

BLESSING THE ANIMALS



PHOTO COURTESY ROBERT LAYTON

Pastor Malone Gilliam, of St. Paul's Episcopal Church, blesses Wingnut as owner Harriet DeHart watches Sunday during the Blessing of the Animals. The ceremony is often held the closest Sunday to Oct. 4, which is the Feast of St. Francis Assisi.

The dancing angels

“How many angels can dance on the head of a pin?”

Doubtless, you've heard this question before, and you knew straight away that the question wasn't meant to be taken seriously.

Angels have been long dismissed from modern thought, pretty much assigned to the same wastebasket of history into which the “flat earth” and the “green cheese moon” have been thrown. At the beginning of the modern age, in the 1600's, some philosophers started poking fun at the idea of even thinking about such beings. They dismissed such thinking as mere and idle speculation, about as useless as arguing over “How many angels can dance upon the tip of a needle?”

For your information, by the way, no one in the medieval church — Thomas Aquinas nor any of the Scholastics — ever posed such a nonsensical question. This famous (and irresponsible) question actually came from post-Reformation philosophers: the so-called Enlightenment had no room for angels or even rumors of angels: Angels were not material and thus could not be observed, experimented upon, and defined. So therefore, in a “flat” sort of scientific worldview, they were simply dismissed.

But the modern world, despite its technological prowess, cannot afford to be so blindfolded. There is more to reality than what can be scientifically proven or even proposed. Hope and meaning, truth and goodness and even beauty cannot be manufactured from elementary particles. To try to do so is to throw oneself deeply into the quicksand of Buryan's “slough of despond” (Pilgrim's Progress). Which is a good description of a historic moment so afflicted by absurdity and nihilism.

After all, the most modern, secular (and anti-angelic) century was the twentieth. And that century was by far the most violent and destructive this world has ever seen. Recall Stalin, Hitler, Mao, Pol Pot: they had, let's just say, a “vested interest” in there being no God, especially a Trinitarian God of Love.

We would be better off with a worldview that recognizes angels. Realistically and practically speaking, they're all around. From the time of Apostles, the Christian Tradition has emphasized angels as a necessity for belief and life. There is no place in Creation that is not without angelic presence. Everything in the world is “managed” by these non-material beings, even the stars, even strange numbers like pi and e and the golden ratio.

In her must-read book, “A Wrinkle in Time,” Madeleine L'Engle suggests that stars are definitely under the superintendency of angels. The three older ladies who help Meg, Charles and Calvin are Mrs. Whatsit, Mrs. Who and Mrs. Which. These ladies are really angels in disguise: Apparently, their



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stars had gone supernova in an earlier skirmish with evil, and now they operate as “free agents” in the struggle.

It turns out that this notion of L'Engle's is not so far-fetched. In the “angelic” worldview, Divine Love is accompanied by angels everywhere, from the human heart to the edge of the universe: “He shall heal the shattered in heart, He shall bind up all their wounds. He measures the multitude of stars, calling each one of them by name” (Psalm 147:3-4).

But closest to our experience are the Guardian Angels. Every one of us has one, whose entire task is to help us become utterly transformed by divine love:

“See that you do not despise one of these little ones,” the Lord said in Matthew 18:10, “for I tell you that in heaven their angels always behold the face of my Father who is in heaven.”

The Divine Love of the Holy Trinity is at the very basis of all reality. Your guardian angel, whom you will see one day, is simply trying to make you real — or, to put it another way, more congruent with the way things really should be, rather than the way things have gone awry.

On the face of it, that sounds, these days, like mere sentimental fluff. But I suggest that the reason why it sounds fluffy is because the problem is with “these days,” not with the idea of angels.

We are in a moment when people are more likely to be molded by events (and anxieties) rather than molding events by their good character. I'm afraid that the main reason for this decline is that we have lulled ourselves into thinking that we live in a material world — a worldview that is cardboard and superficial, compared with the real Creation that is of enormous, beautiful physical and metaphysical depth.

In his first inaugural address, Abraham Lincoln mentioned the idea of angels. It was, as we all know, a time of crisis and chaos, when everything seemed to be falling apart, and when the notion of angels was more than sentiment and fluff. “The mystic chords of memory,” he said, looking toward the way things should be, “will yet swell the chorus of the Union, when again touched ... by the better angels of our nature.”

