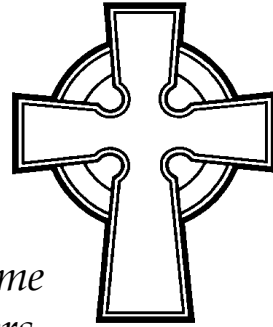


ApostlesJournal



*"The gifts the Lord gave were that some
would be ... pastors and teachers,
to equip the saints for the work of ministry,
for building up the body of Christ."*

(Ephesians 4:11-12)

Church of The Apostles

Evangelical Anglican

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Church of The Apostles
Evangelical Anglican

*We are
Christians
who Worship
in the
Anglican Tradition.*

*Our Mission
is to
Obey,
Follow
and
Bear Witness
to
Jesus Christ.*

Church of The Apostles is a member of the
Conservative Congregational Christian Conference.



What you will find in this issue of the *ApostlesJournal*

Welcome to this November 2011 edition of the *ApostlesJournal*! Contained in this issue is a collection of short biographies of and reflections on men and women deemed by our Elders to be among their “heroes of the faith.” The articles are arranged (roughly) in descending chronological order. The recurring themes in each of the accounts of these everyday “saints” of God are their overwhelming selflessness and humility, their zeal for the proclamation of the Gospel message, and their love for their Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

In the first article, the Reverend Mark R. Galloway presents an in-depth study of the Reverend Dr. John R. W. Stott (1921-2011), a British evangelical Anglican pastor, author, teacher and leader of twentieth century evangelical Christianity. Superintendent Galloway’s follow-up article is the inspiring story Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906-1945), the Lutheran pastor, theologian, teacher and martyr of the faith who stood up for the Gospel despite danger and persecution in Nazi Germany. Elder Nina Deuel introduces us to Mother Basilea Schlink (1904-2001), another of the heroes of the faith who persevered in preserving the Gospel during the Nazi regime. Mother Basilea recognized the need for repentance and dedicated her life to such. Elder Chad Tvenstrup chose Charles Simeon (1759-1836) and Richard Baxter (1615-1691) as two of his heroes of the faith. Simeon, a presbyter of the Church of England, was an effective bridge builder between opposing orthodox theological factions within the Church. His primary goal was always the spread of the Gospel message. Richard Baxter, another ordained Anglican presbyter, lived in a time of tension and turmoil in both the State and the Church of England. Despite humiliation and persecution he too stood firm on the truth of the Word of God. In the next article, Superintendent Galloway presents Gregory the Great (c. 540-604), Bishop of Rome, a humble servant who served God and his Church by maintaining order and Christian values in a time of disorder and chaos during the Middle Ages. Elder Nina Deuel provides a portrait of a contemporary of Gregory the Great, Benedict of Nursia (c. 480-547), a Roman monastic. Another humble saint, Benedict developed a Rule for living that, to this day, is still the leading guide for monastics living in community. Finally, Elder Rob Geoffrey gives us a sketch of the life of Monica (c. 331-387), the mother of Augustine of Hippo. Elder Geoffrey points out that as Monica’s life of prayer and devotion greatly influenced the life of her son, so did Rob’s own mother, May, influence her son as well.

As you read through these well researched and carefully prepared articles, dare to ponder the “heroes of the faith” or “saints” in your own life. Who are they? How did they influence you? Whether they be well known to others or to you alone, to God be the glory!

Barbara A. Bickerstaff

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Communications Officer

John Stott: Humble Giant

By Superintendent Mark R. Galloway

On Sunday, March 5, 2006 as a small, frail, nearly eighty-five year old preacher, who had a surprisingly stern voice, climbed to the pulpit of St. James Episcopal Church, precious few gathered in the Manhattan parish had any idea who he was. “I had never heard of him,” admitted a brave woman, one of about 250 New Yorkers present for the service. “It was just in the program that we were having a special presenter.” That “special presenter” was the Reverend Dr. John R.W. Stott.

John Stott, the British evangelical Anglican clergyman, perhaps the most revered evangelical Christian on earth (though a virtual unknown to the secular world and non-evangelical Christians) died on July 27, 2011 at the age ninety.

Dr. Stott (who retired from public ministry in April 2007) died at the College of St Barnabas, a retirement community in England for Anglican clergy. Stott, the chief architect of twentieth-century evangelical Christianity, a servant of God who helped shape the faith of a generation, was surrounded by family and close friends who were reading Scripture and listening to Handel’s *Messiah* when he peacefully passed into his Lord Jesus Christ’s nearer presence.

John Stott’s status was such that his death was reported by the BBC, which referred to him as someone who could “explain complex theology in a way lay people could easily understand.” Stott’s funeral was held on

August 8, 2011 at All Souls Church in London, the parish where he served as an ordained Minister for more than sixty-five years. Memorial services were also held in his honor at St. Paul’s Cathedral, London; Holy Trinity Cathedral, Auckland, New Zealand; College Church, Wheaton, Illinois; Regent College, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada; as well as in dozens of other places around the world.

Nearly a decade ago, Stott’s dear friend and contemporary, the Reverend Dr. Billy Graham, the iconic American Baptist preacher and the world’s most famous evangelist, called John Stott “the most respected clergyman in the world today.”

Mark A. Noll, the accomplished Reformed evangelical Christian theologian and current professor of history at the University of Notre Dame, has said of Stott, “I consider John Stott the sanest, clearest, and most solidly Biblical living writer on theological topics in the English language.”

“Almost anyone who is a leader in American evangelicalism has been shaped by the thought of John Stott,” wrote recently David Neff, editor of the highly respected evangelical publication *Christianity Today*.

Even Stott’s critic, antagonist, and fellow Presbyterian of the Church of England, the liberal theologian David L. Edwards, has said that John Stott was “the most influential clergyman in the Church of England during the twentieth century.”

In April 2005 *TIME* Magazine named (the

then eighty-four year old) Stott as one of the “100 Most Influential People in the World.”

Indeed, by popular consensus, John Stott, the world’s premier evangelical Christian teacher was (for some four decades) in effect the theological leader of the world-wide evangelical Christian movement. In a November 2004 editorial on Stott, *New York Times* columnist David Brooks cited Michael Cromartie (director of the Evangelical Studies Project at the Ethics and Public Policy Center in Washington D.C.) as saying that “if evangelicals could elect a pope, Stott is the person they would likely choose.” Upon hearing of Stott’s death Cromartie wrote “he was, quite simply, the most Christ-like man I have ever met.” Britain’s other truly great evangelical Anglican theologian of world acclaim, James (J.I.) Packer called Stott “the most modest of men” he has ever known.

In an age of mega-church pastors and media-driven religious celebrity, the Reverend Dr. John R.W. Stott, the humble, gentle, unassuming and unpretentious ordained Anglican Elder from London, a model of confidence and intellectual strength, was a throwback of sorts, a spiritual giant on the world scene who was also virtually anonymous outside the attention of committed evangelical Christians.

Who was John Stott?

Who was John Stott? David Brooks, the Canadian-born Jew, wrote the following in his afore mentioned November 2004 *New York Times* editorial:

It could be that you have never heard of John Stott. I don’t blame you. As far as I can tell, Stott has never appeared on an

important American news program. A computer search suggests that Stott’s name hasn’t appeared in this newspaper since April 10, 1956, and it’s never appeared in many other important publications...

Stott is so embracing it’s always a bit of a shock – especially if you’re a Jew like me – when you come across something on which he will not compromise. It’s like being in “Mr. Rogers’ Neighborhood,” except he has a backbone of steel. He does not accept homosexuality as a legitimate lifestyle, and of course he believes in evangelizing among nonbelievers. He is pro-life and pro-death penalty, even though he is not a political conservative on most issues.

Most important, he does not believe truth is plural. He does not believe in relativizing good and evil or that all faiths are independently valid, or that truth is something humans are working toward. Instead, Truth has been revealed. As he writes: “It is not because we [evangelical Christians] are ultra-conservative, or obscurantist, or reactionary or the other horrid things which we are sometimes said to be. It is rather because we love Jesus Christ, and because we are determined, God helping us, to bear witness to his unique glory and absolute sufficiency. In Christ and in the biblical witness to Christ God’s revelation is complete; to add any words of our own to his finished work is derogatory to Christ.”

In his editorial, Brooks admitted that Stott was “friendly, courteous and natural.” That

he was “humble and self-critical, but also confident, joyful and optimistic.” Brooks acknowledged that Stott’s “mission” as a preacher and teacher was “to pierce through all the encrustations and share direct contact with Jesus.” Indeed, as Brooks conceded, Stott routinely claimed that “the central message of the gospel is not the teachings of Jesus, but Jesus himself, the human/divine figure.” And Brooks agreed that Stott was completely dedicated to “bringing people back to the concrete reality of Jesus’ life and sacrifice.”

John Stott never limited his friendships to Christian circles. Shortly after Brooks’ 2004 editorial about Stott appeared in *The New York Times*, the American singer-song writer Paul Simon asked Brooks to introduce him to Stott. The two eventually had tea together for several hours in Stott’s modest two-room London apartment. Simon began by complaining about specific members of the “religious right,” until Stott interrupted him to say, “I am more interested in what you think of Jesus Christ.” Simon later phoned Brooks to thank him for the introduction.

Even though he was well-known for his vast theological acumen by evangelical Christians all over the world, when admiring believers met John Stott for the first time they encountered a most devout, humble Christian man whose life was bathed in prayer. Testimony after testimony gives witness to the fact that Stott’s private life was no different from his public life.

For decades, Stott began each day at 5:00 a.m. with these two Trinitarian prayers.

Good morning, heavenly Father; good

morning, Lord Jesus; good morning, Holy Spirit. Heavenly Father, I worship you as the Creator and Sustainer of the universe. Lord Jesus, I worship you, Savior and Lord of the world. Holy Spirit, I worship you, Sanctifier of the people of God. Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

Heavenly Father, I pray that I may live this day in your presence and please you more and more. Lord Jesus, I pray that this day I may take up my cross and follow you. Holy Spirit, I pray that this day you will fill me with yourself and cause your fruit to ripen in my life: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Holy, blessed, and glorious Trinity, three persons in one God, have mercy upon me. Amen.

John Stott owned a small well-worn leather notebook, stuffed full of folded papers and pamphlets and held together by a strong rubber band that always served as a traveling companion with his favorite Bible. Each morning, having read three chapters of Scripture and meditated prayerfully over them, he would pull out his prayer notebook, take off the rubber band, and pray for friends, family, ministries, and even strangers.

Inside the notebook was a daily prayer list that was under constant revision. In minuscule print, the pages were divided into four columns: for evangelism or new converts, for people who have decisions to make, for the sick and bereaved, and for miscellaneous requests.

Each day he read through, prayed over, and amended these four columns. Below the columned pages was a stack of prayer requests. Stott would pray daily through the requests and for the many different Christian organizations which he supported.

Finally, having worked through these various pieces of paper, he would come to a well-handled, yellowed page that contained a handwritten one-month calendar. Each day had a list of names, some dating back thirty years, some just a few months.

For John Stott, prayer was the rhythm of each day. From the discipline of regular intercession in the morning, to keeping the daily offices of Church of England's 1662 Book of Common Prayer, to spontaneous prayer at the end of a pastoral visit, to spending time on bended knee shortly before bed, each day of his life was marked by simple, unpretentious, direct, and persistent prayer.

A plain, ordinary Christian

"An evangelical is a plain, ordinary Christian," John Stott told *Christianity Today* in October 2006. "Humility," Stott said, "is not another word for hypocrisy; it is another word for honesty. It is not pretending to be other than we are, but acknowledging the truth about what we are." John Stott was not the least bit concerned with status, hierarchy, the pursuit of power, or with any other misunderstood or misapplied definitions often associated with the ordained ministry.

For instance, speaking candidly about the "fragmentation" that is often present among some elements in the evangelical movement Stott said that he believed much of the

fragmentation was "a simple matter of ambition." "There is a great deal of empire building among us," he stated. "The only empire in which we should be interested is the kingdom of God, but I fear some people are building their own." Stott said that his "main concern for the church everywhere is that we often do not look like what we are talking about. We make great claims for Christ, but there is often a credibility gap between our words and our actions." Stott was no fan of the sin of pride: "Pride is without a doubt the greatest temptation of Christian leaders. And I'm very well aware of the dangers of being feted and don't enjoy it and don't think one should enjoy it."

John Stott believed that the essence of being an evangelical Christian was very humbling. He was fond of quoting Archbishop of Canterbury William Temple (1881-1944), who said: "The only thing of my very own which I contribute to redemption is the sin from which I need to be redeemed."

Despite his international fame as an author and theologian, Dr. Stott, who never married, lived modestly (almost monastic like) in the same two-room flat in London for more than sixty years. He freely acknowledged that if he had had the responsibility of family he would not have been able to write, travel, and serve Christ in the way that he did. A celibate, he said that "the gift of singleness is more a vocation than an empowerment, although to be sure God is faithful in supporting those he calls."

Stott wrote all of his books and countless other writings out in longhand – many of them in a summer cottage in Wales that was not outfitted with electricity until 2001! Stott

was not a person who desired possessions or worldly comforts: “We need to give away what we are not using, because if we don’t use it, we don’t need it.” He believed that the terms – simplicity, contentment, generosity, and wealth – were comparative. “There is no absolute simplicity or poverty,” he stated. “The little kitchen in my apartment not only has running water but constant hot water. That would be regarded as the height of luxury in some parts of the world, yet we don’t regard it as that, and comparatively speaking, in England it isn’t. We need to feel the challenge of Jesus to us in the light of our own situation and circumstances.”

Simply known as “Uncle John” to the thousands of people he worked with, Stott donated all of his substantial book royalties to scholarships, especially for students from developing countries, many of whom went on to lead evangelical movements in their own lands. Stott focused his laser-like attention on projects that blessed the Church universal in the second and third-world (majority-world), whether building libraries for Ministers, educating indigenous scholars, or ensuring that majority-world voices were heard at global evangelical gatherings.

Discernment and discipline enabled Stott to touch lives world-wide. Implementing an amazingly balanced, wise, Biblical, and global ministry, Stott, the local plain, ordinary pastor from London, pioneered an erudite, thoughtful brand of evangelical Christianity. He gladly accepted creative tensions as a permanent feature of the Christian life, and he made that life appealing to believers across denominational lines. Hence, he could write in his book *Christian Basics*: “God’s Word is

designed to make us Christians, not scientists, and to lead us to eternal life through faith in Jesus Christ. It was not God’s intention to reveal in Scripture what human beings could discover by their own investigations and experiments.” He also stated that “the hallmark of an authentic evangelicalism is not the uncritical repetition of old traditions but the willingness to submit every tradition, however ancient, to fresh Biblical scrutiny and, if necessary, reform.”

But Stott was also not afraid to uphold the supreme authority of the Bible and to call sin what it is and to preach the cross of suffering and the Gospel of salvation. “All true Christian preaching is expository preaching,” Stott insisted. “When I enter the pulpit with the Bible in my hands and in my heart, my blood begins to flow and my eyes to sparkle for the sheer glory of having God’s Word to expound. We [Christians] need to emphasize the glory, the privilege, of sharing God’s truth with people.”

Stott believed in the mind as a gift from God: “I think we need to encourage each other in the proper use of the mind. Preachers are still the key people; the church is always a reflection of the preaching it receives. It is not an exaggeration to say that the low standards of Christian living throughout the world are due more than anything else to the low standards of Christian preaching and teaching.” In an evangelical world often tempted to rely on proof texts and emotive stories, Stott drilled down deep into Scripture to display its power. Many people, hearing Stott preach for the first time, said they had never heard the Bible expounded with such clarity and depth. His passion was to learn

what God said, and to let it shape lives. Stott's preaching and writing renewed millions of peoples' faith in the inspiration of Scripture – not only because he defended it, but because he displayed it.

