



# Niagara Anglican

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

## Lent Begins



The imposition of ashes on Ash Wednesday, 2004, by Archbishop Tutu at a staff service in St. Andrews House, London, the office of the Anglican Communion (Rosenthal/Anglican World).

## Huge Cost Savings for Parishes

JOHN JANISSE  
STAFF WRITER

We're all concerned about the financial health of our parishes. Most of us focus on the supply side of the equation: how we can bring in more money for our parish. Fundraisers, stewardship campaigns and the like are all good and necessary; but they aren't the only answer. Parish spending is the other side of the equation.

There are big savings to be had out there. But we have to work together to get the most benefit. Currently, in most parishes, a few hard-working people do the best they can to keep costs down, and diligently scrutinize new expenses to make sure that the parish is getting the best it can. Often though, the regular expenditures, such as electricity, telephone etc., don't get the same amount of scrutiny.

### Dramatic cost savings

In some parishes however, staff and officers have dramatically reduced expenses by joining programs offered by the Diocesan Resource Centre, or by purchasing regular items in bulk from commercial suppliers.

David Murray, property manager at Christ's Church Cathedral, searched on high to find savings. And he found them...in the Cathedral's lighting. "We should save about \$4,000 a year as a result of changing from incandescent to compact fluorescent lighting." David had some professional help from Jeff Mills, of Energy Efficient Lighting Agency. "Jeff has prices that are at or below others that I looked at," claims Murray. "When I asked him about going to other parishes, he said that in fact his territory included most of the Diocese, and that he would be more than happy to speak with other parishes about doing a lighting audit of their buildings."

### Safety issues as well

David is not only concerned about parishes saving money. He's also concerned about safety. "When it comes to janitorial supplies, there are so many new and different chemicals out there, and a professional supply company can provide this important information - in the form of WHMIS (workers hazardous material information system) sheets.

WHMIS sheets reduce liability from a legal standpoint, and they protect the employee from possible toxic fumes and substances, and the building from damage that can be caused when certain chemicals are mixed.

"A janitorial supply contractor will almost always have better prices, and carry professional grade products, which are better suited to cleaning public buildings, such as our churches." David claims that the Cathedral alone will save almost \$700 dollars this year purchasing through a local Hamilton company.

### Buying bulk goods and advertising

But what could be saved if the parish bought more things in bulk, or if a group of parishes pooled their purchases? He's sure that the savings would increase because of volume. "Cups and toilet paper may not be the biggest line item in any one parish's budget, but if we start with these things, we can usually find other things. What about paper, or copying costs?"

David says that the Cathedral is also looking at advertising - churches going in together in the local papers and getting a larger ad that can be shared. This has been recommended before and some high seasonal advertising has been done in some communities. In the past the will was just not there. But times change

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John Janisse

## Families' Journey through Lent Activities

CHRISTYN PERKONS  
CONSULTANT IN YOUTH MINISTRY

While Lent is clearly a liturgical season marked in the Church by reflective preparation for the great events of Holy Week, it is also a period that lends itself to family activities of spiritual renewal at home.

It begins in the kitchen on Shrove Tuesday, the day of celebration before Lent begins. Many churches have pancake suppers where your family can celebrate in community the richness of "Fat Tuesday." Or celebrate at home by making your own pancake feast and talk about how Shrove Tuesday is marked in other

cultures around the world. Traditionally, Shrove Tuesday (or Mardi Gras) was the day to use up all the meat, eggs, butter and other rich perishables that would not last through the fasting the early Church demanded during Lent. This is a perfect opportunity to create a family prayer of thanks for God's many gifts.

The following day, Ash Wednesday begins Lent, and children love to participate in the solemn Ash Wednesday service where foreheads are marked with ashes in the sign of a cross - to symbolize God's unconditional love and forgiveness and our sorrow for our wrongdoing.

Some families have a tradition of rising early to attend the Ash Wednesday service followed by a family breakfast out before heading off to school and work. What a great way to evangelize; answering questions all day long about the "dirt" on your forehead; a way for you and your children to share your God story.

Younger children can create an Easter Garden. A large rectangular aluminum cake pan can be covered with small stones, and then partially filled with potting soil. The children sow grass seed which will grow in by Easter. During Lent, encourage children to water the garden regularly, and talk with them about the importance of caring for things and people around them. You might explore with them how we can care

for God's gifts to us: our home, school, local park or neighbours that need a hand. The garden can be enhanced at Easter with a rock to symbolize the tomb, and with small spring flowers.

As a family, you might create a Tree of Life poster. After drawing an outline of a tree on a piece of poster board, have family members trace an outline of their hand on a piece of paper and cut it out. Each person should write or draw on the hand one or more ways in which they would like to become more loving (more Christ-like) during Lent. Attach the hand to the tree. Cut out a cross for each family member, and then have everyone write or draw on each person's cross how they will support their Lenten journey to become more loving. Place each

person's cross across their hand and use the Tree of Life to stimulate family discussions about the "love" journey over the forty days.

Traditionally, Lent has been a time of self denial in the church. While we rarely observe the fasts and penitential rites of the early church, as families we can support a practice of "giving up". There are a couple of activities that lend themselves to family life. Each person can identify one thing they really enjoy; for example, chocolate, coffee, videos, television, personal music devices. Consider how the money or time saved by giving up one of these could be used positively to care for others; supporting PWRDF or a similar charity or vol-

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Christyn Perkons

# Niagara Theological Student Conference

DEREK ANDERSON

An inconspicuous plaque displayed in the lobby of the Diocesan Retreat Center at Canterbury Hills informs visitors that the facility uses a ground-source heat pump for its heating and cooling requirements. Winter and summer, water is circulated to a depth below ground where the temperature remains well above the freezing mark. In winter months heat is extracted from this water and circulated through Bagnall Lodge; in the summer heat is extracted from the air in Bagnall and returned to the earth. This geothermal system is efficient and, most importantly, it is a renewable energy source. It was a group of visionary leaders who decided to invest in this system back in 1985. Clearly the plan fit with Canterbury Hills' mission to preserve forest lands and to provide opportunities for future generations to encounter God in community and in the beauty of the retreat center's grounds.

Why, you may wonder, do I begin a reflection piece about the theological students' annual conference by

praising the facility's heating system?

In brief, I think the constellation of ideas that lay behind Canterbury Hill's selection of this renewable energy source offers a helpful lens for grasping connections among the diverse presentations the students heard through the course of the weekend.

For instance, Archdeacon Vincett's stories of her encounters with leaders in the Church of England during her sabbatical tell of parishes which, when faced with extinction, sought new ways to communicate the gospel that were fresh, consistent with their unique sense of mission, and targeted to the needs of the people who pass by their doors everyday. The Archdeacon did not return from England with a file box full of cookie cutter plans that we can implement in Niagara, although more than one student thought it wouldn't be so bad to emulate the Church Army's Malt Cross pub in Nottingham. Rather she tells of communities that clarified their sense of mission, found people in their midst with the gifts and the vision to try new forms of ministry, and then gave themselves permission to take



Theological students from across the diocese at their annual gathering at Canterbury Hills.

risks. To be sure, this is what the then Canterbury Hills Committee did when it took the risk of building a heating/cooling system that would be in keeping with its mission.

Similarly, Bishop Spence's vision for ministry in Niagara also contained an invitation to adopt an entrepreneurial approach to ministry. The Bishop identified several demographic shifts that have occurred in the diocese in recent years, and encouraged the students to be adaptable and mission-focused leaders for the future.

One part of becoming this kind of leader, he pointed out, was learning effective strategies for self-care, including avoiding becoming workaholics, finding regular opportunities for deep spiritual nourishment, and making time for family and friends. Bishop Spence returned several times to the phrase, "it's an exciting time to be doing ministry in this diocese." Exciting, not least because the challenges we face are also opportunities for creativity, renewal and hope.

In various ways similar themes of

innovation and adaptation were struck in the presentations on Natural Church Development, the experience of international Anglicanism through the Canterbury Scholars Program, and the evaluation of the rapidly expanding Meeting House movement.

The conference also provided ample time to relax and hang out with colleagues. I found it energizing and affirming to spend this time learning and worshipping with so many like-minded people.

## LENTEN LETTER FROM THE BISHOP

RALPH SPENCE

Dear Friends, In 2060, the last Anglican Church in Canada will close its doors. Now I have your attention. This statistic is very accurate. If we look at our church realistically, and look at the way Christianity is progressing in our nation, we will have to agree. Does it have to be this way? Yes it does, if we continue along our same path. Can we change the path of the church in the future? Yes we can, and we can alter the outcome.

In Niagara we started a process of Evangelism. This is a great start in moving away from the predicted outcome of our church viability by the middle of this century. Evangelism in Niagara gives us the tools that we need to get out into the world and make both a statement and a difference. It is not enough though.

I have been thinking lately about our spiritual journey as a church and as individuals within the church. Last month Dean Peter Wall called us to have a hard look at the liturgical



Bishop Spence

from the example of Jesus of Nazareth. We know that his own prayer life gave him courage and wisdom to discern the will of God. So it is with us, we must also take time daily for prayer. The season of Lent, a time of conversion, is a wonderful time to work on our personal relationship with God. Every morning when I wake, my first task of the day is to spend time in reflection and prayer. I try to listen to the voice of God within, and I daily remember all of you in my time of prayer.

I encourage rectors to lead the way by helping our communities to remember their responsibility to pray individually and regularly. I say it is a responsibility - because that is the way it starts. After a time, you begin to realize the benefits. God does speak in our hearts albeit sometimes in a veiled fashion. Inevitably, if we are faithful to prayer, we will see growth in our lives. We will find ourselves more faithful to the gospel of Christ - and this is the key to reversing the trends. If the world

### Lent: A time to work on our personal relationships with God

gatherings of our community and to re-evaluate their relevance and effectiveness as we journey into the future. Our young people will be very important in this re-evaluation of our worship together. It must happen. The liturgies of today do not look like the liturgies of the second century or of the sixteenth century. They are different. They have met needs, but like all other things in life - our corporate expression of worship and spirituality must continue to grow.

We cannot ignore our own spiritual journeys as we undertake the task of altering the outcome of today's statistics. Our prayer lives, individually are so important. This is part of our heritage as Christians, and it is derived

around us sees an evangelizing and a prayerful people who are truly faithful to the gospel of love and forgiveness, they will most certainly want to walk with us.

Closing the last door of the last church? I say no. I believe that you and I will accept the call to truly continue on our journeys of conversion and growth as a community of Anglicans and as individual followers of Christ. Let's recommit to that journey during these grace-filled days of Lent.

## Families' Journey through Lent

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unteering somewhere that makes a positive difference. It's not about denying ourselves; it's about gifting ourselves to others out of love for God. Another idea: help your children identify their special gifts or talents; skills at a game, friendship, tutoring, baking and so on. Share with your children the story in Matthew 25 where Jesus talks about using talents in the Master's service. Encourage family members to think of ways they can use their talent to help someone else.

Lent is also a time to focus on prayer. If your family prayer time often focuses on the family, Lent is a good time to draw more of God's creation. Parents can create (or families can create together) a forty day prayer plan. Use one of those many calendars that come in the mail, and write on each day something to focus on during family prayers. Check the prayer calendar every morning, and encourage family members to hold that person or issue in prayer all day long. Alternately, your family could keep a journal of whom and what they are praying for on each of the forty days of Lent. Maybe this is a time for your family to try some creative ways of praying. Try writing together a traditional four line rhyme about one of the Lenten gospel stories like Lazarus being raised from the dead. Even quicker is a two line couplet like "Jesus' word/Must be heard". Want more of a challenge; try the diamond poem below to describe one of the Lenten gospel stories.

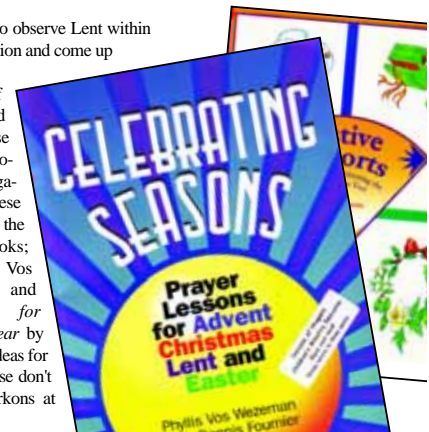
### How to Write a Diamond Poem:

Line one: one word which is an opposite of line five  
Line two: two words which describe line one  
Line three: three words which resolve the conflict  
Line four: two words which describe line five  
Line five: one word which is an opposite of line one

### Example: Jesus' Betrayal

Betrayal  
Deception, Dishonesty  
Conscience, Sincerity, Trust  
Faithful, Steadfast  
Loyalty

There are a myriad of ways to observe Lent within the family. Use your imagination and come up with something that reflects your own family culture. If you do something you would like to share with others, please send your ideas and digital photos to [christyn.perkons@niagara.anglican.ca](mailto:christyn.perkons@niagara.anglican.ca). Some of these activities were taken from the Resource Library books; *Celebrating Seasons* by Vos Wezeman and Fournier, and *Festive Allsorts: Ideas for Celebrating the Christian Year* by N. Currie. If you need more ideas for family Lenten activities, please don't hesitate to call Christyn Perkons at 905-527-1316 (ext. 460).





# An Exciting Lent



PETER WALL  
DEAN, CHRIST'S CHURCH CATHEDRAL

In this column last month, I wrote about the importance of looking carefully at what we do as we worship, and how we do it. As this month of March begins, we also enter into that wonderful season we call Lent. For most Anglicans, there

is no more definable a season in the Church than Lent. It is steeped in pious history; it has many practices associated with it, and it is clear - by that I mean that it is easy to segregate as a discrete time within the rhythm of our church's yearly cycle. It is also the season in which we have always done things 'differently'

- our liturgies change, our colour changes, the 'feeling' of our churches and our celebrations changes. It is a time, I suggest, when we can actually embrace the sometimes uncomfortable feelings of 'change' - we know, after all, that Easter is coming and then everything can go back to the way it 'should' be!

## Sundays are not included in Lent!

The history of Lent is an interesting one - for the first few Christian centuries, it really focused around a period of two or three days of fasting just prior to Easter. In the Canons of Nicaea (AD325) there is the first mention of a forty day period - reflecting the required fasting period for candidates for baptism, and also hearkening back to the fasts of Moses, Elijah, and of Jesus himself. The period of 'forty' days, of course, is also an interesting one. The only way to get to an actual forty is to begin with Ash Wednesday and go through Holy Saturday without the Sundays. This, of course, supports the ancient notion, which we, in our time have recovered, that every Sunday is a Feast day to the Lord; hence, as I often point out to worshippers at the Cathedral, if they gave up chocolate for Lent, they should have some on Sunday since it is not, technically, Lent! Only in the Church!

The season of Lent may include special weekday services in many parishes, often associated with a special series of teaching or preaching;

many communities will have special Lenten studies, using particular books or educational materials. Sundays will also provide opportunities for changed or modified liturgical practices, reflecting the images of the season, the themes of the readings, and the whole idea of preparation for Easter which Lent implies.

## Baptism and renewal at the Great Vigil

In the earliest days of the Christian era, the period leading up to the Pasch (the Greek word for 'Passover', often used to refer both to the Jewish Passover and the Christian Easter) was all about preparing for baptism. Unlike current practices (in these post-Constantinian days), baptism only happened on Easter Eve and was the culmination of a long preparation time, often years in duration. The various rites of the catechumenate (the process of preparation) were detailed and prodigious. Modern day interpretations can be seen in many contemporary catechumenal rites, particularly in the Rites of Christian Initiation of Adults, being carried out today in the Roman Catholic Church. So, even if we are not intentionally preparing baptismal candidates for Easter Eve, we are all preparing ourselves for the renewal of our own baptismal covenant which is an integral part of the Great Vigil liturgy on Easter Eve. Why not move the font (if it is moveable) to a prominent place in your church this Lent, if it is not

already there. Speak to your parish priest about the font having water in it on Sundays (and on other days for that matter) so that one may dip one's hand in it as one enters or leaves Church, as a reminder of our baptism? If your furniture moves easily, try moving some things around for Lent - move the altar, invite the choir to sit in the nave, amongst the assembly, helping them to worship even better. If you have access to a gong or a sweet sounding bell, observe this special season by including intentional silences after the readings, marked by the ringing of a bell. If your parish's practice is to use one or two of our rich library of Eucharistic prayers (remember that we have 11 of them for the *Book of Alternative Services* alone!), suggest to worship planners that, this Lent, your parish should try some of the others. If, for example, you have not used the three recently (2001) authorized supplementary prayers, give them a try. They are beautifully written and evocatively moving. There are some wonderful new hymns available - both in our book *Common Praise* and in other publications - perhaps this Lent is the time, in that wonderful six week window, to learn two or three new ones.

Ultimately, this 40 day gift (with six Sundays of riotous living thrown in) could be a time of learning, of experimentation, of daring to be different. Let's not give something up; let's take something on!

Have a happy and exciting Lent!

# Confronting the Past and Committing to the Future

CHARLES STIRLING  
HONORARY, CHRIST'S CHURCH CATHEDRAL

Some of you may find in reading these words, they may sound somewhat familiar. You're not hallucinating, or having an out of body experience. The bulk of this article was written for the Blog of January 23rd, on our diocesan web-site and I was invited to expand on it. Its final purpose, after a wander from my past to the present, is to suggest that Lent may be the ideal time to confront our past and commit to the future, a future that is not just ours alone, but one that should be shared in harmony with the futures of others.

Of late, for some reason unexplained, I have wandered several times into reflections on past years, mostly childhood years, their experiences and their memories. My sister loves these writings and encourages me to reach back and remember more of them. Perhaps it is, in growing older; one is more in touch with the past. I'm sure some professional can find reasons for this, and charge OHIP by the hour to reveal them. However, this time it was specific childhood memories of war which came back to me just weeks ago, while in Germany. This was, for me on the whole, a good experience. There remains for all of us the reality that we need to remember visiting in the past is one thing, living in the past today is quite another. The past is shadows and memories, while the present is the very real here and now.

## Gathered around the radio

My maternal grandfather had a large floor model radio with a short wave band. During the years of the Second World War, we would gather around it, much as people did with the

advent of the small early television screens, to hear the news. We always did this, at Christmas, to hear the messages of King George VI. Whenever something important was being broadcast, it seemed that no one was more than three feet from the set staring at it intently. On the short wave band we could get Europe and were convinced that among the many things we heard, we had been able to pick up some of Hitler's bellicose rantings.



Charles Stirling

Then again, we did not speak German, so who knows for sure.

This, combined with news broadcasts, raw news reels at the cinemas, together with war movie re-creations that revealed a world gone completely mad, saw to it no one was ever far from the devastating reality of those unforgettable days, even children. Clearly recalled is a captured film, shown at the Savoy Theatre, in Hamilton, of men, women and children machine gunned to death, because their Dutch village had harboured downed allied fliers. The cinema was filled with kids, because it was a war effort event and you can imagine the effect. We had brought scrap foil and cellophane in order to see the feature movie, *Song of the South*.

## Images of hate

There is no doubt about it; the war cast a shadow over my young life. I have clearly retained the memories, from these sources, of great assemblies of people, right arm extended upward saluting the little corporal and demonstrating their support of a new order, in which goose-stepping troops would loom large. I can recall the images of swastika banners and iron eagles which were marched across Europe and so visible at the Berlin Olympics, where a

black man bested the best of the Arian race.

