

Chapter 1 : Rowan Williams - Wikipedia

Rowan Williams is above all a pastor, and he knows well what needs to be said and heard of the Christian message these days." Presbyterian Outlook "Rowan Williams speaks with a passion for the church, her people and her practices.

Faith in the Public Square by Rowan Williams. Should he respond with sources such as the Bible or church tradition, he risks the charge of insularity. Alternately, should he opine beyond narrowly "religious" concerns—venturing into sociology or economics, say—he can incite criticism for inexpertise. Acknowledging such stakes, Rowan Williams introduces his recently published lectures by stating that "archbishops grow resilient, and sometimes even rebellious, in the face of all this. The venues are diverse, from the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences to the New Delhi British Council, and his subject matter is admirably comprehensive, from human rights to European cultural inheritance, religious offence to climate change. Defending his grounds for commenting broadly, he writes: No theologian has an automatic skill in economics; but there is an ethical perspective here, plainly rooted in theology, that obliges us to question the nostrums of recent decades, and above all persistently to ask the awkward question of what we want growth for, what model of well-being we actually assume in our economics. His ensuing questions prove just as forthright and unsettling. For instance, in challenging concern over resource allocation in an ageing population, he presses, "can we envisage resisting the temptation to regard the demographic pattern of the future as primarily a threat to economic efficiency? His resulting challenge to typical public terms is then rooted in an encounter prior to any civil interaction. In defending human rights beyond narrow capacities such as verbal rationality—a position which would briskly exclude the unborn or many people with disabilities—he argues that the human body should itself be seen as communicative. In our time, this is most often shown in how market language sets all terms of "value. His overall case proves compelling, such that I would read it against other apparent lapses, such as when he describes sustainable communities as those which do not deplete "human capital. In speaking between religions, the archbishop refreshingly does not trade Christian terms in for a "common core" multi-faith vocabulary. He argues, rather, that attempting to begin from the generic sacred neglects the embodied practices vital to religion. Recognizing how many can hear Christian language wrongly or defensively, however, he tends to gradually show doctrines in operation before he names them. From there, he argues that religious groups should function in civil society with a higher authority than that which clamours for a privileged voice or the protection of religious freedoms. Even given the issue of context, Williams can at times prove reticent to elaborate on overt theological content. In his essay on perceptions of the elderly, for instance, he describes how earlier cultures saw old age as one of the most creative phases of life, during which one can "make the soul" toward death. This flows naturally, he writes, from the sense that human life is "a story that is open to the judgement and mercy of God. For example, he specifies that it is programmatic secularism which would seek to excise public displays of private religious conviction in order to secure state loyalty as often seen to be the case in France. While the two adjectives could use sharper contrast, the differentiation is valuable: Recognizing that in modernity political belonging is assumed to be "unitary and clearly defined," he argues that any properly liberal society must learn to acknowledge a gradation in allegiances. Williams then presses against easily won accounts of social "harmony" or "cohesion" used to call into line religious commitments construed as "divisive. That said, Williams is careful to chasten less principled disassociation. Instead, Williams calls for a robust commitment to what he terms argumentative democracy. This costly, protracted work of persuasion and adjustment is in marked contrast to that societal demand "for an account of the social good that is final and obvious. Applying this specifically to his British context, Williams takes up the work of Jonathan Clark to criticize a "presentist mentality which assumes that constructive historical conflict and negotiation are essentially over. Though not reprised here, this line of argument helps to contextualize his controversial and frequently misunderstood remarks on sharia law. Nevertheless, his argument sits uneasily in the form of a monologue. This silence is critical given that in several instances he proposes, with reference to Chief Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, a form of "covenantal mutuality" in the pursuit of broader social unity. Given that both society and church are divided

on what he calls "the dangerous frontiers of sexuality and power," it would have surely strengthened the integrity of his societal address if he had included a more candid account of the failures within the institution he was serving. Nevertheless, the still visible clerical collar, as understood through the content of his final address, suggests that we can attribute a dimension of depth here. It is an evocative theme which we can now read back over his own time in office.

Aggregate reviews and ratings of Old and New Testamen Bible commentaries.

Archbishop Williams and Miracles: If you think of miracle as those sets of circumstances in which somehow the underlying action of God breaks through, breaks through the surface to create something new. I believe that Williams does present a reasonable Christian understanding and definition of miracles which is supported by other Christian thinkers. I wanted to expand on my comments a bit. I think his understanding of miracles fits in the mainstream of Christian theological thinking and that one of his comments, beginning at I have written on this blog about miracles before , which I believe in and which are a specific part of the way in which God acts in history. If we are to define everything that God has done in creation, such as the very act of creation, as a miracle, then by definition I suppose we could say that everything is a miracle, all that exists, all that has life, the birth of a child, is a miracle. This is not, however, the normal definition of miracle. It is too broad and when everything is described as a miracle the word becomes meaningless, even though we sense or feel the wonder of life at times which would not otherwise be seen as "miraculous" just "natural". What did he mean? Instead, I maintain that evolution has a direction, and is ultimately guided by God. But God does not determine every detail of evolution. Brazos Press, , Nichols goes on to say, Modern thought, however, tends to think of nature as an autonomous system, and God as outside of or extrinsic to nature. I believe that Archbishop Williams affirms the first citation quite clearly, but denies the separation of God from nature as modernity tries to do, as described by Nichols in the second quotation. This is where the quotation of Williams directly related to miracles comes into play, which I will cite again: Again, I will return to Terry Nichols: The Deist attitude toward miracles was carried forward into the eighteenth century by Enlightenment thinkers. But how then does he view miracles, at least on the basis of these discussions? Miracles are better understood as signs of divine action that, like grace, do not violate nature but work through it, perfect it, and reveal its divine ground, for nature is not a closed system but an open system within a larger, divine context The Sacred Cosmos , Grand Rapids, Mich.: My contention is that nature is a system open to the action of divine grace and the miraculous, as I have described it above. The degree to which this occurs depends largely on our openness to God in faith. Williams is at pains to reject the view of the arbitrarily acting, capricious God. Another way of putting this is that miracles are like sacraments:

