

# Verbum

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## Full Issue

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## Full Issue

### Abstract

This is the full issue of Volume 2, Issue 2 of Verbum, published in Spring 2005 by the REST Club at St. John Fisher College. Articles from this issue are available as separate PDFs at <http://fisherpub.sjfc.edu/verbum/vol2/iss2/>

# VERBUM

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St. John Fisher College  
Religious Studies Department Club

Spring 2005

# Verbum 2005

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## Volume 2, Issue 2

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**Special Thanks** to David Mammano and Edward Parrone

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# Letter from the Editor

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This semester brought about many changes for the Religious Studies Club. From new members to a change of leadership, this was definitely a transition time for the club. As a result, much more effort had to be put into making this club a success. Fortunately, this group's drive and passion kept the club on a steady path. Thus, as the newly appointed president of the Religious Studies club, I am pleased to announce the publication of the fourth issue of *Verbum*.

In this issue, we will try to enhance people's knowledge of that which is religious. Overall, we feel that the content is not only well written, but also thought provoking. There is no doubt in my mind that this issue of *Verbum* will bring about tremendous reflection and insight from the Fisher community.

In closing, I would like to thank all of the people who contributed their work to this issue of *Verbum*. Although we cannot put every entry into the publication, we are truly grateful for everyone's hard work. It is the writing of such individuals that shows how the study of religions and theology truly affects each one of us.

I am proud to announce that *Verbum* will be expanding. Starting with the next issue, we will have a *new* section dedicated to various works of art and poetry related to religious thought. We feel that this addition will bring about more great insights from the Fisher community.

In the end, I hope that all of you enjoy reading the fourth issue of the journal. We feel that this edition is one of the best yet and we encourage all to not only reflect, but to consider writing for our next publication as well.

Sincerely,

Matthew Cotugno,  
REST Club President

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Contributions from the Department of Religious Studies Alumni

## **Forgiveness and Moral Obligation**

The questions surrounding forgiveness produce varying thoughts in regards to the action. Is forgiveness a moral obligation? Is this moral obligation tied to religious duty? And, if forgiveness is tied to religious duty, then does it become a moral prerogative? In order to answer these questions, there is a need for much philosophical and theological debate. Rather than allude to the pretense that I know a lot about philosophy or theology, I intend to focus on forgiveness as a moral obligation—one that includes all of us.

To begin, forgiveness may be viewed by some as moral prerogative. In this case, it would seem that only certain individuals, within a specific sect of a religion, practice the act of forgiveness. For example, Christianity—a faith I know well, for it is my own—practices the act of forgiveness. Within Christianity, certain denominations, or individuals within this faith, claim that in order to enter the Kingdom of God, one must be “saved.” In other words, one must ask God for forgiveness and be accepted into God’s grace to enter Heaven. What does this idea say about the rest of humankind? Perhaps without realizing that this is an exclusive practice, the act of forgiveness, at least in this case, has become a moral prerogative—an exclusive right for a certain group.

Moving away from the notion of forgiveness as prerogative, I would like to focus on forgiveness as an act of moral obligation, which may fall under religious duty and moral prerogative as well. However, the distinction here, is that forgiveness is inclusive of all persons. For example, in a secular society, when there is a wrong act committed against another individual, the offender may genuinely have a change of heart and seek forgiveness. Providing forgiveness, in this case, is necessary. It is a moral obligation.

Whether the decision is based on religious duty or another reason, it comes down to moral obligation. For the mere fact that it will make both persons stronger and healthier, forgiveness is obligatory. Although there may be some horrendous and some insignificant offenses that may not require forgiveness, I am not the judge of these. However, I do understand forgiveness as a necessary condition within our world. Without forgiveness, we will only produce hatred and hurt. Too many times we do not require or even expect the act of forgiveness, especially in cases of extreme hurt. In my opinion, which is perhaps tainted by the notion of religious duty, it is imperative that we anticipate and practice the act of forgiveness, especially in cases of extreme hurt. Forgiveness is an act of restoration. Without this restoration, not only is the wronged action causing hurt, but so too is the act of not letting go and not forgiving.

Forgiveness is a moral obligation because it requires growth and development of the human condition. It requires us to reach out to another person, even if that person caused us pain, and accept him or her fully. Forgiveness becomes an act of unconditional love—like a parent loving a baby. Often times, due to this nature, forgiveness is seen as a religious duty, and God is considered to be this unconditional love. Perhaps this is a prime example of the execution of forgiveness. However, focusing on ourselves and those surrounding us, we should strive to unite as one; and therefore, we must first learn to forgive. To live in a world without forgiveness, whether or not the forgiveness is generated from religious duty, is to live in a world full of dissent, mistrust, and anguish. Thus, forgiveness becomes our moral obligation. It becomes our duty, religious or secular, to preserve life.

By: Jodi Rowland



*A Day in the Life of REST alumni*

### **Joys and Sufferings of Youth Ministry**

Recently, I received a youth ministry position at a cluster parish in Palmyra and Marion. During my two months at this parish—St. Anne’s Church and St. Gregory’s Church—I have had the opportunity to explore the field of ministry, meeting and interacting with many individuals. From these experiences, which have been both joyful and challenging, I have had the chance to learn, enjoy, and grow as a Youth Minister.

To start, thus far, one of the greatest challenges that I am enduring is beginning a job in a new place, where I do not know the area or anyone from the area. Clearly, many individuals starting a new job are also in this predicament. However, in ministry, this creates a greater challenge, for ministry involves working for the people. To overcome this challenge I have attempted to attend as many events associated with the Churches and the youth within the communities as possible. For example, at St. Anne’s Church, I attended a St. Patty’s Dinner/Dance, which was quite fun. Making myself known at events, like the St. Patty’s Dinner/Dance, shows the parishioners that I am serious about my ministry job and that I am willing to participate in the community. In addition, it provides me with the opportunity to learn the parishioners’ names and more about them. Although not all persons entering into a ministry position already know individuals within the community or are a part of the faith community itself, many do have some sort

of connection with the people. Making this connection continues to be a challenge; yet one that I look forward to on a daily basis.

Although there are many joys that I have experienced while working as a Youth Ministry, the one that continues to have an impact on me is knowing that this ministry is making a difference to the youth in Palmyra and Marion. From weekly faith formation meetings to social events, like movie nights and rock-climbing, and retreats to service projects, getting to know the youth and witnessing their outstanding ability to open up and share their faith is a wonderful encounter that I hope will carry on throughout my time in this position. One example of making a difference the life of a teen thus far as a youth ministry is when I participated in a youth retreat with Church of the Transfiguration as an adult leader. One of the youths from Marion participated in this retreat. During the retreat, as she was in my group, I had the opportunity to get to know her on more than a surface level. This experience was an amazing one for both of us, along with all the others who participated, and is difficult to express in words. However, after the retreat, the youth's mother told the staff at Church of the Transfiguration how much her daughter has improved since the youth program started at St. Gregory's and St. Anne's, that her daughter's grades are improving and that she has had a more positive attitude. Knowing that in only a couple months, that this ministry has effected even one youth makes my job worth-while. In fact, it makes it more than worth-while, it makes it a jewel that I will cherish everyday.

Overall, even in the face of challenges, the joy of my job continues to outweigh any suffering. There are obvious sufferings that a person in ministry faces, such as lower income and modeling a faith-filled life, which can include giving up certain activities.

However, in my opinion, these are insignificant sufferings, that one must bear in this field of work. Being a Youth Minister has been and will continue to be an exciting and exhilarating experience.

By: Jodi Rowland

Class of 2004



## Religious Education 101

In the spring of 2004, I began interviewing for positions as a Director/Coordinator of Faith Formation for several parishes in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Rochester. To my luck, beginning in June of 2004, I was hired to the pastoral staff of the Church of the Transfiguration in Pittsford, New York.

The purpose of this reflection is to enlighten those who read this about the benefits of working for a faith community, and also the struggles one might face along the way. I must admit that when I began my current position as Associate Director of Faith Formation, I did not know exactly what I was in for. According to my job description, my duties included overseeing the Children's Faith Formation program for grades kindergarten through eighth as well as overseeing sacramental preparation for the sacraments of Penance, Eucharist, and Confirmation. I would soon learn that there was much, much more to my "job" than this.

To be frank, choosing a career path in Faith Formation is not my overall goal in life. I hope someday, whenever that may be, to become a university professor of theology or ethics, or something along those lines. Nearing the completion of my Master's degree in theology from the University of St. Michael's College in Toronto, Ontario, I realized that at my young age (I was 23) I did not want to be the only 23 year old entering into a Ph.D. program where 90% of the other students would be perhaps twice my age. I did apply to a few programs however, with lukewarm luck (I was rejected.) So, push came to shove, and it was time to go to work.

The best thing about working for a parish is the people. Everyone is welcoming. I must admit it was a little overwhelming at times, trying to learn everyone's names, shaking hands, and meeting all these new people—especially in a parish with 1,600 families. The people of the church however, have a quality that you would not find working in a different setting, in a major corporation for example. There is a genuine appreciation for you doing what you do, and a genuine welcome and hope that you can fulfill the faith education needs of their children. It's a good feeling: knowing that you have everybody behind you in what you are trying to accomplish. You have the freedom to try new things, get parents involved, open new lines of communication, and really explore you who are in relation to God while at the same time trying to steer 1,000 children in the same direction. In a sense, you are accountable to God, not your manager or supervisor, or "boss." I do have an immediate supervisor—our Director of Faith Formation—but our working relationship is far from the corporate model. We actually complement one another in a unique way and offer one another different aspects on what we're trying to accomplish in our work. She technically is my "boss", along with our pastor, but our staff is really a team: and I mean that in the most basic sense—we all work together.

There are, to some extent, certain struggles that accompany a career of this type. One is funding. I am lucky enough to be at a parish whose members are financially committed to helping their church the best they can. Other persons who do what I do are not as fortunate as our program is—they struggle with enough funding for supplies, books, and activities. Also, responding to parents in certain situations can get complicated. For example, when preparing nearly 100 children for a sacrament, you can only answer so many questions and return so many phone calls at once.

Also, there is always a struggle between those Catholics that come to Mass, and those who do not. Sacramental preparation in the Diocese of Rochester is home-based. This means that parents are the primary educators of their children who are preparing for a more full communion in the church. How can these people adequately prepare their children when they do not participate at church in any way, shape, or form? It is easy to see that struggles accompany working in ministry, just like any other career choice.

Will I work in ministry for the rest of my life? I think so. Ministry to me is being Catholic. Any job I have I will be a minister in some sense, even if I choose a career that has nothing to do with church. I am a Catholic Christian, and that carries big responsibility. Whether I am a religious educator or an airline pilot, my faith affects my work and in turn, I affect the people around me.

By: Jonathan Schott

Class of 2002

Alumni  
Corner

# Brief Essays



\*\* Prizes for *Brief Essays* Awarded by  
the REST Club

## **\*\* A day at “Operation Good Neighbor”**

As I tour the facility, I feel a sense of guilt for all that I have in my life. My clothes are fresh, in style for the most part, and when I have had enough of them, I give to the “unknown” and “unseen” people for whom I feel distance. After my tour is over it is time to go to work. We open the doors and place the sign carefully out in front of the old church that was donated to this venue, which was so foreign to many. I am feeling a little nervous about how I will talk to the people coming in for donations. What will I have in common with them? An hour passes before my first “customer” arrives. Thank goodness, because I was beginning to feel as if I was wasting my time. I pondered, “is there really such a great need in my community; I would know about it if there truly was such a need”. I found my thoughts righteously judging, “just get a job, anything would do, I see signs all over that say help wanted”. “For heavens sake, help yourself climb out of the lowly acceptance of poverty.”

