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During a time when some of our brothers and sisters in the church are working toward separation because of differing views, it is very interesting that the writers in our paper are calling us to growth and unity beyond our imagining. A new way of being Christian (Basbaum); encouraging dialogue with other Christians and other religions (Bothwell, Burslem); opening the doors to new metaphors and understandings of faith and prayer (Johnson, Thompson); understanding and accepting our differences (Darlington, Westall), openness to new incarnations of faith beyond our traditional understandings (Tatarnic) and much more are all ideas expressed in this edition. Almost every author is calling us to hopeful reform. This edition is one to read carefully and slowly as we continue our journey as an Anglican Church in these hopeful times!

A mature attitude toward other faiths

JOHN BOTHWELL
RETIRED ARCHBISHOP OF NIAGARA

In my files, I came across an old Church of England report on "Salvation". It outlined three main attitudes amongst Christians towards other Faiths, and I want to review them and add a comment:

■ Many believe our Christian Faith is exclusive; that Divine approval and humanity's salvation are available exclusively through Jesus Christ and His redeeming work in the Cross and Resurrection. Therefore members of other religions may be good, even noble people, but they are not assured of God's acceptance unless they are converted to Christ.

■ Other Christians are convinced that our Faith is inclusive. This is a gentler view, for although it insists that salvation is certain only through Christ, it recognizes that God is merciful and may find reasons to accept and save non-Christians, especially if they are "invincibly ignorant" of Christian teaching, i.e. totally unaware of its content and implications.

■ Finally, there is a minority of Chris-

tians who endorse "Christian Pluralism" and affirm the supremacy of Christian Faith only for those who understand it. They believe that all religions tend to be "culture bound"; and since the one true God is just and compassionate, surely He (or She) reveals Himself to different people in a manner that is appropriate to their own culture and circumstances.

The third view is the one I espouse personally; and Father Harry Williams, an Anglican monastic, in his autobiography entitled "Some Day I'll Find Me", elaborates this pluralist view, in this way:

"Religion is like language. You can't speak language in general; you have to speak a particular language. So religions can't be amalgamated into one universal religion. Religions have to be particular and will be conditioned by (as well as conditioning) the cultural mould in which they were formed.

"The various religions don't in the end, all say the same thing. The experts in comparative religion are quite certain about that. When attempts are made to describe "the infinite", who

would expect the same thing to be said by all people and cultures?"

"It is arguable that you can't say exactly the same thing in English and German, since each language has its own history and package of associations. And if that is literally true of languages, how much more must it be true of the various languages of religion? It is by their own religion people must be fed. But if they are to keep a sense of proportion, they will always bear in mind that no one religion can be the judge and referee of others."

Exclusivist Christians often quote St. John's Gospel 14:6, "Jesus said, I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except by me". However, Pluralist Christians may respond that earlier in the very same chapter, in St. John 14:22, Jesus said, "In My Father's House are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you."

Mature faith is confident, but never can be so certain that it feels able to render final judgement. That right is God's alone. And that is just one reason why dialogue with different views of faith is always very important.

The metaphor is the message



ELEANOR JOHNSTON
ST. THOMAS, ST. CATHARINES

Imagine an astronaut looking at earth from a space station and, with powerful binoculars, seeing a person standing on the steps of the Cathedral in Hamilton. Shortly after watching the earth turn, he or she sees another per-



I looked and looked but I didn't see God.

Yuri Gagarin, first person in space, 1961

son in front of the Cathedral in Sydney. The astronaut would easily recognize that "up" for the Canadian is the opposite direction from "up" for the Australian. And nowhere "above" the earth's clouds would the astronaut see

heaven. References to "up in heaven" express a pre-Copernican worldview that is still a common metaphor used in churches. Yet, with our scientific education, we find it difficult to picture God in heaven above the clouds and the Devil in hell below the earth's crust.

Then where is God? If we look more closely at our use of metaphor—the literary device of substituting one word for another, for example, "My love is a red, red rose—we see that the words which express our faith are inevitably metaphorical because "God" is beyond both our comprehension and our attempts to explain "him." Liberal Christians want to modernize the metaphors taken literally by many conservatives because the old way, so contradictory to our understanding of the universe, is leading the Church to oblivion. Conservatives are convinced that the rejection of traditional words for and about God is tantamount to the complete rejection of God.

» CONTINUED ON PAGE 18

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PARISH NEWS



Good Friday Walkathon at St. John's, Port Dalhousie

BARB STONE
ST. JOHN'S, PORT DALHOUSIE

It is now a yearly tradition for the parishioners of St. John's Anglican Church in Port Dalhousie to 'Walk with the PWRDF' on Good Friday.

Born out of the sad loss of her dear friend Becky Stone-Purcer in 1994, Doreen Hayward started a Good Friday Walkathon in 1995 at St. John's in celebration of Becky's life, and as a fund-raiser for the Primate's World Relief & Development Fund (somehow dear to Becky's heart during the horrible times of Rwanda in 1994). Over the 14 years since then, the parishioners and friends of St. John's continue to raise over \$1,000.00 each year. And this year is no exception.

It has been my privilege for the past several years to carry on the tradition of organizing the Walk. Following our 'Stations of the Cross' service in the Church at noon, our walkers gathered in the lower hall for Hot Cross Buns and refreshments, amidst the squeals of the little toddlers and the excited barks of many of our four-footed friends. And this year our Youth Director, Sonya Bolek, had arranged for her 'kids' in the Discovery Club to meet,

make, and bake 51 little Hot Cross Buns to share in the day. They were delicious!

Over the years we have expanded the walk to be for 'all dear loved ones now passed on', while at the same time continuing to raise monies for the PWRDF.

Before heading out this year, we gathered with Canon Gordon Kinkley for prayers for the work of the Primate's World Relief & Development Fund, and the precious lives of our loved ones. This year we read the names of 46 now moved on to a higher life. A very poignant moment on a Good Friday day.

Then it was off on our walk. Two of our teen-aged boys, Michael Sobchak and Stefan Rowland, took turns carrying our wooden cross (beautifully hand-crafted several years ago by the late George Cook), as over 75 walkers of all ages and stages, the little ones in strollers, wagons, or on scooters, and of course our very happy four-footed friends barking along the way as we left the church. We headed down thru the streets of old Port Dalhousie, waving to many friends along the way, and soon we reached the harbour on a bril-

liantly sunny day. Some of the more enthusiastic climbed the high mounds of snow still along the way and acted as our scouts. The cars were very co-operative in stopping as our long procession crossed the intersections, with many drivers waving in greeting. These walks are a grand time to catch up on stories of one another's lives as we chatter along our way. Our route varies a little each year, depending on weather conditions or how adventure-some our walkers are.

Then it was back to the church hall where our very decided Kitchen Crew headed up by Bev Morris, Jean Winram and Betty & Ed Storosko provided us with sumptuous hot dogs and refreshments. A wonderful time for fun and fellowship, with no one in a hurry to leave.

All monies pledged thru our Pledge Sheets, or donated on the day, go directly to the PWRDF and the incredible work they do throughout the world. This tradition has become a very meaningful part of many of our parishioners' Easter Weekend celebrations each year—a time for remembrance, and a time to reach out to help those in need.



St. Luke's wonderful organist moves on

WALTER RAYBOLD
ST. LUKE'S, HAMILTON

On March 30 Saint Luke's Hamilton held a farewell reception for their departing organist Zachary Windus.

Zach, as he is known around the parish, has tickled the ivories, pushed and pulled the stops and kicked the pedals on Saint Luke's antique Spencer Tracker as organist and music director and behold, made beautiful music unto the Lord. Now to fur-

ther his education he is moving on to another tracker in Burlington's Holy Rosary Church.

As a renowned countertenor Zach was often included in the singing of the cantors to great effect. As a composer in training we got to hear some wonderful new works. As a Christian he was an example to us. As a wonderful young fellow he became one of the family to the congregation. As a parish we were blessed.

Reaching deep into the heart of outreach

Church of the Incarnation to host justice workshop

SUSAN CURRAN
CHURCH OF THE INCARNATION

On Saturday May 31, the Reverend Maylanne Maybee will lead a workshop at the Church of the Incarnation, Oakville, in conjunction with the Division of Outreach of the Niagara Diocese, titled "Faith, Justice and Charity: Reaching deep into the heart of outreach".

Reverend Maybee is the Coordinator for Justice Education and Networks for the Anglican Church of Canada. Prior to joining the staff at the national church, she worked as a teacher, a community minister, and a coordinator for a network of people and organizations addressing the issues of homelessness and urban poverty across Canada. The workshop will explore the concepts of charity versus justice, review how the gospel calls us to transformative justice, and help

develop tools for parishes to enhance their outreach efforts by encouraging a justice-oriented approach.

The Church of the Incarnation came into being in 1987, and from the outset, the small parish committed to donating a significant portion of its budget to outreach programs. Over the intervening years, we have supported community and diocesan food banks, a local center for troubled youth, and participated in a Habitat for Humanity build in Burlington.

We have also sponsored 2 refugee families and rejoiced as they became Canadian citizens. Last fall, many members attended a fundraiser for Home Suite Hope, which provides transitional housing for individuals and families affected by homelessness in our community.

» CONTINUED ON PAGE 13

All Saints in Hamilton to host concert

DOROTHY TILBURY
ALL SAINTS, HAMILTON

Internationally renowned performers Valerie Tryon (piano) and Martin Beaver (violin) will give a recital at All Saints Anglican Church (corner of King and Queen Sts in Hamilton) on Tuesday, May 27 at 7:30 PM.

Valerie Tryon has been an audience favourite for many years both around the world and in Hamilton where her

brilliant technique and sensitive interpretations have been much acclaimed. In addition to her many recordings, she is the recipient of several major international awards and honours.

Martin Beaver has won accolades for his recordings and for his performances in solo, recital and chamber music. A prize winner in international competitions, he is known most recently as first violin of the renowned

Tokyo String Quartet which performs extensively in concert halls around the world.

Tickets cost \$25.00 and will be on sale as of April 21, 2008. Staff will be available at the Church from 9:00 AM until 12:00 PM for ticket inquiries. Voicemail is also available by calling 905-527-5673. All proceeds will go to the continuing ministry of All Saints Church.

The road to Damascus



PAUL SHERWOOD
RECTOR, ST. PAUL'S, DUNNVILLE & THE DUNN PARISH

On March 13 at 10:00 AM the people of St Paul's Dunnville were delighted to have Bishop Michael Bird officiate at the official opening of our new Damascus Fair Trade Café—ably assisted by the Archdeacon of Brock, Lynne Corfield.

The Damascus Café is open every Thursday between 10:00 AM and 1:00 PM. We are staffed by volunteers and serve only Fair Trade certified Coffee, Tea and sugar.