Chapter 3 : Rowan Williams lead a Theology Morning on John's Gospel at St Mark's church | BRI

Rowan Williams' belief in the Church and his view of academic life are closely related. His decision to leave Canterbury and take up the position of master of Magdalene College at Cambridge should not be seen as a retreat from the difficulties of Church life.

The one at Lambeth is no exception. They preen and jostle for favour somewhat pointless, as Rowan treats everyone the same. They build professional silos and guard their sometimes limited responsibilities jealously. Jane Kramer of the New Yorker offers a different perspective: The choices he had were simple: He was tired, and, being a good man and a Christian in evident anguish, he resigned. I think that he missed the old Rowan Williams, too. His decision to leave Canterbury and take up the position of master of Magdalene College at Cambridge should not be seen as a retreat from the difficulties of Church life. Instead, for Williams, this will be a transition from one kind of priestly ministry to another. It is often said that Williams is an unusual churchman "too scholarly, too ponderous, too sensitive to complexity" but it should equally be said that he is an unusual scholar. Although he has made important contributions to several academic disciplines "not only theology but also history, political philosophy and literary criticism" his deepest commitment has always been to the cultivation of community rather than to any particular intellectual project. If his critics complained that he was an unusually academic archbishop, Cambridge will also find him to be an unusually priestly scholar. Simply put, Williams believes in the Church more than he believes in his own opinions. All his troubles as Archbishop of Canterbury have stemmed from this fact. He believes in processes of communal negotiation more than he believes in the enforcement of any fixed viewpoint. It is this mindset, this belief in the Church, that has drawn so much criticism, even from within the Church of England. But his belief in the Church shapes the way he understands academic life: What he will really bring to Cambridge, in other words, is the same thing he brought to Canterbury: What is unique about Rowan Williams is simply the fact that he is a priest. If anything will come to define his new position at Cambridge, it will be that he approaches academic life just as he approaches Church leadership: As President Obama is now well aware, our culture celebrates or crucifies leaders by tallying up foes vanquished, reforms instituted, swift decisions not second-guessed. Contrast this with a leader of 80 million who would rather be known for simply encouraging adversaries to stay engaged with one another. It may not show up in the stat box, but it counts for the fragile bonds of unity that keep Christians in communion, at least for the foreseeable future.

Chapter 4 : SPCK Rowan Williams Collection (5 vols.) - Logos Bible Software

For Rowan Williams, reading the Bible must be, to use Michael Spencer's term, Jesus-shaped. The person of Jesus is the center and focal point of the scriptures. This means that our lifetime assignment is to see how the various bits of the Bible move us relentlessly to him.

