



Niagara Anglican

NEWS • PERSPECTIVE • REFLECTION • FOR A GROWING CHURCH • JANUARY 2006

Exploring the Wealth of Anglican Diversity:

Via Media Succeeds at St. Cuthbert's

HEATHER DI MARCO
ST. CUTHBERT'S, OAKVILLE

At St Cuthbert's Church in Oakville, we've had the wonderful opportunity of being one of the pilot churches for the new Via Media programme.

Via Media is an 8 week programme that explores what it means to be Anglican. Every week it explores a different aspect of Anglicanism and Anglican belief; from the church historic to God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, the bible, what is sin, and so forth.

Each weekly session, for us, began with a social time of coffee and dessert. The formal part of the evening included a 20 min video covering the topic of the day. Part of each video featured a small group discussion of said topic. The whole then broke into small groups where we discussed amongst ourselves many of the questions and ideas raised in the videos. The evening ended with a short, but lovely worship service.

We had between 30 and 40 people turn out to each session. The last session began with a wonderful pot luck dinner. It was a lovely celebratory (and tasty)

way to end our 8 weeks together.

One of the aspects of the programme that really jumped out at me was the incredible diversity of ideas and thoughts that surrounded every topic. Yet still, at their core, all these beliefs remained Anglican. Discussions were lively and we didn't necessarily agree with everyone's opinions; still we felt comfortable enough to let ourselves be heard and to let ourselves listen to others.

Modes of Prayer

As well as hearing and discussing so many ideas revolving around Anglicanism, the programme also touched on various ways and modes of prayer. We were introduced to Centering prayer (a meditation) and Lectio Divina. Each session included take-home material that included a prayer for the week, a scripture reading for the week, an encouragement to journal and a reflection of the week.

I must admit that I was less than diligent in doing my weekly at home assignments. I did journal a few times. I lectio divina'd a few times and tried the meditation as well. I have to say each time I did



Via Media participants at St. Cuthbert's in Oakville

do these extra assignments I was very much rewarded in the ideas and insights I garnered

The greatest part of the programme though, was just the fact that it got me thinking...deeply about God and Christ and my faith.

Personal Benefit

I'd like to share a reflection that I developed early in the sessions

while we were discussing the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. To be sure, the theology may be a bit weak, but it was not meant to be a study in theology. It is just some thoughts that are a direct result of having taken the Via Media course.

I had been out walking my dog when I came across a sight that just struck me as so beautiful.

We were walking in the meadow near my house on a lovely, warm day in early October. It was mid-afternoon after a rather hectic day at work and we were walking up the path behind the local pizza parlour. Tasha was looking for pizza crusts and I was just quietly looking around, enjoying the day.

That's when I saw them, four

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Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

SHARYN HALL
PRIEST AT ST. LUKE'S, BURLINGTON

In January we mark the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. As we struggle to reconcile our differences within the Anglican Communion, what does Christian unity mean to us? Have we forgotten to strengthen our relationships with other Christian churches?

Ecumenical relations are not only formal talks about doctrinal issues. Ecumenical work goes on among neighbouring parishes.

My parish, St. Luke's in Burlington, is grateful for the friendship offered to us by several parishes in our neighbourhood. Our parish hall is being renovated and we are without a gathering place for parish activities.

Some of our parish events have been held at nearby Anglican churches, but parishes of other denominations also have welcomed us. Our women's mission group meets regularly at a United Church. Our youth group meets Sunday evenings at a Roman



Sharyn Hall

Catholic parish. Several events important to our parish life have been held in various churches.

In November St. Luke's hosted a celebration of music entitled, The Great Fall Hymn Sing. Our choir welcomed choirs from Anglican, United and Baptist churches to join in singing hymns and anthems. Parishioners from all four churches enjoyed an afternoon of music and fellowship.

Our parish experience with our ecumenical neighbours is not unique. There are more examples in our diocese of churches supporting each other, sharing buildings, or working together on mission projects, but do we celebrate our ecumenical partnerships?

Our mission as Christians is to be Christ to the world. Regardless of our differences and disunity, let us work together with our Christian partners to foster understanding and compassion among all people. Share your ecumenical stories and encourage initiatives among the churches in your neighbourhood.

Our mission as Christians is to be Christ to the world, regardless of our differences!

Supporting Prison Ministry

ELEANOR CLITHEROE
DEACON

Did you know that almost half the people incarcerated in someway in Canada are between the ages of 12-18 years old? Or those children of offenders are 7 times more likely to end up in prison? And that once in prison, there is a 70% chance that these same people will return to prison again and again throughout their lives? In the Gospels, Jesus focuses us on helping the poor, the poor in spirit, and those in prison. These kids, and adults, meet all of Jesus' criteria for help.

Prison Fellowship mobilizes 1500 volunteers across the country to walk with prisoners, ex-offenders, victims, and their families by:

1. Reaching out to the families of inmates through Angel Tree. We touch the lives of thousands of

children, from Nova Scotia to British Columbia, with half of them in Ontario. Christmas baskets are provided. A back to school program is in the works. Kids are sent to camp. We receive letters from inmates whose children attended camp. The experience can change the lives of an entire family.

2. Encouraging and upholding victims of crime; I am planning to launch a project to bring victims together with inmates to discuss issues of restitution, forgiveness, and reconciliation.

3. Supporting offenders and ex-offenders who want to make a fresh start and connect with a community and need assistance with accommodation, employment, and just socializing. We support through providing pen pals, prayer, visits, and helping

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PARISH NEWS

St. George's Excels in Scouting



Reverend Rob Park and Brenda Sisnett with scouts

LUCINDA LANDAU
MASTER OF DIVINITY STUDENT
AT TRINITY COLLEGE

St. George's Anglican Church in Georgetown, sponsor of the 2nd Georgetown Scouting Group, has been lauded in the October edition of *The Leader*, Canada's scouting publication:

Sue Bramley, Area Commissioner was thrilled to find out the 2nd Georgetown Group had the highest membership increase in the country. She said their sponsor, St. George's Anglican Church, had a lot to do with it, as the minister had moved through scouting and was very supportive. The Beaver Colony was re-established this year, and four new leaders joined. - October 2005, The Leader

Brenda Sisnett, Group Committee Chairperson for the 2nd

Georgetown Group and long time member of St. George's also said that Reverend Rob Park is a pleasure to deal with. The scouts appreciate the use of the church hall for its weekly meetings - for free.

Reverend Rob moved through scouting as a boy and takes great pleasure in saying grace at their yearly dinner. "We have a long tradition at St. George's of providing space for community groups and we welcome occasional group involvement in our Sunday worship services" said Reverend Park. "It appears from our Church records that the date of the first Scouts charter was January 4, 1921."

"Every February we commemorate the anniversary of scouting founders Lord and Lady Baden Powell's birthdays in the Church with a parade and inclu-

sion of scouts in the 9:30 am worship liturgy - last year we even had an artificial 'camp fire' going at the entrance to the nave. The kids really enjoy the service and bring their families to participate," said Reverend Park. Members from the congregation have actively supported the group by acting as group leaders and congregants sometimes come out to speak on special topics, such as world religions.

"Scouting can instill values that last a lifetime for children. I know it worked for my children and I'm proud that my own parish has provided consistent support," said Brenda Sisnett. "This year, our group has grown the fastest of any other group in the country. That's not surprising considering the wonderful partnership we have here," she concluded.

Integrity

Integrity is an organization of people who are working together to promote the full inclusion of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people in the life of the Anglican Church of Canada. Niagara Integrity holds an open meeting on the fourth Tuesday of most months at 7:30 P.M. The meetings provide a safe and comfortable place for individuals of various sexual orientations to share ideas and feelings. All are truly welcome. Thus far, meetings have occurred at Christ's Church Cathedral in Hamilton. It is the group's desire to meet at other parishes in the Niagara Diocese. If your parish would be willing to provide a space for a future meeting, please contact Sue-Ann Ward at 905 527-1316 x250 or at integrity@niagara.anglican.ca

The next meeting is Tuesday, January 24, 2006 at 7:30 P.M., and will be held at Christ's Church Cathedral in Hamilton.



ARTWORK: HE QI

St. James, Dundas



The Reverend Stephen Murray, associate priest at St. James, Dundas, tries to induce some reaction from some "dead" lights at the Annual Holly Faire in November. He was less than successful, but did say a couple of times, "let there be light."

Aids Vigil



The Aids Vigil took place during World Aids Day at Christ's Church Cathedral, Hamilton, on December 1, 2005.



Helen Denton, Regina Dahne, Bea Marskell and Brenda Tebay get take part by purchasing lovely jams and jellies at the Annual St. James Anglican Church (Dundas) Holly Faire in November.

Memories of Holly Fayre



The reception celebrating Holly Fayre was held on Sunday, November 13, 2005. Shown (from left) is Margaret Gibbs, Betty Waring, Bettie Wamsley, Ruth Roberts, Sue Hawthorne/Bate (representing her mother Doreen Hawthorne), Wendy Smith, Mary Goldsack, Marion Logan, and Beverley Farmer.

On a beautiful summer afternoon almost 30 years ago Bill and Dorothy Sewell and their friends John and Bettie Wamsley took a leisurely ride through the surrounding countryside. Sitting in the back seat the ladies hatched the idea of having a church bazaar at the Ascension - the first at the church. (Up until this time most of the financial needs of the parish were met by the free will offerings of the congregation.)

In August the idea was presented to some of the ladies of the parish and by November the first Holly Fayre was born. What an exciting time - the sales ladies in their long dresses (in vogue in those days) and Santa hats, the halls decorated with the Holly theme embellished with garlands and drums and toy soldiers gave the first Holly Fayre a very festive and inviting image. Mary Goldsack (an original helper) reported at a recent meeting that we made \$800.00 that first year. A real accomplishment after only a few months work!

It was decided from the start that monies raised through Holly Fayre would be used solely for refurbishing the fabric of the church. We were not contributing to the general operating budget - that, would still be the responsibility of the congregation. Another decision made from the beginning was that at least 10% of the profit be given to charitable groups in the community. The feeling was that it was the community who supported Holly Fayre by being interested consumers and we should share some of our success with the wider neighbourhood. The present workers

of Holly Fayre have compiled a list of the many items that have been purchased for the refurbishing of the church and some of our charitable contributions.

Over the life of Holly Fayre more than \$300,000.00 has been raised to support these goals.

An outgrowth of the Bazaar was the annual rummage sale, which was begun to raise the needed seed money to purchase supplies for the next year. Many of the Holly Fayre convenors were involved in this project for many years.

There are still many members of the original Holly Fayre group who contributed to this facet of our church life for its entire time. They are Bettie Wamsley, Mary Goldsack, Joy Baby, Betty Waring, Marion Logan, Wendy Smith, Bev Farmer and Ruth Roberts. Many others have assisted throughout in many and various ways. We are thankful for all of their support.

On Sunday, November 13, 2005 all those who had helped with Holly Fayre over its lifetime were recognized and thanked during the Sunday morning worship service. It was at this time that Canon Kristine Swire announced that the balance of the monies held by Holly Fayre would be put toward refurbishing the Ascension's bells that have not been heard for many years. The members of the congregation were truly pleased with this decision. The Holly Fayre workers and convenors were delighted that there will be a continual reminder of this special bazaar for years to come as we listen to the bells especially during the Christmas season.

Some of the special memories surrounding Holly Fayre over the years include:

- The long line-ups down Charlton Ave. waiting for the doors to open.
- The T.V. coverage by CHCH.
- The day the vacuum cleaner exploded.
- The mini party following 'The Day' - with beer and wine in the Wallace room.
- Going to The Hillcrest/The Schwaben Inn to finish the day with a relaxing meal.
- Wisemen glittering in their golden robes.
- The fact that the RBG called to check that our dates didn't clash.
- The 'fight' to purchase Belgian Cookies.
- Santa's helper in her mini-skirt.
- The fellowship of the Monday Ladies group.
- The evenings we tried to allow others to help prepare.
- The involvement of so many parishioners who helped on 'The Day'.

A Culture of Stewardship

JIM NEWMAN
DIRECTOR OF STEWARDSHIP AND FINANCIAL DEVELOPMENT

In the Stewardship part of the Fall Synod agenda, several questions were posed to clergy and lay delegates. The first question was:

If we had a culture of stewardship in Niagara, what would it look like?

The responses were really interesting. Some said our focus would be on ministry and service, our churches would be growing, more programs would be offered, and God would be working in people's hearts. Others envisioned a new awareness of parish needs which would be seen as opportunities, not challenges. We would give with thankful hearts; not out of duty. We'd be working together as a diocese.

The financial minds pictured full churches where normal average giving would be at least 5%; and there would be no need for a Director of Stewardship and Financial Development! I really chuckled at that last comment which probably sums it up best. Overall the responses showed thoughtful understanding and a clear picture of what could be.

Are there barriers to developing a culture of stewardship in Niagara?

Some of the responses to the second question were somewhat discouraging. The comments ranged from the plague of consumerism to concern about how money would be used. People cited insecurity about unemployment, a deep sense of scarcity, and even uncertainty about the future of the church. Others perceived a lack of sound teaching on stewardship principles, and a need for focus on mission and outreach. Still others

saw the belief in a sense that the church will always exist and God will always provide as a barrier.

But wait! The third question called for action, and the feedback was downright inspiring.

What two things will you do about Stewardship and Financial Development in your parish in the next 10 days?

Clergy and lay delegates offered well over 100 constructive steps that ranged from praying about stewardship to establishing a stewardship committee, and almost everything in between.

They planned to preach about abundance, discuss year-round stewardship, write follow up letters, present a clear picture of parish finances to parish council, question how others feel about stewardship, encourage legacy planning, publicize planned giving, renew story telling, articulate mission, highlight accomplishments, lead by example, give a testimonial, and emphasize outreach. Generally people felt that communication about stewardship should be improved.

A substantial number plan to review their financial position, create a will, increase their financial giving, seek God's will for their tithes and offerings, and write cheques!

And actions pertaining to year-round stewardship and planned giving were mentioned frequently. Topping that list were developing narrative budgets, instituting pre-authorized payments and commitment cards, and encouraging more use of the Legacy Planner.

All in all, I came away with a positive outlook for stewardship and financial development in the diocese. I'll leave a fourth question for you to ponder.

That culture of stewardship, it's within our reach, isn't it?



Jim Newman

The Niagara Investment Fund

ROBERT MCKINNELL
DIOCESAN TREASURER & CFO

In July of 2003, the assets of the Niagara Investment Fund were invested with the Russell Investment Group.

Frank Russell Canada Limited was established in 1985 and has its head office in Toronto. In addition to managing multi-manager funds, it offers comprehensive investment management services to large institutional clients including pension funds and endowment funds. These services include objective setting, asset allocation advice, transition management services, alternative investments and



Robert McKinnell

money manager research.

Frank Russell Canada Limited is a wholly owned subsidiary of Frank Russell Company, which in 2003 adopted the business name of Russell Investment Group for its global operations. Founded in 1936, Russell Investment Group has its headquarters in Tacoma, Washington, U.S.A., and in addition to Toronto has offices in New York, London, Paris, Sydney, Singapore, Auckland and Tokyo. Russell Investment Group utilizes the global money manager research of its affiliated companies and the expertise of its parent company in

designing multi-manager investment strategies and funds. Russell Investment Group is considered a global leader in multi-manager investing, and one of the world leaders in investment consulting. Russell Investment Group directly manages over C\$167 billion in assets and acts as advisor to some of the largest investors around the globe.

Russell Investment Group supports its global operations with a team of over 85 full-time manager research analysts who are dedicated to evaluating more than 1,500 manager firms worldwide. Each year these analysts conduct over 2,000 face-to-face meetings. Russell Investment Group has been conducting manager research for 35 years and launched its first multi-manager fund in 1981.

The minimum investment required, when we entered the fund in 2003, was

\$10,000,000. The Niagara Investment Fund currently has assets of approximately \$18,000,000. The policy asset mix chosen by the Diocese includes: Canadian Equity 30%, U.S. Equity 15%, Overseas Equity 15% and Canadian Fixed Income 40%.

In 2004 we earned an 8% rate of return. Results to the end of November indicate our rate of return should be even higher for 2005.

One of the reasons we chose Russell Investment Group was the number of individual fund managers (approximately 20) who handled our funds. Prior to Russell Investment Group, we had three individual fund managers and we experienced wide fluctuations in two of their fund values. The Niagara Investment Committee felt Russell Investment Group would minimize our risk and ensure a good return on our investment. We are pleased with the results to date.

Incarnation: Is it Worth the Risk?

This sermon was preached by Ian Dingwall on November 20th, 2005, at the Induction of Owen Ash as Rector of Incarnation Parish, Oakville. The editors felt that the spiritual benefit of these words would be applicable to many across the diocese.

Much of what I am going to say is directed at Owen but it is done with one basic principle in mind. That principle is that the Christian leader (priest, pastor, Rector,) is called to be a sign pointing the community to God and God's creation.

This is done in order that the entire Community of Faith will understand who they are and that they are all totally involved in that self same ministry.

