

THE EPISTLE

Saint James' Episcopal Church
Livingston, Alabama



Volume XXIII, Number 2

February 2016



February 2016

This Month's Cover

Our cover picture this month is Duccio's *Saint Matthias* (February 24). After Judas betrayed Jesus he hanged himself, leaving only eleven Apostles. Jesus had chosen twelve, emblematic of the twelve tribes of Israel, so the Apostles selected Joseph Barsabas and Matthias from among his disciples (Acts 1:23ff). Then, in accordance with to the practice in those days, they cast lots to determine God's choice. The lot fell on Matthias, who thus became Judas' replacement. Little is known of him, although ancient tradition says that he was eventually either beheaded or stoned to death. He is therefore often portrayed with an axe or a stone in his hand, although in this painting he is holding a scroll. Because of that, if the icon did not identify him we might question who it portrayed.

This painting, by Duccio di Buoninsegna (1255?-1319?), was begun in 1308 and completed in 1311. It is egg tempera on wood embellished with gold leaf, as are most of his paintings. It is one of the few surviving Duccio paintings of a series of saints. It is displayed in the Museo dell'Opera del Duomo (the cathedral museum) in Florence.

Duccio is considered the founder of the Sienese school of art, and one of the founders of the Proto-Renaissance style. This style was a bridge between the rather stilted art forms of the Middle Ages and the great freedom of Renaissance painting, although he also shows a strong influence of Byzantine art. He was one of the first painters to put human figures in architectural settings. Although he did not use that device in this painting, it became very common in the Renaissance.

Duccio was born in Siena sometime between 1255-1260. Little is known of his life other than that he was married and had seven children. He was apparently a very poor manager of his finances, as he was constantly in debt. Nevertheless he gained great fame in his own lifetime, and was generally far better accepted in society than most debtors were in those days. He died in Siena in about 1319.

Richard R. Losch+

A Word From the Editor

Our country's motto is *E Pluribus Unum*, One From Many. In the writings of our Founding Fathers it is clear that they meant not only one nation from many colonies, but also one people from many peoples. For two hundred years America thought of itself as a melting pot. It was a place where people of all cultures and backgrounds came to blend together to become Americans. They were encouraged to honor their heritage and contribute the best of it to the American culture, but they saw themselves first and foremost as Americans. They did not think of themselves as Germans or Italians or Hispanics, nor as Europeans, Africans or Asians. They came here to make a new life as Americans.

In the past 50 years we have begun to lose all that. Sometimes I fear that we are working to change our motto to *Ex Uno Plus*, Many From One as we worship at the altar of the false idol of Cultural Diversity. Worship of that false god is tearing our country apart. I am aware that it is the height of political incorrectness to attack cultural diversity, but I believe it is destroying us. We are no longer simply Americans. We are hyphenated-Americans divided by race, ethnicity, religion, politics, gender, wealth, sexual orientation/confusion, vocation, and just about anything else we can find that makes us different and allows us to claim victimhood.

I was born in the Great Depression, long before the Civil Rights era, yet in my lifetime I have never seen our country so divided as it is today. Even in the shameful days of segregation there was not the racial and social tension, rage and hatred that we have in America today. I am convinced that it is no coincidence that the more we drive God out of our soci-

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ety, the more we become separated from one another. Whether godlessness is the cause of our disease or a symptom of it, there is no question that we are diseased.

When Jesus prayed “that they may be one even as We are One,” I believe that he meant more than just ecumenism. Christ grieves for the division in his Church, but I am sure he also grieves for the division of mankind. That division separates us from God. Christ’s reason for coming into the world and giving us the Church was to reunite us with God, and from that unity to lead us to be at one with each other. The Psalmist wrote, “Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity” (Ps. 133:1).