Stott developed into the leader of a world-wide (inter-denominational) evangelical movement while simultaneously serving in a church body (The Church of England and the wider Anglican Communion) that had incrementally embraced liberal theology. That is to say, he believed and continued to communicate the traditional, apostolic and orthodox Christianity that centered on belief in the power and authority of the Scripture, the necessity of faith in Jesus Christ alone in order to be saved, and in a real judgment – the literal reality of both heaven and hell. “Every authentic ministry begins ... with the conviction that we have been called to handle God's Word as its guardians and heralds,” he wrote in his commentary on Saint Paul's letters to the Thessalonians. “Our task is to keep it, study it, expound it, apply it, and obey it.” Stott was, therefore, preeminently a steward of God's truth as recorded in the Scriptures. The leadership he gave to evangelical Christianity flowed out of his pastoral and Biblical perspectives. From these he imparted to millions his affection for the universal (global) Church and a passion for Biblical fidelity and a true *agape* love for Christ the Savior.

If any man hear my voice

John Robert Walmsley Stott was born in London on April 27, 1921 to Sir Arnold and Lady Emily Stott. Sir Arnold was a leading physician in London and an agnostic, while his wife Emily was a Lutheran by birth that

chose to attend the nearby Church of England parish, All Souls, Langham Place. John Stott would spend virtually his entire life in the same London neighborhood in which he was born.

Stott was educated at Rugby School and then at Trinity College Cambridge. At Trinity he earned highest possible honors in both French and Theology, and was elected a senior scholar. At the University, he was active in the Cambridge Inter-Collegiate Christian Union. After Trinity he transferred to Ridley Hall Theological College, Cambridge, to train for ordination to the Anglican pastorate.

As a child, Stott attended All Souls Church with his mother, sometimes sitting in the balcony and dropping wads of paper on the ladies below. Though he had been raised to read the Bible daily, Stott admitted that as a young student he had no idea of personal salvation:

As a typical adolescent, I was aware of two things about myself, though doubtless I could not have articulated them in these terms then. First, if there was a God, I was estranged from him. I tried to find him, but he seemed to be enveloped in a fog I could not penetrate. Secondly, I was defeated. I knew the kind of person I was, and also the kind of person I longed to be. Between the ideal and the reality there was a great gulf fixed. I had high ideals but a weak will ... What brought me to Christ was this sense of defeat and of estrangement, and the astonishing news that the historic Christ offered to meet the very needs of which I was conscious.

While at Rugby School in 1938, Stott heard the Reverend Eric Nash (nicknamed “Bash”) deliver a sermon entitled “What Then Shall I Do with Jesus. Who Is Called the Christ?” After this sermon, Nash pointed Stott to Revelation 3:20 (King James Version): *“Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.”* Stott later described the impact this verse had upon him:

Here, then, is the crucial question which we have been leading up to. Have we ever opened our door to Christ? Have we ever invited him in? This was exactly the question which I needed to have put to me. For, intellectually speaking, I had believed in Jesus all my life, on the other side of the door. I had regularly struggled to say my prayers through the key-hole. I had even pushed pennies under the door in a vain attempt to pacify him. I had been baptized, yes and confirmed as well. I went to church, read my Bible, had high ideals, and tried to be good and do good. But all the time, often without realizing it, I was holding Christ at arm’s length, and keeping him outside. I knew that to open the door might have momentous consequences. I am profoundly grateful to him for enabling me to open the door. Looking back now... I realize that that simple step changed the entire direction, course and quality of my life.

Stott was for a few years mentored by Nash, who wrote a weekly letter to him, advising him on how to develop and grow in his Christian life, as well as practical advice such as how Stott could lead the Christian Union

at Rugby School and then at Cambridge.

Until his conversion and subsequent call to Christian ministry, Stott seemed headed for a career in the British diplomatic corps. A skilled linguist, nobody doubted that Scott would have made a superb diplomat. In his ministry, he retained the best qualities of that calling, which is to faithfully and skillfully represent someone else.

A gifted speaker and loving shepherd

In 1945 Stott was ordained Deacon and then Presbyterian (Elder) in the Church of England and served as Curate (Assistant Pastor) at All Souls Church, Langham Place for five years. In 1950, at the age of twenty-nine, he was elected Rector of the still badly World War II damaged church. This was the same parish in which he had grown up, and in which he would live his whole life, aside from his few years spent in Cambridge.

Stott was a gifted speaker and loving shepherd to his parish, helping it rebuild after the terrible bombings of London during the war. Although Stott would ultimately become internationally known as a Bible expositor and teacher, during his first decades of ordained ministry he gained a reputation as an evangelist. At All Souls, he led many to Christ himself, while organizing and teaching the Congregation how to bring their friends and neighbors into a personal relationship with Jesus.

All Souls was an inner-city church with a striking mix of the well-off and the indigent, and Stott was determined to neglect neither side: “Christians are radically different from non-Christians, or if they are not, they ought to be. Jesus sets over against each other two

communities. On the one hand there is the world, and on the other hand there is you, who are the dark world's light. Jesus implied that we are as different as light from darkness and salt from decay."

Stott firmly believed that the local Congregation should be a locus for evangelism: "I believe that evangelism is accomplished through the local church, through the community, rather than through the individual. The church should be an alternative society, a visible sign of the kingdom." Central to Stott's model of parish ministry were five criteria: the priority of prayer, expository preaching, regular evangelism, careful follow-up of enquirers and converts, and the systematic training of helpers and leaders.

For John Stott the Christian life was not just one's own private affair. "If we have been born again into God's family," Stott wrote in his most popular book *Basic Christianity*, "not only has he become our Father but every other Christian believer in the world, whatever his nation or denomination, has become our brother or sister in Christ ... But it is no good supposing that membership of the universal Church of Christ is enough; we must belong to some local branch of it ... Every Christian's place is in a local church ... sharing in its worship, its fellowship, and its witness."

All Souls grew numerically during the 1950's and 1960's yet Stott continually pleaded with people not to abandon their local evangelical churches in order to become members of All Souls. Like his favorite evangelical Anglican hero and mentor, Charles Simeon (1759-1836), Stott turned down several

opportunities for advancement to the *episcopate* (the hierarchy of consecrated Bishops in the Church of England) and chose to remain at the same parish throughout his ministry.

While serving as Rector of All Souls, Stott became increasingly influential on a national and international basis. In 1970, in response to increasing demands on his time from outside of the Congregation, he appointed a Vicar of All Souls, which enabled him to work on other projects. In 1975, he resigned as Rector, and the then Vicar was elected Rector in his place. Stott continued on as a valuable member of the Church Staff of All Souls and was appointed "Rector *Emeritus*," an honor he held till the end of his life.

To this day, All Souls continues to serve as a beacon for visitors from all over the world. The Congregation continues to take to heart the words of her beloved former Rector: "It's the same issue across the globe. Churches live, grow, and flourish by the Word of God. And they languish and even perish without it."

Stott's international ministry, through his writing and speaking, launched from his pastoral service at All Souls, in time became justly famous. Less known is the ministry of Langham Partnership International (known as John Stott Ministries in the United States), which he founded in 1974 in order to serve majority-world Christians. Langham Partnership International (LPI) particularly encourages Biblical preaching by providing study books for pastors and libraries and by offering doctoral scholarships for evangelicals who will commit to teaching in their home seminaries. He also founded (in 1982) the

London Institute for Contemporary Christianity, which offers classes and lectures on a wide variety of topics relevant to life in modern society. All of this grew out of Stott's personal involvement as he tirelessly traveled the world. "As I approach the end of my life," Stott wrote, "my passion is to promote the ministry of Langham Partnership International and so to see the Word of God faithfully expounded in the pulpits of the world."

Stott received many honors during his lifetime. He was appointed a Chaplain to Queen Elizabeth II in 1959 and, upon his retirement from the chaplaincy in 1991, he was simply "reappointed" by her Majesty as an "Extra Chaplain." He was also awarded Britain's highest civilian recognition when he was named by Elizabeth II (for his act of chivalry on behalf of the Gospel cause) as a Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE) during the New Year Honors of 2006. Stott also received many honorary doctorates from institutions all around the world, including Britain's highest academic achievement, a Lambeth Doctor of Divinity degree awarded by Archbishop of Canterbury Robert Runcie (1921-2000) to Stott in 1983.

Basic Christianity and The Cross of Christ

John Stott is best known to the evangelical world through the more than fifty books that he authored. The most famous is *Basic Christianity*, which in effect has served as an evangelical primer on the Christian faith for millions of converts (including for several people here at the Church of The Apostles!) and has been translated into seventy-two languages and sold more than 2.5 million copies.

In this short paperback book, originally published in 1958, Stott set forth eleven lessons covering the "milk" of the Word of God in which he argues convincingly from Scripture that we need a Savior and that Savior is Jesus Christ. According to Stott,

We must commit ourselves, heart and mind, soul and will, home and life, personally and unreservedly to Jesus Christ. We must humble ourselves before him. We must trust him as our Savior and submit to Him as our Lord; then go take our place as loyal members of the church and responsible citizens of the community. Such is basic Christianity, and the theme of this book.

Stott's other notable titles include, *The Contemporary Christian*, *Issues Facing Christians Today*, *The Incomparable Christ*, *Why I Am a Christian*, and *Through the Bible Through the Year*, a daily devotional. He also wrote eight volumes in *The Bible Speaks Today* series of New Testament commentary.

In 2005, he produced *Evangelical Truth*, which summarizes what he perceived as being the central claims of Christianity, essential for evangelicalism.

In 2008, showing his fidelity to the Reformed Catholic theology of historic Anglicanism as codified in Church of England's Thirty-nine Articles of Religion and in the sacramental teaching of the 1662 Book of Common Prayer, he helped produce a collaborative work called *The Anglican Evangelical Doctrine of Infant Baptism*.

An introduction to Stott's collective thought can be found in his two final substantial publications, which act as a summation of his

lifetime of work. Both were published by the publishing house with which he had a lifelong association, Inter-Varsity Press.

The first, published in 2007, was his reflection upon the life of the universal Church: *The Living Church: Convictions of a Lifelong Pastor*. And the second, which Stott published in January 2010 at the age of eighty-eight, and which he announced would be explicitly his final book, was *The Radical Disciple: Some Neglected Aspects of Our Calling*. This latter work concludes with a poignant farewell and appeal for his legacy to be continued through the work of Langham Partnership International.

Perhaps Stott's greatest gift as a teacher was to be found in his wonderful ability to bridge the gap between theological works for scholars and thoughtful theological works for lay people. Indeed, Stott's entire corpus of publication is a summing up of evangelical Christianity: dominated by the Bible, but full of a sense of Christ-centered mission.

Many people consider Stott's *magnum opus* as a teacher to be *The Cross of Christ* (published in 1986) of which J.I. Packer stated: "No other treatment of this supreme subject says so much so truly and so well."

The Cross of Christ is a thorough and Biblical defense of the penal-substitution theory of the Atonement. In other words it answers two questions: What exactly happened on Calvary? And, what exactly did Jesus accomplish? The Answer: He took upon himself the judgment and punishment due sinners. He accomplished the salvation of those who believe.

The penal substitution theory of the

Atonement is a contentious doctrine that elicits some of the most hysterical reactions from Christians who come from traditions that construe the Atonement in other ways. In *The Cross of Christ* Stott never denied that Scripture pictures Christ's death as multi-dimensional (as Savior, he is also our liberator, model, and healer), only that the minute you lose sight of Christ's role as the ultimate sacrifice for sin, you have lost the key that unlocks the mystery of the Incarnation and how and why God saves in the first place.

The Reverend Dr. Robert S. Munday, the recently retired Dean of Nashotah House Theological Seminary (the notoriously orthodox Anglo-Catholic seminary of The Episcopal Church) has written,

John Stott was one of the greatest influences in my life as a Christian. I first encountered his thinking in the small book, *The Baptism and Fullness of the Holy Spirit* when, as a teenager, I confronted questions about this issue. This encounter led me to read *Basic Christianity* and, over the years, practically everything Stott wrote, eventually using his book, *The Cross of Christ* as one of the texts in teaching systematic theology at the seminary level and in numerous classes for laity. This book is, in my opinion, the best, most powerful and most accessible treatment of the subject of the Atonement of Christ ever written.

Lausanne 1974

John Stott was every inch an evangelical, but a reforming evangelical. He recognized that

evangelicalism could and sometimes did sink down into mere piety, whereas the Bible spoke of a robust transformation of the world brought about by God's people engaged in mission. As a London pastor, Stott increasingly recognized the need for evangelicalism to reclaim its heritage of engagement with the social issues of the day. As he told an interviewer years later, "In the early 1960s, I began to travel in the third-world, and I saw poverty in Latin America, Africa, and Asia as I had not seen it before. It became clear to me that it was utterly impossible to take that old view." The "old view" being the belief that preaching was always a Christian's preeminent task, and that deeds of compassion were strictly secondary. As Stott probed the Scriptures, he came to believe that Jesus' Great Commission (Matthew 28:16-20) commanded Jesus' servants to carry on his entire mission, which included practical concern for life and health.

Ironically, Stott's greatest impact on world evangelicalism came about somewhat inadvertently. In July 1974, Billy Graham (through the efforts of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association) convened an International Congress on World Evangelization in Lausanne, Switzerland. About 2,700 evangelical Protestant delegates representing 150 countries attended (in addition to 1,300 other participants). About half of the delegates and speakers came from majority-world countries. The gathering's wide representation resembled meetings of the World Council of Churches, but the excited atmosphere of unified mission was unprecedented. Many participants grasped for the first time the universal dimensions of the evangelical church. The Lausanne

Congress showed the world that evangelicals both could and desired to work together as a global church. The Lausanne gathering was described by *TIME* magazine as "possibly the most wide-ranging meeting of Christians ever held."

Because he was considered to be the leading evangelical Biblical expositor of the time, Stott was chosen to give the opening address to the Congress. In the speech, Stott – with characteristic humility – demolished the long-time, erroneously held cultural belief that evangelicals should concern themselves only with evangelism and not with the social dimensions of society:

Here then are two instructions, "love your neighbor" (Mark 12:31) and "go and make disciples" (Matthew 28:19) [Stott said, referring to the words of Jesus]. What is the relation between the two? Some of us behave as if we thought them identical, so that if we have shared the Gospel with somebody, we consider we have completed our responsibility to love him: But no. The Great Commission neither explains, nor exhausts, nor supersedes the Great Commandment. What it does is to add to the command ... a new and urgent Christian dimension. If we truly love our neighbor, we shall without doubt tell him about the Good News of Jesus. But equally, if we truly love our neighbor we shall not stop there.

Going into the Congress the relationship between evangelism and social concern was an emotional hot button. But Stott's convictions prevailed.

Granted, prior to Lausanne, Stott had already

played a large role in the remarkable international growth of evangelicalism since World War II. But the unquestionable high-water mark in this resurgence of Biblical Christianity was the final product of the Congress – the now famous Lausanne Covenant, whose principal framer and author was John R.W. Stott.

The Lausanne Covenant was both a theological declaration and a summons to evangelism and social responsibility and it confidently asserted to the world that evangelicalism was now a global movement. The Covenant, set evangelization into a much broader context than had been the practice among evangelicals to that point – including the purposes of God, the authority of Scripture, the uniqueness of Christ, the mission of the Church universal, the power of the Holy Spirit, and the second coming of Jesus.

The wording of the Covenant articulately expressed a common mission that the vast majority of delegates could enthusiastically endorse; and it spoke to the future, providing a framework that various evangelical groups could use as their basic statement of the orthodox Biblical Christian faith. The Lausanne Covenant was a demarcating milestone in the rise of evangelical Christianity and has appropriately been hailed as one of the most significant Christian documents of the twentieth-century.

Indeed, Lausanne was a defining moment in global evangelicalism. True. Billy Graham was the indispensable convener, but it was John Stott's personal character and the quality of his theological thought that provided the indispensable unity. The

importance of the Lausanne Covenant remains (nearly forty years later) undiminished for its evangelical cohesion, vision, and conviction, and no small part of this remarkable accomplishment belongs to the evangelical Anglican Presbyterian John R.W. Stott.