Visitors can also indulge themselves with a variety of muffins, cakes and cookies, home baked by our wonderful skilled Dunnville cooks!

The Café came to fruition following my charge to our annual Vestry (my first in Canada) where I described my vision of the kind of community that I hoped St. Paul's would strive to be. Our fivefold vision is to be a Mis-

sionary, Compassionate, Learning, Expectant and Generous Community.

The opening of a Fair Trade café on our Church site seemed to fulfil all aspects of this vision.

Our Café is missionary in its purpose to open the doors of our Church and reach out to the wider community offering a warm welcome to all.

Our Café is compassionate in its purpose to offer people a safe place to come and be refreshed, listened to and valued. Through supporting Fair Trade we are also demonstrating our Christian compassion to our sisters and brothers in developing countries by giving them a fair price for their labour and produce.

Our Café offers opportunities for people to learn about the Fair Trade movement and issues of social justice in the world and the reasons why Christians would care about such things.

Our Café is part of our being an Expectant community, in that we have looked at our Church and how we can utilize our building and other resources at our disposal, trusting that God will show us fresh ways (expressions) of working for his kingdom.

Above all the Damascus Café affirms our commitment as a parish to respond to God's generosity towards us by responding in kind to the needs of those in our parish and across the globe.

The Damascus Café was so named because of the link with the patron saint of our parish.

But it is our sincere prayer that, just as Saint Paul had a life-changing encounter with Jesus on the road to Damascus, people who come to the Damascus Café will also encounter the love of Christ in the welcome they receive and the fellowship we share.

Size matters



MICHAEL THOMPSON
RECTOR, ST. JUDE'S OAKVILLE

"What do you miss about your dad?" I was driving our daughter back to university and, as is often the case, an extended time in the proximity afforded us by the front seat of a car had deepened the conversation. Rachel had asked me what I

That's the thing about Jesus—he could look at something little and understand how big it really was.

was thinking about, and because I travelled this particular highway to my parents' home after news of my father's death, it's a pretty safe bet that sometime in the trip I will think of him.

There are things about my father that I miss, but some of them I missed already while he was still living. The changes in the relationship between a son and his father are the stuff of many stories. One of the things I miss about him is actually something I miss about me—I miss being *little*. I miss being pulled in a wagon, pushed in a shopping cart. I miss being picked up and embraced.

I miss wrestling with my father early on Saturday morning. I miss walking with my hand stuck up into his hand and the absolute certainty that I was with the right person on the way to the right place. It's not easy having to decide for yourself what place is the right place all the time.

It's not that I object to being a grown-up; it's just that not everything about being a grownup is an improvement over being little. I need places and times to be little, and I think that's true for pretty well any of us.

I need big sky. Under a big sky, I can be little again. In town, the sky is not so big. What's big in town is us and the stuff we've built. But seeing the Northern Lights under a frozen prairie sky, it becomes clear that there's something much bigger going on.

I need big water. On the shore of Lake Superior as the storm moves across the water, picks it up and hurls it at you, standing there, an elemental force of vastness and great power offers a more modest sense of one's size.

I need big mountains. Remembering that the earth pushed these stone children from her belly, and gasping at their size and durability, I am not just allowed, but absolutely required, to be little.

Big music—from Joan Jett and the Blackhearts to Handel's "Comfort ye my people". Game seven, overtime. Vast silence, darkness, distances. We find our transcendence where we can.

There's a difference between being little and not mattering. When I was four years old, my dad was

transcendent. And though I was little, I never felt as if I didn't matter. His transcendence wasn't distant, careless or indifferent. Being little with my transcendent dad is, as I reflect, one of the best things I have ever been.

I got bigger, and for the longest time, my father lost his transcendence. Along the way, I've had to develop a way to find what you might call "hidden bigness". Along the way, I've had to cultivate a kind of attentiveness to the ordinary that opens my eyes and heart to its true scope. It helps to have stood, for example, at the beginning and the end of something, to have officiated at the wedding of a young couple on Saturday, and then, a few days later, to have stood at the grave that marked the grievous end of a long true love. The hidden bigness in both events is clearer when I see them as part of a single story. Sometimes, maybe often, what seems small shelters something very big indeed. I think Jesus knew that when he told the stories he told. I think he meant for us to learn that the whole vastness of the Kingdom of God could be found by careful consideration of a mustard seed. That's the thing about Jesus—he could look at something little and understand how big it really was.

The parable of the mustard seed shows up in all three synoptic gospels. But only in Mark does the mustard seed grow into mustard. In Luke and Matthew it grows into something impossible—a mustard *tree*, with birds nesting in its branches. Only Mark lets the little seed grow into a shrub, with birds nesting *under* its branches. A little seed, a shrub, a little thing, really. Unless you are, say, a ground-nesting bird. Then the little shrub is very big indeed. Like Matthew and Luke, it's sometimes easy for us to miss the bigness of a little thing.

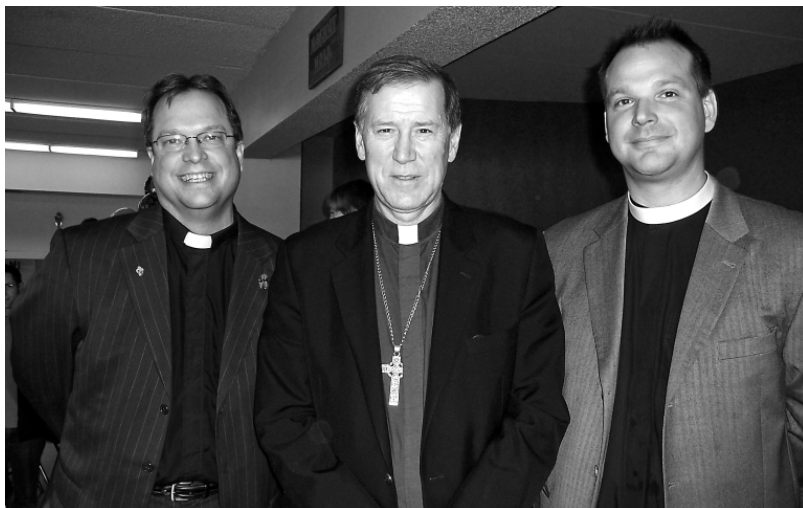
I like that Jesus could see something little and understand its hidden bigness. And I like that he could *be* something little—a single frail and mortal human person in a universe of danger, death and beauty—and in the course of that small life reveal the vast beauty, truth and glory hidden in all our little lives.

While those around him sought greatness size in status, stuff, and power, and even as they sought to reduce him, to "take him down a peg", to "bring him down to size", he laid claim to the human greatness that is waiting to be called into being out of all our little lives.

In the Apostles' Creed, we recite these words about Jesus—"He will come to judge the living and the dead." For the longest time, the emphasis was on the judging. I needed to think carefully about what I was choosing, because my choices, and I myself, would be judged. The more I think about it, though, that's not news at all. We are all being judged, all the time. Are we young enough, strong enough, smart enough, kind enough, big enough, moral enough, clever enough? And whole sectors of the marketplace thrive on their ability to convince us that we are not. No, the news here is not that we will be judged, but who will do the judging.

Jesus will come to judge the living and the dead. I like that. Size matters. Jesus judges.

Primate visits St. Simon's



Archbishop Fred Hiltz (primate), pictured with The Rev. Jeff Ward (left) and Canon Darcey Lazerte (right), visits St. Simon's parish in Oakville.

Are comas and head injuries treatable?

FOSTER ZANUTTO
HEADWAY HOMES

The short answer is YES! The long answer was presented by internationally acclaimed researchers and experts in cognitive neuroscience, Dr. Mihai Dimancescu and Dr. John Connolly, at a community symposium presented in 2007 and sponsored by Headway Homes Inc. in partnership with Gluckstein & Associates. In their comprehensive presentations, Drs. Dimancescu and Connolly showed evidence from their scientific studies that with the proper stimulation and recovery program, individuals who have been severely brain injured or are in coma (even those in coma for sev-

eral years) can recover mental abilities and functions.

This information and evidence was very inspiring to the Board of Directors and community supporters of Headway Homes, who have been working for many years to establish and build the first Headway Home for individuals living with severe brain injury in Ontario. Headway Homes is an organization dedicated to establishing a model residence in the Niagara area for people with severe head injury, with a goal of creating a model that is suitable for duplication in other communities in Ontario. Headway Homes is operated by a Board of Directors with Mrs. Jean Vandenbelt of Fonthill

as the founding and current Chair of the Board.

The inspiration for Headway Homes came from the serious brain injury which caused severe brain damage to Jean and Henry Vandenbelt's son Carl in a 1988 automobile accident. Jean and Henry endured very difficult times fighting for appropriate care and treatment for Carl, taking him as far as Texas and Pennsylvania for care and rehabilitation, and ending up renovating their home and bringing him home for care through paid medical staff and his family. Carl was home for 12 years and sadly, on July 8, 2003, we lost Carl, who died after surviving his brain injury for 15 years.

Headway Homes wants to build and operate homes to serve the needs and to help rehabilitate individuals like Carl of which there are approximately 400 in the Province of Ontario. These brain injured individuals are now housed in chronic care beds in hospitals, in private homes and in nursing homes. Often, they are not receiving the care and attention they need in institutions, and in private homes caregivers are aging and will not be able to continue caring for their loved ones.

Headway Homes asks your assistance in helping us identify potential candidates for our homes and services, so that we can involve them in our quest to gain government support for our pro-

ject and plans. If you know of anyone who is living with a severe brain injury and might be a candidate for our first home, please contact us at 905-714-9824 or 905-732-3267 or go to our website www.headwayhomes.org.

We need your support and assistance. If you are able to lobby on our behalf with the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care, we would be very happy to hear from you. If you are interested in joining our Board of Directors or roster of volunteers, or if you can donate financially to our cause, please contact us by phoning Jean Vandenbelt at 905-714-9824 or 905-732-3267.

Sacred Water

LAURA MARIE PIOTROWICZ
ASSOCIATE PRIEST - ASCENSION, HAMILTON

Have you ever thought about where your water comes from? We here in Niagara Diocese are blessed with an abundance of water. There are lakes, stream and Niagara Falls! Hamilton has more waterfalls per capita than any other city.

Have you ever turned on your tap and wondered how the water got to be in the piping systems, safe to consume? Or what happens to it after it goes down the drain? Have you ever thanked God when you turn the tap and a miracle flows out?

Water is indeed a gift from God. It's a miracle. It's very molecular structure alone does not follow the regular behavioural pattern in chemistry; if it did, life would not be possible on this planet. Water is the only molecule which, when frozen, becomes less dense than when thawed—if ice sank instead of floating, our lakes and rivers would never fully thaw, eventually killing water creatures and denying the hydrological cycle. The simple complexity of the hydrological cycle is profound, that water molecules are constantly in motion throughout the environment, through natural systems which (when not interrupted or impeded by human activity) clean and distribute this resource as it is needed.