Clergy are not Vicars - who do things for people who do not or cannot do things for themselves. Clergy are not Rectors - rulers of a community. The clergy are the servants of the community; modelling Christian life and responsibility to all the folks they meet and serve. Therefore, as we reflect on Owen's ministry, let us remember that each of us shares it fully with him.

As I contemplated today's preaching assignment, I thought of 3 particular words: Owen, Incarnation, and Risk.

Owen

I understand that name is from Welsh/Celtic roots. And we know that those roots lie at the very

heart and center of our Anglican Communion's life and history.. Further, the dictionary explains that the name Owen means "Well Born or of Nobility" as well as being a Warrior. A Warrior! You will have to be careful and walk softly when dealing with him.

You will discern Owen's nobility because he is well rooted/ well grounded and knows who he is as a person and as a Christian. Not with an arrogance of any kind but simply as a well "put together" kind of person. As far as the Warrior part, I am not certain but I do know that underneath his quiet, thoughtful dis-



Ian Dingwall

position there is a militant and strong sense of Mission that would be hard to divert. Owen and I were colleagues in Ministry here in Oakville a couple of years ago. During that short period we developed a wonderful friendship of mutual regard. And, although I have been told that one does not or should not need mentoring at my advanced age, Owen became a mentor and support for me at that time (and subsequently). So, my friends of the Incarnation, my first word is to commend Owen to you as your new Rector but, far

more, as a potential friend, a close collaborator, and inspired, dedicated leader.

Incarnation

I choose this word not because it is the name of this faith community but because Incarnation lies at the Center of the Faith we proclaim and speaks incisively of the journey that we undertake together. Incarnation, you all know well, affirms that the abstract becomes concrete, that hiddenness is, at least momentarily, open and visible.

And, for Christians it means that God became enfleshed, embodied and human as a very part of God's own creation and of the very history of Humankind. All of which affirms that God focussed Himself in the most intimate of ways by becoming human.

In Jesus of Nazareth, God in an absolutely astounding and mysterious fashion came and identified herself completely with us.

Now if that is true (even if we can only glimpse that Divine Mystery or able only to articulate it in a stuttering and limited way), then what it means to be church or congregation or priest or lay person is: that we are called to Incarnate that truth in this community. What a great opportunity for you of this congregation to enter these doors each Sunday and be aware that you are indeed the Community of the Incarnation.

Risk

It is all Risk. It is all Dare. Risk lies at the very heart of

Incarnation because it is at the heart of God. God risked...

- becoming human
- the helplessness of babyhood.
- the uncertainty of family life.
- the terror of living in an occupied country.

God accepted totally the limitation of human existence. God risked being rejected by those he came to visit: 'He came unto his own and his own received him not'.

You see? Vulnerability is part of the Divine Personality. It is the ability to be hurt; to have the courage to accept the hurt; and to be shaped by it. That's Incarnation. That's Risk.

Jean Vanier in a biography he wrote about his father tells that he was taught and molded by his father's frailties and weaknesses and vulnerability as much as by his strengths.

As you begin this renewed phase of ministry, let risk be your slogan. More than a Slogan let it be your way of life.

Owen, God invites you to be vulnerable and take risks and show this flock the demand and joy of being truly Christian. Just a few examples:

Be prepared to let go - to relax. Risk going with the flow (not of society's flow but with the Divine flow). I look at myself and the church and, too often, I see a rigidity of thinking that builds walls and obstructions to faith rather than openness and inclusion. Don't let yourself or this Congregation get mired in 'We've

never done it that way before'. Let go of prejudices and dogmas and organization that impede rather expedite the ways of God.

Be prepared to be different: don't be pigeonholed into an ecclesiastical stained glass Icon of the Status Quo. Certainly be thoughtful and sensitive to Tradition but know that Tradition grows - it is not a stagnant pool.

For goodness sake, be prepared to laugh. If you don't or can't laugh at the church, you'll end up in tears. Walk, as Micah told us in our 1st reading, Humbly with your God.

Being humble does not mean allowing yourself to be a doormat but rather to allow folks to see and appreciate who you really are and who all these people really are.

Accept yourself and others without fear - warts and all. Walk not as rector or vicar or hierarch or whatever: but simply as one who serves and has much to offer.

Sometimes you will be tempted to ask, Is it worth it? Other times, it will be other people who ask the same question. Is it worth the risk? Is it worth being misunderstood?

Your answer, Owen; your answers, people of the Incarnation? Certainly No - that is if you evaluate things in the light of much that our society demands.

But certainly Yes, if you discern your task as given by the Mystery of God's Incarnation through which you are invited to an instrument of God's reconciling, unconditional and all-inclusive love.

Get a Life

MICHAEL THOMPSON

The last time we looked he was a baby. Shepherds coming and going. Then magi to see the toddler. And now he stands in the crowd, watching and listening, waiting and weighing, almost ready.

He pushes forward through the crowd. Does he say, "Excuse me, please"? Or is this crowd beyond the reach of courtesy? Does the Galilean put his shoulder down and part the forest of backs until he finds himself at the river's edge? Could he tell you in so many words what he's doing there, or is it all beyond words as well as courtesy?

For the writer of Mark's gospel, this is where the story begins. A new character tumbles out of the hand of God and into the hands of history. With Mark we meet him first not as a baby, being decided about, but as an adult, deciding.

What he does in this short scene will become the foundation of everything from this point on. And we know we are meeting a grownup because he is choosing, deciding. Not choosing a flavour, a colour, a brand, a style. Not choosing friends, a neighbourhood, or a school. He is choosing a way.

The first thing to notice is not what he decides, but that he decides. And if that's

what makes him an adult, it's what makes so many others, despite an impressive accumulation of years, decidedly not adults. Not choosing a way, but assuming it, "just the way things are." We adapt to that way, make the most of that way, with the ability to perhaps thrive in it, or at least (we hope) to protect ourselves and those closest to us from all the ways it is toxic, dangerous, and deadly. The better our capacity to adapt to business as usual and the closer our fit with current arrangements, the more likely we will just "walk this way" without much choosing, perhaps with no sense that there is a choice to be made in the first place. How hard it is, this young man will say later in the year, for the wealthy (the adaptive, those well-equipped for current arrangements) to enter the Kingdom of God. How hard it is for them even to know that there's a decision to be made.



Michael Thompson

Fear and Fences

It may not be so much that we are at ease with the way things are; it may be that we have forgotten (or never knew) that they could be different. So the first witness of the young rabbi as he waits on the riverbank is to remind us that we can choose a way. A couple of years ago, I visited Head-Smashed-In buffalo jump near Lethbridge, Alberta. Fear and fences drove thousands upon thousands of buffalo to the edge of the

cliff and over it. Fear and fences drive us, too. Fear and fences create the illusion that there is no other way. And so it is astonishing to us when someone appears on the other side of the fence unafraid. The merchants of fear and fences would rather we not notice. It is not good for business-as-usual when customers begin to doubt the product, and it is even worse when an alternative appears.

So there he stands, not driven by fear, not contained by fences. Driven, instead, by the future he dreams of, and the way he chooses. Driven, too, by the Spirit in whom he dreams that dream and chooses that way. Driven, in the next verse, by that same Spirit beyond fear and fences into the womb of wilderness. To gestate, to be born, and to be born again. Fences do not keep the Galilean from seeing the wilderness, and fear does not keep him going there. Instead, in the wild and holy love by which hope becomes history, he has chosen what will drive him there.

Fear and fences work pretty well for most of us. And yet, there are moments when we see other truth. Moments of courage and compassion, of hope and hospitality, of costly love and costs not counted. Moments, too, of wonder that there is such beauty in the wilderness, and such gladness. Moments, most of all, when we discover that we are less alone in the wilderness, because somehow in the wilderness we find each other more easily and hold one another more deeply. Perhaps

we are simply more lovely to each other against the backdrop of scrub and stone. Maybe - in the profound and utter darkness that night brings to the wilderness - smaller lights can shine, lights not seen in the fluorescent distorting garishness of life bounded by fear and fences.

Our Choice

The last time we looked he was a baby. Now he stands on the edge of decision, poised to choose a way. And we, nearby, notice - and not for the first time - that we are choosers, too. We notice that there are ways, and not just the one that has made itself obvious, compelling and only. That "only" way begins, as we stand with the Galilean, to be stripped of its onliness. Its illusory power diminishes, and somewhere near the edge of vision we catch a glimpse of something both other and more.

Saying yes to this way, this other way to more, is consenting to be driven into the wilderness. It will be in the wilderness that we begin to discover the angular dimensions of other and more. Not only more joy, love and life but more grief, cost and truth. In that wilderness our lives are hiding in plain sight, waiting for us to leave the road to nowhere that fear and fences define and along which we are driven by the illusion that there is no choice.

This is what a grownup decision looks like; this is the shape of an adult life. Being an adult is not about getting a house, a job, a cottage, boat, or car. It is not about being able to stay up as late as you want. Being a grownup is about getting a Life. A Life that God has redeemed, and that waits for each of us beyond fear and fences.

Via Media Succeeds at St. Cuthbert's



Via Media participants start the last session with a pot-luck supper.

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little butterflies all flying together; just hovering over the grass at the side of the path.

Butterflies

They were small, pale, buttery yellow butterflies that seemed to be dancing and cavorting in the afternoon sun. They'd fly apart a bit and then coalesce again and again. I was mesmerized. I watched them as they rose and fell. They seemed to pulsate as they slowly moved as one across the path, then higher and higher into the air. I couldn't tear my eyes off of them.

Then the dog pulled me in the opposite direction. I looked her way; when I looked back, they were gone. I scanned the sky trying to find them, but they were too tiny. They were gone.

I really felt crest-fallen; very melancholy that I'd lost sight of these lovely little creatures.

I lowered my eyes and wistfully gazed across the meadow. I couldn't believe my eyes. Everywhere I turned there were butterflies; dozens of them in every direction.

Mostly they were the little but-

tery yellow ones, but a few were white and a very few were a bright marigold orangey-yellow. For the most part they were flying alone; sometimes dancing in pairs; but everywhere flitting just above the grass.

All my cares seemed to tumble from my back and I felt so light-hearted and peaceful.

What had happened? What had I seen or sensed in this short span of time that would have me run through this gamut of emotions? I went from amazement and awe to melancholy, then from carefree to peaceful and joyous.

You know, it's funny, but in those butterflies that warm October afternoon, I saw God.

The 4 dancing butterflies that first caught my attention; well at first I just enjoyed their dance. "How do I know they're dancing and playing?" crossed my mind. For all I know this could be butterfly posturing. Perhaps they were drawing battle lines. How do I know this isn't what butterfly aggression looks like? The answer is I don't; but it looked so innocent and pretty I couldn't help but see it as something good.

I had the strangest feeling

though, that I was witnessing something important.

Epiphany

This was God, in these butterflies. This was Trinity but four... quadrinity! Father, Son and Holy Spirit AND Man; intertwined in this ephemeral dance; pulsating, coalescing; each dancing their own dance but all moving as one. Sometimes they moved at a little distance from each other. Sometimes they were tight together. Man's dance with God; Man's divinity; separate yet not separate; individual yet one. It

was such a powerful experience.

Then I'm pulled back to reality by a tug on the leash. The butterflies are gone. The vision is gone and I am diminished.

I search the sky and see nothing. I look at my feet and see nothing. It's when I look out, beyond myself, when I look forward and take in all the meadows in a glance that I find all my myriad of butterflies. As divine as the first vision had seemed; this second vision was as earthy and natural; a completely bi-polar view.

Perspective

As I looked at all these dozens of butterflies flitting amongst the flowers, I thought "what do they know of my cares and concerns". So what if the 'Pie Bee' might fail, or that there's an inch of dust on the furniture and the floors need washing. These are so unimportant to my butterflies. They are completely unaware of me and my problems.

As true as it is for my cares; how much more it is for Man's cares and woes.

There is a whole planet full of life other than human, which has neither care nor concept even, of the cares of Man. We are not the centre of the universe.

And my cares tumbled away. They are not so big really in the grand scheme of things.

When I am moldering in my grave and the daisies grow where I lay, there will the butterflies still be, dancing in the breeze and

there is God.

When the butterflies are gone and Man is gone, the crust will still move, the mountains will still rise and erode away and there is God.

When the Earth is gone and the Sun is swollen to a red giant in this death throes, there is God.

When the Sun is a dead cinder tracing a path in a darkened universe, there is still God; eternal and constant.

I feel such peace and contentment and quietude at these notions of mine. I understand. An understanding that is not particularly an Anglican thing, neither is it just a Christian thing. It is a God thing and that supercedes all boundaries and distinctions of Man's making.

Dance with God

In my dance with God, it is my selfish cares and woes that pull me away from Him. When I release those cares and am carefree; when I open myself to joy; when I seek to give joy and caring and compassion then, like my 4 butterflies coalescing, I move closer to God.

Does that mean I'll never have a care or worry again as long as I live? Of course not! I live in this world; I can't help but get caught up in it. It's then that I hope to remember my butterflies so they may help me to gain some perspective on my problems.

When I open myself to God, He fills me. Divinity and Humanity, but more than this... divinity in humanity.



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Renewal, Evangelism, Christian Community, and Spiritual Growth

SUSAN WELLS
CURSILLO CHAPLAIN

"For the first time in my life I had an understanding of what Jesus meant when He said, 'love one another as I have loved you.' It had always been difficult for me to comprehend how one could love all people. Now, it was as if blinkers were dropped from my eyes, and I was able to see 'the Christ' that is in each of us." - Ann Grose, St. Cuthbert's Oakville

How well Ann's words reflect the essence of the Niagara Anglican Cursillo Movement. To explain Cursillo to someone who

has never experienced Cursillo is at best, difficult. Even for those who have experienced Cursillo it is still somewhat mystifying. Not because the Cursillo Movement is a "secret" organization, the reason behind the mystery is God. No one can fully explain how God can touch lives through the various elements of the Cursillo Movement.

Most Christians would like to live their lives in a Christ-like manner, however the pressures of today's world often make this difficult. The Cursillo Movement offers a method to provide each of us with the tools, the mentality,

the strength, and the support to make this natural type of evangelism possible.

The Purpose of Cursillo

The purpose of the Cursillo Movement is to bring about a conversion in the environments in which we live, work and worship. Cursillistas (those who have attended a 3-Day Weekend and are living the Cursillo method) are encouraged to become agents of change in their families, work situations, and neighborhoods.

The Cursillo Movement began in 1940 in Spain within the

Roman Catholic denomination and rapidly spread to many other countries and denominations. It has been part of the Diocese of Niagara for 22 years. During that time, 41 weekend courses have been held and over 700 individuals have been exposed to the Cursillo Method

Our bishop, Ralph describes Cursillo as "community building, enriching our Spiritual Journey, a rekindling of the lamp of spirituality in our Christian pilgrimage. A chance to go to the well when your well is dry and be refreshed."

Canon Michael Patterson, Director of Evangelism says "Cursillo is a profoundly effectual process by which people can either discover or renew their relationship with Christ. And out of that renewal of faith comes a new commitment to Christ's Church - to proclaim the Gospel. That is evangelism."

In this tough and unforgiving world, the Cursillo community is somewhere where I can go and always be accepted for who I am. - Kim Thompson, St. Philip's the Apostle, Burlington

How Does Cursillo Work? Cursillo Consists of Two Interdependent Phases to Achieve its Purpose

The 3 Day Cursillo Weekend

Cursillo is the experience of living for three days in a community of persons who are consciously trying to live as Christians. It is the opportunity to share ideas with others, helping to clarify the teaching of Christ and the Church. The weekend begins on Thursday evening and ends Sunday at suppertime. There is nothing new or unusual about any aspect of the Cursillo Weekend. What makes it special is that we experience and live Christianity in a concentrated time frame, free of the distractions of our everyday lives.

On a Cursillo weekend, team and participants listen to 15 talks by laity and clergy who share their faith stories and then, in

for the first time I truly experienced God's love for me and the love and acceptance that is possible in a Christian Community. The Cursillo Weekend, meeting in small groups and taking on leadership responsibilities in the Movement all fostered my growth into a day-by-day, minute-by-minute follower of Christ." - Reverend Stephanie Pellow, Deacon in Charge, St. Alban's, Grand Valley

"Cursillo made a profound impact on me. I saw Christian love first-hand, up close and I felt a glimpse of Jesus' fathomless love for me. I felt inspired to serve, to recognize God's call on my life". - Olivia Crowe, Cursillo Niagara

faith, study and action.

Faith: where the person has recently felt the presence of God or seen God at work. The more we look for God's activity in our lives, the more we find it.

Study: what they are learning to help deepen their faith.

Action: action is sharing their successes and disappointments as they attempt to do God's work.

"Cursillo, Brothers and Sisters in Christ whom I've bonded with; where I feel comfortable sharing the highs and lows of my faith journey. Bringing new ideas for study; genuine support in time of need; people who will cry and laugh with me." - Lise Simmons, Grace, Milton

Another part of Cursillo's support system is monthly meetings happening in various regions of the Diocese as well as quarterly Diocesan wide meetings, called Local and Diocesan Ultreys. These meetings are also open to everyone. At these meetings people gather, sing songs and listen to a speaker who shares how God is working in their lives. Then both laity and clergy reflect on the talk. Participants then join in small group reunions to discuss their faith, study and action.

