Pope Francis's obvious commitment to changing “business as usual” in the Vatican is also changing the landscape of Church reform. FutureChurch is poised to seize the moment through networking with international priest leaders, working in coalition to adapt a Vatican survey for input to the Synod on the Family, and providing resources for claiming fundamental rights and responsibilities for all of the People of God.

Synod on Family online survey
In preparation for the Extraordinary Synod on the Family to be held in two sessions in October 2014 and October 2015, the Vatican has asked national bishops’ conferences around the world to seek the opinions of Catholics on a number of church issues including contraception, same-sex marriage and divorce and remarriage. Archbishop Lorenzo Baldisseri, secretary general of the Vatican’s Synod of Bishops, asked the bishops’ conferences to initiate a survey “immediately as widely as possible to deaneries and parishes so that input from local sources can be received.”

“IT’S NOT ENOUGH TO ORDAIN WOMEN... I WANT ALL WOMEN... TO PARTICIPATE IN CHURCH DECISION-MAKING”

In the U.S., however, there was no immediate commitment from the Conference of Catholic Bishops to encourage its members to seek feedback from ordinary Catholics. In other countries, notably the United Kingdom, an online survey was made available to all interested Catholics.

To help gather this important information, FutureChurch adapted the original Vatican survey to allow Catholics, both inside and outside the parish to share their experiences, sorrows and joys regarding family life. This effort is being done in coalition with 15 other reform organizations and sociologist Gay Rowzie, PhD. On November 12th, FutureChurch Executive Director, Deborah Rose-Milavec, participated in a press conference held at the annual meeting of the US Bishops’ conference. She asked U.S. bishops to gather input for the synod from all Catholics and not just those who typically agree with them.

International priest associations, lay leaders meet
From October 10-12 FutureChurch Executive Director Deborah Rose-Milavec and Sr. Chris Schenk attended the first-ever international meeting of leaders of reformist priest organizations from six countries including Switzerland, Austria, Germany, Ireland, Australia and the USA. Rose-Milavec has been invited to be on the group’s core committee. Schenk represented the ten U.S. reform organizations that sponsored Father Helmut Schüller’s fifteen-city Catholic Tipping Point tour last summer. The coalition committed itself to “developing an international network of priests and people working for fundamental rights in the Church,” including the rights of women and all laity to participate in Church decision-making.

Praise for G-8 focus on laity
In an October 4 media release FutureChurch applauded Pope Francis and his group of eight cardinal advisors for paying significant attention to “the role and responsibility of the laity.” The release asked Pope Francis “to invite international lay leaders, both women and men, to the next meeting of the G-8” to be held December 3-5, 2013. Prior to the meeting FutureChurch leadership sent a letter to Cardinal O’Malley delineating important issues that should be covered.

A Million Voices
It is clear that this is the year to raise up the voices of the people of God and help our new Pope in his efforts to reform the Church. To this end, FutureChurch is focusing especially on our A Million Voices initiative. This in-depth packet provides resources and strategies to promote discussion of important issues in the church such as the rights and responsibilities of ordinary Catholics, women’s equality in Catholicism and how to resist common abuses of authority at the parish and diocesan level. Available for download at www.futurechurch.org

Give your input to the Vatican for the Synod on the Family
https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/SynodOnFamilyUS
From the Director’s Desk

The Catholic Church is changing before our eyes and the Good News is being proclaimed once again. Through both example and the initiation of structural change, Pope Francis is creating an atmosphere of contagious openness to the voices of all Catholics, those who are still in our parishes and those who have left. Encouraging both young and old to, “dialogue, dialogue, dialogue” and to “make a mess,” we are beginning to feel the welcome winds of change that will bring about structural reforms rooted in love, justice and peace.

The recent decision by Pope Francis to call—a year before the regularly scheduled synod occurs—an extraordinary synod on the family with the express intent to gather input on tough questions is an example of meaningful dialogue that will lead to meaningful reform. FutureChurch is actively promoting and strengthening this latest effort by Pope Francis. (See cover story.)

