the northeastern quadrant of the province. For David the trip marked a threshold; he would be on his own for the first time in his life. I know that he was apprehensive; his father certainly was.

The day after my return to our home in Surrey, my wife and I began our journey into the past, driving from British Columbia to Colorado, where our parents and our siblings live. While distance may make the heart grow fonder, it also puts stresses on the adult children of parents facing the challenges of aging. In various ways Paula and I became more aware that our formative years of growing up, going to school, and beginning our careers in the United States are our past—treasured and formative, but the past.

Then we made the trip home to British Columbia and to the present. In that present my wife and I serve Anglican parishes facing the challenges of a culture that finds religious faith and membership in a community of faith increasingly irrelevant. What is most tragic, I believe, is that this culture desperately needs the vision of God's *shalom*, available not just in some indefinite future but in the here and now, that we proclaim and embody day after day, week after week, year after year.

Long road trips offer me time to ponder who we are as Christians and what we are called to be and to do. In this issue of the *Anglican Theological Review* I believe that you will find some shorter road trips that will give you ideas to ponder and hopes to entertain.

At the end of the Introduction to *The Book of Alternative Services* of the Anglican Church of Canada, the Doctrine and Worship Committee wrote that the "work of liturgical reform is not finished; in fact

it is never finished. Liturgical texts cannot be tested in an armchair or at a desk, but only in use. There is bound to be room for refinement and improvement.”<sup>1</sup> In a similar vein, **Stephen Burns** and **Bryan Cones** take us on a journey into the unfinished work of liturgical formation begun in the 1979 *Book of Common Prayer*. In particular they focus on questions concerning expansive language, the relationship between baptismal ministry and its expression in the ministry of bishops, presbyters, and deacons, and the contextualization of liturgy in a multicultural church. Their essay is a welcome corollary to the work on common prayer found in our Summer 2013 issue on “What Is Common about Common Prayer?”

A troubling aspect of our present are the religious conflicts raging in various parts of the world, especially those where a militant and intolerant form of Islam is driving Christians from their ancient homes. Such conflicts plead for a more informed understanding of interreligious dialogue on the part of every Christian. In her essay on Samuel Crowther (1807/1809?–1891), the first indigenous African Anglican bishop, **Alison Fitchett Climenhaga** traces Crowther’s own interreligious journey as he exercised his missionary work in West Africa. Although Crowther generally portrayed both indigenous religions and Islam in negative terms, his writings, intended in part for a wider evangelical audience, were more nuanced in their evaluation of the values embedded in local and Muslim traditions and practices. Fitchett Climenhaga believes that Crowther provides a model for inculturation, particularly in his concern to balance fidelity to the gospel with an openness to the symbols and practices in local social and cultural contexts. She writes that “Christians in parts of Africa and Asia . . . could benefit from attending to [Crowther’s] successes and failures as he navigated the tensions arising from his bold proclamation and his cautious, sometimes pragmatic, accommodation to local religious and cultural traditions.”

During the past thirty years or more Anglicans in North America (and elsewhere) have experienced the conflicts and schisms occasioned by differing understandings of how Christians should conduct our lives as gendered beings to whom God has given the gift of sexuality. These conflicts and schisms have been characterized by

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<sup>1</sup> The Anglican Church of Canada, *The Book of Alternative Services* (Toronto: The Anglican Book Centre, 1985), 13.

responsible and irresponsible use of the scriptural and theological resources of the Christian tradition. **Kirsten Laurel Guidero** leads us on an exploration of how Archbishop Robert William Duncan of the Anglican Church in North America and Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori of the Episcopal Church have used scriptural texts traditionally identified as “prophetic” in their preaching. Guidero is guided by Origen, John Barton, Kevin Vanhoozer, and Stephen Fowl as she identifies how both Duncan and Jefferts Schori have used and perhaps misused the words of Isaiah and Jeremiah as the two bishops have sought to build up their own cases and tear down those of their “opponents.” Guidero invites us to consider what it means to call a text “prophetic” and then suggests some principles to guide the use of such texts by means of her own interpretation of Isaiah 58:1–12.

In the first offering in our new section of “Short Essays,” **David Neal Greenwood** takes on the so-called New Atheist movement and especially those writers who have dismissed the historicity of Jesus of Nazareth and portrayed him simply as a “mythic” character. Greenwood does so by taking a trip into the past to point out that one of the more ancient critics of Christianity, Celsus, levels no such accusation. Greenwood writes that “neither Celsus nor any of the polemicists who followed him could scientifically validate the existence of Christ, but at every turn when historical issues were raised, neither he nor they ever claimed that Christ was a myth.”

Two other shorter contributions to this issue of the *Review* are well worth close reading. As one who has always found fiction to be a perfect vehicle for theological speculation, imagination, and interpretation, I commend **Jake Andrews**’s “Farewell to Theology?” to you. It may well lead some academic theologians to reconsider the reading lists of their courses. **Gary Hall**, the Dean of Washington National Cathedral, has written a second contribution to the *ATR*’s Practicing Theology series on the role of cathedral churches in the mission of God and the ministry entrusted to the *ekklesia*. Hall asks foundational questions for the church today: “What, specifically, are *cathedral* churches for? What is uniquely episcopal about them? What are the qualities of apostolic ministry they exist to serve, and how might they carry them forward in their own particular way?” In future issues of the *Review* we will bring a variety of voices in response to these and other questions that inform how we as the body of Christ participate in the mission of God in the twenty-first century.

As we enter into the beauty of autumn and, for some, the busyness of academic and congregational life, I hope that you will enjoy reading this issue of the *ATR* and joining the journeys into future, past, and present on which our authors will take you. Make sure that you take time to ponder the questions that each journey raises. After all, that may be what journeys are really meant to do.

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