



# Niagara Anglican

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## Getting to know our Bishop-Elect

An interview with Michael Bird



**FRAN DARLINGTON**  
HONORARY-ST. JAMES, GUELPH

"Bishop"—what does the word really mean? The words "bishop" or "bishops" appear only four times in the Bible, in Paul's letters to the Philippians, Timothy and Titus, indicating that the order of bishop arose very early in the church's history.

The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church says: "It seems at first the terms "episcopos" and "presbyter" were used interchangeably." In the second century, Ignatius named three distinct orders of clergy: bishop (episcopos), priest (presbyter) and deacon. Our Church is "episcopal" (from "episcopos"), meaning that we are led by bishops.

The earliest bishops "saw themselves as carrying on the role originally undertaken by the apostles, as heads of regional church(es), and

as representatives of Christ himself, responsible for the unity of the whole church, (and) guardians of the true faith." (*This Is Our Faith*, Ian Stuchberry, Anglican Book Centre, Toronto; 1990)

The "job description" of an Anglican bishop today, particularly for a Diocesan Bishop, seems almost limitless in its duties and demands! "The Parish Question Box," a booklet published in 1947 by the Church of England in Canada, as we were then, says the bishop is "to administer the affairs of the Diocese, both spiritual and material. He is the 'Persona' of the Diocese in all matters that concern the whole Church."

In matters of doctrine and its interpretation, bishops strive to maintain historical unity in the Anglican Communion in the Diocese, in Canada and around the world. The final arbiters in discussion and disagreement, bishops meet regularly in the national "House of Bishops," the gathering presided over by the Primate, the country's senior bishop. Every ten years, bishops from around the world gather at the

Lambeth Conference, hosted by the Archbishop of Canterbury.

Sacramentally, only bishops may confirm and ordain, bless oils of chrism and anointing, and participate in the consecration of other bishops.

In addition to selecting, ordaining and appointing parish clergy, the bishop is responsible for their pastoral care. In this Diocese of Niagara, clergy are fortunate to have bishops who minister generously to their priests and deacons in that way.

### Niagara elects a new Bishop

On June 2, 2007, the Diocese of Niagara chose Michael Bird, Rector of St. Luke's Church, Burlington, and Archdeacon of Trafalgar, as our next bishop. Michael accepts the people's will, and is "starting to pay attention to many things I didn't notice before." His gentle smile appears: "Obviously, the reality of it all is setting in. I'm waking up, saying to myself, 'Hey, it really did happen!'"

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## Why the Anglican Church has already split

**JOHN BOWEN**  
ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST, HAMILTON

People talk about how we can avoid a split in the Anglican Church. The truth is that it is too late. The split has already happened. Look at the signs:

■ On the personal level, our church has been bleeding members for years, and I suspect the rate is accelerating. People are moving to other denominations as wildly different as Baptist and Roman Catholic.

■ On the parish level, we know that several parishes in New Westminster and parts of the US have left their respective national churches and put themselves under the leadership of African primates. (Whether this is right or wrong is another subject. I am merely observing.)

■ On the national level, the votes at

General Synod revealed how deep the divisions are within the Anglican Church of Canada.

■ On the global level, several African provinces have already said they will not be sending bishops to the Lambeth Conference next year, and undoubtedly others will join them. There is even talk of a separate conference for the dissenting bishops.

What of the diocesan level? At the Niagara Diocesan Synod in November, there will almost certainly be a vote on whether to allow parishes to decide for themselves whether to offer blessings for same-sex unions (the "local option"). If it comes to a vote, it will be passed by a large majority, to overwhelming rejoicing among many, and walk-

ing out by others. More individuals and parishes will undoubtedly leave the Anglican Church of Canada. Some will become part of a new Anglican body.

Three things in my limited experience are contributing to this breakup.

### Verbal abuse

One is the level of verbal abuse that is tolerated. I suppose because I am on the traditional side of the issue, I am more aware of the abuse thrown in my general direction than of any flying the other way. I am getting hardened to being called "homophobic," "fundamentalist," "behind the times," "literalist," and "unanglican."

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## Reflections on General Synod

**STEPHEN F. HOPKINS**  
ST. CHRISTOPHER'S, BURLINGTON

I promised I would talk today about General Synod. I'm happy to have had a couple of weeks to digest the experience—not because I have changed my mind about anything, but I have become more centred and focused in my response to it all. In that intervening time it has also become clearer in my own mind what it all means for St. Christopher's.

### The experience of General Synod

Let me say a couple of things about General Synod in general before I get to the sexy issues. This was my fourth General Synod as a member and, if you count the General Synods at which I was a volunteer, I have been at every General Synod

since 1992. All six of them. In every instance, including this one, it has been an incredible experience of the church in both its breadth and complexity. Not only does one encounter the church from sea to sea—far more significantly for me, one experiences the church from south to north, with glimpses of the worldwide Anglican Communion.

Every diocese in the country is represented by its own people who speak of their communities and mission in their own voices. As an urban white guy who has never lived more than an hour from the American border, it is the only place where I meet and work with First Nations peoples in significant numbers.

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## Shoot, Ready, Aim

HOLLIS HISCOCK  
RETIRED PRIEST - BURLINGTON

### SHOOT - The photograph

I photographed the breathtaking Webster's Falls, near Dundas, Ontario, on a hot, sunny, July afternoon. The falls, located in Spencer Gorge, cascades down 41 metres (131 feet). It is slightly shorter than its world famous cousin, Niagara Falls.

A Hamilton Conservation Authority online brochure describes it as 'a magnificent curtain waterfall', which resulted from the gorges being carved out by 'glacial meltwaters about 10,000 years ago when the creek's water volume was much greater and steam erosion consequently much more active'.

After viewing Webster's Falls in its summer glory, Helen and I eagerly anticipate its autumn and winter splendor.

### READY - Words behind the photo

Waterfalls can be dissected into three stages, namely, before the falls, during the falls and after the falls. Similarly, human beings experience repeatedly comparable junctures during their life's journey.

Jesus' parable of the two house builders provides a unique Bible message to help us deal with each stage. People who follow His Gospel, said Jesus, are like those people who build their houses (lives) on a strong foundation (rock), whereas those who refuse the good news are erecting their lives on flimsy, unstable sand. Each will be exposed equally to the winds, rains and flood, yet only the house built on rock will survive, the other will be destroyed. (Matthew 7:24-27)

Here is my twist on Jesus' story. Let's assume that the 'house' represents your life, and the two types of foundations symbolize the situations you encounter in daily living. Sometimes your life is on solid ground, but on other occasions you are standing on the shifting, unpredictable sand.

Now let's plug your house into the three stages of Webster's Falls.

Firstly, 'before the falls'. Helen and I sat on the riverbank watching the slow meandering river edging closer and closer to the top of the waterfall. We tossed an ice cube into the water, and watched it float lazily down the river.

This stage epitomizes our every day 'take it for granted' routine life. We go to work, we play, we socialize, and basically we are free from debilitating worries and cares. It may not be utopia, but life is good. This is your house (life) experiencing the benefits of a rock solid foundation.

Secondly, 'during the falls'. We watched our ice cube being sucked into the raging waterfalls and being plunged unmercifully towards the dangerous rocks waiting some 41 metres below.

In life, we too are often cast adrift when devastating circumstances and situations disrupt our gently flowing lives and cause havoc and trauma. It could be major illness, a betrayal in a relationship, death, a lost lover, actions of our Church or secular community, job loss, mistrust, etc. (add your own example).

At such moments we lose control of our lives. We cannot cope with present realities. We feel abandoned by the securities of our past. And we are unable to focus clearly on any hope or direction for the future.

Like the ice cube, we seem to be catapulting towards the darkness of the abyss. This is your house's (life's) foundation being shattered and ripped asunder by the winds, rains and floods of life.

Thirdly, 'after the falls'. This is the moment when you start to build another foundation upon which to anchor your house (life).

Our melted, shattered ice cube has been swallowed up by the larger body of water. If we wish to create another ice cube, we need to collect

'pieces of water' and place them in a freezer. We will produce another ice cube, and it may contain water from the original, but it will also include new water as well. The same is true of the lives we erect after the falls.

Re-assembling our foundation and house (life) involves enormous support, effort and energy, but it can be accomplished. We cannot go back to where we were 'before the falls', nor change what we experienced 'during the falls', but we can be transformed into renewed human beings 'after the falls'.

Slowly and surely, with occasional relapses possible, we pick up the pieces of our house (life) and foundation and fit them together to be transformed and ready to once again continue our life's journey.

Faith in God helps, support from other human beings makes it easier, but the strongest and most enduring factor in rebuilding a strong foundation after the falls is you. God/Jesus promised to be with before, during and after all the falls of life (Matthew 28:20).

### Aim - Questions and actions for you

■ Spend a few minutes reflecting on your life before 'the falls' happened.

■ Recall what happened during 'the falls'.

■ What pieces did you salvage from your troubles and how did you incorporate these and new pieces into your foundation to rebuild your house (life)?

■ Now close your eyes and visualize the cleansing, soothing and healing waters of God flowing through your body, mind, spirit and soul.

■ Hollis would appreciate your feedback on this series. Contact him at [hollism@hotmail.com](mailto:hollism@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.

## This is my story



DAVE MCKAY  
ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST, HAMILTON

I've heard about a statue of Jesus; a statue in which Jesus has no hands or feet. I guess the sculptor wants people to draw the conclusion that they are to be Jesus' hands and feet. That's a pretty powerful image if you think about it. It reminds me of the passage from Matthew in which Jesus thanks his followers for providing food, drink, shelter, clothing and compassion to the "least of these His brothers and sisters." These helpers were doing the sort of thing that Jesus often did Himself, but which He more frequently uses people to do. For more than fifteen years I read the words in Matthew at the Epiphany Pageant at my church, St. John the Evangelist, Hamilton. Watching parishioners act out the roles of Jesus' hands and feet always made me very emotional. I could hardly get the words out. I think that was because it brought home that my story, and the story of those around me, forms a small but integral part of Jesus' story.

In telling my story I would like to relate times when people, some my acquaintances and some total strangers, have acted as Jesus' hands and feet in helping me on my Christian journey. Frankly, I have sometimes felt like "the least of these," but in most circumstances I have just needed guidance or inspiration.

The first hands were those of my family. I was baptized, as a small baby, at St. Paul's, Stratford. My strongest recollection of that church is that my grandma, Carrie Candler, was the Sunday school superintendent, and I was somehow proud of that fact. Through stints in Moncton, Jarvis and Brantford my parents, Rae and Lois McKay, took me to church and made it seem like a natural thing for people to do. Their model of consistent Christian living allowed me to develop a certain comfort with God and His church.

My teenage years were spent at St. James' in Dundas. There I was privileged to grow under the tutelage of the Reverends John Bothwell and Jo Fricker. I was confirmed, and was the recipient of several growth opportunities. Noteworthy were a trip to a youth conference at The Church of St. John the Divine in New York City, and, as an 18 year old, the taking on of the role of sacristan. These opportunities demonstrated to me that youth were not just developing members of the Body of Christ, but full participants. This "liberal" approach had a strong impact on me, and helped to get my hands and feet moving at a relatively young age.

Still as a teenager, I had a wonderful opportunity to see people selflessly acting on Jesus' behalf. At Camp Artaban, a Christian residential camp located, until its closure in the late 60s, right next door to Canterbury Hills, I witnessed saintly people using their hands for culinary, maintenance and organizational

tasks, their feet to walk the campers to chapel and campfire, their minds to instruct their charges in Christian living and their hearts to model following Jesus' commands. My two summers at camp had a profound impact on my thinking about the church as an active instrument of Christ. Also, it was at camp that I met Susan Walker.

I married Susan, certainly the biggest influence in my Christian growth, at the McMaster Divinity Chapel in 1971. Despite Susan's gentle encouragement I must confess that I drifted away from the church for a period of some five years. Because I had appreciated that my parents had brought me up in the church, thus allowing me to make an informed decision about my involvement when I came of age, I made an agreement with Susan and with God. I promised that, if Susan and I were blessed with a child, I would start attending church again when that child turned one. We were blessed with a daughter, Carolyn, and so in 1977 I joined St. John the Evangelist Church in Hamilton.

Countless people have worked as Jesus' hands and feet in encouraging me or providing me with opportunities for growth since then. On three separate occasions I have felt called (not just by the minister) to serve in the capacity of warden. The first term commenced in 1985, and I must say that I approached the job at some considerable distance from Jesus. He was there, but somehow in the background. I did the required tasks, but not with Christ's joy in my heart. My last two terms were quite different, because by 1997 I was at a completely different place on my faith journey. I will explain how the change came about shortly, but let me say now how much more satisfying the tasks are with Jesus as the motivating presence.

So, what caused my change in outlook? First, our parish hall burned down and some inspired parishioners, notably John Lidgley, David Little and Peter Noel, convinced parishioners that God was calling us to build a non-profit housing complex with a new parish hall in the basement. Over a period of some three years this project, called Artaban Non-Profit Homes, became a reality. This was clear evidence of people in my own community acting as Jesus' hands and feet. The success of this project altered my thinking about what Jesus expects a church to be and to do.

Strangely, after the housing complex was completed, I went into some sort of questioning period again. I continued to work in the church, but much of the joy was gone. But, another opportunity presented itself—the Canadian Christian Festival, at Copps Coliseum. There I encountered a blind Christian musician named Ken Medema. This faithful and talented man inspired me in a profound way. His lyrics spoke right to my Christian soul. He seemed to be able to get to the heart of the matter, especially in his song that contained the following words: "Finding leads to losing."

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## YOUNG AND PROPHETIC

# Facebooking the Church

The Church's unofficial face of the same-sex blessings debate



**JOSHUA MORRISON**  
CHURCH OF THE ASCENSION, HAMILTON

Facebook is a social networking utility on the internet that has grown rapidly in recent years, and is now accessed by thousands of people in Canada. It is especially popular among the youth, as it first gained popularity among university students. On Facebook a person can communicate with their friends, find new friends with similar interests and join groups and forums discussing popular issues. These groups range from the "Bring the Spice Girls to Toronto" group all the way through groups for political parties. It is quickly becoming one of the primary ways that youth are exposed to hot button issues, including the debate over same-sex unions in the Anglican Church of Canada. It seems prudent to examine what is being said by both sides of this debate on Facebook as a way of seeing how many young people are getting their first impression of the Church.

Before I go any further, I will say that as I examine the Facebook groups for both Integrity Canada and Essentials Canada, neither of these forums have been officially sanctioned by the organizations in question as far as I can tell. Facebook is a free utility that can be used by anyone with an email account, and the people running these groups are not representatives of the actual organizations. That being said, they are still putting together the first thing many youth inside and outside of the Church will

see about their groups, so they have some influence in this debate, even without official sanction. I have also tried to conduct this survey with as little personal bias as possible, using only my own personal experiences on Facebook as research, which I will try to convey as objectively as I can.

### Responding with respect

I will start by looking at the Facebook group "Integrity Canada". It does use the official logo of Integrity, and I am not sure if they have permission to do this. It is also run by one Administrator, which means that this person has absolute power over who can join the group, what can be posted on its forums and thus read by members. This made me suspicious when I joined because when one person runs a group, it has the possibility of not being very open. As I have explored the group more though, I have found it to be a very positive and open one. The "wall", or main public writing space, for the group contains posts from those who do not agree with Integrity's pro-same-sex union stance, but these posts have been responded to with respect by the group administrator, and its members. The discussion threads exploring specific issues posted by members show the same respect for differing opinions, and there was one rather touching thing that I have seen here as well.

One of the people who posts in the discussions most often has openly admitted to being a gay Anglican teenager in high school. He joins all of the debates, though has admitted that he may not have all the right facts for his arguments because he is young, and new to church politics. He has been accepted with open arms into the group, and if he got any facts wrong, the people speaking with him

have kindly corrected him, but not in a way that attacked the validity of his opinions. This strikes me as exactly the kind of sharing, open discussion that we should be having with new, young members of our church. They cannot be expected to get all their facts right all the time, but they have valid ideas that need to be addressed.

The Integrity Canada group has shown itself to be one that is open to discussion including differing opinions, and seems to have an administrator who is fair to its members. The group is listed as open for anyone to join, so if you have Facebook, you should be able to find it by searching "Integrity Canada", and you can join if you want to without needing to be invited.

### Kicked off, because I was gay

I actually found the Essentials group by accident in the beginning of my research on Facebook. I had initially only joined the group "Anglican Church of Canada". This group carried the logo of the church and its name, so I assumed it was official, even though it only had one administrator. I quickly discovered this was not the case. Soon after joining, the administrator sent out a private message to every member of the group, inviting them to join the Essentials Facebook group and urging them to "stand up" for the traditional values of the church. I responded to this on the public wall of the group because I felt that the administrator had abused his power by inviting every member of a seemingly neutral group to join one side of a debate, when the wall clearly indicated that many of the group's members were not in favor of it. I have no issue with the administrator voicing his opinions, but I do not agree with him doing it in this fashion. I

posted a reply on the wall stating this, as well as my personal views on the issue as a gay Anglican myself. I was promptly kicked out of the group by the administrator, had my wall posts deleted, and the following message written on the wall about me (and I have quoted it directly, right down to the sentence structure and capitalization): "Josh this is not a forum for you being GAY... you need to repent and getting over your sin of the flesh and walk at the right hand of Jesus."

This is but a taste of what he said in a lengthier private message that he also sent to me, but it gets the point across. He has also said things on the wall that put down those who do not agree with him including (directly quoted again), "Mrs Taylor you epitomize whats wrong with anglicanism." I found this to be a very unwelcoming and un-Christian way to run a group, and proves that it's important to look at how many people are running a group and how they have responded to others before you join and expose yourself to possible rebuke. Furthermore, it is very easy to join groups that look officially sanctioned, but aren't in reality; I found out from people in the national church that they had allowed neither the use of the name or logo of the Anglican Church of Canada for this group, and it has no official power to speak for it.

Once out of this group I joined the group "Anglican Essentials Canada", another group open for anyone to join. When I joined though, I was dismayed to see that it had only one administrator; the same one running the Anglican Church of Canada group. As I explored through the group, I found more of the same kind of comments from the administrator on the wall of the group. Many people have

attempted to engage the members of this Essentials group in constructive conversation on the issues, only to be rebuked in ways similar to how I was treated in the other group. This group is very friendly to those who share its ideology, but has the potential to be very hurtful to those who disagree.

### Take responsibility for what you are reading

Though none of these groups are official, they are still one of the first ways that I have run into Integrity and Essentials, and I am a preacher's kid who has attended Diocesan Synod on several occasions. If I'm still forming a first impression of them based on Facebook, imagine how much influence they could have on youth coming to the church for the first time. I would recommend that both Essentials and Integrity further investigate how they are being unofficially represented in the popular media, including groups about them on Facebook, and other networking utilities. It could even be beneficial to them to form official groups on Facebook, administered by people within the organizations. Even the Church of Canada and individual Dioceses might consider Facebook groups as a way to spread information about us wider and to a more diverse audience. Most importantly though, it is important for youth and other Facebook users to take responsibility for what they're reading, and investigate all the groups they join the way I have with these three. Facebook can be an excellent way to connect with like minded friends, but it can also be a place where a person can get hurt, and have their spirituality and faith questioned, or even insulted, and as such it should be investigated and used with caution.



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# Why the Anglican Church has already split

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

The July 2007 *Niagara Anglican* also tells me I am abusing power ("General Synod 2007: A personal journey"), that I am "prejudicial" and "discriminatory" ("A sad day can bring some hope"), racist ("Step into another's shoes" and "It is time to stop being polite"), and, a new one, the equivalent of anti-semitic ("Scripture is about how to live, not how to be saved").

Frankly, I am incredulous. How can people use this kind of language and yet expect traditionalists like me to remain in the church? If people verbally abuse gay and lesbian people, they are condemned—and rightly so. If one member of a couple is verbally abusive, we are not surprised if they split up. But if we verbally abuse our traditionalist members, it is somehow acceptable. Tell me: What is wrong with this picture?

Please do not ask traditionalists to stay in the Anglican Church in order to submit to a constant barrage of this kind of language. Those who talk this way should know that they are actually accelerating the breakup of the church. Sometimes I begin to wonder whether this is what they actually want after all.