As the Executive Director of Future Church, I am fully committed to the important work of reform that will promote the rights and responsibilities of all Catholics, bring women into full partnership and leadership in the Church, and build an inclusive leadership and ministry model. In such a model the gifts of all the baptized can be fully realized in Eucharistic communities where we feed on God’s dreams carrying out the work of the Gospel in a world sorely in need of good news.

But my investment in this work has always been deeply personal too. As a Catholic woman, mother and grandmother, I have felt the pain of a Church that excludes. Many of those I love deeply have not felt the welcome embrace of a church community. They have left because they cannot abide a church who discounts them, their friends, and their sense of what is just and right. Turned off and out by the voices of condemnation, they have chosen to stay away.

As I read the official letter that accompanied the survey I felt tears of both lived pain and hopeful joy well up: “many children and young people will never see their parents receive the sacraments…, we understand just how urgent are the challenges to evangelization arising from the current situation.” Maybe, just maybe, we are finally seeing a reversal from the “smaller and purer” exclusionary vision of Church that has built walls and dulled hearts, to the messy, beautiful and radical love that is poured out on all by our God.

This work is personal. And I pray that God’s love will continue to burst through all our defenses so that we may become one in the life and work of love, justice, compassion and peacemaking to which we are called in Jesus Christ!

DEBORAH ROSE-MILAVEC
Executive Director

FutureChurch trustees from Irvine, CA, Milwaukee, New York City and Cleveland celebrate October 4 leadership transition
On October 4 and 5 over 200 FutureChurch supporters remembered the past and began looking to the future. On Friday evening the organization presented FutureChurch’s founding director, Sr. Christine Schenk with the Louis J. Trivison award and welcomed Deborah Rose-Milavec as the organization’s new Executive Director. The honor is named after the late Fr. Louis J. Trivison, a co-founder and spiritual father of the organization. It is offered to those who exhibit outstanding leadership in advancing the FutureChurch mission and vision.

Schenk publicly recognized the Congregation of St. Joseph for their staunch support over 20 years. Rose-Milavec called the task of filling Schenk’s shoes “awesome and humbling” saying: “The only sensible way to follow is to do what Chris did... walk humbly, discern prayerfully, and act fearlessly, trusting that God who inspired this work will help us to carry it forward.”

As Rose-Milavec had requested, the leadership transfer occurred in a context of prayer. Bishop Thomas J. Gumbleton, a friend of both women, presided. Board members intoned specially created blessing prayers while the assembly raised hands in affirmation. One blessing for Sr. Chris read: “Like Sor Juana the 17th century Mexican sister and ‘first feminist of the Americas,’ may your poetic and literary gifts flourish during this coming year of reflection and writing about women’s leadership in the early Church.” Another for Deborah asked: “Like Prisca, Nympha, Lydia and Phoebe, may you serve the far-flung communities of FutureChurch in fidelity to our faithful, provident God in whose image both women and men are made.”

Bishop Gumbleton’s final prayer was especially meaningful: “In the name of God who is all Love, I enjoin you Deborah and all at FutureChurch to faithful service to the People of God, to fidelity and obedience to the Holy Spirit, and to respectful relationships with the lawful authorities of our Church, as you fulfill your mission working for changes so that all Catholics have the opportunity to participate fully in Church life and leadership.”

Next generation leaders Christine Nelson and Matt Wallenhorst with Jamie Manson

NCR award-winning columnist Jamie Manson’s keynote set the stage for the evening and the following day: “My vision for the future of Vatican II’s legacy is that we use it to empower young people to see that God works through all of us sacramentally, and not only through all of us. God works through the poor, God works through the broken—that all of our work can be an instrument of God’s grace.”

Manson spoke to the need for “older spiritual leaders and those emerging from the new generation to enter into true dialogue, marked by respectful listening, an appreciation for the wisdom of all generations, in shared writing and speaking projects.” And that is exactly what happened on Saturday October 5 when Cleveland’s “Vatican II Veterans” and “Next Generation Vatican II Leaders” focused on how clergy and laity working together made Vatican II happen in Cleveland and what the Council means today. Saturday’s program will be covered in greater depth in our next issue.

Is Optional Celibacy on the Horizon?