Because this problem of division has taken many years to develop and is the result of the attitudes of countless people, it would seem that there is little that any of us can do individually to heal it. In fact, there is a great deal that we can do. The ripple effect of a tiny act that encourages unity can spread and spread until it affects hundreds. A scientific phenomenon known as the “Butterfly Effect” says allegorically that a butterfly flapping its wings in Shanghai can set a man to shoveling snow in New York.¹ A tiny act of kindness (as well as a tiny act of evil) can eventually have an enormous effect. Your tiny attempt to enhance unity, or your tiny refusal to support division, might possibly change the world for the better—and you will never know (but God will).

We are now approaching Lent, when we examine ourselves and strive to suppress our weaknesses and strengthen our relationship with Christ. I can’t think of a better way to spend this Lent than to work regularly for unity and to pray for the wisdom, strength and courage to help achieve it.

Father Rick Losch

¹ The term “Butterfly Effect” was coined in 1969 by the meteorologist Edward Lorenz, an early proponent of Chaos Theory. He proved that a minute atmospheric phenomenon such as a butterfly flapping its wings could eventually become a major storm. When plotted on a computer, his mathematical formula produces a butterfly-shaped image. The legend that the term came from a Ray Bradbury science fiction story is not true.

Be Wordly Wise

Waste

We get the word waste from the Latin *vastus*, which has the same meaning and was used in much the same way. It could refer to trash, or it could be used as an adjective meaning empty, deserted or desolate. It also could mean enormous, from which we get our word vast. Also, like our use of it in its verb form (*vastare*), it meant to empty or to make empty. Just as we often call a desert a wasteland, the Romans also often called a desert (*desertus*) a *vastus*.

The Romans had a harsh but effective way of putting down rebellion, known as the *vastatio*, the emptying. Caesar used it liberally in his conquest of Gaul. If a tribe rebelled or aided a rebel tribe, every house and village of that tribe for miles around would be leveled, the fields burned, the warriors killed or mutilated, and the rest of the population, including women and children, sold into slavery. When the neighboring tribes saw this they had serious second thoughts about rebellion. From this we get the rarely used English word vastation, which means the drastic or violent emptying or purifying of something. In Late Latin the prefix *de-* was added, producing *devastatio*, devastation. The prefix changes the implication from just emptying or purifying to that of violent destruction.

Richard R. Losch+

“The Epistle” Is Online

The last three years' issues of *The Epistle* are online. Go to <http://rlosch.com> and click on the “Epistle” tab at the top, then click on the issue you want to see. You can read it online or download it as a *.pdf* file.

Richard R. Losch+

The average American child spends 40 hours a week in front of a computer, tablet or phone screen. That is the same as the average adult full-time employee spends at work. This can result in serious emotional problems, including Internet addiction and anxiety. Perhaps it's time to unplug the devices and let our children have a real life in real time.

ECW News

Here are some important dates to keep in mind for the coming months:

Sun., February 7th, Super Bowl Sunday Po' Boy Sale

Sun., March 19th, Palm Sunday

Sun., March 27th, Easter Day

Sat., April 16th, Sucarnochee Folklife Festival

Wed., May 4th, May Birthday Party at the nursing home

Sharon Underwood

Shrove Tuesday

On February 9th, Shrove Tuesday, we will have a Mardi Gras party beginning at 6:30 p.m. in the parish house. You are asked to bring your favorite hors d'oeuvre and your favorite wine to share. Tea and soft drinks will be furnished.

Hiram Patrenos

Special Services for Lent

On February 10th our observance of Ash Wednesday, the first day of Lent, will be held at 12:05 p.m. with a service of Holy Communion and Imposition of Ashes. Please make your plans to begin your observance of the Lenten Season at this special service.

A Touch of Trivia

Do you think your iPhone is expensive? On September 21, 1983 the FCC approved the first commercial portable cell phone. It was Motorola's 8000X, and it cost \$3,995. In today's money that would be close to \$10,000. It gave 30 minutes of talk time on a charge, a full charge took over 10 hours, and it had service in only a handful of major cities. It retained 30 phone numbers for instant dial. It measured 13x3.5x1.75" and weighed 1¾ pounds. It was so heavy and clumsy that it was called "The Brick."