## Lack of understanding

My second concern is that there is a persistent misunderstanding (could it be deliberate?) of the traditional position, in spite of interminable panels, articles, conversations and so on. I suppose

when traditionalists are a minority in the diocese—and apparently a racist, fundamentalist minority at that—nobody has to try to understand their views seriously, since they come from such a disreputable source. Here are just some recent examples.

Nissa in her article digs up the old charge of biblical literalism. If conservatives take the Bible so seriously, why haven't they cut off their hands and plucked out their own eyes ("Scripture is about how to live, not how to be saved"). It is an old strategy, and was maybe amusing the first time we heard it. But there are too many serious theologians on the traditionalist side for that to be a legitimate argument. If you want to oppose someone's argument, it is more honorable to challenge the strongest form of it, not the weakest.

I remember one priest boasting what a lot of reading material she had given her parish on the issue. Out of interest, I asked for a set, which she generously gave me. But when I looked through it, there was not one out of the fifty or so pieces on the traditionalist side. Under such circumstances, you will understand that it is hard to believe when I am told that my point-of-view is "respected."

Joshua Morrison's article, "Step into another's shoes" says, "Imagine what it feels like to be a gay Christian." Does he really think that, in all the years this issue has been discussed, traditionalist Anglicans

have never thought about this? Trust me, Joshua, those of us who have soft pastoral hearts (and, though it maybe difficult to believe, many traditionalists do) have imagined it many times. Some of us are gay and lesbian. Those of us who are not have spent time listening to the stories of those who are. We are not actually as lacking in pastoral imagination as you think. You should know too that it has not been easy to come to the conclusions we have arrived at, and it is not easy to maintain them in the face of constant pressure, misrepresentation and name-calling.

Michael Patterson's letter in *The Star* this past May (see the Diocesan website) says the traditionalist agenda means "slavery will make a comeback in the 21st century." Either this is a joke in poor taste or it is scare-mongering. Since this kind of charge is so often made, traditionalists have carefully thought about the similarities and the differences between issues of slavery and those of homosexuality. Either Michael is not aware of this or he chooses to ignore it.

But I cannot just criticise my friends. As one who has written and spoken from the conservative point-of-view on this issue, I want to apologise that I and others have so clearly done a poor job of it. But there is a deeper issue.

## Are there two different religions here?

I have heard others ask this question, and have resisted it, thinking

it to be inflammatory and unhelpful rhetoric. But more recently I have realised that there are such deep differences between some (though by no means all) representatives of the different sides in this issue, that I am beginning to think the answer may be yes after all.

A couple of recent examples, one to do with the Bible, one to do with Jesus:

■ In a discussion on homosexuality, one friend said, "When you talk about 'where the Bible is pointing us,' it implies that among the 66 books of the Bible there is some kind of unity. And that would suggest that there is something supernatural about this book. And we all know from first year biblical studies that that is not the case." For most of Christian history, Christians have indeed believed that there is a unity among the 66 books (yes, yes, I know there is also diversity) and that there is indeed something supernatural about this book. Most Christians in the world still do. I am one of them (and, by the way, so are many teachers of biblical studies). No wonder we cannot agree on the authority or the interpretation of the Bible. We don't even agree what this book is.

■ Someone was speaking about how Christians worship Jesus, and a friend responded, "It is OK to say that we follow Jesus, but surely we don't want to say that we worship him?" Again, most Christians throughout history and around the world today do very explicitly

and deliberately worship Jesus as second person of the Trinity, equal with God. I certainly do, and last time I checked this was still a "creedal" view. Whichever view you agree with, I think you will admit that the difference between worshipping Jesus as God incarnate and following Jesus as no more than a helpful spiritual teacher are views that belong to two very different world views.

Rowan Williams said not long ago: "People are no longer confident that we are speaking the same language, appealing to the same criteria in our theological debates." I am beginning to think he is right. Every single thing is understood differently—the Bible, Jesus, sin, atonement, even God. It is a kind of Tower of Babel situation—and you will recall that that story did not turn out particularly well.

It is for these reasons that I no longer ask. Can the church be held together? The split has already happened, and it will get worse. The question is whether the divorce can be an amicable one, where the partners can remain friends, or whether it will be messy. The signs, as I have described them, suggest it will be of the messy kind. But we can hope and pray. What I don't think I can pray any longer is that it will not happen.

John Bowen teaches at Wycliffe College and is a member of St. John the Evangelist in Hamilton. He does not belong to Essentials.

## What makes Orders valid anyway?



IAN DINGWALL  
RETIRED ARCHDEACON

I have on occasion thought of writing on the subject, "Why I consider Roman Catholic Ordinations to be invalid". It is not a noble thought; it usually is evoked by reading of some Vatican official proclaiming a similar opinion of Anglican Orders. Seems to me they do this on a regular basis in an attempt to 'keep us in our place'—'our place' being somewhere lower on the Ecclesiastical Pecking Order. Of course, I have never attempted or completed such an assignment.

However, Rome has done it again. This time the Vatican's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith—the official Roman Catholic organ on Christian (or, more accurately, Roman Catholic) doctrine and faith. We Anglicans now, along with Orthodox and Protestant Church of all kinds, are relegated as merely "ecclesial communities". Seems we don't even rate the title "Church" at all.

Rome's official stand since the Reformation of the 16th/17th centuries is that we Anglicans, in separating ourselves from communion with the Church of Rome, have for

ever cast ourselves into the Darkness of non-Churchness. To have that reiterated in 2007 has finally 'pushed my button'. Well now, wait a blooming minute. Let's consider their own (i.e. the Vatican) little heresies that place them, perhaps, outside the Pale too.

Enforced celibacy on all priests does sound a little odd, given their claim that Peter the Apostle was the first bishop of Rome. According to the Gospel narrative, Peter had a mother-in-law which I presume means he had a wife which, if he were around today, would make him ineligible for Ordination.

I'd consider that a breach of Christian practice—shame on them.

I don't despair too much about Roman Catholic Marian Doctrines—most of which appeared on the scheme of things rather late in history (19th Century). I honour the place of Mary the mother of Jesus but suggest the Vatican went one step too far in promulgating the doctrine of her bodily Assumption into heaven. The operative here for me would be the word "assumption". Surely the doctrine is overly presumptuous—just an assumption.

More importantly the Church of Rome's Holy Orders completely ignores at least half of its Church population and some would say it is the more important half. To call their Orders valid while ignoring the Vo-

cation of all members of the Community which should also include female members is surely, in my view, an heretical point of view.

Further, in this year of Enlightenment 2007, for the world's largest Christian denomination to deny anything in the way of democratic policy and procedure is to say the least absurd. If the Church is community then surely all members of the community should have a voice and vote in determining the direction of that Church. The absolute power of a celibate male Hierarchy is not only questionable, it is downright undemocratic, peculiar and, surely, questionable from an orthodox point of view.

I could go overboard and speak of Rome's view of Human Sexuality (particularly in reference to Gays and Lesbians), but I resist because I am more than aware that our own Anglican stance is not noticeable in its attractiveness or orthodoxy. After all, our General Synod in Winnipeg of this year, passed a resolution which approved the blessing of Gay/Lesbian unions as appropriate according to "core Anglican doctrine" and, lo and behold, next day approved another resolution saying that we ought not to do it.

I'll rest my case. Whether the Vatican's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith ever sees the Niagara Anglican is most unlikely, one might hope. Whatever... I have said my say and rest contented (somewhat).

The Reverend  
**D. Linda Corry**  
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## Our celebrations continue... 175<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Coming Events St. George's Church, Guelph

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**Sunday, September 23 - 3:00 pm**

Harvest Festival Hymn Sing

**Wednesday, October 3 - 7:00 pm**

Guest speaker: Kim Phuc, Vietnam War  
survivor speaking on "Forgiveness"

**Friday, October 12 -**

**Sunday, October 21**

"Threads of Praise"

A display of liturgical fabric art

**Monday, October 15 -**

**Wednesday, October 17 - 7:30 pm**

"A Time of Spiritual Renewal" led by  
Bishop Colin Johnson, *Bishop of Toronto*

**Saturday, October 27 - 7:30 pm**

The Nathaniel Dett Chorale Concert,  
A concert of Afrocentric music including classical,  
spiritual, gospel, jazz, folk and blues

**Saturday, December 1 - 8:00 am**

Breakfast with Archbishop Caleb Lawrence,  
*Archbishop of Moosonee and Metropolitan of Ontario*

**Saturday, December 8 - 2:00 pm**

Community Carol Sing with  
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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION AND TICKETS, CONTACT

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Join us for our celebrations.

# Upbeat musical youth service enthralled St. Paul's



**ALAN L. HAYES**  
THE ITINERANT CHURCHGOER

Most of the time, youth programs in the diocese of Niagara involve only youth, not adults. So I don't usually have a chance to report on them.

As the father of an 18-year-old who has never said, "Dad, my friends and I would really like to chill out on Saturday with you and the other over-50s," I can understand that kids like being with kids.

But once a year, in early June, a lot of our parishes celebrate Youth Ministry Sunday. For an hour or two, older folks like me are warmly welcomed into the world of people in their teens and early twenties.

This year, on June 10, I joined the people of St. Paul's, Fort Erie, for one of the most spirited and creative Sunday morning services I can recall.

The music was led by the Niagara Youth Conference Band, which got

its start backing up worship for the diocesan youth conference which is held every year just before Labour Day. The band has taken different forms, but today it's a very gifted and well rehearsed group of musicians specializing in well amplified electric guitars and drums.

A young man named Jamie Barnes directed. The other members were Brandon Prodger, Jane Caulfield, Phil Jones, Jordan Russell, and Katie McDougall.

Their music was well varied. Some was ecstatic praise music on a familiar melody with a driving beat, like Three Dog Night's version of "Joy to the World." Some was a bit more subdued, such as the "Prayer of St. Francis," in a version inspired by Sarah McLachlan's. Some was mellow and prayerful, like "With My Own Two Hands".

As I told the interim pastor later, I really noticed the congregation warming up during the service. I arrived a few minutes late (I arrive a bit late for a lot of services, except for the ones that I'm leading, for which I usually arrive barely in time), and walked in from the front where I could see many folks standing just a little stiffly and looking

just a bit uncertain during the band's roaring first song. An hour later, the congregation was bouncing along in loose and limber fashion and "enjoying God," in a nice phrase of the Westminster shorter catechism.

I'm sure I would have enjoyed a sermon from the interim pastor, and people told me later that he's a fabulous teacher, but instead I had the privilege of enjoying a message from two younger people from the parish, Kyle McCooney and Jordyn Woehl.

Other young people who helped plan the service were Caroline Woehl and Despoina Niyomwungere.

The liturgy was adapted from several worship sources, including one from the United Church and another from the Iona community. The Eucharistic prayer took the form of a dialogue, with echoes of the Anglican prayer book of New Zealand. It was respectfully and warmly led in a way that helped us recognize our community together.

It was doubly a good day for me to visit, because the service was followed by a barbecue and a wonderful buffet. It was a lovely sunny morning, and the church has a very pretty site overlooking the upper Niagara River.

From the conversation over lunch, I know that people generally found the service a great blessing. So I'd definitely recommend the Niagara Youth Conference Band to other churches.

Our diocesan youth programming is rich and varied. You can find lots of information about it at [www.zipsqueal.com](http://www.zipsqueal.com), the diocesan youth website (I couldn't always get my browser to handle its dropdown menus, though). Among other opportunities, there's Youth Connections, a regional training event in ministry; the Youth Leadership Training Program during March break; Youth Synod, a parliamentary-style forum in May; Servers' Fest, an event at the cathedral in February; and SpiritQuest, a small-group program in spirituality, also in February. Christyn Perkons, Joyce Wilton, and Jane Wyse are the main diocesan resource people.

As it happens, this youth ministry service was part of a creatively conceived and well planned series of unusual liturgies at St. Paul's, Fort Erie. The series started on a Sunday morning in April with a liturgy from the early Church. On

successive Sundays in May came a Morning Prayer service from the 1549 Anglican prayer book, then the 1962 Canadian Eucharist, then a Eucharistic service from the *Book of Alternative Services*. In June, a couple of weeks after the youth service, came a liturgy called Beyond BAS.

In addition, St. Paul's has joined with other local churches, Anglican and otherwise, on several occasions over the past few months. On one Sunday it joined with Trinity Lutheran Church for a service and picnic at the Old Fort (The historic fort for which Fort Erie is named was destroyed by the Americans in 1814 and reconstructed and opened to the public in 1939).

Worshipping God makes us more human, and more grateful, and more at peace with God. At St. Paul's this year, worshipping God has also been an opportunity for people to enrich their experience of the great diversity of Christian sensibility through the ages and in our own contemporary world. But I'll bet that none of its Sunday mornings was more exciting than Youth Ministry Sunday with the Niagara Youth Conference Band.

# St. Jude's welcomes Methodist Minister



**CARLEEN CARROLL**  
ST. JUDE'S, OAKVILLE

"We, Ralph, by divine permission, Bishop of Niagara. To our beloved in Christ, The Reverend Mervyn Russell. Greeting: We do herby give and grant unto you, in whose integrity, learning, doctrine and diligence we do confide, our permission to perform the office of Ecumenical Honorary Assistant under the direction of the Rector and during the Diocesan Bishop's Pleasure" (from the license sent by Bishop Ralph Spence, Diocese of Niagara, May 13, 2007).

If part of the mandate of churches is to be mindful of one another and to welcome "the other", then the parish and community of St. Jude's Anglican Church in Oakville demonstrates the value of welcoming and hospitality through both word and deed.

In May 2007, St. Jude's embarked on an innovative journey with the appointment of its first Ecumenical Honorary Assistant in the parish, the Rev. Dr. Mervyn Russell. And while the ecumenical nature of the appointment may not have been something new for the Methodist-trained Dr. Russell, it was a new initiative for St. Jude's.

So how did all this come about? "Mervyn had been hanging around for over a year and sometime in early spring he mentioned he was a Methodist pastor who liked to come to Eucharist sometimes," said

Reverend Dr. Michael Thompson, Rector, St. Jude's.

"When I moved to Oakville, I was looking to take part in weekly Communion, so I began coming mid-week and sometimes at 8:00 am on Sunday," explained Dr. Russell. "After awhile, Michael's and (Assistant Curate) Martha Tatarnic's interest was aroused and they were wondering, 'Who is this guy?' We started to have conversations and Michael asked me directly, 'What would you like to do at St. Jude's?'"

That's when Mervyn described what he'd been doing in England. "And when I learned he had served in a Church of England parish, I asked him if he would like to preside on occasion at St. Jude's," said Dr. Thompson.

Mervyn's ecumenical background has naturally brought him to this new venture. Born in Plymouth, England to a member of the Royal Navy and an Anglican mother, his first church experiences involved singing in the choir. He still sings in public to this day. Although sadly, his natural father was killed in the war when Mervyn was just one-year old, his mom remarried a Methodist and the family started attending the Methodist Church in the Town of Eastbourne. There he became a local preacher and then a candidate for Methodist ministry. In 1962 he was accepted at theological college of Birmingham University.

After being ordained in 1968, he spent a number of years in the United Kingdom, Washington, DC and in Canada with the United Church. In 1999, he and his wife Patricia offered to work for a Division of World Outreach at the Methodist Church in St. Vincent. This also appeared

to be a natural calling given Patricia is the eldest daughter of the famous missionary and Olympic gold and bronze medal winner Eric Liddell, part of whose life was portrayed in the film *Chariots of Fire*. Following his overseas experience, Mervyn returned to England from 2003-2006 to assist the British Methodist church with its shortage of ministers.

As part of the Covenant of Understanding between the British Methodist Church and the Church of England, clergy from both churches, may, with the Bishop's permission, preside at the rites and assume the responsibilities of either church. On most Sundays, by permission of two Anglican Bishops in Guilford and Southam, Reverend Russell presided at joint Church of England and British Methodist Church services.

In both cases, the clergy and congregations used liturgies and hymns from both traditions. However, with the Church of England, there were certain limitations. For example, he could not marry anybody according to the rites of the Church of England or enter and sign that the marriage had been conducted in the Register.

"Nothing was ever written about this; it was all on trust. I had never had a piece of paper saying there was authority to do this but all in all, it was a very happy experience, not without certain tensions, but on the whole, working happily," said Reverend Russell.

And then he found himself back in Canada—Oakville to be exact.

"When Mervyn explained what he'd been doing in England and suggested he'd be happy to help in conducting services, I was very excited about this idea and offered to speak

to the Bishop," said Michael. "I liked the idea for a bunch of reasons. First, the ecumenical focus which was so visible a generation ago has all but vanished in many places. Second, Mervyn has great experience with mission work and international experience, and we hope to plan a mission trip with our youth in 2009, so his presence will be very helpful. Finally, he's a very fine singer!"

A dialogue with Bishop Spence ensued. It was important to Michael that Mervyn take the title of "Ecumenical Honorary Assistant" to focus on the ecumenical spirit of the appointment, and also because it expressed the uniqueness of this gift of ministry in the life of St. Jude's. Then the license arrived authorizing Mervyn to carry out the duties of clergy under Michael's direction.

"We were very excited, Michael and I, about receiving this license as there are very few like it. And I was excited because it was a great honour really," said Mervyn, who began presiding with St. Jude's in May. Not only is he assisting with service every second Sunday but he also helps take Communion to residential homes, visits shut-ins and participates in the shaping of "Justice and Servant Ministries" of St. Jude's.

"There are certainly some unique aspects to the appointment," said Michael. "We had to figure out what to do about vestments. It took a bit of conversation to come to the realization that Mervyn's unique presence as the welcome and contributing 'other' in our midst would be highlighted if he continued to wear the vestments of his Methodist tradition, complete with preaching tabs. It's a way of recognizing his difference while embracing his ministry."

Overall, the parish of St. Jude's has been warm and welcoming, demonstrating that hospitality to the "other" so much at the heart of the Church.

"I first became aware of Mervyn as someone in the pews at the mid-week and 8:00 am Sunday service," said St. Jude parishioner Drew Bucknall. "That's how I learned he was an English Methodist, and being Scottish, that was something new to me. It's just wonderful to have Mervyn at St. Jude's. He has an interesting style and mannerism; he speaks more slowly and dramatically, and is not quite so high church, but we're working on that. It's been a great experience all around, for Mervyn and for all of us!"

"This whole adventure owes a lot to Bishop Spence's willingness to do something unusual," explains Michael. "But it's also part of the identity of the Diocese of Niagara to use all of our best resources. It's the Niagara way. So thank you to the Bishop for making this appointment—and thank you to St. Jude's for receiving a minister coming out of a different tradition and thanks to Mervyn for being so available to us."

What will be the lasting legacy of this innovative work at St. Jude's?

"I hope I will have helped people in their worship of God and their understanding of God. I hope I'll be considered a contributing member of this congregation. I hope I will have helped the congregation to make links with other church traditions in Canada and elsewhere," concludes Mervyn.

And about the singing, well parishioners and friends at St. Jude's may just be in for a treat this fall as Reverend Russell is hoping to put on a recital of English songs by late 19th and early 20th century composers.

# I love the Church



**BILL MOUS**  
DIVINITY STUDENT - ST. JAMES, DUNDAS

During the debates at General Synod, it seemed that every second speaker started their remarks with "I love the Church..." This phrase was used so frequently that it began to take on a life of its own; even the Primate wryly noted one speaker's particular fondness for the phrase. Unfortunately, more often than not, this line was attached to a "but" which inevitably carried with it an argument against change of some sort or another.

With each speaker uttering "I love the church... but..." I would silently and sarcastically say in my head... "duh... would any of us be here for eight long days if we didn't love the church?" It frustrated me to no end and seemed simply unfair to say that because one person loved the way the church is now, that by voting for change we do not care or love the church.

Or was this in fact the case? Do I really love the church? If so, and especially after the decisions of General Synod, do I need to go for a psychiatric assessment? What is love any way? What is the church? These questions bounced through my mind in the weeks following my adventures in Winnipeg.

