## Sermons for the Christian Year


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# SERMONS FOR THE CHRISTIAN YEAR

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Trinity 2: 5th June

## BELIEF AND UNDERSTANDING

*By Mrs Susan Lampitt*
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Genesis 12:1–9; Romans 4:13–25; Matthew 9:9–13, 18–26

C. S. Lewis remarked that we Christians are not required to believe six impossible things before breakfast. Nevertheless, we are required to be believers, and we are required to have faith. So to thoughtful Christians in the twenty-first century how we set out what we believe and how we base our faith, is a matter of prime concern.

Our readings for today portray some of the great biblical figures of faith: Abraham who set out for Canaan childless and landless yet trusted God to ensure his descendants' future in their own land; Matthew, the quisling tax collector who left his customs post and his fat income to follow Jesus; and the synagogue president whose faith led him to Jesus even *after* his daughter had died.

Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury in the late eleventh century, said, 'Credo ut intellegam': 'I believe in order that I may understand' and if you are not actually engaged in just such an undertaking, that is if you are not a thoughtful twenty-first century Christian trying hard to integrate your secular knowledge with your Christian faith, you may think Anselm had got the order back to front. But he was right. If you don't continue to believe, if you don't hang in there and continue to worship God and practise your religion, you will not understand more, indeed, you will penetrate no further into the mystery of life, which is not to say that if you stick with it, it all becomes crystal clear, but you will learn as you go on and your insight will deepen, none of which can happen if you throw in the towel.

Anselm lived at a time when rational enquiry was receiving more respect. The faith of the Church had been enough, but the new emphasis on the power of reason which began to spread amongst the schoolmen – the scholars of the time – and which reached its height under Thomas Aquinas in the thirteenth century, asked the question, 'Can we show that our faith is not contrary to reason?'

Anselm devised an intriguing definition of God which, if accepted, entailed logically that God must exist. He was perfectly well aware that a logical argument would never lead anyone to faith, but in the smart intellectual circles of the day it was good to be able to show that faith was not contrary to reason.

Thomas Aquinas, starting from the existence of the physical world, also argued that rational enquiry pointed to the likelihood of a power behind the universe, which, as he remarked, we generally refer to as God. Again, no one knew better than Aquinas that that was only the starting point, but faith was certainly *not* contrary to reason.

To a surprising degree we live in a similar situation.

Since the time of the Enlightenment, the question of how reasonable it is to hold a faith has been up for discussion.

To many people, the advance of science, the theories of Darwin, the interpretations of religion advanced by sociologists, psychologists, and socio-biologists are weighty arguments against the validity of any insights offered by religion.

Yet those who study the universe at its most finely grained, the physicists who deal in terms of quarks and spin and charm, are often awed by the fine balance which their researches reveal. Einstein famously considered that there must be some great mind behind the cosmos. Paul Davies in *God and the New Physics* concludes, 'Truly, we are meant to be here' and only six months ago the octogenarian philosopher Anthony Flew who has spent a lifetime championing atheism conceded that the evidence now seemed to imply a reasoning power of some

sort behind the universe, not the God of Christianity, but a power of reason at least.

The idea that this universe is intentionally anthropic in its outcome is not contrary to reason – it is a reasonable possibility. It is not a *necessary* interpretation of the evidence, but it is an intellectually responsible one, a position which may be held with integrity.

On the other side of the equation, science is often seen to be a set of proven certainties in which faith plays no part, and this is not truly the case either. Science is a collection of working hypotheses, which for the most part seem to be correct, but even scientists can be too firmly wedded to their views to have their minds open to new ideas.

So where does this leave us, children of Abraham, but living in the twenty-first century?

It is quite clear that we humans need values and inspiration to live by, but such things are not to be found written in trees and stones, Jaques in 'As You Like It' not withstanding. They are built up carefully and steadily by groups of humans, they are cherished and handed down generation by generation.

Take the faith of Abraham. This seminal story is set in about 1700 BC, give or take a couple of hundred years, but the pen which set it down on a scroll in about 540 BC belonged to a scribe who had his own special reasons for emphasizing the faith of a couple, childless, landless, who moved from Harran, the land of Exile to Canaan the land of destiny and claimed God's promises there in the face of tremendous odds. We have only to read the books of Ezra and Nehemiah to know how great the problems were for the returning exiles and how this story would resonate with them.