Richard R. Losch+

TEC and the Anglican Communion

In mid-January there was a meeting of Primates of the Anglican Communion at Canterbury, England. A Primate is the chief bishop of an autonomous Church—in the case of The Episcopal Church (TEC), that would be the Most Rev. Michael Curry, our Presiding Bishop. The titular head of the whole Anglican Communion and the *de facto* president of the Primates is the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Most Rev. Justin Welby. The Archbishop of Canterbury is in no sense an Anglican Pope. He is the Archbishop of the See of Canterbury in the Church of England, and in the British socio-political structure his status is just below the Royal Family. He has no authority over the rest of the Anglican Communion, yet for almost 500 years the Archbishop of Canterbury has been the symbol of Anglican unity around the world.

The Anglican Communion is not a legally constituted organization, but rather a “gentlemen’s agreement” type of association made up of those national or provincial Churches who are mutually recognized as teaching and practicing the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Faith as deposited with the Apostles and interpreted by the divines, theologians and councils associated with the Church of England. There are certain mutually agreed parameters of theology, liturgy and practice within which a church or province must remain in order to be considered “in communion with Canterbury,” which means to be considered a member of the Anglican Communion. There are many churches and provinces around the world that follow most of the Anglican traditions, yet are far enough outside these parameters in one way or another that they are not in communion with Canterbury. They are therefore not a part of the Anglican Communion, even though they may call themselves Anglican churches.

The Episcopal Church has been a member of the Anglican Communion since its formation in 1789, when it severed its formal ties to the Church of England and became an autonomous national Church. Last year it authorized the blessing of

same-sex unions and launched plans to prepare a liturgy for the solemnization of same-sex marriages. This is in direct contradiction to the Anglican Communion's position that marriage can exist solely between one man and one woman. The action of TEC therefore placed its standing in the Anglican Communion in jeopardy. The first serious threat to that standing was the 2003 General Convention's approval of the consecration of V. Gene Robinson, an open and actively homosexual priest, as Bishop of New Hampshire. That stirred up a hornet's nest, but no disciplinary action was taken against TEC other than a symbolic slap on the wrist.

On January 14 the meeting of Primates considered the matter of TEC's 2015 approval of homosexual marriage, and in effect placed TEC on probation until the next General Convention in 2018, waiting to see what will be done at that gathering. The official statement, supported by a strong majority of the Primates, says that The Episcopal Church "no longer represent us on ecumenical and interfaith bodies, should not be appointed or elected to an internal standing committee and that while participating in the internal bodies of the Anglican Communion, they will not take part in decision making on any issues pertaining to doctrine or polity." Despite current rumors, TEC has *not* been expelled from the Anglican Communion, although if there is no change of course in the next three years that is a possibility.

Presiding Bishop Curry made a statement in response to this, expressing his disappointment with the decision. He said that he believes that TEC has a mission to the rest of the Communion, and he hopes that they will come to understand TEC's position and agree with it. Bishop Sloan also wrote a response for the Diocese of Alabama recognizing that this is a very serious matter, and acknowledging that it is too early to make any claim to know where this will ultimately take us.

This is a critical point in our history, and I urge all to pray fervently that the Holy Spirit, whom Jesus promised would lead us into all Truth, will guide our leaders and us to make wise decisions and to act judiciously.

Richard R. Losch+

So Many Translations

The Bible is translated into more languages than any other book in history. In fact, to the best of our knowledge there is no language on earth into which it has not been translated with the exception of the languages of a few recently discovered Stone Age tribes in the Amazon Valley. There are currently almost 1000 different English translations alone. Some are from the original Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek, and some are translations of earlier translations.

