



PIER REVIEW

THE MINISTRY JOURNAL OF THE CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF ST. LUKE, ORLANDO, FLORIDA

Sometimes It *Is* Rocket Science

By The Rev. Canon J. Gary L'Hommedieu

WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO PUSH somebody over the edge? I don't mean the edge of sanity, but the edge of deep and profound faith.

What sort of event outside us or experience within us causes us to rethink everything with God added to the equation?

It's not always something huge and "life changing". It could be a moment's quiet reflection when life comes sharply into focus.

It's not always rocket science that enables us to remake our worlds.

It might be the wonder of seeing how God works in people's lives in seasons of crisis. This is the constant testimony of Stephen Ministers, who "do" nothing but listen to souls sharing the events of life's off-seasons. Stephen Ministry is described in detail in the present issue of *Pier Review*.

Sometimes seeing that it's the little things that make all the difference is what shows us God at work. The Cathedral Prayer Shawl ministry, detailed in these pages, illustrates this principle.

Sometimes the smallest question—"Where are we going?"—leads to the biggest question—"Where is God leading us?" From that moment we are in deep waters with no turning back. This month the Dean introduces the concept of Values as the markers by which we charter a course across and through these waters.

Then again sometimes it *is* rocket science that pushes us over the edge.

This *Pier Review* has two stories of rocket scientists who found God in a vast dark universe, amidst the greatest accomplishments of science, triggered by historic incidents of violence and tragedy. Cataclysmic events push great men and women to the limits of knowledge and ability, and only then does God add the perspective that turns it into meaning.

Sometimes all it takes is a word between friends or a pastor's shared reflections to remind us that God is in the middle of everything. Sometimes a simple household item, lovingly crafted, becomes a sacrament turning our everyday world into holy ground.

Sometimes we have to press ourselves to the limits of our power before we remember that the end of limits is the beginning of God. **PR**

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Dean Clark visiting with Paul Kennedy on a weekday afternoon at the office.

The Value of Values

By The Very Rev. Anthony P. Clark

“AS THE FOUNDATION GOES, SO GOES THE house.” I learned that construction truism while watching several homes being built in our neighborhood one summer. For the subdivision building contractor, the most important step in home building was laying the rebar and pouring the concrete for the house. An error in the foundation would have a ripple effect through the walls to the roof.

“As the foundation goes, so goes the house” applies to another truism as well: namely, “Building a Cathedral with Living Stones”. Here the foundation consists of the Values that support the Piers (Gathering, Healing, Sending, Renewing) and the Living Stones (you and me, see 1 Peter 2:5) that become the Cathedral. While the foundation of Values is unseen below the visible construction, it provides the platform for construction.

As our Cathedral begins evaluating our current ministries around the Piers of Gathering, Healing, Sending and Renewing and then refining and developing ministries for the future, it is crucial to identify the Values that undergird that construction. To use another image, if we are building a ministry bridge from today to a preferred future tomorrow, we need to know the bedrock Values in the riverbed supporting that bridge.

An important lesson to keep in mind about Values is the distinction between an organization's Values and an organization's practices. For example, a retail store may value “good customer service,” but “good customer service” is really a *practice* and not a Value. If we step back from the practice of “good customer service,” we can see that the practice reflects the prior Value of helpfulness or courtesy.

I believe the Lord has revealed three significant Values for us to build upon as we focus on “Building a Cathedral with Living Stones.” These Values come from our foundation of Jesus Christ and God's Word and cluster around the words “Classic,” “Excellence” and “Anglican.”

“Classic,” whether it refers to music, cars or literature, suggests a timeless and enduring quality. The Christian “faith that was once for all delivered to the saints” (Jude 3b, *ESV*) remains a “Classic” amid the innovations of modernity. You might say we value a “Classic Christian Worldview” reflected in the practice of preaching, teaching and serving within a classic biblical framework.

St. Paul reminds us that “whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus” (Colossians 3.17a, *ESV*) and that suggests “Excellence.” With the Lord as our audience of one, we strive to offer worship, preaching, music and pastoral care that reflect the Value of “Excellence.”

Finally, “Anglican”—a multi faceted value—reminds us that we are a “Sending” Cathedral. The early church in England sent missionaries with the Gospel throughout the British Isles. Today's robust Anglican presence in Africa, Asia and South America may be attributed to that missionary mindset rooted in the Great Commission (see Matthew 28:19,20). We value our Anglican identity which informs our ministries of Sending and Renewing.