Then in St Paul's time this story is taken up again. Paul applies it to the new children of Abraham, the Christians, and equates the faith of his struggling converts with that of the great hero of faith who trusted God and for whom faith was counted as 'righteousness'. In a fascinating move Paul draws an analogy between Abraham and his standing before God, his 'zedek' and Christians who have been placed into that new relationship with God in the death and resurrection of Jesus. It (faith), is to be 'counted' in the same way to us who have faith in the God who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. It establishes our 'zedek'.

Paul uses his learning and his deep faith together to interpret the death and resurrection of Jesus in a language which resonated in his own times, the language of blood-sacrifice and of redemption from slavery.

But we live in the twenty-first century and we do not practise blood sacrifice (though we know the cost of a life sacrificed in a cause) and we do not have the same vivid appreciation of slavery as Paul's contemporaries did, despite the fact that there is as much slavery now as there ever was in Paul's time. So our faith requires us to understand our redemption in pictures which are clear to our century, real to us, consonant with reason and true to our inheritance.

The Exiles, Paul, Anselm, Aquinas have all had to struggle in their day and age to interpret their faith for their times. We can be confident that we too can do the same. Science is simply knowledge, and knowledge belongs to God. Materialism sees only part of the story. With belief and reason we can enter ever more deeply into our faith and when we have learnt to express it in contemporary language we shall see that our faith, as Anselm said it would, has indeed led us to understand more profoundly.

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Trinity 3: 12th June

## EXPECTING THE UNEXPECTED

*By the Revd Peter G. Jarvis*
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Genesis 18:1–15

As today's Gospel (Matt 9:35 – 10:8) and today's Epistle (Rom 5:1–8) seem to have no connection with today's Old Testament reading, I shall leave Gospel and Epistle to speak for themselves, concentrating instead on the strange haunting story of Abraham's encounter with God, and God's promise that Sarah would have a son, a promise apparently impossible of fulfilment.

The story, as with so many Old Testament stories, presents a challenge to the modern reader. Are we supposed to take the story literally, to treat it as an account of an actual happening, or should we treat it as a vision or dream of Abraham, which came to be regarded later as a piece of sober history? Let's look at the story itself, to see what we can make of it, and what we can learn from it.

Abraham, a nomad with no fixed abode, has pitched his tent near a grove of sacred trees in

Hebron. At that time Hebron was a focal point of worship, a place where God was believed to be peculiarly present, but nowadays it is a flashpoint of hostility between Arabs and Israelis, a place where rioting and gun battles are liable to break out at any moment. Hardly an example of human progress over the centuries.

Abraham is sitting in the entrance to his tent, shaded from the burning heat of the midday sun. The text doesn't say so, but we can safely assume that he has nodded off to sleep and is enjoying a siesta. When he wakes and opens his eyes, he sees three men standing there. He regards them as travellers, but doesn't know who they are and where they've come from. Chapter 18 opens with the words: 'The Lord appeared to Abraham', but in the story itself the Lord manifests himself in the form of these three men. (This isn't to be taken as an early proof or glimpse of the subsequent doctrine of Trinity!) Several commentators think that Abraham, though surprised by the sudden arrival of three strangers, had no idea that he was face to face with the Lord God and two attendant angels. As the writer to the Hebrews put it, he 'entertained angels unawares'.

I can't help feeling, however, that Abraham must have recognized from the start that there was something special about these visitors – they were certainly very important persons, if not celestial beings. Notice his extreme deference towards them. He is an elderly well-to-do sheikh, yet he casts dignity aside and runs to meet them. He bows before them with his face touching the ground: the attitude of worship. Then he begs them to stay and rest, and to have what he calls 'a morsel of bread' (RSV), 'a bit of food' (GNB). They accept the invitation. He then washes their feet, a menial task, tells his wife to bake some fresh bread, and arranges for the fatted calf to be killed and cooked by one of his servants. When the meal is ready (and one wonders how long it must have taken to prepare), Abraham spreads a table in the shade of a tree, sets cream and milk and meat before the men, and waits on them himself.