On December 28, 2005, I was in Nuremberg, renowned for its place in the events the brought National Socialism to the forefront of German post WW1 politics. Nuremberg was also renowned for the WW2 war crimes trials that were deliberately held in that city, by the victorious allies, as some sort of retribution.

Standing at the reviewing stands on the Zeppelin Field, where 340,000 spectators could gather and 100,000 soldiers would demonstrate the might of this movement and where Hitler stood at his podium was an eerie experience. Eerie, in part, because some of this space has been converted to new and happier uses and some of the marble structures have been demolished, while the rest of the site is eroding away. There is no memorial or national historic site dedicated to the lasting memory of that mad, mad time, not even tourist dollars, or is that Euro, to be made hawking souvenirs. Most people in Nuremberg would be happy if no one came to view the site.

## All too real

Eerie also, because I could envision one of those rallies. Out of my real and assisted memories of those times, I seemed to be able to call up the scene, see and hear the crowds and meditate on the incredible carnage, destruction and death these events would set in motion, forever changing the world and its peoples and creating a new world order, albeit not the one that had been envisioned. It was all too real, but there was some sort of catharsis that said to me: "it is done, even if the cost was enormous, they did not succeed, what they built is in ruins." The vision faded and was gone. Yet, I know in the unfolding of human history such cataclysmic times occurred

before, are occurring and have the potential to occur again.

We have to be vigilant and work harder in our age, as confessed people of God, at building a more secure world, for always there seems to be somewhere in our world or our society and in faith communities, sometimes too close for comfort, an individual, a movement, or an ideology that threatens collective and individual peace, justice and basic freedoms for everyone. Any number of concepts for society has begun as reasonably acceptable possibilities until power and the desire for control renders them corrupt. Not to be excused from this scenario is the universal Church, whose collective history is filled with all manner of crimes against humanity, the perpetuating of ignorance and intolerance, and the need to control to protect its power and assumed authority, all this, the unwanted, perverted heritage of the Good News of Jesus Christ.

## Lenten focus and commitment

Many people among us seem unwilling, or unmotivated to make a commitment to be truly informed, well and broadly educated and wholly committed to the objective, that such a person and/or movement must not take root in our communities, nation or in our Christian communities. As people of the Resurrection we need to be life giving, life sustaining, advocating, defending, comprehensive and loving.

Finally and to this end, we might find some personal value in observing Lent as a time to get in touch with what we believe in faith and what we could claim as our mission and our witness, great or small in our world. Much depends on each one of us to work actively to guarantee the worst elements of our human nature are suppressed for the common good of all people.

# Narnia and Evangelism Part 2 of 2

*John Bowen teaches evangelism at Wycliffe College in Toronto, and is a member of St. John the Evangelist in Hamilton.*

JOHN BOWEN

The Narnia series began in 1950 with the publication of *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*. This was two years before *Mere Christianity*, but six years after the last of the radio broadcasts on which it is based. Whether or not Lewis was aware of it at first, the Narnia stories demonstrate a quite different approach to evangelism. There is no attempt to begin by convincing people they are sinful. They do not argue in a linear, rational fashion that Christianity is true. In fact they do not argue at all. After all, they are children's fantasies.

Perhaps then we are wrong to think of them as trying to help people towards Christian faith. But Lewis' own words confirm that he did think of them as evangelistic: "I thought I saw how stories of this kind could steal past a certain inhibition which had paralyzed much of my own religion in childhood... Supposing that by casting all these things into an imaginary world, stripping them of their stained-glass and Sunday school associations, one could make them for the first time appear in their real potency? Could

one not thus steal past those watchful dragons? I thought one could."

## Christianity is life giving

Lewis is concerned for people like himself who thought they knew Christianity, but had never really known or experienced it as healthy and life-giving. In his life, his experience of church on the one hand and his experience of the things that touched him most deeply on the other were totally different. It took many years before he came to realise (through conversation with Tolkien) that the thrill he found in mythology was not an end in itself but merely (to use his own image) a signpost pointing him for its fulfillment toward faith in Christ. The mythology of Narnia, he felt, might provide a similar kind of signpost to point people to Christ.



John Bowen

Lewis is the master of metaphor, and it is not surprising that he gives another image for what he was doing in Narnia to his friend and biographer, George Sayer:

"His idea, as he once explained to me, was to make it easier for children to accept Christianity when they met it later in life. He hoped they would be vaguely reminded of the somewhat similar stories that they had read and enjoyed years before. 'I am aiming at a sort of pre-baptism of the child's imagination.'"

The Gospel may not yet have reached people's minds or their wills, but if their

imagination has been captured by Narnian images of redemption, then when they hear the Gospel, it will resonate more readily because of that work of preparation done by the Narnia stories.

In this way, Lewis is a kind of John the Baptist, preparing the ground for the hearing of the Gospel, perhaps years later. Now however, unlike the Lewis of *Mere Christianity*, he is coming at it through the door of the imagination, not of the mind.

## Christian beliefs are compelling

So what is there in the Chronicles that can be understood as evangelistic or pre-evangelistic? Karl Barth says somewhere: "The best apologetics is a good dogmatics," meaning, I think, that Christian beliefs, as they emerge from the Christian story, are themselves more compelling than any intellectual argument. If so, there is a wealth of good apologetics in the Chronicles, because behind Lewis the storyteller, is Lewis the teacher, and somewhere in the Chronicles you will find an incarnation of almost every traditional Christian belief.

**...and somewhere in the Chronicles you will find an incarnation of almost every traditional Christian belief**

Below the surface there are theologies of such things as creation, the image of God, stewardship of the world, and the nature of sin and evil; there is (of course) a Redeemer who dies because of sin and is raised again; there is a doctrine of the Spirit (the breath of Aslan); there are experiences of conversion, and lessons in repentance, faith, and obedience; there is even the end of the world, a final judgement, a heaven and a hell.

## Lewis hopes for response

All that is lacking is the traditional evangelist's altar call - but Lewis has already told us he cannot do "the heart stuff." Yet it seems to me that, in spite of his words, Lewis is not simply baptizing readers' imaginations, preparing them for a future response. He actually hopes for more, that people will begin to respond to Jesus, both immediately and in the future, through his stories.

Why do I say this? There are several occasions in the Chronicles when Lewis comes close to giving away the identity of Aslan. One, for example, is in *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*, where Lucy visits the house of the magician Koriakin, reads through the book of spells, and comes across a story which takes up three pages and tells "about a cup and a sword and a tree and a green hill." She says, "That is the loveliest story I've read or ever shall read in my whole life." Yet as soon as the story is done, she can't remember it, and she can't turn the pages back. She asks Aslan, "Will you tell it to me, Aslan?" And he says, "Indeed, yes. I will tell it to you for years and years."

So I think we are meant to imagine Lucy back in our world, knowing only that she had once read the most wonderful story, wondering how Aslan will keep his promise, and then discovering, in the most unlikely place in our world, people who treasure a story about a cup and a sword and a tree and a green hill. And as she learns more about the story, she realises that Aslan is keeping his promise.

Maybe the clearest clue, however, is at the end of *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*. There the children meet Aslan in the form of a lamb, who has prepared breakfast for them on an open fire in a beach. The children are about to return to our world, and Lucy is upset because they will not meet Aslan any more.

Aslan, however, reassures her: "But you shall meet me, dear one."

"Are you there too, sir?" said Edmund. "I am," said Aslan. "But there I have another name. You must learn to know me by that name. That was the very reason you were brought into Narnia, that by knowing me for a little, you may know me better there."

Lewis' intention is that readers, having got to know Aslan in Narnia, should try to discover Aslan's "other name" in our world, and indeed that what they have learned about Aslan will help them in getting to know him in our world.

## Pointed in the right direction

Like the good teacher he is, Lewis does not spell things out for us, but points us in the right direction, and lets us discover the truth for ourselves. Most evangelists are reluctant to do this! Lewis however is content to sow seeds, nurturing curiosity that he trusts will lead people to consider or reconsider the stories of Jesus without the interference of the

watchful dragons. Is this evangelistic? In the sense of calling for an immediate decision to follow Jesus, no. But if evangelism involves all kinds of words whose intention is help people take steps towards faith in Jesus, then the stories of Narnia certainly count.

Some will want to ask, "Does it work?" I realise that one example is hardly a convincing sample, but, for what it is worth, a friend of mine has recently become a follower of Jesus, and reading the Narnia stories over the summer was a significant part of her journey to faith. With her permission, I'm going to share some of the questions that reading the Chronicles rose for her:

What have I been created (designed) for? Who am I meant to be? I found the whole creation scene (in *The Magician's Nephew*) very moving. It has made me realise that rather than simply being created, I've been called to life for a purpose.

I've been questioning my work anyway: reading about how the dwarves loved making the crowns (what they were made to do and thus what they do well) has made me question it in another way - "Where does my passion lie?" "What is it that I have been made to do well?"

## God accepts us

What are the things that stop me following Aslan (like Susan in *Prince Caspian*)? This is one I really need to work on.

The way Aslan accepts people and their failings has made me understand much better how God accepts us (and question how I accept myself and others).

I cannot imagine that (humanly speaking) any amount of preaching would have caused her to ask such questions. But Narnia reached very deep into her soul, and drew her very directly to Aslan. In her case, the watchful dragons were certainly driven back.

Lewis leaves me with many questions about evangelism. Many people in our world are guarded by the watchful dragons - they can smell religiosity a mile off and they do not want it - so how do we get round the dragons, so they can encounter a Christian faith that is deeply satisfying and life-giving? I believe that if the movie of *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* succeeds in disarming some of the watchful dragons, it is an essential contribution to the process we call evangelism. And unless such sowing and watering takes place, there will never be any reaping.

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# Rescuing the Zebra out of Narnia

*Judy Steers works as a consultant in Children's and Youth ministries, and teaches in the Faculty of Theology at Huron University College in London. She is a member of the Church of the Transfiguration, St Catharines*



## A Challenge to What We Consider 'Evangelism'

JUDY STEERS

I find myself quite struck (and often disturbed) by how much *The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion the Witch and the Wardrobe* has been promoted as an Evangelism tool. Let me explain why I react like this, and why others might agree.

*Christianity Today* recently featured an interview with Douglas Gresham, step-son of C.S. Lewis, about the movie and the role he played as co-producer of the film. Here's a brief excerpt from the interview:

**Christianity Today:** Christians are concerned that this film retains the apparent Christian imagery...

**Gresham:** You have to bear in mind that Hinduism has a dying god who dies for his people, then comes back. Norse mythology has the dying god. Greek mythology has the dying god. This myth is not new and it's not unique to Christianity. Yes, Christians who watch the movie or read the book will look for Christian symbolism. But I think that's the wrong way to approach it. I think it's far better to read the book or see the movie and try to find out where you fit into Narnia... How you would react under these circumstances? (Which character) are you?

### Evangelism tool

It is interesting to note that even C.S. Lewis didn't think of his Narnia books as being an allegory as such. One way he described the stories is a 'supposing' rather than an allegory. Lewis said, "I did not say to myself 'Let us represent Jesus as He really is in our world by a Lion in Narnia.' I said, 'Let us suppose that there were a land like Narnia and that the Son of God, as he became a man in our world, became a Lion there, and then imagine what would happen.'"

So, to advocate for Narnia as an 'evangelism tool', that is, to take people to see the movie with the specific intent of converting them to Christianity is, I think, inappropriate, and possibly counter-productive as I will elaborate. Yes, this and other films can certainly help us

reflect on the Gospel and the spiritual life. I know of many church youth workers and educators who have also used films such as *The Matrix*, *The Lord of the Rings*, and (ironically) *Harry Potter* as Christological allegory and discussion starters, but we wouldn't think of promoting those films as 'evangelism tools.'

Now, before you suppose I don't like the books or the film, I did indeed see the film - twice - with both friends and family. We all loved it. But I wouldn't invite someone to see it with an 'evangelistic' intent, because there is something not-quite-right about the world that is represented and its theological underpinnings.

### A dualistic world

Let me consider the original story, and CS Lewis. What an author writes is based on an author's worldview, and a writer cannot claim to be uninfluenced by their worldview. CS Lewis was writing this book for a British audience whose memory of World War II was as fresh as our memory of 9/11. In Lewis' world, a dualistic notion of human conflict was much starker in people's minds, and perhaps more socially acceptable. Narnia's characters are those who are on the side of Right, and those who are not. If you want a hint about the dualistic nature of Lewis' world, read forward into the next books, which are rife with anti-Semitism, sexism, and anthropocentrism (man as center of creation, rather than a symbiotic part of it). This does not mean I don't like the books - my daughter and I are enthusiastically reading them - but the theology and worldview embedded in the symbolism is sometimes incongruent with a 21st century theological understanding or worldview. A Mennonite friend of mine took her non-Christian friend (a young adult, in his twenties) to see the movie. He liked the story, until he was told that it was a Christian allegory. Then, he was horrified. Suddenly what he saw in the movie was a sub-plot of Western Industrial Christianity's

'domination' of creation and a good vs. evil dualistic worldview that demonized and sought to conquer the 'Other'. "If that's Christianity", he said "I don't want any part of it!" A post-baby-boom audience is indeed wary of a Christianity that embraces an 'us vs. them' worldview ruled by absolutes. This wariness is (in Lewis' words) the "watchful dragon" of this generation.

In the world we inhabit today, we are cautious of seeing things in the absolutes of Good and Evil, though it is not uncommon for us to try to cast one another, or situations, in those roles. Yes, dualisms do still exist, but perhaps are no longer appropriate, in that they lead to such sins as racial profiling, environmental exploitation, classism, and bigotry.

### We are all like the zebra

In the film, people were either 'on the absolute good side' or 'on the absolute bad side'. The good creatures were good-looking, kindly and brave (and clean). The evil characters were greasy, ugly and taunting. As it is in many stories and films. It is not so easy to assign such roles in this world. Rather, we are all like the zebra in the Shel Silverstein poem who is asked "Are you black with white stripes? Or white with black stripes?" and probably replies with questions like "are you good with bad parts, or bad with good parts? My experience of the world tells me that our lives are a mysterious mix of curse and blessing, of wounds and balms and the corresponding zebra-like uncertainty as to our true natures.

### God calls us to listen

In the film, I felt like Edmund was truly 'set up', and was cast in a bad light without ever having the chance to expose or encounter what he wrestled with. In the beginning of the film, he runs back into the house during a bomb raid to rescue the photograph of his soldier father, whom he obviously loves and misses. A noble act, for which he is chastised (and rightly so, but nobody listened to Edmund's feelings in the desperate moment). His relationship with his elder brother is conflicted, and he doesn't know how to resolve that. He feels shamed, and responds with spite and teasing. Wouldn't you? Cold and confused in Narnia, he encounters a woman who feeds and warms him, oblivious to the fact that the woman has murderous intent. The Turkish delight is pronounced by some as the allegory of sin and temptation, but if you were a cold and hungry 10 year old, wouldn't you innocently eat it? I certainly would, without a thought for the motive of this charming lady wrapped in fur, who asked about my family and wanted to meet my siblings. Edmund finds himself an abused prisoner the moment he steps into the witch's castle - which I find reminiscent of the many times in my life I have found myself unintentionally in a bad situation when I have let my hurts and angers overwhelm me. That doesn't make me bad. It makes me part of the human family. Our God does not destroy or usurp our utterly human nature,

rather, calls us to listen to the parts of ourselves which draw us into a right relationship with one another; to choose to heal, rather than destroy; to forgive, rather than conquer. In the real world, there is no absolute enemy, nor any vanity of extra-personal evil to blame things on, rather, the challenge to overcome that within ourselves which draws us away from each other and from God. One of the greatest challenges we have to overcome is self-loathing, and to act from a place where we know ourselves to be gifted, blessed creatures of God.

The double-agent fox, who is not trusted, the faun, who wrestles with his own fears in debating whether to turn Lucy in, and the hurt and confused boy who unwittingly betrays... these are all realistic characters to me.

### Take a deeper look

This film shares good news, but no more so than any other film which speaks to our human nature, challenges us to rise above our own self doubt, encourages us to be faithful to our friends and family and those who call us into solidarity, and to look beyond ourselves for strength and courage to choose what (we believe) is right. And blessedly, when we fail, there is redemption.

In considering what media we might promote as "Evangelism" I believe we should take a deeper look at what themes or sub-plots are being told alongside, and what kind of view of "Christianity" we may unintentionally be portraying.

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# A Blogger's Journey through the Death of a Loved One

DAVID HOWELLS

RECTOR, ST. DAVID AND ST. PATRICK, GUELPH

Late in 2005 Chris Grabiec invited several people to offer a weekly Blog on the diocesan website. "Just your thoughts, only a paragraph, no bragging or preaching." I accepted thinking, "What on earth will I have to say that anyone could want to read?" As it happened my mother died during this Christmas period, and I found that the weekly discipline of writing my blog was the place when this part of my life came into focus. The entries are very personal. Someone once told me, "The personal is the most general."



David Howells

## December 15th

On Thursday, when I was supposed to be writing this, my mind was no longer working. I had what you might call a body blow. My mother is slipping out of life through senile dementia. TIAs, a bit like Alzheimer's. I have a father and a sister in England. They live near each other, near the nursing home where my mother is. My father called, full of jagged energy, saying she was seriously ill, a deep stroke, lung infection, close to death. I listened to his aloneness, his despair, his powerlessness. I listened to his anger. My sister called. My mother is Ok, she is not fine, but was eating in the dining room the day before. The staff told her that she was nowhere close to death. I heard my sister's anxiety about being optimistic, her fears for her husband's health, her own and her mother-in-law's. I heard her being bullied and hedged in by her father's frantic pain. "I hear my mother is dying. I should be thinking about her. All I can think about is how to manage Dad. It's not fair." she said. My mother is like a small needle point. On either side of her I feel buffeted by my father and sister. But the need-

le slips deeper into me as she slowly dies away, so far away. I am left stupid. I am unable to think straight. I leave papers lying around the office and my house as I leave one task unfinished and move urgently to the next. I arrange Christmas Communion with women my mother's age and in my mother's place of journey. If this were someone else I could think my way through it. I could bring sense and

context, perspective and meaning. As you read you will be doing this. But my mind is embodied. In my soul-body there is a deep needle numbing it, stilling it. In my prayers my head-mind flits like a bug over the stillness of my soul. I think God is now in my mother's body. She will not have been abandoned, but there is not much brain left. I doubt her prayers are more eloquent than my dumb presence. My parish and friends will find me dysfunctional. I find myself that way. I believe, though, perhaps, it is in the body-mind's dumb silence that I am being brought close to her, and close to God. I shall never know. But that is the nature of faith.