Reading and Hearing"--and has formulated a screaming headline out of it entitled, "Anglican head Williams says anti-gays misread Bible" [http:](http://) Then, too, he states that same-sex relations were "as obviously immoral as To indicate, as Paul does, that any form of sin could get one excluded from the kingdom of God if personal merit is the criterion of evaluation is not the same as saying that all forms of sin are equally abhorrent to God the latter point Paul and Scripture generally deny categorically. My second example [note: It is, for the majority of modern readers the most important single text in Scripture on the subject of homosexuality, and has understandably been the focus of an enormous amount of exegetical attention. And, once again, what is the movement that the text seeks to facilitate? The answer is in the opening of chapter 2: The change envisaged is confidence in having received divine revelation to an awareness of universal sinfulness and need. Once again, there is a paradox in reading Romans 1 as a foundation for identifying in others a level of sin that is not found in the chosen community. Now this gives little comfort to either party in the current culture wars in the Church. Paul is making a primary point not about homosexuality but about the delusions of the supposedly law-abiding. As I have said, this does nothing to settle the exegetical questions fiercely debated at the moment. But I want to stress that what I am trying to define as a strictly theological reading of Scripture He similarly misinterprets "the way, the truth, and the life" text in John Before I proceed with my response to Williams, a word needs to be said about what Williams was doing and not doing and what I am doing and not doing in this article. What Williams was not doing in his address was settling the question of whether Romans 1: This is what Williams apparently means when he says that his reading of Romans "does nothing to settle the exegetical questions fiercely debated at the moment. He infers that the church should take note of this primary point and not be judging persons who enter into homosexual unions or making too much of an issue of homosexual relations, at least not to a point where it may lead to a rift between ECUSA and the Anglican Communion generally, for we are all sinners anyway. The Bible and Homosexual Practice Abingdon, , esp. Two Views Fortress, , esp. Saltzman; Kirk House, , , esp. Instead, with Williams, I focus on the literary context for Romans 1: My own point is that, contrary to what Williams claims, the context for Romans 1: Now one might argue that contextual analysis of a passage in Scripture is still part of exegesis. Let me also say that I respect the Archbishop as a caring person and able theologian though he is not a biblical scholar. There is much in his address as a whole that is commendable, which makes his misinterpretation in these two specific examples that much more regrettable. Indeed, the headline accurately captures the primary substance and focus of his remarks on homosexuality. Let us begin by affirming what Paul in his letter to the Romans was emphatically not telling believers in Romanse. Paul was not telling the Roman Christians to avoid passing judgment on fellow believers who actively engage in sexual immorality of an extreme sort, including homosexual practice. When Paul next used the term "sexual impurity" akatharsia in his letter 6: He reminded them that believers in Christ are no longer "slaves to sexual impurity," for to continue in such behavior was to engage in acts of which they should now be "ashamed" echoing the shame language that dominates Romans 1: Such acts, he says, lead to death and the loss of eternal life 6: If you continue to live in conformity to the sinful desires operating in the flesh you are going to die. But if by means of the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For only those who are being led by the Spirit of God are children of God. This quotation makes it clear, if it were not already, that mouthing a few words of confession that Christ is Lord does not exempt Christians leading a life consonant with that confession, nor even the dire eternal consequences that would arise for failing to do so. For Paul the outcome for a believer who lives under the primary sway of sin in the flesh is no different from the outcome for an unbeliever who so lives. Again in Romans 13, Paul makes clear that sexual impurity is definitely not one of the matters of ethical indifference, like diet and calendar issues, that later in Paul insists in This takes us back to the discussion in Romans 6: It

is far more likely, though, that Williams has misinterpreted Paul than that Paul was a monumental hypocrite, in my opinion. The immediate context of Romans Indeed, nothing in the immediate context of Romans 1: Does Williams think that Paul would have chastised believers as "self-righteous" for speaking vigorously against Christians who worshipped gods other than the God of Jesus Christ? I would hope not since Paul clearly regarded belief in Christ as absolutely antithetical to idol worship. For example, he described the conversion of the Thessalonians as a turning from idols to serve the living God 1 Thess 1: Yet, if Williams would concur with this point, then he would have to give up his point about Paul being opposed to "judging" persons who engage in unrepentant homosexual practice. When Paul begins his moral exhortation in his first extant letter, he starts off by warning his converts not to engage any longer in the forms of "sexual impurity" akatharsia that once characterized their lives as Gentiles; and that failure to heed such a warning would leave them prey to an avenging God 1 Thess 4: Obviously, then, in Romans Paul is not telling his readers to stop passing judgment on severe and obvious cases of idolatry and sexual immorality. The wrath appears initially in the form of God stepping back and not restraining humans from engaging in self-dishonoring behavior that arises from gratifying innate desires to do what God strongly forbids. The continual heaping up of such sins, Paul says, will ultimately lead to cataclysmic judgment on the eschatological Day of Wrath 1: This is not grace but wrath. This is not love but hate. Paul in Romans 2 is debating, in the first instance, with a non-Christian, imaginary Jewish dialogue partner or interlocutor. Despite what Williams suggests, Paul does not tell the interlocutor to stop judging pagans for committing idolatry, sexual immorality, and an array of other sins including murder, 1: Essentially Paul is moving the interlocutor to the view that mere possession of the Jewish law of Moses does not exempt him from responding to the offer of salvation in Jesus Christ, an offer equally accessible to sinful Gentiles 3: Everybody is in want of the atoning, amends-making death of Jesus and the indwelling Spirit of Christ that makes possible a life lived "for God" compare Gal 2: However, it is not a trap designed to preclude judgment of immoral behavior within the Christian community. Instead, it is a trap designed to convince moral unbelievers that they too need the grace of God manifested in the atoning death of Christ and the attendant moral transformation that comes with being a recipient of such grace: There is also a layered trap for Christians at Rome who judge one another over matters of moral indifference such as diet and calendar As we have seen, though, sexual immorality, like idol worship, does not fall for Paul in the category of moral indifference. There is a big difference between, on the one hand, Paul chastising a non-believing Jew for using his sense of moral superiority to consign unbelieving Gentiles to hell while exempting himself from the need to receive Jesus as Savior Rom 2: There an exasperated Paul asks the Corinthian believers the rhetorical question: For a "yes" for Williams would mean that one has not given sufficient attention to "universal sinfulness and need. Far from tolerating the case of incest, Paul advocated temporary removal of the offending member from the life of the community and did so not only for the sake of the purity and holiness of the community but also for the sake of the offender who needed to be recovered for the kingdom of God 5: Paul also, in the broader context, explicitly rejected any attempt to view the morally significant issue of sexual immorality as comparable to morally indifferent issues surrounding dietary practices 6: Clearly when Paul spoke of judging those "inside" the church he qualified that judgment in many ways. Yet, equally as clearly, Paul insisted that the church do its job of judging those within the community of faith who have deviated into serious sexual immorality. Anything less would be unloving. Perhaps Williams would respond that a loving and consensual relationship between a man and his mother or stepmother is far more serious than a loving and consensual relationship between persons of the same sex. Both incest and homosexual practice are instances of immoral sexual relations between persons too much alike on a structural or formal level one as regards kinship, the other as regards the sex or gender of the participants. The only difference between the two is that a two-sexes prerequisite for sexual relations is more strongly grounded in the creation texts and is more absolutely sustained in Scripture generally and in the traditions of early Judaism i. Moreover, the issue of too much structural sameness, of a narcissistic arousal for what one already is, is if anything more keenly felt in the case of same-sex intercourse than in the case of consensual, adult incest. Of the two, the prohibition of incest and the prohibition of same-sex intercourse, the prior and more foundational analogue is clearly the prohibition of same-sex intercourse. Partly what this boils down to is this: Williams