If, as I believe, Abraham had more than an inkling of who these visitors were, the inkling is confirmed after the meal is over. One of the so-called men turns out to be the Lord God, no less. He promises that in nine months' time Sarah will have a son. According to the previous chapter, Abraham was 100 and Sarah 90, but the present chapter merely says that they are both 'very old' and that Sarah is beyond the menopause. No wonder, when she overhears God's promise, she doesn't take it seriously, and chuckles inwardly. She's not laughing at a joke, or laughing with enjoyment; she's laughing at the sheer absurdity of the promise. She's past childbearing, and her husband's getting on a bit. That she should have a son is clearly out of the question, a sheer impossibility. God has heard her disbelieving laughter, and asks, 'Why did Sarah laugh?' Then he says: 'Is anything too hard for the Lord, is anything impossible for the Lord?' Sarah immediately takes fright, claiming that she didn't laugh. 'O yes you did' says God.

When the child arrives, his parents call him Isaac, which means 'he laughs'. Perhaps Abraham and Sarah had seen the joke after all.

A fascinating story, but it includes several details we find it difficult to believe. What are we to make of it, and what can we learn from it?

First, we note that Abraham was open to God's approach, in whatever way God chose to approach him. As described in the story, God and his angels turn up in the guise of weary travellers. This may seem bizarre to us; but perhaps that's because we aren't open to God's approach, are often unaware of his presence, don't notice when he is touching our lives, don't hear him when he speaks to us. We are spiritually blind, deaf, insensitive. He still comes in human guise, sending other people, friends or enemies or strangers briefly encountered, to speak his word to us, if only we will hear it, if only we will open our lives to his approach, in whatever way he chooses to approach us.

Second, we note the generous hospitality Abraham extended to these mysterious strangers. Nothing is too much trouble. He freely gives them the best he has to offer. Perhaps this is another lesson for us. We tend to hold back, to keep things to ourselves, to be tight-fisted rather than open-handed. And in the end we are the losers. Jesus described the rich fool as someone 'who piles up treasure for himself and remains a pauper in the sight of God'. H. E. Fosdick reminds us how easily people can become 'rich in things and poor in soul'. Sadly, that is true of far too many of us. Abraham knew better.

Third, we note that God's promise, seemingly beyond the bounds of possibility, was fulfilled. We can take the statement that Sarah had a baby at the age of 90 with a considerable pinch of salt. If true, this would rank as a world record! Perhaps the real

point of the story isn't the alleged miracle, but the fact that this child of promise was literally a God-send, born 'not of the will of man, but of God'. We, with our rationality, our commonsense, frequently set limits on what God can do, and miss out in consequence. There are many things God is able and willing to do for us, if only we will let him.

To quote from a hymn by Brian Rees:

Have faith in God, my heart,
Trust and be unafraid,
God will fulfil in every part
Each promise he has made.

If only we trusted him more.

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Trinity 4: 19th June

## FAITH AT THE FRINGES

*By the Very Revd John McIndoe*
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Genesis 21:8–21; Matthew 10:24–39

Reading the account of the birth of Isaac in Genesis we soon become aware that, rather surprisingly, laughter is a prominent feature of the narrative. In Chapter 21 Isaac's birth is greeted by Sarah with a laugh of joy where previously she had laughed with incredulity. A child at her age! Small wonder if the neighbours have a laugh at her, but no matter. She has seen God's will fulfilled through her, and Abraham has a son.

But Abraham already has a son, Ishmael. This is no laughing matter. Some years back, before Sarah's time of laughter, when the prospect of Abraham ever having an heir by his own wife seemed impossible, Sarah could see nothing for it but that her maid Hagar should bear a child to Abraham in her stead. Ishmael was duly born, a fine lad and just the part for fulfilling God's purposes. Or so they thought; but it soon became clear that God had a different plan. Once Isaac made his appearance Sarah began to regard Ishmael, by this time a teenager, as surplus to requirement. If rivalry was to be avoided he would have to go.

She waited her opportunity. One day, when Isaac was three, she caught Ishmael laughing at the child – whether playfully or mockingly, it hardly matters – which gave her grounds for instant dismissal: '*Cast out this bondwoman and her son*.' Abraham was very perturbed at this turn of events and was persuaded to accept the situation only after receiving an assurance from God that the boy Ishmael would fulfil a great destiny of his own as father of the Bedouin people. In trying to understand Sarah's ruthless action, which reflects no credit at all upon her at a personal level, we may find the observation of a modern commentator helpful: 'The patriarchal stories like to show that God pursues his great historical purposes in, with and under all headstrong acts of men' (von Rad).