## December 22nd

Entry into the community of the bereaved is like crossing a date line in the ocean. I knew it happened because I got the phone call. "Your mother died this evening." I was in church singing carols about a newborn baby as my mother's breath decreased and decreased and then stopped. What is death? What is that date line and what is passing over it? What is the birth line for the baby Mary had? Of course, I knew the answers to these questions. How many times in 25 years have I walked beside people, and even helped them find their way forward. My head knows it. But that is a cool knowing. There, inside my body, my wind-pipe goes hard, tense, as a pre-

monition of tears. But they do not come. Driving, at a traffic light, I notice a feeling of sadness, as if something sad happened, but I have temporarily lost track of it. Maybe the echo of last night's dream. In my "waking life" I have been running around, full of pre-Christmas busyness. But I feel like something else is dormant, waiting to be born. People ask how I am, and tell me they are sorry. Some look hard into my eyes. I feel a bit of a fraud. I feel I should be feeling something profound. When my children were born I felt none of the earth shifting emotions other fathers had predicted. I just got children. Some people get God in a wallop of sudden shock. Some slowly realise something must have quietly happened to them. God slipped in the side door some time ago and just seems to live here now. I expect I shall realise I am bereaved some time in the future. I will be able to date when it must have begun, the date line, 4th Sunday of Advent, evening. And though I cannot remember my children's birth dates, when faced with a form, they fill the movement of my heart each day. So my mother's life and death will settle into its place. But not yet, not quite yet.

## December 29th

Bereavement in the second week, Christmas passed, has an odd feeling. As I sit around the kitchen table with my friends, eating Christmas cake and drinking tea, I feel content and engaged. Mostly. Most of me is, but there is an enlarging part of me which is inclined to be somewhere else. It feels as if there is a silence. A movie without a musical soundtrack running. "My father was a wandering Aramean..." the invocation to be people who are in the world but not of to it. "No need to stand up gentlemen, I'm just passing through..." The odd sense of detachment and quietness. On a summer day at the lake, everyone is talking, laughing and the air is full of noise, then you dive off the dock. The entry is deafening but as you drift slowly

upwards it is so silent. All that noise and life lies just above the filmy separation of water and air. Part of me keeps slipping under the water. Perhaps this is what death is like and grief is just a glimpse ahead. Perhaps this is what mystical experience is like too. We live simultaneously in worlds of spirit and of what we touch and see. Worlds of the head and of the heart. We intersect them and only seldom know it.

## January 5th

"In the midst of life we are in death... make us, we beseech Thee, deeply aware of the shortness and uncertainty of human life..." I said at my mother's funeral last week. The air was thick with fog as the funeral limo drove us through what could not be seen of the English countryside near the south coast. What could not be seen? The thousand possibilities of death in my own body. Triggers waiting to be pulled, car crashes, aircraft disasters. A slip on the stairs. It cannot readily be seen that we live in the midst of death. Someone told me once that your death is like a shadow that is with you from birth, best made friends with. Meditate on Golgotha says Ignatius. And life is uncertain. In my precarious family of origin, like where the earth's skin is shallow and fragile, angers can break out, hot and destructive, explosive. Life is uncertain. Can civility be maintained? Can the appearance of love survive? Or what will be left if carnage ensues? Funerals bring out the worst too. These last weeks have revealed the illusion of order and meaning that gives direction and pattern to thoughts and beliefs. Stories we tell of ourselves that make us belong in the right place. Paper lanterns faced with rain. I sat in an English church pew, coated and gloved, on Sunday. Old stones and old sacraments have weathered a million families like my own. Often I look for God in my life, but there I looked for my life, and my mother's, in God. "In the midst of

life we are in God... make us, we beseech Thee, deeply aware of the eternity and stability of Thy love." I need to say.

## January 22

I am late blogging. I have had to dig out my Windows 95 computer, when Pentium chips were not numbered, and write in the hope of uploading this from a floppy to the web. I thought it a wry joke that my computer should grow sick and die. A brief period in computer hospital revealed its terminal state. My MOTHER board is on its way out!

Things die. People die. Some are inconvenient, some are sad. The seasons come and go and so do we. There is an illusion of permanence that I embrace. I am, after all, a child of my age and I naturally believe every advert I see on TV. But everything is passing, spending brief moments here. I heard that if you took the whole time-line of life on this planet, and you stretched it out on your arms from the end of your left finger tip to your right, just one stroke of a Emery board would erase the human race. Definitely transience. And perspective-giving.

So I am left with the joyful, liberated feeling that I am free to be the most alive me I can be. My brief passage is not of earth-shattering significance (a mid-life moment of truth) so I am free to rejoice in the life God has given me. Still focused on death I can exult in living. So I am renovating my kitchen. Exultation has peculiar expressions. After all, you have to ask yourself, would God be glad that you lived a safe and narrow life, or would she not perhaps ask, "Did you have fun?"

## January 26th

The last of my blogs. It is an odd thing to send your thoughts and heart out into a blog, not knowing who will read it. There is an intimacy that is possible in the distance between a preacher and a congregation. It is the immediate reply which is missing. Lucy used to be in a clergy support group. They would gather and take turns to say how life was. The struggles, the joys, the hopes and fears. The rule was of respectful listening. A question of clarification, but no replying, no problem solving. But these are face to face, both these quiet intimacies. Blog has no face, and little feedback. Has this enabled me to be deeper in truth? Maybe blog is like prayer. In prayer I can lay my heart bare before God. I know I am heard. There is understanding without judging. There is no immediate reply. Just the knowledge that what has happened has happened in sacred space, sacred time. And having been 'spoken' (like the word which goes forth and does not return...) it has changed me. Perhaps the first answer of prayer is the change it brings into the person who has let out their secret self to God. The time of my blog was in an important moment of my life as my mother died. It enabled me to put into words that moment. For those of you who read along, especially those who offered their silence, I thank you.



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# Church Architecture Influences Worship



Holy Trinity, Chippawa

ALAN L. HAYES  
THE ITINERANT CHURCHGOER

How physical space is organized in our church influences our worship in three very large ways.

First, it helps determine what can actually happen - where we can sit, stand and move, where speakers can be seen and heard, what will draw our attention, and so on.

Second, it influences how we feel. It's one thing to stand surrounded by the eternal serenity of Notre-Dame Cathedral in Paris, another thing to be sitting among folding chairs in a gym with a portable altar. And in different contexts, different styles of worship will feel appropriate.

Finally, the organization of space itself conveys messages about what we believe. A church in the shape of a cross, a baptismal font at the entrance to the church, and a resurrection window over the altar, all tell us something about salvation in Christ.

In our diocese of Niagara, I've come across three main designs of church building.

## The neo-classical

First is the neo-classical style of architecture. Our only examples, I think, are Holy Trinity, Chippawa (1841), and St. John's, Ridgeway (1841). Ridgeway is a whitewashed frame building, and Chippawa is in brick.

These are stately buildings with a regular and symmetrical appearance. Their straight lines and right angles, with a few gently curved arches, suggest harmony with the mathematical principles of the universe. Their weight is carried on columns of Greek order.

These buildings are made for the spoken voice, suggesting that our faith is built on the preaching of the word and Christian instruction. They remind us of ancient Greek city-states and New England town halls, and so convey the message that our faith is civic-minded, public, enlightened, participatory, and important. Everything is visible and open.

## The gothic

Around 1842 the gothic revival began, and it turned out to be as unstoppable as a Sherman tank. For

the next 120 years Anglicans were indelibly sealed at baptism with the conviction that only gothic architecture should ever, ever be used for a church.

I actually like gothic architecture a lot. But as readers of this column know, I like openness to diversity better.

Gothic churches have tall walls, high ceilings, and vertical lines, with light streaming from above through clerestory windows, all directing our eyes to the heavens. The message is that God's grace and holiness are far greater than anything we can ask or imagine, and that they come streaming down into our lives without any prior invitation or permission from us. Patterns of pointy-topped arches direct our gaze upwards too.

Horizontally, our attention is drawn to the altar. This stands remote and protected within an architectural space distinct from where the congregation stands or sits. The terminology used for the two-room church is that the congregation is in the nave, the altar and clergy in the chancel. This division evokes a sense of the mystery of Christ, both revealed and hidden. It can also promote clericalism.

## Niagara examples

There are literally scores of examples of gothic architecture in the diocese of Niagara. I find Ascension, Hamilton (1851) particularly impressive outside, while St. George, Guelph (1873) is just gorgeous inside. Both are in stone. A much smaller example in clean fresh-looking red brickwork that I really like is St. Luke, Hamilton (1898).

In Canada below the tree-line and in the northern United States, because there were lots of trees, church architects who wanted to use local materials developed a carpenter gothic. The most stunning example I know is a simple red oak Episcopal Church near the Noshotah Lakes in Wisconsin, in Delafield. In our diocese, St. Luke's, Palermo (1845), in Oakville, is a really sweet whitewashed country gothic church. It's no longer in the country, though. About 12,000 people now live within a five minutes drive.

So obsessed were Canadian Victorian Anglicans with the gothic that they gothicized most of their pre-1842 churches. Our oldest surviving church building in the diocese, St. Mark's, Niagara (1816), sprouted chancel and transepts. The lovely, simple St. Luke's, Burlington (1838) was rudely updated with a chancel and a narthex with a gothic-style door.

There was one big exception in our diocese to the reign of the gothic: St. Thomas, St. Catharines. It deserves a whole column. I'll talk about it next month.

## A liturgical revolution

In the 1960s a revolution in worship exploded on us. We call it the Liturgical Movement, and it was an ecumenical, international, rather elitist school of thought and sensibilities whose best known product in our little world was the Book of Alternative Services.

Its mantra was: "Everything medieval is bad, bad, bad." Late medieval piety and liturgy were clericalistic, individualistic, exces-

sively penitential, world-despising, superstitious, and generally creepy.

The laity should be much more involved in liturgical leadership, it said. The Lord's table should be central, not remote. Worship should connect the gospel with the modern world, not the medieval world.

Congregations that were stuck with gothic churches often made ad hoc changes. For instance, they might celebrate the Eucharist from an altar that was moved into the crossing, trying to ignore the chancel.

## Contemporary churches

So as we built new churches after 1960, we increasingly took into account Liturgical Movement thinking. Contemporary churches have come to look more and more anti-gothic.

The newest church in the diocese, and one which I personally find very appealing, is the Church of the Incarnation, Oakville (2000). The magazine Canadian Architect describes its style as "simplicity" in a "modernist language," and that

seems accurate to me.

One wall of the worship space is made of windows, opening the church to the world, instead of withdrawing people from it as gothic churches do. There's no chancel separating clergy and altar from people; instead, layfolk and clergy sit together, around the Lord's Table. There are no pews; the worship space is extremely flexible and subject to rearrangement from week to week. The sightlines and lighting are predominantly horizontal and diagonal, not vertical. That design conveys the message that grace comes to us through nature and from one another, not directly "from above." Unlike typical gothic, with its highly detailed stonework, Incarnation has a "minimal material palette," in the words of *Canadian Architect*. Don't you love how architects talk?

I think we're enriched by having a diversity of building styles, a reflection of the diversity of our theological thought and liturgical sensibilities, all towards the adoration and service of our one Lord, Jesus Christ.

# From the Mouths of Babes

LINDA MOORE  
THE CANADIAN CENTRE FOR LEADERSHIP AND HUMAN VALUES

In most spiritual communities there appears to be importance placed on sacrifice and denial. And yet I often wonder if any of us truly understand why these two disciplines hold such high value. Is it the outward expression of forgoing personal pleasure? Is it the conscious curbing of desires? Is it the heightened awareness of our humanness and interest in self gratification? If something is done out of duty or because it is "tradition" in what way does that action either bring us closer to ourselves or to making a meaningful contribution in the world, especially if it doesn't resonate within us? I had no answers to my questions until a young girl of six brought me to a new and deeper understanding.

Meghan Quinn is six years old. She is pretty and smart and athletic. She is healthy, adventurous and willful. She is artistic, musical and an extremely skilled competitive Irish dancer. She is fun and at times likes to be silly. She is my friend.

Recently I found out that Meghan is in the midst of an exceptional experience that involves a unique perspective of both denial and sacrifice, I believed expressed in the best possible way.

Meghan is on her way to India with her parents and some other fellow travelers as we explore leadership from a global perspective. Knowing she was going to India, Meghan on her own took time out to investigate and compare the Indian culture from a child's perspective and compared that with her experience of being a child in Canada. When she gets to India she plans to attend a school there for a few days and share stories with the new friends she will make. Her faithful assumptions of a collective experience, shines through her. A truly grand adventure for a six year old!

In preparing for the trip she was told explicitly that she would only be able to take carry-on luggage and that no bags were going to be checked. Last week she went to her father and said that there was a bit of a dilemma. She said that it was now going to be impossible not to have a least one large bag to check. She then proceeded to explain the situation to her dad. She had been giving a great deal of thought to her Indian trip. When she was two she met my friend Debashis Chatterjee, world-renowned thought leader and an amazing human being. They had an instant connection and their special rela-

tionship has only grown stronger over the years. Recently Debashis and another friend of ours, Anoop, have started a school for orphaned girls with their own resources and hope to support thirty young girls through their lives until they have completed all their formal education and have found a successful and sustainable place in their society. Meghan knows of their dream and had plans to visit their school while in India. In the core of her soul she knew the generosity that lay within Debashis and Anoop. She knew of their sacrifice and denial gladly made to create and support the school and she was moved by it.

Meghan decided that she would take all her Barbie dolls, their clothing and accessories and bring them to India and give them to the girls at the school. Moreover she wanted to shop for a child's sari before she visited the school so the girls would not think her too strange with her fair skin and blonde hair. She especially didn't want them to think she felt she was better than them. Hence the need for a large suitcase that needed to be checked!

No one told her to do this act of great kindness. No one talked to her about denial or sacrifice. She simply searched her heart and knew what she wanted to do. I sat down with Meghan to ask her why she had decided to contribute in this way. Her answer was simple and profound. "I have more than I need and I don't play with my Barbies very much. I think that the girls at the school probably don't have too many toys and would love the dolls. Doing it makes me feel good."

I am blessed to have Meghan as my friend. She has taught me much about denial and sacrifice. At its core it is about a heightened awareness of others and then mobilizing that awareness in action. It is about grace and graciousness. It is about simplicity in the giving. It is about denying the myths and stories we make up about lack or abundance. It is about effortlessly stretching ourselves into our innate goodness. Above all it is about sacrificing what is less important to follow our life's purpose, our unique gift to human kind, our individual contribution.

Meghan's contribution goes far beyond her act of generosity. From the mouths of babes comes the deep wisdom of the true meaning of sacrifice and denial. It is the reverse of everything I understood it to be. In that new knowing, Meghan has now challenged me to simply be "more." Thanks Meghan!



Alan L. Hayes



Linda Moore



# In the Meantime: Wilderness Curriculum

MICHAEL THOMPSON  
RECTOR, ST. JUDE'S, OAKVILLE

There is a further edge to this darkness, this wilderness, but it is not yet in sight. There is a purpose in this wilderness, but it is not yet clear. It will take forty days (or was that forty years?) to make our way across the wilderness, through the darkness, to the further edge.

In Lent we deliberately acquire a loss or take a step.

What did Jesus do in the wilderness? Who was Jesus in the wilderness? What was the curriculum of that barren place? What might we miss in the wilderness if all we pay attention to is the further edge? What don't we learn in February if all we can think about is summer vacation (the last one, the next one)? That there is a further edge doesn't make this any less the darkness, any less the wilderness. That this is the darkness, is the wilderness, does not make it any less holy, this Lenten mean time.

"And no matter who you think you are, everybody gets the chance to be... nothing." (*Isn't that what friends are for?* - Bruce Cockburn) In the Lenten fast, we give something up and detach ourselves from



Michael Thompson

one thing or another that helps define our lives. In the Lenten fast we take at least one step towards becoming nothing. In Lent, we deliberately acquire a loss and take a step towards that place, where like the One whom we follow, we have lost everything but our name - "Beloved of God." I don't think we are meant to despise these things - our work, our food, our leisure, the practices in which we house and clothe and feed our lives - but neither can we seriously believe they "are us."

## What if Jesus had not gone into the wilderness?

There is a further edge to this darkness, and there is a purpose in this wilderness, but we cannot approach that edge or enter that purpose without being changed, being made new, without the abandonment of what was, without the downward plunge of baptism.

What would have happened if Jesus had not gone into the wilderness? What if he had gone shopping instead, or written a spiritual (but not religious) book about the events at the river? Surely he had some measure of freedom in this; surely he was not so flimsy that something

as feathery and near-weightless as the Spirit could drive him, without his consent, into the wasteland. Or did he come up from the water so empty that "You are my child" could utterly fill him, that something as insubstantial as the Spirit could outweigh him? Is this what being born is like? Again?

These are not questions we can entertain as if our faith were a commercial break in the drama of our lives. They are big questions, and they matter. They matter enough that the church offers us the habit of Lent and the curriculum of the wilderness, to invite us to become a nothing so empty that "You are my child" can be our new name.

Or our ancient one. What if, when we said in the garden, "I'm nobody's child" it actually happened? What if God decided that our freedom is the only possible condition for love, that we could choose - even cluelessly - a life without God? Because if we can't choose a life without God, you couldn't meaningfully say that we have chosen a life with God either. What if that day, even if we didn't actually lose the name, "You are my child" we lost the ability to hear that name spoken?

In his essay on "Vocation" in *A Ray of Darkness*, Rowan Williams, who later became Archbishop of Canterbury, tells the story of an

accomplished rabbi who fails to hear his name read from the book of life at the gates of paradise, not because the angel doesn't read the name out loud, but because the rabbi has never heard it before. He must go away and struggle to remember, the angel tells him, an occasion when he has heard his true name spoken in love. And if he cannot recall such an occasion, he must enter the deepest silence, and wait to hear his true name on the lips of the Holy One.

In the story of the Tower of Babel, it is no accident of language, no careless verbal filler, that puts on the lips of those erstwhile engineers, "Let us make a name for ourselves." (Genesis 11) It is, rather, an accurate reflection of all the times, of all the ways, of all the torrent of activity, the haste, the worry, the bending of the universe and one another to our own fabled wills, hungry to make a name for ourselves.

## Perhaps in the desert we can hear the name under the name

To make that name out of stuff, out of status, out of power. To make it out of who we know, who we beat, but trying to be somebody hasn't worked out that well. And the name we have made for ourselves is nothing like the name that waits for us in this darkness; that will take us across the further edge on the day of Resurrection. "You are my child, the beloved. With you I am delighted."

thing has not been good for us. It has not been good for the earth. Almost anything will not do, and the name we have acquired that way cannot bear the weight and beauty we are made for.

In our baptism we received a name. If we were fortunate, and many of us were, it was a name we heard from those who loved us, those who gave us the name. But the name wasn't always spoken in love. And it has not always been associated with the best we can do. In our frailty and our flaws, not only have others betrayed our name, but we have betrayed it as well. Perhaps in the desert we can hear the name under that name. Perhaps we can become light enough that the Spirit can blow us into our true name. Perhaps, in the desert, we can lay down so much of the name we have so awkwardly invented that God can fill us with that name.

It is Lent. The baptized will meet in the wilderness for forty days. We will try to become nothing, to become nobody. It's crazy, but trying to be somebody hasn't worked out that well. And the name we have made for ourselves is nothing like the name that waits for us in this darkness; that will take us across the further edge on the day of Resurrection. "You are my child, the beloved. With you I am delighted."

# Huge Cost Savings for Parishes

Continued from Page 1

and the squeeze is on, not just to save money, but to exercise good stewardship with member's givings.