does not regard homosexual practice as a particularly significant sexual offense, if even an offense at all. I have read in the press that he may have moderated or even changed some of his earlier strong support for homosexual practice but the evidence for such a change is at best conflicting. Yet neither he nor anyone else who talks in this way has made a convincing case that Paul would have viewed loving and committed same-sex intercourse involving people "oriented" to such behavior as a significantly lesser offense than adult, consensual, and loving incest of the first order. Until he or anyone else makes such a convincing case, no basis exists for arguing that severing ties with a schismatic Episcopal Church of the United States of America would be an unfaithful, self-righteous, and anti-Pauline act. Indeed, the truly anti-Pauline act would be a business-as-usual approach to a renegade body that endorses sexual immorality among its leaders. This is not the first time that I have addressed these context issues. Much though not all of the material above in a different form can be found in works of mine already published for full citations see above , such as *The Bible and Homosexual Practice*, pp. Does Paul reject judgment of homosexual practice? It would be nice in the future if persons making the kinds of claims about Paul that the Archbishop has made could at least acknowledge the counter-arguments already made and attempt to respond to them. I respect him and nothing said here should be interpreted otherwise. Of course, I would be delighted to discover that the Archbishop actually does not believe, or has now changed his mind, that Paul warned his converts against judging believers who were actively engaged in sexually immoral behavior of a severe sort such as homosexual practice. It is about the move from desolation in the face of the cross. This is a misreading precisely of the context that Williams wants us all to uphold. This "I am" saying is part of a much broader witness of "I am" sayings and identifications made throughout the Gospel of John. There are also various places where those who do not believe in him are said to be facing destruction; for example, John 3: He can be reached at [gagnon pts](#). Read the entire article on the [Dr. Robert Gagnon website](#) new window will open. Reprinted with permission of the author. Any reproduction of this article is subject to the policy of the individual copyright holder. Follow [copyright link](#) for details.

Chapter 5 : Death, Resurrection, and Human Destiny: Christian and Muslim Perspectives

Despite broad differences in Christian thinking and practice both today and in past centuries, the essence of the Christian faith can be distilled to four basic elements for the majority of those who call themselves Christians, according to Dr. Rowan Williams, the th Archbishop of Canterbury.

Jonathan Petersen Content manager for Bible Gateway Despite broad differences in Christian thinking and practice both today and in past centuries, the essence of the Christian faith can be distilled to four basic elements for the majority of those who call themselves Christians, according to Dr. Rowan Williams, the th Archbishop of Canterbury. Bible Gateway interviewed Dr. Williams about the chapter on the Bible in his book, *Being Christian: Baptism, Bible, Eucharist, Prayer* Wm. How did you decide to focus on baptism, the Bible, the Eucharist, and prayer as the four essential elements of the Christian life to write about? It would be hard to recognize as Christian a body that had none of these practices. And all are mandated by Jesus in different ways: The Bible is a collection of books written over centuries. How do they all fit together in a cohesive message? The cohesion comes through the fact that it is the set of texts read and accepted in a cohesive community—the community of those whose lives are being shaped by the Spirit of Jesus Christ. Christ is the center of Scripture for the Christian and provides the perspective in which diversity can be held in the right kind of tension. And the church both gives Scripture its unity by treading it in the Spirit of Christ and receives its unity from Scripture as the book which provides a universal common language. We believe in a God who speaks and calls; the God of the Bible is one who is always seeking to communicate more fully and effectively with human creatures, so we have to train ourselves to be quiet enough to hear that communication. If the Bible is intended to be communication from God to us, why are there so few directed quotes from God to us in it and so much seemingly mundane information? God speaks through human lives, not only human words: So God speaks in the narrative of those whose lives he has touched and transfigured. His life and death and resurrection create a set of relationships in which learning happens—by words and acts and interactions, not words alone. Why should readers of the Bible be careful to interpret the whole story of the Bible and not merely a bit of the whole story? Is the Bible accurate history? Sometimes yes, sometimes no, sometimes maybe. Narratives that may not be exact history can still be exact theology because they represent a long-term deposit from reflection on how God has been encountered over many centuries. Paul says ; and he alone is without qualification God present and active in the middle of the human world. Why is the concept of reading the Bible together important? His numerous other books include *Christ on Trial: An Introduction to Christian Belief*.