Tears now replace laughter. The particular lesson for the day directs us to the pathetic episode of Hagar and Ishmael in their banishment. But it is very important to note that in the moment of their sorest trouble the Lord comes to their aid, providing life-saving water for their immediate need and guaranteeing a great future for the boy. They may be outside God's covenant but they are not outside God's care.

In our concentration on the covenant grace of the Bible we should keep in mind also the wide and common grace of God which operates for the blessing and benefit of all people. This too the Bible records. Paul, who is unmatched in his insistence on the grace of God in Jesus Christ is also strong that God has never left himself without a witness, providing a clue to his nature in the kindness he shows, sending rain from heaven and crops in their seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness (Acts 14:17; Rom 2:4). Episodes are scattered through the Bible which show God's considerate grace to outcasts and those on the fringes. A tender moment in the departure of Adam and Eve from the garden is where God makes them clothes out of animal skin to equip them for their journey (Gen 3:21). In the following chapter Cain, who has turned his hand against his brother and become a man of universal guilt, is protected by the Lord against the indiscriminate vengeance of the world by means of a mark placed upon him, perhaps a tattoo (4:15). Noah, a figure who precedes the covenants, is described as having 'found grace in the eyes of the Lord' in spite of the wickedness of the world around him (6:1). In the Gospels, the centurion, whose faith in Jesus to heal his servant shows such a military directness, is commended by the Lord for his spiritual attitude in terms that are specifically non-covenantal: '*I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel*' (Luke 7:9).

What faith is this that is found on the fringes of the covenant or outside? What grace is it that calls forth a response from those living at the margins?

Today's gospel reading (Matt 10) is addressed to all who find themselves living in chaotic times, where families are disrupted, boundaries broken down, truth devalued, violence never far away. In such a situation people trying to do their best are thrown on the back foot and wonder what they are to do. From the gospel text for today it is clear that the Lord does not underestimate the fierceness of the fight: '*If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, think what they are going to call his household*' (Matt 10:25). But he advises them to dig in and take to heart three considerations:

(a) *Truth will out*. '*There is nothing covered that will not be revealed*' (v. 27). In a world which relativises everything which it cannot trivialize it is hard to find any agreement on what really counts. Nevertheless we must not doubt that true values exist and that the day will declare them. At a recent service at Westminster Cathedral in honour of Margaret Hassan, the aid worker killed by Iraqi dissidents for refusing to give up her life-long work for Care International among the people of Iraq, she was described as a 'martyr in the cause of goodness'. No one could offer a challenge to that.

(b) *Beware Beelzebub*. The devil is a sophisticated operator and has no difficulty in masquerading as an angel of light (2 Cor 11:14). Whether you prefer an impersonal representation ('spirit of the times') or a personal one ('the devil ... that proud spirit') the scripture warns us to be alert to forces which have power to rubbish people's bodies and souls (v. 28). The first rule of spiritual warfare, as of any other, is know your enemy. '*Whom resist*', counsels the scripture, '*steadfast in the faith*' (1 Pet 5:9).

(c) *The Grace of God*. There must always be mystery as to how the human spirit receives some inkling of a caring presence greater than itself, all the way from Hagar's awareness of the well 'full of water' to the remarkable 'coincidences' that have happened to us all at some time. Out of an over-confident self-sufficiency we may dismiss the metaphors of sparrows and hairs of the head as too trivial to bother with, yet we may still find it in our hearts to respond to whatever signs of grace have impinged upon our own awareness: 'to show forth thy loving kindness in the morning and thy faithfulness every night'. From awareness of grace it is a natural next-step to a practice of worship.

Of all creatures, both in sea and land,
Only to Man hast Thou made known thy ways,
And put the pen alone into his hand
And made him secretary of thy praise.

Geo Herbert

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Trinity 5: 26th June

## VIOLENT DEVOTION?

*By the Reverend Canon Marilyn McCord Adams*
*Christ Church, Oxford*

Genesis 22:1–14

This year's summertime lectionary cuts us no slack. Barely at the brink of the vacation season, we are confronted with the darkest of stories, what Jews call the *aqedah* or 'binding', what Christians bluntly label 'the sacrifice of Isaac', the ritual murder of a beloved son!

