



Niagara Anglican

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NEWS • PERSPECTIVE • REFLECTION • FOR A GROWING CHURCH • JULY 2007

General Synod 2007: A Personal Journey



WENDY NEWMAN
CHRIST'S CHURCH CATHEDRAL

I was invited to forward a journal of my feelings as a member of General Synod 2007 to the *Niagara Anglican*. This is not an objective account, but my record of an intensely personal Christian journey.

Equipped with a personal survival kit that includes Cantic 6 from the New Zealand Book of Prayer, an email from a wise friend, and the photo directory of Christ's Church Cathedral, where people are holding us all in prayer, I arrive in Winnipeg. I travel a lot and meet new people easily, but here I find myself surrounded by "Synod regulars" who've known each other forever. Not a comfortable pew.

On Tuesday I attend an orientation, where once again the generous love of Peter Wall for the church is evident. He chairs the organizing committee. I am so proud of him. Primate Andrew Hutchison reminds us that we are here to discern what the Spirit is saying to the Church. Hmmm. It feels like the eve of D-Day, actually. *Note to self: Hang in here with the discomfort. Walk your talk.*

The opening service at the Cathedral begins with an Aboriginal smudging ceremony by the river—the first of many blessings of a strong Aboriginal Anglican presence. Still, I find the air crackling with unacknowledged tension.

We begin each morning with prayer and reflection in a pre-assigned small group. My group includes Peter Elliott, formerly of Niagara, now Dean of New Westminster, and Bishop Fred Hiltz, later elected Primate. I say straight up that I find this Synod tense and stressful. It helps. My group leader invites us to talk directly and safely—the only place where that happens consistently all week. *Note to self: Loving through difference is classic Christian work. So do it. Resolve to keep asking yourself: "Is the unconditional love of God flowing through me RIGHT NOW?"*

We begin the business of General Synod. Why doesn't this feel like church? I am not new to politics or advocacy, but some of the bare-knuckled politics here gives me a jolt. Later the Bishop of York speaks on "gracious magnanimity"

and the Secretary-General of the Anglican Communion delivers a politely crafted pitch for unity. I wonder if we mean the same thing. Don't even try to sell me a "business as usual" church. I hunker down. But the earnest presentation of the Aboriginal Council opens me up again when a speaker quietly observes that Jesus shows us how to redistribute power. Another little moment of grace breaks through. Thank you, God. The cruel legacy of residential schools will take generations to heal, though it is begun. ("You are not OK. You must be changed; you must be like us. And we have the power here.") Why can't this church see that it is doing the same thing to gays and lesbians right now? *Note to self: Is this church worth saving?*

We take a peek at the elephant in the room as we begin the discussion on same-sex unions and the St. Michael Report. This is presented with sensitivity and respect. Despite my disagreement with the St. Michael conclusions, I smile inwardly. We do many things well in Anglican land. This session has been one of them. I am grateful for the silences and prayers built into it.

On Wednesday I go a lunch-hour Eucharist organized by Integrity. Bishop Ralph presides and Rev. Andy Asbil delivers an unforgettable homily. It feels like a warm bath on a winter night. I am touched by God's grace at an anxious time.

We go to a plenary session—kind of a town hall. People line up at the microphones. The north-south and urban-rural fissures in the church mirror those in Canada at large, but they feel more distressing in the church. I notice that "conservatives" are organized and strategic here; it appears that "liberals" kind of turn up to see what happens. We use different languages. I wonder if some "conservatives" in the hall are feeling as alienated as I am. There appears to be a carefully choreographed domination of the microphones; some of the views expressed are over the top. The language is coded and not always honest. "Treat the matter sensitively", "let's have more study", "wait" and "I really love this church" all mean "no". This feels like a church in fear—fear that the consequence of any change will be catastrophic. Supported in prayer, I approach the microphone and urge the assembly not to deliberate in fear. I don't feel quite so helpless, having spoken. But my gut persists: how does the Anglican Church appear today to a broken world so in need of the Good News? Paralyzed and self-absorbed?

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A MESSAGE FROM OUR BISHOP-ELECT



Dear Friends in Niagara

Ever since June the 2nd, it seems like my life has been a whirlwind of activity and it is clear that my life is about to change dramatically! I am continuing my work as Rector of St. Luke's while at the same time I am beginning to prepare to take on the new ministry of Bishop in the diocese of Niagara. I felt it was important, however, to write a brief note to our Anglican community in Niagara.

When I was elected Bishop, Archbishop Caleb Lawrence asked me before the entire synod whether

I would accept this responsibility. I indicated that I enthusiastically accepted. I am honoured, humbled and thankful that you have placed your trust in me and that I have been called to this ministry of leadership. I assure you that I will use every God-given gift that I have to serve you faithfully as Co-adjutor Bishop and ultimately as Bishop of Niagara. Many people think of these times as difficult, and they are. More importantly, we have a joyful and hopeful message to proclaim and I know that together we will be faithful in the

work of bearing that message to a society and world that God calls us to serve.

The summer is now officially here. Many of us will be travelling and vacationing. Remember God in your vacation time. Spend some time in prayer and reflection, visit a local church if you are traveling and above all let us all continue to witness to our faith in Christ.

Be assured of my prayers and my support. Yours in Christ,

MICHAEL BIRD
Coadjutor Bishop-elect

Step into another's shoes

A response to Charlie Masters' Toronto Star interview

JOSHUA MORRISON
STUDENT - UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO

Before I begin at length, this article refers to an interview that the Reverend Charlie Masters conducted with the Toronto Star. It can be found at this web address: <http://www.thestar.com/article/213177>.

I will start by saying that though I disagree with Rev. Masters politically, I respect him for many reasons. First, he has had the bravery to stand up for what he believes in not just in the Diocese, but na-

tionally. Being in the media spotlight is a vulnerable position and it takes great courage to step into that light. I also respect him for having such a powerful faith in Jesus and God. People like Rev. Masters are the backbone of the church and we need them to speak their opinions and lead the Church with clear and strong voices.

This all being said, I would like to propose a hypothetical situation regarding Rev. Master's belief that we need to adopt a "love the sinner,

not the sin" attitude towards homosexuals in the church. I hope that anyone reading this will approach the situation I'm going to pose with an open mind and a prayerful heart. I also hope that Rev. Masters will read this and that if he wishes to respond to me personally or publicly he will.

Imagine that you have been an Anglican for all of your life. The church is your home, and you love it and everyone in it as best you can.

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CATHEDRAL CAMPAIGN

Preserve to serve



SANDY DARLING
CHRIST'S CHURCH CATHEDRAL

Since the founding of the Diocese of Niagara in 1875, Christ's Church Cathedral has served as the cathedral. Today Cathedral Place is a lively place, visited by over 15,000 people each year, and is the venue of many events that are significant in the life of Anglicans in this part of the world. In a five-week period in May and early June Cathedral Place was full to overflowing for two services where the Order of Niagara was conferred, 100 people affirmed their faith in confirmation, the bishop ordained new deacons, and Synod elected a new bishop. These events allow all participants to be part of the wider church and to receive the support of others at the time of major decisions in the Christian journey.

These events take place in one of the most beautiful cathedrals in Canada, and are enriched by the Anglican liturgy and splendid music. They do not, however, occur spontaneously—the building, staffing and service required for such diocesan activities and events are

of a different order than those required for the operation of a regular parish. Cathedral Place is the spiritual home of all Anglicans, just as their parish church is. Recently, our Diocesan Synod Council approved embarking on a capital campaign, entitled Preserve to Serve, across the diocese to raise \$4 million for the support of Cathedral Place. The purpose of the target is to provide a foundation that will enable Cathedral Place to continue to play a central role in the life of this diocese. Parishes are being encouraged to link this campaign to their own capital needs or to raise endowments.

Bishop Ralph and Bishop-Elect Michael are committed to this program and pray that you will be as well. In a letter to all clergy and licensed lay-workers, Bishop Ralph said, "It was my request that we begin this campaign immediately, and while I am still in office, in order that I may fully commit myself to assisting with the early phase of the program. It is my heartfelt prayer that you will help me achieve our goal in this regard."

Bishop Ralph has declared Sunday, September 30th, the day of the Consecration Service of Michael Bird, as Cathedral Place Day and the day of the official launch of the campaign in each parish at morning services. He said, "What a perfect day for us to celebrate so much: Michael's consecration, Cathedral Place, and the place of the Cathedral in our lives. Like many Cathedrals, ours is in the very heart of the city. Cathedrals are always places of outreach, pilgrimage, and signs of Christian unity. On September 30th, Bishop-Elect Michael will be presented to us all as a symbol of the preaching and teaching of the Church—reaching out to all people."

It has been suggested that parishes consider a pulpit exchange on that day with clergy within the region, asking preachers to focus on the life of our Cathedral in their lives. The main thrust of the campaign will take place during October and November of this year, and you may expect to hear more in the coming months.

God, be merciful to me, a sinner!



SUSAN WESTALL
ALL SAINTS, HAMILTON

Throughout the life of the Bible mankind has sought for an escape, a way out. Humanity has proved itself to be incapable of accepting responsibility for its own actions. We have to "pass the buck". It started with Adam who blamed Eve for his own transgression, Eve passed the responsibility to the snake, which has suffered ever since from humanity's inbred fear of the slimy creature who, of course, is warm blooded and not slimy at all.

A sin is a transgression against God's will for us; God wishes us to enjoy his/her creation, but we run counter to God's will and "rock the boat". That is why Jesus taught us "thy will be done". We already live in God's kingdom, God's Realm, but we haven't learnt how to keep God's Law, God's Will; hence "thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven".

In Old Testament times humanity invented the idea of a "propitiation" for their sins. Since humans seem to have been incapable of trusting each other, they have become resentful and finish up killing each other. Blood is shed. "Well", goes the logic, "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth". If we shed blood, we can only balance the account by shedding some more. We either go out on a revenge excursion or we have to find a way of squaring the account with some god, whom we create in our own image. As a result, humanity decides not to kill somebody else, but to kill some animal, whose blood will balance the account (See Endnote). Burnt offerings is one of the results, but they don't have to be burnt. Slaughter can take place on an "altar"; the Aztecs knew how to do that (they are just one example). The Old Testament records that the blood of the sacrificed animal had to be sprinkled around the altar.

By the time of Jesus, progressive O.T. prophets had condemned the slaughter of animals as a propitiation for the sins of the people, because the people continued to sin in spite of the sacrifices (cf. Isaiah 1:11). Why do sins continue? Surely it is because of our own self-interests.

Why was Jesus crucified? It was because the interests of the priests and the scribes were at stake. It is noteworthy that the arrest of Jesus occurred at night so that the general public would not be around to witness the action. Had they been present there could have been a riot and the Roman authorities would have had to intervene. The Jewish authorities were always walking on thin ice; in order to maintain their own authority they had to satisfy the Roman overlords. Jesus presented a

threat to their power; he had to be destroyed. Jesus never claimed to be King of the Jews; but he was tagged with the label because the Sanhedrin knew that Pilate could not permit a rival claim to the authority of Caesar. It was all a matter of preserving one's own best interests.

The first "Christians" were Jews. Saul of Tarsus was steeped in Jewish tradition and the Torah. Did the logic of Gamaliel have any effect on him? Like the other apostles (Paul calls himself an apostle although not one of the original Twelve) he sought proof in the Scriptures for evidence that Jesus was the Messiah. The early church came up with many quotes whether appropriate or not. They knew that mankind was addicted to self-interest—to sin—and they continued in the ancient tradition of propitiation for sin. Humanity is always looking for an escape hatch, a scapegoat, a way out. Humanity is fundamentally cowardly; it is always somebody else's fault. Jesus becomes the scapegoat, the lamb, that is the propitiation for mankind's sins. The Agnus Dei is born.

Jesus died because of the sin of self-interest—a sin of which we are all guilty. In that sense each one of us shared in his crucifixion, because we continue in our self-interest. Jesus' life was the contradiction of this: His concern was for the wellbeing of others at the expense of himself.

For two thousand years we have hung on to the lifeline of Jesus' crucifixion as a propitiation for our sins and we have continued to sin. God is just and She/He is now teaching us that, because we have misinterpreted the sacrifice that Jesus made, we are now crucifying ourselves. As the Qur'an repeats "God is merciful". God, in His/Her mercy, used Jesus' crucifixion to give us hope that there is new life after death if only we will live life as Jesus did. Away with self-interest! We must put the interests of others before our own and we will then find the Peace of God. At present we are poisoning the earth in which we are placed. Self-interest is ruining our environment. Scientists have just reported that humanity will exterminate itself unless we clean up our act.

We crucified Jesus. Because we have failed to interpret that action we are now condemned to crucify ourselves.

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Endnote: While serving with Indian troops during the Second World War, I could be approached with the request for permission to go home on leave because a family breadwinner was ill or had died and the soldier concerned was required at home to help the family in a time of loss. It was necessary to get in touch with the District Commissioner before leave could be granted in order to make sure that the real reason for leave of absence was not so that the soldier involved could go home and settle a family feud and balance the account.

GENERAL SYNOD 2007

A message regarding the defeated motion on same-sex blessings

Dear Friends,

Today, two important resolutions came before the General Synod of our Church. The first proposed that the blessing of same-sex unions is not in conflict with the core doctrine (in the sense of being creedal) of the Anglican Church of Canada. This motion passed.

The second, proposed to affirm the authority of a synod and its bishop to allow rites for the blessing of committed monogamous same-sex unions. It passed clearly in the Order of Laity and in the Order of Clergy,

but was narrowly defeated in the Order of Bishops.

We share in the profound sense of loss that many in our churches will experience in the wake of this decision, especially gay and lesbian Anglicans along with many of their family and friends.

Please be assured of our prayers and of our commitment to press forward in faith towards an ever more welcoming and inclusive church.

+Ralph, Bishop of Niagara
The Venerable Michael Bird, Co-adjutor Bishop-elect

My Synod Journal

CAROL SUMMERS
ST. JOHN'S YORK

Richard (my husband) and I decided to drive out to Winnipeg. It has been a great journey. We spent the first night in the Soo and then went on to Thunder Bay. We had not been there before, so we made a couple of stops on the way. Ouimet Canyon was frighteningly deep. I'm not very comfortable standing on the edge of a chasm but Richard had no such reserve and happily leant over the edge to take photographs. On we went to the Terry Fox monument. The image was familiar. There he was, with fists clenched, head thrown back, his face showing the effort he was making as he step-hopped halfway across this country. I noticed, for the first time, the base of the monument, which looks like a bridge and is etched with the emblem of every province. I read the inscriptions and was, once more, amazed at his courage and overwhelmed with a fierce pride as I thought of this young Canadian whose hope and determination continues to bring a country together.