“Classic,” “Anglican,” “Excellence”—solid foundational Values for “Building a Cathedral with Living Stones.” ^{PR}

Who Cares? Stephen Ministers Do



The present lineup of active Cathedral Stephen Ministers (front row l. to r., Helen Christensen, Roxanne McCormac, Linda Jakubisin; back row l. to r., Ken Fricker, Kevin Burlleson-Web, Wesley Dubic)

By Roxanne McCormac, R.N., Parish Nurse

WHAT AN EXCITING YEAR IT HAS been for Stephen Ministry at the Cathedral! We graduated five caring Stephen Ministers in May and added two experienced Stephen Ministers later in the year. Opportunities for building deep relationships and sharing the Gospel are abundant.

Stephen Ministry is a distinctively Christian form of lay ministry provided by congregation members trained to provide support to people in a variety of stressful situations. Becoming a Stephen Minister involves a serious commitment and includes 50 hours of training plus supervision while serving. Training of the Stephen Ministers is done at the First Presbyterian Church downtown, and the Stephen Leadership Team provides ongoing oversight at the Cathedral.

In our transient society Stephen Ministry is a Christ connection for many who do not have family or close friends to support them in a time of need. It also helps others who may have support but do not want to burden their loved ones. Often the extended family is already too stressed to offer the support that is needed.

Everyone goes through difficult times. Having someone to care, listen, and share God's love can help you get through the stress, confusion, or loneliness you may be experiencing. I have witnessed our group "walk" with struggling people on a journey towards healing. The people they care for are listened to, prayed for and encouraged. They may have specific issues

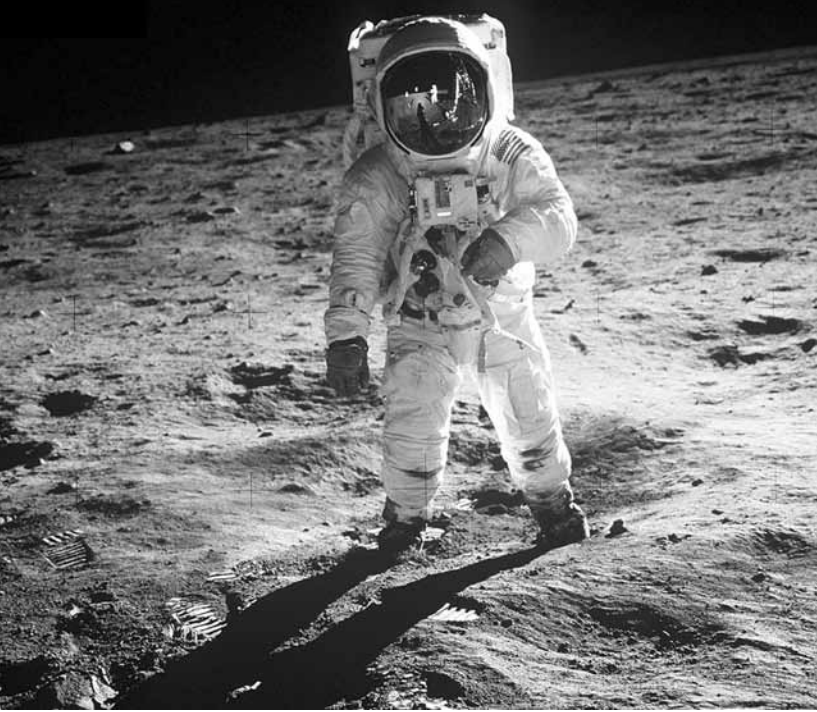
such as divorce or financial difficulties or may be grieving another form of loss. They may feel overwhelmed. I have also witnessed the growth that occurs when problems are dealt with as a caring person listens.

Stephen Ministers may also feel overwhelmed at times in being unable to help with these issues. They are on a journey themselves to witness the powerful changes that take place when the love of Christ is shared with another. They are reminded that God is in control. This experience can have a transforming effect on Stephen Ministers, enhancing their own faith and trust in God's healing. With every story I hear shared (confidentially, no names involved), I know how blessed the care receiver is to have our Stephen Minister with him or her. I am constantly reminded that God's love is shown through these caring people, and I am personally blessed to be able to work with them.