God's command summons Abraham: '*Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering.*' God is author, producer, director of this drama: Abraham is ever quick to obey. Two servants, a donkey, firewood, and Isaac; three days' journey, and they are there. Father and son climb the mountain alone, Isaac bending under the kindling, Abraham with the weapons, knife and fire in hand. The rubrics are simple: build the altar, lay the wood in order, bind, place the victim on the altar, raise the knife. This story shows us how child sacrifice was regularly done.

This icon is hard to look at, its message indigestible. If Abraham is God's chosen friend and paradigm patriarch, what hope is there for Divine-human relations? Perhaps other passages, biblical equivocation, will provide the tension-relief we require. How often do we read that first-born male

sheep and oxen must be offered, but human sons may be redeemed? Doesn't the Exodus dramatize how Israel's first-born were spared through the blood of the passover lamb? The prophets regularly inveigh against human sacrifice to idols. Jeremiah's God abominates it: '*I did not command it, I did not decree it, it never even came into my mind!*' Even today's text speaks of a test. Aren't we allowed to think it was 'only a test', which – once passed – allows us to hasten on to Isaac's marriage, if not to 'happily ever after' at least to Jacob and Esau, those descendants beginning to multiply like the stars?

For better and worse, we cannot squirm off the hook so easily. Exodus (22:28–29) warns that God does not confine His diet to lamb and beef. '*Your first-born sons you shall give to me*.' God expects Jephtha to sacrifice his daughter to keep his oath. Elsewhere animal-substitutions are merely *permitted* but not required. Clearly child sacrifice continued to be regarded as strong medicine until rather late; for we read how the Israelite army melted and fled when the king of Moab slaughtered his son on the city walls. Returning to today's story, not only does God *command* the sacrifice of Isaac: God announces that Abraham's action is *the reason why* the Divine promise of land and dynasty will be fulfilled.

Continually wrestling for blessing, Jewish midrashim embellish the *aqedah* with a wealth of explanatory plots. Scrubbing off textual whitewash, some tell how Isaac really *is* killed and burned, how God continually sees his ashes heaped on the heavenly altar. Others link the story with ancient practice that founds the city with ritual shedding of innocent blood, caps off walls and towers by doing it again. Eventually, Mount Moriah gets identified with Mount Zion, animal sacrifice in the temple legitimated by the founding father's original deed of binding, raising the knife over his beloved son. Some rabbis turn Isaac into an adult, take his cryptic question – '*Where is the lamb?*' – to signal 'informed consent', his readiness to die for the foundation of his father's dynasty, to offer himself willingly to his father's God. In times of pogroms, others seize the theme of testing, conclude that God does require the sacrifice of Israel, His first-born, His people's loyalty-to-the-death in times of trial.

Lent forces us also to struggle, because New Testament writers, Church Fathers see 'the sacrifice of Isaac' as a type of Christ's passion. Did we not memorize '*God so loved the world that he gave his only Son*'? St Paul insists that God must be for us because 'He … did not spare his own Son but gave him up' to found the Church; that Christ is for us, because He willingly consented to this scheme. As with most cities, there are cost overruns: not only must the Son of Man suffer, but disciples must shoulder crosses; St Paul and his missionaries are already being slaughtered like sheep all the day long.

Notice: Today's story is not rubbing our noses in the scandal of generic violence, horrendous as that may be. Nature red in tooth and claw, human mimickry of it, has an evolutionary explanation. Freud domesticates human readiness to divide the world into 'in-' and 'out-groups', 'split the ambivalence', hate strangers so that we can love neighbours, at least get along as much as we need. Pop-pscyhology trivializes our tendency to slander, demonize the other – the poor are lazy, other ethnic groups dirty and devious, the Vietcon are 'gooks' and Saddham Hussein is the devil – to justify targeting them for neglect, degradation, or destruction. Before *lex talionis* legitimates, human psychology makes it easy to understand violence towards the bad.

Abraham's deed is different: it is precisely because Isaac is *not hated but beloved, not guilty but spotless*, that the sacrifice really counts. Is God really Molech, testing to see how much Divine favour is worth to Abraham? What kind of God would want us to be pleased by willingness to slaughter His own Beloved Son? If He treats the Son that way, how should the servants expect to fare better? Is Jesus' blunt answer, 'they won't'?