## Oakville leads the way

In Oakville, this is already happening. The Reverend Owen Ash, at Incarnation Parish says there were two things that drove the parishes in Oakville to advertise together: Cost and Competition. "A number of independent churches have been taking larger ads in the Oakville Beaver - one of them was even using 'Anglican' in its ad, although

it's not part of the diocese. The smaller ads by individual Anglican parishes didn't attract the attention that the larger ads did. By joining together and taking out a larger ad, we got a larger presence in the paper, and the cost for each parish was lower. In the end, every parish pitched in.

## Endless possibilities with the web Site

"It's a great presence, and it shows that we're all one family, instead of competing with each other. It also allowed us to point people to our websites." The diocesan website ([www.niagara.anglican.ca](http://www.niagara.anglican.ca)) is itself an example of pooling resources. Already a popular site, it allows parishes to post events and announcements, and has helped streamline information via email, saving postage. "With the website, the possibilities are endless," says webmaster Christopher Grabiec. "Any future expansion of the parish area will help not just one parish, but all parishes." Funded by the Diocese, the website reaches not only Anglicans in the diocese, but is also a great tool for evangelism. The recent addition of a daily blog section (look for the shaded area on the right hand side of the home page) is a good example this.

## All Saints, Hamilton follows the lead

Back in Hamilton, David Murray told Bob Tilbury at neighbouring

All Saints parish about his savings with lighting. "David told me about the good service that Jeff provided, so we had him come in and do an audit of our lighting. He brought samples of different bulbs, and used a computer program to show us how much we could save. We decided to change the lighting in the church and in the parish hall. We had 500 watt lights in the church, and 300 in the hall, but Jeff recommended 23 watt compact fluorescent spot lights for both. Not only will we save a lot of money, but the bulbs will last longer, and that will please my wife, since I'm the guy who has to climb the ladder to change them!"

All Saints has also chosen to buy their paint from Master Paints "because they advertise in the Niagara Anglican, and because they offer a discount".

Bob tells the story about the early days of computers at Stelco. "We were pretty slow at getting into computers - the first one we had in the department had a four inch screen! But things got better, and eventually we got into licensing, which saved us a lot of money. I don't know if the Diocese has got any licensing programs that parishes can join. When it comes time to do the vestry report, I do it at home, but because I don't have Excel on my home computer, I can't do the DM&M report." Bob is also concerned about the number of illegal copies of software that might be on parish computers.

## DRC offers money saving programs

Wendy Duncan, the Controller at the Diocesan Resource Centre, is more than happy to answer. "The Diocesan Resource Centre offers a number of programs that can save parishes large sums of money. Since 2004, Primus has offered parishes discounts on both telephone and Internet. Presently, a long distance plan through Primus costs just 4 cents/minute for calls made any time, anywhere in Canada and the US. Local lines are only \$32.95/month, and include call forwarding, line hunting, call waiting and caller ID."

Primus also offers High Speed Internet for \$54/month. "It's easy to switch," says Wendy. "They just sign up, and Primus does all the switching. There's no disruption to the phone lines and no changes to the phone numbers." Parishes can save from 17-30 percent through these programs.

"We also offer incredible savings on software. Parishes can get a very large charitable discount on Microsoft XP (the operating system) and Microsoft Office (which includes Word, Excel, Access, Outlook and PowerPoint)." If a parish is looking for accounting software, the DRC is offering substantial discounts on QuickBooks - the program recommended by the DRC. Retired accountant Gord Archbell is also available to help those parishes who need assistance getting started

with computer-based accounting.

Ross Gillett appreciates the efforts that the DRC staff has made to help parishes save on these purchases. He knows that his own parish of St. John's in Niagara Falls has signed up with Primus and is happy with the savings. But he knows that the situation is not the same for every parish in the Diocese. "I see two problems: One is that some parishes don't trust things that come from the Synod office, and the second is that parishes don't talk to each other. In one parish they may see a problem [with spending], and solve it, but the news doesn't get out. We've got to find a way of spreading the information."

## Savings and good stewardship

Ross, Wendy, Bob, Owen, and David are all members of a new task force on Parish Purchasing. This task force, which includes members from all regions of the diocese, had its first meeting in January. It is looking into ways to help parishes join together to share information at both regional and diocesan levels. The Diocesan Resource Centre is wholly supportive of this task force - "This is about the parishes saving money, not about the diocese saving money," asserts Wendy. "If we all work together, we can achieve great results and it is good stewardship, as well!"

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# This Is My Story...



David Little is congratulated by Bishop Spence upon receiving the Order of Niagara in September, 2005.

CAROL SUMMERS  
PUBLISHER'S ADVISORY BOARD, ST. JOHN'S, YORK

I talked with David on the second floor at St. Peter's Hospital, Hamilton. David will never walk out of that room as he is partly paralyzed. This happened a few months ago. It's a war wound David is left with because of the battle he is waging with cancer. His body is battered certainly but his mind and spirit are strong. He has a lot to share with us all, so let me introduce you to an extraordinary man of faith, David Little.

He was born into a believing family and most of his life has been spent within shouting distance of the same parish of St John the Evangelist, Hamilton where he had a conservative Anglo-Catholic upbringing. His family attended church regularly and God lived for him through the bible stories he read from the Golden Bible which he was awarded (along with many other good books) through the outreach program for church attendance. He felt blessed to be part of a church community that took the formation of children's spirituality very seriously, as something worth cultivating and inherently good. There was never a time when God wasn't real to David, even during playtime when their Mother would pin diaper vestments onto the children who would then hold processions and play church.

### The law or the Church?

David started working at the age of 16 in a law office. The understand-

ing was that once he finished law school he would go back to the practice in Woodstock and become a partner. In his third year of law school he thought he had a calling to the priesthood and that caused him to have to retake some of that year. Eric Mills, his parish priest at the time, told him that if this was of God it would return but in the meantime he should carry on doing his work in the church and continue doing what God had called him to do with his legal expertise. He continued to do this for 8 years. He gradually lost all interest in doing the legal work until in 1982 when he asked his wife, Susan, what she would think if he went to study theology at Trinity College because he felt God was calling him to serve. Susan wasn't shocked or surprised but was "very calm and collected" and basically told him to go ahead while not being too sure how they would survive this change in their fortunes. They followed God's call and with their two children (aged 2 and 4) they moved from a large five bedroom house in a very nice area of Woodstock to a modest two bedroom cottage on busy Aberdeen Avenue. It was a struggle but they were never without food, or friends, and never without those little moments of God's presence. David feels this time was a lot tougher on Susan than on him as he was doing what he wanted to do (study theology) leaving Susan to deal with the practical side of life David came out of Trinity with what he felt was a good knowledge of the basics and he felt he could hold his

own in theology but he felt the church had no need for more priests, especially at that time when the first influx of women was entering the priesthood. It was during his placement at St. James', Dundas that he had an awakening and realized that ordination did not make sense for him. He felt he was called to work with people but not in a priestly role. At this time he was in a state of general confusion and great uncertainty because the church did not know what to do with David because he was not ordained. He feels that the church needs to look at what it understands by the ministry of the laity. He feels he is a bit of a strange bird, one who walks around and talks like a priest but is a lay person. He is aware that this is confusing for many, even in his own parish, who believe him to be ordained.

David has lived with the fear of the unknown, not knowing where life would take him, and to counter that he makes the decision to commit himself to Christ daily. When he wakes and puts his feet to the floor (so-to-speak, these days) he says, "I am going to live this day committed to Christ, I will live my life faithfully today as wisdom and my light shows me."

It is an ongoing conversion, an ongoing commitment. He found he had to do this everyday because of the disconfirming evidence he was surrounded by. He would have to reassert the object of his faith in the face of the contradictory objects of unfaith.

### David talks about his present situation

"Someone asked me not long ago what do you think best prepared you to handle facing cancer and an untimely death the way you have? I would say interestingly enough it was all the work we did on stewardship growing out of the David Gordon Stewardship Programme. How could stewardship do that? It put me back in touch with the reality that all things in life are gifts. Life itself is a gift. I have no right to exist. We live as radically contingent beings who but for God's sustaining word would fall out of existence tomorrow. There is a radical deep way in which we are kept in existence by God's grace and that none of what we have belongs to us. It all belongs to God and the old saw that we shouldn't be surprised that God takes 10%, we should be surprised that God takes only 10%. If the realities were reversed He should be taking 90%. So for me the whole business of stewardship is a radical recognition of our dependence on God and therefore everything we have and everything we are, first and foremost, belongs to God. That makes it very easy for me to hand it back to God because it's not mine to begin with. It's not mine to do with as I choose. I don't feel that's deprivation, I don't feel that's loss; I feel that's the order of the universe. God could have done it a different way but He didn't and this is the world in which we have landed ourselves like it or not. It's the world

into which we've been brought by God's grace and so we just accept it. We take that as our starting point and we live up from there. There's an awful lot of living to be done from radical contingency upwards. So that's my fundamental learning from God and that came from the David Gordon

*"It's just so important, so helpful to the person who's dying, if people can say I know there is nothing I can say so I'm just going to sit here with you."*

### Stewardship Programme.

Others can help by acknowledging that there's nothing they can do, there really isn't, to change the situation or the decree (so-to-speak) and the quicker you accept that fact the better, in most cases. You must always be open to possibilities (for treatment) and not be rejecting them out of hand but you need also to be accepting the fact that this is the way it is and that I'm not going to change it by behaving this way or that way. It's just so important, so helpful to the person who's dying, if people can say I know there is nothing I can say so I'm just going to sit here with you. When you reach this stage (of illness) you switch from doing to being. Sometimes one of the nicest things the doctors and nurses do, and I've had this happen a couple of times, is just to sit with you for a minute and squeeze my hand, hold my hand. The nurses come in and ask if there is anything you need, anything they can get for you, anything they can do for you. The most important thing they can do for you is be here for you."

### What advice would you give to new Christians?

"All of life is a gift, enjoy it all. Enjoy the things that God gives you; enjoy the desire for the things that God hasn't yet given you. God does not ask us to be plaster saints, he asks us to be flesh and blood saints who glory God with all of the flesh and blood that is us. So by immersing ourselves in the good things God has given us we give glory to God.

Don't quit no matter how far away God seems. God breaths his life into us, so recognize that God is as close to you as your next breath. Most of the time you're not even aware of your breathing. Never give up. Never stop.

I'd also say to people that the Church is not a supernatural reality given to us in the here and now, just

as one day we will be perfected in our human life, coming into the presence of God through Christ. I believe also that the Church will come into its perfected life in the same way and in the same kind of language. So I'd say accept the Church for what it is, broken in the here and now it's waiting to be fixed

like the whole of the created order. Even though it was created supernaturally, it's got the seeds planted just as my Christian baptism plants the seed of transformation in me so the Church has the seeds of transformation planted in it."

### Talking of our faith

"We all show up on Sunday morning because we're in the faith business. If you are in the shoe business they expect people to show up at the store and they'll talk about shoes but Anglicans are funny. They are in the faith business but when people show up at their store on their day of business, which is a Sunday morning, the last thing in the world they want to do is talk about their business.

It's a terrible tragedy that we have people who are unable to verbalize. This is where evangelism is so important. We can learn to talk with a greater ease and facility about what makes us tick spiritually. It doesn't need to be fancy; it just needs to be simple and straightforward. I talk about the faith because it allows me to get up in the morning and turn on the radio and listen to the news and if it wasn't for my faith in God I wouldn't be able to listen to that news. That's a wonderful faith starter. Otherwise, I wouldn't be able to start my day if it weren't for knowing that I've got God standing behind me who's promising this and that. Whatever it is that makes you tick, that allows you to go back into life everyday with your faith, is important grist for that mill, and why is it that we don't want to talk about it? It's really absurd that we get into this situation; I just find it incredible. The beginning of our evangelism should be to ask yourself 'where is it that I get excited about God?' and quit feeling inadequate about it. God doesn't care; God's decided to take up residence in your life. That's already a mark of extreme bad taste so nothing you do can make it worse. If God is willing to take up residence in your life, then who are you to tell God that God is wrong?"

**Lasagna Luau & Praise Service**  
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# FOCUS ON YOUTH

## Lincoln Youth Fest

BRENDA CHATTERTON  
ST. GEORGE'S, ST. CATHARINES

What do our youth do in their spare time? How can we keep them interested in spirituality and the church? Can we lead them to greater connections to church and God? These questions were presented to the Lincoln Clericus and the decision was to do joint regional youth events. The youth workers, clergy and Joyce Wilton (Program Consultant, Youth Ministry) planned events through the end of the year. The base group will be Grades 5 to 8 in hopes that we will carry them through and keep them interested even in high school. Named Lincoln Youth Fest, we will meet monthly on Fridays.

The March 3rd program will run from 5:45 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. and this kick-off event will include a pizza supper. There will be a fee of \$2 in addition to a donation per family to the St. George's Breakfast Program (i.e. red jams, Cheez Whiz, peanut butter, cereals).

The first night is only the beginning of a great venture. Let's make it an awesome venture by spreading the word through all the Lincoln congregations and getting maximum participation each event!

For more information contact Joyce Wilton at 905-527-1316 (ext. 430) or joyce.wilton@niagara.anglican.ca.

### Different events have been planned:

- Friday, March 3 - Night at Narnia at Transfiguration, St. Catharines
- Friday, April 21 - Games and Leader Night Training at St. George's, St. Catharines
- Friday, May 26 - TBA
- Friday, June 23 - Sleeping in Holy Places at St. George's, Grade 4's invited



Donna Ellis (05), surrounded by the youth groups of Christ's Church, Woodburn.

## Amazin' Momma

ELYSE ELLIS  
CHRIST CHURCH, WOODBURN

Who has a magenta Mohawk, lime green hair and is the most amazing woman I know? My mom, Donna Ellis who sacrificed her hair to the merciless hands of the Senior and Junior youth groups of Christ Church, Woodburn.

On Friday, January 6, 2006, Donna had her hair cut by me, her daughter, ending up with a Mohawk that made her look more gorgeous



Daughter Elyse holds the scissors.

than ever. How did this happen you ask? Well, it started two months ago with my mom making a deal with the youth groups of our church, proposing that we cut and dye her hair any way we'd like if we were able to raise one thousand dollars for the Canadian Cancer Society. Well, we did better than that! The final total of the evening came to \$3,299, and there is still more being donated. My mother was so happy and I got my few minutes of

revenge chopping off her hair, bit by bit. That'll teach her to feed me brussel sprouts! Some of the other kids in the youth group, as well as our priest, Reverend Kathy Morgan, were also able to cut off some of her hair for fun. My dad, Mark, let the group shave his hair off and then we wrote the total we raised on his shiny head!

As the "cut 'n' dye" night went on, my mom brought out some candles and placed them on a table in the middle of the room. The candles were lit by people who knew someone in their lives touched by cancer. We lit them and said a prayer for those people and everyone in the world who was battling cancer, recovering from it or had passed because of it. The room was silent as we remembered the ones we loved; the candles caused a mystical glow in the faces of the children, teenagers and adults there honouring family and friends.

So what was Donna's motivation? It was her niece, Christina; who died of breast cancer last year. Christina was pregnant with her third child when she found out she had cancer, and didn't want to go through treatment because of the risk to her baby's health. So after her healthy baby girl was born, she began treatment; but her remission was short. Doctors thought that the cancer had finally gone, but it unfortunately returned; and Christina had put up such a fight the first time that she was too exhausted to continue. She is missed greatly by her family, including her husband and three children.

Thank you to all the people who sponsored us and donated money to our cause. And thanks to the people around the world who donate money to the Cancer Research Society. Together, we will defeat cancer.

## First North Greater Wellington Cluster Youth Service

The North Greater Wellington Cluster held their first youth worship service on Sunday, January 29th. St. John's, Mono (Diocese of Toronto - invited to join the cluster because of their proximity to Orangeville) hosted this worship on a dark and stormy evening. A planning group of young people met with Christyn Perkins (Program Consultant - Children, Youth & Family Ministries) to plan the service using a variety of worship resources from the Resource Library. After identifying what parts of worship were important to them and then creating a framework for their own service, each of the planners took responsibility for developing and presenting a part. Joining in was the NYC Band who drove up from the Hamilton area to provide contemporary music for the worship experience. The planners liberally sprinkled music throughout so the NYC band surrounded worshippers with melodies that ranged from quiet and reflective to downright rowdy. Also included were readings from Henri Nouwen, a prayer wall, and Iona Eucharistic prayers after which participants served the Eucharist to each other in a circle. There was loud agreement among participants that this was a great experience, worth repeating, and they all made a commitment to invite friends to come next time. Still to come in the North Greater Wellington Cluster, are a spring Social Justice Day, a summer canoe trip and another planning session for more, more, more!



Members of the NYC band.

## Children's Festival 2006

Theme:



Program Time: 10:00-3:00 p.m.

Undermount & Mohawk Regions

Saturday, April 29, 2006

St. John the Evangelist, Hamilton  
320 Charlton Avenue West

For more information contact Susan Little - 905-528-3326  
or Susanne Adams - 905-575-1815

Lincoln & Brock Regions

Saturday, April 29, 2006

St. Columba, St. Catharines  
7 St. Columba Drive

For more information contact Elizabeth Connor-Elliott  
905-935-3266 or Beth Kerley - 905-685-1286

Greater Wellington Region

Saturday, May 6, 2006

All Saints, Erin  
81 Main Street

For more information contact  
Kim Bell - 519-833-9099

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**YOUTH WORKERS**

Here are four responses that area youth workers (two paid/profession and two volunteer) have written. We asked them to tell us what excites them about their work, what challenges they face and what they need from the church. Their answers are illuminating!

**ERIN BIGGS**  
DIRECTOR OF YOUTH MINISTRIES,  
ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST, HAMILTON

I've been working with youth since I was a youth. I've had both positive and negative experiences in the journey that lead me to the youth ministry position I am in now. The negative experiences all involved communities that put me in charge of a group without any training or support and then turned away with a sigh of relief. The positive experiences all involved participation in leadership but support from the existing leadership.



**Erin Biggs**

I can see the direct influence of four such leaders in my own journey: my own youth pastor, Captain Paul Simons, who invited me to participate in the leadership of the pre-teens group when I was in high school; Andrew Murray and David Little who invited me to participate in the youth ministry program when I started at St. John's, but made sure I was supported in that work; and Alix Shriner, my predecessor at St. John's, who took me under her wing and mentored me, giving me a vision for what youth ministry can be and do. What keeps me in youth ministry is the students. Seeing the students for who they really are and not as a faceless mass, catching glimpses of their pain and struggles, seeing the sincerity with which they search for purpose and meaning, all this eclipses any other profession or calling I could imagine for myself.

Without a question, the highlight of working in youth ministry is the people. The opportunity to work with adults who are willing to give so much of themselves for a group generally marginalised by society and the opportunity to work with students who give all of themselves in everything they do, despite the opposition and obstacles they often face.

There are two things that come to mind when I think of what has surprised me the most about this ministry. First, the point to which many people are unaware of youth ministry, its goals and purposes. I had thought the idea that youth ministry was to keep teens and pre-teens "out of trouble" or "sitting silently in the service" were attitudes of the past. I have been consistently surprised by how many people still look at teens through this veil of mistrust and expectation of conformity. To be fair, this is not the view of the majority of people I encounter, but it is still held by a surprising number of people.

Second, the degree to which many youth are already cynical and jaded. How quickly the belief that they can change the world fades! If, when barely in their teens, young people already believe that they cannot influence in the world around them, their attitude will become a self-fulfilling prophecy. Such hopelessness in those so young makes me sad!