Even if you are not a Stephen Minister you play an important role in Stephen Ministry at the Cathedral. Stephen Ministers need your prayerful support as they meet with their care receivers. They need your help in identifying people who may benefit from this program. If you know someone who could use some extra Christian care, tell that person about Stephen Ministry and get their permission to be referred to a Stephen Leader. PR

Roxanne McCormac, R.N., completed special training at Florida Hospital as a Parish Nurse in 2007 and certified as a Stephen Ministry Leader in 2008.





Apollo 11 Lunar Module
Pilot 'Buzz' Aldrin poses
for pictures during the first
moon landing in July, 1969

How Big

By Paul Kennedy

WE EXIST AT GOD'S MERCY IN THIS incredible universe.

In July, a comet collided with the planet Jupiter—not all that distant from Earth given the expanse of the heavens—leaving an imprint the approximate size of the Pacific Ocean. Ponder what force would create devastation equal to the greatest of the Five Seas. An impact affecting 64 million square miles across the largest planet in our Solar System.

The stars still twinkled. Life for us went on in the summer sun.

This August, NASA's Kepler spacecraft and its onboard telescope introduced all to this mouthful: HAT-P-7b. A scientific acronym for a new "hot Jupiter," rotating in hellish heat some 1,000 light years away from your nearest Starbucks. (Traveling at the speed of light, we would reach it in 10 centuries. Or, had our journey begun during St. Augustine's lifetime, we would be arriving at "HAT" right about now.)

How big is your God?

Twenty years ago, the late astronomer Carl Sagan described Earth, the only world to harbor life of which we are aware, as a humble "pale blue dot suspended on a moonbeam." It is here on this pixel that each man or woman, "everyone you have known or loved, has lived out their lives," on our mote of dust.

"Every hero and coward, every creator and destroyer."

Those six words would describe tellingly the

one figure who four decades ago most singularly lifted Mankind to its greatest achievement since creation, exploring the Moon and safely returning home. Wernher von Braun was proud of his scientific brilliance as the father of America's space program. He also loathed his compromises of character in designing Germany's World War II arsenal that unleashed V1 and V2 rockets upon London, causing massive loss of life. Records further reveal even more slave laborers perished in building those feared weapons than detonation subsequently killed.

Van Braun chose to surrender at war's end to American forces rather than Soviet, offering this statement to the press on behalf of his team of Nazi scientists: "We knew we had created a new means of warfare. To what nation we were willing to entrust this brainchild of ours was a moral decision... that only by surrendering such a weapon to people who are guided by the Bible, could such an assurance (of peace) to the world be best secured."

The necessities of military weaponry, the Red Menace of a growing Cold War, and the harkening to space exploration were pragmatic reasons for pardoning von Braun and granting him United States citizenship in 1955.

And while his engineering and propulsion brilliance launched satellites and embraced astronauts with *The Right Stuff* (1983 film), Gemini and Apollo glory, America's—and Germany's—foremost rocketeer carried to his grave the conflicts of his life. Literally.

Paul Kennedy is in his 22nd year doing television commentary for Sun Sports and FS Florida. He was confirmed in the Episcopal Church at the Cathedral Church of St. Luke on Easter Day 2005. He is an active Lector.



Photo by Phelan Ebenhack

Is Your God?

When Von Braun died at 65 of cancer in 1977, America's fascination with blastoffs and moonwalks had waned. And for all he had experienced and accomplished, this man of missiles, faith, faults and vision placed only two words on his tombstone as an epitaph: "Psalm 19."

The language is rich and moving.

The heavens are telling the glory of God;
And their expanse is declaring the work
of His hands.

Day to day pours forth speech,
And night to night reveals
knowledge.

In them He has placed a tent for
the sun,
Which is as a bridegroom coming
out of his chamber.

It rejoices as a strong man to run
his course.

Its rising is from one end of the heavens;
And its circuit to the other end of them.
And there is nothing hidden from
its heat.

The glories above us day and night held the heart of von Braun. A siren's song to explore, and silently revealed God's majesty with light and heat undeniable.

The law of the Lord is perfect, restoring
the soul;

The testimony of the Lord is sure,
making wise the simple.