Studying the Bible from a translation always introduces inaccuracy and the possibility of misinterpretation. It is rare that a word in two different languages has exactly the same meaning. In most languages things that are very important in a culture have many words for them, while relatively unimportant things have few. For example, the Inuit (Eskimo) language has over 25 different words for ice. In Greek there are four major words for love and several lesser ones, each implying a different degree and kind of love, many having only very subtle differences. In English there are only a few, and they are generally very broad in their shades of difference (love, passion, affection, liking, etc.). It is therefore very difficult to translate this into English. When John said, "God is love" (1 Jn. 4:8), what exactly did he mean? He used the word *agape* (ἀγάπη), for which there is no word in English that is exactly equivalent. On the other hand, Greek has only a few words for money and wealth, while English has many. Which word for money do we use to carry the English meaning into Greek? Because of these problems, a translation will usually either miss a fine shade of meaning or introduce one that was not intended. An ancient rabbi said that reading the Torah in translation is like kissing your bride through her veil.

Language changes over time, and meanings of words change with it. Therefore even in the same language old meanings can be lost and new ones introduced. For example, in the King James Version, 2 Tim. 3:6 refers to "silly women," fueling the feminists' claim that Paul was a misogynist

(even though Paul was almost certainly not the writer of that letter). In the 17th century, however, the word silly did not mean air-headed or inane. It meant innocent, naïve or defenseless. The writer was showing concern for women, not contempt. It is therefore important in making a translation not only that we find the closest possible meaning of a word, but also that we know which version of the original language we are translating. There is a huge difference between Classic Greek (the Greek of Homer) and Koine Greek (the Greek of the New Testament). A Greek Classicist with little knowledge of Koine would render a very inaccurate translation of the New Testament. Similarly, there is a huge difference between the Classic Latin of the Late Republic (that of Caesar) and the Vulgar Latin (so-called “Church Latin”) of the early Church Fathers (that of St. Jerome, who translated the Bible into Latin in the 5th century). Because of these problems, serious biblical scholarship must always depend on the original and not on a translation, and must be aware of which form of Hebrew, Aramaic or Greek was used in the original writing. This is why Erasmus tried to talk Luther out of translating the Bible into German. He said that it would lead to a thousand different interpretations of it, sending people in a thousand different directions. Luther’s response was that the Bible is so clear that there could be only one reasonable interpretation. Today there are over a thousand Protestant denominations, most of whose differences lie in their interpretations of the Bible.

The first significant translation of the Bible took place in the 3rd and 2nd centuries BC. Hebrew was a dying language. Jewish scholars still used it to study their sacred scriptures, but it was no longer a spoken language. In Palestine the language was Aramaic, a Syrian tongue that is a close cousin of Hebrew and is written in the Hebrew alphabet.¹ The majority of the world’s Jews lived outside Palestine, however, and did not speak either Aramaic or Hebrew. They spoke Greek and

¹ An Aramaic speaker could make out Biblical Hebrew, but it would be as difficult as an English speaker trying to read Chaucer in the original.

in most cases the native tongue of the country in which they lived. Only the best educated knew Hebrew, so most Jews could not read the Bible. A group of scholars in Alexandria in Egypt feared that in a couple of generations Hebrew would be completely lost, and thus so would the Bible.¹ They decided to translate it into Greek, a language that most people around the world knew. Many of the more conservative Jews were horrified, because they understood the pitfalls of translation. For over a century there had been a great conflict between traditional Jews and what are called Hellenized Jews. The latter retained their Jewish faith, but accepted the Hellenic (Greek) culture. Traditional Jews believed that this was a watering down of the faith, and looked on the Hellenized Jews as apostates. Notwithstanding, the Greek Bible (later called the Septuagint) rapidly spread around the world and was what most Jews read and studied. In the New Testament, all the quotations from the Old Testament, of which there are several, are taken from the Septuagint.²

The next significant translation of the Bible did not take place until the early 5th century AD. By that time Greek had faded away, and the *lingua franca* of most of the known world was Latin. A Greek scholar priest named Eusebios Sophonios Hieronymos (known today as Saint Jerome) was charged by Pope Damasus I to translate the Bible into Latin. There were some Latin translations already, but most were badly done and incomplete. Translation of the New Testament was no problem, as it was originally written in Jerome's native tongue, Koine Greek. The original idea was to translate

¹ Hebrew did indeed die as a spoken language, and remained dead for almost 2000 years. In the late 19th century the Jews in Palestine revived it, and when the State of Israel was formed in 1948 they adopted Hebrew as the official language. Today it is once again a robust living tongue.