So why is it that we are ignoring the wonder that is water? We have become complacent and expect our water to be plentiful and safe, paying our taxes and our water bills so someone else can worry about it, so that we are not required to consider it. But how is it filtered? In this diocese we do not have any tertiary filtering of our drinking water. Our waste is filtered only minimally before being returned to the ecosystem. What if we lived as most of the developing world does?

Near Tenente Portela, in southern Brazil, the aboriginal Guarani community has one small stream as their water source. This stream is influenced by the non-aboriginal industry some 10 km away, and the people are starting to find visible objects in their water, making it dangerous to them and their survival. The community of Ndolage in north-western Tanzania, suffering from an extreme

and expanding drought, celebrates the rain by placing buckets out to collect the water for when the reservoir is too low—a more and more frequent occurrence. The waterfall which supplies their electrical power is reduced to a trickle, meaning that the community lives without power for most of the day, and will increasingly have to do without.

What if we had to collect and filter our own water? Would we have enough? Would we still have those long hot showers? Water our grass? Highly unlikely.

Let's consider the role of water in our liturgy—and respect the sacred mystery that is water. We use water in our Eucharist, as part of the blessed element of communion. We recently used water in the foot washing of Maundy Thursday. Every baptism involves the use of water representing the death to sin and resurrection of new life. What if our water was unclean? Would we drink the common cup if we knew there were dangerous chemicals in it? Would we want to see a dirty and germ-ridden resource in the font being used to clean an infant from all sins? Would you allow your foot to share space in a bowl with dead fish and garbage?

We as a people are called to recognise the beauty in creation—we are called to see the sacred aspects of all forms of life. Water IS life—without it nothing can exist. Our tradition celebrates that all of life came to be from water (Gen 1:2), being called into being through the pulsating, hovering energy that is God that is present over the waters. If God can choose water as a medium for the basis of creation, we can choose to protect this sacred element.

Our very bodies are significantly made up of water. What if we acknowledged that ongoing presence of the breath of God over every molecule of water within us—the winds, the power of the divine, at work within us—making us fully sacred because of the sacredness of water? It is a powerful thought, and a powerful feeling to know that we carry with us at all times the breath of God, the creative force of the divine, calling us to care for everything that is sacred—that is, everything that has life.

We must be magnanimous



SUSAN C. HUXFORD-WESTALL
ALL SAINTS, HAMILTON

One of my favourite anthems ever since I became a chorister in my mid-twenties, after my return from the Second World War, is Henry Purcell's "Rejoice in the Lord always": *"Rejoice in the Lord always, And again I say, Rejoice! Let your moderation be known unto all men" (Philippians 4).*

After many visits to the officers' clubs during the war I knew something of the art of holding the bar up. I therefore interpreted moderation in the sense of sobriety—don't let your alcohol consumption be excessive.

In more recent years I have had to revise my thinking. The KJV uses the word "moderation" but the RSV uses "forbearance" and so to the dictionary. The Concise Oxford gives *"forbear, v.t. & i. Abstain or refrain from; not use or mention; be patient."* Okay for alcohol—but *be patient?* A completely new concept. So how should the original Greek be translated? The result is confusion. Moffatt used "forbearance", as does the RSV. The NEB uses "magnanimity". The JB uses "tolerance" NIV uses "gentleness". For me, "gentleness" is too soft; I want something with more strength in it. "Tolerance" is much more what I am looking for, but "magnanimity"? Back to the dictionary and "magnanimous": *High-souled and above petty feelings. Ah, that's what I want!*

I can claim to have been a geographer. During a long chat with the Rev. Fran Darlington last night she mentioned that the Provinces of Nigeria, Uganda and Kenya have determined not to attend this year's Lambeth Conference. I added Central Africa. As I lay in bed meditating this morning I pictured the map of Africa: there before my eyes was a great mark across the middle of the continent, a great stretch of land which comprises Sub-Saharan Africa. I looked at the extremities of this area: in the east, Somalia; in the west Sierra Leone and Liberia—all of which have been,

or are still, torn by violent civil wars. What has gone wrong?

I can also claim some experience in counselling. On my retirement and on adopting a new identity I found myself counselling persons suffering from what is known as Gender Dysphoria. Later I found myself working among people who were recovering from mental disorders, "nervous breakdowns", schizophrenia, bi-polar disorders, all listed in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders.

I have come to realise that most if these disorders are part of a human defence mechanism whereby our bodies, our nervous systems, make adjustments for the strains and stresses of modern life. Drugs and alcoholism are escape mechanisms by which people try to escape from the problems with which they are faced in life. Some gay men try to escape by wishing they were female.

What are the social strains that have been afflicting Africa? Firstly, there has been the new-found release from colonialism and the artificial boundaries that imperialists set up to mark off their own territorial acquisitions without regard for tribal territories. Secondly, there has been the struggle for power among tribes finding themselves living in the same new-born independent state. Thirdly, there has been the need to balance tribal traditions against the intruding concept of Western democracy. As if these had not been enough, nature intruded with a fourth problem—a new disease, HIV/AIDS.

Among peoples who for generations had considered homosexuality as a mental disorder—as has been the case for generations in Western society and is still considered as such by a few diehard psychologists—it is hardly surprising that these societies resorted to a form of defence mechanism. They denied the existence of HIV/AIDS. This state of mind existed for decades since the appearance of AIDS in the latter half of the last century. The government of the Republic of South Africa, denied its existence as did states across the centre of the continent. Peculiarly enough, research scientists traced the origin of AIDS to the consumption of monkey flesh in certain tribal

rites in Africa, where the disease first occurred.

What has this to do with the Anglican Provinces of Sub-Saharan Africa? What was Christianity's first reaction to AIDS? Was not the knee-jerk reaction of many Christians to say that AIDS was God's punishment for sexual perversion? The gay community got blamed for it by a society that had no idea as to how or where the epidemic had started. They knew only that it was spread by sexual activity. The most susceptible to the disease have been women who have had no control over their menfolk. The defence mechanism of societies dominated by the male sex has been to deny the presence of the epidemic among their own people. It has now become obvious that such a reaction is no longer tenable, but what happens in a society that still cannot accept homosexuality? Has it not turned to the defence of its religious beliefs?

Christianity has grown rapidly in countries such as Nigeria during the last century. There are now more Anglicans in Nigeria than there are in the United Kingdom, the home of Anglicanism, but this majority is concentrated in the southern half of the country. The northern part is dominated by the Hausa tribe who are convinced Moslems. Kenya and Uganda are neighbours to the Sudan, a militant Moslem country with a history of antipathy to the West since the nineteenth century. The Saharan region is a dominantly Moslem region. The present turmoil in Somalia is fuelled by Moslem militancy and Ethiopian (Coptic Christian) interference.

The Christian churches of Sub-Saharan Africa are on the defensive against a militant Islam. Islam condemns homosexuality; the Christian Church cannot be seen to defend it in the face of traditional beliefs. The Anglican Churches of Sub-Saharan Africa feel that they cannot be seen to condone the acceptance of homosexuality by attending a conference which might be dominated by churches prepared to accept some degree of homosexuality. Such action would be a threat to their own stability in their Provinces and could give rise to the strength of fundamentalist Islam.

Let your magnanimity be known to all people.



The human spirit is at stake



MARTHA TATARNIC
PRIEST, ST. JUDES, OAKVILLE

The writing is on the wall. Seats full of grey haired people. Dwindling numbers. Apathy. Desperate measures. The Music Industry is in trouble.

I see it every time I open *Rolling Stone* magazine and read about the tanking record sales, the folding labels, the massive lay-offs of executives,



The history of the Church bears witness to a vast spectrum of incarnations which have worked.

agents, talent scouts within the ranks of the most gigantic and successful of music conglomerates. Sure, there is the advent of I-tunes and the sale of digital music downloads, but the revenue isn't comparable. And why buy the cow when you can get the milk for free? There is a world-wide web full of free music for the taking.

I see it when I get together with friends. Friends who at one time were as passionately interested in new music as I am, who followed the latest releases, ran to the music stores as soon as a hot album came out, shared interesting bands, singles, albums, they had come across. And now they half-heartedly listen to Top 40 radio and couldn't tell you the last time they bought a new CD.

I see it at my band concerts. When I look out in the audience and see a homogeneously aging demographic and wonder whether in twenty years there will be anybody to play to. The costs of running a non-profit amateur music ensemble are on the rise, most local music groups now have to charge hefty membership fees as well as engage in perpetual fundraising, and the audiences consist in great part of the members' friends and families, members therefore paying for audience tickets out of their own wallets in order to have someone to play for. How long will this be sustainable?

There are many reasons for these trends. The internet has been the bane of the music industry's existence for at least a decade with the invention of file-sharing programs like Napster and the proliferation of cheap user-friendly

technology that allows individuals to burn their own CDs. In the case of my friends, interests change as people get older—when you're paying a mortgage and raising kids, you have less time and money to be hunting down interesting bands and quality albums. And my community band faces challenges on numerous fronts. To name just two: decline in public school music programs which feed into adult ensembles, and the increasing competition of operating in the GTA when tickets to a professional orchestra or band are available a go-train ride away for a similar cost.

But underlying these explanations would be one simple reason. Music is cheap. In our world, music is cheap. Over the past hundred years, music has shifted from an activity in which people engage to an item people consume. Our relationship to music has become passive rather than active. And music is everywhere. It is not just available for free over the internet, it is blaring out of our cars, our stores, the hair salon, restaurants, through tiny state-of-the-art quality earphones, onto our city streets. It is ours for the taking, requiring no skill, no money, no effort, no discernment, to acquire. It is a commodity, cleverly packaged, re-packaged, hyped-up, glammed-up, and shoved down our throats so incessantly, that it becomes valueless. Background noise. Not much else.

There are parallels to the Church. These are similar trends to the ones that we have been observing in the Church for several decades. How do we continue to renew our aging congregations? How do we engage a new generation of perpetually over-stimulated young people who have decreased attention spans and vastly increased access to the flashiest and most innovative technology? How do we get heard above the din of noise surrounding our people today? What does it mean that our churches are in competition with one another for the loyalty within a church-shopping-hopping consumer mentality?

What is at stake if we can't bridge these ever-widening gaps? There is good news here.

Because in the case of both the Church and the Music Industry, there is something at stake. And there is something that is not at stake. As people of faith, we are invited to know the difference, liberated by knowing the difference.

This is what is not at stake ultimately. What is not at stake is the success of the industry, the survival of the institution. History shows that

institutions have a shelf life. They grow. They grow into obesity. They collapse. They transform. They start again. The history of music reveals constant cycles of boom and bust through the centuries. The history of the Church likewise bears witness to a vast spectrum of incarnations which have worked—from clandestine house gatherings to meticulously organized global organizations—and then have not worked.