In response to a question from a Venezuelan journalist, the new Vatican Secretary of State, Archbishop Pietro Parolin said in early September that the tradition of priestly celibacy is not dogma and is therefore open to discussion. In 2006, after Brazilian Cardinal Claudio Hummes made a similar statement before assuming his post as head of the Vatican’s Congregation for Clergy, he was required to issue a statement saying that priestly celibacy was not up for discussion. So far, Archbishop Parolin has not been asked to backtrack. Meanwhile, on September 21, Pope Francis moved a known opponent of optional celibacy, Cardinal Mauro Piacenza, from his position as Prefect of the Congregation for the Clergy to the Apostolic Penitentiary. Archbishop Beniamino Stella was appointed prefect in his place. According to veteran Vatican correspondent, John Allen, Stella, “is a veteran diplomat seen as moderate and pragmatic, and thus arguably better in sync with the outlook of the new pope” (USA Today, 9/21/13).

How would we pay for married priests?

How would we pay for married priests? Compensating married priests fairly should be manageable for most parishes. A 2009 study found that 17 married priests in 12 US dioceses received an average of $56,142 in compensation. A 2009 survey of salaries in US Protestant Churches found that ordained pastors and associates average $57,132. That same year, US diocesan priests averaged $44,033 in salary and salary equivalents. It is likely that Catholic parishes could find an additional $13,000 annually to attract or avoid losing a priest in residence. All data from a 2009 study conducted by the National Association of Church Personnel Administrators.

SEND A POSTCARD for Optional Celibacy
We are visiting Vatican offices in March! Visit www.futurechurch.org and click on the optional celibacy icon.
Whether in a cave in France, a college in Chestnut Hill, MA or a packed church, St. Mary of Magdala celebrations once again inspired thousands this past summer. Nearly 350 organizers held celebrations this year to celebrate her July 22 feast. Twenty-three were held outside the United States including Australia, Canada, France, Ireland, Netherlands, Norway, Scotland, Philippines, United Kingdom, and Singapore. Catholic parishes, religious orders, Catholic colleges and Church renewal organizations including Call To Action, DignityUSA and Voice of the Faithful were among those sponsoring celebrations.

Scores honored the legacy of Mary of Magdala by remembering the 23 women—all but unknown—who attended the Second Vatican Council as auditors. Just as St Mary of Magdala, proclaimed good news to the world, as the Apostle to the Apostles, so in the 20th century, the women at Vatican II brought the good news of God’s life-giving love to the Council.

During this 50th anniversary of Vatican II, FutureChurch honored these modern day “Apostles to the Apostles” who were ambassadors from the “world of women” to the body of bishops. Women such as Rosemary Goldie, Sr. Mary Luke Tobin, Luz-Marie Alvarez-Icaza and so many others helped develop the Vatican II vision of a new Church—unified, egalitarian, accepting and loving. Their work is apparent in the words of Gaudium et Spes: “Every type of discrimination, whether social or cultural, whether based on sex, color, social condition, language, or religion is to be overcome and eradicated as contrary to God’s intent” (29).

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Here are some highlights:

**St. Louis, Missouri** This year’s celebration followed the Women of Vatican II theme. Sister Joan Delaplane contrasted the church at the time of Vatican II and the church of today. Sister Sue Rogers, SL, who knew Mary Luke Tobin, spoke about Sr. Luke at the council and how the Council impacted the lives of Catholic sisters. Laura Law, a pastoral associate at St. Ambrose parish in St Louis, spoke frankly about the reality of women in ministry.

**Glasgow, Scotland** A celebration was held for the Feast of St Mary Magdala at St. Anne’s church in Glasgow, Scotland. Fifty people from different parishes—and from all over the archdiocese participated. Various women religious came as well as parish priests. The younger generation was represented by two girls Hannah and Lucy—who took charge of distributing service sheets and candles. Participants commented on how prayerful and informative the ceremony had been. Few had ever heard of the 23 women auditors at Vatican II and were keen to learn more.

**Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts** A sold-out crowd of over 250 gathered for Boston College’s annual Mary of Magdala celebration featuring Sandra Schneiders. See the video: http://www.bc.edu/content/bc/schools/stm/edevnts/CampusEvents/Resources/mary_magdala_lecture.html

**Cincinnati, Ohio** The Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati hosted an inter-community Mary of Magdala Prayer Service on Monday, July 22, 2013. About 150 people were there for a special service that featured good music and preaching by Dr. Jessie Thomas, an African American lay ecclesial minister. She discussed St. Mary of Magdala’s leadership and consequent struggles to be heard and valued by those around her and ended with her own struggles. The message was powerful.

**Hampton Bays, New York** An estimated 130 people gathered on their Parish Veranda to celebrate the Feast of St. Mary of Magdala. Their bi-lingual service featured a children’s choir.

For a copy of the celebration that gives voice to the story of these women and could help educate your community, contact liz@futurechurch.org
FutureChurch Gains Allies in Push for Female Diaconate

FutureChurch’s Women Deacons: Why Not Now? initiative is gathering important allies in a developing groundswell working for female permanent deacons.

This past summer, the Association of US Catholic priests (AUSCP), passed a resolution asking the U.S. Bishops’ Conference to publicly support ordaining women to the permanent diaconate. The Association also requested “the amendment of canon 1024 that restricts valid sacred ordination to baptized males alone.” Currently the AUSCP numbers over 1,000 priest members. (To learn more about canon 1024 and how it can be amended, email liz@futurechurch.org.)

Voice of the Faithful (VOTF) has a special “Roles of Women in the Church” program that is also promoting the permanent diaconate for women. You can read VOTF’s white paper, Women Deacons: How Long Will It Take the Church to Open This Door at www.votf.org

“There are increasing calls globally for women to be recognized for the diaconal service they already provide...”

FutureChurch is developing a network of local organizers in the US and worldwide to reach our goal of surfacing female candidates to the permanent diaconate in 8-10 dioceses. Currently 37 organizers in 6 countries have started the process of educating their parishes, finding candidates, and meeting with their bishop. Foundational to their work is the Women Deacons: Why Not Now? packet that provides concrete education and advocacy tools geared to creating a broad base of support.

There are increasing calls globally for women to be recognized for the diaconal service they already provide: serving the poor, feeding the hungry, accompanying the sick and dying, and teaching in parish schools of religion. In the U.S. an estimated 80 percent of over 30,000 lay ecclesial ministers are women, most of whom already have the qualifications to be ordained permanent deacons. Sadly, until that happens, none can preach on a Sunday. This restriction deprives the Catholic community of hearing the Gospel proclaimed through the lens of female experience.

With the help of all those who work with us, we hope to hasten the day when women are ordained to the permanent diaconate so that their preaching and diaconal service are fully part of Catholic parish practice.

Advocate for Women Deacons

ORGANIZE AT HOME
Women Deacons: Why Not Now
Resource Packet: $10 print; $5 download
SEND A POSTCARD TO ROME
Visit www.futurechurch.org and click on the Women and the Word icon.
For more info email liz@futurechurch.org

Yes you CAN change Vatican policy

In early November, two appreciative audiences heard canon lawyer Sr. Kate Kuenstler and Sr. Chris Schenk share the story of FutureChurch’s Save Our Parish Community (SOPC) initiative at Call To Action’s national conference held in Milwaukee. As of 2012, Catholics from 28 U.S. parishes in 6 US dioceses successfully won appeals to keep their churches open. During conference sessions Catholics from over 15 North American dioceses shared details of their own diocesan reconfiguration plans and learned about their canonical right to resist closing vibrant churches. After the presentation, Call To Action New York City, invited Sr. Kate and Sr. Chris to share their expertise with Catholics in the Archdiocese of New York.

Unheard homilies of Catholic women

At a special morning prayer service at Call To Action on November 2, FutureChurch program coordinator Liz England and board member Lisa Barczyk gave homilies they would love to preach at Mass if only Church rules permitted. Here are excerpts:

Lisa preached on Wisdom 3:7 In the time of their judgment they shall shine and dart about as sparks through stubble: “When we find our church in a state of stubble—cut down so far that it can no longer explain itself on issues that matter to faith-filled people, we must be the sparks that light the fire of new life to come.”