"Whenever I hear songs from my weekend, even years later, it instantly takes me back to the experiences of my weekend. I remember feeling completely surrounded by love and aware of God's immeasurable love for me." - Nancy Wood, St Philip the Apostle Burlington

"When I was considering a Cursillo weekend its length nearly keep me from going. Yet in its length is its strength. It was people telling

their personal heartfelt faith stories that compelled me to a life of greater commitment to my faith in Jesus Christ. I believe that the process of Cursillo is part of a healthy spiritual life and I would recommend it strongly." - Paul Tinker, St. Peter's Hamilton

"The moments of utter joy, peace and awe-some love that I experienced on my Cursillo week-end will always remain in my memory and continue to envelope me every day. My life was refreshed, and my faith and spirit were totally uplifted." - Jan Barry St. Paul's Fort Erie

"When I attended a Cursillo weekend I was a new Christian, chomping at the bit to tell others and bring them to Christ - and I had absolutely no idea how to do that. The talks during the Cursillo weekend affirmed the calling on my heart and gave me the tools needed to carry out the work our Lord desired. Best of all, attending Cursillo events recharges my batteries and brings the joy from 'down in my heart' bubbling to the surface for all to see." - Zandra Miller, St George's Georgetown

Our Vision for the Future

Cursillo is part of the bishop's pastoral plan for the Diocese. Although not for everyone, Cursillo is a vehicle through which the Holy Spirit can touch people and give them the heart of an Evangelist. The Cursillo Community is committed to making Cursillo available to anyone who would like to explore this method of Spirituality - to anyone who feels called to explore the Cursillo Method as a means of renewal, to anyone "who is dry and needs to be refreshed at the well"



small groups, discuss the talk. Each day begins with Morning Prayer and concludes with Eucharist. The music is awesome, a combination of old, new and everything in-between. It is lively and often led by guitar and/or keyboard.

While attendance at an Alpha course renewed and strengthened my faith I still lacked Spiritual direction in my life and the confidence to share my faith with others. After attending a Cursillo Weekend, I have grown in confidence and actively seek ways that I can share Christ's message of peace and love, wherever I am." Brian Galligan, Grace Milton, Lay Director, Niagara Anglican Cursillo

"My Cursillo weekend was not earth shattering. Yet, my faith grew daily after the weekend into a clearer understanding of my faith and my love of God. I developed a thirst to learn more about the Bible and a better way of living." - Barb Dobbie, St. John's, Thorold.

"I experienced the weekend. Joy, because

"On my Cursillo weekend, I had a wonderful and exceptional experience of the Holy Spirit working in and through everything that happened, and everyone I met. I now have a special bond with people from every part of our Diocese; one, which I know, will connect us for the rest of our lives." - Reverend Tim Morgan, St. Paul's, Fort Erie

The Fourth Day

If Cursillo were just a weekend, the experiences shared would have been short lived and even may have faded rapidly. But Cursillo is much more than a weekend; it is a way of life, of ongoing support and of encouragement.

Those who have attended a weekend meet in small groups, known as Group Reunions. These groups are open to anyone desiring to deepen their faith through this discipline. These groups of 3-6 people meet regularly for 30 - 45 minutes. The group members are asked to listen to each other as each person (if they desire) shares three elements of their spiritual journey;

Contact Information

For more information about Cursillo or to attend one of our events please contact us:

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Web-site: www.niagaracursillo.org

Upcoming Events

Diocesan Meeting (Ultreya)

Sun. Jan. 8, 3:15 - 6:00 p.m. Eucharist, Ultreya, and Potluck supper, St. Christopher's, Burlington

Local Ultreyas

For schedule and locations contact Sharon Insley at insley@forterrie.com

Next Scheduled Weekend

Thursday November 2 - Sunday November 5, 2006, Mount Mary, Ancaster

Restorative Justice Works with Our Support

Continued from Page 1

churches understand their particular role in supporting these families.

I recently talked to an inmate at Joyceville Institution in Kingston. He had been part of a group led by Jimmy Cavanagh (who is an ex-inmate and now on our staff) for over two years.

This inmate said he was getting out in four months and would be moving in with his sister and her family in the west end of Ottawa. He had written 14 churches to introduce himself and see if he would be welcome. He had not received a reply from one of those fourteen churches.

Now they may have had good reasons - and there are good reasons to be discerning and cautious when opening your doors to ex-inmates. This is where we at Prison Fellowship can play a big role - introducing people to congregations, and equipping congregations in becoming communities for the ex-offenders and their families, where appropriate.

Rehabilitation

I, like you, have seen all the news stories and headlines regaling us about ex-offenders committing crimes and the high rate of recidivism. These headlines are commonplace; in fact, these headlines are becoming tragically more and more common. This news saddens us, and our hearts want to reach out to those who seem to be at the very bottom of society and beyond hope.

On any given day over 60,000 inmates are incarcerated in 300 institutions across Canada. This figure includes close to 25,000 young offenders (12-18 years old).

Now you may say... that's not so bad 60,000. Certainly not at all as bad as the U.S.A.

Well, two statistics that do alarm me and will shape the direction of my focus on the prison system, are:

1. 60-70% of these inmates will re-offend after they're released from prison and return to jail, and
2. The children of these inmates are seven times more likely to become offenders themselves because of the environment they are growing up in.

This is hardly a rehabilitative system. Whether you are mildly interested in these as news stories or actively involved in some way or another - there is one thing that is very clear for us today. The old thinking regarding prisons as a deterrent is not working. So what is working? An international movement called Restorative Justice, which started in Canada.

But before I talk about a solution, I want to paint a picture of the correctional system as it stands today and the people who inhabit it... the prisoners.

In federal institutions, almost 85% of the inmates are there for

non-violent crimes like narcotics, while in provincial jails the majority of inmates are there for non-payment of fines or impaired driving. Drugs and alcohol were contributing factors in over 70% of all cases.

The Situation Today

For the most part they come from broken homes and US statistics show that almost 80% of the prisoners were abused as children. So most prisoners feel they are the victims of injustice even before they enter the system. They find it hard to take responsibility for their actions.

Before they were jailed, more than 65% of these inmates lived well below the poverty line. Many have never worked or only had sporadic employment. They come from disadvantaged backgrounds and have developed poor work habits. Almost 60% of new offenders test below a Grade 4 level in math and language. When released they have even less ability to find a job and provide for themselves.

And what are some of the costs? In 2003, research showed that 80% of all inmates entering the federal system had substance abuse problems. 76% of inmates admit to using drugs in prison. With growing numbers of HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis C illnesses, costs for incarceration in Canada now stand at over \$80,000 for each man and \$150,000 for each woman in the system. And with over 35,000 adult inmates that means a yearly tab of over five billion dollars.

A study conducted by Environics Research Group for Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada, was released amidst media stories about the imminent release of convicted killer Karla Homolka and the comfortable accommodations she has apparently enjoyed at the Joliette prison for women in Quebec. According to the study, half of the Canadians polled believe federal prisons are too comfortable, while only three percent viewed conditions as being too harsh.

Conditions

In prisons, inmates must submit to searches on a daily level. Obedience to both guards and others higher up in the pecking order is mandatory for their safety. Self-esteem is lost, and violence becomes commonplace. With the overcrowding in Canadian penitentiaries, it is not unusual to find two men living in a space 6 by 9 feet and sharing the same toilet with no privacy. In some institutions people spend 23 hours a day confined to their cells. Some inmates need to be in separate conditions, for their own protection from the violence in the prison. This is not a country club!

So what does all this tell us?

What traits are common to inmates? I can think of six: lack of self-respect, lack of respect for others, need for attention, hardened & suspicious, unrealistic about life, and lastly, resistant to accept responsibility for their crimes. It is these traits that restorative justice addresses.

Restorative Justice

The first step in restorative justice is for inmates to accept full responsibility for their crimes. Restorative justice acknowledges that crime causes injury between people and their communities; that justice must repair those injuries and that all the parties participate in that process. Restorative justice programs enable the victim, the offender and affected members of the community to be directly involved in responding to the crime. They become central to the criminal justice process. The restorative process of involving all parties is fundamental to achieving the restorative outcome of reparation and peace.

Restorative justice is different from contemporary criminal justice in several ways. First, it views criminal acts more comprehensively - rather than defining crime as simply lawbreaking, it recognizes that offenders harm victims, communities and even themselves. Second, it involves more parties in responding to crime - rather than giving key roles only to government and the

offender; it includes victims and communities as well. Finally, it measures success differently - rather than measuring how much punishment is inflicted, it measures how much harm is repaired or prevented.

Although restorative justice is less than 20 years old, its influence has spread around the world at a remarkable speed. Canada is falling behind.

Recidivism Lower

Research on Restorative Justice programs has found higher satisfaction among victims and offenders who participated in mediation, lower fear among victims, a greater likelihood that the offender will complete a restorative obligation, and fewer offenders committing new offences. In fact, research in New Zealand shows that the recidivism rates for prisons that are involved in the restorative justice have dropped to almost 30%!

But let me put a face to restorative for you. A mother's son was murdered when he was stopped on the street and asked for help. She participated in the

first Writing Workshop held at a federal prison. She says it was an experience that helped her view inmates as real people. "Week by week you can feel this incredible friendship or cohesiveness developing. They're still human beings, and they have to be redeemed," she says. She says it's important for prisoners to be treated with respect.

"If we treat them like terrible human beings, that's how they're going to feel about themselves when they get out of prison." The Writing Workshop helped her heal. She says the program benefits the whole community by offering a restorative, not punishing, experience for inmates.

But you are thinking - does any of this have to do with me? As Canadian citizens, parents, people with relatives in prison affected by crime, yes it does. It affects us all.

Eleanor Clitheroe supports those in prison ministry. Interested individuals or parishes can contact her at www.prisonfellowship.ca or eleanor.clitheroe@rogers.com

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Hear What the Spirit is Saying to the Church

More and more frequently we are hearing these words offered at the conclusion of a scripture reading in worship. More and more often these days I ask myself 'are we in fact being attentive to what the Spirit is saying to Her Church?'

A colleague of mine encouraged me to write a column for the New Year that was positive, hopeful and a good news story. Yet the words of our former Governor General Adrienne Clarkson, quoted in the December Journal, continue to ring in my ears. Ms. Clarkson was "saddened by the fact that young people don't realize what is there (in the Church) that could be offered to them" and "Churches have not adequately explained the meaning of faith to young people; we haven't attracted them by all means possible." I would say!

Not only have we failed to attract young people, there has also been a drastic decline in attendance of the twenty-five to forty five age demographic over the last ten years. What is the Spirit saying to the Church?

Disenfranchised Anglicans

Quite by happenstance, over the past year, I have been encountering people (most of whom would fall into the twenty-five to forty-five age group) who have left the Anglican Church, or are considering doing so. I thought that there must be something we, the Church, could learn from these people so over a number of months I 'collected' an inventory of names of people that I came to refer to as 'disenfranchised' Anglicans. The list grew to a point that I could no longer ignore it so I then had to decide what to do next? We did what any good Anglican might do, we went out to eat.

At the five hour meal that ensued, I heard a group of passionate and intelligent people express thoughtful opinions about what they believed was happening to their beloved Church. They offered insight, emotion and grief over a Church that most had

been associated with all their lives. Some believed that the Anglican Church was too concerned with maintaining traditions and archaic structures rather than finding meaningful and relevant ways to bring the Gospel to our new world. Some felt that our worship had become stale and boring- 'it is suppose to be a celebration', one participant declared, 'Not a wake!' There was a consensus amongst the group that the Church has become preoccupied with numbers - dollars in the plate, bums in the pews! 'We have lost the essence of who we are called to be as a community of faith!' stated one woman.

Double-Edged Sword

We burn our people out, one man felt. His quote was most disturbing to me when he said, "if you get involved they keep coming back for more from you until you have nothing left and then they chew you up and spit you out!" In addition, he added, you never really feel like a part of the community unless you are involved, so it is double-edged sword.

"The Churches' greatest concern these days, it seems to me," offered one relatively new Anglican, "is about survival. Once that becomes your main focus and where your energies go, then it is already over. I do not want to be part of a Church that is solely about survival." Many echoed this sentiment believing that we need to train our leaders to be innovators and 'change agents' - we need to take risks, try new things, rely less on clergy and more effectively equip lay people, they felt. Isn't that what Jesus Himself was about; reducing the status quo, engaging with God and the world in new ways, creating communities where all are honoured and heard!

The single most common theme that was expressed from this group, where the deepest emotion was offered and where the grief was most profound was that they believed that no one was listening. Does the hierar-



Michael Patterson addresses the 2005 Diocesan Synod

chy want to hear from the disenfranchised? Is there a place to be heard within the church community? Can I have a conversation about my life and where God is at work in it that is meaningful and safe? The debate over same sex blessings was cited as a relevant example. The conservatives and those opposed believe they are being marginalized and not listened to. While the liberals and those in favour feel dishonoured and frustrated by the lack of any meaningful dialogue or action. In the midst of it all, the silence creates greater levels of distrust, pain and disenfranchisement amongst all. What is the Spirit saying to the Church?

Hope

In the midst of what seemed to be relentless negativity, I did sense that the Spirit had something very important to say to our Church that night. In the midst of the grief,

passion and, on occasion, anger there emerged a deep and profound love for God and love for a Church that wasn't quite done yet. All present that night were there because they loved our Church and they wanted to remain part of a Church that was attentive, that was listening and was responsive to individuals and communities alike.

What is the Spirit saying to our Church? She is saying listen to all God's people - listen for the voice that is a relevant and faithful voice because it is in and through the whole people of God that the Spirit speaks most powerfully.

So to my colleague, this is a positive, hopeful and good news story for this New Year. That God is calling us, as Church, to listen to each other, to learn from each other and to respond in love and compassion to one another and that in each other, we encounter the Living Christ.

Bishops, Bishops, and more Bishops!

PETER WALL

One of the Churchwardens at the Cathedral recently sent a note to our office, asking our Administrative Assistant to help him with an evangelism initiative he wished to undertake. In writing about a piece he hopes could be printed, he asked that we 'write it in English, and not Anglican!!' We do have an interesting language all our own in the Church; I recall once sitting beside a youth member of a Church committee who asked me to translate all the acronyms for her during each session for our meeting!

Terms like Canon, Arch-deacon, Vestry, Synod, Metropolitan, and Dean all need some unpacking and explaining. If one went to England, one would find a whole new set of imponderables, like Prebendary, Precentor, and Royal Peculiar. Then if we were to mine the riches of church architecture, we encounter a lot of strange terms: nave, sanctuary,

narthex, ambulatory, sacristy, and sedilia. These are all wonderful and historic words, and we should both learn them and enjoy using them

At our recent Synod, our Bishop announced his appointment of Bishop Ann Tottenham as

Assistant Bishop. Not a diocesan Bishop, nor a Coadjutor Bishop, nor a Suffragan Bishop, but an Assistant Bishop. So what are all these different kinds of prelates, anyway?

To look at Bishops and their varieties, we must first look at the ordered ministry of the Church. The Anglican Church has always spoken of the 'three ordered ministry' - that of Deacon, Priest, and Bishop. I want to extend that to a fourth order - that of the laity. Each order of ministry - lay, deacon, priest, and bishop carries certain responsibilities and authority. Each is distinct but each has an interdependence with the other. There is also a cumulative nature to them: one does not stop being

a layperson (i.e. the community of the baptized) when one is ordained to a clerical order. A priest does not discard his or her diaconal ministry when ordained priest; a bishop retains the ministry of both deacon and priest when consecrated as a bishop.

The word 'bishop is simply an Anglo-Saxon corruption of the Greek word episcopos, which literally means 'overseer'. Episcopal ministry is one of the oldest forms of ministry which we have in the Church, far older than the order of Priest or Presbyter.

In our Church, there are no orders higher than Bishop - Archbishop is simply an honorific used to denote someone who has particular oversight for a number of Dioceses or Episcopal areas, called, in our case, provinces.

So, the first thing to note is that, in our country (and in most of the Anglican world) bishops are elected; the only way they are created is by election, usually by Synods of lay people and clergy gathered together. One notable exception is the Church of England, where bishops are appointed by the monarch.

(Ireland, Scotland, and Wales all elect, however...)

Normally, a Diocese elects a diocesan, suffragan or a coadjutor bishop. If the diocese or the see (another one of those words that simply means 'diocese') is without a Bishop, a diocesan bishop is elected. If a diocese elects a coadjutor bishop, they are electing someone with a right to succession to the see at the next vacancy. When Bishop Ralph was elected in 1997, some months prior to Bishop Walter's retirement, he was elected as 'bishop coadjutor.' Some dioceses (our own, in the past; Huron and Toronto currently) have bishops who function in an 'assisting' role as 'suffragan' to the Diocesan. Suffragan bishops are elected to that position. Bishop Mitchell was our last Suffragan Bishop in Niagara. An assistant bishop is someone, already in episcopal orders, who is appointed in an assistant role to a bishop. People in Niagara will well remember Bishop Heber Wilkinson, who, although a Canadian, spent most of his ministry in India and was the first Bishop of Amritsar. He retired back to Canada and was Assistant Bishop in Niagara. So,

our new Assistant Bishop, Ann Tottenham, continues a tradition of assistant bishops in this diocese and this country. Retired from the Diocese of Toronto, where she was a Suffragan Bishop, she will be assisting Bishop Ralph with some Sunday duties.