Thankfully, a woman and child arrive to lift me from my boredom. After carefully assessing a toy section in the back of the building, a sweet little girl comes to me with eyes bright, handing me a pink bear that carries a rainbow on its belly. Someone, given the worn fur, had obviously loved this little bear. “She is sad and needs a mom,” said the little girl. The mother asks the price and proudly tells her daughter that she can buy the bear. The girl called “Anna” immediately embraces the bear and begins to form an attachment, one that seemed carefully avoided prior to being told she could have the bear. As Anna’s mom searches copiously through the mass of women’s clothing, Anna initiates a quiet conversation with her new bear. I feel moved by her animated speech

and warmth toward the tired bear. While I wait for Anna's mom to finish "shopping" the manager of this site, a story that will stay with me for some time, tells me.

Anna's mother, who is called Roberta, is mentally ill. She suffers from a disease called "Manic Depression". Unfortunately, she is often non-compliant with her medications that are needed to sustain stable emotions. Therefore, Anna lives in an environment that many would consider unstable. She is unable to count on the stable security of a parent, which is her God given right. When Roberta falls into the depths of depression, the people of the church come together and schedule around the clock care for Anna. At this moment, thoughts of my own childhood come to mind that include a beautiful home where security, love, and friends could be counted on. Teddy bears galore and new clothes that were often worn only once adorned my closet. What must this child feel? This just isn't fair I tell the manager, Charles, of the donation site. But Charles explains that issues such as these are quite common. Poverty affects many people right in my community. Some people are affected due to illness, both physical and mental. Other people are affected due to loss of job, or a spouse. One woman, I'm told had a husband that worked on a farm. He had little education and is an immigrant from Poland. He died suddenly and she had no training of any kind to put to work. He did not carry life insurance and they have no family. Now she depends on "operation good neighbor" for her food, clothing and the warmth of friendship.

Roberta comes to the counter as the man is finishing his story. I want to give her everything and more. Charles totals her things and places them in a bag along with some day old cookies and bread that were donated from a local supermarket. He wishes her a blessed day and asks Anna to "give me five". She playfully slaps his hand and runs to

her mom laughing. A sadness and emptiness lingers as I wait on the next family. Suddenly I feel so inadequate. How can this happen to others as we live our daily lives in abundance? I am feeling a compassion for humanity that is so easy to ignore. The reality of our world is not seen in my life. It is seen in the eyes of everyone we meet. We are all Gods children put here for a purpose. Although that purpose is something I continue to seek and struggle with, I believe it must ultimately better our world. Not my world alone, but I am starting to realize this world has been given to me to live in as a gift, its God's world.

By: Caroline Randall

## **\*\* Schizophrenia.**

The Hospital: such a sterile atmosphere, clean smelling, but one knows it is cleanliness as a precaution, a disinfected smell and a guard against disease. People come to the hospital when they are sick, when they are born and when they are dying; no one should live at the hospital.

My daughter asked my wife recently, “Do people break?” Sadly, they do and some of them break in their mind. In a former age, it was possible to be considered a saint if one heard voices, but it was also a possibility to be considered possessed by devils; either way at least one was seen as a man or woman who, in a way, was in control of their faculties. Now the “mentally ill” are treated like a machine gone wrong; they are taken apart, diagnosed, given the appropriate quick fix medicines, and sent on their way with a weak band-aid on the mind that will only last for so long. They become the victims of a lifelong illness.

Mike was in the Hospital for the third time in two years. There is no joy in the R-wing, the psychiatric ward of the hospital, especially for those who have committed themselves and are denied visitors. They are tucked away behind bolted doors. Everyone has to be buzzed in and out in order to “protect” the world around him or her.

The “R-wing”: what an innocuous euphemism for mad- house.

My friend and I, both visiting, rang the bell by the door and when we were, finally acknowledge by some sort of doctor, we were informed that Mike could have no visitors, and we would have to come back another time. He was “unstable”, and could not handle the excitement.

The next day we returned and were let in to see Mike. He looked like one of my children when they've done something wrong and are expecting me to yell at them; but there was also a deep resentment in his eyes; he was angry that we were seeing him, in the R-wing, walking around in his socks, heavily medicated. *Why are the mentally ill ashamed that they suffer?*

The conversation primarily consisted of uncomfortable silence, and Mike asking how our families were doing, school, work, the weather... There was nothing to say; in hell there are no words, no communing of souls; crowds of people are utterly alone together.

Two things stand out to me from this experience: First, Mike had no shoes because they probably thought he might hang himself with the shoelaces. Second, on the wall in his room, he had taped a piece of paper, and it said "GOD IS LOVE."

By: Jeff Frate

# ORIGINAL ESSAY



\*\*\* Prize for original essay awarded by Dr. Michael Costanzo

### **\*\*\* The Margarets of the World**

It is my first time inside a city school. Signs on the doors tell me to sign in at the main office, but there are no directions to the main office. I ask a girl walking by; she points down a hallway to my left. As I walk I notice the floors are old; some of the tiles cracked and dirty. In the main office the principal, to whom I have spoken on the phone but never seen, rushes past me just as I explain to someone behind the desk that I have an appointment with her.

“Mrs. Jones!” the desk person calls. Mrs. Jones turns mid-flight. I stick out my hand and introduce myself.

“We spoke on the phone. I’m here to tutor a child in reading?” She looks at me blankly for a moment, then says, “Oh yes, come this way.” With long strides she leads me through the school, asking me questions as we go. I explain again, as I have done once on the phone to her and once on her voice mail, that I have three daughters of my own, all in school. That I lived in this neighborhood when I was young and single. That I’d like to help.

The teacher is not in her classroom. We stride briskly back down the hall to a teacher’s lounge. Ten or so teachers are seated around a table eating their lunch. They all pause and look up. No one smiles at the principal or at me when I am introduced. We are plainly intruding.

“This is Mrs. Williams,” the principal says to me, indicating a dour, middle-aged woman. “There is a student in her class for you to work with.” The principal leaves. The teachers still look at me. Mrs. Williams’ fork is frozen halfway to her mouth.

“I’ll wait in the main office until you’re done with your lunch,” I say hastily, and beat a retreat.

I am to work with a little girl named Margaret. Margaret is sticks on springs. Her tiny, skinny legs have amazing buoyancy, and she runs so lightly up and down the hall that I half expect to see her continue right on up the wall, like Fred Astaire in an old movie clip. Unfortunately she dances along the hallways when she should be sitting at a tiny, cramped desk with me, just outside her first-grade classroom door, where she and I are hunkered down to try and help her with her reading. Mrs. Williams has given me a brand-new pack of alphabet flashcards, still stuck together at their perforations. Did she buy these herself for this occasion? Or have they been among her supplies for a long time and she’s never found time to use them?

Margaret seems to know her alphabet fairly well, although she mixes up her b’s and d’s. The pictures on the backs of the cards are another matter. Going through them, I find that she is unable to identify a zebra. “A horse?” she asks. She doesn’t get lion right, either. “A tiger?” The lemon stumps her completely. “I don’t know,” she says. She doesn’t know what a xylophone is, or a teapot, or a bunch of carrots with their greenery, or a ladder. I wonder how often she has been read to.

After struggling through the alphabet, punctuated by my “Sit down, Margaret”’s and “Come back please, Margaret”’s, I read her a Xeroxed book provided by her teacher. She has plainly heard it a million times and doesn’t want to hear it once more. She is distracted by every event and person in the long hall, no matter how remote. She is a social butterfly and must greet everyone, and she must tell me who everyone is, and who their siblings are.

Teachers go by, leading long uneven columns of kids. In this part of the school they are all third grade and under. I am unpleasantly surprised by the way the teachers bark orders at the children. “Stand up! Stay in line! Be quiet! Stop that! Get back here! Cut that out!” The kids are unruly. Some fall on the floor. Some punch other kids. A few wave sticky little hands at me as they go by. Many smile. I smile and wink at them. We are supposed to be quiet.

Mrs. Williams gives me the same pack of flash cards the next time I come in, and Margaret is clutching the same paper book. Once again we are to work in the hall. This time I ask Margaret to read to me. She glances at each word for an instant, fixes her eyes on the ceiling, and guesses.

“Going?” she says. The word is “dog.” She tries another. “Like?” The word is “ball.” She won’t focus on the word or sound it out. I think she gives it a very fast look, sees a letter near the end, and thinks up the first word she can that begins with that letter. Is she dyslexic, I wonder? Surely the school would have already tested her for something like that. Mrs. Williams seems too harried for me to ask.

After several sessions with Margaret, I am beginning to be discouraged. I can hardly get her to look at a word or stay in her seat. Her spoken language seems to have little relationship to the written English she struggles with. When I tell her to read me a word, she says, “I can’t!” Her refrain is always, “I can’t read, it’s too hard, I don’t know that word, it’s too hard, I can’t, I don’t know.” She smiles broadly and twists her torso as she says it.

I say calmly, “Of course you can read.” When she gets a word I make a BIG DEAL out of it. We must do high fives, which I pretend give me a sore hand. That

makes her giggle. I say, “All right, Margaret! What a good job! See, I KNEW you could do it!” She grins, plainly pleased to be praised. I have brought a book from home this time, something with few words and colorful pictures. I invite her to sit on my lap for the story, knowing I am probably breaking some school rule, but she sits, and I read the story with so much expression that I feel like “master thespian,” but it seems to work – she listens to most of the book without fluttering away down the hall. I go home feeling slightly better.

My next time with Margaret is far different. Mrs. Williams tells me at the classroom door that Margaret has a temperature of 102° and is in the main office waiting to be picked up. Would I like to work with another child, or ...?

“Why don’t I go sit with Margaret until she gets picked up?” I say. “I can read to her if she wants.” For the first time, Mrs. Williams’ face creases into something resembling a smile. Is that relief in her eyes, or concern, or both?

There are about eight children eating lunch in the principal’s office. Whether they are all sick or there for some other reason, I don’t know. Is there no school nurse, I wonder? No health office? I remind the principal who I am and say I will sit with Margaret until she is picked up. Margaret’s eyes are red and glassy. “She isn’t getting picked up,” the principal barks, “but you can have her until she’s done with her lunch.” Behind the principal I see Margaret’s eyes well. Apparently until that moment she thought someone was coming for her.

Margaret trails out of the office with a lunch tray, her coat and backpack dragging on the floor. Silent tears are beginning to overflow her eyes. The principal shows us into a nearby empty office and leaves the door ajar. I help Margaret with her things, pull up a

chair for her, and sit down nearby. She stands. I say gently, “Are you okay, sweetie?” Margaret bursts into tears and says something long and, between the sobs, unintelligible. I stuff her little hands full of tissues and coax her closer, inch by inch, until I can give her a hug. She is burning hot.

I have brought another book, *Are You My Mother?* and I read this to her while she picks at the potato chips and sips the chocolate milk that came with her school lunch; she leaves everything else untouched. No, she isn’t hungry, she shakes her head in answer to my question. She sits more still than I have ever seen her sit and she listens carefully to every word of the book. Acutely conscious of the staff just outside the office door, I nevertheless read the story with all my best squeaky, silly, and growly voices. I ask Margaret questions. “Isn’t that guy funny?” and “Who do you think this is?” but she only shrugs. I sit close and from time to time rub her back while I read, again knowing that I am probably violating some no-touching rule but not caring. When I am done she asks to hear the book again! And she listens to it straight through a second time. On impulse, I give her the book, knowing my girls won’t mind parting with this outgrown treasure. Margaret nods, yes, she would like to have it to keep. I write her name in it and take her back to her classroom. I tell her I will see her next week. That I hope she feels better soon. I smile at the teacher (who doesn’t smile back), walk out through the halls, smile at everyone I pass, wave to a couple of kids. Then I get into my car. I start the engine. And I cry all the way home.