Chapter 6 : Death, Resurrection, and Human Destiny | Georgetown University Press

The Primacy of the Bible. By Charles D. Bush COMMENTARY January 29, ON 27 June , the Archbishop of Canterbury issued a commentary entitled 'The Challenge and Hope of Being an Anglican Today, A Reflection for the Bishops, Clergy and Faithful of the Anglican Communion'.

Posted on February 13, by helenbeece I was very enthusiastic about hearing Rowan Williams and was not surprised to see the church full when I arrived. I was relieved to find a seat, although I was disappointed to have my view obscured by a pillar. However I was relieved to find that the talk was also displayed on the screen so I could see Rowan Williams as he spoke. We had 10 minutes of worship using the screen for responsive prayers. Rowan was introduced as a speaker not only of Welsh but also 9 other languages. It was also thought to have been written later than the other gospels in the early 2nd Century; as it was quoted by writers from the 2nd Century onwards. The pool of Bethesda with its 5 porticos was seen as symbolic until archaeologists found a pool with 5 porticos in Jerusalem. A confident pessimism then further discredited the priority of John in the last Century. It was seen as historically unreliable. Rowan decided to give his own opinion about the gospel, as there are so many conflicting opinions about it and its authenticity. Rowan described it as an eye witness report about Jesus, as it had unexpected points in it. The story ended by saying that it was a trusted testimony of an eye witness in the gospel. The text was not written down by the eye witness, but we accept that it is the testimony of the eye witness. The writer of the gospel would have been part of a believing community who sat at the feet of the eye witness as he talked about Jesus and his life. We can imagine the writer asking him to give more details about Nicodemus and why Jesus had talked about being born again. What did Jesus say the night before he died? It was a mixture of meditation and memory, not all simple direct reporting about God in that text, but it tells us what we need to know about Jesus. It is a dramatic version of lengthy dialogues with Nicodemus, the woman at the well and with Pontius Pilate. Jesus declares who he is, by being drawn to people who recognise something in him. In the raising of Lazarus in John 11 Jesus drew out a confession of faith from Martha, as in conversation he asked her to think beyond what she had thought before. Rowan reminds us that we are now part of this story. The writer picked an example of a typical healing story, a story of meeting an outsider, the feeding of the multitude and a series of icons, when Jesus is in action or a conversation here or there in his life. This is disturbing in the age of anti-Semitism, the anxiety it brings and disturbing aspects of global violence. The roots of anti-Semitism were in the New Testament. The early church had struggled with the more powerful Jewish communities, so many had savage things to say about the Jews in Jerusalem, those who engaged in dispute with Jesus, yet the authority of the testimony and salvation came from a Judean, as the author was a Jew. The authoritarian Jews wanted to destroy Jesus and push his followers out of the synagogue; it was Jews criticising the Jews. Who wrote the gospel? Who was the eye witness? Rowan sees that the eye witness was probably John, the beloved disciple, St John the disciple of Jesus. Elsewhere it was acknowledged that it was Peter, John and James who were authoritative in the early church. Rowan feels sure that the eye witness source was John. Maybe that is old-fashioned but as far as Rowan is concerned that explanation made sense. The language used in the gospel is very carefully written, when the evangelist uses the Greek word more than once in different contexts. There are little internal echoes, a phrase used in earlier chapters such as when the risen Lord is by the Sea of Galilee and has a coal fire on the beach; where was the last time a coal or charcoal fire was mentioned? It was when Peter betrayed Jesus 3 times, and the same fire is recalled and the threefold questions reverts the betrayal. The prologue is a world changing manifesto, a theological manifesto statement. That sense of place continues as we consider where Jesus is now? Jesus has been in intimate relationship with God from the beginning. Was it because they did not know what to say? In the last supper Jesus talks about places to stay. In John 14v3 Jesus says that he is going to prepare a place for the disciples. Jesus will clear space for them. The prayer Jesus makes to the Father becomes our prayer. After Jesus rose from the dead, Peter went into the empty tomb and saw the grave clothes whereas the younger John stood at the entrance first, then entered after Peter and John saw and believed. John sees differently from Peter who had gazed at the scene, whereas John saw and

perceived. All those themes are connected to how we see and remain with the Father. He explained that it sets out the full scale of salvation. In the beginning is the new start, the new creation. Firstly the Son does what his Father is doing. They cannot bear to live with light, as it is too bright. That is the characteristic way that Jesus talks; here is the light, the door is open for them to come into it, but they can shut it out, condemning themselves as they lock the door to protect themselves from the light. The author would have been part of a community and would have had input from the community as he compiled the gospel. Matthew, Mark, and Luke wrote their gospels to be read out loud, as it was set out in readable chunks with a punch line. He explained in my mind, when those amazing words are read or when I read them, bowing my head. The Jerusalem Bible was good on nuances, treating the long passages as poetry and it also has good accompanying study notes. Both endings were included and gave us the best of both worlds. He said that the story of the woman taken in adultery does not really fit in, but he is so glad it has been included. When passages from this gospel are preached or read, there is always an invitation to come and see for ourselves. I found the way Rowan considered and answered the questions was excellent and thoughtful. I must admit he has opened my eyes to the importance of this gospel, depicting excerpts from the life and teaching of Jesus and he has made the gospel far more accessible to me. I felt privileged to listen to him and his explanations and insight are still making an impact on me and I am sure will continue to do so.