² Saint Paul was a well-educated Jew, and as such would certainly have known Hebrew, even though he probably never used it as a spoken language. His spoken languages would have been Greek, Latin, and probably Aramaic and an early form of Turkish. When he quotes Scripture it is from the Septuagint (Greek), because he was writing in Greek.

the Old Testament from the Greek also, but Jerome recognized that a translation of a translation would only compound the usual problems with the meanings of words. He went to Jerusalem and spent years studying Hebrew, and then undertook the project. The result was a magnificent piece of scholarship for its time. His translation is known as the *Versio Vulgata*, “Common Version,” because Latin was then the common language of the world. It is usually called simply the Vulgate. For over 1000 years it would be the most common translation of the Bible in the Roman Catholic Church, and the Council of Trent in the 16th century declared it the official one. Jerome used the best Hebrew texts available at the time and consulted many rabbis about their interpretations in order to render the best possible translation. Since his time many of these texts have been lost, so in 1917 the Jewish Publication Society used the Vulgate as one of its sources when translating the Tanakh (the Jewish Bible) into English.

In the late 16th and early 17th centuries, at the behest of the Council of Trent, the Vulgate was translated into English in the French cities of Douay (New Testament, 1582) and Rheims (Old Testament, 1609). The Roman Church officially accepted the Douay-Rheims translation for use in English speaking countries. Again, as a translation of a translation it had many problems. In recent years the Roman Catholic Church has authorized other English translations from the original Hebrew and Greek, the best and most authoritative being the Jerusalem Bible (1966).

Although there were some translations of the Bible into Old English as early as the 7th century, these were translations only of small portions. The first complete translation, which was into Middle English, was that of John Wycliffe¹ (1331-1384). Although it was done from the original Hebrew and Greek, its grammar and sentence structure followed exactly that of Latin, which makes it very difficult for the average layman to read. Wycliffe died of natural causes, but in

¹ Pronounced *wick-liff*.

1415 he was posthumously declared a heretic and his writings were ordered to be burned. His body was exhumed and burned, and the ashes cast into the River Swift. Fortunately for history, a few copies of his Bible survived.

The next major translation was equally controversial. It was that of William Tyndale¹ (1494-1536), who was inspired by Luther's German translation to do the same in English. It is not clear how much of the work he actually did himself, although he is usually credited with the whole translation. His was the first English translation of the Bible to be produced on a printing press. Although Tyndale was a strong supporter of the Protestant Reformation, he vehemently opposed Henry VIII's marriage to Anne Boleyn and thus was denounced by Henry. He fled to Belgium where he was captured and condemned to death as a traitor. He was strangled at the stake, and then his body was burned. Despite this, Henry VIII authorized four translations of the Bible in the next four years, all of which were based on Tyndale's work. The most important of these was Miles Coverdale's translation, which came out in several revisions between 1535 and 1539. The 1539 version came to be known as the Great Bible.² In 1560 Queen Elizabeth I authorized the Geneva Bible, which is noted for being the first English Bible divided into chapters and verses. In 1568 she authorized the Bishop's Bible, which was designated as the only English translation to be used in worship in the Church of England.

In 1604 King James I sponsored a group of scholars to make a new translation from the Hebrew and Greek. By that time manuscripts of some of the books of the Bible had been

¹ Pronounced *tin-dle*, rhyming with kindle.