My three daughters have become quite interested in Margaret’s progress. When I make a set of vocabulary flash cards, my youngest daughter, age 8, helps me choose pictures and glue them onto index cards. As we flip through magazines she says, “Will

Margaret know what this is?" We rule out things like pineapples, lobsters, and binoculars. Finally we have about 35 picture cards. On the back I print their names: car, door, boy, cat, man, horse, elephant. We cover them with clear contact paper. My daughter is satisfied that we have done a good job.

And Margaret seems to like them. I explain that first we will look at all the pictures, then we will read the words. My goal is to teach her to sight-read these basic words. She looks interestedly at all the pictures and even gets some of the words correct the first time around. She tells me everyone in the pictures is "ugly" because it made me laugh the first time she said it. Afterwards we go through the cards I read her a story. She listens to most of it. For the first time, for some unknown reason, we are not to work in the hall but in the library. There is much less traffic there and Margaret focuses much better on the work at hand. I thank the teacher when I bring Margaret back to her classroom.

I notice something else, too. Teachers I see every week now smile and greet me (except Margaret's teacher). I hear them sometimes say kind and encouraging things to their straggly lines of kids, as well as sharp and admonitory things. I notice how some of the older kids walk along purposefully with books tucked under their arms.

I have been working with Margaret for five months now. I know she has a large family but I have been unable to get a clear account of exactly how many brothers, sisters, and pets she has. She speaks often and proudly of both parents but "my Dad" figures prominently in many things she tells me, and it is apparent that she adores him. I know nothing about her background, where she lives. I would like to meet her parents some day, shake their hands and tell them what a beautiful daughter they have, what a

good job they have done with her. For Margaret is sweet and funny, and so lively that she reminds me of a firefly, flashing brightly hither and thither as it travels through the dark.

As the weeks go by I notice that Margaret says “I can’t” less and less. She actually studies a word and sounds it out, and she can even sight read a handful of words, which she does with great glee, shouting out the word the instant she sees it and giggling at the astonishment and enthusiasm I display for each one she reads that way.

“Elephant” was a word she was convinced she’d never be able to figure out; now I show it to her while shaking my head and saying dismissively, “Ooh, this one’s too hard, I don’t think you....” Her whole body erupts out of the chair as she interrupts me with her excited shout: “Elephant!” “Oh, my GOSH!” I exclaim, my jaw dropping in amazement. Margaret giggles, pleased as punch.

We have been working hard on two simple rules: sound it out; and “e” on the end means the vowel in the middle says its own name. With these two rules she is reading more and more words with minimal help. Best of all, she has memorized big portions of *Are You My Mother?*, and comes to me each week with this book tucked under her arm. She thinks she is getting away with something because she can read those parts quickly and flawlessly. I am delighted to hear her say “mother” when I point to the word and slide effortlessly on to the next one: what Margaret thinks is cheating, I know is actually sight reading.

The school year is drawing to a close. I debate what to get Margaret for a gift for all her hard work, and settle finally on a small box of crayons and a dot-to-dot book. She discovered dot-to-dots in one of the teaching tools I brought along and seemed fascinated

by the idea that zooming her pencil around the numbers in order would reveal some mysteriously secret picture.

On my last day with Margaret I wait, as usual, in the hallway outside her classroom. Teachers are leading their wavering rows of children back from the lunchroom. Often, teachers walking by will roll their eyes at me; clearly, this gesture is meant to convey exasperation as well as a certain camaraderie.

Shouting from one end of the hall attracts my attention. Two rows of classes stand on one side of the hall, staring at a squirming little boy who stands alone on the other side. Two teachers are also staring at the lone boy. One of them yells, “Rico, show Mrs. Smith what you just did.” The boy squirms. “I said, SHOW HER!” yells the teacher. Nothing. “Show Mrs. Smith what you just did!” She yells yet again. She is still yelling at the child, a kindergartener, when Margaret’s class comes up and distracts me.

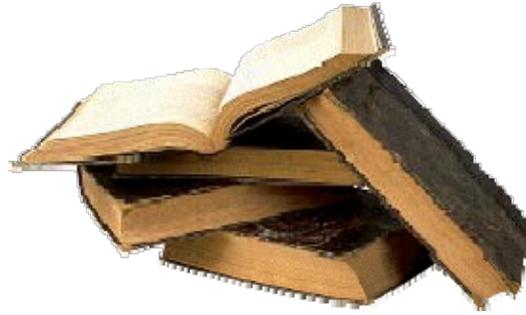
Two kids slap my hands, smiling, as they file into the classroom. “Get in there!” yells Margaret’s teacher. Another little girl stops to give me my weekly hug, although she has had no contact with me other than a smile as she goes into her classroom. Margaret’s teacher, who has never smiled at me nor called me by name (despite the name tag I wear), nor spoken more than a few words to me, now stands 12 inches in front of me, with her back to me, as she converses with another teacher, as though I am less visible than the class work taped to the wall behind me – which, I note, has been changed only twice in 5 months.

Margaret skips up, smiling, her book tucked under her arm. “Hey, bud,” I say. And we’re off for our final session.

I give Margaret her little present, praise her hard work, and wish her a happy summer before leaving the school, no need to sign out or say good-bye, for I doubt whether anyone other than Margaret's teacher even knows I was here, or what my name is. Not that I am expecting thanks or a going-away ceremony, and it is painfully obvious that the teachers have all they can handle already. But it would have been so easy for someone to say, "Would you like to come back?" Even though I am not an expert in child development or reading, it is plain to me that a small amount of individual attention and lavish praise has made a real difference in the capabilities of one child.

I can't help feeling sorry, as I leave, for the sensitive souls in the classrooms, mixed in with the kids whose first language is shouting, and wonder what will become of them, the Margarets of this small and inhospitable world?

By: Catherine Agar



## Research Papers



*+++Prize awarded by the REST Club*

### +++ Tibetan Buddhism

Upon entering the Amitabha Foundation for the Sunday gathering at ten o'clock in the morning I noticed colorful prayer flags from the facade on the front of the house that distinguish it is a center of Tibetan Buddhism culture in Rochester's east side. Entering the house I was greeted by the director of the center, Frank Howard. My first instructions were to take off my shoes and place them in a closet. He gave me two books titled "The Thirty-Seven Practices of Bodhisattvas" and a "Prayer Book". He directed me to a closet where pillows are located and indicated that members usually take two, one to sit on and one to place the books on in front of them.

Frank then led me into the shrine room where the service was actually held. I entered the room sat on one pillow, while placing the other in front of me with my reading material on it. I sat facing the shrine as the other members did. The shrine has a large idol of the Buddha surrounded by colorful drapes and flags hanging from the ceiling and flowers. Around the Buddha were smaller versions of pictures and statues of less significant Buddhas and lamas.

Against the right wall there was a colorful throne that was made specifically for visiting lamas, teachers, and special visitors. There were many musical instruments such as; a drum (damaru), cymbals, a conch, maracas, and bells used for meditation. Hanging from the left wall were decorative thangkas that depict myriad bodhisattvas and deities. The Buddhists meditate to a different thangka each week.

As members entered the room they found a spot on the floor and then stood up and faced the shrine in the front of the room. They then began to perform some sort of bowing to the Buddha. They placed their hands together in front of their face, moved them down towards their knees bending their body at the same time, and then fell to the floor face first until their forehead touched the ground (in a crouching forward like manner). They

performed this act of acknowledgement to the Buddha three times. Then they returned to their places on the floor sitting “Indian style” for the entire service.

The first half of the service was dedicated to a Dharma teaching offered by Frank. Frank spoke to us about the importance to hear information, think or ponder about the information heard, and to then meditate. He told us that meditation is the most important part of the Buddhist tradition because it is where each person is able to experience their own idolization of Buddhas before they become a Buddha themselves (inner experience) and to achieve an experience of the pure land (outer experience) and ultimately achieve Nirvana. He also spoke about how people are discontented with the world and that is why they write such as articles written in everyday newspapers. For happiness people need to look to their own minds with patience and gradual training exercised through trial and error. Followers need to look to the Dharma for practical teachings to advise them. Through the Dharma they will learn that everything is subject to change, reality is subjective, and there is no permanent expectation for anything. Frank also stressed the importance of practicing the nature of our minds, which involves both love and compassion.

The service is divided by a short break for tea. After the intermission, the second part of the service, which was meditation, began with the ringing of a bell (by Frank). Each week a different bodhisattva is chosen to idolize. While I was there, we meditated toward Tara. First we read from the “Thirty-Seven Practices of Bodhisattvas.”

During the meditation the objective is to visualize yourself as Tara who represents wisdom, protection, and a basis of manifestation. The goal is to train in the selected bodhisattva’s path, which generally entails love, compassion, and kindness. During this part of the service I observed several people with prayer beads that they held in their hand and rotated throughout the meditation. The meditation involved Frank saying a line or

two followed by the whole group chanting lines in a different language. When we encountered certain parts many people in the crowd would play the musical instruments they had chosen. These parts seemed overwhelming and powerful at the same time. Meditation concludes with selected prayers from the “Prayer Book.”

As I attended the Tibetan Buddhist service at the Amitabha Foundation, I immediately compared that service to the service I familiar with, the Roman Catholic Mass. The first thing I noticed was that the Catholic Mass is more formal, incorporates more people, and is more structured. As people enter the Amitabha Foundation they take off their shoes, gather pillows, and find a seat on the floor of a small room. Before sitting they bow to the Buddha. Catholics enter a large church with an altar and pews to sit in, they dip their fingers in Holy Water and perform the Sign of the Cross looking toward a resemblance of Jesus Christ on a Cross. Before sitting in a pew, Catholics genuflect toward the tabernacle (which is similar to the Buddhists bowing), which holds the Eucharist (that will be blessed later and is believed to be the offering of the body of Christ).

Mass begins with an entrance song while the priest and ministers process from the back of the church to the altar where they genuflect and then find their seats. The Buddhist service did not begin in this fashion. It simply began with a short introduction by the director. Mass is led by a priest who wears special dress, where as the service is simply led by a man, Frank Howard who is casually dressed.

The first hour of the Tibetan Buddhist service merely consists of Frank, the director casually speaking. Frank sat on the floor in front of the audience. He spoke casually about the Dharma, how each person should live to become a Buddha themselves, and why and how people live they way they do, as a Tibetan Buddhist. Participants in the service sit facing the

Buddha and Frank. They sit on a pillow with their legs crossed and their hands relaxed in their laps.

A Roman Catholic Mass only lasts about an hour, most of the time it is shorter. The priest sits in a chair up on the altar in the front of church facing the crowd. When the priest speaks he stands up rather than sitting as Frank does during services. The people in attendance sit in pews at Mass. During certain parts of the Mass, members of the congregation may stand or kneel, where at the service, people remain seated on the floor the entire time.

Throughout Mass the priest and selected lectors will read from the Bible. Frank does not read from any sacred text, he simply talks about the Dharma teachings, as if the entire service is a homily. During the homily at a Mass, the priest relates the Gospel reading to practical, everyday life events to allow participants to have a better understanding of the Gospel reading (which is essentially what Frank does).

After the first hour of service at the Amitabha Foundation, there is a short intermission where members gather to drink butter tea. This is a tea that many Tibetan Buddhist's drink everyday. After the tea break is over, a bell is rung to call the service back to order. The second half of the service is meditation.