## A false sense of hope?

A few weeks ago I was at a barbecue. During the course of the evening someone rather innocently said something to the effect of, "It's so nice to see someone so young who still buys into the church." I cringed inwardly at the comment. It was not because of the implication that most people of my generation have become cynical about the church, although to some extent that may be true. Rather it was because, to my mind, the comment implied that my participation in the life of the church was a sign of hope for the future; a sign that our actions today are acceptable to the current generation. Oh to be a beacon of light for the church! Am I, along with the few other twenty-somethings that still attend our church, unknowingly providing a false sense of hope to the church; somehow impeding the process of change because we're dulling down the seriousness of the crisis which the church is facing by suggesting a sort of implicit approval for the way the church is; or being a sign that all will be well in the future?

Perhaps the history books might define the church of the twenty-first century as: a hierarchical, slow moving, traditionally grounded, belief-based, discriminatory institution that is not unlike many other institutions in our society. Yet this institution claims also to say something about love and truth. Why again would I and a few other of my peers buy into such an institution? The truth is that even though we may unintentionally give a sense of hope to the institution, and some of us even love the church, we don't fully buy into the institution. Its discriminatory practices around sexuality, its technophobia, its disconnected liturgy and its lack of any

palpable prophetic voice have long alienated a majority of us.

## A community knit together by love

One thing is even clearer: for several generations now the majority of our society as a whole hasn't bought into the hypocrisy and lethargy of the church. The glass-ceiling for women in leadership. The stigmatization of divorced persons. Our outdated understanding of human sexuality. The residential schools scandal. The struggles and scandals of our church have long overshadowed its joys and successes. When was the last time you read a decent good news story about the church? They are there... but in most media they are by far overshadowed by our institutional baggage. By putting out fires instead of dreaming the vision of God's love larger each day, many people with a huge amount of integrity have become spiritual persons, instead of religious ones.

Yet to me the church is more than its institution or its buildings or its way of belief. If I learned anything in Grenada, it was that the church is a community; a community knit together by love for God and neighbour. It's something that we've still not perfected—but nor will we ever this side of heaven—but something that we strive each day to have written on our hearts: to love God and our neighbour with all our being.

In one of my field placements, a wise supervisor modeled for me how to love one who disagrees with you. This supervisor and a parishioner strongly disagreed with each other about things like the prayer book, the practice of confirmation, and the blessing of same sex unions; yet through love in fellowship with one another they were able to come together and be companions for each other's journey. This is what I believe Christ intended; to come together at the table and share a meal; perhaps it is even why some of us persist in our relationship with the church.

## Pushing the boundaries

In everything we do we are called to love—to love God with our whole being and to love our neighbour and ourselves. In reflecting upon the Parable of the Good Samaritan, I believe Jesus' vision for humanity was that of radical inclusion, radical compassion, and radical love. Who are the folks laying on the side of the road in need of our help? The young woman who dropped out of high school to raise her child. The homosexual couple coming to the church for a blessing. The man from Saudi Arabia looking for work. The researcher who decries what we are doing to the environment. The suicide bomber whose bomb failed to go off. These are our neighbours. Love is challenging and it is difficult, as much as it can be easy and a basic emotional response. Are we not called to practice love in our lives—the same love which God demonstrates daily?

Might this understanding of love be extended to the institutional church? Perhaps, but I don't think God's primary concern is for the survival of institutions. God cares about you and me, the people of creation. This is why I love the church.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 15

# Doors Open Haldimand County

**CAROL SUMMERS**  
ST. JOHN'S YORK

Doors Open is a program in which Ontario Heritage Trust encourages communities to open the doors of their buildings, many not seen by the general public, heritage homes, court houses, places of worship, commercial buildings, gardens and natural heritage sites. Admission is free. This event has been very popular in many other communities for a number of years. It began in France in 1984, spread across Eur-

ope and in 2000, Toronto hosted the first event in North America. It has been an amazing success.

Of the twelve sites chosen to participate in this, the first Doors Open Haldimand County, two are Anglican churches: St John's Anglican Church in York and St. John the Evangelist in South Cayuga.

Many of the sites will be having special events and displays to add to the interest of the visit. Each of the sites will have maps and information about the other sites on

the tour. Pick a place to start and from there go on to whichever sites interest you.

The doors will be open on Saturday, September 15 from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm. Further information can be found at the Ontario Heritage Trust website ([www.doorsopenontario.on.ca](http://www.doorsopenontario.on.ca)). For a complete list of participating sites and local maps, contact Doors Open Haldimand County by telephone at 905-772-3790 or sending an email [catherine.stidsen@hwcn.org](mailto:catherine.stidsen@hwcn.org).

## Participating Sites - September 15, 2007 from 10:00 am until 4:00 pm

Location	Street Address	City
St. John's Anglican Church	3 Nelles Street	York
St. John the Evangelist	143 Haldimand Dunn Townline Road	South Cayuga
Grand Trunk Railway Station	1 Grand Trunk Lane	Caledonia
Canadian Drilling Rig Museum	259 Kohler Road	Selkirk
Cottonwood Mansion	740 Haldimand Road 53	Selkirk
The Ingles-King House	107 King Street West	Hagersville
Jarvis Train Station	2189 Main Street North	Jarvis
The Jeffrey House	1615 Concession 13	Townsend
Lalor Estate	241 Broad Street West	Dunnville
Nicholas Log Cabin	8 Echo Street	Cayuga
Ruthven Park National Historic Site	243 Haldimand Highway 54	Cayuga

# The work of stewardship continues

**CARL SNEYD**  
DIRECTOR OF STEWARDSHIP & FINANCIAL DEVELOPMENT

The recent news has been on General Synod and its decisions and now we move on to our own diocesan synod in November. While we are waiting for further decisions and direction, life in the church goes on and the work of stewardship continues. A lot of Stewardship programs gear up in the fall to campaigns in October, November and December.

But as we are all learning, stewardship doesn't just mean money, money, money. The broader definition includes looking after and using wisely all our resources. We know about the three "T's", time, talent and treasure in stewardship. But do we use them as wisely and as ef-

fectively as we could?

On September 15, the Stewardship and Financial Development Committee is presenting Stewardship 101, an education and review day for all parish stewardship reps and clergy and those needing and wanting to get their parish stewardship programs off the ground.

We will be providing ideas on building up your stewardship committee, having a basic review of the large number of "tools" in the Diocesan toolbox available to use in your parish, and presenting ways of enhancing your narrative budget.

There will be the opportunity to share your ideas with others and finding out what others have to say about what a successful

stewardship program can mean for your community.

There will also be an overview of Gift Planning, the future financial foundation for your church. You can find out more details by going to the Stewardship Development page of the Programs section of our diocesan website.

Undermount Region is also working to develop yet another "T" to go along with Time Talent and Treasure. This "T" stands for "Trash" and represents tools and programs to help your parish be more ecologically friendly (while saving you money), and to help us all be better stewards of the wonderful gifts God has given so freely to us. More on this initiative in upcoming issues.

## Bishop's Diploma Course

This program provides an opportunity for lay people to grow in their commitment to Christ and Christ's Church through a deepening of faith. This fall will feature an eight-week course on the Old Testament. To register, contact the centre nearest you.

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

Area	Parish	Start Date	Time
Dunnville	St. Paul's	September 10	7:00 pm
Flamborough	Christ Church	TBA	TBA
Grimsby	St. Andrew's	September 17	7:00 pm
Hamilton	St. Peter's	September 17	7:30 pm
Milton	Grace Church	October 9	7:30 pm
St. Catharines	St. Columba	September 19	7:00 pm

For further information contact Jane Wyse by calling 905-527-1316 (ext. 420) or sending an email to [jane.wyse@niagara.anglican.ca](mailto:jane.wyse@niagara.anglican.ca)

# Embracing the future

**ROGER HARRIS**  
ANGLICAN FELLOWSHIP OF PRAYER

In my journey my path often comes to dwell at the door of a church other than my own, and on entering and joining others of like mind, I enjoy the gathering together and the richness of centuries of the written word in Scripture, Liturgy and Hymnal.

All we are given originates in the past, but what has been handed down to us is not just a rule of life that was for the first generation of Christians, but is something that is for all generations. We seem to be falling into the trap of over theologizing, of creating a need for finding new ways to interpret a very simple message handed down to us nearly two thousand years ago through two simple commandments - to love our God and to love our neighbors as ourselves.

The message that comes from the homily, quite rightly, is generally a recourse to subjects that have a direct bearing on these commandments and exhorts us to listen and learn from Jesus and the Apostles what we must do, say and think, so that we may find fulfillment in what God desires of us.

**Globally the church is in decline**

With the changes that are now taking place in our 'global' village, even the most casual observer will see that each day or week seems to bring about new revelations regarding man or his environment. In the past quarter-century alone, the rate of change has accelerated phenomenally and this change has come with a price; one that with all the adjustment of social, economic and environmental issues, has not left the church untouched.

As I mentioned earlier, our Christian heritage is based on centuries, even millennia, of God-given direction that has fed our predecessors and provided the growth for mankind. God's Church has been spread throughout the world by missionaries

from all branches of the faithful, people who have striven to be in the world but not of it. The unfortunate part is that a part of the church over time, seems to have become a part of the world where the structure of the church is being compromised by what man has done in the past, and feels he needs to do in the present to make it acceptable to society.

Globally, the Church of God is in decline, and even with the hard work that has and is being done in the vineyard, there appears to be a greater satisfaction amassing material wealth than spiritual wealth. Looking back over the last fifty years the rate of change has now placed mankind at the beginning of a new phase, one which should give us cause to reflect on in Scripture and what Jesus has given us enlightenment on.

The Bible gives us much to reflect on regarding what the future has in store for us. From Isaiah to Revelation we are shown a window to the future, sometimes interpretive and other times concise, but it is the message that Jesus gives to us which we need to be attentive to, because He has given us a window to look through where we are able to see the future unfolding in the present (Mark 13: 3-37).

In God's creation nothing happens in isolation. All the work of his hands is a tapestry where everything is interactive, and as time progresses, each new event has an impact on those that preceded it. What Jesus has done is to provide us with the larger picture, and leaves it to us to be watchful and see the details being added. This portrait of the future, which started several millennia ago, is still being painted, and if we are vigilant and focused, we will be able to see and anticipate what the future holds for us.

**The Church will be called upon for refuge**

In this passage of Scripture we can see the past, the present and

future all have their place in the 'Day of the Lord'. When Jesus spoke to his disciples, He was also speaking to us, because we are the heirs of Peter, James, John and Andrew to whom He was talking. The new phase that we have embarked upon still has its roots in the past where the vision of progress has created conflicts in the present, conflicts which are not confined to specific places or situations, but affect each and every one of us at one time or another. This progress is encroaching on our freedom and to sustain growth we are gradually decimating the environment that God has created to sustain this.

Jesus has laid the future out for us in chronological order, so that we are able to anticipate what tomorrow has in store for us. He begins by warning us of false teachers, wars, earthquakes and famines, as a new age begins. As time passes, we will be called to account for Him in times of turmoil, false messiahs and prophets will confront us, and there will be signs in the heavens. Then there will be Jesus in all his power and glory.

The past, present and the future have been linked together for us. We know through scripture that Jesus will return because he is the link, and our future. We do not need to concern ourselves with what tomorrow may bring, we have no need to change, add, or remove anything that has been given to us from the past. Our energies need to be directed to the future; for it is there that the church will have its greatest need, and will be called upon to give refuge.

We give thanks to Jesus for the enlightenment that He has given us, and the knowledge that all we need to do is talk to Him in prayer, for the assurance that we will be given all we need to enable us to face whatever may be placed in front of us.

# Is it working for us?



**NISSA BASBAUM**  
TRANSFIGURATION, ST. CATHARINES

One of the dictionary definitions for the word *loss* is, "the state of being deprived of or being without something that one has had; for example, the loss of old friends."

I have spent a goodly portion of my summer thinking about this word, though I'm not sure I would call the particular thing which I have lost "an old friend." In fact, some might be more inclined to consider it the loss of a long-time irritant.

Depending upon the particular company I am keeping, I have described my recent six weeks of sick leave as recovery from surgery for old plumbing or old women parts, or quite simply, a hysterectomy. (Prior to having the surgery, I had come to the conclusion that God cannot possibly be a woman because a woman would have recognized the sanity in creating a switch, or at the very least a tap, which could be turned on and off as and when appropriate!)

**Death, Loss, Endings**

Before sitting down to write this article I hesitated, wondering if the content might disturb or offend (because this, of course, is the kind of thing I worry about). I considered the number of reflections Martha Tatarnic has written on pregnancy and her personal experience of being pregnant, and began to wonder why it is that I wouldn't hesitate to write, as she has done, about the mental and physical changes brought on by pregnancy; yet somehow it seems untoward to talk about these same changes as they instead relate to the approaching reality of menopause. I quickly told myself, "Get over it. There is something important here that needs to be said; something you wouldn't have been thinking about if you hadn't had the surgery!"

That something is loss, and herein, perhaps lies a clue to a part of the reason we have reached a point of comfort with openly discussing pregnancy but not so menopause. While the former bespeaks birth, gain (in more ways than one) and beginnings, the latter evinces images of death, loss and endings. Less an issue of sexuality and privacy, I think the subject of menopause evokes "sad" things which we tend to avoid in mixed company. Not only have we not been taught how to talk about such things, we may deliberately veer away from discussing them because by veering away, we live in the fantasy that somehow we can steer clear of the pain which they may inflict.

**Loss is a two-edged sword**

Over the summer, the image that I haven't been able to get out of my head is an historic picture of both of our children as they first set off for kindergarten. It seems that over the last couple of months, this event

has characterized the sense of loss that I have experienced. In particular, it is more an image of our daughter than our son since the latter, in many ways, has been old since he was born and extraordinarily independent from a very young age. (When he was six, Robin and I were told there would be no more kisses. By the time he was eight this rule had morphed into hugs, as well.) Still, for different reasons, it was hard to let go of each of them as they embarked on that first day of school, and all the days thereafter. For them it marked a new beginning, and while at the time, I recognized that this occasion in their lives was for us also a bit of an adventure, it evoked feelings of a wistful ending, too. I knew our children were no longer babies and never again would be. Indeed, in the spring, upon reading Martha's articles, I couldn't help but feel a sense of this same wistfulness as, with her descriptions of pregnancy, she evoked fond—and sometimes not so fond—memories of past years. For an instant, I thought, it would be fun to have those moments back. And then, I regained my senses!

Loss is usually a two-edged sword, isn't it? Rarely do we lose something without gaining something else. Loss is the essence of having to make major life decisions; the reason it's so difficult to do this is that these decisions always force us to choose between at least two things, and once we make the choice, there will be something that is gone forever. Even if no hole is left by this loss because our second choice fills the empty space, we still are left with the knowledge that by opening one door we have been forced to close another.

It's not that Robin and I ever intended to have any more children; we made sure of that years ago! Rather, it's more about the reality of getting older and letting go of the past. The act of having a hysterectomy is an extraordinarily black and white, hugely physical and literal, *cutting out* of what lies behind and the message is painfully clear. What was once there is gone. It's time to move on, and with this, only one question remains: "What does the future hold?"

**Fear of change**

So, broadening the spectrum beyond my own situation and introspective meanderings, I ask myself, is the worldwide Anglican Church in need of one giant hysterectomy; one giant cut and removal that will forever exchange the past for a different future? And if it is, will those of us who participate in this process look upon this surgery as the loss of something old that can never be replaced, or the loss of something old that has the potential to be replaced by something new and even perhaps, dare I say it, a damn sight better?

I receive a regular email subscription to a newsletter from St. Matthew-in-the-City, Auckland (SMACA) in New Zealand. In its most recent publication, one of their regular contributors, clergyman Clay Nelson, wrote an article entitled "At the End of Our Rope."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 20

**CALLING ALL WOMEN!**

**MOTHERS' UNION FALL RETREAT**

November 23-25, 2007  
 Crieff Hills Conference Centre

*Mirrors & Voices: Listening to Women of the Bible*

**Saturday Workshops:**  
**Revelations through Dramatic Exploration**  
 with Virginia Reh, Professor of Theatre and Torah reader  
**Remembering our Heroines in an Altar Frontal**  
 with Susan Strachan Johnson, textile artist

**Read:** Twelve Women of the Bible by Marci Alborghetti  
 (ISBN 1-58595-326-1)  
**Bring:** An 8x10 photo of a personal heroine  
 Day Delegates \$60, full weekend option available

**Deadline** for registration: October 19, 2007.  
 More info from Laurie Kondo (905) 827 2673

**NON-MEMBERS WELCOME!**

# What I did, and read, on my summer vacation



**MARNI NANCEKIVELL**  
DIRECTOR OF TRANSITIONAL MINISTRY

School begins again in September. Although I am chronologically far away from the first-day-of-school-butterflies-in-my-tummy feeling, there is something within me that is compelled to repeat certain September back-to-school rituals. One of those rituals is the mandatory essay: "What I did on my summer vacation". Today, in early elementary school, this might be a story told during circle time, rather

...there was nothing to do but to release myself to the force of the river as I literally struggled to try to keep my head above water.

than an essay written on the half pieces of foolscap upon which I remember writing.

Each year, we spend some vacation time on Wood Lake. Although we simply rent a cabin there, Wood Lake is an important part of our family history. My daughter is the fourth generation in our family to spend her summers there. That means that I too, grew up spending summers at Wood Lake.

One day during the summer, I decided that it was time to take my daughter over to see the Vankoughnet Falls. It is a small waterfall which tumbles into rapids before the Black River smooths out into an even lazy river.

In my childhood, Vankoughnet Falls was the annual site for a weenie roast in our family. Somewhere in the archives in my basement are 8 mm films of me being, oh, a little precocious, prancing from rock to rock. Although these films are without sound, ringing in my ears are my Mother's cautious words to "be more careful" when I am near the falls. Well, my Mother is 85 now, and this

year she was unable to join us at the cottage, so my special project for her upcoming Birthday was to create a snapshot collection of our time at Wood Lake. Part of that album, I thought should be pictures of my daughter on her first visit to Vankoughnet Falls. So one sunny day, we set off with Amanda's friends, Adam and Brittany. We took some posed pictures. I took some shots of Amanda. Other photographs were candid. I enjoyed spending some time while the teenagers wandered off doing some nature photography. Eventually, I motioned to the kids—who were being none too careful themselves among the rocks - that it was time to head home.

However, before we headed home, I just couldn't resist asking Brittany to take one more picture of me with Amanda—with the scenery of the top of the waterfall serving as our backdrop. And a lovely picture it is... However, as I began to climb the rocks to get back to the car, I lost my footing. Somehow, the smoothness of the rock coupled with the gritty sand and my rubber sandals created an opportunity for skiing backwards and I stumbled back, back towards—you guessed it—the falls. I almost regained my footing at one point and then lost my balance again. And I plummeted right into Vankoughnet Falls.

It was a terrifying moment, as I experienced the power of that water, carrying me down, and then propelling me through the rapids.

My first conscious thought was that there was nothing to do but to release myself to the force of the river as I literally struggled to try to keep my head above water.

At some time, my new pair of glasses that I acquired in the spring were sacrificed to the rushing river—and I also surrendered my favourite sandals. "Let them go," I thought to myself.

My daughter, Amanda was screaming to me from the shore, and I panicked even more each time I surfaced to see her preparing to dive in after me. Amanda's friends saw the danger in that and had to fight with her to hold her back on the shore. At one point, Adam tried to give me a reaching assist, but it was a wet and slip-

pery stick, and I lost hold. The water sent me to the east end of the river (which was not the side that the kids were on). With the rapids behind me, and with the current slowing, I made my way over towards the western shore. There I spied, about 20 feet from the shore, a rock extending above the waterline. It was a beautiful dry rock, and that meant that it would not be slippery. I hoped that I could hold onto it. Eventually, I was able to swim—albeit partially against the current to get to the rock. I clung on to it and caught my breath. When I had stopped gasping, I was able to explore the bottom of the river at this point, and although the river bed was rocky, it was shallow enough to let me walk to shore, aided by my daughter's friend Adam, who waded into the water to help me.

Eventually, a much shaken Marni emerged from the Black River. You know, my Mother was right, I should have been more careful around those rocks.

I tell you that story because it points me to the title of one of the books that I read on vacation.

The title? *Congregational Leadership in Anxious Times: Being Calm and Courageous No Matter What*. The book is by Peter L. Steinke, and it is published by the Alban Institute in 2006.

Now, I am not sure how courageous I was as I tumbled over the falls—most of what I did in an effort to save myself in that situation was seemed to be a matter of instinct. But I did know that the only way I was going to get out of that alarming situation was by being somewhat calm.