Despite the lessons of history, we believe that the institution is forever. We hang our hats on the seeming stability of buildings, popularity, income, regularity, regulation. And there will forever be evolving technology, shifting demographics, transient preferences and values and priorities. The ground will constantly be shifting under our feet.

But there is something truly at stake as well. The human spirit is at stake. The human spirit which needs to create; which needs to engage in the work of art—of collectively giving shape to the act of art through offering it, enjoying it, commenting on it, receiving it. Which needs to be opened to Other, to the incarnational and transcendental working of the Divine in our world, which needs to express something of the joy and pain and beauty of our mortal lives, which needs to participate in the redemption of that joy and pain and beauty through art, through prayer, through love, through imagination. Through all of those activities which open us to the working of the Creating God in our lives.

This is our work. We, as people of faith, stand in solidarity with artists, music-makers, writers, with all those creatively struggling to partner with the living God in giving voice to our redemption. We stand in solidarity because the institutional ground is shifting underneath us all:

- Because we are collectively threatened by a world in which the excess of consumable goods, the ever-increasing volume on the voices screaming for our attention, the accelerating competition to be the flashiest, newest, and coolest can numb us into life-draining apathy.
- Because as human beings we are created in the image of our Creative God.
- Because it is built into our DNA to sing our songs and tell our stories and actively and beautifully engage one another in growing our imaginations.
- Because it is the work of the Church to give ourselves to the project of reclaiming that divinely-stamped image.

Earth Week Challenge

A letter to the people of the Diocese of Niagara

At Youth Synod, 2007, one of the key motions pointed to our ever increasing consumption of oil and how it is adversely affecting our environment—from polluting the air we breathe and damaging our fragile Plant Earth to the human rights violations and battles of power and control related to the production and distribution of fossil fuels. The Diocese responded to the one of the clauses of the Youth Synod motion by designating ecojustice as the social justice theme of the 133rd Diocesan Synod. I write you in response to another clause that asked me to declare one Sunday (coupled with Earth Week) per year for Anglicans in Niagara to walk, cycle or carpool to church.

As Bishop of Niagara, I invite all Anglicans to walk, cycle, skate or carpool to work, to school, and to church in order to reduce our carbon footprint during the week of April 20-27. My own plans for the week include car pooling or walking whenever possible. I have found the hybrid vehicle I use in the course of my travels as Bishop to have been a good first step in my own personal commitment to this important initiative.

What's a carbon footprint and how do you measure it? Your parish can find more information about the global dependence on fossil fuels and what individuals and parishes can do to educate ourselves and reduce our carbon footprint at www.re-energize.org (a KAIROS project). Other resources can be found on our diocesan website.

I would love to hear stories from parishes about how you are utilizing blue boxes, green carts and other ways that contribute to a reduction in global warming. Tell me about your Earth Week actions. How are you greening your sacred space? We are called to care for one another and the earth, and I believe our efforts can impact ourselves, our communities and our world.

+Michael



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A safe place to become...

The empty tomb



GRAHAME STAP
RECTOR - ST. ALBAN, GLEN WILLIAMS

The empty tomb of Easter is why we go to church. It is the reason we have an opportunity to have everlasting life. It is what brings all Christians together. Yet sometimes we wonder if we have taken the Lord out of the tomb and we do not know where we have laid him, just as Mary said to the angel. It looks as if political intrigue and love of buildings takes precedence over all we do. At the present time we seem to be conflicted in all we do. It appears as if we have lost our sense of direction.

I believe this is the time like no other in our living experience when we need to rally together to forget our differences and support the Anglican Church as never before. We need to especially support the Diocese of Niagara and our Bishop Michael. It is not the time to lose sight of the empty tomb and turn from our church.

Our Easter celebrations at St. Alban were wonderful. From the sunrise service in the cemetery where the moon shone in the western sky, the sun slowly rose in the eastern sky and the frost crackled under our feet. About 90 people, Anglicans and United, praised God from whom all blessings flow. This was followed by a sharing of hot cross buns and hot chocolate, then the said 8:30 Eucharist followed by a

wonderful upbeat coral Eucharist and a church full of people.

However I was saddened by the absence of some people who regularly attended our Sunday services. When I called to say we missed them I was told, "We have left the Anglican church because of the problems." When I further asked if there leaving had to do with the blessing of same sex union I was told, "No we just cannot take all the infighting. We are too saddened by all that news in the papers." I asked them to return and help us weather the problems we are facing. They did not say yes but did say they would think about it. I hope and pray that they do return, because they, like all of us, need to feel the sense of wonder in the realization that the tomb is indeed empty and our petty squabbles, our political intrigue, and yes even our buildings pale when compared to the Empty Tomb and that just as Jesus found Mary, so Jesus will and does find us.

It is because of the empty tomb that we have not lost our sense of direction. We know that the direction is, and always will be, toward God through the empty tomb. We know that we have not taken the Lord out of the church he is risen and has opened the path to God for all people.

We know we are an inclusive church and that the love and grace of God knows no bounds. So let us go to our churches even more than before. Let us stand with a smile on our faces and the love of God in our hearts and know the future whatever it is, has no hold on us because of the indescribable wonder of the empty tomb.

Infinite worth among the ruins

JERRY SALLOUM
FORMER VICAR - ST. GEORGE'S, LOWVILLE

Recently, my wife and I had a brief vacation in a small town east of Toronto. Our accommodation was an attractive and comfortable Bed 'n' Breakfast that had recently been purchased and renovated by a retired couple. We learned from them that their residence was a century home that for many years had been allowed to fall into serious disrepair. So deteriorated in fact was its physical condition that, at the time of its listing, realtors expressed little interest in even mentioning the property to potential buyers.

The retired couple that purchased the B&B stumbled on this sad-looking home by accident. Completing a quick inspection of its dreary walls, worn carpets, blackened floors and rotting window frames, they surprised the realtor by deciding the place was "perfect". With little hesitation on the part of the owner, their offer to purchase was immediately accepted.

But why was it so perfect? What was the attraction? What would prompt someone to purchase something others considered so unattractive? Simply this: its appeal lay not in its appearance, but rather in its potential. It mattered little how it looked but rather, how it had been and what it could be. And so, soon after the purchase, this dwelling underwent a slow but radical transformation. Dreary walls received fresh paint; worn carpets were ripped up and discarded; blackened floors were sanded and varnished; rotting window frames were torn out and replaced. Slowly the house began to

take on a new appearance and reflect the care and vision of its new owners. In tiny increments, this slow metamorphosis began to reflect something of the dwelling's former glory.

Listening to the owners tell this tale caused me to reflect on an author who imagined a modern-day crowd of tourists gazing on the ancient and weathered ruins of the once-magnificent Parthenon sitting atop the Acropolis in Athens. Within this crowd stands the original designer and builder of the Greek temple. His facial expression differs from the expressions among other observers. While the crowd sees the Parthenon as it is and wonders how it was, the designer and builder grieves over how it is because of his vivid recollections of how it was.

Human lives are like houses. Living, moving and having our being amid destructive forces, we exist in various states of disrepair and brokenness. Not seldom do we refer to our lives as "messed up", "wrecked" or even "in ruins". Attempts at restoration, though often extensive, are at best cosmetic, feeble and temporary. Leaving us far short of what the Bible hints as our former glory, we are left yearning for a restoration that is both radical and permanent. Unfortunately, for many of us, such yearning appears as little more than a vain wish.

But what if? What if what was lost could be recovered? What if Someone were to come along, Someone similar to the buyers of that sad-looking dwelling. Someone like the builder of the Greek Parthenon, who is capable of seeing beyond appearance and remembering something called "for-

mer glory"? What if Someone out there had both the interest and the power to radically transform human wreckage, transform it permanently and convert it into a dwelling fit for Royalty? Sound preposterous?

From Holy Scripture, we read of such a One. His name is the Lord and we are His glorious ruins. Only He knows the true worth of the ruins. Mysteriously, we read that He purchased them all, not with money, but with blood. Only He is capable of the complex and extensive surgery needed to convert the ugly, the worn out and the broken into something of superb beauty.

The good news is that the scriptural verb describing this transformation is a *passive verb* signifying change that is anything but cosmetic. This passive verb describes action done TO us rather than action we initiate and complete ourselves. Moreover, this verb describes *continuous action in the present*. Continuous action in the present means that any transformation is gradual rather than instantaneous. That is, human transformation is the work of God, not our work, and this transformation is slow, not rapid. Somewhat like that old house east of Toronto? Yes, but far less cosmetic and far more permanent. The difference is that once restored, our ruins, which are far more glorious than any present-day dwelling or ancient temple, will never deteriorate again.

"And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit." (2 Corinthians 3:18)

Plato's soul, neurology, and growing up happy



COLIN C. M. CAMPBELL
DIOCESE OF NIAGARA

Far from being a primitive idea, left over from a supernatural age, Plato's concept of the soul is in complete agreement with the latest theories of neurology and child development. The Judeo-Christian idea of the soul



A wise parent nurtures her child by using dependence to develop, at first, independence, and then interdependence.

is different from Plato's and will be discussed in next month's article. Plato divided the soul into three parts: the appetite, the spirit, and the mind. Neurologists divide the brain into three parts: the reptilian brain controlling the appetites, the paleo-mammalian brain, corresponding to Plato's spirit, and the neocortex, which controls thinking; that is, the mind. How we understand the relationship between these three parts

determines whether we know how to make ourselves happy. Our healthy social development begins with dependence, and transitions to interdependence by way of independence. However, this can only occur if our spirit is nurtured appropriately.

Plato was of the opinion that the soul was a trichotomy of the appetites, the spirit, and the mind. He likened it to a chariot drawn by two horses, one willful and unruly; the other refined and obedient. The task of the charioteer was to restrain the unruly horse and to encourage the obedient one. The unruly horse corresponded to the appetites and the other horse to the spirit. Appetite and spirit received their direction from reason, corresponding to the charioteer.

From this model, Plato derived his four cardinal virtues and his ideal society. The appetites were restrained by temperance; the spirit was strengthened by courage; and the mind developed wisdom by the exercise of reason. The state of perfect behaviour, or justice, was attained, if all of the three other virtues were exercised perfectly. He believed that society required the same trichotomy. Workers would meet society's need for nourishment; its police and army would meet its need for protection; and a philosopher-king would meet its need for good governance.

According to neurophysiology, three-quarters of our brain consists

of the reptilian brain, which gives us messages that deal with our basic survival. Since mammals cannot survive alone, the paleo-mammalian brain, or limbic system, motivates them to form relationships, in order to protect each other. The limbic system overrides our reptilian brain's impulse to steal, for example, enabling us to work in groups. The neocortex enables mammals to perform tasks requiring precision and detail. Each individual learns how to use her gifts and how to coordinate them with others.