Parts of a Roman Catholic Mass are quite similar to these aspects of the Tibetan Buddhist service. During Mass, the Eucharist is blessed which symbolizes the body of Christ. It is offered to all the members in the congregation if they meet the criteria of having been baptized, received reconciliation and made their first communion. Some services also offer wine, but not many today. The wine represents the blood of Christ. This eating and drinking is similar to the drinking of tea performed by Tibetan Buddhists.

There is also a similarity in that after these acts of eating and/or drinking, there is a time of meditation. After members receive communion at Mass, they return to their seats,

kneel down and pray or meditate silently to themselves. Meditation at the service is very loud, cymbals, drums, a conch and other instruments are played. At Mass there are guided citations given by the priest and lines recited back by the congregation as well as pieces read by everyone together. This occurs in a mass during the penitential rite, Kyrie (Lord have mercy, all: Lord have mercy...), the Gloria, Nicene Creed, during the liturgy of the Eucharist, the communion rite, as well as in the concluding rite, therefore it occurs throughout the entire Mass. All of those parts of Mass exemplify how a Catholic Mass is structured; there are defined parts of Mass with specific actions performed within each part. A Tibetan service is only structured by two parts, the Dharma teaching and the meditation. The Dharma teaching alone is as long as a mass, with far less activity performed by the guests. There are definite divisions in each religion's service.

Music is also played throughout Mass at certain parts, however there is usually a choir gathered together to lead the singing. These members are the only members playing instruments. The Buddhist service entails members to have music making instruments with them at their seats to participate in the meditation. Members from both religions can be seen rotating prayer beads in their hands. In Roman Catholicism these beads are called a rosary. The rosary is used to keep track of the prayers recited depending on which bead is held.

Just as a certain bodhisattva is chosen to be worshiped each week at a service, each day a different reading from the Bible is chosen from a different author, therefore, in both the service and the Mass, each day brings about a new story or different aspect of life being looked at and taught depending on which author or bodhisattva the day is dedicated to. Each of these comes from a book or booklet used during both services. Mass ends with a small prayer just as in the service, however we were dismissed from the service as soon as the prayers were concluded. At Mass you are not dismissed until after the priest exits the Church.

The experience I had at the Amitabha Foundation was different from any type of religious service I have ever attended. The most emotional part was during the meditation. The playing of all of the instruments and the blowing of the conch were very powerful; I believe it would qualify as a numinous experience.

The quality of the religious experience gave me chills as if there was an element of a “wholly other” or as if I was encountering something significant. Everyone at the service was very involved and seemed very determined to make the mediation experience as successful and meaningful as possible. As the music progressed, the noise level rose, a man blew into the conch harder, the drummer beat stronger, people rattled the maracas faster, and it seemed as if everyone was concentrating more to reach out and achieve more strength, to keep up the fast pace of performing and meditating. The noise was so loud and brought such a large amount of energy and strength to the room, it seemed to drive everyone’s participation and fascination with the service. The playing of all the instruments definitely caught me by surprise and I found myself awestricken and speechless, it was so overpowering and almost frightening. I felt out of place because I did not know what to do with myself, primarily because I did not completely understand the meaning of it or what I was supposed to be doing.

The purpose of the meditation is to become more like Green Tara, the Bodhisattva the group had designated to meditate toward. The members attempt to live like Green Tara who serves with wisdom, protection, and is the basis of manifestation. They also intend to do so with compassion, love and kindness to achieve an ultimate goal of Enlightenment, to experience Nirvana, and avoid suffering.

The narrative that was employed in the service I attended was the story of Enlightenment. Enlightenment is when one has achieved a state of being without desire and suffering. The narrative gives reference to the Buddha who is the fully enlightened one and

the primary teacher of the Tibetan Buddhist religion. The Buddha lived a life among a path with open eyes, that bestows understanding, brings peace of mind, and higher wisdom, which is what one must perform to achieve enlightenment. This narrative is important because it is essentially the establishment of the religion. This is the one story everyone refers to in order to decipher how the Enlightenment and the tradition of trying to achieve Nirvana originated in Tibetan Buddhism.

The ritual aspects of the service that I encountered were the bowing performed toward the Buddha and the meditation which is the heart of Buddhism. These acts are rituals because they are predictable and repetitive behaviors that employ many significant symbols to the religion. The bowing to the Buddha occurs before the service, but after members settle into the shrine room. This bow is performed three times by each individual. The main ritual is the meditation in which members gather on the floor and sit with their legs crossed “Indian style” with their hands coming around their legs. They sit in this position for about an hour while they recite prayers and hymns aloud (they follow the leader). As some sayings are said, the members perform interesting hand motions to elaborate the meaning of what is being said. They also repeat “Om mani padme hum” several times (in the book you read from, it says to say it as many times as you can) which means “Om, the jewel in the lotus.” Members participate in the service by playing musical instruments at designated points.

All of the instruments played throughout the meditation, the banners and the prayer flags in the room where the service takes place are symbols that represent something significant to Tibetan Buddhism. The lotus, is the core of the repeated line in the meditation. It symbolizes inner purity, as it grows out of the mud, blossoms above water, and faces toward the sun. The conch played by one member symbolizes the sounds of

Buddhist teachings being heard from everywhere. The banners that represent victory symbolize the preeminence of knowledge and wisdom over ignorance and confusion. The colorful prayer flags distinguish the Amitabha Foundation from other houses, which symbolize a center of Tibetan culture. Another very important symbol of this particular religion is the eight-spoked wheel which represents the Buddhist Dharma (wisdom and teachings) and the Noble Eight-fold Path of enlightenment. Enlightenment first began when the Buddha set the Dharma in motion and began rolling it. These symbols represent the core meaning of the teachings and values promoted by the Tibetan Buddhist religion, which spread the desired knowledge and wisdom to many generations.

As a result of the service, I believe the ethical implications arising from the participants include those beliefs set forth in the Noble Eight-fold Path. The Noble Eight-fold path involves following specific behaviors that should be performed. The pieces of the Noble Eight-fold path are: right views, right aspirations, right speech, right conduct, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right contemplation. During the meditation, these are the things being perceived that the members are trying to achieve to ultimately reach nirvana. Another objective of Tibetan Buddhism involves avoiding desire and suffering to find compassion for all sentient beings. The Dharma is the highest ethical truth followed to experience life as the Buddha teaches it.

I believe this service makes a difference in the lives of its members in that it gives positive direction, assistance, and focus in life. It also explains what should be followed and what ethical implications should not be made. These are hints for a successful life full of love, compassion, kindness, wisdom, and knowledge that lead to Nirvana and most importantly Enlightenment.

The Tibetan Buddhist belief system is composed of a doctrine featuring the Four Noble Truths. The Four Noble Truths describe a Buddhist's prognosis throughout their life beginning with diagnosis. Diagnosis presents the fact that suffering is always present in life. Next is the belief that desire and craving cause suffering, the belief in the importance of one's self. Treatment is the third truth, which states, when desire and craving are overcome, suffering ends, which is the achievement of Nirvana (Nirvana ends suffering). Nirvana is the last truth. It is attained through meditation and by following the path of righteousness in action, thought, and attitude, which pertain to the Noble Eight-fold Path. Most importantly, the doctrine of Tibetan Buddhism is reincarnation, which is achieved prior to Nirvana. For rebirth to occur there are two instructions. The first is for transmitting one's soul into the pure Buddha lands (the great western paradise). The second is for choosing a womb door in the impure life cycle (or the coming back), which can happen many times depending on the consequences of following or not obeying the Noble Eight-fold path and the Dharma teachings. The trip to the pure lands is an outer experience, whereas experiencing the life cycle is more inner because one is trying to become a Buddha or as much like the Buddha as they can.

Tibetan Buddhists worship Buddhas, Dalai Lamas (a well achieved monk or a reincarnated Buddhist), bodhisattvas (future Buddhas), Taras (ferocious consorts of the bodhisattvas) and spirits. There is no particular God. Tibetan Buddhists are polytheistic idealists. They believe that there are multiple beings and when all they are all incorporated together, they make up the ideals Tibetan Buddhists are supposed to live up to and try to emulate to make their life as enriched and as free of suffering and desire as possible.

The Buddhist tradition entails the social dimension of religion through monastic orders such as monks and nuns. This organized form taken on by this religion was not directly displayed at the service however, Frank mentioned the Dalai Lama in the first half of the service as being a reincarnated Buddhist monk. What I believe provides the social cohesion is the respect for the great communities of monks and nuns that represent this small group. Even though they were not monks or nuns themselves, they took the service very seriously and close to heart. You could see their deep compassion, active involvement and dedicated. They meet every Sunday for two hours to try to fulfill themselves to be the best Tibetan Buddhists they can possibly be and they look to each other for support. Frank, the leader is very welcoming to questions and concerns of all the members to make each individual's experience full and complete. The amount of dedication, support, acceptance, and concern about each other as well as the compassion among all the members at the service is what I believe allows a strong sense of community to be involved each week.

Overall I believe this field assignment was worthwhile. I was able to experience and understand aspects of another religion, which I never thought I would do. I found it to be very interesting especially when I compared the Tibetan Buddhist service to the Roman Catholic Mass I am familiar with. I found similarities that I did not render before until I actually sat down and thought about them. In conclusion, studying Tibetan Buddhism was a very interesting and powerful experience. I am glad I have had an educating opportunity to learn so much about Tibetan Buddhism.

By: Corinne Bidnick

## **The 5 Pillars of Islam**

The basic rites of Islam that were revealed to the Prophet are the “pillars” of Islam. These are considered to be the entire ritual structure of the Islamic religion because they are the five essential and obligatory practices that all Muslims follow. These pillars also “have certain disciplinary effects in curbing the excess desires of the believers, in teaching them to do things together for the welfare of the group and for the purification of their souls” (Farah, 135). The five rituals consist of: 1.) Shahada, the profession of faith, 2.) Salah, prayer, 3.) Zakah, almsgiving, 4.) Siyam, fasting, and 5.) Hajj, the pilgrimage.

Shahada, the first of the Five Pillars is what is known as the “profession of faith” or “bearing witness.” It is a two part statement, the first part, in Arabic reads: “ashhadu anna la ilaha illa ‘l-Lah.” Which means “I bear witness that there is no god but God.” The second half of the profession in Arabic is: “wa anna Muhammadan rasulu ‘l-Lah.” Which means “and that Muhammad is the messenger of God.” By saying the full statement, “I bear witness that there is no god but God, and that Muhammad is the messenger of God” a person becomes a Muslim.

The first half of the Shahada is important because “it affirms Islam’s absolute monotheism, an unshakable and uncompromising faith in the oneness or unity of God” (Esposito, 90). It is also the confirmation of their reliance on God for all things. The second half of the Shahada is “the affirmation of Muhammad as the messenger of God, the last and final prophet, who serves as a model for the Muslim community” (Esposito, 90).

These words are so important that they are the first that are said to a newborn baby and the last said by a person who is dying. “No words are more often uttered than these; they are repeated by the average believer no less than twenty times daily. They constitute the basic part of the call to prayer” (Farah, 135).

The second of the Five Pillars is Salah, which is prayer. This is not just whimsical prayer, but the ritual and obligatory prayer that is carried out during five specified times during the day. The times of prayer are fixed to these times: “1.) fajr – when the sky is filled with light but before actual sunrise, 2.) Zuhr – immediately after midday 3.) ‘asr – sometime between three and five o’clock in the afternoon, 4.) maghrib – after sunset but before the onslaught of darkness, and 5.) ‘isha’ – any hour of darkness” (Farah, 137). This prayer may be performed wherever the person finds themselves at any of those times, or it can be performed in a mosque with others.