A sinner saved by grace

The Reverend Dr. S. Douglas Birdsall, Executive Chair of the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization, in a statement released upon Stott's death, said that "perhaps more than any other person in the last century, John Stott restored confidence in the authority of God's Word and in the centrality of Biblical preaching and teaching. He inspired many evangelicals around the world to make a robust and clear affirmation of Biblical truth while at the same time emphasizing that this must be backed up with a distinctive, godly Christian life." "Social responsibility," John Stott once wrote, "becomes an aspect not of Christian mission only, but also of Christian conversion. It is impossible to be truly converted to God without being thereby converted to our neighbor. As I read and studied and meditated [upon Scripture], my vision of God grew and I came to see the obvious things: that God is not just interested in religion but in the whole of life – in justice as well as justification."

Dr. Rowan Williams, the incumbent Archbishop of Canterbury, has recently written,

The death of John Stott will be mourned by countless Christians throughout the world. During a long life of unsparing

service and witness, John won a unique place in the hearts of all who encountered him, whether in person or through his many books. He was a man of rare graciousness and deep personal kindness, a superb communicator and a sensitive and skilled counselor. Without ever compromising his firm evangelical faith, he showed himself willing to challenge some of the ways in which that faith had become conventional or inward-looking. It is not too much to say that he helped to change the face of evangelicalism internationally, arguing for the necessity of 'holistic' mission that applied the Gospel of Jesus to every area of life, including social and political questions. But he will be remembered most warmly as an expositor of Scripture and a teacher of the faith, whose depth and simplicity brought doctrine alive in all sorts of new ways.

John Stott was not only revered, he was loved. He possessed a humble mind and a charitable spirit. He was a pastor and teacher whose books and preaching not only became in the evangelical world the gold standard for expository teaching, but his Christian character was a model of truth and godliness. In the future it will not be possible to write

the history of the Christian Church in the twentieth century without substantial reference to John Stott. His remarkable ministry spanned the entire second half of the twentieth-century and even into his ninth decade of life he continued to make an impact on the twenty-first. Stott's leadership of the evangelical movement, both within the Anglican Communion and in wider inter-denominational settings, was a major factor in moving evangelicalism from a rather narrow-minded fundamentalism after World War II, to the fastest growing segment of world Christianity that it is today. His books have challenged and nourished millions of Christians into a balanced and thinking Biblical faith. His legacy is immeasurable.

John Stott's biographer, Timothy Dudley-Smith has written that John Stott thought "of himself, as all Christians should but few of us achieve, as simply a beloved child of a heavenly Father; an unworthy servant of his friend and master, Jesus Christ; a sinner saved by grace to the glory and praise of God."

To the millions of Christians who rejoice at the evangelical Christian resurgence that has taken place around the world in the last fifty years, the patient, humble, gracious and passionate John Stott will always be a hero.

And we also bless thy holy Name, O LORD,
for all thy servants departed this life in thy faith and fear;
beseeching thee to give us grace so to follow their good examples,
that with them we may be partakers of thy heavenly kingdom:
Grant this, O Father, for Jesus Christ's sake,
our only Mediator and Advocate. Amen.

(The 1662 Book of Common Prayer)

Bonhoeffer: Pastor, Theologian, Teacher and Martyr

By Reverend Mark R. Galloway

Who stands fast?
Only the person whose final standard
is not reason, principles, conscience,
freedom, or virtue,
but who is ready to sacrifice all this
when he is called to obedient
and responsible action in faith and
in exclusive allegiance to God.
It is not the religious act
that makes the Christian,
but the participation in
the suffering of God in the world.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer

In Germany, during the late 1920's and early 1930's, the rise of Nazism raised serious questions about the role of faith and freedom in a godless society. One remarkable German pastor and theologian, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, wrestled with these questions – and sacrificed his life in the process. For Bonhoeffer, who was one of the greatest Christian thinkers and writers in the period between the First and Second World Wars, the centerpiece of his life became the growing conflict between his beliefs as a Christian and his duty as a German citizen.

It is virtually impossible to not be fascinated by the life and faith of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a patriot who acted as a double-agent during a time of war in order to overthrow the government and rid his native country of demonic rule. A valiant Christian, Bonhoeffer persistently risked his life to

oppose the monstrous tyranny of National Socialism in Germany, and the Nazi attempt to undermine every German who truly accepted Jesus Christ as one's Savior, put their whole trust in his grace and love, and followed and obeyed him as one's Lord.

The great tensions and contradictions of his time, the living with guilt and the costliness of obedience to God – these tough realities of life faced honestly are what make Dietrich Bonhoeffer's story so influential and provocative. "Many other pastors died in prison in Germany during the church struggle [of World War II]," writes Dallas M. Roark in a book on Bonhoeffer's life and his theological works, "but we have not been caught up with them. Bonhoeffer is different. He is a rare soul who had many interests, a rare being who came to grips with his theology, the kind of person who would die for his convictions."

A brilliant career ahead

Dietrich Bonhoeffer and his twin sister Sabine were born on February 4, 1906, in Breslau, Germany (which is now part of Poland). Dietrich's father, Karl Ludwig Bonhoeffer, was a distinguished neurologist and considered to be the most accomplished German psychiatrist of his time. When Dietrich was six, his father was appointed to a senior professorship at Berlin University.

The Bonhoeffers were Lutherans, but not inordinately religious. Of his eight siblings, only Dietrich chose to study theology. He began his theological studies in 1923 at Tubingen University, but after a year moved

to Berlin University. In 1927 he received the licentiate, *summa cum laude* (a degree comparable to a doctorate in theology in the United States). In 1930, his dissertation, *Sanctorum Communio*, was translated into English and published as “The Communion of Saints.”

After his ordination in 1927 as a Lutheran Pastor, he served from 1928-29 as the assistant Minister of a German-speaking Congregation in Barcelona, Spain. In 1929, Bonhoeffer returned to Germany and, in 1930, after completing a second dissertation (*Act and Being: Transcendental Philosophy and Ontology in Systematic Theology*), was named Assistant Professor in Systematic Theology at Berlin University. In September 1930 he began a year of theological studies as an invited student at Union Theological Seminary in New York City. A year later he returned to Germany to again accept a Berlin University faculty position and to assist with pastoral work in a local parish.

By the tender age of twenty-five, Dietrich Bonhoeffer was already a very influential Lutheran Pastor and considered to be one of the most promising young Protestant theologians in the world. His first published work, *The Communion of Saints*, had been praised as a “theological miracle” by none other than Karl Barth (1886-1968), the German-speaking Swiss citizen who was generally recognized as the world’s outstanding Protestant theologian of the time (and whose own thoughts greatly influenced Bonhoeffer’s personal theology). Bonhoeffer truly had a brilliant career ahead of him.

In 1931, Bonhoeffer’s flair for languages, his theological accomplishments, and general

friendliness led to his election as Youth Secretary for Germany and central Europe for the *World Alliance for Promoting International Friendship through the Churches*, a position that marked his entrance into a very elite and influential circle of leaders in the world-wide ecumenical movement. Dietrich’s involvement in the *World Alliance* gave him a high profile venue that allowed him to convey to the free-world the real status of Hitler’s oppression of the Christian church in Germany and brought him immense respect from many older and better known men, who admired the young theologian both for the originality of his ideas and the boldness of his faith.

From the first days of Adolph Hitler’s rise to power in 1933, Bonhoeffer opposed the movement and was among the first people involved in protests against the Third Reich, especially its anti-Semitism. He eventually became a strong voice for the “Confessing Church,” which served as the leader of the German evangelical Protestant Christian resistance to, not only the Nazi regime but also, the “German Christians” (or the “Reich’s Church” as Bonhoeffer called it), that is, those German Protestants who, during Hitler’s years as *Fuehrer*, tried to bring about a synthesis between Nazism and Christianity.

Though he was one of its most prominent members, Bonhoeffer, as the Nazi regime wore on, was not shy about criticizing the Confessing Church for not going far enough. He called for greater protests against the Third Reich’s inhumane treatment of Jews, but could not get the Confessing Church to follow his lead. In fact, by 1942 Bonhoeffer would speak of his disappointment with his

church, which had become content in trying to survive until the evil times were over, concerned only with (as he put it) “self-preservation, as though that were an end in itself.”

The Cost of Discipleship

In 1934, Bonhoeffer went to England to serve as chaplain for two German-speaking Lutheran parishes in London. In February 1934, Dietrich, speaking to an ecumenical gathering in Saint Paul’s (Anglican) Cathedral in London, in an effort to inform English Christians of the struggle faced by Christians in Germany, said this:

The German Church seems helpless to save itself, so we look to the world-wide church, starting with the church here in England, to get involved. There are German Pastors and Congregations who wait breathlessly for *your* help, for *your* decision to intervene on behalf of the true believers in Germany. Christians and Jews alike are in danger. Our Chancellor, who once said he would never meddle in church affairs, has put into effect a muzzling decree, prohibiting any public discussion of the decision making of the Reich’s Church. This is what the Confessing Church of Germany is up against. The ecumenical church must follow the example of our Savior Jesus Christ and be a voice for those who have no voice, like the Jews in Germany. I would venture so far as to say that the cause of Christ is now at stake – will we be found sleeping?

Following this impassioned speech, Bonhoeffer learned that Archbishop of

Canterbury Cosmo Gordon Lang (1864-1945), Primate of all England, wished to meet with him. Archbishop Lang requested that Dietrich attend the next gathering of the *World Alliance of Churches*, scheduled to meet in Fano, Denmark, as a personally invited guest of the spiritual leader of the Church of England and the world-wide Anglican Communion. Thus, because Germany was only represented by the pro-Hitler “German Christians” (the Nazis having banned all members of the Confessing Church from participation), Bonhoeffer, a Lutheran, would now go to Denmark as an official representative of not only the (Anglican) Church of England, but also the most influential Protestant Prelate in world, the Archbishop of Canterbury. The *World Alliance* gathering in Denmark, due in part to Bonhoeffer’s influence, denounced the “German Christians” and aligned its sympathies with the Confessing Church.

Bonhoeffer’s year long stay in England allowed him to strengthen his friendship with George K. A. Bell (1881-1958), Bishop of Chichester, the Church of England’s most admired and successful statesman in international affairs and one of the premier leaders of the world-wide ecumenical movement. Bonhoeffer supplied Bell with accurate information and the Bishop of Chichester threw his weight as one of the most respected Christians in the world behind the Confessing Church in Germany; and, in a speech he gave on the floor of the British Parliament as a member of the House of Lords, Bell condemned the tactics, beliefs and practices of the church of the Third Reich, the so-called “German Christians.”

While Bonhoeffer was in England, in May 1934, the Confessing Church, issued the *Barmen Declaration*, which repudiated the claims of National Socialism and upheld Jesus Christ as Lord. Bonhoeffer returned to Germany in 1935 and became the academic dean of an “illegal” seminary of the Confessing Church. As his work at the seminary progressed, he attempted to retain his teaching post at Berlin University, and did so until August 5, 1936, when his authorization to teach was terminated by governmental authorities because of his opposition to Nazi intervention in church affairs. Further, the authorities declared Bonhoeffer a “pacifist and enemy of the State” and banned him from entering the city of Berlin.

In 1937, Bonhoeffer’s first widely popular work, a study on the Sermon on the Mount, called *The Cost of Discipleship*, was published. In this great work he harshly criticized the “cheap grace” which the liberal Protestant churches were preaching, and called for “costly” discipleship to Jesus Christ. In the same year, the Confessing Church’s seminary was officially disbanded by the Nazis, but Bonhoeffer continued to lead the underground studies of his seminary students until 1940.

The trials of this time

In 1939, when he was called up for military service, Dietrich had serious problems. He was a loyal German, but was personally unable to take the required oath of loyalty to Adolph Hitler. He consulted with Bishop Bell and other international friends. Then suddenly, Reinhold Niebuhr (1892-1971), the accomplished American theologian and writer

on social and ethical issues, arranged an appointment for Dietrich to the faculty of Union Theological Seminary in New York City for an indefinite period of time. Bonhoeffer accepted the offer and arrived in the United States on June 12, 1939, only to discover that his friends were, out of deep concern for his well-being, trying their best to rescue him from the Nazis. Within a month Germany invaded Poland and World War II began. The safety of America made Bonhoeffer far too uncomfortable. He believed it was his duty to go home: “I will have no right to participate in the reconstruction of Christian life in Germany after the war if I do not share the trials of this time with my people.” He was back in Germany on July 25, 1939.

Upon his return, Bonhoeffer escaped military duty by serving as a courier for the *Abwehr*, the German Military Intelligence Service (an organization which was often at policy odds with the Nazi party), and thus was able to enjoy certain freedoms from the interference of the Gestapo – the German (Nazi) Secret Police. Certain members of the *Abwehr* were opposed to Hitler and they asked Bonhoeffer to join a secret group conspiring to overthrow the Nazi Government and place Hitler on trial for crimes against humanity. For several years this secret conspiracy was safe because Gestapo agents were not able to infiltrate the *Abwehr’s* infrastructure. Bonhoeffer came to accept the full implications of the resistance movement. However, on September 9, 1940, sterner restrictions were placed on Bonhoeffer by the Gestapo. Not only was he not allowed to enter Berlin or publish any material, but he was now “prohibited from public speaking anywhere in the Reich” and had to report

regularly back to the Gestapo.

However, with an official Nazi passport of the *Abwehr*, Bonhoeffer was on several occasions able to travel outside Germany on behalf of the resistance movement without the Gestapo's awareness. The Nazis had wanted to use Bonhoeffer for propaganda purposes. In fact, Bonhoeffer had been "ordered" by the Nazis to go to neutral countries during the war and "persuade" the churches of these countries to come over to the German side. Of course, he did just the opposite. For instance, on one such trip Bonhoeffer made it his personal mission to take a group of Jews to their freedom in Switzerland. He was successful.

On Whitsunday (the Day of Pentecost) 1942, Bonhoeffer, who was the liaison between the resistance movement and the free-world, particularly England, was able to meet with Bishop Bell while they were both in Sweden. He gave Bell the *Abwehr's* secret plan to overthrow the Nazi Government and then offer Germany's unconditional surrender to the Allies. The Bishop of Chichester promised to do his best to persuade the Government of Winston Churchill (1874-1965), the British Prime Minister, of the likely success of this coup. Unfortunately, before British cooperation could be secured, several officers in the Germany military (who had previously come to believe that Hitler was insane and had declared themselves sympathetic to the secret plan of the *Abwehr*), suddenly withdrew their support. Therefore, those who remained in the conspiracy saw no other way to remove Hitler than by assassination. Bonhoeffer, who by now had forsaken his earlier pacifist views, agreed to

cooperate. Several unsuccessful attempts were made on Hitler's life over the next two years.

The beyond

Without search warrant or notice of arrest, Bonhoeffer was arrested by the Gestapo on April 5, 1943, and held in a military interrogation prison in Tegel, a suburb of Berlin. On April 29, 1943, he was formally charged with "subversion of the armed forces."

During his eighteen months in Tegel, Bonhoeffer was able to have communication with the outside by means of coded messages passed in books and food parcels. Good-hearted guards made it possible for his fiancé, Maria von Wedemeyer (to whom he had become engaged just two months before his arrest), and other members of his family to visit him. These visits kept him informed of events taking place in the outside world.

The fact is, by his own admission, during his two years in prison, Dietrich's knowledge of Holy Scripture, Christ's holy catholic Church, and of himself, grew. The many books he was able to read influenced his thinking – not the least of which was the Bible, as he made it his discipline to continue to personally follow the liturgical Christian year and keep all its Greater Festivals and Holy Days throughout his prison stay.

On July 20, 1944, the final and fatal failure to assassinate Hitler took place. In September 1944, the Gestapo's long desire to incriminate the *Abwehr* was fulfilled in dramatic fashion with the finding of the *Abwehr's* secret file. On October 8, 1944, Bonhoeffer was transferred to the harsh conditions of a Gestapo cellar in Prinz Albrecht Strasse, the

house prison for the Security Head Office of the Third Reich, where he and others were tortured to squeeze out information on conspiracy collaborators. The evidence already on hand was enough to have Bonhoeffer and his companions executed, but Hitler desired to find all conspirators, and this desire prolonged Bonhoeffer's life.

Because the Allied forces were rapidly advancing from the west and Russian forces from the east, Bonhoeffer was, on February 7, 1945, moved to Buchenwald. Payne Best, one of the survivors of Buchenwald, described Bonhoeffer's character while in prison there: "Bonhoeffer was different; just quite calm and normal, seemingly perfect at his ease ... his soul really shone in the dark desperation of our prison. He was one of the very few men I have ever met to whom God was real, and ever close to him."