Here I am in Winnipeg. I arrived at the Marlborough Hotel and was greeted warmly by many people, some I knew and many I did not know. It was busy and noisy with a lot of conversations going on at the same time. I will have tonight to rest a little, read more reports and prepare for Synod. As I have thought about General Synod over the past six months or so I admit to feeling the same sense of discomfort I felt at Ouimet Canyon, a sense of a great gaping hole beneath the church, threatening to swallow it up. Now I have the image of Terry Fox in mind as I prepare for the week ahead of us. We've got to keep step-hopping along on our journey, without fear, determined that we will get there in the end.

Tuesday

This evening Richard and I took part in the smudge ceremony, which was held on the grounds of St John's Cathedral. It was a beautiful, warm summer evening down by the river. We took the opportunity to slap others as the mosquitoes descended and we had to defend each other and ourselves. There were a lot of us and one person

holding the smudge so we were waiting for quite a while. The service had begun when we finally arrived inside the church but I was glad I had been through the ceremony and the sweet smell of sage and cedar stayed with me. The opening ceremony was impressive and I appreciated that the guest speakers had done their research well and actually seemed to know about the Anglican Church. When it rains here it pours down. We were told we would need rain gear so, of course we did not take it with us when we went off to the service at 6pm. Richard and I were caught in the rain storm and arrived back at the hotel drenched to the skin. Not an auspicious start.

Wednesday

This was our first full day. It is a familiar routine. I recognize many faces, the name tags help us all recall each other and I enjoy meeting so many members from our church and hearing their stories. I look forward to the eight o'clock table group, which is a short bible study and prayer group. The people at my table look interesting but it will take a few days for us all to be comfortable enough with each other to say what we really think. The Archbishop of York, Dr. John Sentamu, gave an inspiring address, most people were impressed and we all heard affirmation, no matter what side of the debate we are on. We heard from the Council of the North and I was very pleased that we agreed to provide more funding for them. I have met some wonderful people from the North in my time at both Provincial and General Synods. They are totally committed to the Anglican Church and I feel we should show them the same support. We had an interesting time at the reception given by the Council of the North that evening. I would like to do something to help them. I'm not sure how yet but I intend to try. I have various names and email addresses and believe there is an adventure here for them and for us.

Thursday

Time rushes past here. We spent a good day with the Lutherans, I met

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Reflections on a wonderful Synod



PETER WALL
DEAN & RECTOR - CHRIST'S CHURCH CATHEDRAL
DIOCESAN LITURGICAL OFFICER

General Synod 2007, with the theme "Draw the Circle Wide. Draw it Wider Still" is now over and its decisions in the history books. It was, in many respects, a wonderful synod, bringing the Canadian church together from sea to sea and making both important and historic decisions. On an emotional and tense day, Bishop Fred Hiltz of the Diocese of Nova Scotia and PEI, was elected our 13th Primate, and, in a service which was magnificent and hot, Archbishop Hiltz was installed into that office, amid the best of Anglican ceremony and pageantry. One of the most moving events at General Synod was the recognition and presentation of Bishop Mark McDonald as National Indigenous Anglican Bishop, a new office in our Church. Mark is an amazing person, and brings tremendous skill and experience to this new position.

The eyes of our Church (and indeed of the Anglican world) were on us as Synod debated and made decisions about doctrine and about a local diocesan option for the blessing of same-sex unions. I know that many are left confused and uncertain after the votes taken on Sunday, 24 June. The resolution dealing with doctrine is a very important one: Synod resolved that the blessing of same sex union is

not in conflict with the core doctrine of our church. That resolution, which needed to be carried by a straight majority in both General Synod houses: Laity and Clergy voting together, and the Order of Bishops, was carried by a significant majority in the 'lower' house and by a vote of 21-19 in the order of Bishops. The second resolution, deferred from the 2004 Synod, which would allow for dioceses to make a local decision, was passed by the laity and clergy, voting separately, but narrowly defeated by the Bishops, in a similar 21-19 vote. This was difficult and painful for many, made all the more so by the fact that, clearly, the church wanted to move ahead on this matter, but some Bishops, concerned about our international Anglican relationships, and because of reactions in their own diocese, stopped what seemed to be the intention of the Clergy and the Laity.

I was initially very angry and tearful at the decision—tearful because this news hurts many people whom I know and love, and angry because such a small majority of Bishops can decide such things, and because it seems to be irrelevant that so much has been done since 2004 and that so many Canadian Anglicans clearly want this matter to be resolved.

In the days since, I have both reflected personally on this matter and spoken with many other similarly minded folk, including many of our Bishops. Three things are important to note and remember:

- The decision to declare our church doctrinally on the blessing of same sex unions is a critically important step and should not be overlooked by anyone.
- There is no longer any mora-

torium in effect on the Bishops in terms of local diocesan decision

■ There is a palpable energy in both our Diocese and other urban dioceses to keep this matter on the agenda of Diocesan synods and to look seriously at moving ahead in places where it is both appropriate and compelling.

I want to remind you that I was not a member of General Synod this time and, therefore, had no vote. I was present in the House throughout the deliberations and was very involved in the agenda planning day by day. More frustrating for me than being without a vote was being without a voice at Synod. I think that you can all understand why!

This news has caused even more pain and strong reaction in the Cathedral community. I both understand and empathize entirely with those reactions. I want to urge everyone to 'hang in'—a tough thing, I know. I believe that the future is ours in this issue, and that our Diocesan Synod will take some steps (I do not know which steps) when it meets this November. It is time for us (again) to speak out forcefully and confidently with our fellow Niagara Anglicans; it is time for us as a community to encourage and support our members of Synod as it approaches.

The spirit of God and the love of Christ are strong among us; we know that our gay and lesbian brothers and sisters are both fully loved by God and welcomed into this community and into our church with the full recognition of the blessed nature of their relationships. It is up to you and to me to show leadership—strong, loving, and wise—in this matter.

My prayers for us all—we will live to see another day!

A Personal Journey

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Still I am proud of Niagara: youth delegate Stephanie DeForest, poised and articulate in a high-pressure CBC interview; Lynne Corfield, eloquent at the microphone; Niagara honouring the conscience of each of its members.

No Webcast could fully convey the actual debates and the votes. I find the debate isolating beyond words. At my lowest point, a speaker recites the long-discredited junk science on homosexuality. I am well beyond anger now. I want to throw up. I spend any breaks in these proceedings alone and I phone home. Through it all, the incredible Bishop Ralph, with the weight of Niagara and this Synod on his shoulders as he advocates for the "local option", somehow broadens those shoulders and keeps a steady pastoral eye on us all.

Finally exhausted from repeated arguments and procedural parlour tricks, Synod votes to call the question. We hold hands and pray. I hold

my breath as we stand to be counted. The vote to confirm consistency of the blessing of same-sex unions with the core doctrine of the church is carried. There is movement. Thanks be to God. The subsequent resolution on the local option is approved handily by clergy and lay members, but is narrowly defeated by the bishops. I am numb. It feels like the worst possible outcome. *Note to self: I need time to absorb this.*

Tuesday, the morning after the installation of Fred Hiltz as Primate. As I head home I feel good. The core decisions about doctrine are made. I have experienced much that is not visible in media coverage. The support within the Keewatin Diocese and the phenomenal degree of Aboriginal endorsement. An informal inquiry about sharing the Niagara experience of dialogue with others. Bishop Ralph and Bishop-elect Michael preparing their compassionate communique to Niagara, where some hearts are close to the breaking point. The uplifting experience

of discussion in my prayer group with Anglicans whose assumptions are so different from mine, allowing the light of love to shine through the cracks in the church. *Long note to self: Can we spread this kind of conversation? Somehow it works, day by day, chat by chat, prayer by prayer. How can I share the shining hope that fills me today - that the arms of God hold the Anglican Church of Canada closely and will not let us go? Like the shepherds, like Joseph, like all those to whom the presence of God is announced by the phrase "Do not be afraid", we will continue this journey without fear in Niagara and beyond. My deep sadness: it is such a long journey, replete with suffering. My joy: we have together affirmed a matter of Biblical justice and there will be no turning back. I am eager and I am determined, but I can feel God taking the cold edge off my anger. I sing to myself the last line of a hymn I learned here. "Set your seal upon my heart, and live in me."*

A DIALOGUE BETWEEN JOHN BOTHWELL AND CHARLIE MASTERS

June 14, 2007

Dear Charlie:

Ever since our brief encounter in "exchanging the peace" at Christ's Church Cathedral on Maundy Thursday 2006, I have been intending to write to you. That brief moment of cordial exchange reminded me of the wonderfully co-operative relationship we shared during my years as diocesan bishop. I continue to be grateful for that, because from the very first time we met, it was clear that we belong at opposite

ends of the broad theological spectrum of Anglicanism, yet have been able to work together.

You may remember that before you were ordained we discussed and agreed, I thought, that our *conscientious* differences about some doctrines and Biblical passages were acceptable because of our common commitment to Jesus Christ that was sealed by our common Baptism. Because of that, as your Diocesan Bishop, I granted you and your parish exemption from certain diocesan policies, par-

ticipation by all clergy and parishes in special financial campaigns, for example, and we always maintained a warm relationship personally. I even have admired your leadership in the "Anglican Essentials Movement", for although its definition of "essentials" is very different than mine in a few particular ways, it represents a sincere, conscientiously-held point of view.

Now however, I am disappointed and confused, because as a leader of "Anglican Essentials" you have indicated that if General Synod approves

even an optional process for "blessing gay unions", you will try to exclude people like me from the Anglican Communion. What happened to the common commitment to Our Lord and the mutual respect, which in spite of some different opinions, I hope and pray we still share?

You do not need to reply to this letter Charlie; it is really just an expression of my frustration. For we, who desire freedom to bless gay Unions, are willing to allow conscientious dissent to you who oppose, while your side seems intent on denying the

same privilege to us. In my view, Our Lord's prayer that we "love each other as He has loved us" surely means that He calls us to accept each other despite conscientious disagreements, and that we continue to recognize our continuing partnership in His Ministry. In that conviction, I will continue to pray for you and everyone on all sides of this present controversy, that by God's Grace, we may remain one in Christ.

Yours faithfully,
Bishop John Bothwell

June 16, 2007

Dear Archbishop John:

When I received your letter of June 6, 2007 I was appreciative that you had taken the time to write a personal letter of your thoughts and concerns at this time.

I now find myself very surprised and saddened having received your brief e-mail of June 14 that you have chosen to release your "personal" letter and make it, I suppose, a political statement.

In response to your letter, I have the following thoughts:

- I have always been grateful for any kindness you and your successors have shown me as a priest in the Diocese of Niagara and have tried to express that from time to time.
- I think you will agree that through-

out my ministry in this Diocese, consistently, I believe, in public and in private conversations with you or anyone else, I have tried in an open and forth-right way to proclaim the Lordship of Jesus Christ and therefore the authority of the Bible. This is not a new development in my life and ministry.

■ Archbishop John, you write as if I alone represent this position. This, of course, is not the case. I stand in the mainstream of Anglicanism—historically and globally. The position I seek to represent is one that not only the majority of Primates represent but Anglicanism has always stood for. It is a position held by many, many faithful Anglicans across the country and even here in Niagara. Anglican Essentials Can-

ada simply seeks to be a rallying point for the recovery of our Biblical Anglican heritage. I am just one of many, many.

■ Accordingly, I, and countless others across the country, along with the Primates of the Anglican Communion, now recognize the possibility that our church and this Diocese in the present discussions are in effect actively considering departing not just from the Anglican Communion but from what you described as "our common commitment to Jesus Christ." You cannot say I am committed to Jesus Christ as Lord and ignore what the Bible, His word, clearly says. Jesus said: "Why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord' and do not do what I say?"

■ You accuse me of attempting "to exclude" people like you from the

Anglican Communion. I certainly do not have the power to do any such thing. On the contrary, it is the Primates of the Anglican Communion who made it very clear in their Dromantine Communiqué, what was required of us in order to mend the broken relationship between the ACC and the Communion. Anglican Essentials Canada has been appealing to all in our Church to not go down the path it is considering and thus, as the Windsor Report says, choose to "walk apart". If there is any excluding that will happen, it will be because the Anglican Church of Canada has voluntarily chosen to walk away. So, I was very sorry to see the letter you recently co-authored urging General Synod delegates to choose a path that

would lead us further away from the global Communion. We, as a Church, will be fully responsible for our failure to submit to the biblical and godly leadership of the Primates and do what is necessary to maintain our membership in the global Communion.

Like you, Archbishop John, I am in much prayer about all these things. And, like you, I am deeply concerned. Perhaps we differ in that I am very grateful to the Primates for their godly counsel and involvement in our life at this time. I see their strong call to be a call to life and health and yes, full membership in the Anglican Communion.

Yours faithfully,
The Reverend Canon Charlie Masters

June 18, 2007

Dear Charlie:

Thanks for your reply to my letter. I agree with your assertion that you have always been consistent in the convictions you hold. However you always seemed to respect those who hold other Christian convictions as well, and were happy to

"share Communion" with all who are baptized.

Your quotation of Jesus' words, "Why call you me 'Lord Lord' and do not what I say" (Luke 6:46) is surely inappropriate, unless you can find in the Gospels some other words of Jesus that condemn homosexuality. And there are none. However, there are many

instances of Jesus commending Samaritans and others who were marginalized by His society in the same way gay people have been by ours.

Your understanding of "Mainstream Anglicanism" is interesting because while "the mainstream" does include people of your opinion of course, it always has in-

cluded many others with different opinions as well. Further, I am surprised that a Protestant-minded Anglican like you, can accept an initiative that comes from the Primates alone, without reference to either the Anglican Consultative Council (which includes laity and clergy in decision making) or to all the Anglican Churches

in different countries which, like the Eastern Orthodox Churches, are autocephalous.

With the promise of further prayer for you and the Anglican Communion, "that we all may be one" as Jesus prayed, I remain.

Yours faithfully,
Bishop John Bothwell

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Shoot, Ready, Aim

HOLLIS HISCOCK
RETIRED PRIEST - BURLINGTON

SHOOT - The photograph

This year we experienced our first spring in our new house. A 70 year old tree, measuring 210 centimetres (6 feet) in circumference, creates a 'natural umbrella' to shade us from the scorching summer sun.