At each of these five times during the day, all around the world the muezzin announces the call to prayer by saying: “God is great (four times). I bear witness that there is no god but God (twice). I bear witness that Muhammad is the messenger of God (twice). There is no god but God” (Farah, 136). Before prayer the worshippers must perform ghusl or wudu, which is the ritual cleansing of the body. This is to make sure that each person is ritually pure, which is a necessity for divine worship. Ghusl is what is done after acts of great defilement, for example sexual intercourse. Wudu is done after acts of small defilement, for example sleep, satisfying the calls of nature and common contact with the opposite sex.

While praying, all Muslims face the direction of Mecca. “The prayers themselves consist of two to four prostrations, depending on the time of the day. Each prostration

begins with the declaration, 'God is most great,' and consists of bows, prostrations, and the recitation of fixed prayers that include the opening verse of the Quran and other passages from the Quran" (Esposito, 91). At the end the shahada is said again and the peace greeting "Peace be upon all of you and the mercy and blessings of God" is said twice (Esposito, 91).

"In addition to the salah, there are the Friday congregational prayers, which are almost always performed in mosques or in their absence in open spaces in towns, in the fields or in the desert. They bring the members of the community together and have important social, economic and even political dimensions as well as a purely religious one" (Nasr, 93). The main difference between the Friday congregational prayers and the salah is that during the Friday prayers there is the delivery of a sermon by the imam, leader of prayers.

Du'a are the individual, non-obligatory prayers that are said after the salah, or at any other time during the day or night. These are personal prayers that are most often said in the person's own language. Salah on the other hand must be performed in Arabic "for it is a rite whose form is sacred and beyond individual, a Divine norm in which men and women take refuge from the withering effects of the storm of like and the transient conditions of temporal existence" (Nasr, 93).

Zakah, the third of the Five Pillars is almsgiving or poor due. "All adult Muslims who are able to do so are obliged to pay a wealth tax annually" (Esposito, 92). Zakah literally means "giving back to Allah a portion of His bounty as means of avoiding the sufferings of the next life" (Farah, 142). There is no exact amount that must be given, but is usually between 2 and 3 percent of their accumulated wealth and assets. The money

collected for zakah “is to be kept in the ‘public treasury’ and spent for public and religious services and works” (Nasr, 96). These services and works make up “eight categories of people named in Qur’am 9:61: ‘Zakah is for the poor and needy, and those who collect zakah, and those whose hearts are to be reconciled, and to free captives and debtors, and for the cause of Allah, and for the wayfarers; a duty imposed by Allah. Allah is Knower, Wise’” (Brown, 129-130). To put it simply “alms are to be used to support the poor, orphans, and widows, to free slaves and debtors, and to assist in the spread of Islam” (Esposito, 92).

There is also a non-obligatory or voluntary alms. This is called sadaqah and it is a supplement to the alms collected through zakah. “The faithful volunteered them as his proclivity for doing good or acquiring merits when Allah moved him” (Farah, 143). Today sadaqah is generally paid when the month of fast ends.

Which leads to the fourth of the Five Pillars, siyam. Siyam is “fasting, including obligatory and bonus fasts. The major obligatory fast involves abstention from food, drink, and sexual intercourse from dawn to sunset during the month of Ramadan” (Brown, 130). Ramadan is the ninth month of the Islamic calendar (which follows the lunar year) and therefore moves from month to month in the solar year. During this month, all adult Muslims whose health permits must participate in this fast. “The sick and those on a journey are not required to fast, but they must try to make up the days lost when possible. Also women do not fast during their menstrual period; breast feeding mothers also do not fast” (Nasr, 94).

The fast is broken directly after sunset with a “futar” or light meal. The people that are fasting may eat until dawn and this culminates with a “suhur” or dawn meal.

This early morning meal must sustain the faster until sunset. Based on the cycle of the moon, the period of Ramadan could last between 28 and 30 days.

“As the end of Ramadan nears (on the twenty-seventh day), Muslims commemorate the ‘Night of Power’ when Muhammad first received God’s revelation” (Esposito, 93). The celebration of the Feast of the Breaking of the Fast, Id al-Fitr marks the end of the month of Ramadan. This celebration lasts for three full days, and during this is when zakat (the obligatory alms) are given out. It is also a time when families get together and exchange gifts, “the spirit and joyousness remind one of the celebration of Christmas” (Esposito, 93).

If a Muslim does not fast, but is physically able to then he must feed a poor man to make up for it and must give expiatory alms, which are called fidya. “If the sexual prohibition is violated, then he must free a slave or fast two months or feed sixty persons” (Farah, 145).

The last of the Five Pillars is hajj. The Hajj is the pilgrimage to Mecca that Muslims take at least once in a lifetime if they can afford to and are physically able. “Muslims believe that God forgives a person’s sins if he or she performs the hajj with devotion and sincerity” (Nasr, 95).

The hajj takes place during the first ten days of the twelfth month of the Muslim lunar calendar which is Dhu’l-hijjah. The pilgrimage starts on the borders of the haram, or holy area where there are certain areas on the road approaching the haram that the pilgrim performs certain rites that prepare him for the following days. “He sheds his daily clothing and dons two seamless wrappers, one around the loins reaching to just above the knees and the other about the shoulders. After these necessary preliminary

preparations, he enters the haram and does not thereafter shave, trim his nails, or anoint his head during the entire ceremonial period” (Farah, 148).

The pilgrimage consists of a series of visits and events to different areas of Mecca. These are “a visit to the Masjid al-Haram (the sacred mosque), kissing the Black Stone, circumambulating the Ka’bah seven times (tawaf) three times at a run and four at a quick pace, a visit to Maqam Ibrahim, where there is a sacred stone upon which Abraham allegedly climbed while laying the upper courses of the Ka’bah. There is also the ascent to Mount Safa whence the pilgrim runs to Mount Marwa seven times, then to Mount ‘Arafat, on the ninth day of the pilgrimage” (Farah, 148).

When at ‘Arafat the wuquf takes place, this is the culminating point of the pilgrimage, the entire ceremony would be null and void without this. After this, at sunset of the ninth day the pilgrims move to the valley between ‘Arafat and Mina, Muzdalifah which is where they spend the night and then move to Mina at sunrise. At Mina they “cast seven little pebbles picked up at Muzdalifah while reciting Bism ‘l-Lahi, Allahu akbar (in the name of God, God is great. The casting of the seven pebbles is in commemoration of Abraham’s escape from Satan, when tempted by him at this spot to sacrifice his son, by his throwing seven stones at him” (Farah, 149).

The ceremony ends at Mina with the sacrifice of a sheep or a goat that the pilgrim had consecrated during the hajj. The meat is then eaten by the owners and shared with the poor of Mecca. This day is known as the Id al-Adha or the feast of the offerings. It is celebrated throughout the world by Muslims sacrificing an animal just like the animals that are sacrificed in Mina.

“At the end of the sacrifice ritual the pilgrim has his head shaven and nails cut. The waste is carefully buried at Mina” (Farah, 150). After this is done he is “in a state of partial desanctification (tahallu; al-saghir). Full desanctification occurs only after the pilgrim scurries back to Mecca and performs at the Ka’bah the tawf al-ifadah” (Farah, 150). He is now able to be called “Hajj.”

Women are also able to undertake the hajj as long as it is permitted by the husband. She must be accompanied either by her husband or another person that is her protector. The garb for women during their pilgrimage is often a “long white dress and head covering” but they may also wear a “simple, national dress” (Esposito, 94). During the hajj perfume and jewelry are not permitted and neither is sexual activity or hunting.

“Should a believer die without having performed the pilgrimage when he could have and should have, arrangements may be then made for it to be done postmortem on his behalf by his heirs, who would thereby be performing a pious act subject to rewards on the Day of Judgment. In some cases bodies are sent to Mecca for burial” (Farah, 148).

In addition to, but in no way is it a replacement of the hajj, Muslims who are able to do so make a lesser hajj to Mecca at any time during the year, this is called hajj al-‘umrah. They visit the same sites that would be visited during the hajj, but because it is not during the first ten days of the twelfth month of the lunar calendar it is not the hajj.

The Five Pillars are the core of a Muslim’s duty to worship God. These five obligations of every Muslim are the backbone to the Islamic faith. They guide every follower into a life of devotion and servitude of God. Each of them has been carried out since Muhammad brought them back to his followers so many years ago. And “despite the rich diversity in Islamic practice, the Five Pillars of Islam remain the core and

common denominator, the five essential and obligatory practices all Muslims accept and follow” (Esposito, 90).

By: Jennifer Hitchcock

## **Connections Between Christian Communion and the Jewish Seder**

### **Introduction**

For many years, I have been trying to find a religious faith that was right for me. During these past few years I have found Christianity to be the faith that was right for myself but did not have a full understanding as to why I felt this way. By attending the State Street United Methodist Church in Fulton, NY, I was given the opportunity to learn more about the Christian faith and the ceremonies that accompanied it. At the church, Communion ceremonies were held on the first Sunday of each month and for religious holidays. Over time, I learned that Communion ceremonies are a very large component of the Christian faith and wanted to learn more about them; hence why I chose this topic. I also wanted to compare Communion ceremonies to ceremonies in another religious faith in order to have a better understanding as to why they are practiced. Through researching the Communion ceremony I found a ceremony in the Jewish faith to be very similar, the Passover Seder. In fact, Communion is not only similar to the Passover Seder but is directly connected to that ceremony in several ways. To get the research I needed to understand the Passover Seder and Communion, I have consulted sources from various colleges, from my hometown, internet databases and conversed to other people who have had experiences with these ceremonies in the past.

### **The Passover Seder**

#### **Historical Overview of the Passover Seder**

In order to understand why the Passover Seder ceremony exists I read and studied the story of Passover. The story of Passover is contained within the book of Exodus 12:1-28. Passover occurred during the month of Nisan in Egypt. In the scripture, the Lord tells

Moses and Aaron that all families in the community must sacrifice male lambs with no imperfections and sacrifice them on the fourteenth night of Nisan. The blood from these lambs was then spread around the doors of each home using bunches of hyssop plants. If the families complied with the Lord's request, He would *pass over* their homes and not allow the tenth plague to take their first born child. To celebrate this kind act they also had to eat the sacrificed lambs while following strict ceremonial regulations set by the Lord; thus the Passover Seder was created. (*sfr. Nelson 74-76; sfr. Van Voorst 234*).

### **Rules and Regulations for the Passover Seder**

Strict ceremonial rules and regulations for the Passover Seder were created by the Lord and can be found in the book of Exodus, 12:1-28, 45-51. These rules/regulations included when the Seder meal should be held, how it should be eaten, what foods should be included, and who could participate in the event. According to Exodus 12:3-6, "on the tenth day of Nisan every man should take for himself a lamb,...shall keep it until the fourteenth day of Nisan...and then shall kill it at twilight" (Exodus, 12:3 & 6). This means that the Passover Seder is always celebrated on the fourteenth day of Nisan. After sacrificing the lamb, it was then roasted and eaten with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. The Lord then told everyone to eat this meal hastily "with belts on their waists, their sandals on their feet, and with their staffs in their hands" (Exodus, 12:11). When families were finished with their meals they were then required to burn any left over food so that "none of it would remain until the next morning" (Exodus, 12:10). Furthermore, the Lord went into detail about who could eat the Seder meal in Exodus 12:41-51. No foreigners, servants, sojourners or strangers could participate in the ceremony unless they were circumcised. Finally, the Lord set one last rule which stated that no one was allowed to eat leavened bread

for seven days, starting on the fourteenth night of Nisan (the night of the Passover Seder) until the twenty-first night. If the people followed the Lord's requests they would not only be spared from the tenth plague, they would also be guaranteed freedom from Egyptian rule and slavery. This promise of a journey to freedom from slavery was called the *Exodus*. (*sfr. Nelson, 74-76*).