The history of the twentieth century has provided us with many spectacular examples of what can happen when the reptilian brain overrules the limbic system. Our modern technology, combined with totalitarian governments, has caused 170 million people to be murdered by the state (in the USSR, China, and Nazi Germany). Poor control of the sexual instinct is destroying the families of North America. Our propensity for evil is all too evident. Inhibitors of our reptilian brain derive from conscious thoughts, which derive, in turn, from moral training, provided for us by our parents. We are not born with this already in place. The Biblical insight that we are "sinners from our mother's womb," in this sense, is true. This raises the obvious question: are we then born wicked? If we think that we are, this raises the next awkward question: How can a "good" God cre-

ate "bad" people and then judge them for being "bad"? An answer will be provided in next month's article.

My daughter Susan's first child is Sarah. Sarah's brother is Ben. When Sarah annoys Ben, she loses Susan's approval. Sarah then does what Susan wants, not what Sarah wants. Someone who always does what someone else wants is dependent and passive. Someone, doing what someone else wants, when they should, shows respect. By doing what her mother wants, instead of what she wants, Sarah recovers her mother's approval and, as a bonus, receives Ben's affection. She has learned how to obtain affection by her own control over others. Someone who always controls others is manipulative. Someone doing it when she should is assertive. In the Petrie dish of my daughter's home, I have seen a wise parent nurture her child by using dependence to develop, at first, independence, and then interdependence. Susan is skilled, because Sarah has not been stuck in dependence by overly strict correction, or in manipulation, by overly indulgent reward. She has learned interdependence, through the exercise of respect and assertiveness.

It is surely God's will that all individuals make a successful transition from dependence to interdependence, through independence. However, Jesus assured us that this is a

narrow way and that "few find it." Many remain in dependence, stuck in poverty, depression and addiction. They are the poor that are "with [us] always." The secular world offers these people counseling. The first rule of counseling is to teach people how to meet their own needs—to become independent. If the advice stops there, as it frequently does, relationships are formed by mutual advantage. This idea did not impress Jesus. He sniffed, "If you love others, who love you, even the pagans do that." Negotiated relationships are simply a mutual manipulation of each other to meet each other's needs. To be stuck in dependence or independence is to remain in a state of sin. The self-assurance of the rich, young ruler would have pleased any counselor, and we are told that Jesus loved him. By refusing to do the one thing that he lacked, he stayed with those, who feel that they have arrived, secure in their social position and trusting in their money, giving thanks to God that they are "not like other men." There are indeed few that try to love all others (Jesus did mean everyone!), as themselves, and only one, who persisted unto death.

This article has not discussed how grace operates on the soul, producing spiritual experience or how a good God could create a "fallen" humanity. These will be issues to be addressed in next month's article.

YOUNG AND PROPHETIC

Vacation Bible School



ALAN COOK
ST. JAMES THE APOSTLE, GUELPH

To parody the Old English poem: "Summer is a-coming in! Loudly sing, "what can we do?" I am happy to report that church activities are still holding up against TV-watching and 'Game Boy' in occupying our children's time during the summer vacations. I have been present at many clergy gatherings over the last four months and, using a survey, have found that roughly 10% of congregations run a Vacation Bible School (VBS). I have never been part of one myself, but the leaders who have been report a high level of satisfaction.

To spend five sunny mornings with the children of your church (and quite often, of the wider neighbourhood) can be a great deal of fun, a do-able challenge, a good stretch of one's faith and a great way to plant the seeds of the Good News in Christ. As Christian publishers of VBS programs, Augsburg Fortress and Anglican Book Centre want to help churches make the best of this opportunity for fulfilling their mission.

Faith, joy and love

"It was great fun" says Joan, a grandmother who led the team at her suburban parish church last year. "We got together with three local churches from different denominations. That was a great experience for us, too. And in the end we had 63 children show up, some of whom had never been to church!"

Here at the Kitchener store we held a training workshop in March and heard many stories of how VBS is good not just for the children: the leaders and junior helpers find they too can grow in faith, joy and love during a season when church and the spiritual life can often be at a lull.

High quality

There are more options and possibilities in one kit than you could ever use in a week. Some will use the programme for Sunday School during the year or for a March Break event, too. The price can be kept low for those with a tight budget without sacrificing a great experience that will make everyone want to do it again next year. We research to find the best creative ways to get a spiritual message across: with new songs, short movies, crafts, games, snacks and plays. Augsburg Fortress' offering for this year, Rain Forest Adventure, includes a whole web-support program that enables volunteers to manage the schedule and the children easily. (Loud cheers from the workshop participants!)

\$15 a day?

We are promoting two programs this year. 'Rain Forest Adventure' responds to the 'greening of the church' theme through some eco-friendly reflections that deepen faith, relationships and understanding of stewardship. ("It was awesome!" said Laurie in Waterloo of her church's experience last month when they ran it as a March Break programme. "We have a new building and are really aware of our need to be good stewards of the environment. The Bible stories and the recycling emphasis fit right in.")

Concordia Publishing's 'Friendship Trek' focuses on friendships with people around us (including those who are not easy to befriend) and with Jesus, "our forever friend". Starter Packs cost as little as \$70 to which you can add the DVD, music CD, web tool-kit, learner booklets, toys and so on. But for a first-rate programme for your church and neighbourhood, you can start it on only \$15 a day.

As Niagara continues to keep its eye on the goals of investing in youth ministry and of evangelism, we encourage you to consider VBS as one of the greatest witnessing tools available. To learn more or to request a training programme, contact me: I'm your priest in publishing!



YLTP still going strong

JOYCE WILTON
DIOCESAN PROGRAM CONSULTANT

The Youth Leadership Training Program, fondly known as YLTP, celebrated its 29th birthday this year and we can't wait to turn 30! For 29 consecutive March Breaks, approximately 36 young people and 7 leaders have gathered at Canterbury Hills to develop leadership skills, to experience a youth-

ful community of faith, to learn what it means to be involved in servant leadership, to explore their relationship with God and to make lasting and meaningful peer and adult friendships.

Through experiences of small group learning; planning a variety of worship and social opportunities; taking part in a downtown Hamilton mission program; and the comple-

tion of an individual or team project making use of the skills each participant has learned; all these are key components of the Youth Leadership Training Program. Linda Haycraft's story is a wonderful testament to the many years of commitment that Niagara Youth Ministry has put into the leadership and spiritual development of our youth:

LINDA HAYCRAFT
ST. SIMON'S, OAKVILLE

Upon first hearing about the Youth Leadership Training Program, I was a little bit skeptical. Who were these people that would choose to spend their vacations with a collection of moody teens? What was it that kept the YLTP participants returning year after year? More importantly, did I really want to be giving up my March Breaks for the next three years? To be entirely honest, it sounded like a waste of valuable sleeping time.

Within minutes of stepping into the parking lot of Canterbury Hills, I understood why it was that YLTP was so highly spoken of. Here was a group of people, youth and adult leaders, who just wanted to have fun, and spend their free time in a productive way, learning and making new friends. Looking at the people who were in their second or third years of YLTP, it was easy to see

the positive effects that the program had had on their leadership abilities and their faith. Throughout the day, I met more and more returning members who had nothing but positive things to say about their YLTP experience. Then we were introduced to our year group members.

When we met that first day three years ago, it would be safe to say that we were a quiet, awkward bunch of teenagers who were unsure as to why we were there. It seemed like our amazing facilitators, Jay Blackwood and Judy Worsley, had their work cut out for them. It is interesting to look back and see how we have come together as a group to overcome obstacles and to challenge each other to become better leaders, in our churches and our communities. From choreographing a dance in our first year, to developing a complete Eucharist start to finish in our second year, to organizing a Superheroes Ball in our third, we have shared ideas, frustra-

tions, and a lot of laughs. No one was as surprised as we were that a motley crew of teenagers from across Niagara could grow into such a tight-knit family. Throughout my three years in YLTP, my group members have been my peers, my teachers, and most importantly my friends. We have grown both as a group and individually, and though each one of us will take something different away from this amazing experience, we will all move forward with the knowledge that we have created a network of lifelong friends who will support us as we partake in new adventures.

It is amazing how quickly time passes. The three years that it takes to complete YLTP, which seemed so dauntingly long to me when I first signed up, have passed. Although I cannot move on from this experience without a little sadness, I am extremely grateful for the chance it gave me to grow in knowledge of myself and my faith.

Wondering and connecting through Godly Play

KATHLEEN ARMSTRONG
ST. JOHN THE DIVINE, CAYUGA

I was looking forward to attending the Godly Play workshop in Richmond Hill and was chatting it up at work. Some of my co-workers thought it a little ironic that I was excited about going away for a weekend without my kids, only to learn how to lead kids in Church School!! The weekend lived up to my expectations and more.

I had seen Godly Play at a training session offered by the United Church at Five Oaks Conference Centre last fall. It struck me as a bit "weird", but I found myself engrossed in the Story of the Great Family. When I

returned home, I spent some time on the internet doing some research and found out this teaching technique had been around for quite some time. Why hadn't I heard of it before? I called Christyn Perkons at the Diocesan Resource Centre and borrowed the Godly Play resources written by Jerome Berryman. I spent a lot of time reviewing them, but was still not sure how I was going to fit it into our program, where we currently use Rotation Workshop Model. I was hoping the Godly Play weekend would give me more information on how I could use this program.

When we arrived, we were wel-

comed and given a wonderful meal. What better way to get to know other participants? After dinner we experienced a full Godly Play session, including a welcome, a story, and wondering and response time. Once again I was exposed to the dangerous desert and heard the story of Abraham and Sarah. Even though I had heard this story before I still got goose bumps when the storyteller told us that we were part of that family, as many as the stars in the skies and the grains of sand in the desert.

Over the weekend we heard a number of stories, and had time to wonder together. In workshops we

learned the roles of the storyteller and the doorman and we had an opportunity to make resources for a couple of stories. We also learned about other sources for supplies and got patterns we could take back to our own churches. The workshop leaders were all very knowledgeable and experienced and were able to answer many of our "what if" questions. The facility was very inviting, with lots of areas to spread out in workshops.

I really enjoyed the weekend and I look forward to introducing some Godly Play into our Children's Program at St. John the Divine in Cayuga. At this point, I see it as a great

way to tell the story and share some wondering in our first week of a Rotation. For example, I'm planning on telling the Parable of the Good Shepherd on April 13 (which I think matches with what they do "upstairs" that day), to be followed by 2 or 3 weeks of rotation workshops to help reinforce the lesson. During the rotation workshop weeks, the children will have the option of working with the Godly Play resources if they want to.