Our curiosity about its heritage was put to rest when our forestry expert concluded that it was probably the outcome of grafting two varieties of apple trees.

When every branch exploded with pink apple blossoms in May, it provided a canopy and a kaleidoscope of dancing colours to rival any production of screen or stage.

Following an all too short life span, the blossoms began to shower the earth, reminding me of a raging winter storm, except the snow was bright pink. I telephoned my brother and said, 'Our lawn is covered with pink grass', as I described to him the scene in our back garden.

As the blossoms disappeared, the leaves grew quickly and once again our 'natural umbrella' provided protection for relaxation, renewal and refreshment.

Several branches emerged from the naked trunk, next to a gaping split in the tree. Colour filled leaves, buds and flowers appeared and were enhanced by its drab grey wooden backdrop.

I took this photograph in mid-May and offer this wonder of nature to you as a summer meditation.

READY - Words behind the photo

During a three hour meeting, I reflected on an enlarged copy of this photograph. Here are some of my observations.

Observation One - The three pink flowers remind me of the Trinity. The infrequently used unfamiliar creed of Athanasius affirms that even though there are three persons (Father, Son, Holy Spirit), they are 'co-eternal together and co-equal' or one God. This combines two insights revealed by Jesus, namely 'the Father and I are one' (John 10:30), and 'the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you' (John 14:26).

Observation Two - The tree trunk symbolizes God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit), and the branches represent each of us. Jesus declared, 'I am the vine, you are the branches' (John 15:5).

Just as the branches depend on the tree for their growth, so we draw our life and sustenance from being connected to God.

A vine can be a trailer or a crawler, reaching out into new directions and environments, yet always maintaining its connection to its essential source of life. As Christians, our connection to God should be constant and consistent, even though our Gospel message may have to be re-interpreted, and applied according to the nuances of every generation in its peculiar circumstances.

Observation Three - The dark spot in the photograph is a hole or split, probably resulting from damages caused by insects, natural disasters or humans. Although not the most attractive part of the tree, it does indicate that this tree is a survivor. Similarly, we bear the physical, emotional and spiritual scars inflicted in human life.

Following the death of her mother-in-law, a friend described how the 'aftermath' was taking its toll. She wrote, 'we think we have coped but I'm sure all the smaller aches, pains, and anxieties we are having now are rooted in 'delayed shock' of some sort.'

Jesus knew what human life was like, and provided us with many helping gifts, including the assurance that 'I am with you always' (Matthew 28:20). A dedicated female deacon and priest taught every Church School child to remember this saying by holding up a fist and opening a finger for each word in the sentence. At her funeral, several hundred people repeated the words and performed the actions with me as a tribute to Marjorie.

Aim - Questions and actions for you

■ Spend a few minutes considering each question or suggestion and write notes if necessary.

■ Find a comfortable location, alone or with a friend, enjoy a favourite summer drink as you 'solve' the riddle of the Trinity (Observation One).

■ What can you do to strengthen your ties with God? (Observation Two).

■ Think of your own or another person's 'aches, pains, and anxieties' and ask what you can do... then do it.

■ Hollis would appreciate your feedback on this series. Contact him at hollisrn@hotmail.com.

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The Reverend Hollis Hiscock, a retired priest, lives in Burlington. He is available to do multimedia presentations on spirituality, the Bible and the Christian Faith.

Jeremiah was a bullfrog

ELEANOR JOHNSTON
ST. THOMAS', ST. CATHARINES

Where were you when you heard that Germans had murdered millions of European Jews during WWII? The Jewish Holocaust was presented, to me at least, as a shameful, almost titillating, secret. Another Grade 7 student had brought, to show at recess, a book with pictures of dead bodies in piles, of barely living people squashed into train cars, of emaciated people in dirty prison clothes reaching out through barbed wire fences. I turned away, nauseated, feeling it was somehow wrong to look at pictures of such suffering,

“
Were you there when they crucified my Lord?”

amazed and indignant that this cruelty had been allowed to happen.

How were the Germans (as well as the Poles, French and others) who captured, transported and killed the Jews able to explain their actions to themselves? How could they answer their children's inevitable question, "Why did you let this horror occur?" Perhaps their children were afraid to ask.

A common plot line in mid-20th century American and European literature involves just such an indictment of parents by their righteous children. In *All My Sons*, by playwright Arthur Miller, the tragic hero, a successful industrialist, learns of a structural flaw in the airplanes he is selling to the American air force in World War II. Instead of recalling and repairing this defect, he covers up the report and sends many pilots, including his own son, to their unnecessary deaths. He realizes, too late, that the pilots flying his planes are "all my sons," and that he is guilty of putting his personal wealth ahead of responsibility for others.

Most adults today, however, carry a more complex and ambiguous burden. We feel guilty at even the mention of the words "homeless," "Rwanda," and "drought." Do the pictures we see of suffering around the world create our sense of responsibility for far more problems than we can solve, let alone emotionally absorb? Before photography and mass media, humanity had only local problems to be concerned with. Before picture books of concentration camps, most people would not have even known about pogroms.

Are there other reasons for our typically guilt-ridden adult consciousness? Perhaps it is that the wars of the 20th century were fought with weapons of mass destruc-

tion. Perhaps our easy lives seem undeserved; we enjoy greater prosperity than most humans ever have. Perhaps the basis of our guilt is our dismay that the price of our rich lifestyle was bought by our "dominion over" the planet and the poor. If global warming makes the earth uninhabitable a half-century from now, the First World will be to blame.

The May 26, 2007 Globe and Mail introduced the ideas of Al Gore's recent book, *The Assault on Reason*, which describes the distorted fears manipulated by the Bush administration. "Disturbing images go straight to a part of the brain that is not mediated by language or reasoned analysis." Modern Americans exist in a state of "constant fear," unable to distinguish between real and illusory fears.

We remain addicted to our technology and consumerism. We've been warned and we have not been able to listen. In the 1970's, Canada's favorite author, Margaret Laurence, tried to draw attention to the dangers of pollution and nuclear annihilation. Back-to-the-earth hippies tried, briefly, to establish an environmentally-friendly counter-culture. In the Anglican Church we held Earth Day services and took some practical steps such as recycling bulletins. Even as we talked about our role as stewards, we lost momentum. Like other Canadians, with the heroic exception of a few scientists such as David Suzuki, we do not want to tackle environmental issues. We do not want to damage the economy.

Again today, many of our writers are painting grim scenarios as they imagine the future after environmental collapse. P. D. James's *The Children of Men*, Margaret Atwood's *Oryx & Crake*, and *The Road*, by Cormac McCarthy, all express great nostalgia, sadness and fear as they show the breakdown of society to be the inevitable consequence of the breakdown of the balance of nature. The few characters still alive are terribly lonely and fearful. Many of us, reading these prophecies, don't want to think about their message; it's too grim.

Meanwhile, some Christians, entranced by the apparently suicidal mythology of the end of the world at Armageddon (a belief system developed in the mid-19th century USA through a twisting of a few biblical verses), are reading the violent "left behind" novels that actually seem to welcome the destruction of the world. In this series, environmental collapse and nuclear war begun in the Middle East are to be desired since the chosen 144,000 will "rapture" more quickly to heaven.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

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INVESTMENT PERFORMANCE UPDATE

Report from the Diocesan Investment Sub-Committee



ROBERT MCKINNEL
DIOCESAN TREASURER

The Diocese of Niagara operates an investment program in which all parishes are able to participate. This program is administered by the Diocese with advice from the Investment Advisory Sub-Committee, which consists of parish representatives, many of whom have investment expertise, members of the Financial Advisory Committee and the Treasurer.

This program, through the pooling of funds, allows access to the highest levels of investment expertise available worldwide at costs which are much lower in the aggregate than individual parishes could secure.

We are pleased to share with you the details of the performance of the monies you have placed in our care.

You receive regular reports from the Diocesan Treasurer on your individual accounts, our re-

turns are also reported in the Niagara Anglican, and we make an annual report to Synod. This report deals with the Fund as a whole and is intended to provide you with the comfort that your monies are prudently managed, are performing well, and that the costs for management and administration are reasonable.

Fund size and structure

The total market value of the Fund at December 31, 2006 was \$21.5 million, made up of approximately \$5.1 million of Diocesan funds, and \$16.4 million in monies from the various parishes. The Fund is managed by Frank Russell Investment Canada (Russell), a widely respected international investment consulting firm based in the US. It advises many of the largest pension funds and endowments in Canada and around the world. A minimum of \$10 million dollars available for investment is required to engage Russell's services.

In consultation with Russell, the asset mix of the Fund is presently set at 30% Canadian equities, 35% Canadian fixed income, and 35% international equities. With the Fund participating in the Russell group of funds, our Fund

is able to access the expertise of 22 of the top performing investment managers around the world to invest our monies. The managers are selected by Russell and would not be otherwise available to us in so diversified a manner due to our relatively small size in the investment world.

Fund performance

The Sub-Committee recommended that Russell be appointed as the investment manager, effective June 30, 2002. The included chart sets out the investment performance of the Fund over the time periods shown. The returns below are shown before investment management fees and administrative charges.

For the full 4.5 years since Russell has managed the account, the Fund return has been 9.9% per year. The Sub-Committee notes that these returns are very attractive when compared with certificates of deposit and the like, and were achieved with remarkable consistency in investment markets that were very volatile.

Investment fees and administrative charges

The investment management fee charged by Russell has been 0.62% of the Fund assets annually. This

Fund Performance (As at December 31)				
	1 Year (%)	2 Year (%)	3 Year (%)	4 Year (%)
2003	12.4	N/A	N/A	N/A
2004	9.4	10.9	N/A	N/A
2005	12.5	10.9	11.4	N/A
2006	13.5	13.0	11.9	11.9

Note: Periods greater than 1 year are annualized returns

fee is very low when compared to other investment alternatives. Recently, as a result of the Fund's growth, Russell has established a reduced fee of 0.52% for all assets in excess of \$20 million. The Sub-Committee considers this fee to be reasonable.

An administrative fee of 0.5% of the Funds assets annually is charged by the Diocesan office. The fee covers the cost of service provided, and also makes a contribution to the overall expense of the Diocesan Resource Centre. Fees for this type of service vary from a low of 0.2% to a high of 2.0%. The Sub-Committee considers this fee to be reasonable.

All fees are reviewed at least annually by the Sub-Committee based on its analysis of then prevailing market rates. The current combined fee of less than 1.1% is very competitive.

Conclusion

Your Sub-Committee feels that the monies are being managed prudently, professionally, and within a diversified asset mix, the returns earned by the Fund are very attractive, and that the fees borne by the Fund are reasonable and acceptable.

Should you wish to discuss this further, please contact the writer through the Diocesan office. Should you wish to consider placing additional monies in the Fund, please contact the Diocesan Treasurer.

Investment Sub-Committee: Mr. Andrew Bucknall, Mr. David Pady (Past Chairman), Mr. Roger Phillips (Chairman), Mr. David Ricketts, Mr. Dan Waterston, Mr. David Watson, Mr. Malcolm Williams, Rev. Ted Crabtree, Rev. Robert Fead, Mr. Robert McKinnel (Treasurer & CFO), Mrs. Kim Waltmann (Secretary).

REFLECTIONS FROM THE OTHER SIDE OF INTERIM MINISTRY

The sky is falling! The sky is falling!



FRAN DARLINGTON
HONORARY - ST. JAMES, GUELPH

Well, not quite. Let's change that to "The Rector is leaving! The Rector is leaving!" Whatever the reason, however parish life has moved along with that particular clergy leadership, change is coming—and most of us don't like it at all!

As in the world around us, the last half-century has brought considerable change in our Anglican Church, and many folk just want the church to stay as it is "until I die!" Sadly, if that attitude prevails, the church will die before we do.

We are surrounded by change. While the Church sincerely honours our Anglican tradition, it must also find its way in a society accustomed to a great variety of options in most facets of life.

The universe is change; life is understanding

To facilitate understanding in parishes facing a change of rectors,

and to help them find a way forward, our Bishop has supported the development of a specific program called Interim Ministry. This ministry, with its companion "Fresh Start," has become an important element in enabling our Diocese to move coherently through transition.

The February issue of the Niagara Anglican included an article titled "The Waiting Game" by Clare Stewart, a parishioner at the Church of the Resurrection, Hamilton. It was a reflection on the parish's eight month experience of Interim Ministry, between the departure of their beloved Rector, the Venerable Rick Jones, and the arrival of the new Rector, the Reverend Stephen Murray.

It was my privilege and pleasure to be the Interim Priest at "The Res." Clare's article was very generous in evaluating my ministry there, but the achievement it seems to have become could not have happened without the active participation of the parishioners.

In those eight months, the people and I worked together to explore many facets of parish life. Those two words "worked together," and the actions they imply, were crucial for the success of the months we shared as priest

and people on a journey toward a new beginning.

Sticky notes

At the outset, I promised the people of "The Res" that every voice that wished to speak would be heard. Certainly concerns and ideas were literally heard, but many more voices spoke via Post-It notes. Everyone was invited to offer their thoughts in writing. There was no limit on the number of notes a person could write. The anonymity and absence of pressure offered in this way seemed to enable thoughtful, personal responses to questions that are essential for reflection on parish history, its present situation and its hopes and dreams for the future.

The "sticky notes" also became a source of laughter as, from time to time, the people came to worship and found the coloured squares on their bulletins: "What are we up to this time, Fran?"

Every response, hundreds of them, were collated, typed, enlarged and displayed for everyone to read, facilitating discussion and understanding, and the development of a vision for the future of the parish. They also provided guidance for the Parochial Committee as the members considered candidates for the position of Rector.

When I asked parishioners to write down what they expected from their new Rector, pencils scratched busily across the paper; that was easy. About three weeks later, there were more sticky notes, more laughter, and just one question: "What do you think your new rector might expect from you, and how are you prepared to do that?" "Oh, Fran, that's hard!" was one response, but again the pencils made their marks.

Working together to build the future

Yes, it was hard, but perhaps that question collects all the others into a cohesive whole. Ministry has to be a partnership; clergy cannot do it alone. For parishioners to consider the hopes and dreams of a new Rector and how the people might share in the fulfillment of at least some of those hopes and dreams may be a new concept, but one which might make a real difference in how the faith community moves *together* into the future, how the people, clergy and laity, work *together* to discern and unfold the will of God. To quote Anna Briggs fine hymn, "One voice alone is ragged; together we are strong." (Common Praise #600)

The Interim period gives the people of a parish opportunity to

reflect on many elements of parish life, to hear from their Interim Priest questions and ideas that they might not hear from their Rector, and to respond to them in new ways.