### **Exodus: The Promise of Freedom after Passover**

For “[s]even days [the people] shall eat unleavened bread...[and] observe *the Feast of Unleavened Bread*, for on this same day I will have brought [their] armies out of the land of Egypt” and freed them from slavery (Exodus, 12:15 & 17). The Israelites did as the Lord asked and He granted them freedom by making the Egyptians see their requests to leave as favorable. The Egyptians immediately drove the Israelites out of Egypt before they had time to prepare provisions to take on the journey; therefore they were forced to take unleavened dough with them. On foot, they traveled six hundred thousand miles, from Rameses to Succoth, in order to escape Egyptian control. (*sfr. Nelson, 75-76*).

### **The Meaning and Purpose Behind the Passover Seder**

“So this day shall be to the Israelites a memorial; and they shall keep it as a feast to the Lord throughout their generations...by an everlasting ordinance” (Exodus, 12:14) The Passover Seder is used to commemorate the Lord's gift of freedom from Egyptian enslavement to the Israelites and for passing over their homes during the tenth plague. This ceremony is now passed down from generation to generation as a great teaching tool to help them remember what the Lord did for their ancestors and themselves. The ordinance, songs and prayers that accompany the Passover Seder ceremony can be found within the Hebrew text entitled the

*Haggadah. (sfr. Nelson, 74-76; sfr. Wolfson, 19-21)*

### **The Passover Seder Ceremony Today**

The Passover Seder ceremony can be broken down into fifteen steps. The first step in the ceremony, Kadesh, is to drink the first cup of wine and to sing the Festival Kiddush which praises and thanks God. The second step, Urhatz, is to wash their hands in preparation for eating the Seder meal. The third step, Karpas, is to eat a green vegetable dipped in salt water as an appetizer. This is meant to remind people of their ancestors' struggles in Egypt. Fourth, Yahatz, involves breaking the middle matzah; the broken piece becomes the afikomen or "dessert" of the meal and is symbolic of future redemption. Fifth, the Maggid, includes four different tellings of the story of Exodus and freedom from slavery, and the second cup of wine called the Kos Sheini. Step six is the Rohtzah where participants must wash their hands and recite a blessing; this occurs before the breaking of the unleavened bread. Step seven and eight, the Motzi and Matzah is used to praise and bless God for "bringing forth bread from the earth...the bread of freedom" (Wolfson, p. 26). Step nine is the Maror where bitter herbs are eaten as a symbol of their ancestors' slavery. Tenth, the Korekh binds the matzah and maror together "as a reminder of the paschal offering on Passover night" (Wolfson, p. 26). Step eleven, entitled Shulhan Orekh, is where the main course of the meal is eaten. Twelve, the Tzafun involves finding the hidden afikomen, from step four of the ceremony, to eat for dessert. Thirteen is the Berekah blessings to God after the meal along with the third cup of wine known as Kos Sh'lishi. The fourteenth step is the Hallel and Zemirot (songs), and the Sefirat Ha-Omer or the countdown to the Festival of Shavuot. The final step is the Nirtzah, a closing prayer, and the fourth cup of wine or Kos R'vi'i. (*sfr. Wolfson, 19- 239*)

The actual Seder plate is extremely important to the ceremony as well. The plate

contains six types of symbolic food: the zero'a, beitzah, maror, haroset, karpas and the hazeret. "The zero'a represents the paschal lamb sacrificed by Jews...[and] is the shank bone of lamb which is not eaten (Wolfson, p. 343-344). The beitzah is a hard-boiled, roasted egg which symbolizes the Hagigah sacrifice and is not eaten" (Wolfson, p. 345- 346). Maror is a type of bitter herb that is eaten and symbolizes the Egyptian slavery.

Haroset is used as a reminder of the mortar used to make bricks during slavery; it consists of wine, fruit, nuts, honey and spices and is eaten at the ceremony. Traditionally the karpas is a leafy vegetable that is eaten after it has been dipped in salt water; this is used as a reminder of their ancestors' tears and struggles. Lastly, the hazeret is a second kind of bitter herb eaten to remind people of their ancestors' bitter enslavement in Egypt.(*sfr. Wolfson, 19-239*)

## **Communion**

### **History of Communion**

In order to understand why the Communion ceremony exists I studied the story of the Last Supper, along with the arrest, trial and brutal death of Jesus. During the Last Supper, Jesus gave unleavened bread and wine that he had blessed to all of his disciples.

While doing this Jesus states that the unleavened bread "is His body" and that the wine "...is His blood of the new covenant" (Matthew 26:26 & 28). Communion was created on the night of the Last Supper when Jesus stated the words "take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of me... This cup is the new covenant in My blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me" (1Corinthians, 11:24 & 25). He also states that He is the bread of life, and that anyone that comes to Him and believes in Him would never be hungry or thirsty. Believers would also attain eternal life and live forever with Him in heaven. Soon after the Last Supper, Jesus was betrayed by Judas, captured and sentenced to death by

crucifixion. Jesus took on and accepted every human being's sin as His own through vicious beatings and crucifixion. Jesus' loving act of taking on everyone's sins opened the gates to heaven for all people and freed them from the enslavement of their sins. (*sfr. Nelson, 1180-1183, 1382; sfr. Van Voorst, 254- 256.*)

### **The Meaning and Purpose Behind Communion**

Communion is used to help people remember what Jesus went through while He helped free people from the enslavement of their sins. By going through brutal torture and crucifixion, Jesus took all of the world's sins upon Him, died and suffered for peoples' sins so that they would not have to, and opened the gates of heaven to all people willing to believe in Him as their Savior, Lord and Messiah. Communion also symbolically represents a type of sacrificial meal. The bread and wine used in some Christian ceremonies are symbolically 'changed' into the body and blood of Jesus (Osborne, p. 149) and are seen as something that will always remain within the individual that receives it. However, in Catholicism, a priest consecrates communion into the actual body and blood of Christ; this is called transubstantiation.

### **The Use of Communion Today**

Communion is now a traditionally practiced ceremony throughout many denominations of the Christian faith. Each denomination performs the ceremony of Communion in their own way and at different times of the year. However, the essence, meanings and purposes of the ceremonies are similar.

For example, at my Methodist church, Communion ceremonies are held on the first Sunday of every month and on all Christian religious holidays. The Reverend Judy Alderman always starts out the service with an invitation to the Lord's table, followed by the confession and prayer for the pardon of sins. Next, the members of the congregation offer signs of peace

to one another as well as offer themselves and their gifts to God. At this time, the congregation recites the prayer of Great Thanksgiving and the Lord's Prayer. Now, communion is given to every member in the congregation while the words "the body of Christ, given for you. **Amen.** the blood of Christ, given for you. **Amen**" are spoken (United Methodist Hymnal, p. 12-15). Finally, the congregation is dismissed with a blessing that they will now "go forth in peace...with the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit with all of them" (United Methodist Hymnal, p. 15).

### **How the Seder and Communion Are Interconnected**

In the Bible, within the gospels of Mark and Matthew, it can be proven that the Last Supper was indeed a form of the Passover Seder. Kenan B. Osborne, O.F.M. perfectly outlines these gospel facts in his book, The Christian Sacraments of Initiation: Baptism Conformation, Eucharist on pages 165-167. Osborne makes many solid points on how the Last Supper can be historically considered a Passover Seder. First, "The last supper took place in Jerusalem... and was celebrated at night"(p. 165). Secondly, "a room was made available to [Jesus]" (p. 165). Third, "Jesus celebrated [and reclined at] the [L]ast [S]upper with the twelve" disciples (p. 166). Fourth, Jesus washed the feet of each disciple maintaining a "state of levitical purity"(p. 166). Fifth, bread was broken and red wine was served at the meal; the bread and wine was also interpreted during the meal. Finally, the Last Supper was ended with the Hallel hymn. All of these factors were present in both the Last Supper and a Passover Seder.

### **Conclusion**

By doing research on the Communion ceremony and the Passover Seder, I have gained a great deal of knowledge and an increased respect for both religious faiths. Until this

point in my studies, I never truly realized how much the Jewish faith influences Christianity. I believe that without Judaism and the Passover Seder ceremony, the Communion ceremony may never have existed. I now also understand and appreciate the meaning of Communion and what it represents. As a Christian, I now fully understand the meaning of what Jesus did for all people, freeing them from their sins so that they may reach heaven, if all they do is believe in Him. That message and the other lessons taught through these ceremonies are highly valuable and can enhance all peoples' lives for the better. I also now believe that Passover should be more widely celebrated by Christians; that is a frequently overlooked and misunderstood part of the Christian faith.

By: Erin K. McIntyre

# Faculty Essay



# Who Reads Bishop Butler?

By David White

The work of the Bishop Butler Historical Society is, informally, “to spread the word by and about Bishop Butler.” The Society takes Bishop Butler’s work to be a paradigm of philosophy. None of his works were written for purely academic reasons. All his publications derived either from the discharge of his duties as a priest in the Church of England or from an attempt to advance himself in that career. Thus, by the pragmatist standard, they made a difference in the world.

**Butler Studies** aim to determine the extent and the shape of the difference Butler made and to illuminate why he made that difference. The Society does this by looking at the sources Butler used or seems to have used, at what was going on around him while he lived, at the texts he produced (in original and in schematized form), and at the whole range of readers who came in touch with Butler and his works, and what the reception was. Thus, our title might have been expanded to ask, “What Did Butler Read, Whom Did He Know, What Did He Say, and How Was It Received?”

**Joseph Butler** was born in Wantage, the birthplace of King Alfred, in 1692. The house that was shown as the Butler birthplace during the nineteenth century is certainly the family home, but there is no solid proof that Butler was born there. It is a beautiful house and is now in some danger of being sold to developers. Butler’s first career move came while he was a student in Tewkesbury, at a Dissenting Academy kept by Mr. Jones. He sent letters to Samuel Clarke regarding a proof of God’s existence Clarke had presented in his Boyle lectures (1704-05). The exchange continued, and Clarke was so impressed that he included Butler’s letters with his replies in the next edition of his works (1716). The letters were sent anonymously, and we cannot be sure when Clarke first found out who Butler was, but he certainly knew by the time Butler had enrolled at Oriel

College, Oxford, and engaged in some more correspondence. It is in these later letters that Butler complains about how terrible Oxford University is and how he is not learning anything. He considered transferring to Cambridge, but did not want to have to repeat any credits, so he decided to finish up at Oxford. Of course, to pursue a career in divinity at Oxford or Cambridge, Butler had to conform to the Church of England. His family is said to have been Presbyterian, but that designation does not tell us a great deal about what his early life was like.

Again with the help of Clarke and of Bishop Talbot, the father of one of his college chums, Butler landed a very good first job. Butler became preacher at the Rolls Chapel. This was in the legal district of London on the estate of the Master of the Rolls, the third most senior judge of England. The office of Master of the Rolls still exists today, but the chapel was pulled down about a century ago since it was in such poor repair. Visitors to King's College in London can still see some glass that was saved from the chapel. Most of the sermons Butler preached during his tenure at the Rolls have been lost, but he did publish fifteen of them, appropriately titled *Fifteen Sermons Preached at the Rolls Chapel*.