Liz preached on John 6:37 Everything that God gives me will come to me, and I will not reject anyone who comes to me. “When I read this passage, I could not help but think of the radical nature of the Love of God,” Liz said. She recounted a time when her two year-old twin son refused to leave McDonald’s PlayPlace: “As he swung his head about, flailing his arms, he yelled, ‘No, no no, I want to stay, I want to live at the PlayPlace.’ I just kept repeating, ‘Mommy loves you and needs you to come home’ as I held him walking back to the car. When I reached for my keys he slapped me in the face [saying], ‘You can’t, you don’t love me.’ I grabbed him by the shoulders, pressed his adorable little body against the car and yelled: ‘I love you, I will always love you, you cannot tell me not to love you. There is no other thing I can do but love you. You are mine, I HAVE to love you. There is no possibility I won’t love you.’ ...I put him in the car and drove home ...He caught my eye: ‘I love you too Mommy,’ he said. Tears streamed down my face. Radical Love.”

Left: FutureChurch program coordinator Liz England
Right: FutureChurch board member, Lisa Barczyk
Synod structure to be vehicle of “permanent consultation.” According to Cardinal Oscar Rodriguez Maradiaga, Pope Francis plans to significantly empower the international synod of Bishops. “Up to now the Synod gathers for three weeks ...but Bergoglio would like it to be an instrument that works for three years with permanence—and if necessary—daily consultations using the internet.” Maradiaga is the coordinator of the Council of Eight Cardinals advising the Pope (Tablet 10/12/13).

Francis appoints progressive liturgical consultants. Pope Francis has appointed five new consultants who reject the so-called “reform of the reform” movement to change contemporary liturgical practices favored by his predecessor, Pope Benedict. All five studied at San Anselmo in Rome, home of the Pontifical Liturgical Institute and an influential center for promoting the Vatican II liturgical renewal. The liturgists are responsible for planning and overseeing all of the Pope’s celebrations. They were named on September 26 (Tablet 10/5/13).

German Archdiocese to allow communion for divorced and remarried. Vatican doctrinal head objects. In early October, just hours after Pope Francis called for an extraordinary synod on the family for October 2014, the Archdiocese of Freiburg announced it would begin administering sacraments to divorced and remarried Catholics in individual cases after consultation with a priest or deacon. A 14-page handout was sent to all priests and deacons as well as other dioceses in and outside Germany. Within days, the head of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Archbishop Gerhard Müller published a 4600-word article in several languages in L’Osservatore Romano warning that the Church cannot accept proposals “argued in terms of mercy” to readmit the divorced and remarried to the sacraments. The Freiburg Archdiocese has said nothing about rescinding its decision. Pastoral care of the divorced and remarried is a central topic for the synod on the family (Tablet 10/12/13 and 10/26/13).

Theologian calls for discussion of a “theology by and for women” at Pontifical Council of Laity. A highly respected British theologian, Tina Beattie, has called on the Women’s Section of the Pontifical Council for the Laity to begin discussion of “a deep theology of woman ...which learns from women’s visions and struggles in terms of justice and ethics, sexuality and motherhood, sacramentality and prayer.” Beattie believes that the Vatican’s credibility “will continue to be undermined unless it also engages in constructive dialogue within the UN and other agencies about maternal mortality, reproductive health, gender-based violence and women’s rights” (Tablet 10/13/13).

Poll: majority of weekly Mass-goers support same-sex marriage, women’s ordination. According to a Quinnipiac University survey released October 4, a majority of Catholics in the United States who attend Mass weekly support same-sex marriage and the ordination of women to the priesthood (Catholic World News 10/7/13).

More lay ministers lead funerals in France. A recent Catholic survey in France found that 32 percent of church funeral services are conducted without a priest, compared to 19 percent just five years ago. The number of priests in France has decreased by roughly half over the past 15 years. (The Tablet 11/2/13).

St. James Saved. A Year Later. More than a year after Bishop Richard Lennon reversed his decision to close St. James Parish in Lakewood, Ohio membership is steadily climbing. And activities at the Detroit Avenue parish are in full swing (Lakewood Patch 9/3/2013).