There is no doubt that I was anxious as I fell into the water, and while I was fighting for equilibrium. Even a half hour after I arrived back at the cottage, I was still trembling. That reminded me of something that everyone who has studied Systems Theory knows. Anxiety is a symptom that something is out of balance.

Steinke's book offers the reader some hints on how to survive and thrive in congregational situations where there is anxiety or conflict.

There are three parts to the book. The first section focuses on



The Leader's Presence, the Second on the Leader's Functioning and the final section explores the Leader's Challenges.

Part One, "The Leader's Presence" explores the infectious effects of congregational anxiety. He lists the common triggers of anxiety to be issues such as money, sexuality, pastoral or lay leadership styles, challenges to survive or grow, issues connected to transition, tensions between "the old way and the new way," etc. Frequently a congregation enmeshed in anxiety will have several of these issues coincide for significant anxiety to occur.

Part 2 explores "The Leader's Functioning" in the reactive emotional field of an anxious community. Steinke concludes that he has observed five recurrent issues in troubled congregations:

- High anxiety.
- The impasse of two parties.
- A lack of a clear sense of mission.
- Poor boundaries (with symptoms such as gossip, intimidation, not confronting questionable behaviour).
- The avoidance of problems.

He discusses the difference between reacting "reactively" and "reflectively" in difficult circumstances within a religious community. Reflective reaction leads us to a "way of being" which is beyond mere survival, but rather to a kind of growth which results in strengthening and health. He encourages individuals to explore a series of questions:

- Describe the current situation.

- Describe the ideal situation.
- What has Party 1 and Party 2 done to move the impasse, conflict or problem toward a beneficial outcome?

- What outcomes are likely if this situation is not managed?
- What, in your view is preventing movement toward progress, improvement or change?
- Is there a third party? How would they answer these questions?

Part 3 discusses "The Leader's Challenges." It highlights familiar issues in Churchland.

- "We versus They"—do you know that dynamic? It often is experienced in a polarization between two parties, whether within the congregation or with authorities from the larger church.

- There is also "Rocking the Emotional Boat" which is the result of a leader challenging of a congregation's balance.

- Challenge or Survival describes different kinds of leadership strategies. For challenge leaders, adaptive change is primary, while for leaders who are focused on (their own) survival in the congregation, the focus is "safety"

I have offered only a bare sketch of Steinke's book. I recommend this book for all people lay and ordained who are seriously engaged in congregational leadership. By actively reflecting on issues that are manifested by anxiety in our church communities, we can grow in our ability to meet the challenge of being—and growing—the church today.

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

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# Reflections on General Synod 2007

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

That's important: it makes me more Canadian. In addition to the Canadians, there are also visitors from overseas who also speak of their communities and their mission in their own voices with unique accents. This time, there were partners from Tanzania and Burundi, the US and the UK. And that's important: encountering them makes me more Anglican. So General Synod is first and perhaps most importantly a gathering, a community of communities, an intensive experience of the church that I wish more of us could share. It helps to place our community and our mission in context. I value so much the relationships I have developed or sustained through General Synod with colleagues and friends from all over this country.

Second, I have to say it was a great honour and privilege to participate in General Synod on behalf of my Diocese—and a great honour to have been elected by my clergy colleagues to represent our Diocese. Some of what we do there is of minor significance in the larger scheme of things—the housekeeping of a national organization, rules and by-laws, motherhood resolutions intended to educate the debaters far more than they will ever change the world, hand wringing over institutional decline. Not big stuff. But all the minutiae is the price of admission for far weightier matters that include:

- Electing Fred Hiltz as Primate, the person who will be the national and international face and voice of our community.
- Receiving the first Anglican Indigenous Bishop, Mark Macdonald, who will help First Nations Anglicans on their path toward self-determination and help the rest of us understand their struggle.
- Re-affirming our church's commitment to justice for aboriginal Canadians, along with representatives of seven other faith groups.
- The day we spent with the Lutheran National Convention on the environmental crisis—with an excellent lecture by Sallie McFague—that really helped to consolidate a theological framework for understanding what we are all about as people of faith in the midst of creation.
- Helping to define our church's current official stance on blessing same sex unions.

Having a chance to participate and be an actor in those things is an incredible privilege for which I am very grateful.

## The debate and votes on blessing same-gender unions

The big news from General Synod was the votes on blessing same sex unions. You need to know that the Anglican Church's relationship with gay and lesbian people has been on the agenda of every General Synod since 1992 in Toronto and, I would say, at every General Synod since 1992, we have made progress. Sadly, the progress made in Winnipeg is imperceptible to the outside world—but for those of us who have been following the story, we know we have just driven a stake through the heart of homophobia in the Anglican Church of Canada,

even though it will take a while longer for the beast to expire.

I was immensely proud to be at General Synod as a priest of the Diocese of Niagara and as the Rector of St. Christopher's. We are already known to be a progressive diocese. We're the only other diocese in Canada to have voted in favour of blessing same sex unions (the first was New Westminster based in Vancouver) and even though Ralph our Bishop withheld his consent in 2004, the 67.7% majority in favour is well-known and well-respected by others across Canada.

The St. Christopher's piece was a surprise to me. The first time I went up to the plenary hall in the hotel in Winnipeg, I visited the display area to find the Integrity table. Integrity is an organization of gay and lesbian Anglicans and their friends. I've been a member for more than twenty years. Integrity always has a display table at General Synod and I usually know some of the people staffing it. When I arrived there in Winnipeg, the editor of the Integrity Toronto newsletter, Chris Ambidge said, "Congratulations!" "On what?" I asked. "Your parish has more individual signatures on the God's Blessing petition than any other in the country." I didn't believe him—so I went on line and checked. By the day General Synod was convening, 65 parishioners, 5 clergy, and 1 bishop from St. Christopher's had signed the petition. I was floored! So thank you to all of you who were willing to stand up for inclusion and justice in our church.

The debates began on the Saturday evening, but before that, we spent about three hours in a Committee of the Whole on the Saturday afternoon where people could speak to the issues without the constraints of parliamentary procedure. Some very, very unfortunate things were said (and I'll say more about that later), but there were some very moving speeches:

■ Like the clergy widow from Edmontonton who talked about her gay son and her hopes for the church's witness in love and justice.

■ The two speakers who talked about how important it was for us in Canada to send a message of hope to gay and lesbian people in other parts of the world. Antonio Osario, a priest from the Diocese of British Columbia (Vancouver Island) spoke in terms of his native Colombia. Isaac Kawuki Mukasa, a priest on the program staff of the Diocese of Toronto, described the oppression of gay and lesbian people in his native Uganda—how they are subject to harassment and assault without legal protection—and he urged us to tell the world that, at least in Canada, gay and lesbian people are beloved of God.

■ The most moving speech for me was made by Ron Stephenson, the Chancellor of General Synod. Ron is from the Diocese of Fredericton (New Brunswick) where all the other members (bishop, clergy, and laity) voted against same-gender unions. Ron is 79 years old. A lawyer, he's been the Chancellor of General Synod for more than 20 years. He is a quiet, thoughtful man who speaks with great integrity—with the authority of an elder statesman—and he ex-

pressed himself with almost Churchillian eloquence. Let me paraphrase what he said: "I'm old enough to remember when divorced people were refused communion and forbidden to remarry in the church; I've lived long enough to see the church reconsider its pastoral position and remarry divorced people. I'm old enough to remember when women didn't work outside the home or play leadership roles in society; I've lived long enough to see women ordained as priests and bishops. I'm old enough to remember when we took aboriginal children away from their parents and sent them to white residential schools; I've lived long enough to see the church begin to redress the wrongs of that era and to seek just settlements to First Nations land claims. I'm old enough to remember when we thought there were no gay and lesbian people, especially in the church; I hope to live long enough to see my church finally bless the covenanted relationships of committed, same sex partners."

We headed into the debate on the resolutions on Saturday evening and it continued until Sunday afternoon. The outcomes of the votes are well-known—so I don't want to dwell on the details. What I can say is this: there was a dizzying display of parliamentary manipulations to prevent the matter from coming to a vote. In every case, the bishops were dragging their feet; in every case, the clergy and laity said, "We want to decide on this now". When it finally came to the votes, we passed a resolution that blessing same sex unions is not in conflict with the core doctrine or creedal beliefs of the Anglican Church of Canada. That's the stake through the heart of homophobia. The vote to move ahead now was defeated by two bishops' votes. Those are the death throes of the beast.

## Implications of the vote

Already people are trying to make sense of the votes, with advocates on all sides spinning messages to suit their pre-existent assumptions. What is clear to me is that the official approval of same gender blessings in the Anglican Church of Canada is now only a matter of "when" not "if". I'm also pretty sure the declaration that same gender unions are "not in conflict with core doctrine" will be enough to end our relationship with some parts of the Anglican Communion.

I know the members from most of the southern, urban dioceses are ready to move ahead and some will before the next General Synod. I quite expect there will be another motion at our diocesan Synod in November asking the bishop again to approve a rite for blessing same sex unions. I will be voting for that resolution and this time, I'm not sure our bishop will withhold his consent. You need to know that both Ralph Spence (our bishop) and Michael Bird (our bishop-elect), along with all but one of the Niagara delegation, were voting in favour of moving ahead. We'll see how all that develops between now and November.

And what does all this mean for St. Christopher's? I think it means we need to be speaking more clearly in favour of an inclusive vision of



the church; for a church in which all people, regardless of age, race, gender, ethnicity, or sexual orientation are welcomed, affirmed, and nurtured and for a church that seeks to proclaim and embody the outrageous hospitality of the One who made us and seeks to make all things new.

In particular, I think we need to begin saying more clearly that gay and lesbian people, along with their partners and children, have a place in this community – so there is no doubt about who we understand God to be and what we understand God's purposes to be. The present situation and the overarching values of the Gospel demand that we say this clearly and without hesitation or reservation.

When the time is ripe, I expect St. Christopher's will be one of those parishes in Niagara where committed relationships, both gay and straight, are blessed. We will need to set out an appropriate process for dialogue and discernment as we consider that decision, but you know I'm going to be leading in that direction—and it's pretty clear to me that most of you are already there.

## Personal reflections

As you can tell, I have been somewhat emboldened by my experience of General Synod 2007. I wasn't really surprised by the outcomes—I had predicted that the laity and clergy would approve and the bishops would not. So I wasn't surprised. Disappointed, yes, but not surprised. However, it was only after I was home for awhile that the experience began to sink in. I found myself getting angrier and angrier with every passing day.

After a while I realized I was not as disturbed by the votes themselves as I was by the homophobic arguments being used by those opposed. And I became furious with myself for just sitting there and tolerating

such a public display of hate. We all listened quietly and respectfully to ideas which, had they been applied to any other group in our community, would have been considered scandalous—but somehow, it's still okay in the church to hate gay and lesbian people. Why did we let that happen? Why do we continue to tolerate the ideology of hatred with respect to homosexuals that we have long since repudiated with respect to women, people of colour, Jews, and First Nations people?

Homophobia is a matrix of beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours used to justify fear and hatred of gay and lesbian people. It is a construct of false ideas, like racism (and its belief that people of colour really are less intelligent, less industrious, less moral), like anti-Semitism (and Hitler's international conspiracy of Jews and bankers), like colonialism (that believes indigenous peoples and their cultures are inferior and therefore must either be destroyed or assimilated), or like sexism (and all the ideas, cultural norms, and social structures used to keep women "in their place"). All these forms of hatred or prejudice develop assumptions and ideas to make an irrational fear seem reasonable. They build arguments to support themselves and to maintain a certain balance of power.

And, in time, all these forms of hatred gather religious ideas to legitimize themselves. The Christian arguments used to justify apartheid, slavery, pogroms, cultural genocide, colonialism, and the oppression of women are well known. Fortunately, in the last two hundred years, we have learned from our experiences of slavery, the holocaust, apartheid, the civil rights movement in the US, the residential schools in Canada, women's suffrage and the women's movement.

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## PARISH NEWS

# All things made new


**BEV GROOMBRIDGE**  
CHURCH OF OUR SAVIOUR THE REDEEMER

May 27, Pentecost Sunday, marked a very important event in the lives of two Stoney Creek Anglican parishes. It was the day that The Church of Our Saviour and The Church of the Redeemer amalgamated to become one new parish located at 25 Lake Avenue South.

The day began with the congregation of the new parish meeting outside the church. Outside, a

bubble machine filled the air with bubbles and almost everyone in the congregation was dressed in red! The wardens of the church knocked on the door and Bishop Ralph Spence opened the doors to us. The declaration of amalgamation was read by Ian Pratt and members of the new parish entered the church to find it decorated with red helium balloons. The children of the church, led by Glenda Rookwood sang a song called "When

the Spirit Says Move You've Got to Move" accompanied by Rita Giulietti on guitar. Barbara Vance read a moving modernized version of the Pentecost story and the children participated by using windmills and noise makers throughout for the appropriate sounds of the rushing wind.

Bishop Spence presented Karen Lampman with a certificate and a pin honouring her years of service as a server; with much hugging and

many tears it was a very special, joy filled moment.

What a wonderful day to celebrate the formation of a new parish! It was Pentecost Sunday, the Sunday when we celebrate the birthday of the Church!

The service was followed by a delicious pot luck reception in Corman Hall.

The name of the new parish is The Church of Our Saviour the Redeemer. Services are held at 8:30

am (Book of Common Prayer) and 10:00 am (Book of Alternative Services). During the summer there will be one service at 9:00 am. Come check us out!

We are very excited about doing ministry in Stoney Creek in a new and exciting way. Anyone who is looking for a church home and an opportunity to get involved with the development of this new and exciting ministry will be warmly welcomed.

## Saying goodbye St. Philip Calling Canterbury Hills Camp Alumni

### The disestablishment and deconsecration of St. Philip the Apostle


**SUSAN WELLS**  
INTERIM PASTOR - ST. PHILIP'S, BURLINGTON

This is their story. The story of a journey from life to death to the beginning of new life

The story of St. Philip's will be told in three parts. Part one appears in this volume of the *Niagara Anglican*; additional parts of the story will be told in subsequent editions.

Loosely the story of St. Philip's will be broken down into the following articles: "The Introduction and life of the parish known as St. Philip the Apostle, Burlington," "Why this parish chose to close its doors?" and "The beginning of a journey to new life."

This is the hardest article I have ever attempted to write. It is like writing the obituary of a bus load of close friends who all died in a single highway accident. Although I was only the interim pastor at St. Philip's for twelve months, I had

been a parishioner and theological student at St. Philip's in the mid nineties. I feel a close bond to the parish and still feel profound sadness that it was necessary for the parish to close.

At 4:00 pm on April 29, 2007, the parish of St. Philip the Apostle, Burlington was Deconsecrated and Disestablished by the Right Reverend D. Ralph Spence. About 180 gathered to share Eucharist, to celebrate of the life and ministry of St. Philip's and to share in a catered dinner which followed.

The word Eucharist means to "give thanks". That is exactly what we did. Those gathered gave thanks for the forty-four years St. Philip's had served the Community of North Burlington. For forty-four years this parish stood with its doors open, inviting everyone to come in, sit down and to become part of God's family in this place.

Music is at the heart of the worship at St. Philip's and the closing service was no exception. The final service was laced with music. Guitars, drums, organ, piano all were part of the celebration.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 14

**MARY GORDON**  
CANTERBURY HILLS CAMP ALUMNI

Well I guess I better start by telling you that I am an alumnus of Camp Canterbury Hills. That's what it was called when I was a camper and staff. Since I was 10 years old camp has had a special place in my life. I lived down the street from camp and yet I never knew it existed until my parents signed me up to go. Thanks to Father Tilbury who signed my camper registration in order for me to go. Let's just say my life has not been the same since.

I was a camper until I couldn't go anymore (it is a shame they have an age restriction) and then I did the next obvious thing to me and applied for staff. The summers I attended camp and worked there were the best of my life. I guess you could say I grew up at camp. I learned a lot about myself and how God works in my life. I met so many people and have become great friends with many of them. Camp has changed in many ways since then, and continues to get better, but I often wonder what kind of person I would have been if I didn't go to camp. I am pleased to say that my daughter is enjoying camp now. In fact many of us alumni are sending our kids to Canterbury Hills Camp.

However a few years ago (7 to be exact), Camp was on the chopping block of the diocese. Strictly

for budget reasons, so a bunch of us went into 'save camp' mode. Well you guessed it. Many people with hard work, dedication, cash and a plan saved the camping program. Out of that passion and dedication for camp, came the need for the alumni to get together. We did on several occasions and it went well; however, we didn't meet for quite awhile. Then came an urgent call from the registrar at the time (also a former camper and staff) to help raise money for the camper bursary fund. Again we were thrown into action. A few of us from the last get together met and had a brain storming session about how we could raise funds for the campers who needed financial help to get to camp. A suggestion was made from Judy Worsley, a former member of camp staff, to hold a barbecue for the families dropping off kids to residential camp. Judy had seen this work for other places that she had volunteered so we thought we would give it a try. There we were Lana Lowe, David Orde, Tim Webb, Judy Worsley, Tom Scott, Russ Rohr, Kofi Oforu and myself sitting around my dining room table trying to figure out how we could do this. We contacted Canterbury Hills and had the go ahead. So in 2004 we had our first barbecue at the Open House and it was a huge success.

With that encouragement we went on to hold barbecues the first

night of each residential camp. We started off small but we are now going strong. This will have been our fourth summer and we hope to continue. After expenses we have been able to give the Camper Bursary Fund the following: \$500.00 in 2004, \$1,000.00 in 2005, \$1,000.00 in 2006, and we don't have a final count for 2007 at the time of writing. I would like to take this time to thank everyone who has helped out over the last 4 years with the barbecues. We could not have done it without your help. Especially our future alumni (our kids).

Many families have benefited from our efforts and we wish to have that continue. We also hope to have regular Alumni Events. So if you were a camper or staff and are interested in helping out in person, financially or just reconnecting then please contact us at [cchfriends@yahoo.com](mailto:cchfriends@yahoo.com). Note: We did the friends thing so our parents and other family members (who might not have worked at camp but definitely supported us and what we did or do) can be a part of it too. Our next step is to become an incorporated not-for-profit organization. We already have a core of dedicated people and are looking for more. So if you know of anyone who is an alumni, please pass on this information; we would love to hear from them. Thanks for the day campers!

# A loan repaid

St. John's Church in Port Dalhousie pays their mortgage

**GORDON KINKLEY**  
CANON - ST. JOHN'S, PORT DALHOUSIE

If a picture is worth a thousand words then the assorted smiles, in this article's accompanying photo, say it all. The date is June 19, 2007; the place—a local branch of the St. Catharines' CIBC; and the group is a representation of St. John's Church, Port Dalhousie.

This story actually began at the parish's annual meeting of vestry in January 2002. Our growing congregation—240 active families—needed more space, better nursery facilities and total accessibility for any who are mobility challenged. Vestry approved the rector's appeal and the parish embarked on a building campaign that would cost \$500,000. At the heart of our new proposed parish center were two men: Hap Lafferty P.Eng., who spent countless hours over

a six month period overseeing its construction and Brian Leyden who worked tirelessly chairing the fundraising campaign. In the first phase of this project, the parish under Brian's very skilled leadership raised \$225,000 in new money. We had parish investments to add to the pot but we still required an additional \$170,000. In January 2004 Brian in concert with our Diocesan treasurer Bob McKinnell arranged a bank loan for the parish.

Over the next three years we reduced that \$170,000 loan to approximately \$40,000 by April 2007. It was decided at our annual meeting of vestry 2007 to have a final campaign to pay off our remaining bank debt. A committee was struck—Brian Leyden (Chair), Dennis Bezzant, Jan Lafferty, Mary Sipila, Jim Stone and myself. Our goal was \$40,000. In just six weeks



Pictured above: Brian Leyden (Chair), Dennis Bezzant (Campaign Committee and Special Funds), Lorraine Leyden (Special Funds), Jan Lafferty (Campaign Committee), Maree Stasiak (People's Warden), Stu Bell (Rector's Warden), Theresa Bell (Treasurer), Violet Priddle (Chair of Special Funds), Dave Cargill (Special Funds), Carolyn Cargill (Special Funds), Bev Dimich (Special Funds), Louis Dimich (Special Funds), and myself. Absent from the picture are the numerous parishioners whose generosity and prayers have helped bring us to this moment just three-and-a-half-years after our journey began.

we raised \$59,000 with 88 families giving an average of \$600 each. Of this group twenty-six families each gave \$1000 or more.