One of the newest things among our middle school youth is coming out to youth group! Our youth ministry had been around just long enough that the younger students now look forward to being old enough for our Wednesday night groups. Not only that, but they bring out their friends. This is also one of the most exciting things for me to see at the moment.

One of the biggest challenges is connecting our mid-week meeting to Sunday mornings or, to put it another way, connecting the youth to the rest of the parish community. Many people, adults and youth, are content for these groups to be separate, but for real growth to happen, we must be a truly intergenerational community that learns from all its members. This is a challenge from both sides; the students have trouble seeing why it is important for them to be engaged in the wider community and the community often does not see the need to make itself more accessible.

I believe that the church will better meet the needs of young people by first, building a relationship with a teenager or pre-teen. So many of the difficulties in youth ministry come from lack of intergenerational communication. Adults have a skewed view of who the youth are, and what they want and need. They assume that teens are not interested in spending time with them. Youth, for their part, often have just as skewed a perspective of adults, of who they are and what they expect of young people. And they assume that adults have no interest in spending time with them. If every adult had one healthy relationship with a youth outside of their family, and each youth had a healthy relationship with one adult outside of her family, these barriers would begin to crumble.

Second, we need to be willing to change and to sacrifice. This is the nature of what it means to be Christian and it is to our shame that we are not more prepared to do this. If there is something about the way we do things - whether it's the way we worship, the way we expect young people to behave or dress or the way power structures are arranged - that is not a matter of doctrine but is a barrier to faith for our young people, we should be prepared to change that and change it now. No matter if we've always done it that way, no matter if we like it that way, this is our opportunity to sacrifice our own preferences for the sake of those that are seeking God in spirit and truth. If we do not respond in this way, we become stumbling blocks and will be held accountable before God for our choices and actions. If we embrace this opportunity in love and sacrifice, we respond in love to the call of the Gospel and empower the younger members of the Church to do the same.

**ALISON LORIMER**  
VOLUNTEER YOUTH COORDINATOR, ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST, LONDON

When I moved to London to go to University three years ago, I joined the parish of St. John the Evangelist. I had always been involved in my church and it seemed like the right next step. I had a lot of experience working with children so youth ministry seemed like the right place for me. Ever since I was little, I felt that having a youth group is beneficial for a church and the youth in it. I remember being the only youth at one point in my home church. I was also upset to learn that there were opportunities for teens beyond my church and that nobody told me about them. I feel it is really important for kids to learn the ways they can become involved and find what is right for them.



**Alison Lorimer**

Once I was at St. John's, I met two other young adults and we offered to start a pre-teen youth group. Last year, we were joined by two more university students. Together we have created a team that is involved in youth ministries for the church.

This year we decided to go in a different direction. We created Mission 4-1-2 (numbers from first Timothy). This is a three-point ministry. The first section is Mission 412 and is discussions during Sunday mornings centred around issues that youth face. The second section, Club 412, is our bi-weekly social. The third is Mission: Possible which are Deanery events in Huron. We hope to create a larger place for youth from

**SONYA BOLEK**  
YOUTH DIRECTOR & PARISH SECRETARY, ST. JOHN'S, ST. CATHARINES



**Sonya Bolek**

I was drawn to Youth Ministry by chance. Our new youth worker left on maternity leave and being a mom of young children myself as well as an established secretary for the parish, I was asked to fill in. To my surprise I was incredibly inspired by youth ministry. I worked extremely hard at putting together new programs, the only real challenge being which ones would take hold and which ones wouldn't. I have had great success with Vacation Bible

**KIM MARTIGNAGO**  
VOLUNTEER YOUTH COORDINATOR,  
ST. JOHN'S, NIAGARA FALLS

I was originally drawn to the church school program at St. John's because my good friend was a Sunday school teacher and she recruited me. That led to 8 years of teaching Sunday school and eventually having the Sunday school coordinator position. Two years ago when we were without a youth ministry leader, I felt a connection to the youth since I had taught most of them in Sunday school and had a good relationship with them. I also had one of my own children coming into that age bracket and wanted to have a program in place for him and his friends. I had no idea what I was getting into! I have always loved kids and volunteered with them from an early age but a couple of years ago I realized that not everyone shares my enthusiasm for children and especially youth. I felt that this was my ministry, that this was what God wanted me to do for him. The kids that I work with are amazing! I have learned more about spirituality working with the youth group for two years than I did in nearly 10 years in the church school. The high

point for me is watching a youth 'get it': seeing them grow spiritually and helping them understand Jesus loves them... just because they are! The most unexpected aspect is the relationships that I've built with these kids. They share so much of themselves with me... I feel so privileged and blessed to be part of their lives.

What's new or popular with youth? Well my youth group really wants to make a difference in our own community. They really respond to service projects! They want to help in the homeless shelter this winter; we hold a fundraiser famine sleepover for PWRDF every March; we are currently running a mitten drive and what we've called "project backpack" - we're collecting backpacks filled with items for the community youth shelter. They've told me lots of times that they don't just want to sit around talking about stuff (although they like to do that too!); they want to make a difference and feel like they're contributing whether in our own church, their schools, or the broader community.

The biggest challenge for me is handling conflicts between members. It doesn't happen too often, they're a really great bunch of kids,

across the deanery to come together and meet.

I love the enthusiasm of the youth. They see no boundaries and are ready to talk about anything. They are so intelligent about the world around them. I love learning their perspectives on life and God. Beside we get to do a ton of cool stuff together!

I am still surprised by the hurdles you have to overcome in some churches just to do youth ministry. I am lucky to be in a very supportive church. But I realize that in some parishes, youth are not able to express themselves like they want to. It is hard sometimes to get churches to change in ways that are conducive to youth feeling welcomed so they can learn and grow. I am surprised at how many times people would say no to an idea because it involved something that would offend the "older" people in the church who were used to the routine and didn't like change.

From my experience the biggest hurdle in youth ministry is getting over the stigma that church is for losers. Kids have problems saying they go to church or belong to a youth group. It is embarrassing - they don't want to be labelled as "geeks." You have to sell youth ministry as a cool thing - other wise it's no go.

Most importantly young people need to support and to feel that they belong. They need to be encouraged to find ways to worship that meet their needs and we need to listen. They are the present and the future of our church... it is time that we start to welcome them or the church is a no go!

School and Family Retreats, events which draw in children and youth of all ages in different roles. I am so pleased with the growing numbers I see at the events I have put together. We are in the community of Port Dalhousie, a somewhat separate community of St. Catharines, and each year more kids come out to our youth dances. I am aware of the constant growth each week as I lead the nursery and Sunday school children in for communion; we now fill the altar and have more waiting their turn! It makes me proud and very blessed that I was able to stay on as Youth Director past my "temporary year." I couldn't ask for a position with more creative flexibility. What I am looking for next from the Diocese is the opportunity for more faith formation and training with other Youth Workers. It would be that little bit of refreshment that is occasionally needed to keep us all going.

very accepting and accommodating, but in any group there's bound to be the occasional conflict. I hate to see them argue with each other and it really bothers me when there seems to be no quick solution or when one of the kids hurts another emotionally. One of the items we put in our group covenant is that we are like a family and we support each other in all things. If someone is going through a rough time, we're there for them. I try to stress that to the kids as much as possible. Another big challenge is the getting my "message" or lesson across to them without being "preachy." The kids are very open to ideas and can be very spiritual but hate being preached at! It really takes some creativity at times! The Church really needs to be accepting of the youth at all levels. The kids hate being judged and can tell when the older generation is doing it. They just want to be accepted as contributing members, not as "adults in training." They want what any one of us wants, to be accepted as we are and to be part of the church family. They want to feel that they belong and that there is a place for them, programs, activities, and leaders who respect them.

# PARISH NEWS

## Halton Fresh Food Box Thrives at St. Christopher's



Every month the parish hall becomes a farmers' market where volunteers prepare boxes of fresh fruit and vegetables for those in need.

NANCY EMERSON  
St. Christopher's, Burlington

At St. Christopher's Church in Burlington we have a special way to reach out to our community. It is the Halton Fresh Food Box program. This is a program that provides a monthly cornucopia of fresh fruits and vegetables of excellent quality at very affordable prices to the residents of Halton Region. There are between 14 to 16 items in each box - family size is \$15 and \$12 for a box suitable for singles and couples. The orders for the boxes are taken at the beginning of the month and the boxes are packed and distributed on the third Tuesday of each month. This program is open to everyone, regardless of need. We count on parish and community support as volume of orders begs better cents.

The program coordinator, Brenda Moher is

a registered dietitian who worked as a public health nutritionist. This job is the key cornerstone which allows us to provide a community program that reaches out to all members of society as we work to make our community healthier through easier access to quality, safe fresh fruits and vegetables. The coordinator works with local farmers and wholesalers to procure the produce; ensures the quality and quantity of produce ordered meets our customers' needs; organizes packing and delivery of the boxes; sets up community drop sites throughout the region including Burlington, Milton, Oakville, Georgetown and Acton and manages over 60 volunteers.

Three years ago the Fresh Food Box Steering Committee which evolved out of the Halton Anti-Poverty Coalition, asked our rector, Rev. Dr. Fred Gosse, if St. Christopher's

would be willing to host the food box program. Fred readily agreed that we could be a key partner in this outreach. Two members of our parish joined the Steering Committee formed by representatives from other local health and social services organizations. Incubation was over a year. In this time, we secured adequate funding; purchased 350 plastic delivery boxes; searched out and hired a program coordinator; established a roster of 40 volunteers from our parish, and on November 18th, 2004, we had our first packing day. We delivered 168 boxes to 6 community drop sites. Halleluia!

Each month on the morning of the third Tuesday, the parish hall becomes a farmers market. Hundreds of pounds of fruits and vegetables cover the floor - mounds of potatoes, boxes of broccoli, carrots, celery, lettuce, tomatoes, apples, oranges and bananas - all need to be weighed and bagged into family size portions. The boxes are packed in assembly line style with two quality checks en route. At noon clean up crews turn the market back to a parish hall and the kitchen crew serve a wonderful hot lunch to all the volunteers. The program has now grown to 364 boxes as of December 2005. We boast a true assembly line conveyor belt for easier and faster packing. But the fellowship and the feeling of a job well done is still the greatest reward for our efforts. We all know that we are helping our community to eat better through an assistance program that is respectful of the diverse needs of our community. We are able to nurture our community with improved access to healthy food - a truly basic human need.

We now have volunteers from other local churches, high school students who earn their

community service hours in a happy, safe environment, new Canadians who come to help so they can give back to their community and improve their English language skills and people who are receiving Ontario Works assistance. We continue to work towards being more inclusive in our outreach to our community.

Our program is still evolving. We would like to develop a stronger partnership with local farmers now that we have received ongoing funding from the Regional Municipality of Halton. Increased participation by farmers requires that they can count on us to be an ongoing market. We want to be able to expand our ability to bring affordable quality fresh fruits and vegetables to those whose budgets can't stretch to cover them at major grocery stores. This group represents approximately 45% of our customers. Some of these families are subsidized through church and community outreach programs. We also want to reach out to more seniors who have mobility or disability issues, presently about 30% of our customers, while being able to include families who are not familiar with Canadian fruits and vegetables. Presently we are working to have our program brochure and recipes translated into Punjabi, Spanish, Russian and Arabic.

We count it as part of our success, that while we are still the packing site and host site for the coordinator, we are becoming more representative of the community-at-large. St. Christopher's is still the nucleus but with a new packing site in North Halton on the horizon, and translation services starting, we feel we have become enablers - after all better health, better nutrition and a better quality of life is everyone's business.

## Calling all Anglicans

Across Canada,  
Anglicans just like you  
are making a difference  
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## A Small Congregation Can Have a Great Impact

DAVID ANDERSON  
RECTOR, ALL SAINTS, RIDGEWAY

In terms of primary health care, Greater Fort Erie has been one of the most under serviced parts of the Province of Ontario. Two years ago a number of members of All Saints' Church in Ridgeway began to see that there was a crisis in their community that amounted to an important social justice issue. The Canada Health Act is meant to ensure that there is equal access to health care for all Canadians, but that was not happening in Fort Erie, and our most vulnerable citizens, the elderly, the poor, the chronically ill and newcomers to our nation were most at risk.

Over the last two years members of All Saints' Church have worked together with other members of the community with the goal of establishing a Community Health Centre (CHC) in the west end of Fort Erie.

CHC teams include physicians, nurse practitioners, nurses, counsellors, community workers, dietitians and other practitioners. CHCs also offer a wide range of programmes in addition to health services. Existing CHCs offer services such as youth peer support programs, programs to address violence, youth leadership training and skills development,

parent and child programs, outreach to isolated seniors. The CHC is a highly effective model of primary health care, and is of particular value to people who face access barriers. Currently, over 300,000 Ontarians benefit from the services offered at 54 existing CHCs and 10 satellite CHCs across the province. Boards of directors, composed of clients, recognized community leaders and respected health and social service providers, design programs and services to meet the specific needs and priorities of the populations they serve.

Ontario Health Minister George Smitherman recently announced funding for a CHC for Fort Erie and Port Colborne. As a parish we are grateful for the leadership of our parish members, Joy Russell, Chair of the Greater Fort Erie Health Services Committee, June Baker, Secretary, as well as Rector of the Parish, the Reverend David J. Anderson, Vice-Chair of the Greater Fort Erie Health Services Board, who all played an important role in moving this project forward.

In response to the Health Minister's announcement, Mr. Anderson said, "This means that the citizens of Fort Erie will finally have improved

access to the kind of health care that all citizens of this province deserve. The Minister has addressed an important social justice issue that has sorely needed to be addressed in this and in many other communities. This is wonderful news that reminds us that a small group of Christians crying out for justice can make a real difference."

The Greater Fort Erie Health Services Board will soon change its name and welcome new members from the Port Colborne area in response to its mandate to provide primary health care services in that community as well. The Board has already received \$200,000 to assist with initial expenses in developing a new governance structure and programme models, and in selecting a site (or sites) for the Centre. The new CHC in South Niagara will eventually be a multi-million dollar investment in primary health care by the provincial government. The CHC is scheduled to begin serving clients in 2006, but it will certainly be into 2007 until most of its programmes are operational.

For more information visit [http://www.health.gov.on.ca/english/media/news\\_releases/archives/nr\\_05/nr\\_111005.html](http://www.health.gov.on.ca/english/media/news_releases/archives/nr_05/nr_111005.html).



# EDITORIAL

## One Wise Great-Grandfather...

CHRISTOPHER M. GRABIEC  
EDITOR

Last month I shared with you the story of the three wise (Jewish) women at Grace Cathedral in San Francisco. It is often curious how relationships develop. I've had the fortune of having some limited contact with one of the women - Tirzah. She wrote a short while ago to tell me that she had just discovered that her great-grandfather was actually in one of the windows of Grace Cathedral. His name was Martin Buber. Once I picked myself up off the floor, I was able to respond to Tirzah, saying that with this information, I felt that I had met someone as famous as the queen!

Martin Buber was a philosopher and a teacher, educated in Vienna, Leipzig, Zurich and Berlin. Buber began as an editor of a Zionist weekly publication, but wound up in disagreements and eventually resigned. He later became involved with Hasidism. Buber, who would be known as one of the great philosophers of the last century was also a social activist. In 1933 he became the director of the Central Office for Jewish Adult Education (significant since the Jews were prohibited from attending public schools), and in 1938 he immigrated to Palestine where he taught at the Hebrew University.

He is most famous for his philosophy

described in *I and Thou* (1923). He talks about the "I - Thou" relationship that humans have with the world as one of mutuality, openness, equality. He also speaks of the "I - it" relationship or dialogue as one which exhibits the absence of the "I - Thou" qualities. "I - it" is a truly important dialogue since it leads to objective knowledge. However, when the human spirit is truly trying to dialogue with the world, the universe and even with God, it can only be done in the "I - Thou," in Buber's mind.

### Theological systems will not produce a relationship with God

Martin Buber maintained that the only way we could truly get to know God was in the "I - Thou." The objective knowledge of various theological systems would not produce any relationship or knowledge of God. For Buber the Bible is a record of the dialogue experience between humanity and God. Faith was not about the affirmation of a creedal system of beliefs, but rather it was the way in which we could enter into personal dialogue with God and hence meet the challenges of our existence every day.

Martin Buber has had an influence on theology, (Paul Tillich) and on contemporary psychology. He had a huge influence on me as I was pursuing my theological, liturgical and spiritual formation. He helped me to understand the integrity of relationship and the balance between "I - Thou" and "I - It." When my "wise woman" Tirzah said that he was her great grandfather, the communion that I felt between the women at the Cathedral and myself grew ever more deeply.

### We have missed the meaning of Eucharist

Perhaps I can explain this influence on me in Eucharistic terms. In my opinion we have

both missed the meaning of and exhausted the draw to our Eucharistic celebrations. For centuries the emphasis in Eucharist was some sort of transcendent experience of the sacrificial (and sometimes in certain theologies - the bloody) presence of Christ. Countless theo-



Martin Buber

logians have argued about the real presence of Christ in the elements of bread and wine. Some have even argued for a transubstantial or transfiguring theology of how Christ is present in the Eucharist. Today very few people care about any of that argumentation. Behind all of this understanding is a transcendent sense of God's presence. Hence we see or have seen ambries, tabernacles, genuflections, bowing before the consecrated species. An equally compelling contemporary view and that of many of the church fathers (some would say including Augustine) was a more immanent understanding of Eucharist that comes from the Emmaus story. The disciples were walking down the road and the stranger explains scriptures to them. They are excited by this and invite the stranger in to their home. He breaks

bread with them and their eyes are opened. They know that the Lord is there! He immediately disappears from their midst. They remark "were our hearts not burning as he explained the scriptures to us?"

### Experiencing the immanent presence of Christ in Eucharist

If we understand Eucharist in this "immanent" sense of the experience of God there are many implications. As Peter Wall said in his article last month, our liturgical rites would have to undergo transformation. Our liturgical spaces would become radically different. Currently our churches are built on the "temple" model. They face east, everything points to the high altar and to the God who lives on high. Our new spaces would need to be centered on the community who gathers to hear (and break open) the Word of God and the community that breaks bread knowing that Christ is there with them. As in the case of the Disciples of Christ, he disappears. They and we know that the challenge is to go forth to minister to the world and to announce the good news of a God who is alive and present among us. We know that, because of our experience both corporately and individually.

It's amazing how God works. It's amazing how at the hands of philosophers like Martin Buber, we learn about our experience with God. The relationship that we experienced that Christmas evening in the San Francisco Cathedral was "I - Thou" and it was indeed the experience of the living God who transcends creed, race, prejudice, sinfulness and any other obstacle that we put in God's way. This is and will remain one of the wonderful faith experiences in my life. I am truly blessed to say: "How great Thou art - and yet we have met you in the simplest situations and in the crevices of everyday life. How blessed we are."

## Niagara Anglican

The official, independently edited publication of the Anglican Diocese of Niagara. Published 10 times a year (no issue in July or August) by The Dunham Group in Hamilton, Ontario. Printed by Signal Star Publishing, Goderich, a division of Bowes Publishers Limited.