If you are awaiting the arrival of an Interim Priest, certainly you know sorrow and uncertainty, but I invite you to turn your thoughts to hopes for the future of your parish, and how you might be able to contribute to fulfilling those hopes, working first with your Interim priest and then with your new Rector.

God and the Bishop move one Rector, then another, and another, and so on, and we are called to trust those decisions. The process has been compared to toppling dominoes, but instead of worrying about falling over, our beloved Anglican Church needs our energy to be directed to building hope and faithfulness in new ways, ways that will continue to honour our long history, but also renew our parishes, our Diocese, our life in Christ, and so the world around us.

When your Rector moves on, the sky isn't going fall, but you will embark on an adventure, like many parishes before you, and doubtless many to come. God go with you on your way!

EPISCOPAL ELECTION

Synod elects new Bishop of Niagara



On June 2nd in Christ's Church Cathedral the Synod of the Diocese of Niagara elected (Arch-deacon) Michael Bird, currently rector of St. Luke's in Burlington as coadjutor Bishop in the Diocese of Niagara. The other nominees were Alyson Barnett-Cowan (National Office), Sandra Copland, Lynne

Corfield, Cathie Crawford Browning, Richard Jones, Bruce McPetrie, Margaret Murray, Philip Poole (Toronto), Brian Ruttan, James Sandilands and Peter Wall.

Michael, was born on November 15, 1957 and was ordained Deacon on June 10 1984 and Priest on December 12 1984. He

is married and has 3 children. He completed his studies in Theology at Trinity College at the University of Toronto.

When asked about what legacy he would like to leave at the end of his tenure he said:

"My legacy—several sets of bald tires, many tattered diocesan

maps and clergy/parish lists, a worn out prayer desk and a Diocesan Clergy Curling team. OUR legacy as the people, clergy and bishop of Niagara—a diocese envisioned and empowered to meet many of the challenges of doing ministry in an incredibly fast paced, broken and changing world. Many

vibrant parishes where people encounter the risen Christ and embody the Gospel message that he came to bring."

Michael will be ordained as Bishop at Christ's Church Cathedral on September 30th 2008. This ordination will be webcast for the benefit of the entire diocese.

New members needed for Bishop's Decennial Inspection Committee

The Anglican Diocese of Niagara has a program to carry out periodic inspections of all church properties within the Diocese. This work is managed by the Bishop's Decennial Inspection Committee, which is mandated to develop the Policy and Terms of Reference, schedule and monitor the inspection and reporting of the physical structure, fabric, systems, grounds and cemeteries of all Anglican Church properties within the Diocese of Niagara on a rotating 10 year cycle. The Diocese extends from Mount Forest and Shelburne in the North to Fort Erie and Nanticoke in the South and Oakville in the East. The actual inspections are carried out by qualified Inspectors under direction of the Committee and are awarded by tender and paid for by the individual Parish.

The Committee is looking for one or two additional Volunteers to join the Committee to fulfill this mandate. In particular, Committee Members evaluate the Inspectors reports to Parishes and, as needed, assist and advise on the preparation, development and implementation of the resulting Plan of Action and the need for additional specialist investigation or study.

The selected Committee Member is likely to have a background as an architect, engineer, general contractor, project manager, maintenance supervisor or building inspector with an interest in and knowledge of older buildings. A knowledge of structural, mechanical and electrical systems would also be an advantage.

Individuals wishing to be considered for this role should initially submit a letter of interest and a resume to the Bishop's Decennial Inspection Committee:

c/o The Bishop's Office
252 James Street North
Hamilton, Ontario L8R 2L3
Fax: 905-527-1281

Email: karen.nowicki@niagara.anglican.ca

Further information, including the Terms of Reference for the Inspection of Church Properties will then be provided and selected candidates will be invited to an interview with the Committee.

My Synod Journal

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

some good people who are walking much the same path as us. I have discovered a new way of explaining where I live. I just ask people if they have heard of Caledonia and their responses, every time, have been an immediate "Oh yes!" It astonishes me. Many of us who are caught up in the "Caledonia Situation" feel abandoned and alone but it seems that other people are concerned about us and aware that we have found life difficult and threatening over the past 16 months. That is something I must share when I get back home.

Friday

Election Day. Off we all trekked to Holy Trinity Church to vote for our new Primate. It grew hotter as the morning progressed. It was close. I was pleased that we chose the Primate ourselves, eventually. I have met Fred Hiltz and his wife as they, too, are on the third floor of the Marlborough hotel. They are likeable people.

I met a waiter today at a restaurant in town who knew who we were (it was a dinner with the Toronto and Niagara dioceses) and what we are doing. He said many people are watching to see what we do. It is easy to forget the outside world when we are in a hotel, far from home, and totally absorbed in what we are discussing. I have seen the cameras around us but they are easy to forget. I suppose I am focused on the Church.

Saturday

Well today is the day we finally got to the debate we have been waiting for. It was very hard. We heard stories full of pain and much anguish from both sides of the debate. I was impressed that people listened quietly to each other. I doubt if many changed their point of view but it helped to lessen the demonization of each side. It was very apparent that the speakers held their views for good (to them) reason. I sat and listened and got through a whole packet of tissues. When the vote passed to approve the St. Michael Report there were many deeply sad faces around the room. We have to wait for tomorrow to finish the debate. The chasm loomed larger today.

Sunday

We began with a Eucharist which was refreshing as we were in the middle of the debate about same sex blessings. Today we voted against. How divided we are. I think we said we welcome same sex couples into the church, but are not willing to change the laws of the church on marriage. We are going to be talking together for a lot longer yet. I doubt if this will please people at either end of the issue, but it is typically Anglican.

Monday

I am exhausted, as are we all. The cheery conversations have shortened. People look weary. The outside world is threatening us all as we have to re-

turn to our dioceses to explain what we have done. I spoke to a couple of people who have no idea what they are going to say to their parishes. I said I would remember them in our prayers in church on Sunday.

I am so proud of our youth delegate, Stephanie De Forest. CBC Newsworld interviewed her along with another youth member who holds an opposing view on the same sex blessings debate. They were a wonderful example of our literate, articulate, well-mannered youth. Stephanie said what she needed to say and did it like a professional. They both were a credit to our church.

I also must say that I have found our delegates to be wonderfully supportive of me. It was made clear to me that I was a welcome member of our delegation even though I voted in opposition to all the rest. It is hard and often painful to hold different opinions from the rest of your family but we can still love each other and help each other deal with the differences. It is, after all, Christ who decides who belongs to his church.

Tuesday

Still tired and spent time saying goodbye to people. The closing ceremony and instillation of our new primate was uplifting. I was filled with joy at the sound of the singing, which almost raised the roof and the dancing of the young Dinka Dancers from Sudan. So many people die for the privileges we take for granted. They reminded me that this church is worth the struggle.

PLAQUE DEDICATED IN NORVAL



Norma Tripp (President of Norval Women's Institute), Joyce Hutton (President of Norval Community Association), Bishop Ralph Spence and Achdeacon Peter Moore participated in the official dedication of St. Paul's Anglican Pioneer Cemetery Plaque on June 10, 2007.

The Norval Community Association in partnership with the Norval Women's Institute received funding from the Ontario Trillium Foundation to acknowledge the historic sacred grounds given to St. Paul's Anglican Church by General Sir Peter Adamson in 1838. St. Paul's Anglican Church was built by 1846.

Visitors attending the event enjoyed Strawberry Shortcake at St. Paul's Anglican Parish Hall following the ceremony.

Geometry, Poetry, Theology



MICHAEL THOMPSON
ST. JUDE'S, OAKVILLE

Last night, our daughter and I went out for a walk. I had a topic in mind, but she spoke first. She asked me why a poem had to *mean* something. As we walked, I learned

“
If our lines are not wide enough to encompass the communion that is the work of Jesus on the cross, it is not because Jesus' lines are too generous.

of a teacher who spent all the time in poetry class reading poems to the students and then telling them what each poem meant.

We talked about the word poem, whose Greek form means "maker", and about imagination. We talked about how the poet makes new worlds by addressing the imagination of the reader or listener. We talked about imagination as how we *see* the world, and therefore as the basis for how we *act* in the world. And we got further and further from the idea that a poem could "*mean*" some singular and unarguable thing.

As we walked and talked, part of my contribution to the conversation was to reflect on parables—on how, like a poem, a parable sets out to chal-

lenge a prevailing way of seeing, not to generate "the moral of the story".

The parable of the Samaritan came to mind. What is this parable "*about*"? Is it about how religious leaders don't care? Is it about setting out on a journey and being obstructed by the violence of others? Is it about being kind to strangers on the road? Or is it just *about* its own work of being a parable of transforming our imagination?

A parabola in geometry is like a "U" with its sides pulled out, so they encompass a wider and wider, more and more spacious area. "Ye-

shua", the Aramaic name of Jesus, also means "salvation" and "spaciousness". More and more space, a wider and wider imagination shaped by the diverging arms of a parabola. A saviour who makes space, who is "commodious".

The enquirer who asks Jesus, "Who is my neighbour?" is trying to pull the arms of the "U" inwards, so they close up at some not-too-distant point and place some limits on his obligation. Jesus tells a parable to push the arms back out and create for the enquirer a sense of the widening space in which God is at work.

Though not in this instance, many of the parables of Jesus begin something like this: "The Kingdom of God is like..." And in every in-

stance, what follows is either scandalous or absurd. Bad enough if the Jew had helped a Samaritan, establishing that the reviled Samaritans were neighbours to be loved. So much worse that the reviled Samaritan is the one who knows what a neighbour is, whose own actions are a parable opening up on the vista of God's reign. "Our" God turns out not to be quite so "our" after all. The arms bend outward. There's nothing we can do. The parable will be about its work of being a parable. It will open a vista of the Kingdom, of God's promised future. It will embody that future in the present by arms that open out infinitely and cannot be pulled shut by our narrowing certainties and enfeebled imaginations.

The pivotal, foundational parable is, of course, Jesus himself. He doesn't just *tell* parables; his ministry, death, and resurrection *are* a parable. Just when it seems that the forces of order and certainty pulled the arms closed on him, have rolled the stone in place to confine him safely in the cold hard fact of the tomb, something, some One, rolls the stone away, pulls the arms out to infinity again, cracks open death's self-confident certainty with the tensile filaments of love. Martin Luther King said that "the arc of the universe is long, but it bends towards justice." Parables invite us to believe that that same bending power pries open the certainties that exclude, and re-configures the imagination that narrows the world into "us" and "them".

CONTINUED ON PAGE 14

Meeting on the road

TERRY GILLIN
ST. CUTHBERT'S, OAKVILLE

As Christians we are all on the road to Emmaus, trying to make sense of our experiences and of what we have been told. Recently I have been reflecting on the Jesus who meets me on the road. This is part of my response to the same-sex issue in the Anglican Church of Canada, and more generally to other events in the world. Returning to the gospels is a good place to begin a process of discernment. We need thoughtful and respectful discussion on same-sex issues. May these thoughts be a small contribution to the needed discourse.

As I read and pray from scripture, I am struck by how often Jesus chooses to be with, and indeed reveal himself to, those who are the social outsiders of his time. He selects presumably uneducated fishermen to be his friends and disciples; he associates with tax collectors—collaborators with the Roman occupiers. He has close relationships with women—unusual for his time. Fisherman, tax collectors, women, "sinners"—all outsiders by virtue of their social class, political affiliation, gender and conventional moral standing. These are the types of people with whom Jesus surrounds himself and discusses his spirituality. Then there are the people he heals.

Historically, we have tended to see healing as simply part of his ministry. Jesus can be seen as a kind of itinerant preacher-healer. But people in need of healing are often social outcasts, too; these miracle stories are also narratives about outsiders. Lepers were outcasts well into the twentieth century, and probably still are in some places on the globe. The woman who was hemorrhaging was ritually unclean, both socially and religiously rejected. A withered hand? We have only recently begun to acknowledge our own cultural prejudices against physical "deformity." And having mental health problems (being "possessed"?) is still a socially isolating status. Others who are healed include a centurion's servant, the Gerasene demoniac, and the Canaanite woman's daughter. In his acts of healing Jesus is identifying with outsiders, socially rejected or, at best, politely ignored.

Jesus clearly distances himself from the religious authorities of his time. He challenges the laws and customs, rules about fasting, washing before eating, working on the Sabbath, talking to women. He explicitly moves beyond the "let-

ter of the law." Jesus is very clear that love encompasses the whole of the law; love is the greatest commandment that supersedes all law and custom. Moreover, he excoriates the clerics and religious-legal authorities: "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites" (Matt 23). Jesus' view of religious authorities is illustrated by one of the most memorable parables, the Good Samaritan (Luke 10). The Samaritan—who is from the wrong social group and holds the wrong beliefs—does what a priest and a Levite would not; the outsider acts compassionately. Jesus calls us to love everyone, neighbors and even enemies.

In John, the Lord's first resurrection appearance is to a woman, Mary of Magdala; he calls her by name, announcing the power of his resurrection by calling her in love. Even more startling by the mores of his day—and foreshadowing his appearance to Mary—Jesus first and most explicitly reveals himself as the Messiah to a person who is symbolic of all outsiders. She might be thought of as a "triple threat": a woman (with a lower status than a man), from a despised religious-cultural group (a Samaritan), who is morally compromised (she has had five husbands and now lives unwed with another man). Her social isolation from her own community seems evident in that she comes to the well during the heat of the day, at noon, evidently feeling unwelcomed by the other women of the town who would have more likely come in the coolness of the morning. It is to her that Jesus reveals himself.

This is the Jesus I meet in the gospels. He reveals himself to religious, cultural and social outsiders, he heals those outside the "normal" human condition, and his closest associates are outsiders by their class and accent. I am sure that I am not the first to notice these patterns. I simply want to say, this is the Jesus I meet in the silence of my heart; it is he I am coming to know (PS 46). This is the Jesus I hold-up as I reflect on the issues before the church and the world - our shared concerns with the environment, poverty, disease, ignorance, and cultural conflicts of all kinds, including our relationships with those whose sexual orientation is different from our own. Jesus calls us to love. He calls for unity, not uniformity, a union in which people respect one another, live and pray together, and bless each other.