After Allied guns were heard on April 1, 1945, the prisoners' faint hope of survival was revived and, as the war was drawing to its inevitable end, Bonhoeffer too hoped that it would indeed end before he and his fellow prisoners were put to death. But, on April 3, 1945, Bonhoeffer was taken from Buchenwald and put through a horrific five day journey that eventually landed him in Flossenbürg. On April 8th, a court martial met and Dietrich was "tried" and sentenced to death. That night he sent a special note through Payne Best to his old friend, the Bishop of Chichester, George Bell: "This is the end – for me the beginning of life."

On April 9, 1945, Dietrich Bonhoeffer was executed. Stripped naked, he was hanged with six other Hitler resisters. The camp doctor of Flossenbürg, who witnessed the

happenings of that dreadful day, recorded these words:

On the morning of that day between five and six o'clock ... I saw Pastor Bonhoeffer, before taking off his prison garb, kneeling on the floor praying fervently to his God. I was most deeply moved by the way this lovable man prayed, so devout and so certain that God heard his prayer. At the place of execution, he again said a short prayer and then climbed the steps to the gallows, brave and composed. His death ensued after a few seconds. In the almost fifty years that I worked as a doctor, I have hardly ever seen a man die so entirely submissive to the will of God.

As he went to the scaffold, Bonhoeffer could hear again the sound of American guns. He was thirty-nine years old. A month later, Nazi Germany fell to the Allies.

Kindly Powers

In 2011, several of Bonhoeffer's written works remain a source of inspiration, not only because of his discussion of profound issues, but also because of his many memorable phrases, such as when he speaks of God as "the beyond in the midst of our lives" or when he spoke of the liberal Protestant churches preaching their "cheap grace."

Bonhoeffer's most popular and enduring books are *The Cost of Discipleship* (1937), *Life Together* (1938), and *Letters & Papers from Prison* (1944). Yes. Even now, 66 years after his execution, the writings of Dietrich Bonhoeffer continue to have remarkable influence on the universal Christian Church.

Because of his deep respect for the authority of Scripture in determining the life of the Christian community, his devotion to the meaning of the Incarnation, the doctrine of Justification, and his belief in the urgent role of the Church universal in the modern world and in the life of the world to come, Bonhoeffer's works are still studied by contemporary evangelical believers with as much frequency as are the works of the likes of C. S. Lewis (1898-1963), Billy Graham (b. 1918), John Stott (1921-2011) and J.I. Packer (b. 1926). Indeed, he is today recognized as a Christian who in life had been blessed with great charisma and who in death has become a true saint with great mystique.

The real heart of the mature Bonhoeffer's thinking, however, is perhaps found most profoundly not in his earlier published works, but in the ten dramatic poems he wrote in prison, which are charged with white-hot emotions and candor. The importance of these poems lies in the fact that they were the ultimate attempt to express his deepest feelings about himself, his friends, his church, the future of Germany, and his own life. From his dark prison cell the spirit of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a man who lived and ultimately died by the truth, burned its brightest.

Bonhoeffer's last poem, written in late 1944 ("By Kindly Powers Surrounded"), a prayer of thanksgiving and petition, written in the Gestapo cellar in Prinz Albrecht Strasse, speaks of his affection for his fiancé, the members of his family, and all the friends and colleagues he had been blessed with in life. This poem, the most popular of all his poems (and memorized by heart by many a German

evangelical Christian child for over sixty years now) is a celebration of life, faith, a hope in future freedom, and, ultimately, a victory that even the final enemy, death, cannot quench. Here, laid bare with moving eloquence, was the soul of a modern-day martyr. "Kindly Powers" is Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Gethsamne prayer that the cup may be taken from him. Yes. To the end, this disciple emulated his Master. Totally dedicated to Jesus Christ and to the Savior's Church, Bonhoeffer gave himself both in life and in death for the life of the world, proving that grace and discipleship are indeed costly.

Although the current political atmosphere in the United States of America differs greatly from the totalitarian Nazi regime of the 1930's and 1940's, our modern-day democracy still has many lessons to learn about the misuse of power. By studying Bonhoeffer's theology, political views and personal life, we evangelical believers can gain insight and inspiration on how to have a Christian impact on, and participate in, the spiritual renewal of our country and culture. Although one may disagree with some aspects of Bonhoeffer's political philosophy and/or his theological positions, everyone can learn from his courageous example in the face of the brutality of the Nazi regime. Indeed, Dietrich Bonhoeffer was a remarkable Christian who refused to compromise the orthodox Biblical Christian Faith when all the forces of his world demanded that he should. His life and martyr's death raised a standard of faith that challenges, beckons, and guides us today.

BY KINDLY POWERS SURROUNDED

By kindly powers surrounded, peaceful and true,
wonderfully protected with consolation dear,
safely, I dwell with you this whole day through,
and surely into another year.

Though from the old our hearts are still in pain,
while evil days oppress with burdens still,
Lord, give to our frightened souls again,
salvation and thy promises fulfill.

And shouldst thou offer us the bitter cup,
resembling sorrow, filled to the brim and overflowing,
we will receive it thankfully, without trembling,
from thy hands, so good and ever-loving.

But if it be thy will again to give
joy of this world and bright sunshine,
then in our minds we will past times relive
and all our days be wholly thine.

Let candles burn, both warm and bright,
which to our darkness thou has brought,
and, if that can be, bring us together in the light,
thy light shines in the night unsought.

When we are trapped in silence most profound,
may we hear that song most fully raised
from all the unseen world that lies around
and thou art by all thy children praised.

By kindly powers protected wonderfully,
confident, we wait for come what may.
Night and morning, God is by us, faithfully
and surely at each new born day.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer
(1906-45)

Mother Basilea Schlink: Seeking the heart of God

By Elder Nina N. Deuel

Mother Basilea Schlink was a German Christian writer and the superior of the Evangelical Sisterhood of Mary (a Protestant religious order which she co-founded) from 1947 until her death in 2001.

Born Klara Schlink, on October 21, 1904, in Darmstadt, Germany, Mother Basilea was the daughter of Wilhelm Schlink, a distinguished university professor of mechanical engineering, and the sister of Edmund Schlink, an accomplished Lutheran professor of theology. After finishing high school in Darmstadt, Klara, began a journey in higher education that she believed would bring her closer to the heart of God. For one year (1923) she trained at Froebel Academy in Kassel, and in 1924 began attending the Inner Missions Women's College in Berlin. In 1929, after having completed her bachelor's and master's degrees, she went on to teach psychology and church history at Malche Bible College in Brandenburg. In 1930 she began her doctoral work at the University of Hamburg in Berlin, where she furthered her studies in psychology, history and philosophy. In 1934 she earned her doctorate by completing a (theological-psychological) thesis called the "Consciousness of Sin in adolescent girls and its significance for their battle of faith."

In her autobiography, *I Found the Key to the Heart of God*, Mother Basilea, tells of her struggles during her formative years (her twenties and thirties) of getting to know Jesus

personally and of her difficulty in giving up her sins to God in Christ.

In 1947, two years after the conclusion of World War II, Dr. Klara Schlink, while still living in badly bombed-out Darmstadt (where precious few resources were available) and after contemplating the possibility of marriage, made the decision that she was being called by the Holy Spirit to give herself to a life of mission on behalf of the Gospel. Schlink further came to the moral conclusion that it was important for her (and other Germans) to personally repent for Germany's cruel treatment of other nations during the reign of the Nazis, especially the Jewish people.

On March 30, 1947, Schlink and Erika Madauss (1904-1999) co-founded the Evangelical (Lutheran) Sisterhood of Mary in Darmstadt, a religious order within the framework of the German Evangelical (Lutheran) Church. In 1948 the two founders and seven additional women became confessed nuns of the order. From then on, as the leaders of the movement, Schlink became affectionately known as Mother Basilea and Madauss as Mother Martyria. Mother Basilea would serve as the superior of the Evangelical Sisterhood of Mary until her death (at the age of ninety-six) on March 21, 2001.

Today the Evangelical Sisterhood of Mary has eleven subdivisions (including one in Phoenix, Arizona, as well as in Israel) with a total of 209 sisters around the world, of which 130 sisters reside in Darmstadt.

Repent daily, repent abundantly

As is the case with many natural leaders, Mother Basilea had an immensely strong personality. But she was also a very outgoing and extremely positive person. The strength of her personality comes out clearly in her writings, where her conviction and passion captivates her readers. Particularly powerful in her writings is her desire to let God show her sins to her and her willingness to constantly seek God's forgiveness for them.

Indeed, the Evangelical Sisterhood of Mary is founded upon the principle of daily repentance as the only way to the heart of God in Christ. Here is an excerpt from the order's "Rule" of which Mother Basilea was the primary author:

Repent daily and you will daily have a foretaste of heaven. Repent abundantly, and you will partake abundantly in the kingdom of heaven.

Go to him against whom you are bearing a grudge or him against you. Be reconciled. Let love be victorious.

Whenever you meet someone, let your greeting be a blessing, and God will bless you from heaven in return.

Hear and do what Jesus says. He bids you to believe in His victory and promises and count on them. Then you will see His victory and the glory of God both here and in heaven. God reveals Himself through the eyes of faith.

Mother Basilea learned the lessons contained in her order's "Rule" by suffering (as did so many Germans and countless millions of

others) through the horrors of World War II and by completely surrendering herself to God's will. Mother Basilea's writings are so powerful because her conviction reminds readers that they rarely (if ever) have been as willing to let God be as in control of their lives as God was of hers. Her writing forces the reader to get honest with oneself and with God – which, while a very good (and of course a necessary) thing to do as a Christian, is usually the most difficult thing for a believer to do.

In her afore mentioned autobiography, Mother Basilea quotes a statement from Friedrich Nietzsche (1844–1900), the nineteenth-century German philosopher and critic of Christianity, a quote that is quite condemning about a lukewarm church: "These Christians must show me they are redeemed, before I'll believe in their Redeemer." In a very real way, Mother Basilea spent her entire life letting God redeem her and she in turn proceeded to show how others could tread the same path to redemption. Mother Basilea never tried to soften the way to redemption (indeed, those who come to know God in Christ never do). Rather, she radiated a love (like that of Jesus her Savior) that few (including Nietzsche) ever comprehend. The fact is, of course, that true *agape* love can overtake any person, if we allow Jesus into our hearts and let his grace change us. Indeed, it is that exact love that we should all be seeking in life. But such love, the heart of God, can only be apprehended in complete obedience to God, through voluntary suffering (that is, the taking up of our cross daily), and through unceasing prayer.

Centered in Christ

Though she was by nature very much an extrovert, Mother Basilea (once she had committed herself to a life of service as a confessed member of the Sisterhood of Mary) allowed God to lead her into a contemplative life of solitude and deep prayer. Is it not a constant, as one reads about the saints of old who dedicated their lives to Christ, that their paths to the heart of God were always paved with persistent, fervent prayer? For the truly redeemed, repentance and a deeper seeking of God's will for one's life is always a means to joy. A key component of fervent prayer is praising God in all circumstances, always thanking the Lord for where we are at any given time and trusting him (not anyone or anything else) for our well-being. Mother Basilea, like all of the saints through Christian history, learned that for a believer to hold any other attitude would be idolatry.

In her autobiography, Mother Basilea speaks about her experience as the leader of a young women's (youth group) Bible study, a group of girls who in a few years would in part become the initial members of the Evangelical Sisterhood of Mary. Out of genuine concern for their spiritual well-being, she admits that she became preoccupied with wanting the girls' souls to be converted to Jesus. She found mentoring these young lives hard work and often depressing when her efforts did not yield the results she desired. Eventually, however, through her prayer, God showed her that her worries were misplaced:

I was more taken up with these souls than with Jesus ... I knew little of the

heart of Jesus, which is pure love ... by letting myself be pulled down into the depths and fluctuations of the human soul, I no longer abode in the peace and joy of Christ and His victory – a connection I had not noticed ... Only later when the Lord led me into even greater battles of prayer and faith for certain souls, and I was almost desperate that these souls were not being saved, did He show me the evil root in my heart. I did not trust implicitly in His love, since I harbored a spirit of grumbling against Him. Only when Jesus is the focal point; only when His suffering for human souls, His love and wrestling for them moves our hearts, can we abide in peace, true joy and victorious faith – for then we are centered in Him rather than people.

Mother Basilea's honest reflection is inspiring. As was the case with his servant Mother Basilea, God wants each of us to take notice when and where we fall down in our lives, not to bring judgment upon us, but to help us to repent and come closer to him. What a joy it is for a Christian to know that God in Christ loves us so much that he never abandons us and that his perfect will is for us to invite him into our hearts so that we can converse with him in love. The true saints through the ages have always been men and women who have sought this joy and rejoiced in it.

Having lived through the horrors of World War II, Mother Basilea serves as an example to us about how to live as Christians even in the midst of the most difficult of circumstances. During the war she was a

registered member of the illegal “Confessing Church” (the Biblically orthodox Evangelical (Lutheran) church opposed to Hitler and Nazi rule), she was elected the president of the Women’s Division of the German Student Christian Movement, and she served as a traveling lecturer for an underground domestic missionary society. For Americans today it is difficult for us to comprehend how difficult it was to safely travel in Germany during the war – especially as Allied bombing incrementally destroyed the infrastructure of the country. Often Dr. Schlink had to beg rides from farmers or simply walk. It was only her extraordinary determination to serve the Gospel cause that kept her going. As the war lingered on, food became scarcer and scarcer in the land. Schlink was often weak due the lack of proper nutrition and the difficult living conditions she endured.

Nonetheless, she pressed on in the work of ministry because she knew how much the grace of God’s Word was needed in the lives of spiritually lost Germans. Eventually, her hometown of Darmstadt was devastated by Allied bombing, with over 12,000 people dying from the unrelenting air assaults.

Shortly after the end of the war, Schlink (Mother Basilea) and her friend Erika Madauss (Mother Martyria), and the core of

the young women they had been mentoring throughout the war years, collectively began the Sisterhood of Mary. The Chapter House of the order was built from the rubble of Darmstadt. As they learned more and more of the sin (the human atrocities) of the Nazi regime and the German nation as a whole, repentance became the foundational theme of the Evangelical Sisterhood.

In time, the heart of Mother Basilea was affectionately turned towards the plight of the Jewish people. She reflected with grief upon the horror that Jews had endured not only under Hitler’s tyranny, but also during their struggles for freedom and religious security for much of the previous 2,000 year history of Europe.

A deep love for Israel

Through the power of the Holy Spirit, God the Father brought Mother Basilea and the Evangelical Sisterhood of Mary to embrace a deep love for the Jewish people and for the newly formed (in 1948) nation of Israel. The following lengthy quote is from the forward (written in 1987 by the collective membership of the Evangelical Sisterhood of Mary) of a reissuing of Mother Basilea’s book *Israel My Chosen People*:

A visitor entering our Mother House Chapel in Darmstadt may be surprised to find a menorah, a seven-branched candelabra, opposite the lectern; an unexpected sight in a small [Christian] German chapel. But for our Sisterhood it has a special significance. A gift from the Danes, who as a people so bravely supported the Jewish cause during World War II, it is a constant reminder of our national guilt and a summons to pray for Israel. Over the years we have been joined by many friends from home and abroad on Friday evenings, the Sabbath Eve, for a service of repentance and intercession for Israel, which culminates in the Sabbath candles

being lit at the menorah. This kindling of the Sabbath candles is a symbolic act, for each new Sabbath brings us closer to the day when God's chosen people will be a blessing for all nations (Zechariah 8).

The awareness of Israel's unique role in God's eternal purposes has always been alive in Mother Basilea. After Hitler's rise to power, in 1933, pressure was exerted on her while [she was serving as] National President of the Women's Division of the German Student Christian Movement to accept the Arian paragraph, which would bar Jewish Christians from the movement. She refused to comply, persuading the group to reject the demand.