Philadelphia Archdiocese to close or merge 72 parishes. Citing declining membership, the Archdiocese of Philadelphia has announced plans to merge or close a total of 72 parishes. “I have no faith in it,” said Carol Ann Houmeidan, who attends one of the parishes named. “I do believe it’s gonna be closed...” (Philadelphia Inquirer 6/4/13 and David Chang, NBC Channel 10 9/17/13).

FutureChurch supports sisters at LCWR assembly

A Year Later. More than a year after Bishop Richard Lennon reversed his decision to close St. James Parish in Lakewood, Ohio membership is steadily climbing. And activities at the Detroit Avenue parish are in full swing (Lakewood Patch 9/3/2013).

FutureChurch again exhibited at LCWR’s annual assembly held this year August 13-15 in Orlando Florida. Again and again leaders of religious congregations stopped to thank us for making visible the outstanding support of the People of God during this painful time. In an August 19 press statement the LCWR board cited a “profound and honest sharing of views” with Archbishop Sartain. You can still write to church authorities and support the sisters at www.nunjustice.org

FutureChurch Teleconference with Fr. Don Cozzens

FutureChurch’s teleconferences returned in 2013 with a three-part series focused on empowering callers to find their own voice and advocate for justice in their diocese. On November 20, we hosted Fr. Donald Cozzens. This author, professor, and pastor spoke on the future of priestly celibacy. His experiences are recorded in his recent book: Notes from the Underground: The Spiritual Journal of a Secular Priest (Orbis Books, 2013).

Podcasts of Fr. Cozzens’ presentation and of other teleconferences are available at futurechurch.org.

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Stay tuned to our website and emails for dates of future teleconferences, including one by Sr. Sandra Schneider.

Or contact liz@futurechurch.org

Holy Week, Easter and Pentecost:

Put Women back in the biblical picture!

Liturgical Year A, lectionary and prayer resources for Lent, Good Friday, the Easter Season and Pentecost. Order now at www.futurechurch.org
Books for Children: Two Reviews

by Rita Houlihan, Vice Chair of the FutureChurch Board of Trustees

Great Women of Faith: Inspiration for Action
by Sue Stanton, illustrations by Charlie Craig, Mahwah, New Jersey: Paulist Press, 105 pp; ages 12-16

Sue Stanton presents brief biographies of 34 women some well known, e.g., Mother Teresa and Rosa Parks and some not so well known, e.g., Sr. Jose Hobday and Sr. Agneta Chang and some from other denominations such as Sojourner Truth, Jane Addams, and Lois Wilson (a co-founder of Al-Anon.) Their range of spiritual, charitable, and material accomplishments is striking. Her style is straightforward, presenting the core facts in an understated manner while including insights into the transformative power of each woman. We see Lois Wilson’s determination to turn emotional and spiritual pain into a legacy of caring and commitment to others. The mystery of Divine Mercy experienced by St. Maria Faustina (Kowalski) comes alive in the narrative of her simple spiritual life. The prison and death penalty reform work of Sr. Elaine Roulet, csj and Sr. Helen Prejean, csj, presented without drama highlights the urgency of their work and the need for American citizens to work for change.

It was a pleasure to meet so many new women along with the more familiar. I want to give this book an A+ but have one serious concern. St. Maria Goretti is included, which is problematic in a book for adolescents. Presenting her as “. . . a saint for individuals trying to keep their purity despite outside pressure” (p. 33) compounds my concern. Even if her assailant had sexually abused her, Maria would have remained pure – only our actions can make us ‘impure’ not the actions of others. This message of ‘impure’, I believe, adds to the damage of sexual abuse and leads to the self-loathing that often haunts victims. If this book is selected, this chapter should be discussed with the adolescent who reads it. I wish the story could be removed from an otherwise excellent collection.

Yes! I want to support the FutureChurch Mission and Vision

Here is my donation of $50 $100 $250 $500 $1,000 Other $ __________

Make me a member of FutureChurch $50 Individual $75 Family $150 Sustainer

Sign me up for the monthly giving program $ __________ Monthly

Can be processed as an automatic debit from your checking account or from your credit card. If debits are taken from your checking account, please enclose a voided check. Your monthly donation saves us administrative costs and provides a steady stream of income.