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OUTREACH

Justice Camp 2007



COLLEEN SYM
SOCIAL JUSTICE COORDINATOR

I loved summer camp as a kid. In fact, I loved it so much as a kid that as an adult I wanted my kids to have the opportunity too. Last summer was their first experience at "sleep over camp". As an adult, I enjoyed having the kids enjoy a week at camp so much that this summer we can enjoy them being at camp for two.

While I work for a social justice agency and volunteer for the Diocese doing social justice work, so much of my day to day experience is experienced through the lens of security of affluence.

But you know the saying what goes around comes around—I went back to camp.

For the past three years, the Anglican Church of Canada, through the Ecojustice Committee has been a sponsor of Justice Camps. Justice camps are an important outreach activity of the committee and are used to raise awareness of Ecojustice issues, promote the development of local and national networks and partnerships and develop leadership in these areas in the Anglican Church of Canada.

This year I was fortunate to be able to attend Environmental Justice Camp - Mending Creation. The Camp was held in Victoria, B.C. May 13-19. Co-chairs for the camp were Ken Gray, Rector of Church of the Advent in Colwood and Peggy Wilmot, a retired school principal and member of the congregation of St. John the Divine in Victoria.

Campers came from all across Canada and from as far away as Australia. We were clergy and lay people, young and old, students, retired, em-

ployed, Anglicans, Quakers, Baptists, I think there was even a Catholic.

The camp was based at the University of Victoria where we took over one of the student residences. For the events of the opening evening and the first full day of camp, plenary and break out groups were held at the Interfaith Chapel at the University in the middle of one of the most beautiful gardens you could imagine. Tuesday through Thursday camp activities took place all over as we participated in small immersion groups.

Each group had a distinctive theme relating to environmental justice: Lands and Forests, Coastal Waters, Inland waters, Buildings, Power, Transportation and Community Development. I chose community development as my group

as it was closest to my work in the Diocese focusing on community development and outreach from a social justice perspective.

When the Coastal Waters group headed out for a day on the water to tour the coast line in Zodiacs and the next day to walk the beaches I reflected that my choice might have limited my experience. But the feeling didn't last. My immersion group leaders, Maureen Garry and Deborah Curran, had set up a fantastic and fascinating series of activities for our group. You wouldn't think this when our first immersion activity was a meeting in the Walmart parking lot.

There we met with Todd Litman from the Victoria Transport Policy Institute. Why the Wal-Mart parking lot when the focus of the camp was on the environment? Really, what better place to start a conversation on things like density, community design, reliance on the car, transportation mode shifting from cars to mass transit or bicycles, the walkability of our communities, our per-

ception that paradise is a commodity that we purchase time to vacation in as opposed to where we are.

From the parking lot, we walked along the Galloping Goose, a reclaimed railroad right of way that has been converted in a bicycle and walking trail that is a key part of the cycling network plan for the area, to Saanich Municipal Hall. At the municipal hall we met with Judy Brownoff, one of the Saanich councilors. She shared generously of her time and her thinking on green governance and green infrastructure. She also introduced the concept of a "triple bottom line". For background on the concept we were referred to the City of Calgary website.

The website explains "The Triple Bottom Line (TBL) is an approach to decision making that considers economic, social and environmental issues in a comprehensive, systematic and integrated way. The TBL has been adopted by many organizations in both the public and private sector. It is a departure from making decisions based solely on the financial bottom-line. The TBL reflects a greater awareness of the impacts of our decisions on the environment, society and the external economy—and how those impacts are related."

This concept was one of the "take back items" for me. Part of the purpose of being at the camp, especially through participation in the immersion group experience, was to identify what you could take back to your home community. I strongly believe that the triple bottom line is a tool that the Diocese and individual parishes could easily adopt to improve our stewardship of creation.

Day two of the immersion experience had me and my fellow group members boarding the City bus to go from the University to downtown Victoria. The transit experience was one that I had not had for an embarrassingly long time. Riding the bus, living in residence, sharing the bathrooms, and lining up for a shower in the morning made me reflect that while I work for a social justice agency and volunteer for the Diocese doing social justice work, so much of my day to day experience is experi-

enced through the lens of security of affluence. Take back item two—a reminder of the need to be aware of the biases and preconceptions of our "lenses" and how they affect how we see the world and our place in it.

Dr. Christopher Lind, a Senior Fellow at Massey College in Toronto, theologian and ethicist and Anglican with roots and connections with St. Jude's in Oakville, prepared materials for the Theological and Biblical reflections that we studied each day of camp. The materials were based on the Earth Bible Project and each day we were introduced to one of the six Ecojustice principles developed through the Earth Bible Project that formulate a fresh approach to reading the Bible. In reading and analyzing the text of the Bible we were to "reflect with the Earth" and see things from the perspective of Earth. To learn about the Ecojustice Principles see *The Earth Bible Volume One: Readings from the Perspective Earth* edited by Norman C. Habel.

My group was lucky in that on day two of the immersion experience, Chris joined our group and lead the reflection time. My conversations with him and his talk on the integration of social justice and earth justice on the last full day of camp were highlights of the camp.

Day two was spent walking in and around downtown Victoria focusing on community revitalization, green buildings, healthy buildings and integrated community development. The concept of the triple bottom line kept on coming up. Day three of the immersion was spent at an eco-village to see sustainable development and community building in a rural setting.

I have barely begun the processing of my experience at Environmental Justice Camp. The intensity of the experience was such that I am still reflecting on and internalizing what I learned.

In this article, I haven't even touched on how the quality of the music and worship activities reinforced the hands on learning we did at the camp, or on the wonderful and generousness of hospitality of so many parishes and individuals that supported the experience.

As well it had been a priority of the camp organizers to integrate the knowledge, experiences and beliefs of the local aboriginal communities into the camp. This added a whole other dimension to the camp that I have not touched on.

My week at Justice Camp was every bit as good as my weeks at summer camp as a kid.

The week before Environmental Justice Camp began this was the opening prayer of the B.C. legislature:

Dear God,

We have always thought we're responsible for the behaviour of people, while we have ascribed responsibility to you for the weather. We make prayers asking you to deliver us from floods, wildfire and drought, while we concern ourselves with money, power and law.

Something has happened down here to the way we think about who is responsible for avoiding climate catastrophe. More and more we think it is we who must accept responsibility for the well-being of the planet we have been graced to inhabit. Help us with this new idea.

We do not know how to do this thing which for so long we ascribed to you. We have neither tools nor understanding adequate to the task. We are lost.

Help us now to find the wisdom and the vision to deliver ourselves from ourselves. Amen.

CORKY EVANS

Member of the BC Legislative Assembly May 9, 2007

EDITORIAL

A sad day can bring some hope

CHRISTOPHER M. GRABIEC
EDITOR

On Sunday, June 25 in the year of our Lord 2007, the General Synod of the Anglican Church Canada tackled the question of whether or not people who are gay, lesbian or homosexual (choose your term) and who are in permanent, stable, loving relationships with a partner of the same sex, should be blessed in that relationship.

The synod determined that the issue of same-gender relationships (yes—even sexual) is not a matter of core doctrine of the church. This is not an issue that is addressed in the same manner as the various articles of faith raised in the Nicene or Apostles Creed. The biblical arguments that were presented by those who opposed any blessing of same-gender couples were weak at the very best of times. The bible, considered the "living word" of God, simply does not support an ongoing prejudicial or discriminatory attitude toward any person of any gender, race or sexual orientation. The hate the sin, but love the sinner arguments began to look suspiciously like the very attitudes that Jesus himself confronted and ultimately for which died.

The issue itself showed how fractured the Anglican Church is. It showed how divided the church is—within its own ranks. One might think that this division was left from right. That would hardly be worth writing about. The division was between the people and clergy and the house of bishops. The people and clergy voted with good majority to stop the discrimination, aligning the church with the "living word" of God and the bishops voted to perpetuate this discrimination. Not all bishops—but a small majority—enough to paralyze the movement of the church into the future of God's reign. Those bishops should look upon their actions with shame. They should look into the mirror of scripture and see in their

actions the kind of attitude toward the sick, the lame, the prostitutes, the foreigners that was espoused by the hierarchy of the church in the day of Jesus. As they look into that mirror, many of us hope that they will see the saddened eyes of the Christ who continues to live and minister in our own day.

These people will argue that it is all about the "preservation" of a united Anglican communion. Unity at any cost—is the argument. When one examines this issue of unity, it appears that the great proponent of maintaining the traditional stance with regard to same sex blessing is Peter Akinola—archbishop of Nigeria. Let us quote this good bishop. On February 25th last year, in his "Letter to the Nation" he says:

"The Church commends the law-makers for their prompt reaction to outlaw same-sex relationships in Nigeria and calls for the bill to be passed since the idea expressed in the bill is the moral position of Nigerians regarding human sexuality".

This legislation which this Archbishop condones and encourages not only affirms the illegality of same-sex relationships (punishable by up to 14 years in prison), but it bans any speech, assembly or press supporting or defending gay marriage or "homosexual practices" of any kind.

It's not important to go on anymore about Peter Akinola, but what is important is that we recognize that this is the kind of "unity" that we are trying to preserve. There are other churches, such as the American Episcopal Church that long for us to be united with them. They want to stop the discrimination against homosexual persons at every level. Their national assembly (Convention) was able to affirm the consecration of Gene Robinson, an openly gay priest who has a life partner. So what unity is it that we choose to preserve? Obviously the Bishop's have made their choice (at



least a small majority).

Our Bishop Ralph Spence spent countless hours trying to help these bishops to find their way to a solution of justice and compassion. By the end of the synod, he was exhausted. His efforts were rewarded as some bishops truly listened. There simply were not enough of them to make this happen.

So where do we go from here? Some dioceses and parishes will simply move ahead—without a national approval. Preserving unity? Interesting, in an effort to preserve unity we will have divided our own church. Perhaps this is for the best. Holy Trinity Parish in Toronto has already passed a resolution that says they will proceed, in spite of any national decision. More parishes and more bishops will do the same.

We'll have to listen to our delegates carefully. They were there

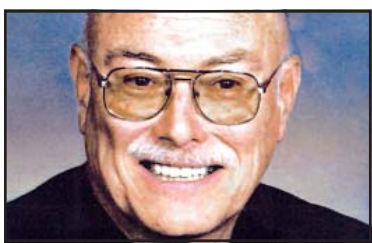
on our behalf and they will share a good deal of wisdom. The House of Bishops has lost a great deal of credibility. They have exhibited what some might call an "abuse of power". They did not listen to their clergy and to their people (and to the Spirit speaking through them), but chose to follow party and political lines which in the end cause injustice and discrimination to continue to reign at the national level. It will take a lot of healing and undoubtedly a lot of time for the church to once again respect this ministry of the "house" as a whole.

It will take a great deal of time for Canadians to find respect for our church in general. We live in a country that has worked long and hard to advance the cause of justice in every respect. The country has taken the leadership away from the church. What is the point of a

church in a society that walks far ahead in the essential values of love and justice that were proclaimed by Christ himself?

Same gender blessings, the equality of women, the embracement of the divorced and separated, the opposition to any discrimination whatsoever, are all principles that are here to stay. Those who have tried to stop this church may have won this battle but they eventually will lose the war. God's Spirit is far stronger than any other on this earth. How prophetic will we be in the dioceses of Niagara? How inclusive will we decide to be? No one is proud of what happened at the General Synod—perhaps we will be proud of ourselves in Niagara. Perhaps we really will lead the way (as we have so often in history) and we will move the church along the path of God's call to justice!

We are the branches, Jesus is the vine



GRAHAME STAP
RECTOR - ST. ALBAN, GLEN WILLIAMS

There is a marvellous story in the Gospel of Luke that shows without doubt the love and compassion God has for us. I refer to Luke 7:11-17. Jesus with the disciples is approaching a town called Nain; as they get nearer they see a funeral. A woman who is a widow

is burying her son and Jesus, full of compassion, brings the young man back to life.

The question we need to ask is, "Why would Jesus bring back to life a man that has gone to a better place? A son that has gone to his great reward? Would this not be a strange thing to do?"

Jesus did not bring the man back to life for the man. He brought the man back to life for the Mother. The mother had no standing in the community. Without a husband or son to look after her she would become a beggar, forced to live out her remaining years on the street. Jesus was not about to let this happen. Having compassion for

the mother he did the only thing that could help, he brought the son back to life. I am sure on the same day many others would have died and many mothers would be left alone it was the nature of the time. And in parts of the world today mothers watch their children die and there is no compassion for them as the wealthy of the world do little to alleviate the suffering that plagues the poorer nations of the world. We are too afraid that by helping we will lessen our own standard of living. So the progress of the world to a kinder gentler place is pathetically slow. We do not seem able to accept that all life is loved by God and our place

is to help where we can. Our place is to do as Jesus did and to have compassion for all the mothers of this world.

There is a change taking place. We are starting to see the results of a few good people working hard to change the plight of the poor.

At the time of Charles Dickens and Queen Victoria the poor were at the mercy of the rich to an extent that we today can only imagine. In the story of a Christmas Carol we see Ebenezer Scrooge visited by two gentlemen collecting for the poor. The response from Scrooge was to ask "are there no workhouses are there no prisons" to which the reply was "there

are but many would rather die than go there" Scrooge gives the cruel and horrible answer "then let them do so and decrease the surplus population".

We have come a long way from the time of Dickens. The world today is, in spite of all the wars and turmoil, a kinder and gentler place. We have a long way to go, but we can have hope, all is not lost. The day will come when peace will reign. Not perhaps in our lifetime but it will come and Jesus is the vine and with his great compassion will always lead the way but it is up to us to be the branches that carry the compassion of Jesus to the people.

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The Diocese of Niagara

The Diocese lies at the western end of Lake Ontario, and is defined roughly by the Niagara Escarpment from the Niagara River in the east to the Dundas Valley in the West and north to Shelburne, Mt. Forest and Orangeville.

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LETTERS

Episcopal Election Webcast

Feedback from the parish and beyond (my sister in England) was that the webcast was fantastic. They really liked the interviews during the ballots, and enjoyed watching people cast their vote. Many said that they felt like participants in the day. Super job!

STEPHEN MURRAY
Rector, Resurrection Parish

The webcast is great, but it would be helpful to have ballot results posted online as well (aside from the webcast). In the end, it was easy enough to follow the flow of the election. Looks like you've got yourselves a very fine bishop.

WALLY RAYMOND
Dean, Cathedral, Quebec City

Congratulations on the coverage of the election today. Being able to watch the whole thing was wonderful and then to find that you had all the coverage on the website tonight was fabulous!!