From 1939 to 1944, in her function as [an illegal] traveling [missionary] lecturer, she risked her life and career during this politically sinister period by speaking publicly of her convictions. Though informers were frequently present at the lectures she held throughout Germany, she felt constrained to speak of the [providential] election of the Jews [by God] and their position and commission to all nations ... [Eventually] summoned before the Gestapo, she was interrogated for hours ...

At the end of the war, clearly perceiving God's hand of judgment in the destruction of many German towns, including her hometown of Darmstadt, she was used by the Lord to start a movement of repentance, which was to have nation-wide repercussions. Repentance was the keynote of the revival among the Girls' Bible Study Groups, which gave rise to our Evangelical Sisterhood of Mary, and it was repentance that gave birth to a deep love for Israel in our fellowship.

The message of repentance for our national crime against the Jews made a decisive impact on the Christian conscience in Germany, greatly changing the attitude towards the Jews, as leading clergymen have attested. Tragically, anti-Semitism is not just a thing of the past: hatred of the Jews is flaring up anew in Germany and other parts of the world. In the not-too-distant future we may all be challenged about our relationship to Israel, and ultimately to God. Will history repeat itself? Will we Christians once more be guilty of silence and passiveness?

It is with this approach we should read this book, (*Israel My Chosen People*) which in many ways is a historical document, written in 1958 while Israel was a young state, her land and capital city divided by barbed wire, and the population half its present size. Inwardly and outwardly Israel has changed considerably since then and, sadly enough, the detrimental influence of our Western nations is also leaving its mark there. Yet it should not surprise us that the greatest struggle

between light and darkness should occur in God's land. Does this not stir us all the more to prayer? As Mother Basilea writes [in 1984] in one of her pamphlets (*A Cry from the Heart for Israel*), "Israel needs our help now ... God is waiting for praying people, who first humble themselves before God because of their own sins and then because of the sins of their people – and this goes especially for us Germans in view of our nations' crime against Israel ... He is waiting for praying people, who will battle in faith for Israel."

Whoever loves Jesus will love the people he loves. What the Word of God says about Israel will not fail to come to pass: "Blessed be every one who blesses you and cursed be every one who curses you" (Numbers 24:9).

Mother Basilea's work and her writings are prophetic in nature and continue to have startling relevance for Christians today. Personally, I have been grateful for the many Christian people who taught me to see the Jewish people as God does. Early in my walk, Mother Basilea was one of those persons. I believe the greatest witness of this remarkable Christian woman was her total commitment to Jesus and her complete surrender to his sovereignty as Lord of all creation. She remained faithful to the Gospel cause in Germany in the 1930's and 40's when many self-proclaimed "evangelical" Christians were not. She persisted in praise of God and submitted to his will in the mist of some of the worst of human conditions. May God give us the grace to always live our lives with this same witness of love, prayer and repentance.

*"Behold, all who are incensed
against Israel
shall be put to shame and confounded;
those who strive against you
shall be as nothing and shall perish."*

(Isaiah 41:11)

Charles Simeon: Unwavering, Faithful Servant

By Elder Chad W. Tvenstrup

Charles Simeon (1759-1836) may not be well known to many here at the Church of The Apostles, but he should be. Simeon was a legendary presbyter of the Church of England who lived out the height of his influence during a point in history that immediately succeeded the era of two other great evangelical Anglican presbyters, John Wesley (1703-91) and George Whitfield (1714-70). Spiritual legends in their own right, Wesley and Whitfield perhaps epitomized the conflicting Protestant expressions of Arminianism ("free will") and Calvinism ("predestination") in relationship to the doctrines of divine sovereignty and human responsibility. In fact, Wesley and Whitfield were once affectionate friends who, while they remained cordial, unfortunately, separated over the issues of free-will and predestination and in turn rarely ever ministered the Gospel together. Charles Simeon, on the other hand, was more than willing to actively engage the theological

positions of both Wesley and Whitfield (and their respective theological successors) in order that those who held such opinions might admit that God and his amazing grace do not necessarily always fit into the boxes in which even the most sincere of Christians often attempt to stuff them.

Charles Simeon, among other things, is such a powerful example of someone who could effectively moderate between two valid and Biblically orthodox opinions. First, Simeon's demeanor is to be commended and even compared with that of Jesus Christ. Second, Simeon was entirely committed to Biblical exposition no matter where its faithful interpretation was to lead. He was always willing to speak and do the right thing, not necessarily the popular or comfortable thing. Third, Simeon was an established figure in the Church of England, a permanent fixture who had earned the reputation of being predictably faithful. And finally, Simeon possessed the educational and pastoral background and understanding that allowed him to set his listeners' hearts on the pilgrim's way. Let us, therefore, delve further into Simeon's life and thought in order to appreciate the example of a lively faith that he so consistently offers us.

Simeon's character

Charles Simeon, though he was raised in the High Church tradition, was an Evangelical at heart. He had "converted" after his undergraduate experience (a conversion that, as he records, happened during the season of Lent in 1779) at King's College, Cambridge. In a few years time, through God's providence, Simeon would find himself with what would turn out to be a life-long pastoral assignment at Holy Trinity Church (also in Cambridge). While ministering there he was described as

having a "devotion to duty ... learning ... courage ... [and] zeal." As committed to the Evangelical cause as Simeon was, he was also a staunch churchman, "loving the Church [of England] and its services with a devotion which did much to strengthen the bonds between those influenced by religious revival and those who looked upon it with some misgivings." In Simeon's own words: "The scope and tendency of our [Anglican] Liturgy is to raise our minds to the holy and heavenly state, and to build us up upon the Lord Jesus Christ as the foundation of a sinner's hope."

Early in his ministry, Simeon proved that he was willing to cross the lines of the High Church and Low Church divide for the sake of communicating the Gospel both creatively and clearly. Likewise (in my own estimation), it was, in part, Simeon's own passion for both a "converted faith" (that which was loudly espoused by many in the Reformed/Calvinist camp of the Church of England), and the things of liturgical ritual and the authority of the Church universal (that which pertained to many Arminian-minded, or "Anglo-Catholic" Anglicans) that enabled him to effectively forge a genuine relationship between the two sides.

There are additional aspects of Charles Simeon's character worth noting. First, Simeon possessed an unwavering devotion to focusing on the "*things that are above, not on things that are on earth*" (Colossians 3:2). For instance, he would often live in the most meager of housing even as he elevated in prominence at Cambridge. When his brother left him a fortune, he simply turned it down! Actually, Simeon was known to channel all of his extra income to religious and charitable organizations. Simply put, Simeon had what

he admitted was a “noble indifference to money.” The simplicity of his life, and his understanding of the principles of Biblical stewardship influenced Simeon to always maintain the moral high ground in discourse with other Christians. It is clear that Simeon was not only willing to learn and teach his faith in Christ Jesus, but he was also willing to consistently live out his faith. He was wonderfully in tune with Saint Paul’s exhortation to the Ephesians: *“I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace”* (Ephesians 4:1-3).

Perhaps the most endearing quality of Charles Simeon is a common thread found in all of his life experiences. John Piper, the very fine modern American evangelical Baptist preacher and author, chooses Simeon among just two other men (the others also being evangelical Anglicans: John Newton (1725-1807), the ordained presbyter, and William Wilberforce (1759-1833), the faithful layman) to demonstrate exactly what perseverance looks like in the life of a Christian leader. A prime example of that perseverance occurred in the life of Simeon in 1807 after he had been ministering at Holy Trinity parish for twenty-five years. It was Simeon’s physical health that was the obstacle in this particular instance. Piper describes the outcome: “His voice gave way so that preaching was very difficult and at times he could only speak a whisper. After a sermon he would feel ‘more like one dead than alive.’ This broken condition lasted for thirteen years, till he was sixty years old. In all this time, Simeon pressed on in his work.”

And where did this endurance originate? How was Simeon able to time and time again display this perseverance (as we will see), not just in dealing with his physical incapacities, but also in so many other obstacles that Satan forwarded his way? It was probably the same factor that led him to question the absolute theological positions of the Calvinists and the Arminians. He was entirely committed to a life of prayer and meditation upon the Holy Scriptures. After all, as Simeon said, “meditation [in the Word of God] is the grand means of our growth in grace; without it, prayer itself is an empty service.” Really, Simeon’s character, by all accounts, is impeccable.

Simeon as Teacher and Preacher

Before anything else, Charles Simeon was a faithful preacher of the Word of God. Literally thousands (to be exact, 2,536 that he published) of his sermons are available today – anthologies and collections even beyond measure. Entire books have been written from Simeon’s words, as a faithful representation of sound, faithful, and evangelical preaching. Simeon considered his calling as a Minister of the Word a most serious one. As John R.W. Stott (1921-2011), the modern evangelical Anglican giant, noted in his introduction to *Evangelical Preaching: An Anthology of Sermons by Charles Simeon*: “Simeon was one of the greatest and most pervasive preachers the Church of England has ever known.” And what is so amazing about Simeon’s passion and gift for expositing the Word is his lack of training. Again, Stott notes: “[Simeon] had no instruction in homiletics, for it was not taught in the theological schools [in his day].” Ironically, in the early years of his ministry, out of sheer discouragement, Simeon was

ready to give up the preaching endeavor entirely. But as he was persistent in all else, Simeon “*press[ed] on toward the goal for the prize of the upward calling of God in Christ Jesus*” (Philippians 3:14).

Charles Simeon essentially taught himself how to preach utilizing such classic sources as *The Reformed Pastor*, written by the great Puritan pastor and theologian Richard Baxter (1615-91), and *The Country Parson*, written by the Welsh born Anglican presbyter and poet George Herbert (1593-1633). Ultimately, Simeon’s effectiveness from the pulpit extended from the very same reason why he was such an effective bridge-builder in dealing with opposing (orthodox) theological factions within the Church. For Simeon was always primarily concerned about expounding the Word of God in light of the Gospel message. His primary concern, as he conspicuously noted in all the prefaces of his works, was to clearly communicate three things:

The Author ... would wish his work to be brought to this test – Does it uniformly tend 1) to humble the sinner, 2) to exalt the Savior, and 3) to promote holiness. If in any instance it loses sight of any of these points, let it be condemned without mercy.

In his faithful communication to the people concerning the Word of God, Simeon never overstated his case (much like the Anglican confession the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion does not!). Rather, he was following one of the primary principles that has been communicated by so many in the history of the Church universal (Richard Baxter immediately comes to mind): “Unity in things Necessary, Liberty in things Unnecessary, and Charity in all.”

This approach to sermonizing by Simeon was most effective. An aspect of his preaching that could have had an even more positive impact for an effective ministry is the genuine passion that he brought to the work. The Reverend William Carus, who was Simeon’s assistant at Holy Trinity, speaks about this passion as an editor of one of his memoirs: “[Simeon’s] soul was in his subject and he spoke and acted exactly as he felt.” Simeon was absolutely convinced of the message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. He was never in doubt about his own salvation, such that when he communicated that salvation to others, it was a very convincing endeavor. He knew that lost souls needed Christ, no exceptions. And he was absolutely certain that the canon of the Holy Scriptures was communicated by none other than God himself. Thus, when Ministers would preach their own findings and their own intellectual biases based in man-made doctrine (that is, the strictest forms of Calvinism or Arminianism), he was unconvinced. Simeon would always bring it back to a level that related directly to the essentials of the Faith. In noting just some of the quotes of Simeon about certain aspects of the Christian Faith, this fact becomes so obvious. For instance, Simeon stated about the Scriptures: “I love the simplicity of the Scriptures; and I wish to receive and inculcate every truth precisely in the way, and to the extent, that is set forth in the inspired Volume. Were it the habit of all divines, there would soon be an end of most of the controversies that have agitated and divided the Church of Christ.”

Simeon was only concerned about the Truth that can be extracted from the Holy Word, not about speculation and guesswork. For Simeon, the Scriptures were easily

understandable in the cases that they needed to be. Thus, he could exhume a passion that may have been absent from the more intellectually committed preachers and teachers. Thus, the man who once admitted that during the first seven years of his own preaching ministry that he “did not know the head from the tail of a sermon,” was, in fact, competent and able to (in his own words) “let the Bible speak.” Simeon’s effectiveness in the pulpit is not distinct from his unwillingness to be the follower of any one theological camp within the Church. He was always committed to Biblical principles, and much like the great Lutheran Reformer Martin Luther (1483-1546), was only willing to interpret those principles through the message of the Gospel (which is central to all of Scripture). Thus, Simeon held a well-balanced view of God, of man, and of the interaction of the two.

Simeon as persevering Pastor

It was back in his “student days” that Charles Simeon reflected on the possibility of ministering at Holy Trinity Church in Cambridge: “How should I rejoice if God were to give me that church, that I might preach the gospel there, and be a herald for him in the midst of the university!” The dream came true, in a sense, in November of 1782. Simeon was only twenty-three years old when he received the appointment. He was an untrained and inexperienced Deacon at the time. It was upon the death of the incumbent Rector at Holy Trinity that Simeon was rather hastily appointed to the position (mainly through his father’s political connections). This appointment was especially a surprise because of Simeon’s (at the time) Methodist (Wesleyan) leanings, an ideology that was somewhat suspect in that time and place.

Thus, Simeon found himself in a rather precarious situation. This fact is especially due to the rejection (of Simeon) by most of the membership at Trinity. They wanted another man to be their Rector, the Reverend John Hammond.

On his first day preaching at Holy Trinity Church there was, for all intense and purposes, a mutiny: “The Churchwardens and the Vestry [lay leaders] ... encouraged all the regular pew-holders to fix locks on their pews so that ... no one else could be admitted to their seats, thus leaving the preacher with a sea of vacant places before him.” How did the young Simeon react? He steadily provided additional seats at his own expense, and continued to preach even when the Churchwardens had the chairs thrown into the church yard! Simeon had additional problems. The Sunday afternoon lecture that was the charge of the parish’s Churchwardens was not assigned to him. Rather, the Wardens passed him over, and instead assigned the service to John Hammond, the assistant Minister. This practice lasted for five years until Hammond left, and even then they still did not assign Simeon the lecture (in his own parish!). In fact, Simeon did not take over the lecture until twelve years after he became the Rector (in 1794)! Simeon attempted to initiate a Sunday evening service but the Wardens locked the doors of the church. In response, Simeon had a locksmith open them.

The long-term resistance that Simeon experienced at the Holy Trinity Church would later spill over to the University. Students spread all kinds of rumors about Simeon, and they “held [him] in derision for his Biblical preaching and his uncompromising stand as an evangelical.” He was even the

target of attempted assault on occasion! Any students who attended the parish to listen to Simeon's preaching were ostracized and accused as being guilty of subscribing to "Simeonism." And it was not only the students who treated Simeon as an outcast. Many of the faculty at Cambridge (his own colleagues) also regularly treated him with disdain. Simeon recalls: "I remember the time I was quite surprised that a Fellow of my own College ventured to [dare] walk with me for a quarter of an hour on the grass-plot before Clare Hall." It is a wonder that Charles Simeon did not "pack it in" within the first few months of his appointment. It seemed as though, on the surface, that he had been misdirected in his calling, and that the many obstacles were proof of his own error. But Simeon did not see his situation in that light. Rather, he always returned to the Scriptures in order to assess the situation. And when he was convinced that he was on the side of righteousness (that his opposition was not inspired by the Holy Spirit, but rather of the Devil), then he appropriately and lovingly (in most cases) resisted the opposition. Simeon dealt with his approach to the Calvinists and the Arminians in a very similar manner (as we will see in more detail in the next section). He was always a steady keel amongst the storms of disagreement. God had blessed Simeon not only with wisdom and understanding, but also with a patient and persistent heart. Simeon's strength was his ability to stay the course and to meet every obstacle by the power of the Word made flesh.

If Simeon were to rely upon anything other than God in his ministry at Holy Trinity Church, he would never have been there for fifty-four years! And he would not have had the unbelievable impact (despite the

opposition) that he did in so many realms of English Christianity. In many ways, it was Simeon's strong sense of accountability that led him to stay. Simeon preached the following excerpt from a sermon in his very first year as Rector at Trinity:

Remember the nature of my office, and the care incumbent on me for the welfare of your immortal souls ... Consider whatever may appear in my discourse harsh, earnest or alarming, not as the effects of enthusiasm, but as the rational dictates of a heart impressed with a sense both of the value of the soul and the importance of eternity ... By recollecting the awful consequences of my neglect, you will be more inclined to receive favorably any well-meant admonitions.