The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring
forever.

The judgments of the Lord are true;
they are righteous altogether.



Moreover, by them, Thy servant is warned.

In keeping them there is great reward.

Von Braun's epiphany followed. This song of praise, authored by King David 3000 years earlier, heartfelt by a man to whom much was given three millennia later. His regret of the 1940's, in the zenith of the Armstrong and Aldrin, still evident in the summer of 1969.

Who can discern his errors.

Acquit me of hidden faults.

Also keep back Thy servant from
presumptuous sins.

Let them not rule over me;

Then I shall be blameless,

And I shall be acquitted of great
transgression.

With the exception of the divinity of Christ upon this Earth, man has not produced an achievement to rival his ascent to the Sea of Tranquility four decades ago. And given the technology of the time—your jogging watch is superior to any Apollo 11 on-board computer—and the events that unfolded (15 seconds of fuel left on lunar touchdown), God's grace was ever present.

As witnessed by David, von Braun, Neil and Buzz, the heavens continue to tell of the glory of Our Creator as the last passage of Psalm 19 concludes the silent final prayer on von Braun's tombstone. It is as eloquent as any passage in the Bible, offering all a moral foundation to boldly go forward—on this earth or in the vast Cosmic arena:

Let the words of my mouth and the meditation
of my heart

Be acceptable in Thy sight,

O Lord, my rock and my Redeemer.

PR



Wrapped In the Presence of God

Calling themselves the Knit-Wits, they are (from left to right) Peggy Mumby, Pat Nichols, Rosemary Atwater, Theo Gordon, and Ethel Borders. These are just a few of those active in the Prayer Shawl ministry.

By Theo Gordon

THE CONTEMPORARY PRAYER SHAWL Ministry began in 1997 as an outgrowth of the Women's Leadership Institute at the Hartford Seminary in Connecticut. It is a "grass roots" ministry that has spread from person to person, one shawl at a time. They may be called Prayer Shawls, Comfort Shawls, Mantels or similar names. They are given for comfort and solace or in celebration and joy. They can mark any life event or rite of passage from a birth, a wedding, an illness, to a death. Every step in planning, working and giving of these shawls is undertaken with prayer. When a shawl is finished it is blessed at the altar before it is given away.

I don't remember when I became aware of Prayer Shawl ministry; but when Canterbury Retreat Center offered its first Prayer Shawl Knitting Retreat in 2007, Pat Nichols and I were both eager to attend. The retreat was a combination of practical instruction, sharing and spiritual renewal. So, all fired up, we began knitting. Pat had specific people in mind to receive her first shawls. I didn't; I figured that if God was nudging me into this, He would provide the direction. Just after I finished my first shawl, Ginger Stevens was diagnosed with cancer. The shawl was blessed and given to Ginger. Then I began another. I would work a shawl and about the time I had it finished, God would show me another need.

In 2008 five of us attended the second Prayer Shawl Knitting Retreat. Early in 2009 we publicized an organizational meeting of

St. Luke's Prayer Shawl Ministry and, with a dozen people present, the St. Luke's Prayer Shawl Ministry was officially begun. Since September 2007 we have worked about 33 shawls and lap robes and given away 22 of these.

What does a Prayer Shawl "do"? It serves as a tangible symbol of the prayers offered for the recipient: prayers for God's blessing, for healing, for comfort. It is a reminder of God's constant presence with us in good times and bad. There is an echo of the Prayer Book definition of a sacrament as an "outward and visible sign". A prayer shawl can provide a "space" to retreat to for quiet time with God, for rest and renewal. For generations of Jewish men, their prayer shawls have symbolized the tent of worship which housed the Tabernacle. If a man could not be with the congregation in the tent or Temple, he could still be "wrapped" in the presence of God. By simply pulling his shawl up over his head, he created his own sacred space in which to worship and pray.

A shawl brings blessing for the one who worked it, too. It carries our love and concern when words are just not adequate. It is oddly humbling to see the responses of those who receive our shawls and to reflect on one's role as God's hands.