In just three-and-a-half years we

have paid off our \$170,000 bank loan plus an additional \$20,000 in interest for a total of \$190,000 while continuing to meet all of our diocesan and parochial commitments.

A special Eucharist to celebrate the burning of the mortgage is scheduled for Sunday September 9 at 10:00 am. A party will follow.

## St. George's celebrates with a fabric art display

**ANNA CONTINI**  
ST. GEORGE'S, GUELPH

St. George's Anglican Church in Guelph continues to celebrate its milestone 175th anniversary with a year-long line up of special events, guest speakers, concerts and presentations. One of the upcoming highlights will be "Threads of Praise," a display of liturgical fabric art from Anglican churches all across Canada. The Exhibition, sponsored by the Chancel Guild of St. George's, will take place October 13-21, 2007.

Textiles have played a very important role in the beautification of places of worship, particularly in the Anglican Church where one can find glorious altar frontals and banners, handmade kneeling cushions, elegant, hand-crafted clergy vestments. For generations, artists have created such items with skill and devotion and yet often these articles go unrecognized. "One of the goals of the exhibition is to highlight some of the creative works of Canadian fabric artists," says Nancy McPherson-Ball, one of the coordinators for the project and member of the Chancel Guild. She has been working with Nancy Walcot to convene the multi-faceted exhibition.

Planning began two years ago with a call for submissions that went out to all the Anglican Churches. An eight-member selection committee embarked on the 'hunting and gathering' phase and is very pleased with the end result. "The generosity of the other churches has been overwhelming," says McPherson-Ball adding that "participants are delighted to have their creative works shown." In many cases, pieces will arrive only about a week prior to the event as they are an integral and useful part of regular services at their home churches. In total, the exhibition will feature 50-60 works of art. Three cathedrals—St. Paul's in London, Christ's Church in Hamilton and St. James in Toronto—have loaned pieces as well as each of the Anglican Churches of Guelph. Individuals and parishes from Whitehorse to Newfoundland are sending items for display.

The flagship piece on permanent display in the Kirk Chapel at St. George's is a magnificent quilted dossal curtain and altar frontal designed by Nancy Lou Patterson, a well-known liturgical artist from Waterloo. Both pieces were constructed and quilted by Isobel King of Guelph.

The large, colourful dossal hanging depicts the four seasons of the earth year, in the form of four squares. The altar frontal symbolizes the Christian year, with eight crosses representing Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, Passiontide, Easter, Pentecost and Trinitytide. While an integral component of the exhibition, the pieces will continue to grace the Chapel, providing inspiration and beauty for many years to come.

"Threads of Praise" promises a rare glimpse into the world of liturgical fabric art. The display is sure to be of interest not only to quilters and fabric artists but also to members of the general public.

The October 13-21 exhibition hours will be Sundays from 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm and Monday to Saturday from 11:00 am to 4:00 pm. While there is no admission fee, freewill offerings are much appreciated. Tea will be served in the Rectory. In mounting this unique exhibition, the Chancel Guild is making a major contribution to St. George's 175th anniversary celebrations. For more information about "Threads of Praise" please contact St. George's Church by calling 519-822-1366.

## A special gift for the Church of the Epiphany in Oakville



In May 2007, Mr. Aubrey Hudson, and his wife Stella, on either side of the Reverend Canon Marni Nancekivell travelled from Nova Scotia to present a special gift to the Church of the Epiphany in Oakville, Ontario. Mr. Hudson, a stained glass hobbyist, created for the Epiphany a work based on the Canadian Anglican flag. It is set into a frame from a window of the original Church of the Epiphany, which no longer sits on the Bronte Road side. Mr. Stephen Ainsworth, People's Warden, and Mrs. Sarah Thompson, Rector's Warden, joined Canon Nancekivell, the Interim Pastor in accepting the gift on behalf of the parish. The Reverend Suzanne Craven is the newly appointed Incumbent of the parish.

## St. Jude's Oakville: Come to the Feast!

St. Jude's Parish in Oakville would like to invite interested members of the diocese to attend our annual parish event, Come to the Feast. This gathering is an opportunity to deepen our understanding of liturgy and worship. Interested people are invited to an open workshop on Saturday, September 29, or to attend the 10 am service and following dialogue on Sunday, September 30.

Our guest speaker is Ruth A Meyers, Academic Dean and Professor of Liturgics at Seabury-

Western Theological Seminary in Evanston, Illinois. She has written extensively, and spoken of the power of liturgy to shape worshipping communities and individuals at numerous national, diocesan and parish events.

Ruth will be sharing her insights on the dynamic nature of liturgy. She has written that "liturgy [is intended] to be transformative, to create a community that embodies Christ's redemptive love not only in its worship but in the world and in the lives of members."

The Saturday morning workshop

will be held at the church from 9:00 am until 12:00 pm. Ruth will be our guest preacher at the Sunday 10:00 am service, and will lead discussions after church. On Sunday, there will be light refreshment, and a children's program to enable adults to participate.

Enjoy the opportunity to expand our spiritual horizons, dig into great conversation and new ideas, and energize ourselves for God's work in the coming year.

For more information contact the church at 905-844-3972 or visit the website at [www.stjudeschurch.net](http://www.stjudeschurch.net).

## EDITORIAL

# We are not a church?

Niagara speaks

CHRISTOPHER M. GRABIEC  
EDITOR

In a recent article posted on the Anglican Diocese of Niagara website, we posted an article that responded to the Bishop of Rome's pronouncement in Dominus Jesus, that upheld the long-standing Roman tradition that the one true and only valid church in the world today was the Roman Catholic Church. This includes Muslims, the Jewish community, our Orthodox friends, and all those who are a product of the reformation, including Anglicans, Lutheran and everyone else. He indicated that although the Orthodox Church has Apostolic Succession (among its Bishops), they do not have the fullness of truth and as such are "defective". Those who are part of the reformation cannot call themselves "church"—but at best, they can be called "ecclesial communities". However, they do not have the instruments of salvation. (So, we must conclude that we cannot be saved?)

The article asked whether or not we have any reason to continue any further dialogues with the Roman Church as it is very clear from their perspective that we are not at the same table. The article also pointed out that this has very little to do with the average Roman Catholic person in the pews, who would have almost no regard for this position, but nevertheless, it does portray the Roman "official position". So, this was a call to live in peace and love with our Roman brothers and sisters and to simply ignore the almost hateful and most certainly judgement and discriminatory attitudes that their leaders display. (For the entire text see [www.niagara.anglican.ca/articles](http://www.niagara.anglican.ca/articles))

People in the diocese were invited to respond on-line to this article. Here are a few of their thoughts:

"With Islamic extremism and sectarian violence rampant, we cannot afford to take dogmatic stances that exclude people who practice Christianity. With the model of Jesus, we cannot take judgment into our own hands and behave as he would not. The content of

Dominus Jesus makes me sad. I trust, and pray, that it is an aberrant step soon to be corrected by a new Bishop of Rome."

"I was at a retreat last weekend, attended by folks of many denominations, with a large concentration of Catholics, both sisters in holy orders and laity. The subject came up at most meals. To my Catholic sisters in Christ, this recent proclamation was a joke. I found no one who seriously followed the Vatican's line. When will the powers-that-be in Rome realize how far out of touch they are with the rank and file of their members?"

"Let us not judge the Pope or his followers. Forgive any remarks that hurt your feelings and go on loving Christ and all humankind."

"Years ago, when I was expressing my angst about the church and contemplating taking leave of it, a friend told me if I wanted to give up on the church, so be it; but, he said to me, don't ever give up on Christ. I say praise God and hallelujah that Pope Benedict doesn't think we are the real church. Perhaps this way, we won't be prevented from getting on with the real gospel!"

"In reiterating their traditional branding of exclusive apostolic authority, are they going to win back the soul of the south (America)? I doubt it. With fewer and fewer priests to minister to the faithful, Roman congregations are beating a fast path to the brand-new, multi-media friendly evangelical congregation across the street. Taken in this context, perhaps some of the sting leaves the insult of the Dominus Jesus proclamation. They are desperate and this document is clear evidence thereof."

"Thank goodness I belong to an "Ecclesial Community". I would welcome others whom the Catholic Church considers unfaithful to our Church. We have been taught to be forgiving, loving, healing and welcoming."

"How sad that the bureaucrats of the church of Rome can't accept that we don't want to play by their rules anymore. To continue the sports metaphor, Ratzinger has fumbled the ball here."



"My apologies for being forward, but it seems to me that the Roman Catholics and Mr. Grabiec are marching under the same banner here: the search for cultural and spiritual significance without the absolute standard of scripture. Whereas the Dominus Jesus appears to make repentance futile and God's grace accessible only to some, Mr. Grabiec appears to make repentance unnecessary, and nullifies the need for grace because—(he does) not believe that anyone is disordered or defective. Personally, I cannot find the authority of (or even a hint of) scripture in either of these scenarios. How sad that the Roman Catholic Church have let go of the Commission of Christ and are—holding on to the traditions of men. How sad that the Anglican Church of Canada appears to be doing the same. Praise to Jesus, our Lord. His saving grace is for all of us... a disordered and defective race of sinners."

"It is time for believers to return to first principles, to re-develop our theology, and to venture out boldly into the new world of the 21st century, looking forward from the amazing discoveries that have been made during the past 150 years. Let the Roman Church retreat behind its

will built in the fourth century with the political support of Constantine 'the Great'. Let the Anglican Church have none of it. To quote Bishop John Spong: 'The Church does not encourage us in this task. That institution seems increasingly brittle and therefore not eager to relate to its creeds as a set of symbols that must be broken open so that the concept of God can be embraced by new possibilities.'"

"Breaking dialogue with the Roman Catholic Church, or denying what it does contribute to the larger Body, would be foolish for us and for the majority of faithful people who truly desire a polity of ecumenism and inclusivity, a polity which is not defined by Popes, Archbishops or Synods. Because who is the Catholic Church? I go on retreats in Catholic monasteries and retreat houses. I participate in ecumenical support groups with Christians of varying denominations. In both cases we break bread together, laugh at the 'institution' and then get down the business of being the body of Christ for one another."

"I feel for those Roman Catholics who are looking for inspiration in these challenging times. I fear that the recent pronouncement

will divide the European and Can-Am faithful away from the other part of the Roman Catholic church. I am saddened on the impact it may have on doing Christ's work here like feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, healing the sick and so forth. It is time for all Christians along with all other faiths to band together and dealing with the ills of society."

"I would direct the Pope to use his eyes to the world around him. We live in God's wonderful world. As a gardener I get to see it every day. That is a lesson he should learn. Certainly the poor man and his governing council badly need our prayers. Let it not stop us from enjoying our diversity with the rest of the world."

"Pope Benedict's re-statement at this time, asserting the supremacy of the Roman Catholic Church and the deficiency of other Christian denominations, hinders ecumenical relations, but will not end the good work of understanding and fellowship developing among churches within communities and dioceses."

There were many other opinions as well—but simply not the room to print them. Many thanks to all who have contributed to this discussion.

## Where has all the grace gone?

GEOFFREY PURDELL-LEWIS  
PUBLISHERS ADVISORY BOARD

I am concerned and upset by the changing tenor over the 'same sex' articles in the Niagara Anglican. As Anglicans we hold widely divergent views and beliefs on this issue and Archbishop Rowan Williams has reminded us of the importance of listening to one another together with respectful dialogue. And why? So that together we can seek 'the mind of Christ' on this issue and work to-

ward a resolution rather than a split in the church and without demeaning one another. I read little of this spirit in the July 2007 edition of the Niagara Anglican which addressed the recent General Synod.

In one part of the Niagara Anglican I read "It is time to stop being polite" as a headline—since when has not being polite become a virtue? Later, in the same article, those who continue to vote against the blessing of same sex unions are labeled as be-

ing blatantly racist. And in another part of the Niagara Anglican I read "The people and clergy voted with good majority to stop the discrimination... and the bishops voted to perpetuate this discrimination. Those bishops should look upon their actions with shame".

Labeling those who voted against same sex union motion at General Synod, and others who feel likewise, as racists is defaming, demeaning, close to promoting hate,

and unacceptable. When the House of Bishops vote was so close (52.5% to 47.5%) it is clear that the 'house' is divided. When we look at the laity and clergy 57% and 54% respectively voted for the local option. This is a majority, but only just—certainly not "a good majority". On such an important and divisive issue as this we would be wise to wait until there is a very strong consensus by all parties that the 'local option' is the right one. In contrast to this negative rhet-

oric Archbishop Fred Hiltz stated "This is a disappointment... I have my own personal position, as you know, but my responsibility is now to work with this decision." There is no place for the publication of name calling, and worse, by any person involved in these discussions.

In contrast to the tenor of the articles mentioned above, "Geometry, Poetry, Theology" was a joy to read and an encouragement that God has not finished with us yet.

## The Niagara Anglican

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**Submissions**

We welcome letters from our readers. All submissions must include the full name and contact information of the author. The newspaper reserves the right to edit submissions. Submissions must be received one month prior to the newspapers publication date.

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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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## PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

■ Archdeacon Harry Bagnall passed away on August 3. A memorial service was held at St. George's Church, St. Catharines on Wednesday, August 8. Please remember his wife, Jean, and their family, in your thoughts and prayers.

■ The Reverend Canon Chris McMaster submitted her resignation from St. Paul's, Caledonia, and has accepted the position of Rector of Our Saviour the Redeemer, Stony Creek, effective October 1.

■ Our thoughts and prayers are with the Reverend Joseph Noseworthy and family on the death of Joseph's mother, Irene, on August 7 in Newfoundland.

■ The Reverend Pamela Guyatt submitted her resignation as Asso-

ciate Priest at St. John's, Ancaster, and has accepted the position of Rector of St. James, St. Catharines, effective October 1.

■ The Reverend Canon Terry DeForest has been appointed Interim Pastor at St. Luke's, Burlington, effective October 1.

■ The Reverend Larry Reese passed away on Sunday, July 29. A private family service was held in Uxbridge. Please remember his wife, Dede, and family, in your thoughts and prayers. A memorial service is planned for a later date at Christ's Church Cathedral.

■ The Reverend Canon Fran Darlington has been appointed interim pastor at Arthur and Mount Forest beginning September 15.

■ The Reverend Michael James Deed, began his ministry at St. Christopher's, Burlington, as Director of Children, Youth, Young Adult and Family Ministry on July 23.

■ The Reverend Mark Gladding submitted his resignation from Grace Church, Arthur and St. Paul's, Mount Forest, and has accepted the appointment to be Rector of St. Paul's, Fort Erie, beginning September 1.

■ The Reverend Paul Sherwood has accepted the position to be Rector of St. Paul's Church, Dunnville and the Dunn Parish, beginning September 1.

■ The Reverend Suzanne Craven resigned as Associate Priest at St. Matthew on the Plains, Burling-

ton, and accepted the position to be Rector of Church of the Epiphany, Oakville, beginning August 15.

■ The Reverend Lynne Thackway, retired from full time ministry at the end of June, will coordinate the Companions Program in the diocese. The Reverend Thackway took this ministry over from the Reverend Audrey Conard, Honorary Assistant at St. Cuthbert's, Oakville.

■ Ormie Carter, O.N., faithful member of St. Paul's, Norval, passed away on July 9. Funeral service was held at St. Paul's Church on July 14.

■ Suzanne Bradley was licensed as lay reader at All Saints, Hagersville, effective July 10.

## A church for the future?



**SUSAN WESTALL**  
ALL SAINTS, HAMILTON

Last June I asked the questions "Is the Church of Non-Attendance to continue to exist?" and "Can the Church of Erehwomos become the Church of Erehwomos?" In other words, can the strange Christian learning experience that I had as a youngster in what I have called the church of Nowhere become an experience in a Church of Somewhere?

This has made me ask myself, if I have any ideas about how our Canadian Anglican Church might develop during the 21st century, what are the traditions upon which the Anglican Church of Canada is founded? Far too many people blame it all on King Henry VIII as if there were no Church of England before 1534. The church that was in England from before the days of Augustine has continued to the present day, but it has gone through many changes during some 1700 years. For political reasons, Henry VIII precipitated a Reformation that had already begun; the church in England became the Church of England. As John E. Booty wrote in *The Church in History* (ABC, 1979) "The Church of England was not a denomination. It was a part of the fabric of the nation". Rome had attempted to interfere in English affairs on previous occasions—e.g., the Pope had excommunicated King John with serious consequences. This time the monarch excommunicated himself and his people; the Papacy, acting with the collaboration of the so-called Holy Roman Emperor, had lost its power. It might be noted that the present Pope is trying to turn the clock back.

There was a Christian church in the British Isles before Augustine arrived in 597 C.E. In fact, when

he arrived he was surprised to find that there was a church building in Kent where the queen, who was a Christian, worshipped. Today there is an increasing interest in the Celtic Church, for there were already Christian communities on Iona and Lindisfarne in the north.

A visit to the city of St. Albans, north of London, reveals the walls of ancient Verulamium, the former Roman city and the Cathedral and Abbey Church of St. Alban. Alban has been described as "the earliest authentic martyr of Latin Europe whom we know". It is now believed that he was beheaded on June 22, 209 during the reign of the Emperor Septimus Severus, i.e., Christianity was alive and kicking 390 years before Augustine arrived in Britain.

A visit to Glastonbury reveals the legend of the visit of Joseph of Arimathea, reputed to be a merchant and related to Our Lord, who may have been accompanied by Jesus as a youth. This is the question asked by William Blake in his poem "Jerusalem":

*And did those feet in ancient time  
Walk upon England's mountains  
green?*

*And was the Holy Lamb of God  
On England's pleasant pastures  
seen?*

The "mountain green" is probably Glastonbury Tor, a prominent hill near the Abbey, with a sacred well at the top fed by a hidden underground spring.

Our recent General Synod was visited by the Archbishop of York, who is Primate of England. "That's ridiculous!", I can hear someone mutter, "the Archbishop of Canterbury is Primate!" So he is, but his title is Primate of All England—there are two provinces in England. The northern church was better organized during the eighth and ninth centuries and York was the centre. It was only after Rome had established Canterbury as the primatial see that York took second place. Once London had become the capital city and the reigning monarch had a say in the choice of bishops, Canterbury was much more access-

ible than York. Nevertheless, Cardinal Wolsey, who was Henry VIII's Chancellor before the break with Rome, was Archbishop of York.

When I first arrived in Canada in 1947 our Canadian Church was still The Church of England in the Dominion of Canada and the Book of Common Prayer contained the same Preface of 1662 that appeared in the prayer book that had been given to me by my godmother at my confirmation in 1937 and that I had brought to Canada with me. Some of the prayers had been slightly amended to cover the Canadian political scene and slight changes were introduced by a Preface to the Canadian Revision of 1918.

The Twentieth Century was to prove one of great changes which may yet turn out to be as dramatic as those of the Reformation. Two catastrophic wars spelt the end of the great empires that had been built up since the voyage of Christopher Columbus and from 1945 onward the need for changes was evident.

In 1943 our Canadian General Synod started a work of revision again and a preliminary revision of the BCP was published in 1957, to be followed by a final revision in 1962. This revision has a Preface to the Canadian Revision of 1918 altered in 1959 and is the BCP that is so fervently defended by Essentials. Furthermore, the Canadian Church is no longer designated The Church of England in Canada, but is recognised as The Anglican Church of Canada.

Our Church was still not satisfied. Less than ten years after the publication of the revision of 1962 our General Synod passed a motion to "initiate a process of revision of Church Services *without delay*" (my emphasis) that would "achieve that flexibility and variety we deem desirable". In addition General Synod was asked "to give guidance to diocesan authorities in relaxing the rigid conformist notes (rubrics) still written into our Common Prayer Book". The result was the "Green Book" of Alternative Services of 1985.

The BAS, as it is now com-

monly called, was the result of considerable experimentation. Canada was not the only part of the Anglican Communion that was struggling with Prayer Book revision. The Church of England produced a series of revised services for experimental use, as did also the Australian Church. The "relaxing of conformist notes" permitted the use of these experimental services in Canadian parishes. My own parish still uses some parts of the New Zealand rites as a supplement to the form prescribed in the BAS.