Thanks to the organizers at the Diocese and the leaders of the weekend for the great training. It was a wonderful opportunity I'm glad I took advantage of.

The process goes on



BILL MOUS
DIVINITY STUDENT

In my first column in the Niagara Anglican, I wrote about setting out on an exciting adventure; an adventure and journey that would challenge and transform. In this column, I committed myself to sharing that journey with you: "to demystify the process of theological education, to provide students' perspectives about issues facing our church and to report about events pertaining to Niagara's divinity students." As I near the end of my formal theological education at Trinity College, I want to take the opportunity to share with you a bit about the 'exit' process.

Much like the process to enter the ordination stream, the exit process begins with the submission of an essay which addresses two questions: *What are the important things you learned during your time in training?* And... *What do you need to do, or to have available to you, to enable continual growth as you begin professional ministry?* Throughout the process of theological education reflective practice has been central to our learning. Consequently these questions, though broad in scope, are in some ways a natural extension of what a student might expect to do in courses or field placements. This essay, along with an updated resume, is submitted to our diocesan Candidates Committee for review.

Numerous Interviews

From here, three interviews are set-up in January with members of the Candidates Committee. While some postulants approach these interviews with a great deal of anxiousness, it is perhaps most helpful to view the interviews as conversations of discernment with lay and ordained members of our diocese. Lasting just over an hour, these conversations are opportunities for reflection, discussion about current challenges facing the church, and looking at how one's gifts might be offered in ministry.

The next part of the process remains a bit of mystery, but from what I've gleaned during the process, the Candidates Committee then comes together along with the Executive Archdeacon and Bishop. Each of the three interviewers of each postulant submits a report beforehand, and a discussion about the vocation of each candidate ensues.

By about the middle of February, postulants are then invited to a meeting with the Executive Archdeacon. It is at this meeting where you learn some of the insights relating to the discussion about you at the Candidates Committee meeting. These insights generally include both affirmations of one's gifts, and growing edges and/or perceived challenges one's personhood may pose in ordained ministry. The candidate is then told about the Candidate Committee's decision about whether they are to be ordained or not.

From Postulant to Ordinand

This is one of the most challenging

parts of the process. Occasionally candidates get to this point in their discernment and are informed that they will not be ordained, after investing a significant amount of time and energy in the process for at least three years. This is a challenge not only for candidates for ordination—but for many professional programs; for example a person holding a Doctor of Medicine degree is not necessarily given a residency placement that enables them to be licensed. All the same, receiving the news at this point in one's journey is devastating to the candidate. Yet sometimes the door is not shut completely. After the initial shock, many candidates continue their discernment and pursue living out their vocation in other dioceses, and are affirmed by the local bishop for ordained ministry.

If affirmed by the Candidates committee a postulant transforms into an ordinand; from one who is a candidate for holy orders to one who will be ordained. The Bishop's office begins the process of arranging interviews between ordinands and parishes interested in hiring assistant curates. Once this process is complete and a letter of employment is agreed upon by the corporation of the parish and the ordinand, the final stage of the process begins.

Attesting to ordinand's "good behaviour"

For many, this stage begins with a quick search using Google to find out what exactly is going to be read before one's home parish. A *Si Quis*, it turns out, is a notice to all whom it may concern, given in the home parish before ordination, that a person means to offer herself or himself as a candidate for holy orders; and *Si Quis*—that is to say *if anyone*—knows any just cause or impediment thereto, they are to declare the same to the bishop. The concept is a bit antiquated as many candidates for ordination, because of their placements and the realities of student life, worship in several parishes. Nevertheless, the intention remains relevant: to give a final opportunity for the community to affirm the candidate's vocation for ordained ministry.

With the *Si Quis* signed and certified by the ordinand's rector and wardens, and a declaration attesting to the ordinand's manner of life and "good behaviour" signed by two priests who have known the ordinand for at least three years, the ordination is officially announced by the Bishop. Normally one graduates from seminary before their ordination, but because of Easter's early arrival this year's ordination will happen on the Feast of Pentecost, Sunday May 11th, while Toronto School of Theology Convocations will happen in the week following.

On the whole this process is both quite unique to the church, but also helpful in transitioning one from academic life to professional ministry. Much like the entrance process, the exit process formally continues the process of discernment by the candidate, the community and the church. Please keep all those who are in various stages of this process in your prayers during this time of transition.

How do you recognize Emmaus?



MARNI NANCEKIVELL
PRIEST, DIRECTOR OF INTERIM MINISTRY

Do you know where Emmaus is?

The story of Christ appearing to his friends on the Emmaus Road raises some questions for me.

Do you know where Emmaus is? Well, there is an Emmaus Road just outside of Pembroke, Ontario.

There is an Emmaus, Pennsylvania just outside of Allentown, PA too. There are several places called Emmaus in Africa, in the Congo, among others. And there is an Emmaus in the Virgin Islands.

I suspect, that when you think of "Emmaus" you're thinking of the Emmaus Road of the Holy Land. If you were to travel to the Holy Land and ask to be taken to Emmaus, you might catch a bemused look from your travel guide who would say something like "Well tradition holds that THIS is where Jesus met two disciples and they recognised him in the breaking of bread". But that intriguing "look" would be because there are at least nine sites in and around Jerusalem that lay claim to being Emmaus. Interesting information, but I would suggest to you that knowing where Emmaus was actually located may not have the only significance to us in the contemporary world. I am going to ask you to think of Emmaus not as much as a place but as an event.

Put yourself in the place of those first travellers on the road to Emmaus. They were journeying away from Jerusalem in despair and sadness. Perhaps they were feeling angry because Jesus was dead and perhaps that made them question all of his teachings. But most of all, if you're in their place, you may be feeling sadness and loss. While you're wandering along the road, a stranger catches up with you. You offer this stranger your story and your hospitality but something extraordinary happens. As you tell the stranger YOUR story in return you are given a better story, and an experience of God, and you experience divine hospitality which is a model for the radical hospitality that we are called, as Christians, to extend to others. That's Emmaus. It is not just a place, but an experience. It is the defining experience for the Christian.

Emmaus in West Oakville

Last Thursday night, I was rushing around, as too often I am. I had less than an hour to ferry my teenage daughter from one point to another, get dinner, and arrive at my next destination which

happened to be a meeting in Burlington. Like many working parents, looking for a short cut at supper hour, I decided on subs for dinner. I poked my head into my favourite sub shop, but there was a crowd of teenagers there, and I recognized that with only one worker on duty, I was likely to be waiting for a long time. With the clock ticking loudly, I knew that I didn't have that long to wait. So I elected to go to yet another sub shop on the way home. We had gone there several times last summer, but had given up, as we didn't like the quality of their bread, which seemed to fall apart each time we ate one of their sandwiches.

However, in the interest of saving time, with my daughter and our restless puppy waiting in the car, I went into that "other" sub shop. There was just one man ahead of me, so I relaxed a little. After he left the shop, I hurriedly placed my order: one small grilled chicken sub, a regular turkey sub, and for my husband a large assorted super sub. The man behind the counter smiled, looked at me and said: "Will you help me? I am new in this country and I don't speak very much English. Will you repeat your order more slowly?"

Now, I confess to you my first reaction wasn't very hospitable. "Oh, great, I thought to myself. This is going to take a long time and I don't have a lot of time tonight. I just need to order my food and get out of here!" I'm not sure what it was, but there was a moment when everything changed for me, a moment that went beyond my understanding. I knew that this interchange was going to be a significant.

At first, I just slowed down and focused on lessening my impatience. I physically relaxed, and began to smile. The man behind the counter asked about my life. He asked about my family: how many children I had, what I did for a living. It turned out that he had moved here from Egypt several months ago. He loves Canada. He was at first overwhelmed by the snow of this past winter. Now, he has found his own place to live and a job and is taking English as a Second Language classes. He is sad because he has to work on Sundays and often can't get to church. But he talked about God being in his heart and in his daily life... and he talked about the time he takes to pray each day. On my way out the door of the "sub shop", I smiled and welcomed him to Canada.

I can tell you that the Risen Christ was present in that conversation. It was a holy moment—a holy conversation. Without a doubt, it was an experience of Emmaus. Right there, in the middle of my rushed daily living. And it happened when I least expected it.

Emmaus in the time between Incumbents

The Emmaus story strikes me as a story particularly appropriate for the hearing of this parish today. As I said, earlier, I was with you one Sunday about two years ago. Now, you are in a different time, a different place. The story of this parish has changed—and if you are like most churches, that has resulted in a time of tension and an unsettled spirit. The Emmaus story is timeless. It is the story of two disciples traveling from Jerusalem to Emmaus, and we are called back to remember what it means to be the community of Christ in the world. But this is not a story of being called "back to the past". Rather the place that you're in is a call, I believe to be open to the spirit of God moving in your midst—in this interim time and beyond. Like those two on the road, I suspect that you have been on a journey of despair to hope as you hear the ancient story—and as you gather for the breaking of bread, you are called into a new vision.

Interim time is an important time in the history of each congregation. That is one reason that we are intentional about Interim ministry, and why we have specially trained Interim Pastors, in this Diocese. As no doubt you have discovered, Interims are far more than "place holders"; someone to "show up on Sunday mornings" until you have your own priest. The call of an Interim is to help you move on in your journey from one place to the next. Interims grow to care for people and sometimes are called to gently challenge congregations.

Interim Ministry is but one part of the formula of Transition in the Diocese of Niagara. It is part of the process. But I have to tell you. There is no "magic potion" or some "quick fix" in the time between Incumbents.

The success or struggles that you will have as your next Incumbent arrives will largely rely on YOU. It will be a matter of whether you are able to recognize those unexpected Holy Moments that happen (and respond to them) rather like that unexpected Holy Moment that I had in the sub shop.

The time when one priest leaves, Interim time, and subsequently the first months and years of a new Incumbency, like the Road to Emmaus, is not an easy time. But it can be a God-filled time when people are called beyond that which is comfortable and predictable, into an awareness of the Holy Moments with which God graces us here and now.

We are always on the Emmaus Road

Where is Emmaus? It was then, and it is now. It was there and it will always be. Emmaus is indeed a place, but it is also an encounter with the Risen Christ, as we encounter Christ in the most unexpected moments.

Order and Chaos

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Or contact Peter Wall, Conference Co-Chair at Cathedral Place, by calling 905-527-1316 (ext. 210).



The babies will feel the love in the diaper from our hands



George Foster sewing



Jean Roberts (Canon Fred's wife) and MaryLou Grant sew in the 'soakers'.

SUE CRAWFORD
ST. MICHAEL'S CHURCH, HAMILTON MOUNTAIN

What do you do when you have completed one Outreach project? Why, begin another, of course!