Chapter 7 : Posts “ Interrupting the Silence

Therefore, when Archbishop Rowan Williams finally did meet with Pope Benedict on Saturday, they confined themselves pretty much to a brief discussion of the Archbishop's bruised ego and a bland.

At the beginning of Matthew 5, there is Jesus and there is a crowd; so too here at the beginning of Matthew 13, there is Jesus and there is a crowd. The crowds are big, so in Matthew 5 Jesus sits on a hill to teach, while here in Matthew 13 he gets into a boat. In Matthew 5 he gives instructions, while in Matthew 13 he deploys a different didactic strategy: Well, yes, parables are stories, very short stories. Not a bit of it. Kids can listen in on these stories, but parables are seriously adult. The materials on which Jesus draws are commonplace “ nature, agriculture, village life “ but the punch lines to which they lead are always strange, unexpected, and “ crucially “ interrogative. So they require a nimble mind, a lively imagination, and “ finally “ an audacious determination to engage them and answer the question. Parables take you from the mundane world and the conventional ways we negotiate it, confront us with a different picture of the world, and challenge us with two questions: And, yes, explicitly or implicitly, all the parables end with the burning question: Will you make this reality your reality? Thus, finally, the parables are dangerous because they confront the listener with judgement, they sift us, they separate those who will say Yes and take a risk and follow Jesus, and those who will say No and travel by sat nav. The sting is that those who play safe are, in fact, living in a world that, for all its apparent givenness and permanence, is passing away “ and so they are, if you like, comfortably heading for oblivion. Okay “ the parable of the sower, the first of a septet of parables in Matthew 13 Matthew loves the number seven. These parables were no doubt originally told by Jesus at different times and places, parables which Matthew, clever rabbi that he is, has grouped together for the purposes of teaching in his own church. First, observe that while Jesus speaks to the crowd, he is actually instructing the disciples, who, however, are not as smart as they think. You see the forces of opposition to Jesus have been gathering. The twelve have been watching as all these events unfold. What does Jesus do? He paints them a narrative picture. The farmer does not plough before he sows, and he does not plant his seeds in a calculated manner. No, the farmer walks along a path well-trodden by his fellow sharecroppers, stubble really, and he tosses on the seed. There are thistle bushes to his left and right “ he tosses some seed there too. In some places there are outcrops of limestone barely covered by soil “ he throws some seed on these unpromising places too. Basically, the farmer chucks the seed all over the place. Like Jesus in his own ministry, this farmer is quite indiscriminating. What else but what would be bitterly familiar to any Palestinian farmer whose seed was his cash-flow? Indeed Jesus actually soft-peddles the frustrations against which farmers contended: No, the picture he paints is depressing enough. The vast majority of the seed bears no fruit during the best of growing seasons. Some of it dies from the get-go, or gets snapped up by the crows. Some of it sprouts, but soon shrivels in the heat. Some of it actually does grow among the thorns, which, however, choke the life out of the neonatal blades. And even if by good fortune you get a yield, your ruthless landlord will be sure to extract more than enough of the harvest to ensure that you remain indentured to the land without any economic security whatsoever, debt and unemployment just a bad summer away. Do we hear him correctly? But a thirtyfold yield? A blooming hundredfold yield?! What does he know? Is he having us on? What is he saying? And my mum who is now telling me, naughty boy, to come home and get a job, well, maybe her soil was just too thin, or maybe the weeds of village opinion engulfed it. Work hard and you shall have your reward? Not a bit of it! That ridiculously humungous yield “ up to a hundredfold! Only God can give “ give! And what about us, the friends of Jesus today? Does this scripture speak to our need and condition? And if it does, what does it say? What is our condition? It is not good: The church is in decline. What should be our response? Well, sure, work is good. But things can only get better? No, things are looking to get a lot worse. In the URC “ and I suspect in the Methodist Church too “ there are those who think that only a cunning plan will save us: And some of these ideas may indeed be worth trying. But none of them is going to save the church. And to think otherwise is not only faithless, it is quite idolatrous, trusting that the deities of effort, or ideas, or techniques will kick-start mission “ by which is usually meant getting more people in the pews and on the

books. Followers of the Jesus who says that following him will not make you balanced, liked, successful, or safe, no, it will put you on a collision course with the world and cause you a lot of trouble and grief. Frankly, at the moment, I think the soil of the church is too culturally contaminated to grow anything much good at all. In other words, there is no point having more plants “more Christians” unless we have richer soil “the practices of Jesus” in which to grow them. In short, the Sermon on the Mount. Here is the soil for growing people who are serious about living the new reality of God, the soil with the promise of a yield of thirtyfold, sixtyfold, hundredfold. Here is our judgement. And here, ultimately, is our only hope.

COUNTDOWN FOR ROWAN WILLIAMS. Commentary. By David W. Virtue www.nxgvision.com 11/13/ It is show and tell time for Dr. Rowan Williams, the putative head of the Anglican Communion.