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Cathedral Place  
252 James St North  
Hamilton, ON. L8R 2L3

**Circulation:** 16,175

**Subscriptions:** \$15 per year

**Deadlines for Submissions:**  
April 2006: Mar. 1  
May 2006: Apr. 1  
June: May 1

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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

### Where do we go from here?

SUSAN C. HUXFORD WESTALL, O.N.  
ALL SAINTS, HAMILTON

In a leading article on page one of the February issue Dean Wall asks the question "Where do we go from here?" and continues to pose quite a number of questions, most of which I have been asking myself for some time. For ages the future of the Church has depended upon the adequate instruction of youth; the ancient Hebrews knew this only too well (Deut.11:19). Why, then, does the Dean ask the question "Why would a 19 year old come to our Churches?"

As a former teacher at both the elementary and the high school level, I answer "Because he/she has been brainwashed" - a more appropriate term in former days would have been "indoctrinated." The Roman Catholics used to claim that if they had a child for the first seven years of its life, that child would remain a (Roman) Catholic for the rest of its days, and yet they are experiencing much the same problems as we Anglicans are... "the rest were all parishioners who only showed up once or twice a year!"

What has gone wrong? Why can a mem-

ber of his congregation suggest that we need "something simpler, more accessible, and easier for the visitor, the neophyte, and the lapsed?" Is it that the questioner him/herself has the same problems? How can we need something "simpler, more accessible, easier," or is it something that is more understandable in the 21st. Century? Our Church/Sunday schools are still teaching in the frame of mind of Deuteronomy; so are our clergy. We live in a space age. Have we not learned that, in spite of all their indoctrination, the Hebrews disappeared in the sixth century B.C.E. (B.C., if you prefer)? The Jews suffered a similar catastrophe in C.E. 70. The present strife in the Middle East is still based on principles dating back 3,000 years. Get with it!

The Dean continues, "We need to be honest and look at ourselves and our own environments as well... Why would we think that any particular kind of language from any particular century would 'work' for a contemporary 'audience'? We must begin to look seriously and critically at our liturgical lives." We must live our faith, our theology, in the 21st Century A.D. (C.E.), not in the sixth century B.C.E. or 325 C.E. We need to come up-to-

date. The beauty of Anglicanism and its glorious history must pass as have the Pax Romana and the Pax Britannica. They left their mark on history, but they are no longer appropriate today.

Neither are our buildings. Peter Wall asks "Can, or should we, continue to worship in spaces designed and conceived a thousand years ago?" I notice that I asked this same question in effect at the Undermount meeting last year. During a discussion group that I led I raised the question of the reorganization of the Nave space. It raised an immediate objection on the part of a certain Canon who seemed to feel that the Nave of a church is sacrosanct and cannot be used for any purpose other than worship. I did not pursue the issue as it could have side-tracked the main discussion.

I close with the Dean's opening thoughts: "Long after the 'Spirit of Christmas' has left Canadian society, the Church would have us ponder the whole business of God becoming human... with showing something wondrous to the world." With God becoming human - that is the crux of the whole thing. "Epiphany (is) the season... of living lives of incarnation. Surely it is time to do it well!"

More Letters to the Editor on following page

Letters to the Editor  
Continued

CHRISTINE PRIESTMAN  
PARISHIONER AT ALL SAINTS, ERIN

Dear Editor,

I really appreciated Peter Wall's insight about church attendance and also his thoughts about church for the contemporary audience. It reminded me of a dream I had several months ago about the church of the future. It goes like this, "I was given an order of service by my priest to write on the blackboards that were at the front of the church. I was not asked to participate for it was only my job to facilitate the piece that bridged the next phase of the life of the church. I went to see what it was all about. Upon entering the sanctuary, it was filled with young people and young families and they were people I had never seen before. The service was entirely different from any I had ever imagined or experienced. The people all stood between the pews and in the aisles. There was plenty of room for movement. The front of the church, where I had written the service, was set as a stage where a woman sat at a desk with quill pen in hand and was writing on her parchment. She was dressed in robes of biblical times and her name was Paul.

Before the audience stood a barrister dressed in clothes as would be seen in the 18th century complete with a white wig of curls. The barrister was addressing the scribe and questioning her. The scribe was defending the scriptures that she was writing. Throughout all of this, it was sung and the audience knew what their responses were and how and when to respond to them. They moved in unison, much as you would see on stage if a dance crew were performing. They moved sideways, forward, stepped back, turned around, sat down and stood and said their responses in perfect time. Those in the aisles added other moves and gestures as they danced out the responses they said. It was a truly powerful service and I was totally out of my element. There was no question that the way I did church had been left behind to keep being resuscitated for one more Sunday by the old way of doing church and this was the church of the new day. A Church like what our young people and youth experience on a day to day basis. Reality church, if you like. A church where you must be the movement in worship or there will be no worship. It was truly amazing."

# FELLOWSHIP OF PRAYER

## A Lenten Reflection on The Empty Cross of Jesus

A Book by Michael Green

ANNETTE HARRIS  
ANGELICAN FELLOWSHIP OF PRAYER

Mr. Green, a scholar and evangelist wrote this amazing book, and each time I have read it, I feel that I am still at the beginning. I sometimes look at 'the why' of Jesus crucified, at another time the righteous leaders of the day putting their opinions, different ages of thought carefully researched and presented to the reader.

Mr. Green takes us through these with ease, skill, and reason, but nothing takes away from his conviction that 'we' are so precious to our almighty Father, He was willing to suffer, whatever the cost, so that nothing should come between us, i.e. sin that the Father who is pure and Holy could not accept, so that one who was willing and without sin, could 'pay' the price for us... Mystery indeed... Grace beyond telling.

We can only accept and wonder at the nature of this love, and walk in gratitude and

amazement - our deliverance - if we accept with faith and trust what the Father and the Son gave to us.

Further into the book, I read of the disciples coming to the tomb (after 'the women' had been early in the morning to refresh the body with herbs and spices...), and had left in anguish. 'Someone has taken away our Lord', they said to the other disciples. Peter and maybe John had rushed to the tomb and saw for themselves the empty grave clothes, as they still were placed covering the head and the body... No sign of a disturbance, just the empty place... Cross and grave sight left, abandoned.

Do not let us remain at Good Friday (after Good Friday). The tomb is empty. Let Him lead you and guide you, through prayer, through bible study, through faith. Let Him know you are serious in wanting a closer walk... Allow His presence space in your journey, ask the Holy Spirit's help and direction always. This mighty abiding presence aids and activates, enables.

This lent 2006 as we journey, let it find us looking and seeking a deeper commitment, finding space and time to communicate with a truly amazing Triune God. As He left 'The Heavens' to bring a great salvation for us, nothing spared or held back, (for a fallen race), let us also give back as we are able in contemplation, reflection, prayer, thanksgiving, joy and gratitude. Allow the mystery and might to be part of your experience as forty days unfold.

Remember we are forgiven, so do nothing to offend or hurt that 'Great Almighty presence' but with acceptance and walking humbly. Keep the symbol of sacrifice as your touchstone yes, but like Him, look for the Fathers blessing and direction.

The Light of the world was at the beginning of time, and promises to be there until the end, with us, for us. Our Lord of time is an endless mystery. Let us meet Him, go with Him, abide in Him and be faithful to His call as we talk, we must walk, be aware of the one who gave all and spared not His own, so that we might have light and life to keep us on our journey... The tomb is empty... The way made clear. Amen.



Annette Harris

## Prayers from the Ages

ANNETTE HARRIS  
ANGELICAN FELLOWSHIP OF PRAYER

"O thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come..." (Psalm 65 v 2)

"We would live the prayer life Lord. We would learn to pray without ceasing, we would ask to this end most Holy One, that you would dwell within us, that your Great and Holy Spirit take charge and direct us, and give us constancy always in our prayers... never to let 'routine' take over and stifle your way for us. If we ask in the name of Jesus, we are promised you will hear us."

Here I have chosen some prayers, some ancient, and others of more recent origin. Even some, that in their brevity, still contain the element of contact that we have and need in our communion with God in prayer.

I would like to share with you a selection of prayers from the Oxford Book of Prayer...

"Eternal Father of my soul, let my first thought today be of thee, let my first impulse be to worship thee, let my first speech be thy name, let my first action be to kneel before thee in prayer." - John Baillie, 1886-1960

"O Lord, thou knowest how busy I must be this day; if I forget thee, do not forget me: for Christ's sake." (Before the battle of Edge Hill - General Lord Ashley, 1579-1652)

"Incline us O God, to think humbly of ourselves, to be saved only in the examination of our conduct, to consider our fellow creatures with kindness, and to judge of all they say, and do with the charity which we would desire from them ourselves." - Jane Austin, 1775-1817

"O Holy Spirit, whose presence is liberty, grant us that freedom of the spirit, which will not fear to tread in unknown ways, nor be held back by misgivings of ourselves and fear of others. Ever beckon us forward to the place of

thy will, which is also the place of thy power, O ever leading, ever loving Lord." (George Appleton)

"All my fresh springs shall be in thee." (Psalm 87-76)

"Jesus the Savior of mankind, who was fastened to the cross with three nails, fasten my heart to the same cross, with the three nails of faith, hope and charity." (Fr Adrian Parviliers)

"The Lord ascended into heaven so that He could send the comforter into this world. The heavens prepared His throne, and the angels marveled at the sight of a human being more exalted and more glorious than they. Today, the Father receives in His bosom the one who has been with Him from all eternity, and the Holy Spirit gives a command to all the angels, "Lift up your gates O you princes - O you nations of the earth, clap your hands for the Christ has gone up to the place where He had been from all eternity." (Ascension Day, Orthodox)

These are only a small selection of prayer and prayer's. I hope the content and their witness will aid you, just as I have found inspiration in the witness from the ages past.

Bruce Kuhn presents:

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- Sunday, May 7, at 7:00 pm - The Arboretum, University of Guelph
- Friday, May 12, at 7:30 pm - Holy Trinity Roman Catholic School, Oakville
- Sunday, May 14, at 7:00 pm - Ridley College, St. Catharines

Bruce will also be leading workshops:

- Public Speaking, Preaching and Storytelling - Tuesday, May 9, 9:30 am to 3 pm at St. Matthew's, Burlington
- Dramatic Reading, Public Speaking and Communications - Saturday, May 13 from 10:00am to 2 pm at St. George's Lowville

Ticket Information

Tickets are \$20 each for general admission and are available from TicketWeb at [www.ticketweb.com](http://www.ticketweb.com) or by calling Ticketmaster at: 1-888-222-6608

Tickets also available through Ruth Anne Martin at the Diocesan Resource Centre [ruthanne.martin@niag-ara.anglican.ca](mailto:ruthanne.martin@niag-ara.anglican.ca) or 905 527-1316 (ext. 203)

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# Getting to Know You: Elizabeth Kay

## Gardener at Christ's Church Cathedral in Hamilton

FRAN DARLINGTON  
INTERIM PRIEST, CHURCH OF THE  
RESURRECTION

Despite many discussions about renewing the downtown area of Hamilton, progress is slow - except at 252 James Street North. At Christ's Church Cathedral, beautiful gardens delight the eye and lift the heart and soul of all who come near, gardens that were featured in the City of Hamilton's evening on beautifying the city's downtown.

Asked for a title associated with her work in the Cathedral gardens, Elizabeth Kay modestly responds: "Well, I'm a free agent. I'm vaguely under



Fran Darlington

Property, but I'm not part of the Property Committee." Elizabeth explains, "I wasn't on the Committee at the beginning, but when the initial plans for Bishop's Gate were proposed at Vestry, I showed interest, because I love gardening. Then I got an e-mail from the Dean (about 'our' next meeting." Surprised, she called Dean Peter Wall and discovered she was on the Committee!

The Venerable Ian Dingwall, Executive Archdeacon of the Diocese at the time, and Canon Judy Dodman were enthusiastic proponents of the project. Elizabeth says, "From a simple concept of just doing something with the walkway and tidying up, it grew!" Also, in Elizabeth's words, Vera Tomlinson was "the mover and shaker in developing Bishop's Gate, (making) a most generous donation in memory of her husband, Percy, who was a very keen gardener."

### Filling in

Elizabeth became the Planting Committee chair. Then, "when (the gardens) were planted out, we thought that the verger was going to look after it. He left, there was no-one, so I said I'd look after it." For six years of faithful commitment, look after it she has, "for a couple of years more or less single-handedly, but last year Margaret Grinstead and Jeni Darling began helping virtually every week. Always others have helped, especially Carol Spence (wife of our Bishop, the Right Reverend Ralph Spence). I'm not carrying this alone; others have put a lot into it in different ways, and it's very much a team effort. People have been very generous financially and with donations of plants."

Elizabeth appreciates wonderful support from Dr. Leslie Laking, Director Emeritus of the Royal Botanical Gardens and a Planting Committee member. "He has been my mentor," she explains. "He designed the perennial beds... and has been very generous with his time - and with plants! It's a great privilege to work alongside him.

He's a real gentleman, and has a great sense of humour." Married at the Cathedral, and now in his 90s, Dr. Laking comes frequently to guide the progress of the gardens.

The Cathedral's designation by the Ontario Heritage Foundation as a historical site affected our choice of plantings, the fence and gate, and the sign, which all had to be approved." Diane Dent, a Cathedral parishioner acted as liaison between the Committee and the Cathedral. Koos Torraveld of the landscape design firm, Environmental Design, drew up plans. Elizabeth smiles, "They were slightly more adventurous than we thought manageable, so they were tempered with... reality - especially maintenance!"

### Climate concerns

Describing the plants, Elizabeth begins with a favourite. "We chose rose varieties suited for the Winnipeg climate. In the border beside the "Schoolhouse" (now the location of Cathedral staff offices), after the long hard winter of 2004/5, they shot into bloom!"

Dr. Laking designed two main perennial beds, in front of the Schoolhouse, next to James Street. The star performers there are Annabel Hydrangea, described by Elizabeth as "almost victims of their own success last year," with "so much bloom they fell over because they were so heavy." Elizabeth explains: "Two bushes were vandalised last year, and blooms were cut. Unexpectedly, they rebloomed, so this year we're going to experiment with cutting some off while they're still in bud, in hope of encouraging more bloom." As the Hydrangea change from green to white, then to colour and back to white, they are cut and dried for use in Cathedral flower arrangements.

### The cat did it

There was concern originally about possible vandalism, but Elizabeth is "very pleased how little (there is), mostly just carelessness. It's remarkable... CC, the Cathedral cat, was responsible for the one big disaster. Dr Laking brought three big Nepetea plants - also known as catnip. She ate them - and still looks for them!" Elizabeth calls CC her supervisor.

Along the Cathedral's west front, behind the Boxwood parterre, Hollies "are still quite small, but produce an incredible amount of berries." Daffodils and Tulips bloom among the Hollies in the spring. For summer, the tulips are replaced with annuals, "ones that give a long blooming season, Geraniums and Victoria Salvia, and a very good blue which sets off the Geraniums nicely. (The Salvia)

bloom prolifically, and we have to trim them more and more. Marigolds go between, because yellow shows better than blue from James Street."

### Neighbourhood interest

The plant boxes on James Street between Canon and Mulberry Streets, made by the Threshold School of building, are part of the project. Marg Grinstead and Elizabeth planted them, and "now more merchants are looking for them!" Last year, the Cathedral gardeners began tackling the planters and gardens in the walkway and west front; watch for new colour there.

Elizabeth happily admits to being "on a steep learning curve. It seemed small on paper, but the building is big, and (the garden) is BIG! It's completely different from my own little garden (at home), which faces north and is hemmed in by big houses and city maples. I've always said I wanted a bigger garden - I'm so lucky!"

Grinning, Elizabeth says, "I'm the sort of person who passes a garden center and thinks (all the plants) are orphans, and I'm the mother they need!" She's also a free spirit when it comes to choosing plants for her home garden.: "The professional books say you should have waves of this and that. I have one of this and that! If it grows and isn't invasive, I'll keep it. With so much shade and so many roots, I can't afford to be picky." She has lots of Phlox, Hosta, and "basically shrubs and (other) perennials, with some annuals in pots that I can move for the limited sun. It's the smallest garden I've ever had."

### Early years

Elizabeth's love of gardening was "nurtured in my childhood in Somerset, living on the Bristol Channel. Everything grows! There's virtually no snow, and very little frost." In war-time, "growing our own food made a big difference between rationing and having a bit more."

Leaving her first job, in a bank, Elizabeth became a nurse. After studying midwifery at Queen Charlotte's Hospital, London, she returned to Bristol as an operating room nurse, working with a doctor developing open heart surgery. "The results weren't always positive, because the patients were so ill, but we did our best. It's very different now."

Marriage to Peter, a pathologist specializing in lung disease, meant moving to Birmingham, where their home's previous owners were "keen gardeners and grew all their own vegetables." Elizabeth became Head Nurse in the teaching hospitals in Birmingham.

Moving to Formbly, on England's northwest coast, challenged Elizabeth's green thumb: "It was sand, nothing stood up! But vegetables did very well, especially the



The garden at Christ's Church Cathedral welcomes parishioners, staff, and all those who pass by.

eighteen inch carrots. There was nothing to stop them going down!... Our seventy-two rose bushes also grow well" in the temperate climate,

### Canadian soil

In 1977, Peter and Elizabeth decided to immigrate to Canada. On a ten day house-hunting trip, they bought the house they still call home. After a six-week return to England to pack, they returned to Hamilton with their two children, the family cat and just enough dishes and cutlery. They slept on the floor until their furniture arrived.

Peter settled into his work at St. Joseph's and McMaster hospitals, teaching and doing research, as well as patient care. "The opportunity here was what he was looking for," Elizabeth smiles. "Both hospitals were developing, so it was an exciting time."

There were too many nurses in Canada, so Elizabeth studied for a Diploma in Applied Music. She taught flute and recorder privately and at Mohawk College. She has warm memories: "I'm not a music therapist, but working with brain-injured patients, I developed my own programme with Orff instruments. Some of them could sing, but not speak. The MS patients could strike instruments and make music!" The music brought Elizabeth into the Cathedral choir: "I met Noreen Wigle at my French Group. She invited me, and I brought my husband." On Thursdays, Elizabeth's language classes "put the world to rights in French in the morning, speak English all afternoon, and Spanish in the evening." She's also comfortable speaking Italian, does water-

colour and pastel landscapes (including beautiful cards for the Cathedral Shoppe), enjoys photography and sewing most of her own clothes. She made all the new cassocks for the Cathedral choir.

Peter and Elizabeth's son, John, is a neurologist in London, Ontario, and their daughter, Alison, is with AMEX in Halifax. Both have two children.

### Garden as outreach

Elizabeth's passion is this: "The garden is outreach! James Street (has) a lot of nationalities and interesting characters. So many appreciate the gardens, coming to sit on the benches, pray, and bless themselves with the water. It's something people can relate to, not just Anglicans. It makes a big difference to the Cathedral and the community." She invites people in, giving "me a chance to practice my languages! I love it when the daycare children come around!"

"I think of the Cathedral as a centre of excellence, and I'd like to think that the garden contributes to that feeling, and adds to spirituality for the Diocese and the people. That's my spirituality."

J. Philip Newel, in *The Book of Creation: An Introduction to Celtic Spirituality*, (New York: Paulist Press, 1999) wrote: "At heart, creation - including our creatureliness - is a showing forth of the mystery of God." When that mystery is revealed in these gardens that bring joy and peace to people in the heart of a busy city, we can all recognise and give thanks for Elizabeth Kay and the people who support her gentle direction and care in co-creating beauty with God.