A few months ago St. Michael's Church, Hamilton shared with you their Outreach that several members of the parish accomplished in Haiti. At the time of preparing that article for the Niagara Anglican, one of the members leaned over during the interview and with a "twinkle" in his eye announced that he had an idea for another project—birthing kits for Haiti. However, it was discovered that there were already ample kits available. So another project was born—the Layette Program. Well, here is the result of that idea.

On Saturday, March 15, members of St. Michael's parish in Hamilton gathered in the parish hall for a "Sewathon". Now to all the members of our parish, this is pronounced *Sew aw' thon*. Just ask any parishioner and they will tell you the neat story behind our pronunciation!

The event was coordinated by our Outreach Committee. Several

women in the parish had already begun making diapers at home. The women announced the project at each of our Sunday services a month ago. The project: the Layette Program for Haiti; with the emphasis on making diapers. People were asked to dig into their linen closets to find any gently used flannelette and toweling. Donations of baby powder, oil, soap, gently used newborn clothing; face cloths, etc. were also on the list. The results, as usual, from our parish went above and beyond.

On the Saturday, the parish hall was set up just like a clothing factory. (Some people likened it to a "sweat shop"). Tables, for cutters, tables for assembling and tables for sewing were lined up along the walls and down the middle of the hall. Women brought in their sergers as well as regular sewing machines. Wooden patterns were used to ensure the material was cut to the right size. The huge difference between our "shop" and a third world country clothing factory was the atmosphere of fellowship, fun and camaraderie that exuded from the room. Water,

tea and treats were enjoyed throughout the afternoon. There was no worry about quotas. Men and women sewed, cut, snipped, pinned and prepared the material for stitching. Our youngest participant was seven year old Heather Wilcox who came out to help with her mother. While putting together some of the material, Heather made this memorable comment, "the babies will feel the love in the diaper from our hands!" With that she kissed the diapers before they were passed over to be sewn! Out of the mouths of babes!

In all, about 36 people came and helped at one time or another throughout the afternoon. Those who were unable to attend sent their donations of clothing, rubber pants, knitted layettes and material. Four tables and the stage area were stacked with the donations.

Around 3:30 we all took a well-deserved break and enjoyed chili (meat & veggie) rolls, a cheese and fruit plate and some delicious (low-cal!!!) desserts. All the food was donated. Those who could stayed until after six. At that time a count

showed we had produced 206 diapers! Some assembled diapers were taken home to be finished so the count of completed diapers will increase once these are returned and those sewn at home before the actual Sewathon.

A member of our Outreach Committee made a very fitting comment at a recent meeting. "Outreach is useless without fellowship". He also said, "Our congregation made this happen. St. Michael's has a heart for Outreach!" We certainly can say that we had fellowship and with the huge pile of donations we certainly can say we have a heart. The results of our labours will be sent to "Sew-on-Fire" Ministries in Burlington who will ready the donations for shipment to Haiti in the near future.

At a recent gathering of some friends of mine, who each attend their own places of worship, I happened to mention our latest project. I have mentioned many of St. Michael's Outreach to my friends. One of the ladies, who attends the United Church, commented "you do a lot of good Outreach at your church, don't you!" Yes, I responded and I am very proud of our par-

ish and its commitment to Outreach, not only in Haiti but in our immediate community. We have close to fifteen Outreach Projects in the surrounding community to which people in our parish are committed. Our Outreach committee is already lining up our next project which will benefit the immediate community.

Let me finish our story with a poem by one of the newest members of our church who was unable to help on the day of the Sewathon. Jean Davis sums up why we commit ourselves to Outreach.

My donation of sheets to help the scheme
Sadly I can't sew a seam!
However, I wish to play a part
My offer comes right from the heart.

We all will help for a wee while
Those new mums we hope will smile
Our offer, God will truly bless
We plan to give some happiness.

For those in need out there in Haiti
I will spread the word over in Blighty!
Others we trust will come 'on board'
In serving others, we serve the LORD!

Diana Butler Bass
Saturday, September 27, 2008



Mainline to Sideline 'Journeying on the Edge'

The Church of the Transfiguration together with the Diocese of Niagara is pleased to present a **Diana Butler Bass** workshop. Diana is an author, speaker, and independent scholar specializing in American religion and culture. She has written six books, including the bestselling *Christianity for the Rest of Us*.

Date: **Saturday, September 27, 2008** Time: 8:30 AM - 4:00 PM
Registration Fee: **\$50 per person or \$40 if pre-registered and prepaid by June 15th**. Fee includes refreshments and lunch. Pay and Register online.
Place: **Four Points Sheraton, Thorold, Ontario**.
Diana Butler Bass will be preaching on Sunday, September 28th at 10:30 am at Church of the Transfiguration, St. Catharines.

For more information contact Ruth Anne Martin
Diocese of Niagara
252 James Street North
Hamilton, Ontario L8R 2L3
Phone: 905-527-1316 X200
Fax: 905-527-1281
E-mail: ruthanne.martin@niagara.anglican.ca
www.niagara.anglican.ca



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Getting to know you

Susan Huxford-Westall

Faithful Anglican, Courageous Soul

FRAN DARLINGTON
PRIEST - ST. JAMES, GUELPH

A popular song contained the line, "I never promised you a rose garden..." God has promised us much, not necessarily a rose garden, but many other blessings and delights, if not in this life, then certainly in the life to come. We go adventuring through this life, confronting countless challenges and decisions. For many, faith in the love and mercy of God carries us through those challenges and decisions, and gives us courage to carry on "no matter what."

Susan Huxford-Westall exemplifies those gifts of faithfulness and courage, having experienced in her long, full life transforming challenges and decisions known to few people, either by personal experience or acquaintance with others. Many readers of the Niagara Anglican are familiar with Susan through her regular column, and are challenged by her honesty, informed by her thoughtfulness, and encouraged by her humour. Now the writer is being written about, her story told to other faithful Anglicans of this Diocese, at a time when many are struggling with recent and ongoing events, and perhaps hoping for some inspiration to carry us through to a new way of being that God has in mind for us.

Early years: son, brother, and determined!

Born in Portsmouth, England, proud of her Certificate of Confirmation at 16 at St. Mark's Church, Kennington, (one of four Churches built in London to celebrate the Battle of Waterloo) in London, England, in 1937, "to prove I'm an Anglican," Susan remembers her mother as "always busy at home, God-fearing and active in the Church." Her father was "a radio pioneer in the Royal Air Force, formed in 1917, (and was) badly burned in an air crash in 1919. He received the Air Force Cross because he went back into the plane to rescue (another airman)... Dad had a radio business till the depression; he lost everything, but no one would employ him because his hands were so badly damaged. But he could write, did cabinetry—he made beautiful things!... He knew Marconi (inventor of the radiotelegraph), and lived to see man walk on the moon. He had a faith of his own, but only went to church once, for an aunt's funeral. We couldn't talk about religion in the family because my aunt and cousins were Roman Catholic."

In 1931 the family, including younger brother, Arthur, now living in Rugby, England, moved to London to live with an aunt, and it was there that a literally life-transforming experience happened for young Susan—or Ted, as she was then known. In 1933, Ted had a bilateral mastoidectomy at St. Thomas' Hospital. "I can remember coming out of the anaesthetic, worrying did I talk in my sleep, did I tell them I wanted to be a girl?" Typically, Susan chuckles, honestly assessing the situation: "It was com-

pletely irrational! I was a perfectly good male and proud of it!"

Radical change in life and faith

The experience led him to make radical changes: "In the hospital I decided that things would be different! I had been bullied in school, (but) I was going to stand on my own two feet - I owed it to my Dad. I became active in school clubs, a school prefect, house captain, Company Quartermaster Sergeant in the Cadet Force, one of two senior positions a student could hold, and Cricket Captain, and I enjoyed it! I took up cross country running; never any good at it, but I had to set an example, so I went gung-ho!" Going "gung-ho" remains an apt description of Susan's life to this day!

In 1937, the British Museum acquired the Codex Sinaiticus, a fourth century version of the New Testament. The BBC ran a radio study program on it, and the Headmaster of Archbishop Tenison's Grammar School "had the whole 6th Form in the library listening to broadcasts. I learned how the Bible was written, and the higher form of Biblical criticism. That got me thinking—which Confirmation classes never did! They were a waste of time—it's all set out in the BCP!"

In 1938, returning to Clapham Road from a trip to French battlefields of World War I, Ted heard of Neville Chamberlain's discussions with Hitler in Germany, and his famous announcement, "peace in our time!" In 1939, Ted was awarded a two-week trip to central Canada by the W.H. Rhodes Educational Trust; on the train to Montreal to sail back to England, he heard the announcement that German aircraft had attacked Poland and been fired at. Susan remembers a World War I officer saying, "I hope you fellows don't have to go through what we went through."

Blacked out, repainted in gray camouflage, the ship arrived in Liverpool just four hours before war was declared. On board, Ted had met a "certain Girl Guide Captain, Edith Wilson," foster child of her aunt and uncle in Hamilton, Ontario.

War years

Having passed his Higher School Certificate, Ted volunteered to become an Air Force meteorologist. Refused because of his ear surgery, it "wasn't a disappointment, because I got to find something else to do!" "Something else" meant joining the Signals Corp, but this time Ted was told he was too young. He got a job in the Chemical Inspection Department (C.I.D.) of the Royal Arsenal, Woolwich, London, doing chemical analysis of high explosives. An obvious target in the 1940 Blitz, the C.I.D. was evacuated to Slough, near Windsor. On December 12, 1940, Ted signed up for the Signals Corp, and was sent to "boot camp" in Wales, training previously experienced as a cadet at school.

Ted and Edith became engaged in 1941, just before Ted boarded a troop ship for India. On board, Ted "picked up a book by John Hadham, 'Good

God!' and I followed that up with 'God in a World of War.'" (Reflecting on her current reading, Susan lists 'The Other Bible,' the Gnostic Gospels, Dead Sea Scrolls, Visionary Wisdom Texts, Christian Apocrypha, Jewish Pseudepigrapha, Kabbala, and the National Geographic Geography of Religion: "There's so much to read! One book leads to another through bibliography...")

Commissioned as a British Army Royal Corps of Signals Staff Captain, Ted served in India until his return to England on VE Day, May 8, 1945. He and Edith married in June of 1945, but because the war continued in the Pacific, Ted was still on "active duty." Captain Westall was sent to Hanover, Germany, where he commanded the main switchboard between London and the British Army's German headquarters and trained German telephone operators. A friend told Ted he should go into teaching: Susan grins, "That's the last thing I thought of!"

Now what?

Demobbed at the end of 1946, Ted went back to England to confront the future. "What do I do now? What I used to do? Chemistry!" Then, "No, this job is not for me, I'm interested in people." Taking his friend's advice, Ted got a job as a temporary teacher with the London County Council while he waited to get into College.