Simeon thought of himself as a "keeper of the lighthouse" in the very spirit of St. Paul and the Old Testament prophets. One historian said of Simeon, "Wakeful endurance was a life-and-death matter for Simeon. He dared not have a casual, sleepy-eyed approach to ministry." Simeon firmly believed in the admonition of Hebrews 13:17, that he would one day give an account for the souls of those who were under his charge. And what was most amazing in and through all of his struggles in the ministry, through all of the opposition against him (in light of his commitment to answering God's call), is that he remained hopeful and loving: "With this sweet hope of ultimate acceptance with God, I have always enjoyed much cheerfulness before men; but I have at the same time labored incessantly to cultivate the deepest humiliation before God." Again, Simeon believed the Lord when he said "*vengeance is mine*" (Deuteronomy 32:35), and he was unwilling to sacrifice his

work or his relationship with God for the sake of his own pride and/or reputation.

Essentially, Simeon held a Christ-like model in dealing with opponents. He encountered his enemies face to face and with courage (according to the “Matthew 18” model). An example of this approach is Simeon’s encounter with a certain parishioner who accused Simeon of setting too high a standard of holiness in his preaching. Simeon refused to meet indirect accusation with more accusation. Rather, with charity, he confronted the person with the Word of God. Simeon’s perseverance was unmatched during his time of ministering within the Church of England. It is truly amazing that he remained in the same parish for over five decades! And it is this perseverance that is most important in his willingness to moderate perhaps the longest standing debate in the Church universal regarding the sovereignty of God and the free will/responsibility of man.

Simeon as moderator

It is important to note once again that Charles Simeon’s foundational strength in moderating the different “camps” of Christians was his unwavering commitment to Holy Scripture. In the words of John Stott: “To begin with, [Simeon] sought to be personally submissive to whatever God said in his Word. In consequence, anticipating the modern hermeneutical debate about the blindspots which our cultural inheritance and ecclesiastical traditions create within us, he tried to divest himself of all preconceptions and to listen to God’s Word with an open, unprejudiced, and impartial mind.”

Stott here is describing an aspect of Charles Simeon that virtually every one of his

biographers agrees on. Simeon, perhaps, achieved the “unbiased approach” to Scripture that we all long for. If anything, he was meticulous about pursuing it. In his own words,

I have long pursued the study of Scripture with a desire to be impartial ... In the beginning of my inquires I said to myself, “I am a fool; of that I am quite certain.” One thing I know assuredly, that in religion of myself I know nothing. I do not therefore sit down to the perusal of Scripture in order to impose a sense on the inspired writers, but to receive one, as they give it to me. I pretend not to teach them, I wish like a child to be taught by them.

It is an interesting application that Simeon makes here from the words of Jesus: “*Truly I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven*” (Matthew 18:3-4). Ultimately then, Simeon’s effectiveness in moderating among divergent theological opinion lay in his humility. He was unwilling to fall into the trap of making God (and his Word) to fit inside little man-made boxes. He was well aware of the words of the prophet Isaiah (as he is quoting God himself): “*For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD*” (Isaiah 55:8). Again, Stott is helpful here: “If Simeon had lived in our generation, I think he would have acknowledged the need for Biblical criticism ... At the same time, I am sure he would have rejected the proud, selective, judgmental attitude which many adopt toward Scripture.”

Charles Simeon was an effective moderator

because he did not choose sides. Again, in his own words: “The author [Simeon]... is no friend to systematizers in theology. He has endeavored to derive from the Scriptures alone his views of religion.” This fact is not to say that he rejected a system of theology presented in the Holy Scriptures (as is very evident from reading his sermons!). Rather, what Simeon rejected was a complete and rigid system according to the reasoning and logic of men (especially in light of obvious Scriptural inconsistency as we often see occur in the Calvinist/Arminian debate). Simeon often claimed: “There is not a decided Calvinist or Arminian in the world, who equally approves of the whole of Scripture. He apprehends that there is not a determined votary [a person committed by a vow] of either system who, if he had been in the company of St. Paul, whilst he was writing his different epistles, would not have recommended him to alter one or other of his expressions.”

Simeon often said: “Sometimes I am a high Calvinist, at other times a low Arminian, so that if extremes will please you, I am your man.” One of the most powerful examples of how Simeon directly dealt with the extremes of Calvinism and Arminianism is found in an obscure (yet now famous because Simeon included the dialogue in one of his memoirs) conversation that he engaged in with the great John Wesley (a pinnacle holder of the Arminian position). Though it is too long to quote in its entirety, it is important to present at least some of what Simeon said in order to better understand his effectiveness in dealing with the issue. Simeon posed a succession of questions to Wesley (who was an old man at the time) in order to show him his own error in his opposition to some aspects of the Calvinist position: “Pray, Sir, do you feel

yourself a depraved creature, so depraved that you would never have thought of turning to God ... And do you utterly despair of recommending yourself to God by anything you can do; and look for salvation solely through the blood and righteousness of Christ?” Simeon went on in this way for some time. Each time Wesley (in an almost calculated manner) responded in the negative. Finally, Simeon closed the deal with these words: “Then, Sir, with your leave I will put up my dagger again, for this [these questions] is all my Calvinism; this is my election, my justification by faith, my final perseverance ... therefore, if you please, instead of searching out terms and phrases to be a ground of contention between us, we will cordially unite in those things wherein we agree.”

There are a couple of important points to note about this conversation. First, Simeon was polite and kind in his engagement with Wesley. Second, Simeon never reached beyond a Scriptural presentation in the questions that he posed to Wesley. Third, Simeon genuinely wanted Wesley to see that there was a practical common ground between him and the Calvinists; and that it made more sense to unify on that common ground instead of dividing over positions that cannot clearly be supported by all of Scripture. It was, then, in Simeon’s intellectual humility, and in his heart for true unity in the Body of Christ that drove him to this wonderful place.

Simeon as a “Hebrews 11” saint

Charles Simeon has received many accolades from history and has much to be remembered for as a servant of the living God. He has been a Godly example to several generations of faithful leaders in God’s Church. Perhaps his strongest influence has been in teaching God’s

people humility and perseverance. Simeon represents an ordained Minister who was not afraid to suffer for proclaiming the message of the Gospel (in all aspects of his life). As one who was constantly in prayer and immersed in the Holy Scriptures, Simeon's strengths are not surprising. It is also not surprising that Simeon did not seek to be a follower of men. He was unconvinced by the systematic arguments from those who faithfully followed John Calvin (1509-64), or those who followed Jacobus Arminius (1560-1609). Rather, he astutely noticed their strengths and consistencies with God's own Word, as well as their weaknesses and inconsistencies. Thus, Simeon was able to commit to a Scriptural system of theology, one that did not attempt to explain away passages. For this fact alone, Simeon is one to be admired. And Simeon has served as an effective model in order to bridge disunity in the Church. He certainly had the great John Wesley second guessing himself! In any event, Charles Simeon will always be remembered as one who was willing and (intellectually and spiritually) able to stand in the proverbial gap. He fulfilled his calling to spread the Gospel in such a way that Jesus will always be glorified and honored for who he was and for what he did. Praise God for having raised up this faithful servant, and for setting upon his heart such a clarity that is often absent from the pulpits in many churches across our land: "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Hebrews 11:1).



Richard Baxter: True Hero in the Faith

By The Reverend Chad W. Tvenstrup

A number of years ago now, the Eldership here at Church of The Apostles embarked on a summer study from a book called *The Reformed Pastor*. This reading was my first in-depth encounter with Richard Baxter (the author), "Puritan Divine." As I read this work (one of hundreds from Baxter!) and witnessed his passion for "*equip[ing] the saints for the work of ministry*" (Ephesians 4:12) and for the Gospel in general, I was thoroughly impressed. Thus, I have continued to further my inquisition of this learned and noble man in the ensuing years. When our Superintendent requested that this particular edition of the *ApostlesJournal* would include biographies of our "heroes in the faith," Richard Baxter immediately came to my mind.

England during the Baxter Years

First, let us briefly review the historical context in England into which Richard Baxter was born. At the time of his birth on November 12, 1615, in Rowton, Shropshire, the nation was ruled by a Scotsman and the first Stuart monarch, James I (in fact, Baxter was born four years after the issuance of the famous Authorized, or King James, Version of the Bible). James I (1566-1625) had followed the last Tudor monarch, Elizabeth I (1533-1603), and was also ruling Scotland at the time (as James VI). In fact, the ecclesiastical sentiments of James I was for the "Kirk," the established (presbyterian)

Church of Scotland. However, upon succeeding to the English throne he became legally obliged to uphold the right and privileges of the established (episcopal) Church of England. Thus, Baxter grew up (as a young boy) in the last decade of the reign of James I, a relatively stable period as compared with later decades, but still nonetheless a rather chaotic time.

Baxter was (despite their compatible ages) educated under John Owen (1616-83) who was rightly considered the greatest Puritan theologian of the Church of England (Puritans being those Churchmen who wanted to further “purify” the English church in a Reformed direction). By this time James I had died and his son Charles I (1600-49) assumed the throne. The reign of Charles I, under the ecclesiastical leadership of Archbishop of Canterbury William Laud (1573-1645), a committed High Churchman, proved very oppressive to the Puritans (non-conformists) within the Church of England. Eventually, Baxter, though ordained in the established Church, ended up on a Puritan track as he studied divinity – a decision that would shape the remainder of his life.

Richard Baxter’s coming of age was also a period of Civil War in England. Various political and religious factions were constantly vying for power, and would regularly skirmish against one another. In particular, the House of Commons of the British Parliament (which supported the Puritan position and even at times the more radical position of the Independent group) was fighting against the monarchy (which held more sympathies for the established Church). Finally, in 1649 Charles I was

cornered and beheaded by Parliament, having been found guilty of high treason.

Meanwhile, in 1638 Richard Baxter had already been ordained a presbyter in the Church of England. Baxter, however, would experience a significant history of serious problems with the established Church; particularly problematic was his belief that the office of bishop (episcopacy) as practiced in the Church of England was not a necessity for the validity of the visible Church universal. Indeed, Baxter proposed a modified and beneficial episcopacy that he believed would better serve all parties involved in the life of the Church of England. At the time of the death of Charles I, Baxter was ministering at Kidderminster in Worcestershire (having been appointed to the parish in April 1641 at the age of twenty-six).

The Reformed Pastor

It was at Kidderminster that Baxter wrote (and administered the Gospel in Word and Sacrament according to the principles outlined in) his *magnum opus*, *The Reformed Pastor*. The town was literally transformed by his efforts of ministering God’s grace to the people, which included his unrelenting commitment to teach his parishioners, house by house, the tenets of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Much sacrifice was involved on Baxter’s part, and he clearly had a passion for growing his people closer and closer to God. He catechized the townspeople at a rate of fourteen families per week (his goal was to cover all eight hundred families over the course of a year)! Baxter was radically dedicated to his people and he spiritually turned the town of Kidderminster upside down on God’s behalf! In time, Baxter’s

persistent hard work and his model of ministry in Kidderminster became an example for those who would come after him throughout all England and even in the United States. The famed preacher of the Great Awakening of the middle-to-late eighteenth-century, George Whitfield (1714-70), was a student of Baxter in this regard. Indeed, the following inscription is found on a statue of Richard Baxter that now stands in the center of Kidderminster: "Between the years of 1640 and 1660 this town was the scene of the labors of Richard Baxter, renowned equally for his Christian learning and his pastoral fidelity. In a stormy and divided age he advocated unity and comprehension, pointing the way to 'the eternal.' Both Churchmen and Nonconformists united to raise this memorial in A.D. 1865." This inscription pretty much says it all!

Tension in Church and State

Because Worcestershire (the region in which he served) was sympathetic to the Royal cause, when Baxter spoke out against the policies of Charles I at the onset of the Civil War, he was forced for a period of time to temporarily retire to Gloucester. Eventually he ended up in Coventry, where he was "hiding" with no less than thirty other fugitive Puritan and non-conformist Ministers. There he would preach to the soldiers (he actually served for a time as a chaplain to the Parliamentary Army) and to the townspeople. It was from here that Baxter wrote his influential work *Aphormisms of Justification*, an attempted theological blending (through Biblical comprehensiveness) of the classic Calvinist

and Arminian positions regarding God's sovereignty and man's free-will, a work that stirred significant controversy among those Puritans committed to a staunch Calvinist position on the said issues. Eventually, Baxter would return to Kidderminster and pastor there for a total of nineteen years.

Baxter was a classic Puritan. However, he exerted much energy in order to foster peace among the warring factions in Protestant England. His famous quote (which he may have "stolen" from times earlier) is the featured quotation from the Conservative Congregational Christian Conference (the 4Cs, of which the Church of The Apostles is a member): "In necessary things, unity; in doubtful things, liberty [diversity]; in all things, charity." Baxter was certainly not an Independent (that is, a Separatist - in other words, he did not want the Church of England to simply go away as the Independents did!), but he was not a Conformist either (as stated before, he was disturbed by the established Church's contention that episcopacy was necessary for the efficacy in mission of the visible Church of Christ). Nonetheless, Baxter was always willing to compromise (within the pale of Biblical orthodoxy) in secondary matters for the sake of unity.

Baxter was a "Divine" because he spent so much of his time writing - over two-hundred books and even more pamphlets and tracts. And he was not afraid to present often controversial opinions (on all sides of the debates) concerning doctrine; though, in all things considered foundational to the Christian Faith, Richard Baxter was orthodox and Scriptural. There is no doubt

that Jesus Christ was his Lord and Savior, and that he lived his life as an expression of that faith. A verse from the Letter of James comes to mind here: *“What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him?” Faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead*” (James 2:14-17). Baxter certainly witnessed and displayed a lot of the fruit of the Spirit in his ministry and life! He most definitely possessed (of which the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion speak) a “lively faith.”

Baxter’s efforts at unity

After the execution of Charles I in 1649, a period known as the “Interregnum” took place in England during which the Parliament and its Army ruled. From this was born the “Commonwealth,” which lasted for about four years. Soon after (in 1653), Oliver Cromwell (1599-1658) was thrust into power and, in essence, served as a military dictator (called a Protectorate) for five years. During the years of Cromwell’s rule the Church of England was suppressed and the Independents gained control of all religious affairs. When Cromwell died in 1658, his son took power for a short time before a second Commonwealth was re-established (lasting for only one year). At last, the Stuart monarchy was restored in 1660 (along with the (Anglican) Church of England) and Charles II (1630-85) assumed the royal crown. Wow! Talk about turbulent times!

In 1661 Richard Baxter attended an important conference of Anglicans and Presbyterians at Savoy Hospital in London. At the meeting, the different groups were discussing the role of liturgy in the newly re-

established Church of England in an attempt to generate reconciliation among the different factions. Baxter himself actually (in the time span of two weeks) penned an entire liturgical book based on moderate Puritan (Reformed) principles and argued for a minimal catechism (doctrine) that would consist of the Apostles’ Creed, the Ten Commandments, and the Lord’s Prayer. Unfortunately, the Puritan participants were the first to reject Baxter’s work, arguing it was still too conformed to the previous Book of Common Prayer of the established Church. Essentially, Baxter’s work was interpreted to be too compromising even though it reflected a genuine and Biblically inclusive expression of the Faith *“that was once for all delivered to the saints”* (Jude 3).

Baxter the persecuted

During the time of the Interregnum and even under the Commonwealth and Protectorate, Richard Baxter (along with many other Puritans) enjoyed much freedom. This fact is mainly due to Cromwell (though he was really an Independent) and the membership of Parliament being made up of a majority of Puritans and Independents; as well as an overall commitment in the country at-large to greater religious freedom. But when the monarchy was restored, Baxter (along with many other Puritans and Independents) was rather heavily persecuted. In fact, from 1662 until the Declaration of Indulgence of 1687 by James II (1633-1701), which formally established a greater degree of religious freedom, Baxter’s life was constantly disturbed by persecution of one kind or another. In essence, Baxter refused to abandon his principles to the monarchy and

to the established Church just for a little job security! Baxter was imprisoned for eighteen months (beginning in May 1685), and fined substantially harsh sums. In order to pay such steep fines, Baxter was forced to sell two of his extensive libraries and was nearly exposed to complete public humiliation, though at the last minute he was saved by clemency.