Each shawl we give carries a card which reads in part, "We hope, as you are wrapped in this shawl, you will feel God's arms around you, holding you close to his heart and that you will rest at peace in his presence." PR

**What does a
Prayer Shawl "do"?
It serves as a
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for the recipient.**

Fernando is a NASA Space Shuttle Airframe and Structure Engineer. He serves as the Lead Structure Engineer for (OV-105) Shuttle Endeavor. Here he is posing with Space Shuttle Atlantis Flight STS 117 the day before its launch on June 8, 2007. Fernando and Christa have worshipped at the Cathedral since 1993. They are the parents of Amelia (5) and Joshua (2 mos).



Touching the Face of God

By Fernando Santos

JANUARY 28, 1986...THE AIR WAS ESPECIALLY COLD that morning. Long icicles formed around the launch pad, a clear violation of launch commit criteria. As the sun came up, the air warmed, masking a deadly hidden flaw. By 11:39 AM hot gasses from the inside of the Solid Rocket Boosters had slipped between the stiffened O-Ring seals, burning a hole through the steel casing and adjacent External Tank, which then filled with a volatile mixture of Hydrogen and Oxygen. The Space Shuttle Challenger, separating from the exploding tank, encountered extreme aerodynamic loads and was literally ripped apart. Seven astronauts died.

This was a national tragedy that impacted many Americans. President Reagan gave a moving and historic speech that evening. At the end of it he said these words: "We will never forget them, nor the last time we saw them, this morning, as they prepared for their journey and waved goodbye and 'slipped the surly bonds of Earth' to touch 'the face of God.'"

Many who know me know that I work for NASA. What many do not know is that I owe my career and much of who I am today to the untimely death of these seven astronauts. I was at the time a 20-year-old college student with little direction in life. I had always had a great love for space, but these tragic events rekindled in a dramatic way that love. I rededicated myself at that time to the pursuit of a career in human space flight. I knew my life would change, but I did not know how it would impact my faith.

It was many years later; upon revisiting these

words of President Reagan that I found he had quoted a poem called 'High Flight', by WWII Pilot John Gillespie Magee, Jr. From the final verse the poem reads, "And, while with silent lifting mind I've trod, The high untresspassed sanctity of space, Put out my hand and touched the face of God." Magee captured poetically a truth that can ironically be well understood in the realm of modern space flight.

On Christmas Eve 1968, on board Apollo 8 looking back at the Earth while orbiting the moon, the astronauts were so inspired that they read the first 10 verses of Genesis. From space we can see and experience the wonder and beauty of God's creation at a deeper level, instinctively knowing his creation. This has not been lost on me, being intimately immersed in the exploration and study of space. I view it from a perspective that may be different from some. I see the infinite vastness of space and can easily believe in an infinite God. When I see the fine tuned planetary motion, the laws of physics that the universe obeys, I see the intentional and intelligent Creator. Looking at the recent images from the Hubble Space Telescope and I am amazed at his creation. My career in space has blessed me with this understanding of God's handiwork. May you also be blessed with this understanding.

"Ask the world, the beauty of the heaven, the brilliancy and ordering of the stars... ask all things, and see if they do not as if it were by a language of their own answer to you, 'God made us.'" (St. Augustine) PR

I owe my career and much of who I am today to the untimely death of the seven Challenger astronauts. I rededicated myself at that time to the pursuit of a career in human space flight. I knew my life would change, but I did not know how it would impact my faith.



Winter Park Firefighter Mark Vaughn poses at the firehouse on September 11 with Miss Sunshine State Teen, Ariel L'Hommedieu.

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pier \pîr\ *n.*

1. *Architecture* Any of various vertical supporting structures, especially:
 - a. A pillar supporting an arch or roof.
 - b. The portion of a wall between windows, doors, or other openings.
 - c. A reinforcing structure that projects from a wall; a buttress.
2. *Literature* The monthly ministry journal of The Cathedral Church of St. Luke, Orlando, Florida.
 - a. Editor/Designer
The Rev. Canon J. Gary L'Hommedieu
 - b. Contributing Writers
The Rev. Christine L. Maddux
Proof Readers
Rosemary Atwater and Theo Gordon
 - c. Original Photographs
The Rev. Canon J. Gary L'Hommedieu

High Flight

Up, up the long, delirious burning blue
I've topped the wind-swept heights
with easy grace
Where never lark, or ever eagle flew—
And, while with silent, lifting mind
I've trod
The high untrespassed sanctity of space,
Put out my hand,
and touched the face of God.

John Gillespie Magee, Jr