It can seem all quite confusing, but it is also quite an interesting part of what it is to be an Anglican!

The last word goes to the humorists: Although there is often confusion about the difference between a 'suffragan' bishop and a 'coadjutor' bishop, the key to understanding the difference lies in the way each greets the diocesan bishop each morning. A suffragan will say: 'How may I be of assistance to you today, Bishop?' while a coadjutor will say, 'How are you feeling today, Bishop?'

And then there is the story of the Bishop of Chicago, elegantly and regally dressed, standing at the end of a long procession of clergy about to enter a Synod service, when a street person passed by. Tapping the Bishop's arm, she said, 'Honey, I don't know what kind of costume party is going on in there, but I know you're gonna win!'

Enjoy our Bishops of all kinds!



Peter Wall

Getting To Know You

Sister Benedetta CSC (The Reverend Canon Doctor Elizabeth Nicklin B.A., M.Div., D.D.)



Sister Benedetta meets Chester, the Christmas elf, at the editor's office.

FRAN DARLINGTON

Do you remember the slogan, "Join the Navy and see the world"? What if it read "Join a religious order and see the world"? For Sister Benedetta CSC, known affectionately as "Ben," "Benny" or "Sister B", it certainly could! Many adventures lead to the celebration this month of the sixtieth anniversary of Sister Benedetta's Life Profession as a member of the Community of the Sisters of the Church (CSC), which has long shared an active role in the life of the Diocese of Niagara, and around the world.

How, and why, does a young woman give up all the worldly attractions of youth to become a nun? Elizabeth Nicklin was the daughter of a committed Anglican family, worshipping at St. Thomas' Church, Toronto, since she was five years old. Sisters of another Anglican order, the Sisters of St. John the Divine (SSJD) taught Sunday school there. Smiling, Sr. Benedetta explains, "It was a fluke, really. When I was about twelve or thirteen, the family drifted over to the Church of St. Mary Magdalene, where the Sisters of the Church did Sunday School. When I was about 14, Sr. Dominica prepared me for Confirmation. When one of the clergy at St. Mary's talked about meditation, I asked Sr. Juliana about (it). She said, 'Come to the convent around the corner next Friday, and you'll find out!' " Given three headings from scripture on which to meditate, and invited to meet in two weeks with Sr. Juliana to discuss what she had experienced, young Elizabeth began a pattern that remains a crucial, continuing element of her life.

Mother thought she wouldn't last more than a few days

In 1940, Elizabeth was seventeen, in Grade 13: "The war was on, my older brother, James, was in the Canadian Navy - the whole ele-

ment of sacrifice was so prevalent." (She also has a younger sister, Joan.) Early in 1941, Elizabeth began investigating what she sensed to be a call to enter the Community. "My parents were not enthusiastic at all, (though) they both said I could. I think my Mother thought I wouldn't last more than a few days, but (she) was wise enough to let me try. (On August 5) I became a postulant, and have been part of CSC ever since."

Given a list of possible names for her religious life, Elizabeth chose "Benedetta" because she was "clothed" with the habit (the nuns' traditional dress) on St. Benedict's Feast Day, July 11. "Benediction" means "blessing," and an older Sister wrote to her on that day, "I hope you receive many blessings, and that you are a blessing."

She spent the next four years training in prayer and understanding of religious life, and "always working too!" She helped in a parish school and nursery, providing child care when fathers had gone to war and mothers needed jobs. Chuckling, she comments, "They were good years. I suppose I was young, beginning to find my vocation in the community."

In 1945, the war over, Sr. Benedetta, sailed from Quebec City to Liverpool, England, with two nuns and another novice. In those days, sisters making their life-long commitment to the Community, called a Life Profession, went to England to celebrate that step in the mother-house of the Community. After spending the night in the Community's Liverpool house, the nuns took the train to London. "There was still the black-out, no labels in the stations, and rationing."

The hospital was bombed

Founded in 1870, in Kilbourn, London, the Community had moved to a big house. Sr. Benedetta made her Life

Profession on January 12, 1946, in the Sisters' chapel in the original ballroom. "There were twenty of us in the house, and some of us made Saturday rounds to the greengrocer's to try to get enough potatoes for Sunday dinner, the big meal of the week!" Sr. Benedetta worked with children in London's heavily bombed East End, and visited in a local hospital, "all on foot, carrying a flashlight - there were no lights anywhere! I remember the hospital was bombed at one end; people were in beds with jackets on to keep warm, and big sheets of plastic hanging from the roof, but people were happy!"

Returning to the Toronto house in 1946, Sister Benedetta worked with those in need, especially children, returning to the house each evening at 5:30 for Evensong.

Back in England from 1953 to 1955, she raised funds, wrote appeals, and sent "a huge mailing twice a year for the children's homes," travelling daily from the Mother House, now at Ham Common, south of London, to the Community's financial office in London.

In 1954, she made her "Solemn Vows, in a very unusual service, with a funeral pall on the chapel floor. We knelt between two rows of tall candles, while the Litany of the Saints was sung. It was like a

death to self. It must have been a medieval thing, and doesn't happen any more." Reflecting, Sister Benedetta comments, "(We) almost followed a Jesuit pattern. The Anglo-Catholic Movement built in things that didn't make much sense for people living in that environment. The CSC has always been able to look at its own life and make changes that are more in tune. There's always been constant growth; the Community didn't deny what had happened in the past, but has a sense of what is right for the time." The Community's Foundress, Emily Ayckbowm "was an innovator in terms of adapting things for the Church... a social reformer regarding Church customs. One Archbishop of Canterbury called her an audacious woman!"

Sister in charge

Back in Canada in 1962, a letter from Mother Superior in England appointed Sr. Benedetta Sister-in-Charge of St. Mildred's School, the Community's school for girls then in Toronto (since 1969 St. Mildred's-Lightbourne School in Oakville). Ten years later, when the Canadian Community became a Province of the Order, Sr. Benedetta was the first elected, rather than appointed, Sister Provincial, or Superior, of CSC in Canada. Asked to visit the Community's Houses across Canada and in Australia, the Solomon Islands, Ireland and England, her world travels expanded. She was twice re-elected by her Sisters, serving as Provincial until 1981, "the most difficult of my years in the Community, constantly looking at relationships. It was very refining of those relationships and spiritual life!"

With the then Anglican Primate of Canada, the Most Reverend Edward (Ted) Scott, Sr. Benedetta also served on the national ecumenical Interchurch Faith Committee, formed in the late 1970s. She comments sadly, "There were some difficult meetings, especially on Baptism and the Eucharist."

Setting aside traditional clothing

In the 1970s, the Community began to set aside their traditional clothing. Sr. Benedetta remembers: "I went with Mother Superior, Dorothy, to a Dominican convent. She said, 'Take a dress from the cupboard.' I

found one, but I'd worn a veil for forty five years - my hair! It was a real struggle, but on the second day another Sister said, 'You look more comfortable today...'"

More adventures filled the 1980s, as Sister became a member of another national Committee, Partners in Mission (PIM). She traveled to South America, visiting Chile, Argentina, and Peru, to discover how aid from the Canadian Church was being used there.

By 1982, Sr. Benedetta knew God was calling her to yet another adventure. Entering Ignatius House, a Jesuit College near Guelph, she began the rigorous forty-eight day Ignatian Retreat to discern whether what seemed to be a call to ordination as a priest in the Anglican Church was "fly-by-night... or real". Sceptical at first, forty-eight days later, her spiritual director affirmed Sr. Benedetta's vocation. Then, she broke the news to her Sisters: "Some were happy, some were not."

In September, 1982, she began full-time theological studies at Trinity College, Toronto. Wearing her habit, Sr. Benedetta graduated that fall too, with a B.A. in Sociology with "high distinction," for which she was honoured with an Alumni Scholarship and named a Faculty Scholar. Sr. Benedetta beams as she says emphatically, "I love school! I love learning!"

Preparation for ordination includes a three-month experience in a community organisation. Sr. Benedetta was sent to the Admission Unit of the Men's Prison, Brampton. She comments firmly, "After over forty years in... a protected environment, it was not an easy time, (but) one of the best learning experiences ever!" She also was examined at ACPO, the Assessment Committee for Postulants for Ordination, for which she had been an assessor herself!

First CSC Sister to be ordained

The first CSC Sister to be ordained (Deacon in 1985, Priest in 1986), Sr. Benedetta served at St. John's Church, Niagara Falls, for one year, then accepted Bishop John Bothwell's invitation to support Hamilton's St. Mark's Church as the congregation worked towards its 1989 disestablishment. At the closing service, the Bishop announced Sr.

Continued on Page 18

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DIABETES
Hamilton

REFLECTIONS ON SYNOD 2005



Friday's session began with Eucharist, lead by Bishop Spence

PATRICIA GOULD
ST. ALBAN'S, GRAND VALLEY

I had never been to Synod before. My first impression was the surprisingly large amount of people in attendance for such a geographically small diocese. I attended the Youth Members Residence and Orientation, which was helpful in getting to know some other delegates and being put at ease with the process. Sitting at the youth delegate table was helpful as well. It allowed me to relax and enjoy myself with other delegates my age. I also felt less pressured to vote with my parish on the motions. The biggest challenge was that I found it hard to locate the motions and the accompanying information in the package - it was confusing! That made it difficult to come up with things to say to the motions in a timely manner. Things moved very quickly!

Worshipping in that community was different than in my home church as well. It was interesting to see how many people can be involved in a service, when you're in a room full of priests!

DAVE BROWNING

Synod 2005 was the twentieth synod I have been to. It was the most meaningful, by far. The Bishop's Christ-centered vision for the Church, on DVD for subsequent use in our churches, was outstanding. He is right: We need to transform the Church's culture, and help it become truly Christ-centered, and build Church-community.

The use of audio-visual material, voting on reports as a unit, and the presentations on evangelism, stewardship and leadership, were inspiring and engaging. The one day format was a blessed relief!

Bruce Kuhn's presentation of Luke's Gospel was holy and awesome! The story of Jesus came alive as I have never experienced it before.

PETER SWIRE

Just a few reflections on our recent Synod. If one really examined how the time was utilized, you will notice a few important things. Firstly, the items which constitute the mandatory and recurring part of the church, the past financial results, next year's budget and the elections, these can all take place in about a quarter of the day. Obviously, when there is confidence in what is being done, ample opportunity for disclosure prior to Synod, improved communication all around, we can see the time savings. Secondly, take a look at the time devoted to community. It was the biggest portion of the day starting with worship and two meals. Christ did a lot of his ministry breaking bread. The portions devoted to the three legged stool were very informative. People at our table wanted to get copies of the slides - perhaps next year they should be downloadable from the web site!

STAN HATCHER
ST. ALBAN'S, GLEN WILLIAMS

The 2005 Synod was crisp and focused, and certainly highlighted the Bishop's vision of a three-legged stool of evangelism, stewardship and leadership. Congratulations to all who had a part in planning and running it! The video presentation by the Bishop came across very well; this technique should be used again. The presentations by Michael Patterson on evangelism and by Jim Newman on stewardship were also inspiring.

Now that the vision is clear, it is up to the leaders of the Diocese, both lay and clergy, to make it happen. We need to examine where we want the Diocese to be five years from now, in evangelism, stewardship and leadership. We should decide what we must do to get from here to there, how we will do it, what resources we need to be successful, and who will do what and when. A road map, showing where we want to be at one year intervals along the way, would make it easier to chart our progress. Let's get on with it.

BARRY COE
ALL SAINTS

Personally I was pleased to see that the budget was passed and we received no negative or divisive publicity in the media regarding the same sex issue. As a professional fund raiser I believe the ongoing negativity surrounding this issue is having an impact on financial support for our church specifically with aging potential donors. I commend everyone involved with the process for getting through the session in record time.



Chancellor addresses Synod issues.

KEVIN BRUNER
ST. MARK'S ORANGEVILLE

It was quiet; almost too quiet! When one attends Diocesan Synod, one does not attend merely for the meetings, budget reports and the stuffy formality. Certainly if this were the only reason to attend, the youth numbers would be even lower in attendance than they currently are. The Residence and Orientation for Youth Members to synod, staying with old and new friends alike at Canterbury Hills is a bonus. This gives the youth of Niagara a chance to meet and discuss with fellow Anglicans from all over the diocese. Synod gives us a chance once a year, especially those of us separated from our home churches due to university commit-

ments, to reconnect with the larger Anglican community as a whole. We get to see current rectors from our parishes, former rectors long moved away, and even, if we're very lucky, get a chance to rub elbows with Bishop Spence. And best of all, who can forget about the fully catered dinner and lunch served to us like the silver spoon elite of the world.

Not to downplay the importance of the event itself. Synod gives the chance for every parish to democratically participate in the life and events of the larger church. The decisions and path that the church takes is partially in our hands. Last year, the synod lasted for two days and was full of heated debate about, chiefly, the budget and same-sex blessings. While many

feelings were indeed hurt, and a mutually satisfactory resolution was not achieved on either issue, the importance was that the issues were debated. This year, I cannot help but feel an aura of unresolved tension, due to the extreme lack of debate and discussion on these issues. While all the formalities and the pleasantries of the synod were present and enjoyed, I find that little was accomplished, and this year was little more than a formality compared to the function served in previous years.

To sum up this year's Synod, it was certainly as pleasant and enjoyable as ever, and I did enjoy my stay with the youth at Canterbury Hills, but there was certainly something missing from the Synod itself.



Joyce Wilton addressed Synod regarding badly needed changes to the sexual abuse policy, and "bringing it into the 21st century."

JACQUELINE JOHNSON

Although I've been an Anglican all my life and have been involved in various parish and diocesan councils, until this week, I had never been to Synod. I didn't know what to expect - though I suspected it would be just like vestry - only bigger... It wasn't.

Synod is about the larger church. It's about the big picture. Everything about Synod is big. It's held in the Hamilton Convention Centre. The room was as big as a football field. There was a big screen in the middle of the room that made the people who were speaking look bigger and sound bigger too. Bishop Ralph Spence is a big man - he fills any sanctuary with his presence - but at Synod, even Bishop Ralph seems to shrink to normal size. The information packages they send you for synod are big; the numbers on the financial statements are big (between two and three million). The problems are big, the plans and solutions are big.

The average age is big too. Everybody at synod looks old. I stood up at one point and apart from two young faces and maybe four or five 30/40 something faces, found myself looking at a sea of bespectacled wrinkled faces framed with thinning, gray or white hair. The presentations were big - some had taken all year to prepare. Speakers stood up and talked about evangelism, stewardship, leadership. Big words. I don't understand them - all they say to me is the Church is in big trouble and we have to change.

That's pretty obvious - I suddenly realize that I've been blind. There really is a schism over same sex marriage issue, even in Niagara Diocese... and it's big. Big in the way the Pacific Ocean

is big (too big to see the other side). Bigger than the schism was the silence on the issue - we voted for silence - tabling the one motion that urged compassion with a big majority - because to talk to the issue would be not so much divisive as futile.

Synod ended a day early - it seemed because there was nothing anyone had to say. It was all too big. Bishop Ralph told us we should come back for supper. He said it was all paid for and even if we wanted to, we couldn't give it away. Besides he said - there was a special presentation. We should all come and see it.

I didn't want to go home - but I wasn't eager for the presentation. Still, I was glad Synod's work was done. I didn't like what I'd seen and I didn't want to look at what I'd seen either. What I had seen was a top heavy, old, and dying church.

So what interested me was the suggestion of one of my fellow delegates that we head across the street to the pub. "I'll be there," I said.

There was a snowstorm - and I hadn't brought either my winter coat or my boots - but I ventured out anyway. I was after-all raised in the Diocese of Keewatin... Yet try as I might - I couldn't find my fellow delegates. I have to tell you, I am 59 years old and I have never in my life failed to find a pub - but I did that day.

Somehow though in my pub search, I found a sculpture garden. Everything in this garden was big; big beams balanced, huge metal shadows, except for a life-size sculpture of a woman. I brushed aside the snow and saw that it was simply a sculpture in memory of the sculptor's wife. He described his wife as a kind, compassionate person.

I returned to the Convention



Synod delegates discussed stewardship. With little table or room discussion, this year's Synod was much shorter than anticipated.

Centre for Dinner. It was a big dinner, well prepared - and after supper we sat back for the evening's entertainment - the Gospel of St. Luke narrated and acted by some big name Broadway actor named Bruce Kuhn. I hadn't heard of him.

I couldn't get over how little this man was (about 5'5"). He wore ordinary clothes - a burnt orange sports shirt, tan cargo pants. His language was that of the King James Version, but he spoke it and you listened to it with the same kind of ease you have talking to your best friend over coffee, and suddenly as in all good plays the actor falls away, the story draws you in, and there you are, in this case, right there with Jesus. He's healing the man with the withered arm - you watch

and the arm heals but the miracle is less that - than the care with which he holds the hand. Somehow you know that even if he hadn't healed the arm, it wouldn't have mattered to the cripple - what mattered was he touched it, what mattered was he gave a damn about something that everyone else had just given up on. The play was a one man show, and was filled with characters (most of whom we know), like the crazy woman who goes off half cocked over nothing - the woman we cross the street to avoid, the person we don't want to talk to because he's annoying, embarrassing and offensive. This one even catches Jesus off guard. He jumps back and shakes his head. "Whoa," and changes tactics, but he stays, and in the play, there is

no miracle beyond that.