PAMELA A. CLARIDGE

Just wanted to thank you for the terrific web coverage of the Episcopal election process, and especially for today's live feed. I have been glued to my computer all day, and felt very much a prayerful part of the process. And thanks especially for the "ministry testimonials" during the counting—very helpful and uplifting. As they say in the navy "bravo zulu" (well done)!

BILL THOMAS
Canon, Christ's Church Cathedral

A letter to the executive assistant of Bishop Gene Robinson

Dear Paula,

When Bishop Gene came to the Diocese of Niagara to lead us (with Maria DeCarvalho) in a wellness retreat for clergy, it was a real pleasure to work with him and listen to him and be in his presence. The Chair of our Ministry Support Committee, Michael Bird, (now our Bishop-elect) and I worked together to plan the retreat and it was wonderful!

I just found out from Bishop Ralph Spence, our diocesan bishop, that Bishop Gene has not been invited to Lambeth.

I would like him to know that I am outraged and deeply saddened by this exclusion of a fine, caring and deeply pastoral bishop of the church. Please forward this message of support to him for me.

I do not remember Jesus saying anything about holding churches together, especially when they are exclusionary.

I believe that the Archbishop is not being faithful to the message of Jesus in terms of our love for one another and our care for one another.

An English priest told me recently that many of his colleagues are deeply disappointed in the Archbishop and his actions. It would be wonderful if all of the bishops in North America would stand in solidarity with you and refuse to attend Lambeth, but that is probably too much to hope for.

I do not believe that this is what the church is called to be. I stand in support of you and keep you in my prayers.

LYNDA KEALEY
Reverend Canon - St. Michael's Hamilton

PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

■ The Reverend Canon Constance Williston, retired from full time ministry and honorary assistant at St. James the Apostle, Guelph, passed away on May 23. Canon Williston was Deaconess in April, 1947, and Ordained Priest by Bishop John Bothwell in April, 1979. A Memorial Eucharist is scheduled for Saturday, June 23 at 11:00 am at St. James the Apostle, Guelph. Please remember to keep the family in your thoughts and prayers.

■ Congratulations to Bishop Ralph Spence who was appointed Chancellor of Renison College, in Waterloo, to take effect on May 1, 2008, for a four year term of office.

■ Anne Porter, O.N., faithful member of St. James and St. Brendan's, Port Colborne, passed away on May 25. Funeral service was held on May 30. Our thoughts and prayers with the family.

■ Mr. Bill Mous was licensed as Lay Professional Worker at St. James, Dundas, effective May 15.

■ Gordon Hawkins, O.N., faithful member of Church of the Ascension, Hamilton, passed away on April 20. Funeral service was held on April 25. Our thoughts and prayers are with the Reverend Dianne Distler and family.

■ Congratulations to the Reverends Martha and Dan Tatarnic on the birth of their first child—a daughter! Cecilia Wylie Tatarnic arrived on June 5. Mother and baby are doing very well.

■ Sympathy to Rob Reid, his father, Clifford, and their family, on the death of Rob's mom, Iris, on June 11. Iris was a life-long and faithful member of St. George's Church, St. Catharines. A Memorial Service was held at her parish church on June 15.

■ The Reverend Michael Nicholas was issued a Bishop's Permission as Honorary Deacon Assistant at All Saints Church, Hamilton, effective June 1.

■ The Reverend John Course Sr. was issued a Bishop's Permission as Honorary Assistant at St. Paul's Church, Jarvis, effective June 1.

■ The Reverend John Ripley was appointed interim pastor at St. Matthew on the Plains, Burlington, effective May 1.

■ The Reverend William Blott was appointed interim pastor at St. Paul's, Dunnville and the Dunn Parish, effective May 1.

■ The Reverend Susan Wells appointed interim pastor at St. Luke's, Smithville.

■ The Reverend Lyndon Hutchison-Hounsell has accepted the appointment to be Rector of St. George's Church, Winnipeg, effective September 1.

■ The Reverend Canon Elizabeth Huether has been appointed rector of Church of St. Thomas, St. Catharines, effective June 7.

■ The Reverend Mervyn Russell was appointed ecumenical honorary assistant at St. Jude's, Oakville, effective May 13.

■ Our thoughts and prayers are with Mrs. Florence Nunn on the death of her husband, Joseph, on June 15.

■ Michael John Edwards and Penelope Joan Johnstone licensed as lay readers at St. Aidan's Church, Oakville, under the direction of the rector, effective May 1; Marianne Moore reissued lay reader license at St. Paul's, Jarvis, effective June 11.



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THE BLESSING OF SISTER ANITA



Sister Anita CSC was blessed for a third term in the office as Leader of the Community of the Sisters of the Church held in Christ's Church Cathedral on May 26, 2007.

Representatives of the Order were present from Australia, the Solomon Islands, England, as well as Canada. This is the first time in the history of the Community since its founding in 1870 by Mother Emily Ayckbown that the Mother Superior has been installed outside of the Mother House at Ham Common in Richmond, England.

Jeremiah was a bullfrog

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

These books promote a dangerously selfish and destructive fantasy.

As a species we have survived for millennia using the fight or flight instincts that enable us to evade immediate dangers. When we look out the window we don't see anything wrong with the planet but we do need to think beyond the present, beyond the apparent. Yet when we try to, we feel paralyzed by the enormity and the frequent invisibility of the environmental crisis, as well as by our greed and preoccupation with other terrors. We've seen the pictures of polar bears on melting ice, of soil erosion and polluted waters and we turn away from "inconvenient truth."

And humans are community-focused; we don't like to rock the boat or upset others. I said nothing when an acquaintance explained why he invested his considerable assets in a B.C. logging company that was clear-cutting old-growth forests. He said that this company's shares paid him great dividends that he, in turn, tithed to his church. He believed

that this was responsible Christian behavior.

To paraphrase the prophet Jeremiah, our generation has worshiped the idols of consumerism and is suffering fearful and unwanted change. We substituted outward trappings of religion for inward faith and now we must rebuild our religion as a moral and spiritual relationship with God. Churches such as St. Gabriel's, as described in the previous issue of this paper, are taking a thoughtful, prayerful, creative approach to encouraging healthy life in God's wondrous creation. We, too, can put God before ourselves and conduct our lives in terms of the effects of our actions on the poor, on other species, and on future generations.

We hear that frog populations are shrinking, as are their habitats. If the prophets of mass media foster our ambivalent irresponsibility, the absence of the frogs' croaking may be a poignant and effective prophecy that leads us to choose life, not death.

Is the bullfrog our Jeremiah? Can God, through our youth, bring "Joy to the world"?

The 70's pop song, "Joy to the World," which begins with the words "Jeremiah was a bullfrog," was sung with great enthusiasm at a recent Eucharist for the youth of our diocese.

"Joy to the world,
All the boys and girls.
Joy to the fishes in the big blue sea,
Joy to you and me."

The Holy Trinity: A Theological Conundrum



JOHN BOTHWELL
RETIRED BISHOP OF NIAGARA

In these times when many find it hard to believe in any God at all, belief in the Holy Trinity—three persons in one God—seems like a theological conundrum! Even faithful Christians may wonder where such strange celestial mathematics came from. Were they devised by ancient theologians during debates on how many angels can stand on the head of a pin? So let's think about this strange doctrine, where it came from and what it means.

Its origin was actually quite natural, when you remember that the first Christians were devout Jews. For when most ancient people still believed in many gods who, like humans, loved and fought with each other, the Jews were amongst the very first to believe in "monotheism", that is one god.

Mind you, it took many centuries before they understood this. When the Ten Commandments were first received, the first one declared: "Thou shalt have no other gods but me!" And that did not refer to god substitutes like money or success, as modern people often imagine. In those early times the Jews really did believe that Jehovah (or Jahweh) was their very own god, and that other nations had their own gods too. Hundreds of years passed before, about 440 B.C.E., a great prophet called Second Isaiah led them to understand that the whole cosmos is a unity under just one god.

Why did it take so long? Because like most of humanity, the ancient Jews were slow learners, especially in matters religious. The Old Testament tells the story of how over many centuries, God revealed Him/Herself to them gradually, as they matured and were able to understand. So the first Christians, being Jews, already believed in one god, and in their daily routine, they would have repeated a Jewish creed called "the Shema" from Deuteronomy 6:4—"Hear O Israel, the Lord our God is one."

However, those first Christians had also experienced God in a unique way in Jesus Christ, and through the Holy Spirit as well. So they searched for metaphors to explain the three different ways they had experienced God, and they found the metaphor they needed in a very unexpected place - the theatre!

In ancient times, long before costumes were used, actors used to identify the roles they were playing by wearing masks, and in some dramas, one actor sometimes played several different roles, each identified by a different mask. And since the Latin word for "mask"

was "persona", Christians declared that in "the great drama of human history", the one true god has worn three masks or "personae", which was a good clear analogy.

But then later, the Latin word "persona" came to be used not just for the mask itself, but also for the role each mask represented, that is, a person. And thus began one of the great problems for Christian theology. For while one God acting in the drama of history wearing three masks, is a clear, useful metaphor, the idea of one God in three persons, is much more difficult to understand and explain. So a series of theological controversies began, and lasted for several centuries. They were far too numerous to describe in detail, but here is a brief sampling:

■ A man called Sabellius attempted to explain three persons in one god by suggesting that perhaps God the Father had transformed Himself into God the Son; and then, after His Ascension, Jesus had been transformed into the Holy Spirit. But since Jesus, while still here on earth, had taught his disciples to pray "Our Father, who art in heaven", this idea didn't work.

■ Another suggestion came from Arius, a devout Egyptian layman who taught that because God's full nature remains forever a mystery, Jesus could not possibly have been God in human form, but only the highest and noblest example of true humanity.

■ A group called Ebionites agreed with Arius that Jesus was only human, but insisted he had been elevated to the status of "Son of God" because of his incredible compassion and holiness.

■ Still other early Christians insisted that, for them, since Jesus was truly divine, and therefore his human nature could not have been real, it was only an illusion.

■ In the end, however, at an ecumenical council representing the whole church, it was decided officially that Jesus was and is, in fact, both truly human and truly divine.

■ Of course, there were controversies about the Holy Spirit too. And although God's Spirit is intangible and unseen, like the wind, people had experienced its power so vividly that the Spirit's "persona" was also declared Divine. And it is interesting to note that the Spirit was described quite often as "Her" instead of "Him".

Then, after 325 C.E., when the whole Roman Empire officially became Christian, the church received a lot of political pressure from the Emperor for a single creed, the Nicene Creed, to be regarded as binding on all Christians. For a single definitive creed would stop theological bickering and help to unify the many different peoples of the far flung Roman Empire. And the Nicene Creed has been regarded as official Christian teaching ever since, though some of its wording, (describing Christ as "being of one substance with the Father", for example) was based on Neo-Platonic

philosophy and often mystifies modern Christians.

To sum up then, belief in the Holy Trinity began when the Jewish monotheism of the first Christians was confronted by their own unique experience of God in Jesus Christ and through the Holy Spirit. But it took several centuries to develop a theological definition of this, and a brief creed to summarize it.

To-day however, in the light of the marvellous practical achievements of modern science, creeds and traditional theology are often regarded as antiquated and irrelevant. But in my view, theology, which used to be called "the Queen of Sciences", should be regarded as an art more than a science. For while understanding both arts and sciences requires intelligence, sensitivity and intuition, scientific procedures are much more precise and mathematical, and usually less personal and intuitive than those of the arts.

Nevertheless, the arts and sciences are both essential, as we seek to understand more fully the mysteries of God and human existence: and over-confident denial of validity to either of them is simply not acceptable. That is why I am convinced that religious fundamentalists who deny established scientific truths like evolution, and also secular-minded sceptics who claim that religious faith is based only on speculation and delusion, are both completely mistaken.

Now finally, for those who may still wonder about the Holy Trinity, Dorothy Sayers, whose artistry with words is widely recognized because of her mystery novels, and who is also noted as a lay theologian, has provided striking metaphors for each of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

She suggests that God the Father (and/or Mother) is like an idea which exists only in one person's mind, and thus is shrouded in mystery, and other people cannot understand it. God the Father is like that!

But when a hidden idea gets expressed in words, then, everybody can understand it. And that is why, in St. John's Gospel, Jesus is called "the Word of God". For being both Divine and human, He shows us both what God is like, and how we could be like, if we would take up our personal crosses, whatever they might be, and followed Him.

And Ms. Sayers further suggests that once a new idea gets into our minds and is fully understood—that is a metaphor of how God acts through the Holy Spirit to give us new hope and courage.

So, may God the holy and mysterious Father and Mother of us all, Jesus Christ, through whom we can understand God, and what commitment to God means, and the Holy Spirit, who dwells in our minds and hearts, and can change our lives, may this Holy Trinity remain with us always, to provide new meaning and courage to our lives in these troubling times, and in all the days to come!

It is time to stop being polite

NISSA BASBAUM
TRANSFIGURATION, ST. CATHARINES

Only once in my life has someone referred to me as a "dirty Jew." But once was enough.

It happened on the streets where I grew up. I was just seven years-old, but it's the kind of thing a person never forgets. Ironically, it was a school friend who shouted the words at me and, perhaps even more ironically, this school friend

world for the very same reason... because the world hates you. For a number of reasons, I chose the latter. In this regard, I am grateful to both of my parents; to my mother, who taught me that even though people were different, none of us is better than the next and to my father, who taught me not to remain silent in the face of injustice (although I am somewhat more subdued than he was, not given to the legendary



I have always had niggling doubts about what we have been doing, doubts brought on by a gut feeling that our polite conversations have been somewhat akin to a "permissible" form of racism.

was African American.

Clearly, at seven years-old, I could not fathom the import of what was being said to me... except for one thing. As the youngest in my family, I had overheard enough discussions among my parents, brothers and sister to know that the meaning of this expression was anything but good. I also knew the definition of the word dirty. Even for a seven year-old, it didn't take much to put two and two together.

As I now reflect on this incident, I think there are probably two responses to this kind of early childhood experience. You either learn to hate the world because the world hates you, or you strive to love the

street-fighting in which he often was purported to have been involved).

More than 30 years ago, homosexuality was a foreign word to me, about as foreign as the expression dirty Jew was to me at seven years-old. It remained foreign until, in 1978, I met and became friends with a homosexual man. Unlike my early childhood experience, however, the roles were now reversed. Instead of being the persecuted being persecuted by the persecuted (that is, the persecuted African American persecuting the persecuted Jew), figuratively speaking, I had now become the African American. At that moment in time, the only question left for me to answer was how would I

handle this new position of power in which I found myself?