He then went to Wadham College, Oxford , where he studied under A. An Exposition and Critique. In he became dean and chaplain of Clare College and, in at the age of 36, he was appointed to the Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity at Oxford, a position which brought with it appointment to a residentiary canonry of Christ Church Cathedral. He continued to serve as Bishop of Monmouth after he was elected to also be the Archbishop of Wales in December , in which capacity he was enthroned again at Newport Cathedral on 26 February As a bishop of the disestablished Church in Wales, Williams was the first Archbishop of Canterbury since the English Reformation to be appointed to this office from outside the Church of England. His election by the Chapter of Canterbury Cathedral was confirmed by nine bishops in the customary ceremony in London on 2 December , when he officially became Archbishop of Canterbury. As a bishop he had demonstrated a wide range of interests in social and political matters and was widely regarded, by academics and others, as a figure who could make Christianity credible to the intelligent unbeliever. As a patron of Affirming Catholicism , his appointment was a considerable departure from that of his predecessor and his views, such as those expressed in a widely published lecture on homosexuality were seized on by a number of evangelical and conservative Anglicans. In addition to these ex officio roles, Cambridge University awarded him an honorary doctorate in divinity in ; [18] in April , Trinity College and Wycliffe College , both associated with the University of Toronto , awarded him a joint Doctor of Divinity degree during his first visit to Canada since being enthroned and he also received honorary degrees and fellowships from various universities including Kent , Oxford , and Roehampton. Beside his own poems, which have a strong spiritual and landscape flavour, the collection contains several fluent translations from Welsh poets. He was criticised in the press for allegedly supporting a " pagan organisation", the Welsh Gorsedd of Bards , which promotes Welsh language and literature and uses druidic ceremonial but is actually not religious in nature. They married on 4 July [25] and have two children who were also state educated. Entitled Goodbye to Canterbury, the programme was screened on 1 January Ordination of women in the Anglican Communion On 9 February in an address to the General Synod of the Church of England , Williams warned that damaging infighting over the ordination of women as bishops and gay priests could lead to a permanent split in the Anglican Communion. But he conceded that, unless Anglicans could find a way to live with their differences over women as bishops and homosexual ordination, the church would change shape and become a multi-tier communion of different levels â€” a schism in all but name. Williams also used his keynote address to issue a profound apology for the way that he had spoken about "exemplary and sacrificial" gay Anglican priests in the past. Williams suspects that Shakespeare was Catholic , though not a regular churchgoer. Williams is also patron of the T. Eliot Society [38] and delivered the annual T. Eliot Lecture in November Williams was also patron of the Birmingham-based charity The Feast, [39] from until his retirement as Archbishop of Canterbury in December On 1 May he became chair of the board of trustees of Christian Aid. Thus "old styles come under increasing strain, new speech needs to be generated". John Shelby Spong once accused Williams of being a "neo-medievalist", preaching orthodoxy to the people in the pew but knowing in private that it is not true. I am genuinely a lot more conservative than he would like me to be. I think he has said that of course I know what all the reputable scholars think on the subject and therefore when I talk about the risen body I must mean something other than the empty tomb. One of his first publications, in the largely evangelical Grove Books series, has the title Eucharistic Sacrifice: The Roots of a Metaphor. Eugene Rogers, Blackwells At the Lambeth Conference in July , then Bishop Rowan Williams of Monmouth abstained and did not vote in favour of the conservative resolution on human sexuality. This section contains too many or too-lengthy quotations for an encyclopedic entry. Please help improve the article by presenting facts as a neutrally-worded summary with appropriate citations. Consider transferring direct quotations to Wikiquote. February Williams speaking at the World Economic Forum in Davos His interest in and involvement with social issues is longstanding. In ,

he was arrested for singing psalms as part of a protest organised by the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament at Lakenheath, an American air base in Suffolk; his fine was paid by his college. At this time he was a member of the left-wing Anglo-Catholic Jubilee Group headed by Kenneth Leech and he collaborated with Leech in a number of publications including the anthology of essays to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Oxford Movement entitled *Essays Catholic and Radical*. He was in New York at the time of the 11 September attacks, only yards from Ground Zero delivering a lecture; he subsequently wrote a short book, *Writing in the Dust*, offering reflections on the event. He stated that the followers of the will of God should not be led into ways of violence. He contributed to the debate prior to the United Kingdom general election criticising assertions that immigration was a cause of crime. Williams has argued that the partial adoption of Islamic sharia law in the United Kingdom is "unavoidable" as a method of arbitration in such affairs as marriage, and should not be resisted. He raised the question of conflicting loyalties which communities might have, cultural, religious and civic. He also argued that theology has a place in debates about the very nature of law "however hard our culture may try to keep it out" and noted that there is, in a "dominant human rights philosophy", a reluctance to acknowledge the liberty of conscientious objection. He spoke of "supplementary jurisdictions" to that of the civil law. He made comparisons with Orthodox Jewish practice *beth din* and with the recognition of the exercise of conscience of Christians. He supported the idea that sharia could be reasonably employed as a basis for "mediation or other forms of alternative dispute resolution".