Jesus simply stays there listening to a crazy lady. I think she must feel his presence in the same way as a child I had felt my mother's hand cool on my head when I was sick to my stomach and my body was totally beyond my own or anybody else's control.

When the presentation ended, people were on their feet, they were excited, they were laughing, talking - it touched some common chord - something we all believed in - something little, something big - some measure of who we are and who we yearn to be.

And that was my experience at synod. The Good news is that the Gospel of Luke is coming to a diocese near you in May. I suggest we have a party rather than a synod and that you all come out to see it.

STEPHEN

Synod feedback: Well, I think that many people are confused, and don't know what to think about this year's Synod. Did the bishop dodge the bullet again? Why was it that something that we were not taking about seemed to come up in relation to almost every topic? What does the synod feel about other topics going on in the world today? Why is nothing being said about anything! Okay, so my little rant is done now. I always find it interesting to read in my binder what youth synod is doing and the amazing topics that they are not afraid to talk about. Over the years they have talked about world poverty, slavery, outreach, and one year a recommendation that we should all dye our hair the colour of the liturgical season (my personal favourite). I understand that the issues of synod and its main tasks in the agenda are different than youth synod but sometimes I wish that we as "big people synod" would follow their lead, discuss a variety of issues in the world and our role in it, take actions, and be proud to be Anglican.



Pushing the Boundaries: Proceeds from the purple wrist bands sold by the youth ministry will offset the cost of residential diocesan youth events for those who otherwise couldn't attend.

Niagara Children and Family Ministries

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FOCUS ON YOUTH



Youth Hike the Diocese North Region

CHRISTOPHER SAAYMAN
ST. MARK'S, ORANGEVILLE

On October 15th, St. Marks, Orangeville, hosted an Open Space meeting for North Greater Wellington regarding youth Issues in our region. One of the initiatives was to create inter-parish youth events in the north part of our region to bring youth together. On November 13th, we had our first event; a youth hike on the Bruce Trail. We walked over 6 km, over to a local lookout where we had a great view for miles around. We ended the hike with pizza and a discussion about more events that we can organize for youth in our area; among them a winter hike. Stay posted for news of upcoming GW youth events. They are, of course, open to youth from all over the Diocese. We look forward to seeing you there.

YLTP: A Transforming Experience

ELYSE ELLIS
2005 YLTP GRADUATE, CHRIST CHURCH,
WOODBURN

The YLTP is more than a Youth Leadership Training Program that you graduate from after three years; it's a time of self-exploration in which you begin to see what you can do in the world and how your sense of self affects your choices in life.

When my mother first suggested YLTP, the image I had was boring. I thought that it would be more business-type discussions and meetings around one of those very uncomfortable, long tables. When I found out that I would have to give up part of my March Breaks for three years, I really thought that I didn't want to go. But I decided to do it anyway and fortunately, I was so wrong! The buildings we held our discussions and meetings in were very comfy with cushioned chairs and big, puffy couches. And the discussions weren't boring either (Score!); they were hilarious at times, intelligent and mature. The



year groups (years 1, 2 and 3) each have their own spaces where they talk about how they are developing their skills and their faith out in the real world. All the training in leadership skills and the leaders themselves were great! It was much better to be in the company of my YLTP friends at Canterbury Hills (a beautiful place where the world around you seems calm, stress-free and away from reality) chatting about values and other important stuff than sleeping in and watching movies.

Year 2 participants put together a project before the March Break of their third year to practice some of the leadership skills they've learned; organizing some sort of event on their own, asking for help if needed, and then analyzing how it went. In my personal experience, it was rewarding to know that I could accomplish something on my own and lead an event. Of course, my project didn't turn out as well as I'd hoped but evaluating the projects afterwards and learning from my challenges was as

valuable as doing the project. And I've accomplished other things since that have been more successful.

Before YLTP, I wouldn't have been able to write something such as this article, or stand up in front of a crowd on my own, and speak. I've found confidence in myself, with the help of my YLTP leaders and the youth who were around me. I am able to speak my opinions without hesitation and I gained the courage to find a job that I love in a location that I love. I feel that I am more open minded about other things in life; less quick to judge people and situations. My YLTP experience has also strengthened my faith and kept me more involved in my parish. Finally, YLTP showed me that I can be part of creating worship that's meaningful to me and to other youth. Through YLTP and the other Diocesan youth ministry programs I saw that worship doesn't have to be what happens in most churches on Sunday morning; that I can be part of creating worship that reflects who I am in a meaningful way.

YLTP was also how I found out about other Diocesan youth events that occur during the year and those programs have all helped mold me into who I am today.

Single Digit Youth Ministry: Working with Fewer than 10 Teens

In today's society, youth can choose from a myriad of activities in which to participate. They have great learning opportunities such as sports, music, language and science programs, and Scouting and Guiding just to mention a few. Since many activities and teams no longer set aside times such as Sunday as family and church time, youth are often asked to choose between participation in those areas or church. Sometimes their grades or credits require their attendance at times that conflict with church activities

So how do we keep youth interested in and committed to being part of a church community? What do we offer that can possibly outweigh the appeal of other opportunities? Why would they want to choose church instead? Who is responsible for providing ways to help youth feel they are wanted and they belong in church?

Do you have fewer than 10 active youth in your congregation? If you do, you still have potential for a youth ministry program to support those youth. You need to read *Single Digit Youth Groups: Working with Fewer than 10 Teens*. This resource will refresh your commitment to keeping that opportunity alive for them so that they can grow in their faith.

Youth who are open to the exploration of faith usually want to experience God in their lives, not just hear or talk about God. While it is possible for them to live out this journey in isolation, it more likely occurs if

they have spent previous time in study, conversation, searching and wondering. Adolescence is the key time for the church community to play a primary role in guiding young people in developing intentional lifestyles of faith. We can provide experiences that keep their interest while walking beside them on their journey.

The dictionary defines the word experience as "active participation in events or activities, leading to the accumulation of knowledge or skill." Experiential learning, then, means learning by observing, hearing, seeing or doing something. We can help youth explore their faith by providing opportunities for them to not only discuss and think about God but also to experience God.

Every young person is important! If we provide youth groups and other programs for large numbers of youth, why would we not provide programs for smaller numbers of youth? It's each and every teenage we are entrusted with to help them grow in a life of faith.

This resource will attempt to offer some benefits, strategies and practical help in beginning or strengthening single-digit youth groups, as well as Scripture-based activities. This is an incredibly reasonable resource at a cost of \$14.50 or it is available for loan from the Niagara Diocesan Resource Centre. The ISBN is 0-687-74042-8. There are many successes to be accomplished through this ministry. Come join the journey!

The Reverend D. Linda Corry

B.A., B.Th., Dip.Min., OACPP
Psychotherapist

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The Children and Family Ministry Resource Library

What does the library offer in the way of musical support?

There is a collection of tapes and CDs that spans a wide variety of tastes and interests from those that might be classified as more secular like Enya's Watermark, Peter, Paul & Mary's No Easy Walk to Freedom, and The Rankin Family's North Country to more obviously Christian worship music geared to families and children like Rainbow Singalong, Veggie Tunes 2 and Wow Hits 2004.

New CDs recently added to the collection include Kids' Praise! Company's *The Best of Kids' Praise!* Company which is

"power packed with some of the biggest praise songs ever, performed by kids for kids!" and *Absolute Smash Hits for Kids* which is another 12 song compilation of Christian radio hits sung by kids including Switchfoot's *Dare You to Move* and two from David Ruis. The advantage of hearing them sung by kids is the accessibility factor... if they can do it, so can we." Also just added is *Here I Am Worship 2*, a collection of 25 of the most popular worship songs from the contemporary Christian music genre. If you're looking for something new to add to worship or are merely curious about what's new in contemporary Christian music, borrow one and have a listen.

Are you looking for something in the Christian rock vein for a teenage audience? Check out the newest release from Switchfoot, *Nothing is Sound*; a CD that would be great for youth groups or Christmas gift for pre-teen or teenager.

You may also borrow music books such as *Songs for a Gospel People*, a Woodlake publication from the late eighties that has some pleasant settings for old favourites, and some of the contemporary Christian music of that time. Also on the library shelf is Ann Turner's *Joyful Noise: Songs of Faith and Fun for Children*, a collection of familiar and new songs with simple settings and easy guitar chords. *The Group Songbook*

which is billed as words and music for over 100 all-time youth group favourites includes such much loved tunes as *Jesus is the Rock*, *El Shaddai*, and *Awesome God*. Lastly, you could take a look at *Song* which is a collection of the lyrics to 800 familiar songs; the perfect resource when you can't remember all the verses or only remember bits and pieces of a favourite refrain.

Any of these resources can be borrowed from the Children & Family Ministries Resource Library at the Diocesan Resource Centre, 252 James Street N, Hamilton for a period of three weeks, or you can call Christyn for more information about these and other resources at 905-527-1316 ext. 460.

Little Village Church Does Christmas in a Big Way!



Mary, Joseph and the gang: Children played a leading role in this nativity scene.

CHRISTINE PRIESTMAN
ALL SAINTS PARISHIONER

Like the angels heralding the wonderful news on that first Christmas morn, from the church bell at All Saints rang the good news that the Christmas season in downtown Erin had begun! As the town Christmas tree along with the "Window Wonderland" lights sprang to life in the store fronts the Spirit of Christmas descended on Erin.

Suddenly, like a scene from the past, a light snow began to fall and the streets came alive with shoppers looking for that special gift. A chorus of carolers who had come together from the churches in town visited each store and sang those special songs that are only heard at this blessed time of year. A horse drawn carriage escorted its happy occupants up and down the main street. Each store carried its own Merry Christmas cheer as the aroma of greenery and sweets wrapped around the beautiful array of picture perfect gift displays that graced each window and shelf.

We here at All Saints in beautiful downtown Erin were very much a part of the Window Wonderland in our friendly village. The ringing of our church bell signaled the time had come to turn on the Christmas lights in the stores and on the town Christmas tree. Members of All Saints offered the villagers a grand reminder of what the season is all about.

The manger scene sprang to life on the front lawn of the church and was filled with happy children. Hot apple cider was shared with passers by. A pamphlet was given out that told the times and dates and places for the children in our community to come and be part of the programs that All Saints has to offer to them. The church was open and any who wished to come inside were welcomed by our host with a warm hand shake and friendly greeting. A large, attractive sign hung at the sidewalk showing when the Christmas services would be held at All Saints. Those who stopped to chat a minute expressed much

gratitude for the reminder they saw at All Saints of what Christmas is about.

In our village All Saints has the opportunity of being closely associated with EWAG, (East Wellington Advisory Group for Family Services). As a result, Reverend Amy Cousineau, has opened the door for All Saints parishioners to do what they do best. Lend a helping hand to others in our community who may be needing support at this time.

This Christmas season we will have the opportunity to help a family of seven people along with those other important members of the family, a dog and a cat. The people of All Saints will supply food for a Christmas Breakfast and Dinner along with a variety of gifts for each of the members in the household. A Sunday has been set for bringing all the gifts to the altar to be blessed and then the following day they will be sent to their new home, (where ever that may be as this is done anonymously on both sides.) What a fantastic beginning for the Advent/Christmas Season.

A Leadership Discovery

LINDA MOORE
CANADIAN CENTRE FOR LEADERSHIP AND
HUMAN VALUES

Each human being is innately gifted with the capacity to be a leader. Do you doubt this bold statement? With regularity more and more individuals are grasping the deeper meaning of leadership and feeling with it an exhilarating liberation. Interestingly enough the leadership discovery journey starts with us, not a "leader."

Why do any of us follow another? Often, when we hold ourselves small and powerless, we look to follow someone who we believe can solve our problems for us. We are willing to be dependent on another although in fact this relationship continues to keep us powerless. We raise the "leader" up beyond realistic expectations and then rail against them when they are unsuccessful or don't meet our needs. A most unfulfilling route!

Some of us follow a "leader" in an interdependent relationship where we share a common vision and work to accomplish a dream together. We see the leader as fully human as they see us, knowing we will each stumble from time to time. We are self responsible. We have accepted our fulfillment is up to us, not another. Even here there is a caution. We must still be ever vigilant to avoid dependence on the leader.

Power and Positions

So we must first ask ourselves, "What kind of a follower am I? What am I expecting?"

For far too long we have kept ourselves in spiritual and emotional bondage, believing leadership is about power and position. It is not. We have been drawn into a web of self deceit through our own fear. Hitler had temporary success as an apparent "leader" because he fed on individuals' fear; using power, control, manipulation and hate to build his deadly and short-lived "empire". A "leader" he was not.

A genuine "leader" lives a life of constant self development towards self mastery.

Real Leadership

They live to exemplify the global human values of love, fairness, truth, responsibility and tolerance. Like Mother Teresa or Gandhi their wish is to bring others to themselves so they will know their magnificence and their capacity. "Leaderful" individuals look to reduce the pain and suffering around them. This may be as simple as cheering up a friend or leading a nation to a new social conscience such as Martin Luther King. A leader is a vulnerable real human being who chooses to make a meaningful contribution by following their purposeful work and in so doing create a "follower-ship".

All of us know individuals who hold formal positions of power and control in our neighborhoods, at work, and throughout the globe. Some are true leaders while many are not. We also see around us individuals who hold no title, no formal authority and no control. Yet, we see these people often quietly and humbly fund-raising for a recent tragedy, improving the neighborhood, creating awareness of AIDS, helping a lonely child. Such people innately know what it means to be a "leader". They easily and humbly create a follower-ship because they are concerned only in making a contribution.

This way of being inspires us and moves us to help one another.

As we mobilize our own contribution we discover our own true selves. Each of us daily has the choice to focus our day around ourselves and our own fear or around others and our own inherent love. Each of us has the capacity to be a leader. We discover our own leadership capacity within ourselves! Know that our own leadership discovery is simply waiting inside us to be experienced. So start the journey now. Start it for a better self. Start it for a better world.

EDITORIAL

Laying Down Gold Frankincense and Myrrh

CHRISTOPHER M. GRABIEC

The scriptures tell us of the story of three men from the east, who followed a star and found the Christ Child. Interestingly they brought their gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh and laid them at the feet of this child. These gifts were symbols of their trade as astrologers and of their view of life. Laying their gifts before him was a true sign of conversion. They were willing to let go of their past ways and undertake a new view of God, the world and of life. This story in Matthew's gospel is at the heart of the Christmas message, because it speaks of how we (and others) are called to "live out" the Christmas message of the incarnate presence of our God. We too (all of us) are called to lay down our ways in order to live the life of a true follower of Christ.

We have had many rules that govern our existence as a people of faith. The community chose to abandon some of these rules and traditions from the beginning, and others we have hung onto. Our Jewish parents in faith, handed us a book contained in our sacred scriptures, called Leviticus. It tells us in chapter 18 that we shall not approach a woman to have intercourse while she is

unclean from menstruation. It also tells us that "you shall not lie with a male as with a woman; such a thing is an abomination." We laid one rule down and kept the other. The book continues to tell us that one should not glean the stray ears of grain, nor gather the grapes that have fallen to the ground. Nor should a vineyard be picked bare. We are certain that the farmers of Niagara are delighted that we've put that rule down as well. Men shall not have carnal relations with a female slave who has been living with another man. We think that we've dropped the slavery thing and maybe even changed the rules a bit in the area of carnal relations. Of course then there are all the dietary rules that we have chosen to lay down and no longer observe.

There is St. Paul when he writes to Timothy and proposes his rules for women. "Women must deport themselves properly. They should dress modestly and quietly and not be decked out in fancy hair styles, gold ornaments; pearls or costly clothing... A woman must listen in silence and be completely submissive. I do not permit a woman to act as teacher, or in any way to have authority over a man; she must be quiet..." It seems that we have abandoned this as well.

There's always discussion in the Church about getting back to the true spirit of Christianity. Maybe we should. Maybe we should revisit the ancient rules of wisdom that we received from our parents in faith. Perhaps we should re-think our understandings of how women should behave in the church community and community at large. Or maybe we should just revisit the whole thing and look at the conventions and rules that some have chosen to keep in order to maintain an "order" that they believe they have received from their selective passages in the sacred scriptures.

At our last synod, there was a group that voted against our budget, because they wanted the church to know that they disapproved of anyone who was willing to consider a discussion on the blessing of same sex marriages. We hope that none of those folks have ever had carnal relations while they or their partner were "unclean from menstruation". We hope that the women who spoke have undergone conversion and realized that they should instead listen in silence and be completely submissive. If any are priests, they should consider surrendering their licenses for St. Paul insists that they should not act as teachers.

Of course this editor does not advocate

any of these restrictions upon humanity - women or men. Nor do we advocate the horrid restriction that some have decided to place upon homosexuals in our community. Nor does this editor advocate the planned sabotage that a very small group of people attempted at our synod - all because of their views of homosexuality.