As Anglicans, we should be ashamed of ourselves. As Christians, we should be appalled by what we as Anglicans have just done at General Synod. In apparent solidarity with that portion of the Anglican Communion which consists of those who historically have been persecuted, a sufficient number of the bishops of our own church have joined with these formerly persecuted people to become the people with power; in other words, the ones who do the persecuting.

We can couch all of this in genteel words, polite conversation and what some would consider a heartfelt defence of the words of holy scripture, but none of this serves to blanket what we actually have done; to sit in judgment and to continue to throw stones. It is what people with power do. Not surprisingly, it is not what Jesus, a man with no power, ever did. Too often, I can't help but ask myself, "Are we disciples of Jesus or disciples of Paul?"

For several years now, I have been witness to and a participant in the endless discussions, studies and debates on the floor of Niagara's Synod regarding the blessing of same sex unions. In all of this, I have always had niggling doubts about what we have been doing, doubts brought on by a gut feeling that our polite conversations have been somewhat akin to a "permissible" form of racism. As I watched the General Synod web cast, these

doubts crystallized and began to take definite shape.

When delegate after delegate came up to the microphone and invoked the bible in defence of his or her position, it became patently obvious that we can and will use scripture to defend just about anything. It wasn't so long ago when people proof-texted the bible to preserve their right to own slaves. Yet, if someone had gone to the microphone to do this, surely all hell would have broken loose at the utterance of such a blatantly racist comment. Still, we remain patient and polite as our friends in Christ continue to invoke the Holy Spirit as the author of humanity's "racist" comments about homosexuality. I would remind you that when I was seven years-old, it was my friend who called me a dirty Jew.

Recently, I just finished reading Lucy Reid's book, *She Changes Everything*. Aside from the obvious—that it is a beautifully written memoir and a well-defended assault on traditional Christianity—there was a particular remembrance from Reid's past that frightened me. Just before she was to be ordained to the priesthood in the Anglican Church, Reid met post-Christian Mary Daly and asked her how, as a woman to be ordained into the church, she could change it from within to become a less sexist organization. According to Reid's recounting of this conversation, Daly replied that the task was impossible, and compared it to a person of colour

wanting to join the Ku Klux Klan and make it less racist.

Recent and not-so recent events in the Anglican Church continue to mark as indelible this analysis by Daly. While I may hope that things will change and I may continue to pray for a miracle to make this happen, at the moment I continue to play a role in an institution that willingly accepts as part of its membership people who defend what is nothing less than a form of blatant racism, however politely this defence is carried out. As such, as I said in another article which I wrote for the Niagara Anglican earlier in the year, regarding the power of a crowd to silence even those who stand up to disagree, "I need to keep reminding myself just how easy it is to get caught up in something, even something I might abhor."

It is not just those who continue to vote against the blessing of same sex unions who are guilty of this racism. All of us who remain in the institution and continue to support this through our time, talents and money will have to answer for its years of abuse, not much different than we have had to answer for the years of residential school abuse with which most of us in the church today have had no direct connection.

We are all guilty of allowing this polite conversation to go on too long. Perhaps the time has come for some of that street-fighting for which, in my family, my father was so renowned.

Step into another's shoes

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

You do all you can to follow Jesus and God's teachings, through scripture, evangelism and worship. You are a leader in your congregation, and a volunteer in many of the church's organizations. This leadership brings you great joy and you are always delighted to enter your church home and contribute to its growth.

Now imagine that you are also a homosexual. You feel no shame in this, because you know that it is who you are. You truly believe that God has made you the way you are, though of course like all matters of true faith you have no way to prove or disprove this. But your faith is unshakable and you believe it as strongly as you believe in loving your neighbour as yourself.

Imagine also that your church has adopted the "love the sinner, not the sin" principle. The church and congregation that you love beyond all recourse believes that the "lifestyle" that you embrace is a sin, even though you know that the perception that many homosexuals are promiscuous is very wrong. Your congregation says that they still love you, but they have committed to doing their best to make sure that you remain celibate and that you never enter into a committed, loving relationship with another homosexual. It doesn't matter that

you have committed not to have any sexual relations with your partner until after you get married, if that's even possible. It doesn't matter that you've devoted your life to the church.

How do you feel right now? Are you willing to accept that your home has rejected that which you believe God has made you? You know deep in your heart that God made you a homosexual, and that homosexuals can find love the same as heterosexuals, and that homosexuals can take all of the same actions in a relationship before God that heterosexuals can like agreeing not to have sex before marriage. But the church that you grew up in doesn't agree with you.

Your congregation says that it still loves you and welcomes you, but not a part of you that you know beyond all recourse was made part of you by God. Do you still feel welcome in the place that was your spiritual home? Do you still feel loved as a neighbour?

I propose that the policy suggested by Rev. Masters in his interview is one that parallels early to mid-1900s America, when the segregation of African-Americans was still condoned by society. The government said that it welcomed African-Americans openly, and they could finally do things they couldn't before, like ride on the same buses as Caucasians but only if they sat

in the back. The people of America said they were welcoming the African-Americans, and most believed it, but it didn't feel that way to the African-American population because this policy still ensured that the African-Americans were second class citizens, and that they were made aware of that whenever they got on a bus.

In the church, the only way that we can truly follow God's commandment to love one another as we love ourselves (which is one of the two greatest commandments, above all others) is to try to put ourselves in other people's positions when we form an opinion, or decide to take an action.

I love the Anglican Church and in particular the Diocese of Niagara, and everyone in it, from the depth of my heart, as I know Rev. Masters and his colleagues in the Essentials movement do. I also love them and everyone in the church who I have had political disagreements with and those who I have hurt and who have hurt me. To me, that is the most important part of our commitment to the church, and if we have that in common, then it is entirely possible for us to worship, love and coexist together if we are willing to look through each other's eyes, remembering that we love one another and are all equally children of the Lord.

Experienced inspectors required to conduct inspections of buildings under the jurisdiction of the Anglican Diocese of Niagara

The Anglican Diocese of Niagara has a program to carry out periodic inspections of all church properties within the Diocese and is looking for a small number of additional suitably qualified professionals to carry out this work. The Diocese extends from Mount Forest and Shelburne in the North to Fort Erie and Nanticoke in the South and Oakville in the East. Some twelve to fifteen inspections need to be carried out each year, generally in the summer months, although in many cases there would be no reason why the interior should not be inspected during the winter.

The selected inspectors should have hands-on experience in building maintenance, especially of older buildings. They are likely to have a background as an architect, engineer, general contractor, project manager, maintenance supervisor or building inspector with an interest in and knowledge of older buildings. A knowledge of structural, mechanical and electrical systems would also be an advantage. The inspections are awarded by tender and paid for by the individual Parish.

The inspector for each particular property would:

- Carry out a comprehensive inspection of the whole of the premises in accordance with Terms of Reference for the Inspection of Church Properties provided by the Diocese;
- Submit a detailed report thereon complete with photographs and recommendations for the necessary corrective action;
- Advise on any additional necessary specialist inspection or investigation that may be deemed advisable.

Individuals wishing to be pre-qualified should initially submit a letter of interest and a resume to the Bishop's Decennial Inspection Committee:

c/o The Bishop's Office
252 James Street North
Hamilton, Ontario L8R 2L3
Fax: 905-527-1281

Email: karen.nowicki@niagara.anglican.ca

Further information, including the Terms of Reference for the Inspection of Church Properties will then be provided and selected candidates will be invited to an interview with the Committee.

Go, Go, Global Warming!

STEPHEN MURRAY
JAMES BEATTIE
CHURCH OF THE RESURRECTION, HAMILTON

Everybody get off the bandwagon! There are certain ramifications to jumping on a bandwagon, or allying oneself with a so-called "cause". It would seem that many have neglected the fact that the balance of power has shifted recently. Who decided it was fair to simply have a change of heart and try to undo all the damage that has taken us as a species so much time to inflict? Ever since Al Gore's film *An Inconvenient Truth* and the wacky weather of last winter collided like a high pressure front over the prairies it seems like everyone's making their own membership cards in the "environmentalist of the month" club. It would seem that Mr. Gore is pushing for some sort of unfair advantage for earth.

Conspiracy Theory?

Suddenly the quest to become Canada's 'greenest' city or company has

spread like a B.C. forest fire. The environmental charge has always been led by left-wing hippies that didn't grow up, but now they've joined with unlikely allies—evangelical conservatives. In the May/June edition of Faith Today is an article that Meadowlands Fellowship Church in Ancaster will be built using a geothermal heating/cooling system. Apparently they believe that this is a good example of stewardship and care for creation saying, "the alternative design wasn't about saving bucks; it was about being true to Christian principles." Shouldn't biblical literalists be quoting Genesis 1:28, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over... every living thing that moves upon the earth?" Clearly God wants us to use plants, animals, oil and other natural resources for whatever we like, and we like big things with flashing lights! The Anglican church is dangerously close to joining in this politically-correct trend without thinking about long-term consequences.

We should all pause and reflect on the upside of global warming. Striving for balance, we've prepared a brief list of positive and negative consequences of climate change.

An inconclusive conclusion...

Christians are called to be "in the world, not of the world," so let's consider:

■ There should be an anti-anti-idling by-law where we can leave our engines running during the worship services. Have we ever considered drive-in churches?

■ Not smaller cars, but bigger cars, and avoid car-pooling at all costs. And like health-care gas should be free and universally accessible to every Canadian.

■ Keep your lights on to be the light of the world, don't hide it under a bushel.

We call upon Anglicans everywhere to help in the cause of Climate Change and hope you enjoyed a good laugh. Remember, Eco-Terrorism is still Terrorism.

Go, Go, Global Warming!	Tree-Hugger Environmentalists
Warmer winters: picture cycling and swimming at the beach all year long!	Maybe they like shovelling snow? Luckily SUVs with 4-wheel drive can get through anything!
Buy real estate in Calgary now—it will have a nice ocean front view in a few years where you can take the grandkids, or sit on the porch with friends consuming non-soy oil based beverages.	Protect the polar ice-caps. Who even lives there? Polar bears? Ever heard of Darwin... survival of the fittest, baby.
Tsunami's make for great surfing in the great lakes—could be tourist attraction and help the economy. Also, never pay to wash your gas-guzzler ever again!	"Endangered species" sounds like a way of driving up the price on shrimp and fish.
Bring back 'garbage' - recycling and sorting takes a lot of time and energy that could be better used watching TV or surfing the web. Also, leaving 'Roll up the Rim to Win' cups on the ground would provide a nice colourful change to the over-abundance of green leaves & grass.	Reduce, Re-use, Recycle—we've tried this for nearly 20 years. Blue boxes aren't used at universities and hospitals, which is where the smartest people in our society work, so clearly it's too difficult for us dumber people. Don't even get us started about composting. If God meant for us to recycle there would have been blue boxes in the garden of Eden.
Easy access to electric lights is a constant reminder of God's light in the world, and who doesn't like a reminder of that forced upon them 24/7? Turning off lights is dangerous, what if someone trips?	'Flick Off' is blatantly offensive.
Turn up the air conditioning! If you're feeling especially generous, open your windows so that your neighbours might benefit from the cool air! Air conditioning is important to keep the vegetables crisp while on the table.	If we don't have the air conditioning on all the time, what's the alternative? Sitting outside in the shade? How can we play Xbox out there?

Geometry, Poetry, Theology

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

What does a poem "mean" is the wrong question, as wrong as what does a parable "mean". What, rather, does a poem, a parable, make of us? How does it seek our transformation?

Well, it seeks to make parables of us, parables that widen from the single places we stand, from the single acts of love and justice we perform, into the spacious Kingdom of our salvation. It seeks to redeem us from our confident uselessness into agents of and witnesses to the work by which God is drawing all creation into the hospitality of that Kingdom. It seeks to nourish us from the wells of God's tenacity, so

that we may realize, in our common life, plantings of the communion God intends for the New Creation.

As I write, I am preparing to attend the General Synod of our church in Winnipeg. Its theme, "Draw the circle wide, draw it wider still" captures some of the dynamic of the parables, of the parabola that opens infinitely into God's future. At the same time, we will find ourselves in passionate contention over an issue that has some of the aroma of the ultimate about it. How shall we include the life and ministry of gay and lesbian persons in our common life as church? What is the orbit and range of God's communion, what is the defining characteristic of holy intimacy?

I am sure that, however that ques-

tion is resolved in the General Synod, there will be many who cannot embrace that resolution gladly. It is the nature of conflict, and we are in conflict about this issue, as we have been in conflict about issues in the past, and will be in the future. And many of those conflicts have had the aroma of the ultimate about them. So, before the Synod, before the conversations, debates, powerful arguments, wounded hopes, there is this to hope for our common life after the Synod: We are called to be together, in Synod (which means "the way together") and in the one Body of Christ. If our lines are not wide enough to encompass the communion that is the work of Jesus on the cross, it is not because Jesus' lines are too generous.

Whither Liturgy?

PETER WALL
DEAN & RECTOR - CHRIST'S CHURCH CATHEDRAL
DIOCESAN LITURGICAL OFFICER

As I write this article, I am sitting in my office trying to get ready for my departure for 11 days to Winnipeg for General Synod. Now that you are reading this, General Synod is behind us—its decisions are now part of our history.

One of the resolutions coming to the Synod this year (one, along with many others, which is being totally eclipsed by the big resolu-

eucharistic rites and resources for daily prayer.

My experience is that the healthiest and happiest communities are those which use as many of these resources as they can, meeting both a wide set of expectations and honouring both our history and our current reality.

My prediction is (and remember, I am writing this before a decision is made; you are reading it after) that the conversation on the floor of General Synod will not be an easy one.

My experience is that the healthiest and happiest communities are those which use as many of these resources as they can, meeting both a wide set of expectations and honouring both our history and our current reality.

tions about Same Sex Blessings and various other reports) is one coming from the Faith, Worship, and Ministry Committee asking General Synod to ask FWM to initiate discussions about both an agenda and principles for common worship text revision.


As a member of the national Faith Worship and Ministry Committee for the last two triennia, I can attest to both the importance and the timeliness of this request to Synod.