But things have gone astray. Essentials are right when they remind us that "This *Book of Alternative Services* is therefore *not* a new Book of Common Prayer and does not replace it" (*vide* Introduction to the BAS, p.8). Furthermore a former Dean of our Cathedral, Bishop Joe Fricker, who had been a member of the Doctrine and Worship Committee that drew up the BAS, emphasized that the BAS was intended to give congregations more participation in the services. In actual fact, congregations as a whole have less participation as psalms and canticles have become the purview of the Choir. In fact the only service known to many members of present day congregations is the Holy Communion. Participation in the Offices (Morning and Evening Prayer, etc.) has evaporated. The only concession to lay participation is that members of the congregation do now lead the Prayers of the People and read the Old and New Testament lessons, activities formerly conducted by a Licensed Lay Reader. In fact, Licensed Lay Readers have become almost redundant as any member of the laity may be invited by the Incumbent (Rector) to take part in a service. When the only regular service in a parish is the Holy Communion, does the Parish Lay Reader know what to do if the priest is taken ill? When I was Warden of Lay Readers I encountered candidates for a licence who had no experience of reading Morning Prayer.

Things are still in a state of flux. There must be more.

# Saying goodbye St. Philip the Apostle

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

The choir sang an anthem entitled "Friend's", an anthem that reflected one of the core values of the parish—friendship (caring and nurturing each other).

Ever since, it was decided that some courageous folk from St. Christopher's who lived North of the QEW would form a new parish and Bishop Walter Bagnall came and consecrated St. Philip's to God's work, the doors of this parish have been open to all. Anyone looking around on a Sunday morning would recognize that the diversity of St. Philip's congregation not just mirrored but exceeded the diversity within Burlington as a whole.

St. Philip's was located in a residential survey, just across from Rolling Meadows School. When the City of Burlington decided not to continue Mountain Grove up to Upper Middle Road, it found itself at the end of a dead end street. As a result, some have lovingly referred to St. Philip's as "St. Philip, the Impossible to Find". And that was a part of the reason why the events of April 29 occurred.

St. Philip's was a place where people gathered, to hear the Word of God proclaimed in Scripture and in song; to offer praise and give thanks to God. It was a place where people came to lift up their prayers and petitions. This was a place where people gathered around the table to share in the body and blood of Christ.

On April 29, Bishop Ralph Spence came to share in our sadness, to share Eucharist with us for the final time and to perform two canonical functions: first to deconsecrate the building and the second to disestablish the parish. I can't imagine how hard this must have been for our bishop to be the person under whose seal this church, which he and his predecessors had supported so lovingly, was deconsecrated and disestablished.

The closing service was a joyous celebration and remembrance, yet there was a profound sadness

that overlaid the celebration. The building and the lands on which the Church, know as St. Philip's, was built were deconsecrated. That means that the lands and building were now available for secular use. This was a profound moment but not nearly as significant as the reading of the Rite of Disestablishment of the Parish. A Parish is much more than a building it is a group of people who have come together to serve God in a unique way in a particular place. It is a group of friends bound together by their mutual love of God and of each other. And part of the profound sadness came from the realization that they, the people of St. Philip's, would no longer meet as a worshipping community each Sunday to hear the word of God proclaimed and to share Eucharist. They would no longer gather at coffee after church to share each other's joys and sorrows and to pray with and for each other. For many of us, the truth came home when the Altar was stripped; More than one parishioner said, "It was like Good Friday with no Easter Sunday to follow".

Who was St. Philip? I am sure that some of you may want to challenge my use of the word "who", yet I believe its use is not only justified but correct because I am not talking about the building but about the people who were St. Philip's and who will always carry memories of the parish with them always.

St. Philip's was named after St. Philip, one of Jesus' disciples. As we know every saint expresses a unique gift of God. The gift of St. Philip, stood at the heart of the ministry and gift of this parish.

In one of the Gospel stories, some Greeks come to Philip and say, "Sir, we wish to see Jesus." Philip then goes to his buddy Andrew and together they go to Jesus. Philip becomes the conduit, the vehicle that leads the Greeks to his wonderful friend Jesus.

In spite of its location, St. Philip's was a conduit that led many people to our wonderful friend Jesus. For forty-four years St. Philip's stood

with its doors wide open, inviting all who would come to find a place of refuge, a place of hope and foremost a place of love and acceptance. Over the years many people called St. Philip's their parish home.

Over the years there have been countless children, youth and adults who were baptized into the faith and who received the light of Christ at St. Philip's. Many of them have gone on to be faithful members of this or other congregations.

This was a congregation that supported its youth and adults, so they might come to a deeper understanding of their faith in confirmation classes, who learned what it meant to be a Christian and decided to claim their legacy as children of God and chose to be confirmed—youth and adults ready to own their baptismal promises, ready to confess the faith of Christ crucified and to share in Christ's resurrection.

At the chancel steps of St. Philip's, many couples came to be married, to promise before God and with God's help to love, honour and cherish each other. And with God's help to build their own Christian homes.

From this place many people came to commit their loved ones into the loving arms of God—St. Philip's own saints now gathered at God's heavenly table and feasting in God's heavenly home.

From its inception this was a parish that invited all the people in the neighborhood to come and meet Jesus:

■ In its early years there were week long Missions with Canon Green.

■ St. Philip's was well known in the area for its Monthly Community Dinners and hundreds of people came to be fed.

■ For over 10 years, St. Philip's fed the children of the neighbourhood at breakfast club. Parishioners and other volunteers served breakfast to as many as 100 children five days a week. The parish provided hot nutritious meals to the children of Rolling Meadows School. When children have a good breakfast they are more attentive and learn more while at school. Even after the par-

ish closed, the breakfast club program continued till the end of the school year and plans have been made for this ministry to continue in the fall at St. Gabriel's Roman Catholic Church.

■ Then there is the Friendship Link which began in the early 90's as a senior's drop-in and continues to meet today and do what their name says, to link friends. This group has now found a new home and continues to meet at St. John's, Nelson

■ The parish also hosted "Let's do Lunch" a monthly luncheon and activity program for seniors and shut-ins where volunteers, as true friends, went and picked up people who needed rides.

■ Every week for the last ten years or so, the Tuesday Club met at St. Philip's to provide activities, crafts, lunch and friendship to a group of severely handicapped adults.

The doors of this parish have always been open to anyone and everyone. Many lives have been changed because of St. Philip's. Many people who came seeking, found. The faith of many was nurtured and deepened through the missions, through bible studies and other study groups, through programs such as Alpha and through renewal programs such as Cursillo.

This also has been a parish that has taken the Gospel out into the world,

■ To Retirement Homes and Long Term Care facilities (Bethany, Tansley, Creekway Village, Heritage Place and helped with services at Lakeshore Place)

■ For several years in the 90's the parish did monthly services at Maplehurst Detention Center in Milton, which were discontinued due to a change in the Ministry of Corrections policy.

■ To the Burlington Mall to play music during the Christmas season.

■ The parish even went to the produce department at Longo's, where among the carrots and cabbages, parishioners, accompanied by guitars, sang Christmas Carols.

St. Philip's was a parish engaged in nurturing and helping all people who came through its doors, en-

couraging them to grow in their faith, as well as a parish that took the Gospel out into its community.

"For so many years St. Philip's the Apostle Church in north Burlington was known as "the little church with the big heart". We were known throughout the diocese for our music, which it turns out was quite unique. I learned to play guitar while at St. Philip's and was part of a small but awesome music ministry for many years. It was truly a joy to praise God through the music we made together. The closing of our parish church is one of the worst things I have experienced in my life. The people, I had worshipped with, prayed with, worked with, played with, sang with, laughed with and cried with over the course of 19 years are not just fellow parishioners but were part of a large, loving family. The sense of loss is sometimes overwhelming but I take comfort knowing I have made many lasting friendships. Friends with whom I can share the pain of our mutual loss as well as the hopes of new beginnings" (Nancy Wood, Parishioner).

Or as another parishioner put it, "St. Philip's was known for many years as a wonderful and loving place to come and heal. Heal the mind, body and spirit. St. Philip's has not been a unique church in the aspect of political and financial problems, but unique in that whatever the problems were, the people of St. Philip's managed to put those things aside to minister to those people in need. Be it prayer, visitation, friendship, love and simple friendship" (Richard Turner, Parishioner).

So why, if St. Philip's was all these things and did all this outreach and ministry, did it close? Why did a parish who went about sharing the Good News of Christ with others cease to be viable?

There is no one answer but if you read Part 2 of the St. Philip's story in next month's Niagara Anglican, I will try to outline some of the contributing factors and led to the parish's decision to request that the Bishop disestablish the parish.

## The love of God is for all people

GRAHAME STAP  
ST. ALBAN THE MARTYR, GLEN WILLIAMS

One of the problems with any religion seems to be fundamentalism. When a person of a particular denomination, faith, or cult says, "I am right and you are wrong" or "If you don't believe the way I do you will not be saved."

It always amuses me to hear someone say "are you saved" as if it is my choice, or as if by my actions, I can make a difference in the love God has for me or for anyone. I am saved, but not because I have done or will do anything that will affect my salvation. I am saved by the grace of God for which I am truly thankful.

Jesus came to tell us how much God loves all things God created, and by his death on the cross

showed all of us the path to God the Father and how we are welcomed regardless of our brokenness.

Fundamentalists will quote bible verses to show they are right. However, I wonder why they don't mention Matthew 7:1-5 which talks about not being judgmental or John 13:34 asking us to love one another or James 4:11-12 which tells us not to be a judge as there is only one judge. I guess I am just as guilty doing the same thing, using these passages to prove my point.

What I am trying to say, is the bible was never meant to be used as a tool to prove a point one way or another. It is a wonderful window through which we see God and the relationship God has to all humanity. How we interpret it is a personal journey, and a personal walk with

Jesus. We should not be blinded by our own faith that we miss the good in others.

Recently Pope Benedict XVI was quoted as saying, "The only true Christian church is the Catholic Church." I believe he is just as misguided as any other fundamentalist that makes decisions on behalf of God and humanity.

Certainly at the time of the reformation in the sixteenth century the church to which we all belonged was so far removed from the love of God that change was desperately needed. People of character had no choice but to leave the existing church. However, they did not leave Christ or the love of God. Through their actions, at the time, they were shown to be closer to the way of Jesus than the existing church. To

now say that the Catholic Church is the only true Christian church is in the least misguided, and totally refuses to accept the reasons for the reformation, which changed not only those who left but also brought change to the Catholic Church.

Fundamentalism comes in many shapes. While I am on the subject, it is quite possible to be an atheistic fundamentalist denying the possibility of God as Richard Dawkins does in his book *The God Delusion*. I do not know Mr. Dawkins but I do know many people who profess to be atheist in belief and it usually stems from one of three things:

■ One, they are unable to accept God because they cannot give credit to God for their accomplishments.

■ Two, something they had prayed desperately for did not happen.

■ Three, they have deluded themselves into believing they have all the answers.

But they have as much right to their belief as I do to mine and I don't think God loves them any more or less than God loves me.

In the end it all comes down to how we will answer the question, as we stand before our creator. What did you do with the gift of life I gave you? Did you use it for the good of all humanity or did you use it to ram home your own point of view? Did you welcome the Presence of God or did you turn your back to God?

Would it not be wonderful if we all followed the words of Jesus, regardless of our faith or lack thereof, and loved each other as God loves us?

# Parish Justice Ideas



**COLLEEN SYM**  
SOCIAL JUSTICE COORDINATOR

At General Synod, an area of interest to me as the Social Justice Coordinator for the Diocese was a series of motions dealing with the National Ecojustice Committee and its mandate. A merger of the Partners in Mission and the Ecojustice Committees was proposed. It had been recognised that the work of the two committees was increasingly converging. As the background to the merger motion described:

The core mandate of the Partners in Mission Committee has been to support the mission priorities of partner churches in other parts of the world. Many of our partners have identified the impacts of global justice issues as being cen-

tral to their mission work. The core mandate of the Ecojustice Committee has been to assist the Anglican Church of Canada in its mission to transform the unjust structures of society and guard the integrity of creation. There has been a growing understanding that both committees address issues that are global in scope and yet have consequences that are experienced locally, and both committees are concerned to work in respectful partnerships and to seek to build right relationships. Both committees understand their work to be about encouraging and enabling people to participate in God's mission to transform themselves and the world. Both committees strongly affirm that the General Synod's work of mission and Ecojustice needs to continue, and that it is best done in a partnership model.

The motion regarding the merger was carried. A separate motion then dealt with the mandate of the new Partners in Mission and Ecojustice Committee. One of the roles

of the committee is to educate, inform and engage Canadian Anglicans to participate in mission and justice making. The explanatory note to this motion described our role as Church:

We, as the Church, are mandated to be signs and instruments of God's reconciling love in the world. We have a responsibility to incarnate our response to Jesus' summary of the law, 'to love God and our neighbour as self', to Jesus' example of being in right relationships, and to the question posed by the prophet Micah (6:8): "And what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and love kindness, and walk humbly with your God?"

As our thoughts are on "start up Sundays" and we plan for the upcoming year, please take a moment to consider how we here in Niagara can support and advance the work of the Church in the areas mission and social justice.

One way is to plan a Social Justice Sunday in your parish for sometime in the upcoming months.

Month	Possible Theme	Rationale
September	Peace	September 21 is the International Day of Prayer for Peace
October	Poverty	October 17 is the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty
November	Restorative Justice	Canada has a restorative justice week in November
December	Violence against Women	December 6 is Canada's National Day of Remembrance
January	Christian Unity	
March	Racial Discrimination	March 21 is International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination
April	The Environment	Earth Day
May	Refugees	
June	Aboriginal Issues	National Aboriginal Day of Prayer

All of the above observances have websites. If you would like assistance locating worship materials, educational materials, speakers or other resources to hold a Social Justice Sunday in your parish, please contact me at social-justice@niagara.anglican.ca.

# I love the Church

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

Because my understanding of church offers a community that, at its best, strives to show and share God's love. Ironically through our youth ministry programs this is what the church taught me. NYC, YLTP and Youth Synod all modelled for me an understanding of church that held the community as its foundation. Caring for each other's uniqueness mattered, being prophetic was affirmed, pushing boundaries was an inherent part of the culture and spirituality was explored and continually reshaped.

To discern God's call and to live out that call in the world, the church, at its best, strives to knit together a people of shared and differing beliefs. The church, at its best, transforms us daily. Perhaps I'm just a naïve optimist, but this is why I love the church—not for its tradition, its rituals, or its structures, but rather for how in its totality it can transform our lives, offer meaning, and give us a taste of the community which Jesus lived out during the last supper.

Yet the pragmatic person in me acknowledges that we cannot separate the institution from the community—at least at this point in our history. There is a First Nations teaching about the two wolves which has helped me understand this dilemma. The teaching holds that the two wolves symbolically represent the opposing positive and negative human virtues. The elder tells his grandchildren that this fight is going on inside them and every single person. When asked who will win, the elder replies: the one which you feed.

### Redefining the Church

In the decades to come, this will be our challenge—to decide which wolf

we as a church will feed: the institutional wolf or the community wolf. As Anglicans, we inherently will have both wolves within us, until at some point in our history we become a post-denominational church. So the question becomes: do we want the community to drive the institution or the institution to drive the community? It's a challenge which I don't think we have faced since the followers of Jesus gradually put the structures in place for the early church. Over the course of three hundred years or so, a community composed of Jewish followers of Jesus gradually morphed into the church institution and ever since we've been feeding the institutional wolf.

Do we need to redefine the church? Absolutely! I would say that is a part of my call to ministry—all of our calls—just as it was for God's people as far back as Deuteronomy—as frustrating and as impossible as that may seem. Even if we have signs of hope in our midst, we cannot be content to rest on our laurels. We must continually be evolving, understanding that such changes are not inherently brought about by people who wish to seek the church's destruction.

So after much thought, my response to the person at the microphone is: "My name is Bill Mous, from the Diocese of Niagara, and I really do love the church, too! Perhaps it is not the same kind of love for the church as many speakers have spoken about, but I do love the church in this sense of the word: as a community that gathers together in many diverse and wonderful ways to experience God's love, to be transformed by God's vision and to live out God's call for our lives as best we can through our joys and our sorrows.

# A matter of tolerance and compassion



**LINDA MOORE**  
CENTRE FOR LEADERSHIP AND HUMAN VALUES

Have you ever decided to pay attention to a specific attribute in yourself with the intention of taking stock of your own self mastery and personal evolution? It is a deeply rewarding experience and one I caution you to do only if you are ready for a rocky ride!

This summer I made a decision to consider two important values; tolerance and compassion. As I gazed out into the world I was deeply saddened by the lack of tolerance I saw in others and its part in dividing people and nations. Whatever the issue, lines were drawn and judgments made, leaving little room for understanding and acceptance.

### Facing our own intolerance

My starting point for this contemplation and observation was frankly

one of quiet smugness. As a practitioner of continuous self improvement, I saw myself as already well advanced in the application of these facets of my being. Silly me!

I share now the learning from this journey with you, as embarrassing as it is, in the hopes that we can all gain a deeper understanding of the subtle and eroding pattern that a lack of tolerance and compassion can wreck in our lives and in the broader world. So here it is!

This practice of "paying attention" had a specific pattern to it. Each time I felt any emotion from simple annoyance to outright anger; my responsibility was to examine the source of the emotion. In this context emotion became my friend and guide. It was the flag and indicator that led me to myself and my own beliefs. In each situation I stepped back from the emotion and dug deep inside to find out what was true for me in that moment and what values and beliefs were being confronted by the immediate situation.

I gleaned many insights and most I am still in the process of contemplating. What I did discover in me was an intolerance of intolerance!! As con-

volved as this sounds in fact it was a simple and disturbing truth to uncover. Each day I confronted a myriad number of situations where I saw myself judging another. I attended a wonderful leadership conference and judged the caliber of the group facilitators and the behaviour of my fellow participants. I judged the language of a friend. I flared with rage at an unintentional racist slur. My blood pressure rose when I heard a prominent leader disparage a fellow associate. Frankly the list of my judging and intolerant thoughts is quite endless! It was not a happy discovery!

### So what does it mean to me and you?

We are all interconnected and no thought or action goes without its impact on self and other. When thoughts and ideologies and beliefs disturb our equilibrium and internal peace we are less and so, become those around us. When we leave no room in our hearts and minds to deeply consider another's perspective we set up an inevitable and predictable chain of events that will lead to an escalation of our separation from one another. Seeking out the root of our own intolerance is

the only sustainable way to bring peace to ourselves and the rest of the world.

The one saving grace of this whole adventure, for me, was the inclusion of compassion in the equation! It is the singularly most powerful way out of intolerance. For you see, I became intolerant of my own intolerance and so began the self flagellation, which again increases and expands the dilemma. For a short time I became quite discombobulated and unhappy. And then, like Divine Grace, a lightness of being filled me.

It became crystal clear that by living in compassion, for me and others, intolerance could not co-exist with love. Of course I knew this intellectually! This was a deeper understanding. I knew that I could be much kinder to myself in this process. What was the most critical element in this grand summer adventure was that I was noticing and becoming more aware of my own intolerance, and that was a worthy start to changing.

### Make an appointment with yourself

Imagine if each of us makes a

consistent appointment with ourselves to intimately examine our own humanity and our own short comings holding a broader intent. With compassion if each of us considered our own intolerance and began to replace it at least in part with compassion, this apparent subtle shift could forever change our immediate world and perhaps impact on a wider scale as well.

Where does your intolerance lie? What are you not ready to admit or divulge about your own narrow perspectives and beliefs? What is in you that is not life affirming? I challenge you to go on this journey with me. I challenge you to face your intolerance. We can all do it. The power of compassion will assure us that the outcome will make each of us bigger and richer in our being and those around us will be blessed by a new sense of our acceptance and understanding of who we and they truly are.

For more about Linda's work in the area of Human Values, visit [www.cclhv.com](http://www.cclhv.com)

# Reflections on General Synod 2007

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

We've learned from leaders like William Wilberforce, Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Nelson Mandela, Nellie McClung, and many, many others. So we have come to recognize the ideologies of hatred when we hear them. We have unmasked them and they have lost their power to manipulate us.