Butler tells us not to try to figure out why he picked the ones he did or why they are in the particular order in which they were published. We can only wonder why he tells us not to do something that probably few people would have thought of doing were it not prohibited. Taking the Rolls job and getting the sermons published was Butler's second big career move. The first (1726) and second (1729) editions are now extremely rare, but fortunately can be read on microfilm. The published sermons caught the attention of David Hume, who included Butler on his list of the founders of modern

moral theory. When Butler's major treatise appeared in print ten years after the sermons, the sermons were generally considered merely as illustrations of the *Analogy of Religion* (1736). Samuel Taylor Coleridge was one of the first to try to reverse this tendency, but even as recently as the 1920s there were complaints about the sermons not being attended to sufficiently. Today, however, the sermons, or at least the five most favored of the fifteen, are readily available in anthologies and in paperback editions. They are the only sermons in English that are routinely studied in secular classes in moral philosophy.

By the time the first edition of the Rolls sermons appeared, Butler had moved north to become rector of Stanhope. Because of the income from mining in the area, this was known as the "Golden Rectory". Little is known about how Butler wrote his most famous work, *The Analogy of Religion Natural and Revealed, to the Course and Constitution of Nature* (1736) during this period. In his will, he ordered that all his papers be destroyed. His library was sold piece by piece soon after his death. We have some anecdotes, but no knowledge of where, how, or when he worked or what or who he consulted while he worked. There is an old story, and it must be true to some degree, that he reworked material from sermons not used in *Fifteen Sermons Preached at the Rolls*. The *Analogy* contains an appendix, "A Dissertation on Virtue," that somewhat modifies the ethical doctrine of the sermons. There is most overlap on the topic of human ignorance. Ignorance is crucial for Butler since he is trying to evaluate the same evidence that has been available to everyone for a long time. His point is that when we look at that evidence as it comes to us in real life, we see that it is in the nature of a cumulative case, that all that matters is its consequences for practice and that all the evidence must be

judged against a background admission that we are still in deepest ignorance about important aspects of the universe, and especially of the consequences of our own actions.

Butler's friend at Oriel had died young, but he became chaplain to his brother, by then the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Queen Caroline carried on in England what was unusual there but common back in Hanover, a gathering of advanced male thinkers around a women of prominence. Butler was included for a time in this group, his person and his work found favor with the Queen, and on her death-bed, she urged that Butler be made a bishop.

When Butler became bishop of Bristol, he took on a job that cost more in expenses than it paid in income. He was therefore allowed to continue as rector of Stanhope until he became dean of St. Paul's, London, which provided him with a good income, much of which he used in Bristol. Eighty years after Butler's death much of what he left in Bristol was destroyed in the Reform Riots. There is now very little to see in Bristol that is directly related to Butler in his own time. Today in Bristol one can see the elaborate memorial to Butler in the cathedral, and the Butler Tower, so called because the funds for it were raised in memory of when Butler was bishop there. What remains of the bishop himself is now under the floor of the cathedral, near the high altar. The inscribed stone on the floor is badly worn, so most visitors, nearly all in fact, walk over Bishop Butler's tomb without being aware they are doing so.

Philosophically, what is most important about this period in Butler's life is that he published six of his sermons "preached on public occasions." Two of these sermons were delivered to the House of Lords, of which he as a bishop was a member, and the other four were given in London churches to solicit contributions for charities. These

public occasions may not sound promising, but actually the sermons, along with his charge to the clergy at Durham, provide us with the main points of Butler's views on institutional integrity. The sermons on human nature (Rolls sermons, 1-3) do not make clear how important formal institutions are for Butler's understanding of how we ought to live. He often distinguishes between our private life and our public life, but only the these later sermons does he spell out how he sees such institutions as the various charities, hospitals, missions, civil government, education and the church itself.

After the *Analogy of Religion* was published in 1736, Butler made some generally inconsequential changes and brought out a second edition that same year. After that second edition of the *Analogy*, he did not publish any work beyond what was specifically expected of him as a sitting bishop of the Church of England, i.e., these "public" sermons and the charge at Durham.

Butler did eventually become bishop of Durham. This position brought him back to the North Country where he had his parish at Stanhope years before. At that time, the bishop of Durham was a prince/bishop with greater political powers than other bishops since the area was considered a border state. Butler died only shortly after getting to Durham, but he is still remembered as one can see in references to him by later bishops of Durham. The most recent one who was most influenced by Butler and did the most to promote Butler Studies was Ian Ramsey, whose life like Butler's was sadly cut short when there was still much he could have done. The Rev Canon Professor D W Brown, who is now Van Mildert Professor of Divinity at the University of Durham, may perhaps be singled out as a leader in the use of Butler's methods in theology today. Were we to

look back into the past, mention would have to be made of John Henry Newman. All these men are associated with Butler's college at Oxford, Oriel.

Even those who have seen clearly the analogy between Butler and Pascal, going before, and William James, following, rarely achieve the full effect of Butler's writing. We need constantly to bear in mind that in his own time Butler was better known for his church-work than his writing, and that the writing itself was only done in close connection with the church-work. When Butler became ill, he was taken to Bath, where he died in 1752. The tar water did not work any better for him than it did for his friend Bishop Berkeley. The building where Butler died is marked, but it is some blocks from the usual tourist trail and can be difficult to find.

**His Reputation.** Some after his death, Butler's works began to be reprinted in the main Scottish cities and were used extensively in theological and general education there. During the earlier nineteenth century, Butler's *Analogy* was essential reading for any educated person in the English-speaking world. The excitement about Butler eventually wound down and the *Analogy* became just another "Christian Classic." Sadly there were some Christian theologians who sought to advance their own work by disparagement of Butler's. Almost always this attitude was based on a very imperfect study of Butler.

Butler has never been an easy read, and the purpose of the new edition is to see to it that those who do invest the effort are paid the best possible dividend. The key words for describing not just Butler but the whole Anglican tradition in theology and for seeing it as an especially pure continuation of the work of the primitive church are words like "evince," "indicate," "induce," "point" as well as "disclose" and "reveal."

God revealed himself in the work of creation (nature), in the history of Israel, and in the person of Christ. The writers of scripture (what became scripture) worked with the language of the oral tradition and the still living memory so much as they had access to it. For this tradition, the experience of ritual life was more important than philosophical reflection or literary composition. Those theological writers and church-workers generally would need first to have a disclosure experience and would as a result have the eye and ear, so to speak, to produce works that would seek to evince, indicate, induce, or point to the experience for others. Borrowing a word from the language of architecture, Butler calls this the “effect” of his writing. Logically or rhetorically the argument is a cumulative case based on analogies and probabilities, but the probabilities we end up acting on may, Butler says, be less than an even chance. Butler, therefore, greatly expanded Pascal’s wager and showed there are many ways by which one can come to see that the religious gamble is one worth taking.

Those who end up less interested in Butler or Pascal or James sometimes feel this is all a matter of intellectualizing about religion rather than the living of the life of religion, i.e., being a Christian. Such attitudes result from a very imperfect attention to what Butler says. That Butler never wrote anything as “literature” has already been stressed, but when we get into the texts of Butler we see that he very consistently refers to religion as a practical matter, that is, as a matter of practice as opposed to speculation. Butler rejected entirely the philosophy of Descartes as speculation, and one of his main themes, the only topic treated at length in both the Rolls sermons and the *Analogy* is human ignorance. When Butler talks about probability, his point is that since human, as opposed to divine, knowledge is imperfect, we have to act on probabilities. Once we are

acting on probabilities, we can fairly bring in considerations that would not be relevant in a formal proof. This is the line that James developed so well. I may act on a proposition for which I have rather slight evidence because I especially want that proposition to be true and because by my so acting I can play a role in bringing about the truth of the proposition. One does not demand proof that an election is fair before participating in the election. One has to decide how the balance of probabilities will play out and how one's participation will contribute to or detract from the fairness of the election. The mere fact that objections to fairness have been raised may help to bring it about that the election is fair, or more fair than it would otherwise be.

Butler, like the Cambridge Platonists before him, used the biblical phrase “candle of the Lord”. Since we have so little in the way of biographical records, we cannot say with any certainty what Butler might have thought of his readers or even of the people in the pews listening to his sermons. Certainly he had what is the Christian view generally that some such thing as the candle of the Lord exists in each person. The light of this candle is often so difficult to see that we may doubt it is there at all, but the universalistic version of Christianity with which Butler is associated, and for the very concept of God as all-powerful and unable to fail, it seems we need to act on probabilities and treat all others as so many refractions of the divine. Even when this seems the lesser probability, it is worth acting on since by doing so we may help to bring it about that it is so. Butler develops all this in his sermons on benevolence and on the love of God, but in preparing the new edition we need to give special attention to how we treat the text.

With this style of theology, the signs or symbols of the original writer must be preserved as much as possible. We can map which aspects of Butler's writing appealed

to some at least of his early readers, but we also know that any change in the text can easily do more harm than good since we are not transmitted mere cognitive meaning, if that at all, but rather seeking to achieve “effect,” which in this case is a very specific religious reaction of whole-heartedly adopting the life of virtue and of piety within the Christian church as one’s own. We also know that some aspects of the printed page of 1726 or 1736 are incidental and not expressive.

Those who have the interest certainly should consult the original works, at least on microfilm, but it would be a mistake for us to stress creation of a facsimile, what Thoemmes did with the Gladstone edition, and what many of the previous editors have done. The problem is that books are artifacts and no matter how carefully they are preserved and no matter how much is explained in notes, we cannot expect that an artifact from one culture will even have the potential to produce the effect in our place and time surrounded as we are with a very different culture. The University of Rochester Press therefore recognized that what was needed was to find people as familiar as possible with all aspects of Hanoverian church life and with all aspects of ethics and philosophical theology as it is practiced today and then let them work out a plan for presenting Butler to the modern reader in a way that stands the best chance of producing the desired effect.

There is no question here of coming to agree with Butler. For almost all readers, however many there are, the contribution of Butler will only be one of many that contribute to an education in philosophy and theology. Butler, and all the rest are to be treated as colleagues. What is different and profoundly significant for some is the nature and extent of Butler’s reception. The new edition will not just, as is usual, include notes

on Butler's sources, but will also have extensive annotation of his reception from the day his works first appeared on down to the present.

Once one starts to look at the sources and at the reception, far more questions are raised than answered, so the editorial workers have to, outside of this introduction, adopt an entirely objective and historical approach.

**Presentation of the text.** There will never be agreement on how to edit the eighteenth-century, so we can never hope that all readers will agree with what we have done. What we can argue for and can hope to gain assent to is our principle of editing, which is that we want to maximize the pay-off for those readers who invest the most in the text. The most recent attempts at major revision (Bernard in 1900 and Gladstone in 1898) do not deliver enough to the modern reader who is willing to make the effort. So, for example, if "hypothesis" appears with a small "h" and with a capital "H", the careful reader will naturally think some distinction is being made. But no such distinction appears in Butler. We have to distinguish between that which is expressive and that which is distractive, as well as that which may simply be neutral. Butler's failure to provide full citation when he quotes is distractive to the serious reader who wants to know exactly what he is talking about. We need to supply the reference, but we ought not to do so by changing ("expanding" as they say in the trade) what Butler wrote. It is entirely distractive when one cites a modern edition, one that Butler could not possibly have seen, so we have to go back and try to find the edition Butler used or might have used. Changes in spelling are always distractive. Readers who consult unabridged dictionaries may wonder that Butler was using such modern spellings or even American forms. We need to guarantee the reader that every word is spelled the way Butler spelled

it and every punctuation mark is as Butler had it. Italics can be expressive, so it too should be reproduced from the original. Capitalization is another matter. Butler seems to have used capital letters in a way dictated by the conventions of his time, conventions that changed drastically, but gradually, only a short time after he wrote. Like everyone else at the time, Butler capitalized not just the initial words in sentences and proper nouns, but all substantives. Unlike italics, punctuation and spelling, this capitalization never seems to tell us anything about what Butler is trying to say or where he is trying to point us, so we use modern Anglo-American capitalization. Pronouns referring to the deity are a very difficult area and cannot usefully be discussed here. Line breaks and page breaks do not seem expressive, and Butler probably did not contribute to them. Chapter breaks do matter, as do titles for chapters used in the table of contents. The index and internal cross references create special problems. When Butler cites one of his own pages, we are sometimes in doubt about exactly what part of the page he has in mind, and of course those are pages of the original editions. Since Butler clearly had a hand in two editions of the sermons (1726, 1729) and two editions of the *Analogy* (both in 1736), we have to record all these variants. The variations should be presented to the reader on a single page since many of them are context sensitive.