Our ancestors in faith who murdered in inquisitions and in crusades have passed. We look back in horror and understand that they were so very wrong in their persecution of those who were different than they. Our consolation is that those who follow us will look back in horror at the church of the first two millennia. They will not understand how we could discriminate against women, the poor, the disadvantaged, homosexuals and so many others. They will give thanks in their Eucharist for a society and a church that is inclusive and caring for all members - a church that grants equality to every person created by the living God. Perhaps it is time for more of us to lay down our gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh before the incarnate God.

These opinions are those of the editor, and not the bishop, or the publisher's advisory board.

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Let Your Voice be Heard:

The Niagara Anglican welcomes submissions from readers as Letters to the Editor. All submissions must include a name, telephone number, and e-mail or physical address of the author for verification purposes. The newspaper reserves the right to edit submissions.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

CORRECTION AND CLARIFICATION

Regarding All Saints Church, while we appreciate Mrs. Schroeder's letter in the last edition, it is necessary to point out that All Saints Church will not celebrate its 150th Anniversary as the parish has been disestablished. All Saints Mission will celebrate its first anniversary in September of 2006.

ALAN CAMPBELL MOSCROP

I thought that the Provincial Courts had ruled that permitting civil same sex marriage allowed gay men and women the same fundamental rights as other citizens of Canada. The Supreme Court of Canada did not consider that these rulings contravened the Charter of Rights. Since the act permitting same sex marriage was passed by Parliament, there have been no reports of the heavens being rent asunder. Stephen Harper has announced that, if elected, his government would allow a free parliamentary vote as to whether the Act, only recently passed, should be repealed. Members, free from political party influence, would be able to vote 'according to their conscience'. I assume that members of Parliament would consult their religious beliefs and vote accordingly. I have always believed that the strength of Canadian government lay in the separation of Church and politics, not in using personal religious beliefs to formulate law. Many Canadians have no declared religious affiliation, and those who do are not necessarily Christian. To suggest that the tenets of certain brands of Christianity should allow Parliament to rescind any law regarding civil union is impertinent at best, and sets a dangerous precedent at worst. Curious, isn't it, that we have not heard demands to rescind the laws regarding abortion or capital punishment? As a gay man, I am not planning to enter into any civil union at present. But if the legislation is repealed, I will probably not be the only one taking to the streets in protest.

JIM G. STYLES

Concerning the new election I know little else than the recent government received a vote of no confidence while concerning the issue of same-sex marriage I feel that such are (as a Christian) immoral; feeling that the Church should hold to the principals of God and His Holy word, refuse to marry such in an actual Christian ceremony, objecting instead even if the state approves.

However, as the nature of things stand in a country where the separation of Church and State is a governing principal, I would not try to force my Christian beliefs on others in the country, letting the popular vote stand as is according to democratic principals.

And with this in mind, with the state already allowing gay marriage in the Canadian courts, I don't see why they feel the need to force the Church into marrying them when a non-Christian marriage conducted by secular sources (i.e. a "Justice of the Peace") is just as legally binding as a Church ceremony for all intents and purposes of Canadian law. The only reason I can see for forcing the Church to conduct such ceremonies as same-sex marriage being to defile the Body of Christ and turn the Church away from God towards sin instead.

LOUISE SMITH

The same sex marriage law is already in place. People are in loving, committed relationships. Harper says that those who are already married can stay married, but nobody else in the gay community will be allowed to marry. As Christians we should be telling Harper loud and clear that this is discrimination of the worst kind. The government needs to move on to other more important issues such as the condition of the Aboriginal reserves, concluding the Aboriginal schools mess, getting the money back from the companies involved in the Gomery enquiry and getting past all the petty bits that take away from real problems.

SUE NICOLLS

I want to send my congratulations to the Niagara Anglican to say, the energy just jumped off the page. Although I haven't read all the articles, it was an inviting format, with lots of interesting articles. Great job!

MARJ LAIDLER

Regarding the Liberals supporting same sex marriages, anyone against it has their head in the sand, like the Pope. These folk are what they are, and should so be able to be together in a blessed union.

Editor's Note: Through the miracle of e-mail, we are able to print both this letter, from Colin Hoare, and a response from Lynne Corfield

COLIN HOARE

I refer to the article *Niagara Falls Team Ministry - A Bird's Eye View* in the November edition. After much discussion and prayerful thought I have been asked, as the Peoples Warden of Christ Church to reply. It would take a submission of equal length to describe the anger and pain caused by this article to many members of Christ Church. In the interests of clarity I will highlight the following. To refer to St Martins as 'a somewhat sinking ship' has caused a great deal of pain to a group of Christians who laboured long and tried hard to keep open their spiritual home. Old wounds have been opened that were just beginning to heal. Christ Church has always been a warm and welcoming place for all who attend. At no time did anyone 'feel threatened and a bit uneasy'. We welcomed a group of fellow Anglicans who

JOHN AINSLIE
TRUSTEE OF ALL SAINTS MISSION

Dear Editor,

I would like to say thank you to the Reverend Brian Burrows for his remarkable ministry at All Saints Church in Niagara Falls. When he came to our church in February, 2004, our remaining membership had fallen to very low numbers and young people were all but missing from our midst. In a matter of weeks, through Rev. Burrows' making the Gospel message the centrepiece of every service, and delivering it with such clarity and intelligence, our numbers grew by leaps and bounds. People came from the closed churches. People came who had not darkened the doors of any church for years. People came from every age group, happy to hear God's word so ably expressed. Young people have come

ARNIE DE VAAN
DEPUTY PEOPLES WARDEN, ST. ALBAN THE MARTYR, ACTON

I would like to voice my opinion regarding politics and should we be involved. In this day and age with the neo/Liberal/Conservative agenda, I have questioned the role of the church. Should it favour the champions of corporate power or should it align itself on a more social platform for the good of the people. I have always said that if we the people elect the politician then they should be representing us and not corporate entities that know no boundaries of our nation or seek to put in place any positive social change for the good of the people. We as a church should also be more involved in the role of social justice. You can probably see by what I have written that I am a social and a union activist. I find that my role in my union is or should be equal in the church. I commend Bishop Anne Tottenham for having the courage to stand up for Sergio Loreto. I have found that unions have taken over a lot of the role that the church used to have. People are under attack. Families are under attack. Crime is up. Single families are greater in numbers. There is another choice here. Please read all party platforms and you will see that for the most part Jack Layton's New Democrats are clearly more in support of people and social structuring. They are also much more open to same sex unions and blessings. I am very proud of the stand that we as a church have taken on this issue and can only hope that we can support not only that but a variety of issues that would support positive change to our social structure. Everything we do is politics so how can we even think of not being involved. Let's have the courage to be pro-active and come down on the side of people and families. That's what it should be about. Thank you for asking.

are now an integral and active part of the life of OUR church. The special vestry meeting in January 2005, despite the inference was a well conducted, organized and constructive meeting. We asked for and were never given a definition of what a 'Chapel of Ease' was and what our responsibilities and commitment would be. At no time did we reject or imply any insult to the people of All Saints. If the Wardens had been asked and we were not we would have been more than happy to provide an accurate record of the meeting. In short the article caused a great deal of anger and upset too many people who have been through much. I am sure this was not meant by Archdeacon Corfield. However as it was made through the Niagara Anglican I am sure she will wish to make an detraction and/or an apology through the same forum.

with their children, who now make up a thriving Sunday school, the nucleus of our church's future. The average age of our congregation must now be among the youngest in town.

It has been a wonderful and moving experience, seeing the work of the Holy Spirit unfolding before us under Rev. Burrows' ministry. And it is our people who are the strength of this growing church. The fact that we are worshipping in one of the most beautiful and historic churches in the Diocese is but an added bonus. Thanks are to God.

With Rev. Burrows' retirement as of December 31st, we look forward with anticipation to the coming of our new priest, to build upon the foundation which has been so well laid. Thank you Brian.

LYNNE CORFIELD

Dear Editor,

Thank you for the opportunity to write an article for our Diocesan Newspaper (November Issue) that enabled me to tell and share the story of the Niagara Falls Team Ministry, warts and all. I thank you now for the opportunity to respond to Mr. Hoare's letter which he wrote on behalf of some of the parishioners of Christ Church, Niagara Falls.

I have been amazed and delighted with the positive response from people in Niagara Falls, around the Diocese, and beyond, who have taken the time to call me and send emails, and even to write letters to you. While attending Synod in November many people took the time to find me and thank me because sharing the story had made such a difference to them as they are struggling with the same issues. That was indeed the point of writing it!

As the Publisher's Advisory Board pointed out in their letter (December issue) there was a lot of Lynne in that article. As the Rector of a local parish, the leader of the Niagara Falls Team ministry, and the Archdeacon of Brock, I have the advantage of having a broader view of the situation than a person who is looking only at their own parish. I am also privy to many comments, positive and negative, that affect people in this area. The latter is not always a pleasant experience, but it goes with the territory of Leadership. I also stated in the article that "I have written the story from my heart, and from my head, and most definitely from my perspective as a lived experience." I learned a long time ago that I cannot be responsible for other people's response. Truth, it seems, like beauty is in the eye of the beholder.

I congratulate you as Editor for having

encouraged and created such a wonderful forum for openness and sharing in our Diocesan newspaper. Indeed, I thank God daily, that we live in a country where everyone can express their own opinion. That would include Mr. Hoare. When I attended the 10am service at Christ Church on November 6th, several members of the congregation took the time to thank me for the article, and to congratulate me for being honest, and for sharing the good, the bad and the ugly. Unfortunately, none of the people who are upset took the opportunity to talk with me. No doubt, as I live close by, the opportunity will present itself in the near future. I am appreciative that Mr. Hoare notes in his letter that he was sure it was not my intent to upset people. Of course not! Indeed, my comments were meant as compliments to the parish as they have been able to steer a steady course through the somewhat stormy times we have all experienced. For example, to take umbrage with the expression 'a somewhat sinking ship' puzzles me, - this does not mean that the people of St. Martin's did not work very hard, - the expression means that no matter how hard they worked to bail and bail and bail, the ship 'St. Martin's parish' was going to sink under the pressures of changing demographics, debt load, and lack of time to turn things around. I do believe that I explained that in the article. It is unfortunate that many people are upset, and I will reassure you that that was not my intent. It is my hope that we can move forward together and serve Niagara Falls in God's mission and ministry, together. If we have learned nothing else in all of this, surely we have learned that as an Anglican presence it is united we stand, and divided we fall!

BOOK REVIEW



Working with Spirit

Engaging Spirituality to Meet the Challenges of the Workplace

Lucy Reid and Fred Evers

Path Books, 2004

\$21.95 CA

CAROL SEGAL

Working with Spirit is a joint venture of Anglican priest Lucy Reid and professor of sociology Fred Evers. Subtitled "Engaging Spirituality to Meet the Challenges of the Workplace," the text strives to establish the inter-

face between spirituality and employment. Observe the authors, "Spirituality in the workplace... is the pursuit of meaning and integrity, the attentiveness to deep question the unleashing of creativity, by which our work is humanised and sanctified." (Reid and Evers, 10)

Part One, "The challenges of the Workplace," investigates "issues of work today on three levels - the personal, the corporate, and the societal." (Reid and Evers, 12)

Part Two, "Simple Gifts," presents "ways to heal fragmentation, humanise the workplace, and embrace virtues that run counter to the culture's norms by engaging the spiritual truths that have always been known and taught, but so often forgotten or neglected." (Reid and Evers, 13)

An excellent account of the evolution of work from agrarian society to industrial society to post-modern society is provided. In it the move from toil connected to the self, land, and family to labours that are disconnected from all three is traced. Outgrowths of the latter are considered - the disconnection from land and family, the whirlwind of expectations that breeds overwork, stress, and burnout, the caprice of a work market subject to the whims of consumerism and profit margins, and the loneliness of being merely a cog in a technologically complex machine. The end result is a mixed blessing. "The gnawing hunger in our culture is a spiritual

one. We are materially rich, but spiritually impoverished. We have gained speed, complexity, and technology, but lost peace, simplicity, and community." (Reid and Evers, 70)

"Spirituality in the workplace is not necessarily opposed to technology or business, but, seeing beyond material gain and career advancement, it does offer a perspective on life and work that can heal, make whole, and satisfy the (spiritual) hunger." (Reid and Evers, 71)

Part Two, "Simple Gifts," also addresses the ways in which this is possible. Using the stories of individuals, both real and fictional, the authors illustrate methods by which the currents of employment can be turned towards tides of wellbeing and spiritual fulfillment. Chapters seven and eight present teachings about work from the Christian tradition and from the wisdom of other world religions (Buddhism, Taoism, Judaism, Hinduism, and Islam). The yield is fascinating. Throughout the book thought provoking questions are addressed to the reader. These provide the backdrop to chapters nine and ten, the former focused on recommendations for rendering a job more spiritually fulfilling and the latter a list of selected readings for those who wish to delve deeper into the subject.

Working with Spirit is a valuable guide for those who seek more than a paycheck from their workplace. The concrete buildings grow taller and the machinery more complex but neither precludes the possibility of a different personal perspective. The tools are at the ready. "In direct teachings, as well as in stories, parables, and by example, a Christian spirituality of work emerges that is rooted in a keen sense of what matters most - of seeking first God's way, and allowing the rest to follow on from there." (Reid and Evers, 139)

First printed in the Montreal Anglican

Parish Websites Keep People in Touch

ALAN L. HAYES
THE ITINERANT CHURCHGOER

Last month, in addition to my physical visits to churches around Niagara, I itinerated the entire diocese virtually, through the Internet.

Every parish in Niagara has its own six-part parish page at www.niagara.anglican.ca. This lets each church give lots of information about itself in a very compact space: address, phone, and email; driving directions and times of services, mission statement, names of staff members, special events and timely announcements, and helpful information about such things as parking lots, accessibility, and policies about baptism.

There's a picture, too. Too often the church represents itself by a rather unartistic snapshot of a church building. I like what St. Alban's, Acton, has done. It features a fascinating picture of the congregation. The camera looks down from an elevated angle, and sees some very interesting people looking back up.

Church Shopping on the Internet

Many church-shoppers will decide which churches to visit by using an Internet search engine. The diocesan website, I've noticed, gets a pretty high position at Google, which means that lots of people visit it. So if your church wants visitors, make sure someone is looking after your parish page.

In particular, I hope your church will update its announcements and special events. Otherwise, the default screen that visitors will see is one I've learned to dread: "There are currently no Announcements. Please check back soon as this page will be updated shortly." No announcements? I've never seen a Sunday

church bulletin in Niagara without announcements. Let's be candid. The church has announcements, but it's content to restrict them to the few people that come on Sunday morning. Don't bother to "check back soon," either.

Additional Web Sites

In addition to the space they can use at the diocesan website, many churches maintain their own parish website. They can then link the parish website from the diocesan website. I counted 104 parish pages at the diocesan website, of which 43 had links to parish websites. That doesn't count five parish pages with broken links. Nor does it count five links that simply open a new browser window that displays the same page you just left. Nor does it count one that produces the screen, "This site is currently under construction."

Two years ago when I counted, the diocesan website had 115 parish pages and 40 operating links. So a greater proportion of churches are maintaining websites.

I looked at all the parish websites that were linked. If your church has a parish website but doesn't link it from the diocesan website, I didn't read it.

Unless my record-keeping has confused me, which is very possible, I found several newcomers since 2003. One is St. Alban's, Acton, whose website looks professionally designed and is quite attractive. Another is St. James', Guelph, which provides quite a number of congregational resources online, including bulletins and parish newsletters in Adobe Acrobat format. St. John's, Niagara Falls, is another new site, very colourful, with lively text.

Most parish websites introduce their churches quite well. In addition to the basic information found on the diocesan website, they typically explain how

their worship services work; they display pictures of staff members and others in the congregation; they introduce their various ministries and activities; they post newsletters and other documents; and they summarize their history.

Good Marketing

Making your church look appealing is, of course, good marketing. The website for St. Andrew's, Grimsby, has a banner reading, "The Church is its People," with rows of high-quality, standard-format headshots of its members. It makes you want to go to St. Andrew's to meet these interesting people. Very effective.

Most churches announce coming events and special services, and a few even display their information in the style of a wall calendar. All this is helpful for both regular members and prospective visitors. An obvious word of advice, though: churches that decide to post time-dated material are also deciding to maintain their websites frequently. A few that are diligent about this are Ascension, Hamilton; All Saints, Ridgeway, and St. John's, Ridgmount; St. Thomas', St. Catharines; St.

Andrew's, Grimsby; St. Alban's, Glen Williams; St. John's, Burlington; St. Christopher's, Burlington; St. Jude's, Oakville; and St. George's, Guelph.

Outdated

On the other hand, I won't name the church which is still announcing its Easter services last year, or the one that continues to invite people to its upcoming Niagara wine tour in October 2003, or the two churches that still list rectors who have moved on elsewhere.

St. James', Guelph, and St. David's and St. Patrick's ("D&P"), Guelph, have a good way of keeping their announcements current: they post the whole bulletin from the most recent Sunday. That's a painless way for a church to keep people informed about its activities; a volunteer or staff member can upload a file and add a link in about five minutes.