Sadly, we have not yet unmasked homophobia—so hate-based arguments are still heard with a respect we would never grant to racism, sexism, and anti-Semitism. Fortunately at General Synod, we did not hear the crassest form of homophobia. No one actually said that including gay and lesbian people would be a risk to our children. (The notion that gay men are pedophiles is as reprehensible as the notion that Jews drink Christian babies' blood. The fact is that most pedophiles are straight men. In fact, most child sexual abuse is committed by family members.) But in the debates at General Synod, we did hear fear and hatred of gay and lesbian people expressed in five very familiar forms:

- Arguments from Scripture.
- Arguments from nature and pseudo-science.
- Arguments from "morality".
- Arguments from "unity".
- Arguments from culture.
- Unmasking homophobia

The homophobic argument from Scripture points to select passages from the Bible that refer to homosexual activity. People at General Synod proclaimed proudly that they were "standing on the Word of God" in their refusal to bless the committed, covenantal relationships of gay and lesbian couples. The problem is that none of those passages say anything about the kinds of relationships we are talking about blessing. Moreover, their citing of Scripture is selective and disingenuous. This is most clear with respect to Leviticus 18 which says: "You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination". However, if people are really taking the Bible seriously, they should also observe the other commandments of this passage—including the prohibition against wearing garments of mixed fiber, the prohibition against eating meat with its blood, the provisions for sexual relations with slave girls, and the details of burnt sacrifices. The fact that the passage is read so selectively reveals the homophobic intent of this misuse of Scripture. I should also point out that no one in quoting this passage ever follows through to quote the remedy prescribed for men found lying together—which is death by stoning. How can these people "stand on the Word of God" in citing the condemnation without also citing the text's response?

The fact is, we would no longer tolerate sexist and racist readings of Scripture. No one in our community cites how women should be silent in church. No one would dare argue for the separation of races based on Genesis (which was used by the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa as the theological justification for apartheid—

in creation, God separates the light from the darkness, in the tower of Babel story God separates the nations of the earth, God intends us to live apart from one another). No one would even think of using a children of Ham argument from the Noah story to understand race relations (which was used to justify the enslavement of Africans—the children of Ham are cursed because Ham saw Noah's nakedness, the children of Ham have darker skin, therefore it's okay for us to enslave people of colour). But somehow, homophobic readings of Scripture are still acceptable to us.

Reliable scholarship has shown how the kinds of homosexual activity known to the writers of the Bible bears no relationship to the kind of relationships gay and lesbian Christians are forming today. Moreover, reliable scholarship suggests that most of those condemnations probably refer to situations of prostitution, exploitation, or violence. We know this—and yet we continue to listen politely to shoddy biblical interpretation in our debates on sexuality. We know how the Bible has been used to justify slavery, racism, and anti-Semitism—and we wouldn't put up with anyone misusing the text in that way today. Why do we still put up with it when it comes to homosexuals? I think we need to start saying, "No!"

Similarly, at General Synod, we heard people arguing from nature and pseudo-science, claiming that gay people are sick but can be cured (someone actually said that), that gay men have shorter lifespans (presumably because of who they love—did anyone consider it might be because they are not married?), and that homosexuality is "unnatural". We had people stepping up to the microphone to cite junk science in a pathetic attempt to make their hatred look reasonable. In every other forum in society, that kind of silliness has been thoroughly discredited—but we continue to put up with it politely in the church. It's time we started saying, "No."

The same must be said about arguments from "morality". Every oppressive ideology tries to make its opponents appear morally inferior, if not evil. In the case of homosexuality, it results in a simplistic syllogism: homosexuality is morally bad, heterosexuality is morally good. Sadly, there is no evidence to support it. Anyone who knows people knows there are good and bad homosexual relations and there are good and bad heterosexual relations. The issue is not who the partner is; the moral issue is about the quality of the relationship, the respect of the partners for each other, the capacity of the relationship to nurture positive growth in the other, and—in terms of Christian ethics—the extent to which the relationship reflects the love of God and engenders the fruit of the Spirit. The fact is that we would no longer put up with anyone suggesting it is immoral for people of different races to couple or for people of different ethnic backgrounds to form families—so why do we put up with people simply asserting it is immoral to be gay? Clinging to the immorality of gay people is like clinging to the laziness of blacks,

the drunkenness of Indians, and the miserliness of Jews. I think it's time we started saying, "No!"

Many of those opposed to same sex unions at General Synod argued from "unity". They said we in Canada should not proceed because so many others in the Anglican Communion thought it was wrong. We all listen to that with serious concern. So what would happen if we also said we'd stop ordaining women as bishops because most of the rest of the Communion doesn't do it—or if we began to stop giving communion to divorced people because others don't? The point is that we would be appalled at the thought that we should betray our consciences and principles on so many other issues—but we are prepared to consider it when it comes to gays and lesbians. The homosexual members of our church are so easily sold out—many of us were a lot more comfortable when they were in the closet—out of sight, out of mind, and quiet. But as Martin Luther King said, "The time is always right to do what is right." When people entice us to sacrifice what we believe for the sake of harmony, I think we just need to start saying, "No."

Finally, there are the arguments from culture. As people of aboriginal, Chinese, African, and other backgrounds say that homosexuality is simply unknown in their cultures, the rest of us say, "Okay, don't worry about it. We want to be culturally sensitive."

As I thought about General Synod afterwards, I found this argument particularly troubling when voiced by aboriginal Anglicans. Some of the First Nations delegates at General Synod spoke in favour of justice for all—but most of the First Nations members and their dioceses voted against. How can they favour justice for themselves and not justice for others? It smells like pharisaical hypocrisy.

I need to find a way to say something like this to my aboriginal Anglican friends: "Yes—I know I come from a colonizing culture that has oppressed First Nations people for centuries—but I have acknowledged that sin and I'm trying to get over it. Yes—I know our church and government attempted to obliterate your native identity through the residential schools—but now we see how wrong that was and we are trying to make amends. I confess to you, my aboriginal brothers and sisters, that I grew up in a racist, colonizing culture—I ask your forgiveness and I'm trying to recover from it. But when I hear you say that homosexuality is unacceptable in your native culture, I need to remind you that I also grew up in a culture where homosexuality was unacceptable—and I'm getting over that, too. If you believe I need to repent of my culture's racist past in order to enter God's new creation of love and justice, I think it only fair that you repent of your culturally-entrenched homophobia."

Some first nations Anglicans understand that connection. They see how justice for them must include justice for all—and that is the fullness of the biblical vision.



Sadly, most aboriginal Anglicans don't—and, in a strange reversal of history, their opposition to inclusion feels like a twisted form of homophobic cultural imperialism. When people continue to use their cultural heritage as an excuse for persistent homophobia, I think we need to start saying "No."

In addition to these arguments from Scripture, nature, morality, unity, and culture, there is another subtle form of homophobia I heard around the edges at General Synod and I have overheard here at St. Christopher's. It's a variation on "Love the sinner, hate the sin". It usually gets expressed like this: "I don't have any trouble with gays and lesbians, but ..." The "buts" usually include some form of "do they have to flaunt it?". I think people are trying to say, "It's OK to be gay as long as you don't act like it". Now let's just look at that in terms of some of the other prejudices we have heard and known:

- "I think women are great, but you would want them voting or making laws?"
- "I'm not prejudiced against blacks, but I wouldn't want my kids going to school with them."
- "I don't have anything against Newfoundlanders, but do they have to talk funny?"
- "Handicapped people are fine, but do they have to take up so much space with their wheelchairs?"
- "Old people are okay, but why don't they just dye their hair?"

It's silly. The idea that it's okay for gay and lesbian people to be here as long as they keep their relationships secret is just as ludicrous and, at root, just as subtle a form of hatred. Including gay and lesbian people means including their relationships—and yes, it means seeing them together—and yes, it means seeing them relate to each other. I think when people pretend to include gays and lesbians while excluding their partners and families, we need to start saying "No."

## Conclusion

So, as I think you can tell, my experience of General Synod has left me feeling frustrated about the kind of homophobia we put up with in the church. I think we as a community of faith need to be much clearer in unmasking the subtle faces of homophobia in all its forms. I think I will have failed in my calling as a pastor and teacher if I do not work

with you to enable St. Christopher's to become a community that embodies the fullness of the Gospel vision:

- A community in active repentance for all the forms of hatred that corrupt and destroy the creatures of God.
- A community where gay and lesbian people, their partners, and their families are fully incorporated, respected, and supported.
- A place where the vision of God's love and justice reigns over our prejudices and conflicts and offers us abundant life.

I know there are some people here who are struggling with this—and there are some who will feel the need to leave. That's regrettable. I think this needs to be a place where it's okay to be while you're struggling with one or another aspect of the Gospel. After all, not all of us have got it about stewardship—we continue to hold up proportional giving as a norm and some of us are working away at it, but you don't have to be giving at 10% in order to belong. Others of us are pretty lousy at a personal discipline of prayer and Bible study—but we still belong while God's working on us. Still others of us haven't yet adopted a lifestyle of justice in our homes—but the parish continues to help us learn, and we don't have to be perfect in order to stay.

It's the same with this. We have all grown up in churches and cultures that taught us to distrust, dislike, and even hate homosexuals—and yet in baptism, we commit ourselves to seek and serve Christ in all persons, to strive for justice and peace among all people, and to respect the dignity of every human being. Coming to terms with what that means for us with gays and lesbians in our midst will be a harder journey for some than for others—but this has to be a safe place for you to make that journey. As a friend of mine once said, "The essence of the Gospel is this: it's okay to be where you are... and you don't have to stay there."

I hope we can be gentle and honest with each other in the weeks and months ahead, speaking the truth in love. But move forward we must—because this is the church and we are God's people: chosen to be a blessing to others, infused with the Spirit of Jesus, and set apart as a sign of hope for all around us to prove that goodness is stronger than evil, truth is stronger than hate, and love is stronger than death. Amen.



# They'll know we are Christians by our love

**ELEANOR JOHNSTON**  
ST. THOMAS, ST. CATHARINES

*"I give you a new commandment: Love one another as I have loved you" - Jesus (John 13)*

*"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind." This is the first and great commandment. A second likewise is this, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." The whole law and the prophets depend on these two commandments." - Jesus (Matthew 22)*

*"Jay Bakker, [son of] the notorious televangelists, is a founding pastor of Revolution, 'a church for people who have given up on church... I felt God hated me... When you're raised in American conservative evangelical Christianity, it's all about right and wrong and dos and don'ts... It's very unhealthy.'" - Globe and Mail (July 30, 2007)*

Baptised and raised in the Anglican Church, an 84-year old woman has moved, over her lifetime, to the Baptist Church, to the United, and finally to the Presbyterian. She considered leaving it as well, a decade ago, after the "establishment" members of the congregation hounded out the choir director and the minister who supported him. She felt both had been badly treated and wanted to find another church, but there weren't any others near her home. She continues to worship at the Presbyterian Church but asks over and over, "Why can't Christians love each other like we're supposed to?"

A middle-aged woman who speaks often of spiritual matters demurred when invited to attend church, saying, "People who go to church are too angry, especially the women."

A young Anglican priest (not of this diocese, but he, like the women mentioned above, is a real person) delivers eloquent, arrogant sermons warning of the Day of Judgment and insisting on a literal interpretation of the Bible. Congregation members feel a combination of fear, guilt and anger. He claims, "I have never preached on the God of love."

Those of us who are drawn to discussions of modern theology have learned it is a topic that can quickly lead conservatives to yell accusations of heresy. Those of us who love to develop new liturgies and find new words to express our faith have learned that many parishioners (frequently those who attend church only occasionally) are highly indignant at what they see as irreverent, unorthodox or merely silly. There is a lot of anger in our churches!

On a hopeful note, there is less than in the past. Some of the church leaders at the time of the founding of the Anglican tradition, including Bishops Thomas Cranmer, Hugh Latimer and Nicholas Ridley, were burned at the stake in Oxford for their "protests" against the traditions of the Church of Rome and for their new-fangled styles of worship. Relative to the conservatives

opposed to the Reformation, today's traditionalists are restrained.

Nevertheless, Christian churches as a whole are seen by modern secular society as intolerant to the point of being unchristian. As John S. Spong explains in his most recent book, *Jesus for the Non-Religious* (and for the Religious, I would add), the essence of the Christian gospel is inclusive love and abundant life, despite the fact that in opposition to Jesus, Christian churches have been the last bastions of sexism, racism and homophobia in North American society. Another sad irony is that for taking a lead in articulating a theology of love, Spong has received several serious death threats and at times has needed a bodyguard to protect him from other "Christians." Cranmer would not be surprised but the 84-year-old Presbyterian lady would be horrified.

What causes the angry fear of change? A primary motivator of conservative hatred is the fear that there is no God left when contemporary theologians call the traditional image of God obsolete. This is why we must keep preaching on, talking about, and studying the God of love who is inclusive (accepting the Samaritan, the woman caught in adultery and the tax-collector), who is the ground of our being, who is met in Jesus and longs to be incarnate in each of us, who is found in every person we feed, heal, clothe and visit, and who is known to us as Parent, Child and Holy Spirit. We

can let go of the ancient tribal God in the sky and rejoice in worshipping the God of justice for all people and, beyond our egocentric perspective, for all creatures and creation.

Yet still the Roman Catholic Pope and the conservative Protestant churches persist in imposing an exclusive view of God. What draws people to them? While not all Catholics accept the infallibility of the papacy (many dissenters remain in the Church, hoping for the restoration of the Second Vatican Council), conservative churches in general are chosen by people who need a simple familiarity in their lives, even at the price of receiving the dysfunctional message recognized by Bakker: "It's all about right and wrong and dos and don'ts... It's very unhealthy."

Years ago a Roman Catholic priest had to leave his teaching position and his Order (and was thereafter labeled "DisOrdered") because he had fallen in love with and chosen to marry a nun who was also, not surprisingly, rejected by her Order. It seems to me it was the Roman Catholic Church that, in shunning these two dedicated and devout religious, showed itself to be "DisOrdered."

Perhaps the Protestant churches that have been rejected this summer by the Pope as "not true churches" are feeling inherently unworthy as have the slaves, women and homosexuals denigrated by both Roman Catholic and conservative Protestant churches in the recent past.

Many conservative churches have attempted to ban the Harry Potter series, ostensibly because children might learn to worship witches. I think that the real motivation is that J. K. Rowling effectively and movingly presents good triumphing through love. Millions of people who are "too busy" to attend church have the time to read these exhilarating books that, like the Narnia fantasies of C. S. Lewis published almost a century ago, celebrate love, loyalty and forgiveness.

Despite recent setbacks such as General Synod's decision against same-gender blessings and the Pope's dismissal of ecumenical overtures, Jesus' commandments remain. Those Christians who seek to move the Church from its current state of disorder to a focus on the love of Christ have to persist in articulating their ideas. Only when we collectively move beyond fear and reach a critical mass of lay and clerical consensus can we persuade the bishops that it is time to move away from the disorder of antiquated worship to the new order known in Jesus, the God of Love Incarnate.

The early Anglican leaders did succeed in modernizing their faith. Bishop Latimer's eloquent exhortation during his martyrdom in Oxford is encouraging here: "Be of good comfort, Master Ridley, and play the man; we shall this day light such a candle, by God's grace, in England, as I trust shall never be put out."

## Century Home: Examining Anglican Governance

**JOSHUA MORRISON**  
CHURCH OF THE ASCENSION, HAMILTON

When I look at the way the Anglican Church of Canada governs itself, I am reminded of the house that my grandparents used to live in. This house is one that I love to this day, even though it was sold many years ago. It is a big old stone and brick number in Guelph, with high ceilings, big windows and a unique grace all its own. It starts below ground in a stone walled basement with floor of packed dirt, many nooks and crannies and that damp but reassuring smell of solid Earth. The first level is full of big, open rooms with hardwood floors, elaborate molding around the doors and a faintly musty odor that tells of years of history and stories that were lived inside of the walls. The upper level is accessed through a large staircase that runs up a wall, then curves gracefully around ninety degrees into the upper hallway. The bedrooms are spacious, with the same hardwood floors and molding as downstairs, but with the added touch of bright light filtering through the higher windows.

This house is a "century home"; it's over a hundred years old and is loved for its grace, timeless façade and history. It has some problems however. The basement is totally impractical to finish, which means that it causes inefficiencies in energy usage in the house, driving

up the heating bills. The fireplace and wood stove in the house barely meet newer safety regulations, and the chimney needs repairs to be totally safe to use. Even with a new furnace the house will never be able to get central air conditioning, or be able to regulate the heat inside of it properly. These are all problems that are not damning to the house, and still let it function, but they cause inconveniences that are minor at first, but they add up. The fireplace and stove drive up insurance costs because few companies are willing to cover possible damage from them, and those that are charge steeply for the service. The house is very large, so as natural gas and electricity prices go up, so does the cost of living in the house. The structure itself is getting old, and needs regular repairs and maintenance to upkeep, which makes the house expensive to own the longer a person lives in it.

Eventually, this house will be in a very unfortunate position; it will have been so outstripped by modern technology that it will become redundant and inefficient in the modern world, even though it has a huge sentimental and historical value that many people cherish.

### A modified Theocracy

After praying and reflecting on the recent decisions of General Synod, I came to realize that our church

governance is becoming like my grandparent's old century home. It doesn't matter what side of any debate you sit on to see this because it is an issue that will plague whoever ends up in control of the Anglican Church of Canada no matter what issue may be the "hot-button" one at the time. This is a systematic problem that has plagued us for many years now, but will only continue to get worse in the political and social climate of Canada.

The Anglican Church is set up as something of a modified theocracy. The real power in the church lies among the Diocesan Bishops. Within their individual areas, the Bishops have absolute power. They don't have to give their assent to anything that is passed by synod, they don't have to listen to the laity or clergy below them if they decide not to. This has been demonstrated in the Diocese of Niagara by Bishop Spence, when he exercised his right not to give assent to the passing of a motion at synod to let Niagara move forward in blessing the unions of committed same sex couples. There is no appeal or veto open to synod when this happens; no checks and balances on the powers of the Bishop.

At a national level, power is a little more equal, but still ultimately in the hands of the Bishops. In the recent vote to approve the "local option" for blessing same-sex unions,

though any one of the three Houses (Laity, Clergy and Bishops) could have stopped the motion passing, the votes of two individuals, both Bishops, totally overrode the majority of both the clergy and laity. Even if the motion had passed, any Bishop could stop its resolutions being implemented in his or her own Diocese by not giving assent to similar motions passing in their own area.

### Remaining a viable spiritual alternative

Canada, Great Britain, the United States, Europe and many other countries in the Anglican Communion abandoned systems of government where the people were not in control years, if not centuries ago. In Canada, we have spent one hundred forty years governing ourselves, with ultimate power lying in the hands of the people through democratically elected representatives. We left the British monarch, represented by the Governor General and Lieutenant Governors, as the head of state as a reminder of our past, but retained power for the people. When Governor General Byng refused to assent to Prime Minister Mackenzie-King's parliament-backed call for an election in 1926, and as a result King was swept back into power in the next election and successfully managed to have the Governor General made only a representa-

tive of the sovereign, not the British government. This was one of the defining moments in Canadian government history because it demonstrated that Canadians valued their governmental independence and that the people would not give up the power they wield over their own country.

Canada has continued down the path of democracy, and we value the power of the people even more today than in 1926. The Anglican Church has not kept up, and after General Synod we look governmentally ineffective to many outside our church. If the Anglican Church of Canada continues to ignore the fact that the Church's power comes from the common people that attend it, who give their money and time to do Jesus' continuing work, it will suffer greatly. A group of 40 bishops hold total power over an organization of thousands in an outdated power structure. This is not democratic, it doesn't fit with Canadian values, and it has started to cripple our Church. I don't want to see the Anglican Church hurt, but we need to start looking at who we are and how far we have gotten behind the times. If we are to remain a viable spiritual alternative to future generations, it's time to start changing how we manage ourselves to better match the type of government our children and grandchildren will expect in the future.