A true hero in the Faith

When Richard Baxter wrote *A Call to the Unconverted* (one of his earliest works) he expressed a pointed interest in the saving of souls. This work is recorded to have heavily influenced the likes of Charles Haddon Spurgeon (1834-1920), the highly influential British Baptist preacher and William Wilberforce (1759-1833), the British politician, philanthropist and the leader of the movement to abolish the slave trade in Great Britain, as well as the afore mentioned George Whitefield. In this monumental work Baxter outlined that which he practiced consistently in his ministry: preaching, teaching, and living the Gospel as a straightforward exercise. In other words, godly living always involves a level of thorough reasoning that actually reaches the mind of the hearer; communication must always be direct and concise, and it must challenge the conscience of sinful men, dealing in primary (and often hard) truths. In conversation, Baxter was not one to talk “around” an issue. In many ways he would have made a terrible modern politician (at least by the industry’s standards). Baxter always dealt with the central and unifying facts of the Gospel, and (to a significant extent) “cornered” his hearers into making a

decision either for or against Jesus Christ. Likewise, Baxter was careful to answer any conceivable objection to the core truth of the Christian Faith, and he did so not in a self-righteous or arrogant manner but in complete humility.

Upon his imprisonment, Baxter is quoted as having said: “I preached as never sure to preach again and as a dying man to dying men.” Richard Baxter loved souls! Despite all of his theological writings and doctrinal articulations, at the end of the day, in his mind life came down to a simple equation: people who are apart from Jesus Christ are eternally separated from God in Hell. Everything that drove Baxter in his extensive writing, pastoral work, deliberations and living was the Gospel – the Good News of God in Christ! The Gospel was always the core. Souls needed saving. We can only pray that we, the membership here at the Church of The Apostles, would take a lesson from the great Richard Baxter and adopt the same passion and vision that he so consistently demonstrated in his seventy-six years on this earth. When Baxter died on December 8, 1691, he was honored by Churchmen (High Church and Low Church) and Dissenters (Puritans and Independents) alike. For they had all come to realize that this was a man who fought for God, ultimately allowing the LORD to fight the battle – the battle already won!

*“Thus says the LORD to you,
‘Do not be afraid and
do not be dismayed ...
for the battle is not yours but God’s.’”*
(2 Chronicles 20:15)

Gregory the Great: Servant of the Servants of God

By Superintendent Mark R. Galloway

By universal agreement the outstanding Christian bishop of the early Medieval period (or Middle Ages) was Gregory the First of Rome – “the Great.” The life and work of Gregory is a splendid illustration of the creative response of the visible Church of Christ to the challenges of maintaining political order and Christian values in an age of chaos; a time when imperial Roman order was disappearing and Europe was being ravaged by war with various Barbarian tribes. A truly model bishop, Gregory is undeniably one of the great saints and churchmen of Christian history.

Gregory was born in about 540, the son of an extremely wealthy Roman senator named Gordianus, who owned large estates in Sicily in addition to a beautiful manor on the Coelian Hill in Rome. Gregory’s family was very devoted to the Christian faith. Indeed, the names of his mother (Silvia) and his two aunts (Tarsilla and Aemiliana) are listed as “saints” on the ancient Roman church calendar. During Gregory’s boyhood the city of Rome had been terribly despoiled by the invading Goths, the population had dwindled, and, though Gregory, as a member of the privileged class, had received a classic education, daily life for the average citizen in the “eternal city” was extremely difficult.

Gregory became Prefect (*Praefectus Urbis*) of Rome in 573, the highest office in Roman politics. But, after two years as Prefect he retired, sold his vast property, devoted the proceeds to the relief of the poor, and

founded and endowed seven monasteries, six on his Sicilian estate, and one (named Saint Andrew’s) in his own home on the Coelian Hill, that latter of which he joined as an ordinary Benedictine monk living in community under the authority of an elected Abbot.

Firmness and strength of character

After a few years of very austere life, the then Bishop of Rome, Benedict I, compelled Gregory to leave the cloister, and, after being ordained a presbyter, was appointed by Benedict a *regionarius* (that is, one of the seven administrators of Rome). Soon afterwards (c. 579), Benedict’s successor, Pelagius II made Gregory *apocrisiarius* (the Bishop of Rome’s ambassador) to the imperial court at Constantinople, where he was widely respected by both churchmen and nobles. After six years in the East (in c. 585) and after having learned that the Eastern Emperor had no intention of lending assistance to the ravished Western empire in any way, shape or manner, Gregory returned to Rome to become Abbot of his former monastery. Not long after his return home, Pelagius II died of the plague, and in 590 Gregory was elected as his successor by the clergy and people of Rome. The first monk to become Bishop of Rome, Gregory agreed to serve only after a severe inner struggle. His humility prevented him from seeking such honors, and he felt ill equipped to cope with the immense burdens of the office.

Gregory had good reason for his reluctance. Upon his return from Constantinople, he

had found Rome in an alarming state. Indeed, throughout the sixth-century Italy had suffered a series of disasters from both war and natural causes. The infrastructure of the Western empire had collapsed and the Eastern Emperor sought to conquer the West for Constantinople, thereby threatening the spiritual claims of the church in Rome and in all Western Europe. These wars left much of Italy a wilderness and made it easy prey for the Lombards, a Germanic tribe, which came into Italy in 568 and continued to plague the peninsula throughout the next century. Flood, plague and famine followed in the wake of the continuous warfare, and as a result many believed that the end of the world was at hand. In the midst of this chaos Gregory was able to provide Christian Europe with farsighted leadership and spiritual guidance. In matters of spiritual jurisdiction, Gregory would not yield an inch to the Eastern Emperor's claims, though he always accepted the Emperor's civil authority. Indeed, it was owing to Gregory, in whom firmness and strength of character were tempered by gentleness and charity, that many of the evils of the sixth-century were at last conquered.

Energy and efficiency

Gregory's tenure as Bishop of Rome was one of strenuous activity. He accomplished an enormous amount of work in spite of his constant poor health. Because of the vacuum first caused by the overthrow of the Roman Emperors in the West in 476, Gregory was forced to take an active role in political affairs (for example, the appointment of governors to cities). In fact, by assuming the obligations that formerly belonged to the Western

Emperor, Gregory initiated the inevitable step in making the Bishop of Rome a temporal as well as a spiritual ruler and in the formation of what eventually came to be known as the Papal States.

In his administration of the vast resources of the church in Rome, Gregory showed remarkable ability and charity. For instance, he fed the plague stricken populace of Rome from the church's granaries in Sicily and used revenues from the church's estates in Corsica, Sardina, Gaul and North Africa to further care for the poor. He organized the defense of Rome against the attacks of the Lombards and then personally rode out and met and negotiated a peace with their invading king in 593. In this as in other matters, he administered his office with energy and efficiency. He removed unworthy parish pastors from their duties, forbade taking money for certain services, and emptied the Roman church's treasury to ransom prisoners of the Lombards and to care for persecuted Jews.

Indeed, in his attitude toward Jews he revealed a tolerance absolutely unique to his time. Gregory defended a Jew's right to liberty and action in civil affairs and to have their own religious services in the synagogue. He condemned all attempts to baptize (proselytize) Jews against their will. As Bishop of Rome, Gregory acted as the protector of his Jewish brethren in the faith of Abraham at a time when they were almost universally being persecuted in all places.

Pastoral Care

Though Gregory was a keen observer of human nature, his writings are not on the

high theological level of Saint Augustine of Hippo (354-430), rather they reflect and meet the pastoral needs of the visible Church of Christ in an age when civilization was collapsing and authentic Christian faith was in danger of being lost. Deeply Christ-centered and even mystical, Gregory's works provided succeeding generations with texts of dignified simplicity. His *Liber Regulae Pastoralis* (c. 591), literally "The Book of the Pastoral Rule of Life," but traditionally known as *Pastoral Care*, sets out the directives for the pastoral life of a bishop and pastor. The book, which was translated into English in the ninth-century by the scholar Alfred the Great (849-99), King of the West Saxons, became (and still is) the classic Christian textbook on the work and office of the episcopacy. In it Gregory describes bishops mainly as physicians and shepherds of souls whose main duties are preaching and the pastoral enforcement of discipline. Skilled at applying the Gospel daily to the needs of his listeners, *Pastoral Care* is but an echo of Gregory's own down-to-earth preaching and pastoral style.

Gregory's leadership formed a vital link between two periods of Christian history. He was the last of the great Latin Fathers of the Church and the first and one of the most important figures of the Middle-Ages. Of all the bishops of Rome, only he and Leo the First (440-61) and the recently departed John Paul II (1920-2005) have been given the popular and well deserved title of "the Great." Gregory is by tradition recognized with Saint Augustine, Bishop of Hippo; Saint Ambrose (c. 339-97), Bishop of Milan; and Saint Jerome (c. 342-420), the foremost

Biblical scholar of the early Church, as one of the four key "Doctors" of the Western Church.

Places for the sake of good things

About fifteen years ago, Gregory's name had once again become popularly known throughout much of the Western world with the release of a best-selling CD recording of Spanish monks singing "Gregorian" chant. Ironically, although we know that he was instrumental in reforming the liturgy of the Western Church during his pontificate, we are not sure how much of the reformation of the music bearing his name Gregory he is actually responsible for. We do know, however, that it was the high standards he set for Western Church ceremony that created the conditions that brought chant into popular use – a development that has molded the spirituality of Western Christianity (both Catholic and Protestant) until the present day.

Perhaps the most famous story about Gregory comes to us from the writings of the Venerable Bede (c. 673-735), the author of *The Ecclesiastical History of England*, who tells of Gregory's encounter (while he was still a deacon) with some fair skinned Anglo-Saxon slaves in the Roman market place. When he asked where the young men were from, Gregory was told that they were "Angles" (English), to which he responded: "*Non Angli, sed angeli*" ("No, they are not Angles, but angels"). Gregory offered to help out with the physical and spiritual welfare of the *Angli* slaves, so that they "might be counted among the true *angeli* of heaven."

One of Gregory's finest accomplishments

was his organization of missionary enterprises for the conversion of pagan peoples throughout world. Gregory was especially concerned about the conversion of England, and in 596 he sent Augustine (d. 605), prior of his own monastery (Saint Andrew's) in Rome, and forty monks to evangelize the Anglo-Saxons. Gregory personally consecrated Augustine a bishop (he later became the first Archbishop of Canterbury) before sending him on his journey. Some correspondence between Augustine and Gregory survives. One of Gregory's most famous counsels to the first Bishop of Canterbury had to do with diversity in the young English Church. Gregory writes: "If you have found customs, whether in the Roman, Gallican, or any other Churches that may be more acceptable to God, I wish you to make a careful selection of them, and teach the Church of the English, which is still young in the faith, whatever you can profitably learn from the various Churches. For things should not be loved for the sake of places, but places for the sake of good things."

It is hard to over estimate the lasting influence of Gregory the Great on the Western Church. Gregory would have been content to be a monk, but he willingly served his Lord and God in other ways when asked. He sacrificed his own preferences in many ways, especially when he was called to be Bishop of Rome. However, once he was called to the public service of the church Gregory gave his considerable energies completely to this work. He personally knew how hard it was to be obedient to the Holy Spirit's calling. In one of his homilies,

he wrote this: "Perhaps it is not after all so difficult for a man to part with his possessions, but it is certainly most difficult for him to part with himself. To renounce what one has is a minor thing; but to renounce what one is, that is asking a lot."

One well respected Protestant historian of the Church universal has written: "It is impossible to conceive what would have been the confusion, the lawlessness, the chaotic state of the Middle-Ages without Gregory the Great."

Gregory's massively effective ministry and his personality did much to establish the idea in the Medieval mind that the Bishop of Rome was the supreme authority in the Church universal, and his achievement was all the more impressive in light of his unquestioned personal humility.

Gregory died on March 12, 604, and was buried in Saint Peter's basilica in Rome. His life was a true witness to the title he assumed for his office as Bishop of Rome: *servus servorum Dei*, "servant of the servants of God." By popular acclamation, Gregory was canonized a saint immediately after his death. His day of commemoration in the Anglican tradition and the Lutheran tradition is on March 12th. In the Roman Catholic Church his feast day is on September 3rd.

Alleluia.
The Lord is glorious
in his saints:
Come let us adore him.
Alleluia

Benedict: Man of Obedience and Humility

By Elder Nina Deuel

I don't know when it happened. I don't remember when I first met St. Benedict. I can't even remember if it was sudden or slow. Somehow I learned about him and his "Rule" (*Regula Benedicti*). I learned about his "Work of God" (*Opus Dei*) and how his monks prayed seven times a day, and how they prayed all of the Psalms in one week. I began to wonder, what it would mean for my heart and my mind if I prayed the Psalms through week by week?

Then I started to buy books that taught me about the Divine Hours – this wonderful cycle of prayer that became the centerpiece of the Benedictine Rule. So it was that I started on this pilgrimage of learning about St. Benedict and prayer. I am still learning. In fact, I am still a novice and continue to struggle with disciplining myself to follow more closely the Divine Hours daily. I can honestly say that praying the Benedictine cycle of prayer has aided immensely in drawing me closer to the heart of God. The Benedictine "Rule" can sound so rigid to modern ears, but (as experience has taught me) as you read the Rule (especially the Prologue) and participate in it one can be set free from earthly cares and concerns and focus one's attention on the heart of God.

Benedict of Nursia

Benedict of Nursia (c. 480-547) lived in Italy after the fall of Rome. Rome had fallen to raiding Barbarian hords in 410 and was sacked again in 455. Romulus Augustus

(c. 460-c. 500) was the last Roman Emperor and was deposed in 476 (four years before Benedict was born) by Odacer (433-93), a Germanic chieftain. Theodoric (454-526), an Ostrogoth of German descent, ruled the remains of Rome from 493-526. During these three-decades there was relative peace. When Theodoric died, however, Justinian I (483-565), the Eastern Emperor (reigning from Constantinople) tried to reclaim Rome. Through the rest of the century (526-599) there was constant war as both armies from the Eastern Empire and Barbarian tribes continuously invaded the Italian peninsula. This was certainly a troubled time with much insecurity and fear. The old all powerful and stable Rome was gone for ever.

Sometime during the first ten years of the reign of Theodoric, Benedict left his native Nursia in Umbria (north of Rome in central Italy) and went to Rome to attend school. Benedict was born into a noble Roman family and, therefore, had privileges that commoners did not have. While in Rome, Benedict became disgusted with the paganism rampant in the city, renounced the world, and went to live in a cave at Subiaco (located some forty miles east of Rome). It is believed that he underwent his deep conversion to Christ at this time.

In time, Benedict came to the attention of some other Christian men who were also living austere lives, who together founded twelve monasteries composed of twelve monks each. While the historical information is incomplete, there appears to

have been rebellion and envy of various kinds that resulted in Benedict leaving the area and establishing a new monastery on the mountain above Cassino (which is about eighty miles south of Rome).

It was early in his stay at Monte Cassino that Benedict wrote his “Rule.” The Rule is believed to be a compilation of the many writings and guidelines for monks and religious who lived before Benedict. Because of his love for Christ, humility and personal character, Benedict was able to take that which had come before him, and make it into a guide for Christian living that still influences today.

The Rule

The Rule of St. Benedict is a book of precepts for monks living communally under the authority of an abbot (since about the seventh-century it has also been adopted by communities of women). During the 1,500 years of its existence, it has become the leading guide in Western Christianity for monastics living in community. The spirit of the Rule is summed up in the motto *ora et labora* (“pray and work”). Seventy-three short chapters comprise the Rule. Its wisdom is of two kinds: spiritual (how to live a Christ-centered life on earth) and administrative (how to run a monastery efficiently). More than half the chapters describe how to be obedient and humble, and what to do when a member of the community is not. About one-fourth regulate the Work of God (the *Opus Dei*). One-tenth outline how and by whom the monastery should be managed. And two chapters specifically describe the abbot’s

pastoral duties.