St. George's, Georgetown, has another clever idea in this connection. If you click the "parish events" button on its parish website, you're taken to the "special events" part of its parish page at the diocesan website. The advantage is that by keeping its page at the diocesan website current, the

church is keeping its own parish website current too.

Sermons Online

Two years ago I could find only four parishes that posted its sermons. D&P, Guelph; St. Luke's, Smithville; and St. Philip's, Grimsby - which share the same rector. The fourth has had a change of rector, and doesn't do it anymore. I'm glad to say that I've found some others that are posting sermons, including St. Alban's, Acton; St. Paul's, Dunnville; and St. Saviour's, Queenston. There's also a wedding sermon posted at St. Jude's, Oakville. St. George's, Lowville, goes one better than posting the texts; it posts the audio of its sermons in mp3 format.

D&P's website is also a great source for liturgical resources, and St. Barnabas, St. Catharines, as I mentioned a couple of years ago, has a stunningly full introduction to anglo-catholic theology and liturgics. These churches are extending their ministry worldwide.

Church websites have become keys to church growth, congregational communication, and mission strategy. It's wonderful to see so many interesting and effective websites in the diocese of Niagara.



Alan L. Hayes

My Experience at ACPO

BILL CHECKLEY

It's funny how in life we mainly hear only the horror stories of things happening to people and hardly any of the good stuff. And ACPO (the Advisory Committee on Postulants for Ordination) is no exception to the rule. I had heard many horror stories and bad remarks of people's experiences at ACPO over the years. However, my experience was the complete opposite.

Although it was intense, I never found it to be harsh or unfair in any manner. In fact it was interesting and funny at times. All the assessors were warm and friendly and very approachable. Sure, they were there to assess us and see if we were adequate for the priesthood. But really, that was no surprise to any of us there: we all knew that before going in!

I believe ACPO is a very fair, well organized system of checks and balances directed at finding out the minds of potential candidates for ordination. I think it is a great opportunity for the Anglican Church to get to know more about a candidate's life and calling.

It gives the candidates an opportunity to tell the story of their life and calling to at least three people during the weekend.

However, doing that in just an hour can be really intense.

Prayer kept me focused

Not once did I feel uncomfortable or ill at ease while I spoke with my assessors. I found prayer really works when you use it. Prayer kept me focused and quiet during



Bill Checkley

the down time of the weekend. There are many moments when the candidates get together around the fireplace and question and doubt both themselves and what they said. This can add to the stress of the weekend. Those were the times when I was fortunate to have buddied up with another candidate and go for walks and talks about life in general to keep our sanity and perspective on the weekend. I am forever grateful to my buddy for his company and conversations.

Then of course you have the beautiful grounds of Canterbury Hills and the breathtaking outdoor sanctuary/chapel. There are deer running through the forests. It is a wonderful environment in which to reflect, center yourself and feel close to God's creation.

ACPO is intense and fair

ACPO is not something I would rush out the door to do again, nor would I call it fun. Intense and fair are the only two adjectives

that come to my mind. I wrote this article to let you, the readers, know how important a process this is to the candidate and to the Anglican Church of Canada.

Further, I wish to express my gratitude to those wonderful people who volunteer their time and talent to help walk me through another stage in my journey towards ordination in the Anglican Church. I feel that being an assessor at ACPO is one of the most important ministries one can do in the Anglican Church of Canada. If you get a chance, do it. It's good for the soul and for the Church.



Bishop's Diploma Course

This program provides an opportunity for lay people to grow in their commitment to Christ and Christ's Church through a deepening of faith. This winter will feature an eight-week course on Spirituality.

To register, contact the centre nearest you.

Registration fee: \$35 (includes sessions plus text)

Area	Parish Centre	Start Date
Dunnville	St. Paul's	TBA
Flamborough	Christ Church	TBA
Grimsby	St. Andrew's	Mon. Jan. 9 - 7:30pm
Hamilton	St. Peter's	Mon. Jan. 16 - 7:30pm
Milton	Grace Church	Tue. Jan. 10 - 7:30pm

For further information contact:

Jane Stewart - 905-527-1316 ext. 420 or
jane.stewart@niagara.anglican.ca

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OUTREACH

Report on the National EcoJustice Consultation

CHERYL LYNN FRICKER

In early October I was invited to be a part of the National EcoJustice Consultation on behalf of the Diocese, to learn more about the EcoJustice Committee and how we can become more involved in communicating and supporting the work of this vital National Committee.

The EcoJustice Committee was established in 1995 by General Synod. The core mandate of EcoJustice is to coordinate our church's efforts in the areas of social, economic and environmental justice. As Christians, we are called to transform the world and usher in the Reign of God, a task both daunting and inspiring. The work is organized under the following headings: Peace & Non-Violence; Global Economic Justice; Canadian Social Development; Indigenous Justice; and Ecological/Environmental Justice.

Our EcoJustice office coordinates work with ecumenical colleagues at KAIROS: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives, the Canadian Council of Churches, Project Ploughshares, the World Council of Churches, and other

justice organizations. Ecumenical staff provide much of the research and analysis, while our Anglican staff act on directions set by General Synod and concentrate on building networks and nurturing partnerships.

I enjoyed two days of sharing and networking with representatives from across Canada including representatives from the Evangelical Lutheran Church. We had presentations from KAIROS and PWRDF introducing their new water campaigns and the ELCIC's Global Hunger and Development Appeal.

One of the highlights of the conference was a time where representatives could share with each other the work they were doing in their own communities. I was proud that almost all of the work reported from across the country was represented in some way in the outreach and social justice work that is being done on a regular basis in parishes across our Diocese. It was a great time of sharing.

At one point we had an opportunity to have a lengthy discussion on some of the identified social justice issues; including poverty, homelessness, environmental abuse, aboriginal issues,

global warming, abuse of power and war and violence. Afterwards we worked together in small groups to discuss what a working definition of justice work might be. We were led and guided by our Baptismal covenant to seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving our neighbour as ourselves and striving for justice and peace among all persons, respecting the dignity of every human being. We agreed that justice work is multifaceted not excluding other work, but inclusive of it. While not extensive, the following are four of the most favoured definitions

that both help to form and inform the faithful response we are called to.

- Justice work is work that moves towards community ownership of solutions.
- It is work that allows for relationship between those addressing systems and those affected by injustice.
- It is that which seeks to educate, raise awareness and increase capacity with a component of social analysis.
- It is work that seeks to make a positive change in the lives and environment presently chal-

lenged and empowers in order to increase capacity to live in health and dignity.

The EcoJustice Committee is an appeal, not an agency, giving us voice and encouraging all of us in the Anglican Church of Canada to have an eye to justice work as we seek to live out our faith in the world around us. It is part of who we are and through this work we faithfully seek to partner with God and one another "to transform unjust structures of society and to safeguard the integrity of creation; sustaining and renewing the earth."

Get Involved

If you want to know more about the EcoJustice Committee check out the National website at www.anglican.ca. One of the ways to build an ecojustice movement in your own parish is to use the tools and educational resources from PWRDF and KAIROS.

KAIROS Water Campaign

Water, Life before Profit, is a campaign designed to raise awareness of the sacredness of water. This natural resource, essential to life in all forms, is God's gift to us and ought to be revered and accessible for the gift that it is. This year's initiative encourages us to be good stewards of this gift and to speak out against privatization and commodification. Resources are available at www.kairoscanada.org.

PWRDF Water Enough For All

The new PWRDF Water campaign Water "Enough for All" also provides worship and educational material for use in your parishes. In cooperation with KAIROS, Ecumenical Churches, and Councils of Churches this campaign encourages us to pray, act and give to help reclaim God's free gift of life-giving water for all. Resources for this campaign are available at www.pwrdf.org.

What Can I do?

NICKY FORSVYTH
DEPUTY WARDEN AT ST. PAUL'S, DUNNVILLE

October 2005 started "Missions Month" here at St. Paul's in Dunnville with a visit from Fr. Raphael Mponda and his wife Ester. The Mponda's are from Malawi, in Southern Africa - more specifically from the Anglican Diocese of Northern Malawi, which is a diocese that has been supported financially by our parish for some time. It was a privilege for me to meet them. I learned a great deal about their country and their life.

Malawi is the third poorest country in the world. The people are farmers and fishermen; many are poor, hungry and sick. Generally, they have to walk everywhere - they walk hours to see a doctor or to go to church. Aids affects 30 percent of the population. Seventy percent of the people are starving and 50 percent are illiterate. There is little food, water, medicine, education or transportation.

The Anglican Diocese of Northern Malawi, lead by Bishop Boyle and the priests under his care, is trying to improve the people's quality of life. They have training gardens where they teach farmers modern techniques for soil conservation and crop rotation, so that they can feed themselves, they are drilling well for drinking water in villages and they are building schools and medical facilities.

Embarrassed by Excess

I have listened to missionaries speak before and have felt moved, but this time was different. The Mponda's are not missionaries from Malawi. Malawi is their home, where

they were raised and where they raise their children. In a strange way it seemed as though the Mponda's were missionaries to us - here in Canada. Raphael and Ester are very nice people. I struggled, and continue to struggle with questions: why do they live where they do? and why am I here - in Canada? God loves them as much as He does me. Why do I have so much and they have so little? We are a hugely materialistic society and when I was with the Mponda's I was embarrassed with the excess I have. My house, my car. Everything. Their visit weighs heavily on my heart. I want to help but feel very inadequate. What can I do?

Trip to Lima

I struggled with the Mponda's visit, what was I to do? Then came the end of October and twelve people from this parish headed off to Lima, Peru. We saw poverty and people in need everywhere. Masses of people have moved into Lima for a better life and now the population is between ten and twelve million persons. People have built homes on huge hills of sand. These are the shanty towns where there is a lot of poverty. We were able to bring supplies, clothing, toiletries, and medical supplies to leave behind.

We worked with people from the church and we made friends. They were so happy to have us there; we worked together and worshipped together side by side. I looked forward to their smiles everyday. We shared, and experienced, Jesus' love with them.

Like in Malawi, the Anglican Church in

Lima is working hard to help with the situation, to help make the people's lives better. We visited a medical center, nursery school and a school all run by the Anglican Church. There are also programs for expectant mothers and ministries in prisons. The Church is working to make a difference in people's lives. But still I struggled.

One Person at a Time

The poverty in both Peru and Malawi is overwhelming; how can I make a difference? We can only make a difference one person at a time, one friendship at a time. We did make a difference, we did as it says in 1 Thes 5:11 'Encourage each other and give each our strength.' We need to offer supportive words and encouraging actions to others. We did that! We must care about what God cares about, let's not waste what

God has given us. We can all help in different ways, with prayers for the people of the world, with financial support, donating supplies for a mission, going on a mission. We are called to love our neighbour as ourselves; the people in Peru and Malawi are our neighbours.

Would I go again? Absolutely! As my heart aches for the people of Peru and Malawi, I pray that God will guide me what other things I can do to help.

In Rick Warren's book, A Purpose Driven Life, I read about what will happen when you go on a short term mission. It will enlarge your heart, expand your vision, stretch your faith, deepen your compassion and it will fill you with a kind of joy you have never experienced before. Twelve people in this parish may just have experienced that. Wow!! I just hope it is contagious!

Teenage to Old Age... with Psalms on the Side Featuring John Bell

4th Annual St. Christopher's Leadership Conference

March 3 - 4, 2006

St. Christopher's (662 Guelph Line, Burlington)

John Bell, an ordained minister of the Church of Scotland and a member of the Iona Community, will lead four workshops.

March 3

9:00 am Faith and Frailty
1:00 pm The Last Journey

March 4

9:00 am God in Touch with Teenagers
1:00 pm Rediscovering the Psalms

Participants may register for one or all workshops!

Fee (including lunch): Whole Day \$40, Half Day \$25

Registration Deadline: February 26, 2006

For more information contact Helen Hicks at 905-634-1977 or check out the web site www.stchristophersburlington.com

Niagara Web: It's All About You

CHRISTOPHER M. GRABIEC

Web sites, internet, email, blogs, instant messaging.

Ten years ago who would have imagined that these would become such part of our society and our lives. Many people today still have no understanding of what this world is about. Although we do not have accurate figures for this year, it's estimated that well over 65% of Canada now has access to the internet.

In our diocese we often hear from well-intentioned rectors that the internet is not a viable source of information for our "elderly" population. That may well be true in some cases, but cannot be used as a generalization. Ethel Pell, a member of St. Alban's Parish, Hamilton, in her 84th year, has recently started using the Internet and email. There is a group in the St. Catharine's area headed by Ross Gillett that refurbish older computers and distribute them to seniors so that they can have access to the Internet.

The Internet is the single greatest source of information in the history of our planet. It is the greatest invention since the printing press. It took many generations after the invention of the press until literacy became the norm. It is only taking a few years since the invention of the Internet for it to become the norm for communication.

The diocese of Niagara ventured into the Internet a number of years ago. Since our beginnings the growth has been enormous. We'd love to take you for a tour of this incredible vehicle of communication. The problem is that the paper isn't big enough to describe what it is that the internet is doing for the diocese. So, we'll give you a few highlights.

News

The web is first and foremost a source of immediate news for the diocese. This is accomplished in two ways. When you go to the main page of the website (www.niagara.anglican.ca) you will see all of the latest news. If there is an event that is critical in the world, or in our church, the news will often be there immediately. For example, we all remember that horrible day that we now call 9/11. The horrible events started with the first attack at 8:46 in the morning followed by the second attack at 9:03 am. By 11:00 am, our diocese had formulated a prayerful response and a letter from Bishop Spence appeared on our website.

The second way that we cover the news is by our email broadcasts. There are two of these. One

goes only to the clergy and parishes. This broadcast is fairly regular and usually has to do with matters that are of interest to rectors and



Christopher Grabiec

licensed lay workers. The second email blast is sent to everyone who has given us their email address. These are sent only occasionally and have items of interest to the whole community of Anglicans. You can be part of this mailing list by going to the main page of the website on subscribing to the Niagara Anglican Mailing list. The subscription area is located on the bottom of the right hand side of the page.

Parish information

The diocesan website has offered unending support to our parishes. Each parish has been given their own section of the website and the ability to update it with the most important things in their parish: Liturgies, Staff, Events, Announcements, Special Services, Employment Opportunities and more. The diocesan website is pleased to advertise all these events across the diocese and beyond. One only has to search our neighbouring dioceses and other churches across this continent and find out that this is not something that is given to parishes. Consequently many people find their way to the parishes that keep their sites current. This happens especially at times such as Christmas and Easter. By the way, every time you go onto the Diocesan web page - there's a feature parish, including the church picture! What a great way to get to know our local parish communities.

Who comes for this information?

Who comes is a difficult question to answer, but we can tell you some things. At the time of writing of this article the number of pages read on our site were:

Tuesday, 2634; Wednesday, 4692; Thursday, 3204, Friday, 3385.

We also checked the weekend of Synod between the 18th and 21st of November. There were 12,267 pages read on our site during those days. Sadly, only 357 people read the synod page which was down significantly from years previous. Most of the viewers went to parish pages, presumably to look up service times and other information. Think about it - some 10,000 pages of parish information were read on that one weekend alone. Is this not an opportunity for evangelism that ought to be explored?

Other services offered to our parishes

A number of parishes are using the facility that we have given (to

every parish) which enables them to email their weekly announcements to parishioners. This goes to folks who come to church and also to folks who do not make it. It's an automated service and even makes certain that your parish administrator doesn't have to type the announcements twice (web and bulletin)!

In addition to this, the parishes now file their annual vestry reports online, and in the near future will be filing their financial reports as well. This will take away hours of work, both on the part of the parish staff as well as Diocesan Resource Centre Staff. The end result is that reports such as those required for the annual synod are now automated. Voting cards, registration cards, mailing lists, mailing labels are now an automated process. We also have a wonderful database of all of our parish leaders - which enables us to communicate when necessary.

Annual Synod

The Annual Diocesan Synod is always carried live on our website. You can go there at any time during the synod (or after) to find out what is going on. Documents

and photographs are posted within seconds of the event and show immediately on the web. This is a tremendous resource to those who are interested in the growth of our diocese but unable to be at synod.

Diocesan blog

This is the newest, latest and greatest addition to our site. Eight wonderful (and generous) writers have agreed to write one reflection a week on the blog. So far it's an immense success. People are

looking daily to see what these writers have to say. The best part of this blog is that it's an acknowledgment of the fact that we have some really great thinkers in our diocese who have the ability to challenge all of us to grow in our commitment to Christ and the church. If you haven't read this blog - you really should look every day, to be challenged by some of these writings.

Program information

The web site is the centre for all the information that anyone would need about any of the diocesan programs. Whether it's evangelism, Fresh Start, Children's ministry, Youth ministry, Outreach, Stewardship...or any number of

other areas, you will find the information you need on the site.

There's nothing magical about web sites, and if they are good, like ours, then they are very easy to navigate and information is always at your fingertips. The Niagara website symbolizes a real change in church communication. Information that was not available in previous times, or difficult to get is now available to anyone who wants to take the time to find it. The site is there as a support to

We have some really great thinkers in our diocese who have the ability to challenge all of us to grow...

our parish ministries, helping parishes to promote the good work that they do, and giving them the resource they need to accomplish their mission.