We have now had the *Book of Alternative Services* in use in our Church for over 20 years, and we still seem, in our uniquely Anglican way, to be of many minds about our worship text. There was a time when the most distinctive thing about Canadian Anglicanism was our 'book wars'. That time, happily, seems to have passed, although there are still those who rail against the BAS and any movement away from what they consider to be the only book—the *Book of Common Prayer*. Fortunately, we have before us a variety of new texts from churches around the world, and also from local design and innovation. The *Book of Common Prayer* is still very much our 'official' book and many Anglicans, myself among them, consider it a jewel in our liturgical crown—the best of poetic language and a resource which is both dear and significant for us. It does, however, reflect a time and a church which is vastly different from our own, and we are enormously blessed with a variety of choices at our liturgical disposal—from the twelve eucharistic prayers authorized for use across the country, to the richness of both

Many will be suspicious of any resolution dealing with liturgical revision as one which is trying to subvert the BCP. Let me assure you that this is simply not the case. The movement for liturgical revision is one geared to providing our church with, perhaps, one worship book, containing the best of what we have in our impressive library of resources. We would all agree, I think, that certain parts of the BCP are inappropriate to our current situation (one thinks about the third collect for Good Friday, for example, already effectively 'banned' by legislative action from our worship) and, similarly, for many, the BAS is already outdated, with too much hierarchical and patriarchal language, a paucity of collects and propers for a three year Sunday cycle, and insufficient resources for the offices. Many worshipping communities look to other church's books—New Zealand, Church of England, South Africa, the new *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*—as but a few examples of helpful and inspiring resources from which we should draw.

Perhaps there will not be a new 'book', but rather a new way of authorizing texts so that current technology can be put to good use; perhaps there will be a whole new 'way' of thinking about liturgical materials. This is what the resolution is all about.

As a result of six wonderful years sitting on Faith Worship and Ministry, I have a great confidence in that body's ability to do this creative, important, and respectful work. The staff of FWM is second to none in terms of education, sensitivity, and experience. I say let's go for it—let's do the work and have the conversations. I wonder what General Synod said?



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Scripture is about how to live, not how to be saved

NISSA BASBAUM
TRANSFIGURATION, ST. CATHARINES

At one of the meetings in Niagara a couple of years ago, a gathering intended to begin a diocesan-wide discussion of homosexuality and, in particular, the blessing of same sex unions, a panel of four people from both sides of the issue presented their views.

I remember two of these people, in particular, who spoke. Oddly enough, while they were both on the "nay" side of the fence, they did not seem to be saying the same thing. Each of these speakers described homosexual practice as a sin. They believed this to be the case, they said, because of their reading of scripture; yet, they seemed to reach this conclusion for different reasons.

Beyond the pages

On the one hand, one person said she "knew" what scripture was saying because she had been brought up in a family that had taught her the bible from when she was very young. On the other hand, the second person described scripture as a "continuing" narrative, and that most things written in the bible continue to be valuable to us because we can see their meaning progress, and envision where this meaning might be heading today. While I didn't agree with the conclusion of either of these two speakers, I did have a higher degree of respect for the second one who, I think, had a sense that the bible reads more like a living document rather than a dead one and, as a living document, it is

meant to be understood beyond its actual pages.

When people from groups like Essentials suggest, that "the decision before us is whether we will choose our biblical heritage or whether we will choose to walk apart," I think they are reading the bible as a book rather than a living document, and they read this book as the "words of God" rather than the "Word of God." What's more, they read it as a *rule* book—a document in which they believe they can find everything God tells them they should do, and all they have to do is to follow the rules.

The meaning behind the words

By approaching the bible in this fashion, there is no decision-making at all for us, which is rather ironic since Jesus' critique of the society into which he was born was that the leaders at that time were committed to the law as it was written—committed to this at the expense of the spirit of the law. Yet, the gospels teach us that by responding to the scripture (the law) in this way, we will end up committing more sin than if we scrutinize the meaning behind the words in order to respond to this meaning. For example, take the story about the healing on the Sabbath. The higher value, Jesus says, is the healing of the man with a withered hand rather than the keeping of the Sabbath. In the same way, the higher value in the story of the Good Samaritan is the saving of the man in need rather than the obeying of the purity laws of the time. It is the meaning behind the words, not the words of

scripture on their own, to which we are to be attuned.

If the bible is meant to be read in the way that some people would have us read it, then what do we do with passages from Matthew, like the following?

"If your hand or your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it away; it is better for you to enter life maimed or lame than to have two hands or two feet and to be thrown into the eternal fire. And if your eye causes you to stumble, tear it out and throw it away; it is better for you to enter life with one eye than to have two eyes and to be thrown into the hell of fire."

How many people in church do you see walking around with missing limbs or eyes?

The Bible is a living document

It isn't only biblical literalists who take the bible seriously. And, what's more, some Anglicans would like to make people think that taking the bible seriously is really what is at issue when, in fact, this isn't at all the case. The real issue is whether we understand and receive the bible literally or metaphorically. Many evangelical Anglicans want people to believe that if we can't take the bible factually, it means we don't appreciate its importance for how we live our lives. Yet, this is so far from the truth. When those of us who regard the bible metaphorically do so, we delve deeper than just the words on the paper. We delve into the meaning behind these words, which is what has the capacity to make the bible a living document to be taken seriously by those of us

who live and have faith today.

In my years as a priest, the most valuable thing I have learned from doing bible studies is this: the people who are biblical literalists and the people who out rightly reject the idea that the bible has any place or meaning in their lives today seem to have more in common with each other than they have with the rest of us, who find ourselves flailing about somewhere in the middle. It's always been my impression that neither of these two absolute positions really reads the bible because neither seems to grapple with its content or its context. They simply accept at face value that the meaning of the scripture is only to be found in the words on the paper. While they come to different conclusions about how these words fit into their lives, their process for doing this is not much different. On the other hand, those of us in the middle find ourselves studying the bible without fear or hesitation of pulling it apart. We are not afraid that by doing this there will be nothing left in which to believe. Personally, I think the people in the middle are the real followers of Jesus. They take the tradition and turn it on its head in order to discover the spirit of this tradition, rather than simply to practice the tradition for its own sake. Isn't this what Jesus, himself, preached and practiced?

Who takes Scripture seriously?


Ultimately, I think the issue of homosexuality seems to have tapped into a much more deep-seated and unnamed fear in people, and this isn't simply a fear of what

is different and what these same people consider to be abnormal. Instead, it is a fear that this "something different" may become the closed door to their own salvation. I learned a long time ago what I think one of the worst sins of human beings is—Christians, in particular. It is our penchant for working out our own salvation on other people. Judgement and absolutes, such as those that are coming from the representatives of Essentials, are less about a concern for those who are "doing the sinning" (the reference to traditional church doctrine that "hates the sin but loves the sinner") than they are about the fear people have of losing their own salvation.

The Essentials group has made this an issue about scripture and tradition. On this point, I absolutely would agree. But it is highly unfair and patently inappropriate for them to suggest that those of us on the other side of the issue don't take scripture seriously. We take it just as seriously as they do. In fact, I almost want to suggest we take it more seriously. Why? Because we study it and incorporate its essence—the Word of God—into our lives for *no other reason than we believe it teaches us the right way to live*. We don't do this because we are afraid of the wrath of God and the consequences of this wrath for our salvation.

Jesus said "perfect love casts out fear." By the same token, perfect fear casts out love. With respect to the issue of homosexuality and the blessing of same-sex unions, this certainly seems to have become the reality in which our church finds itself living.

Share your summer stories with the Niagara Anglican



If you've got any exciting or memorable church experiences while on vacation this year, send them to us, along with a photo (if possible).

We'll include it in the September or October editions of the Niagara Anglican.

MAKER'S MARKET



People came on a beautiful summer's day to the courtyard of Christ's Church Cathedral in downtown Hamilton to find one-of-a-kind arts, crafts, collectables and produce at the Makers' Market on June 16. The Market will be held again on the third Saturday of July, August and September.

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EVENTS

Summer English Teas

Christ Church, McNab

Enjoy lunch outdoors under the shade trees of the church's lawn. A variety of sandwiches, home-made scones with whipped cream and strawberry preserves plus a refreshing pot of tea make for a very pleasant Saturday afternoon outing. Popular for many summers, this event will be held rain or shine every Saturday from July 14 to August 18. The historic church is open during the summer teas.

Cost: \$10.00 per person

July 14 - August 18, 2:00 pm - 4:00 pm

Pot Luck Lunch and Social

All Saints, Hamilton

Pot luck lunch and social following the Sunday service. Bring your favourite board game or play a game of cards.

July 15

Dinner and Salsa Dance

Saint Luke's, Hamilton

A Dinner and Salsa Dancing are on the menu. There will be all the usual high-jinks as Saint Luke's and the North-End party until midnight. No bar so the kids can come, no dress code so the teenagers can feel comfortable and the music just a dull roar so you can still talk. Proceeds will go towards Saint Luke's Neighbourhood Assistance Program. Come out and support our shenanigans! See you there.

July 23, 6:00 pm

Youth Group Party

Saint Luke's, Hamilton

The Annual Soccer and Swim Party has all our young people geared up for more great times. It is at the Hunt's in Mount Hope and there will be Morris our soccer coach on hand and Josh our

BBQ chef to keep the food coming. Lifeguards are in plentiful supply and everyone is welcome. Bring energy and a smile and we will send you home exhausted and happy. That is a promise from the Youth Group Leaders and they never fail!

July 30, 4:00 pm

Vacation Bible School

St. James, Dundas

Come and join the Sunforce as special agents between the ages of 4 and 10 descend upon St. James for the week.

July 30, 9:30 am - 12:00 pm

Trash and Treasures Sale

Holy Trinity (Chippawa), Niagara Falls

Come and check out our annual sale. One person's trash is another's treasure. Lunch will be available in the parish hall.

August 11, 2007

PWRDF Information Session

Christ Church, Whitfield

Wondering what the Anglican Church is doing around the world to help victims of natural disaster and those suffering from AIDS/HIV, and to free captives and bring hope to those who live in despair? This is the work and ministry of PWRDF. Come and hear more about this vital work of the Anglican Church in Canada.

August 12, 9:00 am

Fun in the Sun (Camp 1)

St. Christopher, Burlington

This year the theme for Fun in the Sun is "3, 2, 1, Penguins!" Through songs, crafts, exciting games, Bible stories and tasty snacks (all the things that make vacation Bible school so much fun for children) we will learn about the riches of God's love for us. For children aged 3-12.

Cost: \$30.00 per child

August 13-17, 9:00 am - 12:00 pm

Vacation Bible School

Church of the Incarnation, Oakville

Lift off and join us. Let your spirits soar! Reserve your spot for a fun-filled, high-flying adventure in this year's VBS: Lift Off! Soaring to New Heights with God. Contact Ann Moniuk by calling 905-337-3501 or pick up registration forms in the narthex.

August 13-17

Pie Sale and Peach Festival

St. John the Evangelist, Thorold

Sale of home baked pies. There will also be peachy delectables for sale and consumption.

August 18, 2:00 - 4:00 pm

Vacation Bible School

St. Jude, Oakville

Enjoy a musical by Mark Patterson and a presentation of Elijah! For children aged 5-13.

Cost: \$40.00 per child (family rates available)

August 20-24, 9:00 am - 12:00 pm

Vacation Bible School

St. John's, St. Catharines

St. John's will become a Waterpark Adventure with WaterWorks VBS this summer! Don't miss the splash!

August 20-24, 9:00 am - 12:00 pm

Fun in the Sun (Camp 2)

St. Christopher, Burlington

This year the theme for Fun in the Sun is "3, 2, 1, Penguins!" Through songs, crafts, exciting games, Bible stories and tasty snacks (all the things that make vacation Bible school so much fun for children) we will learn about the riches of

God's love for us. For children aged 3-12.

Cost: \$30.00 per child

August 20-24, 9:00am - 12:00 pm

Summer Vacation Bible School

St. John the Evangelist, Hamilton

Quest for Truth is a daily series of activities to discover more about Jesus. Get prepared for an Indiana-Jones kind of adventure where kids aged 5-12 dig into the world and discover the truth about Jesus! Contact Susan Little for further information at 905-528-3326.

August 20-24

Salad Supper

St. Paul's, Shelburne

All you can eat ham, potato salad, dessert, tea and coffee.

Cost: \$10 per adult, \$5 per child (Preschoolers are free)

August 21, 4:30 pm - 7:00 pm

Dinner and Salsa Dance

Saint Luke's, Hamilton

A Dinner and Salsa Dancing are on the menu. There will be all the usual high-jinks as Saint Luke's and the North-End party until midnight. No bar so the kids can come, no dress code so the teenagers can feel comfortable and the music just a dull roar so you can still talk. Proceeds will go towards Saint Luke's Neighbourhood Assistance Program. Come out and support our shenanigans! See you there.

August 25, 6:00 pm

Parish Barbecue

Holy Trinity, Fonthill

Join us on Sunday, August 26, for our Parish Barbecue following our 10 am service.

August 26, 2007



MOUNT CARMEL SPIRITUAL CENTRE

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INDIVIDUALLY DIRECTED RETREATS

22-28 July — 12-18 August — 16-21 September

An individual meets with a spiritual director once a day. All are invited to join the Carmelite Community for morning and evening prayer as well as the celebration of the Eucharist. The silence of the Spiritual Centre allows for personal prayer, thinking, resting and relaxing. All is done to see how God is active in a person's life.

RETREATS FOR PERSONAL AND SPIRITUAL GROWTH

Self-Esteem: Can you afford to live without it?

July 29-August 2 - Led by Sebastian Fazzari, Ph. D.

During this five day retreat participants will learn to silence the negative inner voice (the critic) that attacks and judges us. Learn how to combat distorted thinking, how to form healthy values, how to handle mistakes, how to ask for what they want without experiencing guilt, how to respond to criticism and how to form a compassionate mind. Come grow at Mount Carmel.

Good-bye ego, hello true self!

July 29-August 2 - Led by Anne Mulvaney, Ed.D.

Take time out to experience intimacy with the Kingdom of God within you. Meditation, imagery and reflection on spiritual writing will foster the integration of your body, mind, emotions and spirit in God during this five-day retreat.

12-Step Spirituality from a Woman's Perspective: "Self-Awareness and Self-esteem"

August 24-26 - Led by Kathryn McMorrow

Open to women from all 12-Step groups as well as those interested in finding out more about 12-Step recovery. Who is the person behind the addiction? What parts of myself do I need to reclaim in order to live fully and remain abstinent? Special emphasis on the 11th Step of prayer and meditation and the opportunity for 12-Step meetings.