In writing his Rule, Benedict was most heavily influenced by the thought of John Cassian (c. 360-435), a Christian theologian celebrated in both the Western and Eastern churches for his mystical writings, who was also known as one the “Desert Fathers.” Benedict’s Rule has a unique spirit of balance, moderation and reasonableness, traits that persuaded most religious communities founded throughout the Middle Ages to adopt it. As a result, the Rule of St. Benedict became one of the most influential writings in Western Christendom. Indeed, there remains today thousands of Benedictine monks and nuns living in monasteries all over the world that continue to be guided by the Rule of St. Benedict.

Apart from what may be drawn from the Rule itself, the only historical account of Benedict’s life is found in the second volume of a four-book set called *Dialogues* written by Pope Gregory the Great (c. 540-604) in approximately the year 593. Gregory’s account of Benedict’s life is not, however, a biography in the modern sense of the word. It provides instead a spiritual portrait of the gentle, disciplined abbot. Gregory did not, therefore, set out to write a chronological, historically anchored story of Benedict, but he did base his anecdotes on direct testimony.

One cannot read the Rule of St. Benedict and not hear in it a voice speaking who was totally committed to Christ. Indeed, Benedict’s was a Christ-centric life and he understood the need for humility and obedience: “the love of Christ must come before all else.” Neither of these

characteristics (humility and obedience), because of our fallen nature, comes naturally to any human. Therefore, we must strive diligently to let Jesus and the Holy Spirit work within our hearts so that obedience becomes our companion and humility our home.

Benedict's Rule stresses seeking God (that is a monk's primary vocation) by specifically reading and praying through the New Testament's four Gospels and the Psalter. In Benedict's monasteries illiterate monks were taught to read and write. The monks prayed seven times a day at fixed hours (hence the title Divine Hours or "fixed hour prayer"). However, during meal time the Bible was systematically read as were readings from the writings of the early Church Fathers. The monks were steeped in the Word of God, and learning was the means by which a monk came to know and obey God. Hearing, reading, learning and copying (that is, making manuscripts) of the Scriptures was an integral part of Benedictine life. The contemporary Church universal owes a great debt of gratitude to the Benedictine tradition for the preserving of many books and manuscripts that we have today from the ancient world.

The light that comes from God

Benedict believed in balance between secular work (farming, cooking, and all of the things necessary for the monastery to be self-sufficient) and praying (*Opus Dei*) – the Work of God. In the Benedictine monastery these two things are meant to blend seamlessly; both being totally necessary to the needs of the individual and the community if the two entities are to mature and together draw

closer to God's heart.

The Prologue to the Rule is of the utmost importance and a follower of the Benedictine way is wise to read it often. The Prologue begins with the all important word "listen." The willingness to "listen" is of the greatest importance because in the Scriptures this is what God calls believers to do time and again. And the meaning of the word "listen" in the Prologue (as in the Bible) is to attend carefully through hearing, humility and obedience. All are necessary in order to truly seek God's heart and to accomplish what you are being called by God to do.

Thus we read in the Prologue:

Listen carefully, my son, to the master's instruction, and attend to them with the ear of your heart. This is advice from a father who loves you; welcome it, and faithfully put it into practice. The labor of obedience will bring you back to him from whom you had drifted through the sloth of disobedience. This message of mine is for you, then, if you are ready to give up your own will, once and for all, and armed with the strong and noble weapons of obedience to do battle for the true King, Christ the Lord ... Let us get up then, at long last, for the Scriptures rouse us when they say: *It is high time for us to arise from sleep* (Romans 13:11). Let us open our eyes to the light that comes from God, and our ears to the voice from heaven that every day calls out this charge: *If you bear his voice today, do not harden your hearts* (Psalm 95:8) ... What, dear brothers, is more delightful than this voice of the Lord calling to us? See how

the Lord in his love shows us the way of life. Clothed then with faith and the performance of good works, let us set out on this way, with the Gospel for our guide ... the Lord waits for us daily to translate into action, as we should, his holy teachings ... Therefore we intend to establish a school for the Lord's service. In drawing up its regulations, we hope to set down nothing harsh, nothing burdensome. The good of all concerned, however, may prompt us to a little strictness in order to amend faults and to safeguard love. Do not be daunted immediately by fear and run away from the road that leads to salvation.

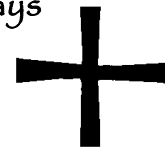
Dr. Esther de Wall, an Anglican lay women and an accomplished author, divides up the Rule into these main categories: the invitation, listening, stability, change, balance, material things, people, authority and praying. In her (1984) book *Seeking God: The way of St. Benedict*, de Wall talks about trying to live this balance of secular work and the Work of God (praying) outside of a

monastery setting. Although we are not monks tucked away in a monastery, de Wall reminds us that the precepts of the Rule can still be a great help to us as we live out our lives as Christians in the non-cloistered world.

I am ever grateful for those who have gone before us to guide us in our walk. I believe that outside of the incomparable Scriptures themselves (the holy Bible), I have learned more about how to walk with God from the Benedictine tradition than from any other Christian source. The Benedictine way has taught me how to “work” at prayer and inspired me to stay immersed in the Word of God. In Benedictine style, I pray some (at least two) of the psalms from the Psalter every night – so that I may “sleep” in the Word, always asking God to soften my heart and heal my mind. I pray God to continue his work in me, and I am grateful for his servant Benedict who lived 1,500 hundred years ago! Please God let obedience come quickly and may humility be my home.



Let a man consider that God always
 seeth him from Heaven,
 that the eye of God beholdeth
 his works everywhere,
 and that the angels report them to Him
 every hour.



RULE OF ST. BENEDICT

Monica: Exemplar of Faith

By Elder Robert J. Geoffrey

Next to Holy Scripture, nothing has formed what we know and believe as orthodox Christians more than the teachings of the early Church Fathers. So near and in tune were these men to the original apostolic traditions of the Church that their works formed the very foundation of Christian philosophy. Indeed, no study of the history of the Church universal would be complete without a study of the Fathers. For insight into the faith of the early Church we, to name a few, rely upon the writings of such giants as Clement of Rome (d. c. 96), Ignatius of Antioch (c. 35- c. 108), Polycarp of Smyrna (69-155), Ambrose of Milan (340-97), Gregory the Great (c. 540-604) and the great “Doctor of the Church,” Augustine of Hippo (354-430). These were the pioneers that untied the Biblical doctrine of the young Christian Church into a systematic cohesion. In fact, to an almost incalculable extent, these Fathers helped codify and articulate the creedal tradition (Nicene Christianity) upon which the Church universal has now stood for nearly seventeen centuries. It was, for example, the great Augustine of Hippo who, through his search of the Scriptures, formulated the concepts of Original Sin, the theory of Just War, the Church as the City of God and (a belief so dear to the hearts of the Reformers) the doctrine of salvation by God’s grace through faith in Christ alone.

The workings of a Sovereign God

No person exists in a total vacuum, for even

members of monastic communities group together! We humans are social beings – the Creator has made us as such. When we consider the great accomplishments of such an intellectual giant in Church history as Augustine of Hippo, we dare not ignore the personal influences of his life. I believe that when we look back upon the lives of influential Church Fathers, we are indeed looking back upon the workings of a Sovereign God in the lives of those who touched the hearts of these Fathers as well. God’s ways are sometimes incomprehensible, and, thus, we may fail to see how his will prevails. Other times, however, history shows the Divine’s authority plainly for all to see.

My assignment for this edition of the *ApostlesJournal* is to declare a Christian “hero.” My take on heroism hinges upon my personal connection to a well known “saint” of history that exemplified both Christ-like behavior in her life and a tangible connection to someone who exhibited similar behavior in my personal life: And that person is Monica (c. 331-387), mother of Augustine of Hippo. I treasure what I have learned about “saint” Monica because many of the same attributes she lived were possessed by my mother, “saint” May.

Right off the start, allow me a disclaimer. Though I intend to compare May to Monica, please do not extend that to a comparison of myself to Augustine! In fact, I am sure that all parties involved would prefer that the focus be (as they always should be) on the

mercies of a Sovereign God. I am sure that we will all agree that greatness among men and women is only the product of God's loving-kindness. When I see the hand of God working in the life of Augustine through his mother's faithfulness, I see a picture of my mother, and, thus, "saint" Monica, mother of Augustine, is my hero because I have been touched by her soul mate, "saint" May, mother of Robert.

Monica's life story is enshrined in the spiritual autobiography of her eldest son, in *The Confessions of Saint Augustine*, which was written after his mother's death. In the *Confessions* Augustine wrote of Monica's life in retrospect, thus it is believed that his perspective was full of an awareness of how God had used his mother to gently and constantly pray for his sanctification. Both Monica and Augustine progressed in sanctification as they grew in faith through their devotions, though it was a bumpy road for each in their own way.

Your son is with you

Monica was born about the year 331 in Tagaste, Roman North Africa. Her parents were apparently wealthy Christians. As a young woman she was baptized. When she was old enough to marry her parents arranged for her to wed (curiously enough) a pagan man named Patricius, who served as a provincial in the Roman government. Scholars speculate that their marriage certainly had more to do with economic concerns than it did with Christian ideals. Though Patricius was an ill-tempered hothead that made Monica's home life miserable, she persevered in gentle and

consistent ministry to her husband. Her Christ-like self-sacrifice paid off in the end as Patricius himself became a Christian a year before he died. I am put in mind here of the words of Saint Paul to the Corinthians: "*For the unbelieving husband is made holy because of his wife*" (1 Corinthians 7:14).

Patricius and Monica had three children: Navigius (the "good boy" of the family), a daughter, Perpetua (the "devoted" child), and Augustine (the "smart" one). Augustine was schooled in the cultural and learning center of Carthage, in North Africa. His stay in Carthage was characterized by – what is the worst nightmare of the parents of college students today – massive partying sprinkled with occasional study. Though successful in his academic pursuits, Augustine admits that he tortured his mother with his carousing. Monica was also repulsed by her son's rejection of Nicene Christianity and his acceptance of the heresy of Manichaeism (a popular third-century A.D. Iranian Gnostic religion that attempted to bring about a synthesis of Christianity, Zoroastrianism and Buddhism) to which Augustine had been exposed while in Carthage (some things never change when you go off to college!). So disappointed was Monica with her son's conduct that she refused to let him live at home when, upon graduation, he returned to Tagaste. Monica held firm to her Christian morals despite her devotion to her son.

Distraught by her strained relationship with her son, one day Monica had a vision in which an apparition told her to dry her tears for "Your son is with you." When she told her son of the vision, Augustine (more or less) replied by saying that he and his mother

would get long better if she would merely try to see things from his learned point of view and if she would cease trying to force her devotion to Christ upon him. She replied: "The one in the vision did not say I was with you; he said you were with me." Though his heart was not yet changed, the conviction that his mother continued to display did leave a valuable impression on Augustine. Indeed, in the future the words of Proverbs 31:28 would become prophetic for Augustine: *"Her children rise up and call her blessed."*

God's time will come

It was Monica's way, her practice and discipline, to fast and pray specifically, we are told, for the spiritual welfare of her wayward son. Here is where the connection between "saint" Monica and "saint" May comes into my life. As it was with Augustine's mother, so it was with my mother. For forty years "saint" May persisted in prayer for her wayward son Robert (a self-centered man who, like the unconverted Augustine, was into massive partying with some occasional studying sprinkled in): such was May's practice and discipline, such was her way. The efforts of "saint" Monica and "saint" May should be an example to all of us in our culture of instant gratification. Persistence in prayer should be our goal, for the salvation of our souls is God's goal. Monica consulted her local bishop for advice regarding her son, to which the bishop replied: "God's time will come." And to give her encouragement he added: "Go now, I beg you; it is not possible that the son of so many tears should perish." Monica was at the end of her wits, at the point where she could do nothing but

trust in God's mercy.

At the age of twenty-nine, Augustine planned a trip to Rome to continue his teaching career. Fearing that the influence of the cosmopolitan city would cause him to forever reject a life in Christ, Monica attempted to persuade him to reconsider. When he decided to go anyway, his mother resolved to accompany him. Augustine managed to leave her behind by trickery while she was alone praying. Despite being deeply hurt by her son's scheming action, she later journeyed to Rome anyway, intent upon her ministry. The ship she boarded to cross the Mediterranean was beset by a storm and it is told that the other passengers marveled at Monica's confidence that God would deliver them from harm. The *"peace that passes all understanding"* (Philippians 4:7) was hers through trust in God's mercy.

After many months and much effort, Monica arrived in Rome only to learn that Augustine had moved on to Milan, where he had become acquainted with Ambrose, the Bishop of Milan, a champion defender of Nicene Christianity. By the time Monica made her way to Milan and at last found her son she learned that he had somewhat abandoned his heretical views in favor of a more orthodox faith. Indeed, because of the influence of Ambrose, Augustine had moderated his position but was still not willing to accept Christ as Lord and Savior. Meanwhile, Monica, due to her reputation of selfless works, reverent fasting and persistent prayer, had also garnered the attention of Ambrose. Through her association with the great Bishop of Milan, she became open herself to edification and correction, for she

confessed that she too had fallen into traditions that melded orthodox Christian piety with pagan practices that were common in her homeland in North Africa. At Ambrose's direction, she vowed to no longer engage in such practices. Thus, with a renewed mind and changed heart Monica availed herself to correct teaching and further submitted her life to the Holy Spirit. Glory to God! Her commitment to bring her son to the Lord had collateral consequences – her own sanctification! Like my mother, “saint” May, “saint” Monica had realized blessings for herself as she poured out herself for the good of her son.

Nothing is far from God

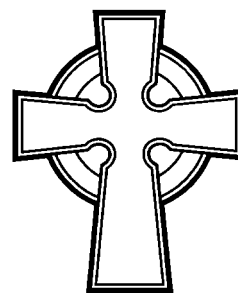
Finally, Augustine answered our heavenly Father's call and became a Christian. That Monica was able to witness this transformation and conversion must have been a moment of immeasurable joy for her. Ambrose, the great Bishop of Milan, baptized the long-wayward, prodigal son on Easter Sunday in 387. Monica had witnessed God's work in the life of her beloved son and, though that may have been enough for her, how many others might she have evangelized through her unrelenting commitment to Christ? As she grew in Christian maturity and spiritual insight through an ever-deepening life of prayer, her actions no doubt had spoken the Gospel to hundred of souls that now rest in the eternal arms of Christ. To be persistent in prayer was Monica's desire, the disposition of souls she left to God.

A few months after Augustine's baptism, Monica, while awaiting ship in the port of

Rome to take her back to North Africa, fell ill and died suddenly on the European side of the Mediterranean, never to see her homeland again. When life was leaving her, and her son saw that the end was near, he asked her if it saddened her that she should die so far from her home. She replied: “Nothing is far from God, and I need have no fear that he will not know where to find me, when he comes to raise me to life at the end of the world.”

I remember the peace that my mother had in the last few months of her life, despite her failing health; one had to be really close to her to see the suffering she endured. I believe that my mother “saint” May, like “saint” Monica, ever grateful for God's amazing grace that had brought her son home, did not focus on the sufferings of her life before she died, but held fast the glories and promises of God, her Savior.

To this day, “saint” Monica is the patroness of Christian mothers everywhere who sacrificially persist in prayer, piety and devotion to the Lord above all else. Through her compliance to God's will, we clearly see the strength and conviction of a true hero of the Christian Faith.



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The Reverend Mark R. Galloway

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*“Let every person be subject to the governing authorities;
for there is no authority except from God,
and those authorities that exist have been instituted by God.”*

(Romans 13:1)

Church of The Apostles

Evangelical Anglican

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*"And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship,
to the breaking of the bread and the prayers."*

(Acts 2:42)

Worship and Education

The Holy Eucharist	Saturday 5:00 p.m. Sunday 8:00 a.m. & 10:30 a.m.
Christian Education	Sunday 9:15 a.m.
Sunday Brunch	Sunday 11:45 a.m.
Evening Prayer Meeting	Wednesday 7:00 p.m.
Morning Prayer	Monday through Friday 9:00 a.m.

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