These days, what's needed is a better view — even of angels who dance indeed to a music of splendor and majesty, and definitely not bound to the head of a pin ...

... a better view, just so we can be better.

Jonathan Tobias (janotoc77@gmail.com) resides in Edenton, and is a lecturer in systematic and pastoral theology at Christ the Savior Seminary near Pittsburgh. A semi-retired Eastern Orthodox priest, he is also an occasional gardener at the Cupola House and sings with the Albemarle Chorale, and the Mighty Termiteless.

Dr. Bally coming to Hertford church

Will preach Oct. 16 at Good Works Community Church

STAFF REPORT

HERTFORD — World renowned speaker, Dr. Sherlock Bally, will preach and teach a fresh prophetic word to the masses starting at 7 p.m. Wednesday, Oct. 16.

The event will be held at Good Works Community Church, 113 Deep Creek Road, Hertford.

Bally, an ordained minister is noted for his special end-times

prophecy meetings held around the globe. His passion to help others fully embrace the Abrahamic Covenant has resulted in many annual visits abroad to conventions, seminars, and crusades; as well as meetings in various political arenas with world leaders. In 2006, Bally was appointed the liaison between the pastors of North America and Israel by the Knesset Christian Allies Caucus of the parliament of Israel.

A native of Trinidad, Bally has been in ministry for over 40 years. He attended Southern Bible College in Houston, Texas, with additional coursework at Luther Rice Seminary and International Bible Seminary. He has authored more than a dozen books, served in many pulpits and conducted numerous radio and television broadcasts.

His revelation of Bible prophecy and application of end time truth has inspired thousands.

Host pastor, Apostle Edna Hathaway Lawrence, and the Good Works Community Church family extends an invitation to you to join them in an evangelistic outpouring of Bally's passion to see the lost saved, the saved sent and the sent empowered.

For additional information, please feel free to call the church at 252-404-9088, Ms. Joelisa Drew, church secretary, at 336-554-1733, or Pastor Lawrence at 757-404-5304.

CHURCH BRIEFS

Submit church items to Staff Writer Miles Layton at m Layton@ncweeklies.com.

Edenton Baptist Church

Edenton Baptist Church is a Cooperative Baptist Fellowship congregation, at 200 S. Granville St. We invite you to join us Sundays at 9:45 a.m. for Sunday School, and Worship at 11 a.m. We have a special program, The Bridge, for 2nd-through 6th-graders during the worship hour, as well as Children's Church for K-1st-graders, and nursery care. Youth, grades 7-12, meet at 5:30 p.m. Sundays. Wednesday evenings at EBC offer choir and mission groups for children ages Pre-K through 6th Grade, and Bible study for Young Adults and Adults. More information may be found on our website, www.edenton-baptist.org.

Edenton Church of God

Edenton Church of God will be in revival starting Sunday, Oct. 13 through Oct. 20. The evangelist will be the Rev. Jarred Purvis

of the Greenville Church of God. You will be richly blessed by the preaching of this 24-year-old. Services are 7:30 p.m. nightly, 7 p.m. Saturday night, and 11 a.m./6:30 p.m. Sunday(s). This will be a revival you wouldn't want to miss. Everyone is invited to come and worship with us. For more information, call 252-331-3998. Church is at 906 Johnston St.

Edenton United Methodist Church

Edenton United Methodist Church, 225 Virginia Road, has Sunday services at 8:45-10 a.m. in the Family Life Center and 11 a.m. in the sanctuary. Sunday School for all ages is at 10 a.m. each week. Nursery is available for all services. For information, call 482-3269.

Faith Pentecostal Holiness Church

Join us for services at 10:45 a.m. Sundays and 7 p.m. Wednesdays. Faith Pentecostal Holiness Church is at 1614 Virginia Road.

See CHURCH, B6

PASTOR TO BE HONORED



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Church of Deliverance, 750 Virginia Road, Edenton, will celebrate its pastor's 18th anniversary by honoring Pastor James L. Ferebee and Evangelist Elizabeth Ferebee at a service starting at 2 p.m. Sunday, Oct. 27. Special guest will be Elder Kera Johnson, of the Bethlehem Apostolic Church of God and Christ.

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