## Church: The Risky Way

MARION VINCETT  
EXECUTIVE ARCHDEACON

Although I returned from my sabbatical in England in time to celebrate Christmas with my family, I find myself continually returning in my mind to the many conversations, compelling images, and fascinating ideas gleaned from my visit. This is the first of two articles through which I hope to capture and share some of my excitement with you here in Niagara.

"For those who want to save their life shall lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will save it..." (Luke 9:24)

### A Post-Christendom Era

First, a little background about the Church of England. Church attendance in England, as in other prosperous parts of Europe, is even lower than it is in Canada. Approximately 7% of the English population is in church on a regular Sunday morning, and this has had a profound effect on every aspect of congregational life. The cities and parishes which I visited were primarily located in the Midlands and the North, and were chosen deliberately for having characteristics in common with our own diocese. It was not my goal to spend time in "Dibley" or in the great English cathedrals, but rather in the typical urban parish in an industrial city whose buildings were mostly erected during the Victorian era. Many of these buildings have fallen into serious disrepair. One clergy person told me that the average Sunday attendance in the churches of his city was approximately 30 souls. For a congregation of this size to maintain a building designed for upwards of 500, clearly something had to give. And it has.

I met a number of people who were asking themselves these questions: Given our existing and challenging context in the post-Christendom era...

- What is the Church?
- What should it be?
- What kind of leadership does that kind of Church need?

These questions are being stirred by a book, *Mission Shaped Church*, which was released by the Church of England in 2004 and commended to all parishes by Archbishop Rowan Williams. This thin volume has challenged parishes to rethink their mission. Gone is the notion that the Church is the building. People are being challenged to think about what the Church really is, or should be, in a society which is hungry for meaning but resistant to institutions.

A companion booklet by Paul Bayes quotes Archbishop Rowan from another of his writings. He said, "You don't build a house by starting with the roof and working down. You start with the founda-

tions." They said, "What does that mean?" He said, "The foundation is our neighbour whom we must win. The neighbour is where we start. Every commandment of Christ depends on this."

This little gem is a saying of one of the early Irish saints but it struck me as being very true and something that we have often forgotten, so anxious are we to keep the buildings going and to maintain all of our traditions.

I realize that I had asked to see churches where the revitalization process had already begun, and so I probably visited the most promising places. But what I saw impressed me: the lay and clergy leadership had rediscovered a mission for their parish community and had opened themselves in a vulnerable manner to the kind of changes from which there is no turning back.

### Listening to the needs of your community

Buildings which, until a few years ago, were entirely composed of worship space, with no meeting rooms or parish hall, have been converted into community buildings. The community not only has full access to them but has also become part-owner of the renewed facility. A number of well-heeled funding agencies have played their role in transforming these old churches, and so the parish and the wider church have had to forfeit their exclusive ownership of the land and buildings. New corporations run the new facilities, with 50% representation from the community and 50% from the parish. Worship space has typically been reduced drastically to accommodate the realistically projected needs of the congregation, and it too forms part of the space available for community use during the week. Sunday mornings both look and feel very different: pews have been removed in favour of folding, upholstered chairs, and the whole space has become very flexible in its use. During the week, in place of pews and carpet, you see a "bouncy castle" along with the crèche for the kiddies, a climbing-wall, ballroom dancing and ballet classes, seniors learning how to paint with watercolours, and similar delights.

It seems that once you begin listening to the needs of your community - your neighbours - there is no end to the creative uses for your building. One parish in a large social housing project in Sheffield has partnered with the Local Education Authority (School Board) to provide "schooling" for "excluded" students, mostly (but not entirely) of high-school age. Their program, based on computer games, has been so successful that some of those excluded are now back in school and have acquired enough self-esteem to stay there.

I saw credit unions, public libraries, computer access points, alternative therapy centres, community health clinics, day conference centres, cafes, daycares, parenting programs, counseling services, and support services for "asylum seekers" (refugees). The list is endless. But, in every case, the successful programs were inspired and introduced after careful research within the local community.

### A renewed sense of Mission

And what has all of this done for the congregation which took the risk and gave away control of its building? Well, there is always some growth in attendance at Sunday worship; there is certainly a renewed sense of mission and vision

within the congregation and a sense of pride in their witness and their ability to share their building. The age demographic has also changed within the congregation and now better reflects the wider community. But the most profound change, I think, is the surrender of the "church" to the community. It is no longer a decaying worship centre known as "a church" which had little relevance to the needs of the neighbourhood. It is now a Community Centre with a worship space which is widely accessible, paying heed to the people who form that community. It exists for them and not simply for itself.

Archbishop Williams explained what he understood by the word "mission" when he spoke to the

General Synod of the Church of England, meeting in York in 2003: "Mission, it's been said, is finding out what God is doing and joining in. And, at present there is actually an extraordinary amount going on in terms of the creation of new styles of church life. We can call it church planting, 'new ways of being church' or various other things; but the point is that more and more patterns of worship and shared life are appearing on the edge of our mainstream life that cry out for our support, understanding and nurture... All of these are church in the sense that they are what happens when the invitation of Jesus is received and people recognize it in each other." I think they might be on to something.



Marion Vincett

## BOOK REVIEW



### The Left Hand of God

*Taking Our Country Back from the Religious Right*

Rabbi Michael Lerner

Harper Collins, San Francisco, 2006

Hardcover: \$22.07

Many Canadians are interested watchers of the comings and goings in the area of American politics. Increasing interest is also being focused on the Religious Right and its relationship to the Republican agenda. A number of these people are nervous about what they observe, and they should be.

The recent political shift, here in Canada, where the soon to be sworn in Conservative Party has strong links with Canada's Religious Right, will have some of us seriously wondering what is going to change and will it be good for Canada and its people. *The Left Hand of God* offers a look at some of the parallels that will most certainly come to be observed between both countries in a time of Conservative Government in this country.

The fundamental structural differences in the two systems of government should not present/pose any problem of comprehension to the reader. The issue is simply one of enormous conservative religious influence brought to bear on government policies and agendas.

### Harper Collins (Publisher) Review

The unholy alliance of the Political Right and the Religious Right threatens to destroy the America we love. It also threatens to generate a popular aversion to God and religion by identifying religious values with a pro-war, pro-business, pro-rich, anti-science, and anti-environmental stance.

Over the past few decades, the Republicans have achieved political dominance by forging a union with the Religious Right. This marriage has provided a sanctimonious veneer for policies that have helped the rich get richer while ignoring the needs of the middle class and the poor, dismantling environmental and civil liberties protections, and seeking global domination. The Right champions the materialism and ruthless selfishness promoted by unrestrained capitalism and then laments the moral crises of family instability and loneliness experienced by people who bring these commercial values into their homes and personal lives. In response, the Religious Right offers insular communities for the faithful and a culture that blames liberals, activist judges, homosexuals, independent women, and all secular people for the moral and spiritual emptiness so many Americans experience.

Yet, however distorted both the Right's analysis and its solutions to America's spiritual crisis may be, it wins

allegiance by addressing the human hunger for a life with some higher purpose. The Left, by contrast, remains largely tone-deaf to the spiritual needs of the American people. It is the yearning for meaning in life, not just the desire for money or power that lies at the core of American politics.

Addressing the central mystery of contemporary politics - why so many Americans vote against their own economic interests - *The Left Hand of God* provides an invaluable, timely, and blunt critique of the current state of faith in government. Lerner challenges the Left to give up its deeply held fear of religion and to distinguish between a domination-oriented, Right-Hand-of-God tradition and a more compassionate and hope-oriented Left-Hand-of-God worldview. Further, Lerner describes the ways that Democrats have misunderstood and alienated significant parts of their potential constituency. To succeed again, Lerner argues, the Democratic Party must rethink its relationship to God, champion a progressive spiritual vision, reject the old bottom line that promotes the globalization of selfishness, and deal head-on with the very real spiritual crisis that many Americans experience every day.

Lerner presents a vision that incorporates and then goes far beyond contemporary liberal and progressive politics. He argues for a new bottom line in our economy, schools, and government. This is a fundamentally fresh approach, one that takes spiritual needs seriously in our economic and political lives. Presenting an eight-point progressive spiritual covenant with America, Lerner provides a blueprint for how the Democratic Party can effectively challenge the Right and position itself to win the White House and Congress. By appealing to religious, secular, and spiritual but not necessarily religious people, *The Left Hand of God* blazes a trail that could change our world and reclaim America from the Religious Right.

"In this book Michael Lerner challenges both right and left to wake up and create a new political movement that is respectful of our deepest shared values and aspirations. He challenges stuck-thinking of right and left but especially the left for its failure to include the spiritual dimensions of the human condition in its rhetoric and appeal. Lerner offers a serious new 'Spiritual Covenant with America' that many of us could enthusiastically support. A timely, forceful, provocative and deep analysis of the political malaise of our time, this book pulsates with life and spirit and the passion of the prophets of old. Bravo!" (John Shelby Spong, Retired Bishop of Newark)



# Caring for Mind Body and Spirit



Chiropractic: Helping the body heal itself can be a spiritual exercise.

ANNETTE LANGLOIS  
CHIROPRACTOR

As a child, I grew up faithfully attending church, learning the values of our faith community. I cherished and continue to cherish all of those values, but today I cannot help but see them in a different light. In my younger years, the church was a place to develop the spirit - but that spirit seemed so divorced from everything else in life. It governed the body through restrictions, sanctions and on the positive side by

encouraging the love of neighbour. The spirituality that I grew up with was devoid of the true integration of body with spirit and mind.

### Drawn to a greater sense of integration

As the years went on, I left the nest and pursued my vocation as a chiropractor. My education was very one-sided. It wasn't that much different than the spiritual formation that I had as a child - except it emphasized the other side. As a chi-

ropractor, I learned to address ailments of the body. Undoubtedly, in some cases this worked very well for people. An injured or strained back can indeed be helped greatly by chiropractic care. But once again, I knew that my vocation was drawing me to a greater sense of integration. Perhaps it's because I saw one side as a child and another as a practitioner of chiropractic. I knew that what I was doing was in fact more than just a practice. It was in a sense to become a ministry of

integrity. My job was yes, to help folks who felt pains (and I do that well), but it was more importantly to help folks integrate mind, body and spirit to create internal and external well-being and wholeness.

### The body has an amazing ability to heal itself

As I write these thoughts, I realize that I'm writing to a large population of people who are either approaching or in their senior years. I know that there are younger folks who may be reading this as well. But for the moment, let me address the more senior group. At this stage in life, health concerns are escalated. There are the inevitable aches and pains that come with



Annette Langlois

The chiropractor does not only align your structure, but more importantly, promotes good nervous system health in so-doing. In removing the impediments to the nervous system's ability to work at an optimum level in our bodies, the chiropractor facilitates the body's ability to overcome its various ailments and create good health on many levels - physically, emotionally and spiritually.

The folks I see in my practice are not just injured people. To me they are people who are working at allowing their bodies to do good things that the creator enabled them to do. Many of them are folks who are on spiritual journeys and who strive for optimum health in their bodies, minds and spirits. If you are a person who is struggling to be who you think you are called to be - then you need to include chiropractic in your regime of ongoing good health. Your body will feel good, not because of what appears most obvious, but rather because you position it to do what it wants to do - make you a healthy person.

I am learning that this view of health applies not only to people, but to animals as well. Consequently this is led me to a rather active veterinary chiropractic practice as well. In a future article, I will discuss the gift of chiropractic for our pets.

# Put Out the Lights

ALAN GILL  
St. MATTHEWS-ON-THE-PLAINS, BURLINGTON

"Put out the lights!" But whose job is that? Perhaps we don't have to argue that point because those lights will automatically go off. When? Sooner than we think. By our own non-action we will have allowed that bright light, which has shone and given energy for over 500 years, to become extinguished. The Anglican Communion, stemming from the Church of England, will be no more.

### We are first and foremost Christians

There is a far greater loss to humanity here than the demise of a church. As Anglicans we are Christians; first and foremost we are Christians, and being Anglican merely categorizes us. Who will preach the Gospel? In fact can we even say that we have? As a church we have lost our voice in society, nationally, regionally and in our own backyard. We may think we are doing a good job, but deep down we know the answer.

Lord Carey, former Archbishop of Canterbury, commented in the late 1990's, whilst still Archbishop, that the Anglican Church was a generation away from extinction, all we need do is look around. In October 2005, Lord

Carey (now retired) was even more direct. Commenting on Britain's churches he said that they were in such serious decline that if they had been shops, they would have been declared bankrupt long ago!



Alan Gill

At a 2005 fall meeting of Canada's Bishops in Mississauga, the Bishops listened to a presentation by a member of The Anglican Church of Canada's communications and information and resources committee.

Statistics and research indicated that given current declining trends in Canada, "the last Anglican will leave the church in 2061."

### We are Christ's ambassadors

In May 2004, Bishop Victoria Matthews stated that "churches are in danger of becoming little clubs" This Bishop at least had the right answer and was not afraid to put it in very plain language. Bishop Matthews said, "The voice of the Gospel needs to be heard in Canada."

That last statement is what it is all about. Each one of us has been given an incredible gift of grace and reconciliation by Jesus Christ. We all have a story to tell. Why are we silent? Paul, the greatest evangelist writes, Christ "has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors."

What an incredible honour, but

what do we do with that charge? Why don't we share our faith with others? There are some very simple answers to that. Answers that can follow us in many facets of our life.

So why don't we share our faith with our fellow man? Because we are not sure of our faith. Because we don't know how to share. Because we fear rejection.

Well there is an answer to each of those "reasons." None of them will be acceptable or good enough when we stand before our God. Paul again writes, "My life is worth nothing to me, if only I may finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me; the task of testifying to the gospel of God's grace."

### We all have our stories

From Paul we know "God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God was making his appeal through us." Such an amazing gift. We all have our stories and through those stories we have the ability to share the gift bestowed on us all. But do we? We share our joy, our love, our pain, our successes and our failures. We share our life with others. And yet we cannot share that essential something that as Christians is the very essence of who we are. That is very sad and that malaise has been within the church for many years. Is it any wonder that the light is flickering and growing dim?

But if we know the source of Light, the source of life, then there is hope. There is no hope in keeping the light sheltered from others and allowing the darkness to encroach. There is hope in sharing our faith and our stories, knowing that Christ will never leave us; it is ourselves who take the fork in the road. Christ promised He would be with us always, overwhelmingly, comprehensively, "even unto the end of the world."

We all have different gifts, talents on loan from God. We don't have to be the most knowledgeable, the most eloquent; we don't have to convince or convert, we don't even need to provide the answers. All we need is to be gracious, to share our story, perhaps share the answers we found to our questions, and to allow people to see and feel that we do indeed love one another.

### There is a revival ahead

So who will put out the lights? We can certainly ensure it is not us; neither you nor I. The answer is before us at all times, share your story.

There is an unquenchable and ever growing thirst for all things spiritual. The writings of C.S.Lewis

are having incredible exposure in theatres world wide; Lewis became an unapologetic Christian with logic as refined as that of Paul. The stories are there for the whole world to see. There is a revival ahead; people are asking questions, they are prepared to listen. It is all about sharing and it is up to each one of us to share the light and life that is revealed in The Gospels.

I will not help put out the lights. I pray that our Anglican Church in Canada (a church is a people) gets away from being a little exclusive club to becoming a bright light for change. As an organization it may have to shed its old and uncomfortable weight so that it can be a force in our modern world; a source where there is a welcome and the gospel is to the fore. For the latter we are all responsible and pray that we can heed Lord Carey's admonition of bankruptcy and Bishop Matthews' strong voice in saying "the voice of the Gospel needs to be heard in Canada."

It is only then that we may through Grace hear those words "Well done, good and faithful servant." Share the light.

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**JIM NEWMAN**  
DIRECTOR OF STEWARDSHIP AND FINANCIAL DEVELOPMENT

I'm a golfer. I've been playing for half a century, and around this time of year I begin to think about warm sunny days on the links. There's something about the game that brings out the eternal optimist in me. I hear myself saying, "This year will be different. This year I'll play better. This year I'll practice - a lot!"

Yesterday I read the following excerpt

from an old issue of *Golf Magazine*: "We aren't getting any better at this game. We spend thousands of dollars on technologically advanced equipment. Virtually fruitless. We buy books, videos, and gadgets based on the latest instruction techniques. Little more than panaceas. We play, and yes, we even practice. However, we still don't improve."

Statistics show that the millions of golfers who love this game finish the season no better

than they started. A study by the USGA showed that over a 10 year period, that country's median score per round of golf improved by less than one stroke. The article cites several reasons why we don't improve. It's not just lack of concentration or practice; it's a number of little things, physical and psychological, that chip away (no pun intended) at our game.

It's not a huge leap to see ourselves and our parishes in all of this. Each year we plan to improve - our prayer life, our attendance, our giving of time, talent and treasure, our outreach to the community, our bottom line. Each year we expect it will be different. Better. But our annual vestries often show results similar to last year; maybe a little worse.

I wonder, could the reasons we don't improve our golf games have parallels in our parishes? Could there be similar little things that chip away at our parishes? I think there's real food for thought in this list of reasons from the magazine.

#### You don't practice smart

Most amateur golfers don't practice until they have a serious problem or their game has gone completely off the rails. Sometimes parishes wait too long before they seek help. It's best to get some assistance at the first sign of difficulty. Most of us don't realize that professional golfers take tune-up lessons regularly, and they get tips about potential problems from their caddies every day. Help for parishes is just a phone call away at the Diocesan Resource Centre.

#### You don't know your golf swing

Golfers who are able to identify and correct some basic faults have the ability to manage their game and often salvage a decent score. How well do you know your parish? Can you identify the warning signs that indicate a developing stewardship problem? Taking corrective action early can save bigger problems later.

#### You take the off-season off

Most of us put our clubs away in November, and bring them back out in late April. In

church-land, the off-season is June through August. It doesn't have to be much, but it's important to keep the year-round stewardship process gently simmering. That's when you'll appreciate those Pre-Authorized Payments that you encouraged last spring

#### You're unprepared

Few amateurs are really prepared when they step up to the first tee. At best it takes them several holes to get some rhythm going, that is, if they do at all. Professionals, on the other hand, come to play having prepared both physically and mentally. Your parish deserves a professional and well prepared approach to stewardship and gift planning. Prepare a game plan that you can refer to all year-round, and make sure your documents and processes are concise, meaningful, and error free.

#### The wrong equipment

Many golfers have equipment that doesn't fit them properly. Take a look through your bag of year-round stewardship and gift planning tools. Are they current? Does your narrative budget tell your parish story? Is it being used to its full potential? The Diocesan Resource Centre has trained staff ready to help you evaluate your programs and your approach.

#### You don't play for score

Most amateur golfers care more about how far they hit the ball than they do about getting it in the hole. But it's the results that are important. Effective game plans and strategies, coupled with strong and carefully evaluated performance, results in great scores and healthy viable parishes too.