Remember, anyone can get wired to the internet. At one time many didn't have televisions and those that did were considered part of the elite. Maybe some think of the internet in that way. Perhaps some think that they are too old for it. In our view, no one is too old to learn and to communicate. Everyone in our church deserves to have the information that we can provide them on the Internet. We hope that more and more members of the Anglican communion will "get wired" and tune into [www.niagara.anglican.ca!](http://www.niagara.anglican.ca)

Getting To Know You

Continued from Page 9

Benedetta's appointment as a Canon of the Diocese of Niagara. "Everyone clapped, which made me feel much better!" In January, 1990, Sr. Benedetta began teaching a one-term course in spirituality at Queen's College, St. John's, Newfoundland. She also lead a women's retreat and worked at St. Augustine's Church, where she was amazed at "the huge congregations! Newfoundland people are different. It was a wonderful experience..." even "preaching for three hours on Good Friday! So many (assignments) brought me into situations where I learned so much - I hope I've made a contribution too."

Back in Niagara, Sister went to Holy Trinity, Chippewa, for a few months of Interim Ministry, and then the Church of Our Saviour, Stoney Creek, from which she retired in 1994, to take up new service caring for ill Sisters of her Community. "I never had any training in nursing, (but) years of being alongside people who were ill and dying. It took me a long time to move through and out. It was very difficult, but I can talk about it now, and remember the Sisters with a certain amount of joy." Reflecting on her own increasing years, Sr. Benedetta speaks thoughtfully, "It was a good experience, but not easy, processing each death in terms of your relationship with each one, (and) confronting questions around death. Death is so final..."

Awarded an honorary doctorate

But there's more... In 1995, Trinity College, Toronto, awarded Sr. Benedetta an honorary doctorate - but she had to use her legal (lay) name for the University, also necessary for her other degrees and her ordination. Her work with a Tibetan Buddhist group, doing a spoken mediation, brought an invitation to Boulder, Colorado, to share a week leading workshops with three other Christians and four Buddhists - "Another wonderful experience!" she happily proclaims.

Now, this intellectual, erudite and faithful woman has "lots of energy and time to read and reflect and (with a grin) no computer! I love gardening, the

flowers, the colour!" An Honorary Assistant Priest at St. John's Church, Ancaster, Sr. Benedetta worships there, celebrating the Eucharist occasionally, as she does at St. Elizabeth's Village and Grace Villa. "I'm more at ease... (able to reconcile) how you perceive yourself... (Having done) a lot of work in spirituality and spiritual direction (for herself and for others), you have to be aware of yourself... I'm still independent, still driving, still healthy... I enjoy doing work. The work of ministry, (which has) always engaged me, is full of joy and sadness." She treasures memories of officiating at the weddings of former students and baptising their children. There are "wonderful on-going relationships from parishes and the school. I continue... to pray for people..."

Looking back, Sr. Benedetta is thoughtful: "In one way, life in a Community is a privileged time... Living alone now, after years in Community, the adjustment is difficult... but you live and work your way through these things. I live in silence, a wonderful experience in one way, but I enjoy getting out, and the pleasure of other people's company. I reflect on what I'm doing, get in touch with feelings, not try to sidestep painful things." She smiles, "I've grown into that as I've aged. I feel I've impacted so many lives, (experienced) a lot of 'firsts'."

On January 4, Sr. Benedetta travels to England to celebrate her anniversary and renew those vows she made so long ago. Asked what has been most difficult since that day, she chuckles: "Put simply, myself! I live inside my head, but my heart has come into play as I've got older. There's growth always - I've been challenged by my family and my Sisters. I've got a few opinions after sixty-five years. You have to have a sense of humour, and be able to laugh at yourself." The best? "It's an accumulation of experiences, (that has) given me an understanding of what life is about." In March, she will make an eight day retreat "to give thanks, and also look at aging!"

Our prayers and congratulations go with you, Sister Benedetta, faithful servant of your Community, our Church, and God above all!

Life in a Community is a privileged time.

Decadent Luxury, Spiritual High!



Marjorie Latimer (right), workshop leader, shares the joys of biblical gardening.

BETTY COOMBS

What does the word Spa convey to you? Luxury? Pampering? Sheer unmitigated decadence? A revelling in the sensuousness of succumbing to indulgence? Sounds pleasantly sinful doesn't it?

Does the phrase Spiritual Spa resonate in your doubting ears as a total oxymoron? Not so, as the thirty or more who attended The Spiritual Spa at St Christopher's Church in Burlington on November 13th can happily attest. Body, mind and spirit were happily engaged in the myriad of activities which were offered.

Designed as part of the Mentoring Program, a focus of Children, Youth and

Family Ministries aimed at training and supporting volunteer leaders, the Spiritual Spa has enjoyed enthusiastic and unqualified approbation since its inception three years ago. Its focus has been on encouraging leaders to find a place apart, to make time for themselves, for spiritual growth, for mental growth, for enjoyment of a facet of life which they have never had the time to explore.

Participants are usually women, often combining a job, a home and family as well as volunteer involvement in the Children and Youth Ministry of the church. Women tend to be the care-givers, the nurturers, the keepers of tradition, roles which leave little time for self. The

result? Stress, of course! This is an afternoon designed to enrich, personally and spiritually and in so doing, to alleviate stress.

Range of workshops

Each participant had an opportunity to sign up for two workshops following registration. They all looked so beguiling... Tai Chi, Biblical Gardening, Circle Dancing, Aromatherapy, Pray as You Can, Not as You Can't, to name just a few; it was difficult to choose and there were many murmurs of "Oh, I'd like to do that... but I've already signed up for two. Oh, it's so hard!"

After a brief welcome and opening remarks to clarify the format by Children & Youth Consultant, Christyn Perkons, everyone trooped off to their designated location to participate in their first workshop. As people congregated at tables in the Great Hall for an opportunity to grab a coffee or a water bottle before the second workshop, there were excited cries of "You should have come with me! It was wonderful." "Look what we made! It was just so relaxing and so personal," "I would never have believed you could pray through the arts... or find spiritual meaning in doing batik."

As participants scattered to go to their second workshop, the sense of anticipation and excitement was palpable. People still bubbled with excitement as they returned to the Great Hall and began to share experiences, compare notes, and in some cases, display objects they had created. They continued to share, not simply spa experiences, but parish experiences as they lined up at the buffet and sat down to a delicious catered dinner. As they enjoyed coffee and dessert, Christyn introduced guest speaker Chris Grabiec, who with his spouse, John Janisse, had attended the dinner.

Dinner Speaker

Chris described, at length, the stages of his own spiritual journey and how time and changes of direction had developed his spiritual growth. He reiterated for his listeners that the journey itself was an exercise in spirituality. He also challenged the group to consider the role of the church in spiritual growth and to be a part of its opening up and acceptance of all people. Comments ranged from challenging, inspiring, and thought provoking to just plain awesome!

Participants were asked to fill in an evaluation sheet before leaving. As well as naming what they particularly liked and/or found helpful, they were asked to consider the fact that funding for the program ends this year and whether they would be willing to pay more, forgo the dinner, or whether they had other solutions to offer.

Evaluations were unanimous in their desire to see the program continue. Many said that while they could enjoy the Spa without the dinner, the engendering of community and the opportunity to share experiences added a great deal to the afternoon. Most indicated that they would be willing to pay more and keep the dinner as a part of the total experience. Participants were loud in their praise of the workshop topics, the expertise of the leaders and the ensuing stress reduction. "It was so wonderful to have some uninterrupted time just for me!" was a common refrain. "I feel so relaxed and refreshed" was another frequent comment, as well as "I'm going to try that in my parish!"

There was luxury; there was a succumbing to indulgence, but there was also learning, relaxation, renewal, joy... they were all present. The poet Goethe said "Joy is an incontrovertible sign of the presence of God" Truly, in the midst of spiritual nurturing and luxury, He was there.

Midwifery, Physiotherapy and Palliative Care: A Parable

JOHN BOWEN

Once upon a time, there was a healthy little community. At least, they looked healthy. They had been healthy for quite a long time, so their self-image remained one of good health, even though the reality had changed a little over time. Because they were (in their own opinion) such a healthy community, they were served by a single family physician but no medical specialists. There had once been specialists, but the community was so robustly healthy that they began to seem a bit of an outdated anomaly in the community, and most moved on to other communities where their specialties were more appreciated. Being the family physician to this community was a good job, rewarding but not too demanding: there were sprained ankles to bandage, headaches to prescribe for, annual flu jabs to give, and occasionally the real challenge: surgery for an ingrown toenail.

As time went on, however, things changed, almost imperceptibly at first. As the community aged, the medical needs became more serious.

For example, one family were involved in a car accident, and

though no-one was seriously injured, several needed long-term help to get back into good shape. The doctor was puzzled. "Hmmm," she said, "dealing with this kind of thing is really not what I was trained for. I could bandage your ankle, of course, if that would help. And I could probably figure out how to bandage your shoulder if that's painful too."

But the family searched online, and found that other communities had people called "physiotherapists," who were trained for precisely this kind of situation. The doctor was a little nervous about their going to consult a "physiotherapist"--what kind of training did they have, after all?--but what could she say? Maybe it wouldn't do any harm. (It didn't.)

Then one of the community became seriously ill with cancer, and it was clear that the man did not have long to live. "What should we do?" the family asked the doctor. "Well, my training didn't cover end-of-life questions," she admitted. "We assumed that everyone was basically healthy. We haven't had deaths in this community for such a long time. What if I give your father a flu shot? That's something I know about, and maybe it would help."

But the family was not satisfied: "Other people must have had this kind of experience," they said. So they went online, and discovered that other communities had medical personnel specially trained in "palliative care" for the last stages of life. The doctor was dubious about this, but the family seemed to be greatly helped by the palliative care team, and, when their father died, they said to the doctor, "You know, maybe we should have a palliative care team in this community too." But she said, "I don't think we should think so negatively. I would prefer to work at keeping people healthy and alive. Then maybe we won't have to deal with this death business again." The family thought this was a sensible idea and said no more.

The other problem that began in the community was that the young people the doctor had treated since they were small began to grow up, to get married, and to talk about having children of their own. The community was not sure about this. "Look," the older ones said, "we had children twenty years ago. They were a lot of work, and frankly we don't want to go through that again, and we don't recommend that you go

through that either. We just need to accept the fact that we are a middle-aged (though healthy) community." And the doctor agreed: "My training didn't cover helping people have babies. That was popular years ago when there weren't as many families as there are now. But having babies these days is seen as a little gauche, not to mention risky. Apart from anything else, it can divert valuable resources that the rest of the community badly needs."

But the young people were not satisfied. "Other people are having children," they said, "so why can't we?" So they went online, and discovered that there were medical specialists called "obstetricians" and "midwives" and "pediatricians", and they began to consult with them.

"Be careful," warned the family doctor. "The fact that they've helped children into the world doesn't mean much. I would check into their training. I know for a fact they weren't trained at my medical school, which everyone knows is the best. I think we need to do a longitudinal study of the babies they've helped, to know whether they will live as long or as healthily as the rest of us. I have my suspicions. But

we'll know for certain in 25 years or so. And if all goes well, we can then strike a committee to consider the findings. And after a couple of years, when they've reported, then we can talk again. Okay?"

But the young people couldn't wait that long and moved to other communities where they could get the help they wanted to start their families and raise their children.

After all this, the original community continued to age. The number of people needing palliative care slowly increased. The number of people needing long-term physiotherapy grew too. But they told themselves they were basically healthy. And the doctor continued to bind up the sprained ankles and to give the annual flu shots and to give pills for headaches. Until they all died - including the doctor - without both palliative care, and a new generation to replace them.

Meanwhile, in other places, people continued to thrive, with medical care for every stage of life from birth to death. And they shook their heads every time they remembered that other community, where the doctor was only trained to deal with people in healthy midlife.

Resting in Him

GERALD BRODIE
RECTOR, CHURCH OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD

I have been reflecting upon a couple of verses from a Psalm attributed to David. My mind has been coming back to this scripture as I have found in it great encouragement.

"For God alone my soul waits in silence; from Him comes my salvation. He only is my rock and salvation, my fortress; I shall not be greatly moved." - Psalm 62:1,2 (R.S.V.)

Some commentators have suggested that this Psalm was written by David when his son Absalom staged his rebellion in order to take the throne. This was a time of great turmoil in David's life. It certainly was one of the lowest points in David's life. Emotionally David was at rock bottom. Yet David was a person who for most of his life when faced with great challenges and crises strengthen himself in the Lord. He says in Psalm 18:2.

"The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer, my God, my rock, in whom I take refuge..."

What magnificent words of David, telling us what he finds in God. These words, the words of Psalm 62, and the words of the Psalms of David tell us for him to be in the presence of God alone brought the quiet, the rest, and the encouragement for which his soul longed and needed, David found that the Lord gave something the world could not give. He found that there was no other human being, no other thing, no amount of power and no amount of prestige that could do for him what the living God could do, that is to minister to his innermost being as he lived life on this earth which can sometimes have great challenges and demoralizing crises.

So how are you feeling lately, a bit overwhelmed, a little unglued, drowning in stuff. David could say "Done that, been there." However in these times David closed his tent down and put a "Do not disturb" sign on the door knob. He realized he needed to be with his Rock of his salvation, and his fortress. David found when he did that he could say "I shall not be greatly moved." David might be somewhat moved, after all he was a human being just like us, but he was not swept away in the storm.

I happened to believe like David the investing of one's time with the Lord is a wise investment. When I do not have these times, for one reason or another, I feel somewhat impoverished inside. Life is busy. Life is full. Life has so many distractions. Yet we cheat ourselves when we fail to come to Him who so loves us that He even would send His Son Jesus Christ to earth.

A Ronde for Christ Mass

Jesus is born!
Let us with shouts of praise,
lift our hearts to heaven
and our voices raise.

O may our happy
songs forever ring
round the throne of heaven,
where the angels sing

Glory to God,
and peace begin on earth,
in the lives of all who
hail Messiah's birth.

William R. Blott

PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

- The Reverend Renée Desjardins ordained deacon on December 11th at Christ's Church Cathedral. She is licensed as Assistant Curate at Grace Church, Milton, under the direction of the Reverend Canon Dr. Mark McDermott.
- The Reverends Eleanor Clitheroe-Bell, Stephanie Pellow, Sue-Ann Ward and Jeff Ward, were ordained priests on December 11 at Christ's Church Cathedral.
- Belated wishes of sympathy to the Reverend Keith Morrison on the death of his mother, Betty. A memorial service was held on October 29.
- The Reverend Jasmine Hivale, Deacon, was issued a Bishop's Permission in the parish of St. George's, Homer and Christ Church, McNab, under the supervision of the rector and during the Diocesan Bishop's pleasure, effective November 1.
- The Reverend Donald McIntyre, retired from full time ministry and honorary assistant at Christ Church, Flamborough, died on November 12. The Reverend Donald McIntyre was ordained deacon in 1988 and priest in 1989. Prior to retirement in 1992, he ministered at St. Michael's, Hamilton. The service was held on November 17 at Christ Church, Flamborough.
- Our sympathy to Mrs. Alice Murray, mother of Canon Cathie Crawford Browning, rector of St. John's, Thorold, on the death of Alice's husband, Bert Murray, on November 19 in Barrie.
- Our sympathy to Mrs. Bonnie Powell and Canon Jim Powell on the death of



Beginning January 1, 2006, Bishop Ann Tottenham has agreed to be the Assistant Bishop in the Diocese of Niagara. Bishop Ann will help with confirmations, Sunday preaching, and special services of dedications.

Bonnie's mother, Ethel Ewing, who died on November 29. Mrs. Ewing was the widow of the Reverend Leonard Ewing. The funeral service was held at St. Alban's, Acton, on December 3.

- Five new Canons were installed on Sunday, December the 4. The following were installed in recognition of their work in education and academics: Alan Hayes, Wycliffe College; Robert Lennox, Appleby College; Brian Ruttan, Trinity College; Gerald Shantz, Ridley College and Robert Wright, St. Mark's Lecture Series.
- The Right Reverend Ann Tottenham

was appointed Assistant Bishop in Niagara effective January 1. This announcement was made at Diocesan Synod in November. Bishop Ann has agreed to take two Sunday duties a month. All requests for Bishop Tottenham should be directed to Alison D'Atri.

- The Reverend Michael Calderwood was issued a bishop's permission as honorary assistant at St. John the Evangelist, Niagara Falls, effective December 1.
- Correction from last issue: The Reverend Tom Evans, deacon, was not issued a Bishop's permission at Hagersville and Cheapside.

Bishop's Calendar January 2006

- 10th, 5 p.m. - Synod Council
- 13th, 12 p.m. - Canterbury Hills, Student Conference
- 15th, 10 a.m. - Acton, Ecumenical Service
- 26th, 2 p.m. - Cathedral Place, Meeting of the Candidates Committee
- 29th, 3 p.m. - Christ's Church Cathedral, Undermount Confirmation (Bishop Tottenham)

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