Like Peter's to Jesus' passion prediction, our recoil should be immediate, our arguments many, our revulsion deep. We are 'enlightened' people; we make human barbeque illegal. We invent theories to explain 'primitive' practices away. Won't Freud tell us, the beloved son is an alternative displacement of neighbour-hatred? Didn't Caiaphus say long ago, '*It is expedient that one man should die for the people*'? Alternatively, the human body-politic is both sacred and fragile. Ritual drama puts the worst in the past. The slaughter of the innocent son 'acts out' the worst case scenario of social dissolution in never-never ritual time, so that it won't happen in the future, thereby giving society a new lease on life.

Yet, tabloids testify, the impulse to destroy the beloved is not extinguished but merely transformed. Parents may be attracted to use their children

sexually, precisely because there *is* some bond of love between them. 'Do this for Daddy! You are very special!' if horrendously perverse, may not be entirely insincere. Abusive spouses may really mean the flowers-and-kisses-and-sweet-nothings before and after they knock their partners across the room. Could it be that what makes our military-industrial complex not merely useful but *sacred*, in the USA the Pentagon more 'established' than the church, is not fundamentally fear of real enemies, but that primitive conviction that the ark of the state cannot long survive unless innocent blood is shed? How readily victims still bow under the wood, accept the saviour role, to rescue the parent, to keep the family together, to preserve truth, justice, our treasured ways of life, to let freedom ring?

The priesthood of all believers notwithstanding, we have not been ordained to carry out such sacrifices. The later prophets were right: slaughter of the innocent and beloved is an abomination. Perhaps such Bible stories, the rhetoric surrounding Christ's saving work does not discomfit, because we identify with Abraham, get the feeling that *we* have been put in important positions, figureheads of the common good, commanded by God to perpetrate the ruin of others. We are the world's policeman supplied with bodybags; we are company managers making loyal workers redundant in the name of corporate bottom line; we are heads of household, entitled to get our needs met, because everybody depends on us. We need to get down on our knees, admit that our individual and collective propensity to destroy the beloved precisely because s/he is beloved, is beyond the power of mere 'enlightenment' philosophy to tame.

Worse still, such Bible stories show how successfully we project our perverse dynamics onto the heavens. Such texts convict us of the need for a radical paradigm shift in our view of God. Unsurprisingly, I have not plumbed the answers. But my own struggles do furnish two clues.

First, there is an important disanalogy between *aqedah* and the passion of Christ. God does not send someone else to suffer and die. It is *God* Whose blood is shed, *God* Who dies absorbing the bitter poison within us. Because God is a sponge of infinite capacity, we do not need to shed the blood of bulls and goats, abuse children or spouses or faceless employees or rain forests in developing countries. Rather we should beg Christ to raise His surgical knife to lance our abcess. We should pray for stamina and courage to 'act out' all of our perversity on God instead.

Second, in the Bible story, Isaac is spared; in midrashim, killed but resurrected. In the Gospels, our crucified God absorbs the worst that we can suffer, be, or do, and rises from the dead. God gives us consolation in advance: our twisted deeds, the harms they cause will not be finally decisive. And so, as we begin our summertime spiritual exercises, we can take heart.

## *Shedding Light on the Old Testament*

The aim of Ronald Dale's anthology, *Windows on the Old Testament* (Stowmarket: Kevin Mayhew Ltd, 2003. £11.99. pp. 228. ISBN 1 84417 150 7), is to amplify the Old Testament readings for Year C of *Common Worship*. Each Old Testament reading is briefly summarized, and one or two substantial comments are offered. Sometimes, as in the section for Easter Day, material on the New Testament readings is also provided, reflecting the editor's belief that 'as we read the Old Testament we need to remember that it cannot be understood in isolation from the New Testament; indeed, it finds its fulfilment in the New' (p. 7). Despite this rather sweeping claim, this is a useful book, bringing together contributions from a wide-range of scholars, including Walter Brueggemann, Elizabeth Achtemeier, N. T. Wright and Cyril S. Rodd.

As a quick entry-point into the Old Testament readings for Year C, this is an ideal addition to a preacher's library, and an interesting book to browse through, whatever the liturgical year.

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