#### Gift Planning Spring Tune-Up Special

Don't forget to register for the Venerable John M. Robertson's Gift Planning Workshop on Saturday March 4 from 9:00am-noon at St. Matthew on-the-Plains Anglican Church, 126 Plains Road East, Burlington. Contact Karen Nowicki at the Diocesan Resource Centre at 905-527-1316 (ex. 380), or karen.nowicki@niagara.anglican.ca

## Transition Time: Is there a Map?

**MARNI NANCEKIVELL**  
CANON, DIRECTOR OF TRANSITIONAL MINISTRIES

The time of transition in a parish is not easy. Routines are disrupted. There are more questions than answers. And frequently, people aren't sure who they should ask for answers to the questions they do have.

Transition, by the way, is the time from when the announcement is made that an Incumbent is leaving, until about eighteen months after he/she arrives. That can seem like a very long time in the life of a parish community.

In the Diocese of Niagara, there is some assistance in the time of transition. The Diocesan web page is a great place to start to search for information. If you search under Programs, you can find information on Interim Ministry, Fresh Start and Human Resources.

In the Diocese of Niagara, the Bishop sometimes appoints a trained Interim to come into a parish between Incumbents. The amount of time the Interim is in the parish varies, both in terms of duration, as well as days per week. Interims are experienced clergy, who have additional training in parish ministry in the "between times." Their assignment is not only to "keep the church going until the new Rector arrives," but rather to help the parish through issues which



**Marni Nancekivell**

Church began just last year. Fresh Start is a programme of wellness to nurture healthy relationships between parishes and the clergy who serve them. We know that it is important to "begin as you mean to continue" church relationships, and Fresh Start helps to get things off to a good beginning. Frequently, early after their incumbent leaves, parishes will be invited to participate in a event to review the Exit, and to prepare for the Entrance of the next Rector. This module is intended to help people identify patterns and themes that may exist especially in past relationships.

Several times I've heard people say "We've already said our 'good-byes,' why should we be thinking about that now when it is time to move on?" Fresh Start is not as much about a prescriptive "how to" manual, as it is an "aerial map," which provides an overview not only of what is past, but what may lie on the road ahead. It is only in learning about all of the dimensions of "where we've been," that we can anticipate "where we might be in the future." Having an "overview" provides context for our human experience. And it helps us to form that which is essential to our faith. After all, the Reign of God is, in part, about the Reign of Right Relationships in our midst. Participation in Fresh Start helps that to happen.

**When an interim is in place there is more work to do not less!**

may not even be visible as the Rector departs. So, there is more work to do than usual, not less, while the Interim is in place. Even if your parish is not assigned an Interim, this particular webpage is helpful in discerning what is normative during "the time in between."

Fresh Start is a programme, which was brought to birth in the Episcopal Church of the United States, but which has been formed in partnership with the creative contributions of the Anglican Church of Canada. Fresh Start Canada, with facilitator training specific to the needs of the Canadian

Finally, there are the "people resources" available to parishes at times of transition. Bishop Ralph Spence and Archdeacon Marion Vincett work closely with parishes to discuss needs, hopes and desires for the future. They are caring people who work in a dedicated way to helping parishes realize their full potential.

In terms of Transitional Ministry, there are volunteer consultants, both in Fresh Start and in the area of Transitional Ministry who will assist parishes in the formation of their Parish Profile. Just call me at: 905-527-1316 (Extension 390) or e-mail me at: marni.nancekivell@niagara.anglican.ca for further details.

## The Reverend D. Linda Corry

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

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# OUTREACH

## The Consecration of Uruguay's First Bishop

STUART PIKE  
RECTOR, ST. ANDREW'S GRIMSBY

There were several things which I and my cohorts, Susan and Bill, discovered quite quickly once we arrived in Uruguay on Monday, August 24th, 1987. I remember that our first night was cold and clear and, walking out into the night, Bill and I looked up and saw that all the stars had changed! We really were at the other end of the world: gone were our familiar big and small dippers and our governor, Polaris, and up above stood the unfamiliar constellation, which we knew to be the Southern Cross. This was the beginning of a change in perspective and I felt myself stumble slightly as my body realized that those 16 hours of travelling had massively shifted the earth under my feet - nothing compared to the shifting which would follow as I entered into a new paradigm and tried to understand my place in this grand scheme, and, more importantly, my direction.

The next thing that we realized is that August in Uruguay is winter and it was damn cold! A bone-chilling damp of single-digit degrees which would never get to snow. Susan and I felt it more than Bill but we toughed it out with our sweaters and wind breakers until our first Sunday when we went to the feria (open street market) and Susan bought a jacket and I bought a scarf. The feria took over the main street, 18 de Julio, each Sunday and was a massive jumble of street vendors and shoppers mixed through with the pulse-quickening thrill of Brazilian music with its whistles and drums. The sun was bright that day and the locals were soaking it in.

### El Templo Inglés

Earlier that morning we had gone to two services at the Anglican Cathedral, which is called by the Uruguayans, "el Templo Inglés." The early service was for the English-speaking Anglicans: British ex-patriots who were dressed to the nines and spoke upper-crust Posh. In contrast the Spanish-speaking population were casually dressed and seemed a little rougher around the edges. All of the people at both services were extremely nice and welcomed us warmly. We worshipped in a small room at the Cathedral, which was more easily heated than the nave.

The Cathedral would be the centre for a brand-new project which would keep Susan and Bill busy and which I would join once per week. It was a "Comedor," a soup kitchen in a former storage room in the basement. It was called "la crypta San Lorenzo" and was furnished with a banged-up wooden table, and plenty of unmatched chairs, a brand new rough wooden counter, which the bishop's

son, Mateo, had made and an old propane stove. Word on the street must have gotten out because, new or not, San Lorenzo started filling up with the "gente de la calle," street people every night and Susan, Bill and I were becoming experts at cooking rice and garbanzo beans for them.

### Mostly men, unemployed

They were mostly men, though we would occasionally get women and children. Most of them were pretty rough - clothes, hands, faces, voices - all rough and dark from living out in the elements. All of this belied a sensitivity which they had inside. They looked out for each other. They were all in the same boat. Most of them had been employed at one time, but years of recession caused the unemployment rate to rise dramatically and there was no social safety net. We got to know the regulars and looked forward to their conversation. They were very patient with us despite our broken Spanish.

Two of our regular customers lived right there on the side porch of the Cathedral. They were a couple: Juanita and Mingo, and they had lived there for a long time. But years on the street had taken their toll. They begged during the day, and Mingo would do hard labour wherever he could to get some money. At night they drank it all away. Some nights Juanita would burst into the soup kitchen in a drunken stupor and raise a fuss. The next night she would be weeping and asking for forgiveness. She looked and sounded like a man with her voice wrecked by exposure and alcohol. Yet her scarred face for me represented the suffering of the poor around the world. Even today as I come across street people in Toronto, I often think of Juanita and Mingo, of Juan Carlos and Luis and their friends.

### Wealthy Brits and poor Uruguayans

The Anglican Diocese of Uruguay was just starting to form and wouldn't be official for another two years. The Church was setting out in a new direction, bringing together the wealthy Brits and poor Uruguayans. The parishes in Salto to the north and Fray Bentos in the West were starting to grow with Spanish-speaking members. Uruguayans were being ordained priest for the new work and it was all coming together. The English community was seeing a new possibility for their Church, which had been starting to die out as there were fewer and fewer ex-patriots. The Church, in reaching out to those in need was finding its vocation.

But in these days the Church had another important mission. Bill Godfrey, having been elected to be



Mingo, (here with a guest) and Juanita had for years lived on the side porch of the Anglican Cathedral. "They begged during the day... at night they drank it all away."

Bishop, still needed to be consecrated. The date was set for September 21st and the Cathedral community was bursting with excitement. One English woman wanted to donate some \$8000 US to redecorate the interior of the Cathedral.

The day finally came and the worship was all in Spanish and there were Bishops and visitors from all over. A Bishop from Brazil preached

and was very enthusiastic. All of the English ex-pats were there in their finery and many of the Uruguayans and, in the middle of them all, were Juanita and Mingo who were finding the pomp and circumstance of the worship, and the length, to be overwhelming. Right after the Brazilian Bishop finished his sermon, Juanita stood up and cried out in a loud voice, "Coronar!o, coro-

narlo!" which means, "Crown him!"

And so Bishop Bill Godfrey was consecrated to be Uruguay's first Diocesan Bishop, with the diversity of his people around him. At the reception following, shabby street people rubbed shoulders with Victorian ladies and everyone ate dainties together and waited in line to wish their new Bishop well. What a wonderful beginning!



KAREN NOWICKI  
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

In Toronto in 1986, the death of George, a homeless man, brought people together to take action.

Students and teachers of St. Michael's High School, Sister Susan Moran, Father John Murphy and Rev. Canon John Erb took the necessary steps to arrange a location, food and volunteers and opened a small storefront on St. Claire Avenue. That was January 15, 1987. From this humble beginning, the Out of the Cold program has spread throughout Toronto and many cities across Canada.

Hamilton Out of the Cold Program started in the hearts of Sister Carole Anne Guay, a Sister of St. Joseph, and her friend Ms. Gloria Colizza. Both of these women are retired teachers from Hamilton. They saw the need, started to pray about what God would have them do about the need, and visited the Out of the Cold Program in Toronto. They invited others to share their vision and dream of feeding the poor and giving them a place to lay their heads. The program began its first year on December 1, 1997, at James St. Baptist Church.



The Out of the Cold Program is a registered incorporated charity and the board members are drawn from the community. Volunteers include adults and families drawn mainly from churches, synagogues and mosques, university students, and high school students doing community service. The program is financed through individual donations, fund raising, charitable groups, churches, synagogues, mosques, and local businesses. The service runs from November through to March.

Hot, nutritious meals are provided for the homeless and near homeless in our community. Overnight accommodation, breakfast and bagged lunches are provided.

In the winter of 2003/2004 there were 11,788 guests fed and sheltered and 1,876 people that received overnight accommodation. In the winter of 2004/2005 the number rose to 12,675 fed and sheltered, and the number of people that looked for overnight accommodation fell to 1,426.

The parish of Church of the Ascension, Hamilton provides this service to the community on Mondays and Saturdays, November through March.

**For more information contact:**  
Hamilton Out of the Cold Coalition Inc.  
354 King St. W., 1st floor  
Hamilton, ON L8P 1B3  
[www.hamiltonoutofthecold.freesevers.com](http://www.hamiltonoutofthecold.freesevers.com)

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# What is Prayer?

**BILL MOUS**  
SEMINARIAN, TRINITY COLLEGE

"What is prayer?" asked one of my homiletics professors on the first day of the winter semester. Although intended as a rhetorical question, it was a question that lingered with me. I had never really given it a great deal of thought. Prayer was prayer... but was there more to it than that? One of the great things about studying theology is that, at its best, it invokes its students to reflect upon such questions.



**Bill Mous**

take many shapes and forms, if God exists in everything. One of my own most profound times of prayer happens but once a year, in a rather unconventional form. Each morning at the Niagara Youth Conference, the community gathers together for 'Tunes' - an eclectic mix of contemporary songs whose lyrics bring the delegates and staff closer to God. Throw into the mix some lively dancing to get the blood flowing in the morning, and voila! It's prayer, and one that engages the mind, body and soul!

## Prayer as response

Martin Smith, a priest and author, writes: "God touches us, God speaks to us, God moves us, God reveals truth to us, and life and prayer is our response." This concept has resonated deeply for me and my understanding of prayer in recent weeks. The burden of beginning the conversation is lifted by the knowledge that God has already begun the conversation via our experience in everyday life and that our task is to simply continue that conversation; to respond to God in our everyday lives - whether that is by praying for ourselves or others, or giving thanks for the things God has done in our lives or wrestling with God about current challenges in our lives - prayer can be viewed as merely continuing an ongoing dialogue with God. Consequently, prayer isn't really an escape from the world, but an entrance into it!

I have at various times in my life had trouble entering into this world. Responding to God isn't always an easy task. Upon reflection, it seems that part of this difficulty was simply because of my understanding of prayer. I was still asking for help, understanding or strength in my stream of consciousness, but just not in any formal way.

While I don't have a definite answer for what prayer is (and I doubt there is one), it is something that I will continue to reflect upon. I look forward in the coming months and years to see how my understanding of prayer morphs as my response to God changes. Perhaps over Lent, you too might take some time and reflect upon what prayer is for you and how you respond to God's continuing conversation in your life.

## So what is prayer anyway?

Is it a private enterprise or only "when two or three are gathered?" Is it directed towards God, Jesus, or the Holy Spirit? How do we initiate prayer? Is it through a period of silence, by meditating on scripture, listening to music, undertaking some type of physical activity?

## Could it be all of the above?

My current understanding of prayer is that of an activity which involves a deeper and intentional communion with God. The psalmist's words: "Be still, and know that I am God" comes to mind - although I don't think you actually have to be still to pray. But I think the concept of 'being' with God is the essential part of prayer. In prayer we enter into the depths of our own being, removing the outer layers of our personhood to reveal the inner core of our innermost selves.

Sometimes, like many things in our lives, we get stuck in familiar routines. In prayer this might take the form of kneeling by the bedside or only praying at Church. This familiarity may disguise the other events in our life that are really prayer, just not of the conventional type. My walk to Trinity each morning, for example, is one of my best prayer times. In the Anglican Church, we have not always been taught how to develop our prayer lives, despite the wealth of techniques and resources that are available - lectio divina, prayer of the imagination, meditation, the Anglican rosary, etc.

Ignatius, whose spiritual exercises have deepened countless people's relationship with God, believed that God was found in all things. Thus, it shouldn't be too much of a stretch to believe that prayer should be able to

# PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

- Belated congratulations and best wishes to **Len and Gwen Mather**, of St. John's, Niagara Falls, who celebrated their 50th Wedding Anniversary on September 17.
- Congratulations to the **Reverend Darcy Lazerte** and **Dawn Lazerte**, on the birth of their daughter, Trinity Jade, born on January 9.
- Deepest sympathy to **Bishop Ann Tottenham**, Assistant Bishop in Niagara, and family, on the death of her father, **Charles John Tottenham**, on January 31.
- Happy Birthday to **Peggy Freeman**, a long time faithful member of St. Mark's Church in Orangeville, who celebrates this significant day on February 21.
- Congratulations and best wishes to **Mr. Bill Daniels**, O.N., and **Shirley Daniels**, of St. Paul's,

Mount Forest, who celebrated their 60th Wedding Anniversary on January 19.

- **Canon Fran Darlington** has been appointed Interim Pastor at Church of the Resurrection, Hamilton, beginning February 1.
- Congratulations to the **Parish Guild at St. George's Church**, Guelph, who celebrated their 60th Anniversary of founding on February 2.
- The **Reverend Canon Dr. Richard Jones** was appointed an Honorary Canon of Christ's Church Cathedral effective February 1.
- The **Reverend Daniel Tatarnic** has been appointed Rector of St. Stephen's, Hornby and St. John's, Stewarttown, beginning March 1.
- **Canon Marni Nancekivell** and **Archdeacon Paul Jackson** have

been appointed as the Interim Pastoral Team at St. John the Evangelist, Hamilton, beginning March 1.

- The **Venerable James Sandilands** was appointed Archdeacon of Mohawk effective February 1 and will be collated on March 5.
- Permission to administer the Chalice at Christ Church, McNab, given to **J'Nell Dilamarter** effective January 1. (Correction: Permission to administer the chalice effective on December 1 was given to Jean James at Shelburne, not Jean Allen, as stated in last month's issue)
- Licensed Lay Readers: **Dawn Christine Gordon** at St. John the Evangelist, Niagara Falls, under the direction of the rector, effective January 1.

## Bishop's Calendar: March 2006

- 1st**, 12:15 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. - Christ's Church Cathedral (Ash Wednesday)
- 2nd**, 10:15 a.m. - Cathedral Place, Meeting of Regional Deans
- 2nd**, 12:30 p.m. - Cathedral Place, Meeting of Archdeacons with Regional Deans
- 5th**, 10:30 a.m. - All Saints, Hamilton, Parish Visit
- 5th**, 4:00 p.m. - Christ's Church Cathedral, Collation of Archdeacon Jim Sandilands
- 7th**, 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. - St. Christopher's Church, Burlington, Clergy/Layworkers Education Day
- 7th**, 5:00 p.m. - Cathedral Place, Meeting of Synod Council
- 12th**, 10:00 a.m. - St. James, St. Catharines, Parish Visit
- 19th**, 10:30 a.m. - St. Columba's, St. Catharines, Parish Visit
- 22nd**, 12:15 p.m. - Christ's Church Cathedral, Eucharist and Canons Lunch
- 24th** and **25th** - Diocese of Toronto: Consecration of Suffragan Bishop
- 26th**, 3:00 p.m. - Christ's Church Cathedral, Lincoln Region Confirmation
- 31st**, 1:30 p.m. - Ridley College, St. Catharines, Visit and Confirmation

## Moving on in Faith: Finding Christ in Others

**IAN DINGWALL**  
RETIRED ARCHDEACON, ST. CHRISTOPHER'S

I unexpectedly met a former parishioner the other day. I hadn't seen him for some time. He had been in the past, a regular Sunday worshipper with a keen interest and commitment to the Church. But, alas, he confessed to have lapsed. I asked him about it.

His reply was honest and direct: "It seems me" he said "that the church is not relevant to me and my life. The Church appears only to be concerned with divisive opinions that, at least for me, are about secondary concerns: they may be legitimate for some but not for me."

We spoke a little longer and I heard that his concerns were, as follow:

1. A general observation that there is a gap between what the faith community believes and says and how it "does" the faith. His beef, that we "talk the talk" but don't "walk the walk." I know it is an old story but I could not argue with him. Could you?

2. My friend thinks we are preoccupied with a one-dimensional discussion about human sexuality. He is in favour of a more liberal view and Christian approach to the gay community. In a profound way he is 'gay friendly'. But he says that is not the fundamental issue we should be concerned with. Rather, he says, we should be

discussing sexuality in a much wider context. "Look" he says "at sexuality in general as it portrayed on our television: casual, self-gratifying and exploitive." Time, he says, that we become more concerned with that than obsessed with condemning gay folk.

3. Then he spoke of our worshiping ways. Why are



**Ian Dingwall**

we so hung up with old concerns such as the use of BCP as opposed to BAS? Surely our concerns shouldn't be limited to a liturgical Pedigree of the 16th century but instead we ought to begin to realize that we have 2000 years of liturgical history to learn from. Forget the polemics and invite folks to consider Christian spirituality and theology and how that relates to our worship. How, in fact, are we shaped by our liturgy to become relevant members of our human community?

Well, we did go on, but I hope you get the idea. For me, as I reflect back on that conversation, I am dismayed that we seem to be allowing the Gospel and faith and theology to be hijacked and reduced to something less than ideal, instead of participating in the discussion and living of the faith in the tensions of human ambiguity and ambivalence. Let's have more talk about:

- The mystery of God - a quest and journey towards truth that is never finished.
  - The discovery of what incarnation really means - to incarnate God in our lives today as we seek to know and understand in the community of faith.
  - The acknowledgment that truth which involves journey is open and inclusive.
  - The understanding that Christ's primary call is to a "bias for the poor," and that we cease thinking of the Church as an end in itself but merely a servant of humanity.
- Let's talk and listen to one another. Stop the argumentative stuff and look for Christ in other people and their lives and opinions.

**Caralei Peters** MSc, ND  
DOCTOR OF NATUROPATHIC MEDICINE

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