# And so it begins



**MICHAEL PATTERSON**  
DIRECTOR OF EVANGELISM

It feels to me like there are a lot of loose ends. Each year at this time most of us go through what I call 'the shift'. You know that transition from the 'it's summer; that can wait' to 'it's back to reality; let's get at it' kind of mind set. This year however, it just isn't the same; reality looks a whole lot different and there is not the same feeling of business as usual. At the end of this month, Archdeacon Michael Bird will be consecrated as our new Coadjutor-Bishop and with this moment comes excitement, wonder, fear, hope, uncertainty, anticipation and a whole host of other emotions. A great mantle has been placed upon his shoulders and we cannot expect him to carry it alone. We too must bear our responsibilities as messengers of the Gospel in this shared ministry, he and us. Say your prayers for Michael, his family, ourselves and our diocese. It is difficult to know what reality is going to look like now; we await the direction that Bishop-elect Bird will begin to steer this good ship Niagara. And so a new era in Niagara begins.

**Confusion from General Synod**

In the two months since our Bishops at General Synod narrowly defeated the resolution allowing a local diocesan option to allow same sex blessings, the debate continues as to what the implications will be for our Church. I am one who believes that we have entered into the absolute worst case scenario. Rev Canon Eric Beresford, principal of the Atlantic School of Theology wrote in an editorial to the *Globe and Mail*:

"Although much has been written and said about the implications of the Anglican Church's general synod debates on the blessing of homosexual unions, most commentators have told us more about their own hopes and fears than about the complexity of the situation created by last month's vote. Put simply, the vote leaves the church in a state of confusion."

Neither opponents nor advocates of same gender blessing are happy with this outcome; people are falling off at both ends and others, in the middle, really do not know what this means for our Church. We have passed a

resolution that states that such matters are not core to the doctrine of the Anglican Church of Canada yet we have said that regardless of what we have decided, we still have to wait (again).

**Moving forward at Diocesan Synod**

We move into the fall and our diocesan synod less clear today, about how we will proceed as a diocese, than we were in 2004 following the General Synod of that year. Niagara's diocesan synod (in November) will be the first synod in the country following General Synod and we know that the eyes of the nation, and for that matter the world, will be watching; it may be the most important synod our diocese has had in a generation. It will be critically important that all parishes and their delegates spend time praying, preparing and talking about how they believe God is calling them and us to move forward toward our synod in full knowledge of what the implications of any decision will be.

What is most disconcerting about the position that we now find ourselves in is that we may have "another three years of messy tussles, drawn-out departures by individuals and parishes from their dioceses and sporadic scandals involving unauthorized church blessings and weddings of gay and lesbian Anglicans", to quote Leanne Larmondin, the editor of the Anglican Journal. What we will struggle to maintain is the spiritual equilibrium necessary to respond to so many issues confronting our society today. Such debates destroy the spiritual lifeblood within us and to be a people of hope, justice and compassion becomes a very daunting task when we are so distracted. Jesus throughout His ministry remained focused on that which was most important; that being to love God, to love your neighbour, to love yourself and to seek justice and compassion for the marginalized and suffering. Jesus worked hard at keeping His disciples on track and working for the Kingdom. We too must restore the mission and focus of what it means to be the Church in this 21st century. Many have given up on us; we cannot give up on ourselves because our Lord Jesus certainly has not!

May we courageously follow the guidance of the Holy Spirit this fall and do what we know we must do in order to be faithful to the path that has been set before us. Once we tie the loose ends, we can then get on about the business of being the Church that Christ would have us be.

# Electoral Synod Review



**ROBERT MORROW**  
ST. JAMES, DUNDAS

On June 2, the Electoral Synod elected a new bishop for the Diocese of Niagara. The day was successful from a process perspective because of the "behind-the-scenes" work by a very active and competent planning committee and a host of volunteers. The Diocese of Niagara is indebted to all those who took part in the process—barbecuers, counters, sidespersons, video technician, organist, parking lot assist-

ants... just to name a few of the over seventy volunteers for the day.

After the announcement of an impending election, a committee was struck to implement the process of the election. This committee, known as the Electoral Synod Nominations and Planning Committee, set the tone for the election process and carried out the process efficiently and effectively, combining the celebratory nature of the election of a new bishop with the caring and concern for all of the nominees.

In late September, the committee will meet to review the process and make recommendations to be kept on file for future Electoral Synods. The committee will use its own observations and comments already received to propose

changes to both the nomination and electoral portions of the process. To assist the committee with its deliberations and to involve nominees, volunteers, observers and delegates to Synod, the committee is asking for input to either segment of the process—the nomination component, or the election procedures.

If you have input regarding either (or both) of these two elements, please forward comments to the chair of the committee, Robert Morrow, by September 15. Comments can be in writing (in care of Karen Nowicki, Cathedral Place) or by electronic mail to robertmorrow@sympatico.ca. Your input will be considered prayerfully and completely. A report will be prepared by the committee for consideration of Synod Council and Synod in the future.

## To the people of Niagara

As an interested group of women from St. Luke's in Burlington, we feel we must voice our disappointment with the decision not to include Bishop Gene Robinson in next year's Lambeth Conference as a voting member. While we all have differing views on the subject at hand, where does the "Golden Rule" apply here. Has everyone forgotten the early attitudes to "women in the clergy" and "divorce"? These comments are made in good faith.

Eileen Spidle ON  
Betty Withnell  
Shirley Cooper  
Mary Branston  
Ethel Finch  
Greta Andrews  
Lillian Allen

Elsie Haywood  
Marilyn Gosling  
Elsie Haywood  
Joan Everett  
Joan Stryde  
Lillian Lomas ON

## BISHOP'S CALENDAR SEPTEMBER 2007

Day	Time	Location	Event
4	5:00 pm	Synod Office	Meeting of Synod Council
9	10:00 am	St. Luke's, Palermo	Parish Visit
13		Renison College	Visit
16	10:30 am	Maple Grove United Church	Visit and Preach
18		St. Andrew's Church, Grimsby	Clergy/Layworkers Education Day
20	5:00 pm	Hillfield Strathallan School	Dedication Service
21	5:30 pm		Diocesan Golf Tournament Dinner
22	Afternoon	Church of the Epiphany	Oakville, Youth Event
23	10:30 am	St. Paul's, Hamilton	Parish Visit
23	3:00 pm	St. Barnabas, St. Catharines	Dedication Service
26	12:15 pm	Christ's Church Cathedral	Service of Institution
27	5:30 pm	Cathedral Place	Bishop's Task Force on Church Buildings
30		Christ's Church Cathedral	Rehearsal and Service of Consecration for Bishop-Elect Michael Bird

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# Summer visits to the Cathedral



**SANDY L. DARLING**  
CHRIST'S CHURCH CATHEDRAL

During July, Christ's Church Cathedral received over 400 visits for special events and during opening hours of 10:00 am to 2:00 pm Tuesday to Saturday. My wife, Jeni, and I greeted people once a week at also at two special events.

**What attracted them?**

James Street North is the home of a number of art studios that organize an "Art Crawl" on the second Friday of each month and 75 people visited the Cathedral as part of that. The first reaction of visitors are "Wow!" and "People go to Europe to see this!" One person said, "This

is the highlight of the evening."

On the third Saturday of each month from June to September, a "Makers Market" is held in Bishopsgate. In July, 179 of those attending came into the Cathedral for visits, including those seeking a church. In some cases we found information about churches they could attend closer to their home in Hamilton.

Christ's Church Cathedral is listed in the tourist guide, and among others this attracted a woman moving to live in Hamilton, who was seeking a church.

**Who is coming?**

A number of people simply come to pray, and I suspect that many of

these are Roman Catholic.

Many are open about their adherence to other Christian faiths and want to discuss the differences and similarities between Anglicanism and their faiths. Some have lived in the community for years and want to see what is in the building they have passed by for years.

One couple I remember is a couple who had visited a relative at the Hamilton General Hospital and wanted a place to pray.

Some are young or younger middle age and are curious. It is interesting to observe the religious knowledge that can be tapped into.

Some of the most exciting moments are the children who delight

in the lights cast by the stained glass and the special wood and stone carvings of animals.

We have many Hamiltonians who were unaware of the beauty of the building.

**What's the result?**

We have recognized people that we greeted on these special occasions in attendance at subsequent Sunday services.

We have provided information about the broader Anglican communion and have directed people to other churches in Hamilton.

**What is the role of the Cathedral?**

Christ's Church Cathedral is the

most visible symbol of the Anglican church of the major city of the Anglican Diocese of Niagara, and so attracts visitors, including those who say they are "church shopping." We try to provide information about all churches in Hamilton and the diocese.

Cathedrals were historically centers of communities and the arts, gathering places of people, and that is what we are supporting in the regeneration of James Street North.

We have excited over 400 visitors in July from many areas about the richness of the broader Anglican communion and we have done it in the name of all Anglican churches.

# Getting to know our Bishop-Elect

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Michael's affection for the people of his parish is obvious: "When I went to bed that night, I thought about how I was going to face the people of St. Luke's tomorrow. It had been a whirlwind day, and we had gone through so much together."

When a priest is considering/becoming considered for an appointment, he or she "has a long time to think about it" before the announcement. This time, Michael says, there was not "that lead time to prepare yourself. After the first several weeks of his new life, Michael admits to still thinking at times, "If I was elected bishop... then I catch myself. It's a surreal time."

Michael reflects thoughtfully on his experience: "There came a point when I realised I was being called to let my name stand, but that's very different from feeling that you're called to be a bishop, so that, really, it was the day of the election, when the results came out, that I felt that God was calling me to be Bishop." He pauses, "I had a real sense of the Holy Spirit acting that day—a lot of people said that too. It's been my experience in the past, that, when God has called me to a particular responsibility, no matter how inadequate I may feel, I've been given gifts, others to help me, gifts to

move forward, so I'm counting on that in this situation."

**General Synod**

Barely adjusted to the potential and dramatic change in his life and ministry, Michael accompanied Bishop Ralph and other delegates from the Diocese of Niagara to Winnipeg for the General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada. "With many people there knowing," it was "a great help to know what it feels like to be a bishop, not as Niagara's Bishop but with a foot in the door. I got to take part in the election of the Primate... an exciting day."

Michael has had some time to reflect on the unfolding of that election, and sees it as far from uncomplicated. "Given events in Anglicanism lately, there's a question about where authority lies. I think there's a sense among a lot of people that we've found a good balance between the two spectrums of authoritarian leadership and grass roots leadership. You certainly can find examples of other denominations with those two represented, but the healthy balance that seems to characterize our Anglican Church seems to be or is shifting."

**History's Influence - Celtic Connections**

Michael finds comfort in a story he heard as a young boy, about the

explorer Dr. Livingston. Travelling through Africa, Dr. Livingston had a firm timetable, which he insisted be followed by the people he had hired to help him. After several days of pushing on, preparing to break camp one morning and move on at high speed, he found his bearers sitting on the ground, not moving. The interpreter told him, "We're not moving today; we're waiting for our souls to catch up with our bodies."

That story still influences Michael's life: "That's what I'm doing now, letting my soul get caught up with me before I head off into this very important work God is calling me to do. I'm going to be encouraging others to do the same thing."

Michael comments, "My whole life has intersected with Celtic Saints," and knows that his episcopacy will be strongly influenced by that experience. With his wife, Susan, Michael has visited Iona, and twice been on Holy Island, the site of Lindisfarne Abbey, where Saints Aidan and Cuthbert led the monastic community. He has chosen St. Cuthbert's Cross as his pectoral cross.

Michael explains the Celtic connection: "We've talked about reaching out to people who aren't finding the church relevant today. It seems to be the sacredness of nature and art and integration of that in worship (that) help us to rediscover

our place in creation. We need to make a major effort to explore (it). We need to gather those resources, along with others that we have, in order to offer people many different, fresh expressions of church, encouraging people to explore and share what has fed them spiritually, to do some experimentation—within reason! As Bishop, I'm going to try to encourage that as much as possible."

Part of that work will be fostering the Anglican-Lutheran connection, which Michael has enjoyed with Holy Cross Lutheran Church, Burlington. "(It's) a gift the Lutherans are giving us—a renewed sense of liturgy and music. They sing a lot in their services! The pieces were not easy to sing, they had no choir, but everyone was engaged and they were doing a great job" (Michael grins) "far better than their guest celebrant!"

**Finding his walking stick**

The Celtic connection will be evident also in Michael's crozier, which he is designing to resemble a hiking stick more than a walking stick. With his wife, Michael has just returned from two weeks hiking in Algonquin Park, "something we do a lot. At the beginning of a trail, we look around for a stick we can use. Many trails have steep

climbs and beautiful lookouts, so a stick is helpful.

"Now, I'm at the beginning of this journey, looking around for sticks to help me. I know there'll be some steep climbs, but I'm also looking forward to those lookout times. Sometimes we see a lot better when we've had a steep hill to climb, but when we get to the top, we find a whole new perspective. I'd like to have it ready for September 30," the date of Michael's consecration as Coadjutor Bishop of Niagara. "I'm working on all those details right now, the Bishop's ring, vestments, and deadlines, all occupying a lot of my time."

For Michael, the consecration service is "another puzzle. A fair bit of it is laid out in the Canons, but we're going to be as creative as we can." More will come in 2008: "But the Installation, when I actually become Diocesan Bishop, will be very creative. I'm hoping people are looking forward to the Installation as a time when we can really celebrate as a Diocese."

Michael will appreciate his time as "Apprentice Bishop," or Coadjutor Bishop with Bishop Ralph: "It's made taking on this work much easier," despite the "fear and trembling."

TO BE CONTINUED IN OCTOBER

# Is it working for us?

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

Speaking of the possible schism in the Anglican Communion and suggesting that this is a reality already beyond repair, Nelson begins his piece with a bold question: "...I ponder why we care? Why do we put such value on an anachronism of the colonial age?" He goes on to say, "To hang on to historical relationships out of sentimentality may be more about our fear of change and forming new relationships than their usefulness. Ultimately, does such sentimentality block us from becoming a church for the future instead of a monument to the past?" To quote another source unbeknownst to me, "Them's fightin' words!"

## Missing hope for the future

It would seem that Nelson has reached the point where he is ready to make the grand cut—the incision that will excise some of us from the Anglican Communion. Interestingly enough, however, he seems to be suggesting that we should be doing this, not because another part of the communion is forcing the issue and wants those of us who are progressive out of the fold; instead, because by now those of us who are progressive should have recognized that per-

haps such a move actually would procure rather than hinder the advancement of what is true gospel. The essence of his article is that the Anglican Communion—what he calls a vestige of the British Commonwealth—no longer has much meaning and purpose. Although he doesn't use the word, in fact, it would seem he regards the Anglican Communion as having become redundant. Speaking of New Zealand and the New Zealand Anglican Church, Nelson says, "Hoping that our historic ties to England can preserve a Communion so culturally and theologically divided is wishful thinking at best and destructive of vision and hope at worst." While he refers to the church in his own country, I think his words also reflect our situation in Canada. As we desperately hang on to a vestige of the past, holding it up as some kind of sacred cow, we may well be missing some refreshing hope for the future.

The reality about a hysterectomy is that the reason the surgery takes place is that the uterus has become redundant, at best, and afflicting, at worst. Let's face it, generally speaking, the surgery only takes place by the time the redundancy is anything but benign. Usually, the build-up to the operation has meant a series of one problem

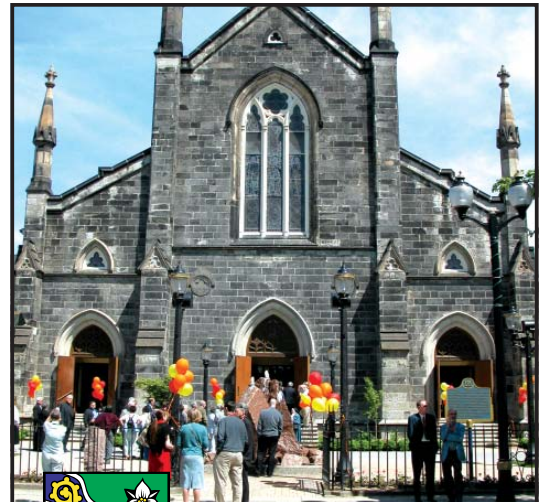
after another. By the time a decision is reached to make the grand cut, the person having the surgery is quite anxious to have the procedure over and done. I know I certainly was!

## New ways of being church

Like millions of other households in the United States and Canada, I regret to say that ours is not unfamiliar with Dr. Phil. One of our favourite quotes from this North American guru is, "Is it workin' for ya?"

We need to ask ourselves, is the Anglican Communion working for us? Is it enabling us to proclaim the gospel or has it become more of a hindrance than a help? Yes, there is a sense of loss. Yes, there is a nostalgia about the past. And yes, there is the painful acceptance that what was may never be again. Yet there also may be a sense of hope for new lines of connection and communication, new ways of being the church; a sense of hope in what might lie ahead, a hope that is only made possible by letting go of what already has been and getting on with what actually might be.

Is it possible that church unity exists in a size, colour and style that none of us has ever asked or imagined?



## The Diocese of Niagara announces with great joy

The Episcopal Ordination  
(Consecration)  
of **Michael A. Bird**

Sunday, September 30, 2007 at 7:30 pm

Christ's Church Cathedral, Hamilton Ontario

Due to limited seating - tickets will be required for admission

The Liturgy will be broadcasted live on the internet at  
[www.niagara.anglican.ca/webcast/](http://www.niagara.anglican.ca/webcast/)

# This is my story

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

Losing lets you find. Living leads to dying, but life leaves death behind. Losing leads to finding, that's all that I can say. No one will find life any other way."

Immediately after the Festival another opportunity for growth came along, again initiated by the friend that I would call the most visionary I have known, John Lidgley. Aware that St. John's was on a plateau, neither growing in numbers nor in spirituality, John and David Little (the very model of a humble life lived for Christ), formed a committee called The Futures Study Group. Members of the Group included parishioners of all ages, rookies and veterans, men and women. Through church visits, seminars and extensive reading, the Group gradually found a way to get our church back on track. A turning point in our deliberations occurred when one member stated what should have been obvious, but wasn't. The revelation that "God is in charge" revitalized our efforts. Our burden suddenly became light as Jesus inspired us forward.

The next opportunity that came my way was called the David Gordon Stewardship program. This diocesan initiative included lots of strategies to mobilize people's resources of time, talent and treasure. But the real impact on me, and many others, was again the simple message that "God is in charge". The fundamental principal of the

stewardship program was that everything we have and everything we are is a gift from God, and that God expects us to be good stewards of what He has given us. We are to use our hands, feet, and every other part of ourselves to act on His behalf.

Another opportunity came along just two years ago. I felt called to help out with the youth ministry at our church. Though less than half my age, the Director of Youth, Erin Biggs, has modeled Christian living for me. She makes being a Christian seem like the most natural thing in the world. She lives as if she really believes that God is in charge. One aspect of the youth program is mentoring. My two charges, only one-quarter of my age, have taught me a lot over the past two years. Their comfort with open Bible study and prayer in the midst of the general public at Tim Horton's is an example of soft evangelism. People sometimes come up to us and ask what we are doing. I'd like to tell you that we answer, "being Jesus' hands and feet," but the fact is that our answers are usually more mundane. Our mentoring sessions are mutual growth experiences. We truly learn from each other. I think that our youth program is another example of treating youth as full members of the Body, rather than members in training, and I feel good about that.

A major example of people trying to act as Jesus' hands and feet

is the work being done to improve the life of Haitians at Hôpital Albert Schweitzer in Deschappelles, Haiti. Hal and Adrienne Devins invited Susan and me to participate in a work team at the hospital in October of 2006. It was a sobering experience, seeing how people live in a third world country. I was inspired by the dignity of the Haitian people and by the selfless professional work of staff from Haiti, Europe and North America. It was perhaps my most poignant example of people taking the call to act on Jesus' behalf seriously.

My story would not be complete without referring to the influence of my favourite author, C. S. Lewis. He literally used his hands to write about Christianity. Imagine having the ability to inspire millions of people towards a life with Christ. Lewis had a way of making Christian principals very clear (especially in "Mere Christianity"), but he also had a way of stressing that living out those principals may not be easy (especially in "The Screwtape Letters").

God has had a hand in every aspect of my life. He has used many people as His hands and feet in influencing my journey and He has made it clear to me that he expects me to act for others. In a sense I think the sculptor, with his extraordinary depiction of Jesus, used his hands in an indirect but very real way to help "the least" among us. The sculptor's story, my story, your story... they are all just part of Jesus' story.

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