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Email ___________________________

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Signature ___________________________

Mail donations and memberships to FutureChurch, 17307 Madison Avenue, Lakewood, Ohio 44107

Donations and memberships can be processed via the internet at www.futurechurch.org • Click Donate and then Apply Online

The Look and See Bible
by Sally Ann Wright, illustrations, Moira Maclean Mahwah, New Jersey: Paulist Press, 94pp; ages 5-8)

I must give this book a "Don't Buy.", which is unfortunate. The first story, “A Beautiful World” sets the stage for a lovely children’s book with its description of God’s delight in creation and God’s friendship with the first woman and man. Noah and the Great Flood is next, illustrating how people had changed, caring only for themselves, making the world an unhappy place. The story of Abraham and Sarah follows with no reference connecting it to Noah or God’s plan and promise. I found the rest of the stories disjointed and often disappointing. There is not space here to review each one so I’ll highlight one war story, Samson’s and three stories with women heroes: Deborah, Miriam and Mary Magdalene.

Samson’s destruction of the Philistine’s temple killed “thousands of God’s enemies” (p.26). This raises serious questions. How do we know who are God’s enemies and if we think we know, does that justify a religious war? The text for Deborah is adequate but I could barely see her in the vivid illustration; the horses and the enemy king and army chief get center stage. The story of Moses in the reed basket is told in a flat narrative with no mention of the energizing courage and wisdom of Miriam and her mother. And most regrettably, Luke’s resurrection narrative is used for this central event in Christian life. Luke’s is the only gospel in which St. Mary Magdalene either alone (John) or with other women (Matthew and Mark) does not witness Jesus directly. It’s a real loss that Jesus’ announcement of the new covenant, that ‘his God is now our God, his Father is now our Father’ is not included and that readers of this bible collection will not learn that Jesus selected women to proclaim his revolutionary good news to the world. Other children’s bibles will be reviewed here in the future.
Focus on FutureChurch

Quotable Quote:

“I’d prefer a Church that makes mistakes for doing something, instead of one that becomes sick for being closed in on itself.”

Pope Francis (the Tablet 6/15/13)

A LOOK AHEAD

January 26, 2014 / New York, NY
Preserving Parish Communities in a Time of Fewer Priests.
Canon lawyer Sr. Kate Kuenstler and FutureChurch’s ED Emerita, Sr. Chris Schenk. Manhatten. Sponsored by CTA: New York City. For details and info email Art McGrath artmcgrath@aol.com

February 1, 2014 / Hartford, CT
You can't quench the Spirit: faith and the future of the Church.
Sr. Christine Schenk from 12:30-4:00 pm at St. Patrick-St. Anthony Church, 285 Church Street, Hartford, CT 06103. Sponsored by Women of Hope: Vibrant Voices. For more info: 860-756-4034.

March 20-27, 2014 / Rome and Ostia
A Pilgrimage to Archaeological Sites of Women Leaders in the Early Church
Sign up soon! Last year’s pilgrimage sold out early! For more information call Liz tel: 800-206-TOUR (8687) or email: liz@206tours.com

April 24, 2014 / Lima, OH
Save the Date!
Sr. Chris Schenk addresses Serra Club, Lima, Ohio at 5:45 pm. For info email cschenkcsj@gmail.com

August 14, 2014 / Cleveland, OH
Save the Date! The Women You Never Knew: The Women of Vatican II
9:00 am - 11:30 am FutureChurch Executive Director, Deborah Rose-Milavec. At River's Edge 3430 Rocky River Drive, Cleveland, OH. http://www.riversedgecleveland.com

TELL THE VATICAN WHAT YOU THINK: Take the Survey!

October 5-19, 2014. Vatican City
Extraordinary Synod on the Family.
http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/SynodOnFamilyUS

A Great Christmas Gift!

Women Leaders in Early Christianity
CD and Presenter's Guide
www.futurechurch.org