² Miles Coverdale's Bible is credited with being the finest of all translations up to that time with regard to its quality as English literature. It is so beautiful that much of it, including the Psalms, was included in the 1549 Book of Common Prayer, and is still used to this day in the official (1662) Book of Common Prayer of the Church of England. It was used in the Book of Common Prayer of the Episcopal Church until 1979.

discovered that were earlier than those previously known, and scholars from the universities had learned more about the Hebrew and Greek of Biblical times than had been previously understood. In 1611 they published what is officially known as the Authorized Version, but is more commonly called the King James Version. For its time it was a very fine piece of scholarship, and its English is magnificent. Scholars generally consider the three greatest writings ever produced in English literature to be the 1549 Book of Common Prayer, the works of William Shakespeare and the King James Version of the Bible. These three collections have had more influence on the later development of the English language than any other single works in history.

The King James Bible was not an entirely new translation. The majority of it is made up of passages from earlier translations, but the scholars carefully checked every word and phrase, making corrections where necessary. They also “punched up” the language to make it as beautiful as possible. The language of the King James Bible is not that which was generally spoken by the English people at the time. For example, by the early 17th century familiar forms like “thee” and “thou,” although they were still in use, were disappearing. Rather, it used the language of about a hundred years earlier. This was intentional. The scholars wanted to separate the language of the Bible from that of the everyday dinner table in order to emphasize its dignity and importance. One of the accusations made against many of the modern English translations is that they have lost any overtone of dignity and awe.

The King James Bible was immediately accepted not only by the Church of England, but also by all the English speaking Protestant reformers. It became so entrenched in most Protestant worship that it has been only in the past few decades that many Protestant churches have started using more modern translations. Despite the fact that it was a marvelous piece of scholarship for its time, its time was 400 years ago. Much has been learned in the subsequent centuries, and we now know that in many places the King James Version is in-

accurate or just plain wrong. Also, for all their beauty, many of the words have changed their meanings significantly over the centuries and can convey an incorrect meaning to the untutored ear. When I want to read for beauty of language I will turn to the King James Version and the works of Shakespeare. When I want to read the Bible for meaning and don't want to struggle with the Hebrew or Greek, I will turn to a more modern English translation.

There are several excellent modern translations, and several that in my humble opinion are quite poor.¹ One of the most accurate is the Revised Standard Version (RSV, 1946-52), but unfortunately its language is rather dull. The New English Bible (NEB, 1961/1970/1989) is very good. The New Revised Standard Version (NRSV, 1989) is accurate and has considerably more interesting language than the RSV, as does the New International Version (NIV, 1984/2011) although both of these versions are weakened by their attempts to be politically correct. I am not familiar enough with any of the Orthodox translations to judge them. For the Roman Catholic Bible I consider The Jerusalem Bible to be the best.

Richard R. Losch+

¹ Many modern language translations, such as *The Living Bible* and *The Good News Bible*, use everyday informal language or change the wording altogether in an attempt to communicate the spirit of the passage rather than its direct meaning. This can be very misleading. The *New World Bible* (Watchtower Society) has many grievous errors in order to fit it to the Jehovah's Witnesses' agenda. For example, it translates John 1:1 ("... and the Word was God") as "... and the Word was *a god*." This is pure heresy, being polytheistic and relegating Christ to being a lesser deity (which is what they believe). Greek scholars, including non-Christians, reject the JW rendering. Then there is *Good As New*, a 2005 translation by retired Baptist minister John Henson, which tries to appeal to the younger generation. It calls Peter "Rocky" (the name Peter means rock), and Mary Magdalene is called "Maggie." It renders Mt. 23:25 ("Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!") as "Take a running jump, Holy Joes, humbugs!" <*sigh*>.

A Touch of Trivia

Michael King, Jr. was born in 1929, the son of Rev. Michael King, the Pastor of Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta. Mr. King, Sr. went to Berlin in 1934 to attend the Fifth Baptist World Alliance Congress. He was inspired there by the life of the German Protestant reformer Martin Luther. When he returned he changed his name and that of his 5-year-old son from Michael King to Martin Luther King, Senior and Junior.

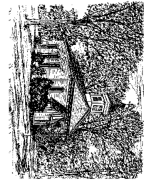
Richard R. Losch+

JAMIE

by **Richard R. Losch**



"I think you're too close to the situation to be objective, and I request a change of venue."



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