Economics [edit] In Williams delivered the Richard Dimbleby lecture and chose to talk about the problematic nature of the nation-state but also of its successors. He cited the "market state" as offering an inadequate vision of the way a state should operate, partly because it was liable to short-term and narrowed concerns thus rendering it incapable of dealing with, for instance, issues relating to the degradation of the natural environment and partly because a public arena which had become value-free was liable to disappear amidst the multitude of competing private interests. He noted the same moral vacuum in British society after this visit to China in . He is not uncritical of communitarianism, but his reservations about consumerism have been a constant theme. These views have often been expressed in quite strong terms; for example, he once commented that "Every transaction in the developed economies of the West can be interpreted as an act of aggression against the economic losers in the worldwide game. My worry is creationism can end up reducing the doctrine of creation rather than enhancing it. In a BBC interview after his trip he described advocates of a United States attack on Syria or Iran as "criminal, ignorant and potentially murderous". Bolton had called for bombing of Iran at a fringe meeting of the Conservative Party conference. He said that the hijab and any other religious symbols should not be outlawed. The initial blame was placed on Al-Qaeda, but Muslims at large were targeted for reprisals: Williams strongly condemned the terrorist attacks and stated that they could not be justified. However, he added that "any person can commit a crime in the name of religion and it is not particularly Islam to be blamed. Some persons committed deeds in the name of Islam but the deeds contradict Islamic belief and philosophy completely. Position on Freemasonry [edit] In a leaked private letter, Williams said that he "had real misgivings about the compatibility of Masonry and Christian profession" and that while he was Bishop of Monmouth he had prevented the appointment of Freemasons to senior positions within his diocese. The leaking of this letter in caused a controversy, which he sought to defuse by apologising for the distress caused and stating that he did not question "the good faith and generosity of individual Freemasons", not least as his father had been a Freemason. However, he also reiterated his concern about Christian ministers adopting "a private system of profession and initiation, involving the taking of oaths of loyalty. His predecessor, George Carey, had sought to keep the peace between the theologically conservative primates of the communion such as Peter Akinola of Nigeria and Drexel Gomez of the West Indies and liberals such as Frank Griswold, the then primate of the US Episcopal Church. In , in an attempt to encourage dialogue, Williams appointed Robin Eames, Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of All Ireland, as chairman of the Lambeth Commission on Communion, to examine the challenges to the unity of the Anglican Communion, stemming from the consecration of Gene Robinson as Bishop of New Hampshire, and the blessing of same-sex unions in the Diocese of New Westminster. Robinson was in a same-sex relationship. The Windsor Report, as it was called, was published in October. It recommended solidifying the connection between the churches of the communion

by having each church ratify an "Anglican Covenant" that would commit them to consulting the wider communion when making major decisions. It also urged those who had contributed to disunity to express their regret. In November , following a meeting of Anglicans of the "global south" in Cairo at which Williams had addressed them in conciliatory terms, 12 primates who had been present sent him a letter sharply criticising his leadership which said that "We are troubled by your reluctance to use your moral authority to challenge the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Church of Canada. Subsequently, the Church of Nigeria appointed an American cleric to deal with relations between the United States and Nigerian churches outside the normal channels. Williams expressed his reservations about this to the General Synod of the Church of England. Williams later established a working party to examine what a "covenant" between the provinces of the Anglican Communion would mean in line with the Windsor Report.

LitBit Commentary - Rowan Williams on the Eucharist 17 Posted on 18 January by CraigT LitBit: The Eucharist reminds us of the need for honest repentance - of the need to confront our capacity to betray and forget the gift we have been given.

Many adult Christians regard Biblical interpretation as the sole domain of their priest or minister. Instead, a critically thinking adult Christian should be able to appreciate that, because Holy Scripture was not written in a void, it can only be accurately interpreted in light of its original context, audience and language. Context acts as a catalyst for the message and is what informs the messenger. Paul wrote to his adopted son Timothy and gave him guidance about how women should behave in church, when and to whom they should speak and what they should wear 1 Timothy 3: Paul responding to a situation in which some rowdy Ephesian women, used to pagan temple settings where order and dignity was not a priority, were causing disturbances at worship services? Did the fact that St. Paul was a part of a patriarchal society-where women are subjugated to men-have any bearing on his views towards women? In other words, the issue St. Paul was responding to and the views he likely held, are all part of his context. Scriptural texts would be purposeless without an audience-without someone or some group to whom the writer is trying to convey a message in a particular way. Peter clearly identifies the audience of his first epistle in the opening verse 1 Peter 1: Christians living in the Roman Empire who were undergoing persecution at the hands of the Emperor Nero the one who played the fiddle while Rome burned, then blamed it on the Christians. The persecution of Christians began in A. Peter himself which, ironically, is quite helpful in dating his letters. Even so, he is writing his letter to tell these Christians not to be surprised at the suffering they are experiencing, but to rejoice, to praise God and to commit themselves to Him. Stop and consider that for a moment. When we consider language, we are attempting to discern whether there are any nuances inherent in the original language that are possibly lost or hidden in a modern translation. Moses lived in a polytheistic environment, where there were many deities Horus, the Egyptian sun-god, was one he would have been especially familiar with. Talk about hidden nuances! It is also helpful to join a Bible study group that uses a guided module, like the Serendipity Bible. I am not suggesting that all adult Christians have to become Biblical scholars. Adult Christians are like homeowners. Every homeowner, sooner or later, has to learn how to solve basic problems or go broke. I challenge you to move to the next level: He is a member of St.