**Definitions** present a special problem. Modern lexicography was only beginning in Butler's day. There had always been plenty of discussion of the meaning of words, but very little systematic study of how words were used. We have no choice but to check the literature Butler or his readers would have been familiar with and then construct definitions, i.e., should articles that help to bring the word or expression into focus. The

process is always in danger of breaking down entirely. How, for example, can we hope to convey what Butler mean, or might have meant, by works such as “mind”?

**Source issues.** Finding the edition Butler seems to have consulted for his quotations is relatively easy. Bernard has complicated matters somewhat by including a puzzling note, but even such can be of help. Editors often scoff at printings that appeared long after an author’s lifetime or that seem to have been done in an “unscholarly” manner. The policy in the new edition is to make some reference to all discussions of and attempts to identify sources. We do not mind recording the errors of the past as long as we are careful not to repeat them. There are so many points that cannot be resolved that it seems better just to quote the data and move on.

The Bible is Butler’s most important source, by far. As with lexicography, Butler was living in the relatively early days of biblical criticism. He lacks the sensibilities that all modern readers of the Bible would have. Sometimes he seems to offer a profound insight into a passage, or at least the passage offers an insight into him, but other times he seems only to be quoting what happened to come to mind. There is a long tradition of editors supplying these references.

The same is true of his other most frequently cited sources: Aristotle and Cicero. Previous editions are filled with editors’ conjectures of where in Aristotle or in Cicero one might find Butler’s sources. Those who really want to trace all the threads should not stop with reading Aristotle and Cicero along with editorial notes. A rich source of references can be found in editions, usually translations, of Aristotle and Cicero as well as a host of other writers that were published during the years when Butler was most

current. There was a time when it just seemed natural to point readers of any of the theological classics (even Mencius in the Legge translation) back to Butler.

We also find some recalcitrant allusions that no one so far as located. For example, in his sermon on self-deception Butler wants to say that just as some of us never miss an opportunity to learn from experience there are others who seem to do all they can to avoid the truth about themselves, these are the self-deceivers. So Butler says that such people “invert the observation which is somewhere made upon Brutus, that he never read, but in order to make himself a better man.” Apparently Butler had no idea where he had heard this (“somewhere’), and all those who have tried to find the sentiment expressed in regard to Brutus or anyone else that Butler might have been confusing with Brutus, have been unsuccessful. For the most part, editors pass over this passage without any comment. The kind of disciplined reading that we encourage does not provide for avoiding a challenge, but then the human life-span does not provide for raising to all such challenges.

Tangential matters may be neglected, although it is always a guess, and a guess prone to self-deception, which matters are tangential, but everything Butler says about self-deception is crucial since his whole system and practice turns on one’s ability to overcome self-deception and receive the word of God inwardly making use of all the empirical senses, reason and conscience by means of a triangulation. The best we can do is to keep whatever search reports have been collected previously in front of those who are working on the text today. We do not expect to find the source for the Brutus comment in time for this edition, so the fall-back position is to make it clear to readers

how much we would welcome any information about it. Without a continuing Society dedicated to this work there would be no convenient clearinghouse for information.

**Contextual issues**, especially formal and acknowledged, are dangerous areas for speculation. Josiah Tucker, Butler's chaplain, tells us, in one of the most famous anecdotes:

His custom was, when at Bristol, to walk for hours in his garden in the darkest night which the time of the year could afford, and I had frequently the honour to attend him. After walking some time he would stop suddenly and ask the question, "What security is there against the insanity of individuals? The physicians know of none; and as to divines, we have no data, either from Scriptures or from reason, to go upon relative to this affair". . . He would then take another turn, and then stop short: "Why might not whole communities and public bodies be seized with fits of insanity, as well as individuals! Nothing but this principle, that they are liable to insanity, can account for the major part of those transactions of which we read in history."

Do we really know how typical or untypical this sentiment was in Butler's time? Do we know that he referred to Methodists as an insane community? Is it fair for us to consider this passage in relation to Butler studies more than Josiah Tucker studies? This thought does not correspond to any passage in Butler, although he does appeal to insanity ("distraction") in attempting to reduce an opponent's position to absurdity. Tucker told the story at least several times, and locating all the instances is a challenge since Tucker's

works have not been indexed. Edgar Allan Poe gives his version, along with some comments in his “Marginalia” in the *Democratic Review* (1844):

The Bishop of Durham (Dr. Butler) once asked Dean Tucker whether he did not think that communities went mad *en masse*, now and then, just as individuals, individually. The thing need not have been questioned. Were not the Abderians seized, all at once, with the Euripides lunacy, during which they ran about the streets declaiming the plays of the poet? And now here is the great tweedle-dee tweedle-dum paroxysm — the uproar about Pusey. If England and America are not lunatic now — at this very moment — then I have never seen such a thing as a March hare.

An innocent reader may wonder whether a passage such as this really does provide context or whether it might better be considered a curiosity. One cannot follow every lead in every direction. The laws of natural selection apply to religious research as much as anything else. In this case the key is to find in the secondary literature on Poe a significant analysis and evaluation of how they are related. The key text in this case seems to be Robert D. Jacobs on the New Critics, where he argues that what Butler, whom he refers to as one of the “harried divines,” tried to do becomes extremely interesting in relation to Poe’s use of the words “gradation” and “analogy.” So mapping the context of Butler’s work down through time becomes wonderful entertainment in itself.

Another major contextual issue is that of the deists. Not in Butler’s time, certainly, but especially since the middle of the nineteenth century it has become conventional to identify Butler’s *Analogy* as a reply to the deists. Not only does Butler

never refer to the deists by name, but even in Leland's great encyclopedia of deists and their opponents there is no mention of Butler. There are perhaps two paragraphs in the *Analogy* that clearly do refer to the deists, and of course the reference needs to be identified there. Many people have been convinced that the *Analogy* is primarily a reply to the deists by the point that Butler does say he is taking it for granted that the existence of God has been proved. All that Butler means here is that he is not aware of any serious objections to the many proofs of God that are readily available in the literature of his day. Indeed, Butler's own first published work, the letters to Clarke, was primarily a discussion of Clarke's proof God in his Boyle lectures. There are a few passages in which Butler does say he assumes God exists, but it is always clear from the context that what he means, clearly means, is that he is taking for granted that the proofs of God are successful and that he takes them as successful because no one seriously challenges them. So to link Butler to the deists by claiming he helps himself to an ad hominem against the deists since they were willing to grant that God exists without demanding proof, is simply absurd.

**Reception.** Scholarly editions usually avoid many references to reception, especially that beyond the author's lifetime. There are two reasons for placing special emphasis on reception. One is that so many of the connections with Butler are just intrinsically interesting.

By Emerson's day, the *Analogy* was well-known, but somewhat old-fashioned. That Emerson would have read it at Harvard is perhaps obvious, but what he would have made of it is not. When Emerson quotes from Butler in his *Nature*, published exactly one hundred years after the *Analogy*, he gives no indication he is doing so. Emerson left it to

scholars to discover that the line, “What we know, is a point to what we do not know,” which it does not appear in Butler’s works, is attributed to Butler in the novel *Tremaine* (1825) by Robert Plumer Ward, a novel Emerson had copied from into what is now known as “Blotting Book II.” Since Ward quoted indirectly, Emerson apparently became confused when he tried to put in the quotation marks. In the same passage of *Tremaine*, which is filled with passages in the style of the *Analogy* but with no reference to Butler, Ward attributes to Butler the definition of “natural” which is found in the *Analogy at* I.i.23, and was also used as an epigraph by Darwin in his *Origin of Species*, second and all later editions. (See the letter from Asa Gray to Charles Darwin, January 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1860.)

We cannot hope to include in the edition all references to Butler. The economic principle of selection is that we want to tell readers all and only what they both do not know and need to know. Admittedly, our ideas about what people need to know may be somewhat more expansive than their own, but here as elsewhere we need be guided by probabilities. Associations of lesser interest today that have been well documented in the literature can get less attention than facts the previous editors have avoided or at least not mentioned. We think it matters that so much of the non-English material in Butler Studies is in Italian, just as it matters that for all that Butler wrote about the Jews, the Jews almost never write about Butler. Yet there is at least one exception even to this. In the *Spoon River Anthology*, the whole point about “Seth Compton,” the librarian turns not only on knowing what Butler’s “Analogy” is but on knowing what it symbolized for Edgar Lee Masters. Readers of Herbert Marcuse will most likely be at a loss unassisted to understand what he is saying about Butler, but those familiar with the doctrine of *Principia Ethica* may feel comfortable with Moore using “Everything is what it is, and

not another thing” as its motto. Should we then explicate Marcuse’s hedge that Bishop Butler’s most famous saying is either the most unphilosophical motto or it refers to the qualitative difference between that which things really are and that which they are made to be? Does it help or hinder understanding to know that Wittgenstein is said to have considered this motto for his own book? Is it a digression from the work of the Bishop Butler Historical Society to inquire more into Wittgenstein’s thoughts on Butler, or should we simply take the word of Wittgenstein’s biographer, Ray Monk?

Abraham Lincoln told Noah Brooks that he particularly liked Butler’s *Analogy* and Mahatma Gandhi’s comments on Butler are perhaps well known to those who are interested. What is slightly more obscure, however, and what many people do not know, is that by the 1920s and 1930s, when interest in Butler seemed at an all-time low, where was a widely held belief that careful study of Butler was no longer needed since all he had to say of importance had now been better said by Henry Drummond. Harriet Beecher [Stowe] being so stressed about having to teach Butler to a class of girls, Oscar Wilde putting the *Analogy* on a list of books “not to read at all,” John Adams being first attracted to Abigail when he saw her reading the *Analogy*, and how one president of Dickinson College was forced to resign because of his inability to deal with the anti-Butler sentiment among students, are all stock anecdotes that need to be documented and their own reception examined. Perhaps the single most interesting bit of reception uncovered so far, and one still far from having a satisfactory account, are the lines from “Howl,” later cancelled, about someone wandering the windy streets looking for a church, an example of baroque architecture, carrying a volume of Butler’s *Analogy* and looking for an example of Butler’s analogy. We might think this is just a random image

of which even Ginsberg himself later thought better, but it is worth remembering that the slogan “first thought, best thought,” so often today associated with Ginsberg and fundamental to his method, is found in Butler’s seventh sermon, the other sermon on self-deception, in the form “the first thought is often the best.” Thinking of William Blake as an older source is natural enough, but attempting to sort out Butler’s reception by Blake actually complicates things a good bit. Those who have ears may make of it what they will, but without a comprehensive guide to the reception of Butler down through time readers have no chance of tapping into the context of Butler and no chance of self-consciously placing themselves in the stream of religious thought and practice down to the present. Hence this project of a new edition and the work of the Bishop Butler Historical Society.