Pregnant with the couple's first child, Edith went to visit her foster parents in Hamilton. (Julie was born there in 1948, and Wendy in 1952.) In London, Ted saw a sign encouraging emigration to Ontario, inquired, and was told, as an analytical chemist, "You'll do." "I told Edith, 'Don't worry about coming back. I'm coming over!'" They met in Toronto in November, 1947, and Ted went to the Department of Education, where the Minister enabled Ted's transfer from his English training school to Hamilton Normal School, as Teachers' Colleges were then known. "It didn't worry me because I'd already taught in East London."

Teaching years

Years of teaching with the Hamilton Board of Education began: Grade 6 at Central School came first, where "we were making models with asbestos powder!" Ted was also asked to do vocal music. After a stint as Principal's Assistant in two schools, in 1951 Ted was appointed to Tweedsmuir School to teach vocal music. ("As a boy, I'd enjoy evenings around the piano with my aunt. I had an offer to go to St. Paul's Cathedral (London), but my Father refused, and I'm glad he did. I'd done a little singing, had a music group at Normal School, and had been invited to join the choir at the Church of the Ascension.") Remaining at Tweedsmuir until 1957, Ted "dabbled in piano, but I wanted to get into high school, teaching Geography, but it was all Social Studies. So I wanted to do Math. I had done vocal and instrumental classes, and applied to teach Music outside the



city, but I was offered the Math job at Delta (High School).

"I had a scientific education, and math. I was not much good at math, failed, but I had a second chance. I went back and did it again and discovered my mistakes." Turning that experience to further good, "I taught 'slow learners, I could see where their problems were, and could present things in a way they could grasp... They weren't dumb, they just had all the confidence knocked out of them. I had counselling sessions with them. They said 'We're dumb-dumbs.' I said, 'You all have a talent. Find out what it is, and play it for all it's worth!'" Ted's encouragement, still uttered with firm conviction out of his own remarkable experiences, surely rescued many lost young people.

Ted was exploring his own talents: returning to school one September, he was assigned classes in Ancient History ("I loved it!") and the school choir. He had been directing the boys' choir at the Church of the Ascension, and was a Licensed Lay Reader there, but transferred to St Mary's, continuing those ministries there. "I enjoyed St. Mary's. I was a Bishop's nominee on the Diocesan Outreach Committee. I was on the joint Presbytery Deaneries Committee dealing with the union of the United and Anglican Churches; that lasted only two years and came to nothing."

Challenge and transformation

Ted was also continuing to explore his understanding of Christianity. "My biggest beef is that we have been indoctrinated! We have been brainwashed about theology as a creed! I do not say the word 'only' (in the creedal phrase about Jesus as 'God's only Son, our Lord...')—we are all children of God; Jesus is my brother! The crux of the whole thing is to get back to what Jesus taught!"

Referring enthusiastically to

author James Redfield (The Celestine Prophecy, etc.), Susan says, "All of us have this sense inside, and try to live it out. Our task is to find out our purpose in life. All the time I've been bugged by this sense I'm in the wrong sex."

The self-knowing that alarmed 11-year-old Ted as he woke from anaesthetic never went away. He continued teaching both elementary and secondary schools in Hamilton: Delta, Sir Winston Churchill, Sir John A. MacDonald, finally as Department Head in his beloved Geography. In 1974, he and Edith separated, to divorce in 1977, the year Ted retired "to sort myself out. People said they weren't worried about me, because I'd always had something to do." Edith died in 2005, but her picture is on Susan's mantelpiece.

That "sorting out" took Ted into an adventure totally unlike anything else he had ever experienced, as one of the first people in Ontario to go through the complete transition from one gender to another. "I moved to Toronto, out of the Diocese of Niagara. I booked an apartment there for Edward Westall and his sister, Susan. I went to England, where I lived in the male role with my mother. I had also adopted the female role at times. I came back to Canada as a female, and told the apartment manager that my brother had stayed in England. I told VISA I wanted a second card for Susan; the bank was a little more difficult.

Ted contacted the parish church, St. Andrew's, Rexdale. "I told the Rector about myself, and that I had been Warden of Lay Readers in Niagara. He said, 'Come here.' I finished up in the choir as a tenor in the female role. I was Outreach Rep for the parish, and on the Deanery Outreach Committee.

» CONTINUED ON PAGE 14

OUTREACH



Your bridge to employment

Hamilton-Mountain's Neighbour to Neighbour Centre leads the way

ROSE MALLAIS

EMPLOYMENT SERVICES NEIGHBOUR TO NEIGHBOUR

"Intimidation, worry, nervousness and overriding hopefulness."

These are some of the feelings every job seeker experiences as they embark on their journey to gainful employment.

Learning where to pound the pavement, scan through the Internet and cold, call prospective employers in the increasingly competitive job jungle requires dogged determination, insight into the marketplace and plenty of skill.

Neighbour to Neighbour Centre's Employment Services on Hamilton Mountain has been helping people do this for almost 16 years, and has contributed greatly to the local economy's buoyancy. The program has helped more than 1,700 men and women secure work. Over the past three years, 85 per cent of the participants in the program have managed to get employment afterward.

They find work in specialized fields, retail enterprises and factories, among other sectors, because they are highly motivated, adaptable and willing to do what has to be done in their quest to become productive citizens.

Participants come in with little in common. Ages span from 20 years old to 74; education levels range from those with incomplete high school diplomas to others with post graduate degrees; employment goals vary from seeking full-time work as engineers to part time work as kitchen helpers; and participants come from all over the city and beyond such as Dunnville, Jarvis, Grimsby and Burlington.

Consider the story of Alissa, a newly divorced woman in her 40s. The landscape designer's business

was failing and due to her dire financial straits, she was in jeopardy of losing her house. Too embarrassed about her desperate situation to seek help from her affluent family and friends, she wisely came to Neighbour to Neighbour Centre, where she had access not only to the Job Finding Club but the Foodbank and Resource Counselling.

Once fed and well-informed about other sources of community support, Alissa built up her confidence through the group workshops. Success came about. Alissa found full-time work in a local greenhouse and simultaneously teaches budding landscaper designers at a community college.

Like Alissa, employment difficulties are rarely an isolated problem. It was the same with Jerred.

A learning disability that is difficult to overcome eventually put this father and husband who worked in sales, out of work. As the sole income earner in his family, he took charge of the situation and sought help through Neighbour to Neighbour.

But for Jerred it is not an easy task to get out of the door each morning because his wife suffers from mental illness and at times it debilitates him from even getting out of bed. His young son, in Grade 1 has a brain development disorder and requires plenty of guidance getting ready for school.

Through the job search workshops Jerred gained confidence and through diligently faxing and emailing his resume earned a job as a manager at a retail store by the time he was finished the program.

"Being unemployed is a part of life. To learn from the experience and take advantage of the workshops at Neighbour to Neighbour Centre was a

valuable lesson for me," he said.

Having a job plugs people into the world and makes them feel productive, independent and confident so that they can get what they want out of life for themselves and their family.

For out-of-work geologist Sara, the Employment Services staff prompted her to set her sights on her ultimate employment goal. "Without the Neighbour to Neighbour program, I would have settled for a job I didn't want and below my skill set." Sara is now working overseas in her chosen field.

"We're a bridge to employment," described Rose Mallais, who is the Director Of Employment Services. "Our staff (which includes Job Developer Rene Tunney and Administrative Assistant Carol Ferber) collectively brings 25 years of experience working in social services."

When the program began in 1992 services were provided only two days a week now. It has expanded to a series of 10 workshops offered over 2 weeks, which are conducted from 9:30 AM to 1:00 PM with a maximum of 10 participants.

Job seekers also have access to one-on-one job counselling, resumes and cover letters reviews. In addition, participants can utilize any of the 15 computers provided through the Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities to job search, research companies and apply online. Resources also include photocopier, fax machines, 'phones and numerous directories.

Best of all, the services, resources and workshops are free and available to any adult, except fulltime students.

Interested job seekers can call 905 574-1334. Search Smarter... Not Harder!

Greening Niagara

Laura Marie Piotrowicz
ASSOCIATE PRIEST - ASCENSION, HAMILTON

The Greening Niagara Team is on the move! This past week Synod Council announced the Co-Chairs of this team to be Bill Mous and Russ Kelk, and the team is growing. In the meantime,

“We as the church have an obligation to be leaders in this movement.”

the presentations that were distributed at Synod to every parish (and also available on the Diocesan website (www.niagara.anglican.ca/green/docs/greening-niagara.pdf)) are hitting the road...

On 2 April, Russ Kelk and The Rev. Laura Marie Piotrowicz attended the Brock Regional Council meeting at Holy Trinity, Chippawa. The Greening Niagara presentation was made to a fantastic group of interested people, which segued into a lively conversation about how to make 'green' ideas applicable to each person/parish in a meaningful and simple way. The group were interested in the program, and the discussion moved in a variety

of directions, including the issues around Compact Fluorescent Light bulbs (needing to be recycled as hazardous waste, or through the Home Depot in a free program; the challenges medically some people face with use of fluorescent bulbs; the government legislation making incandescent bulbs unavailable in Ontario).

The recent Earth Hour program was also discussed, and a 9% reduction in energy was noted in the city of Toronto—while it seems somewhat minimal, this indicates a huge ability of public power and influence

demanding that safe and sustainable alternative energy sources be implemented.

The reality of being a Green space is one of finding one or two areas in which one can improve without it being difficult—the easier a change is to implement, the more likely people are going to take part. Simple solutions such as recycling church bulletins (offer a blue box at the back of the worship space), or invited someone to preach a "green" sermon can make a significant difference! The notion of being environmentally friendly is not a new one, many of our people experienced shortages during the depression or the war eras, when we recognised restraint out of necessity. Now we are facing a different necessity, but the need is just as great. And it's a radical simplicity that will change the world to be a place where our children can thrive—just a few years ago recycling was not offered in municipal waste services; look how far we have progressed as a society! Imagine how much more we can do! We as the church have an obligation to be leaders in this movement, and are demonstrating to the wider community our dedication to all of God's creation.

As months progress, the Greening Niagara Team will be offering presentations to parishes and parish groups—we would love to be invited out to have these conversations with you, and to share your success stories (which you all have!). Remember that while the "secular" Earth Day is celebrated on April 22, and the "religious" Creation Day is celebrated September 1, we are in ongoing partnership with the world around us every day. This Easter season let's challenge ourselves to seek out the Christ not just in every person, but in all with which we interact.

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Micah House: A safe haven for refugees



SARAH V. WAYLAND
ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST, HAMILTON

Long road to Canada

"I was like a stranger yet she welcomed me and I was full of tears." This is how Jeremiah (not his real name) described his first moments with a settlement worker at Micah House in central Hamilton. The day before, Jeremiah had arrived in Toronto after a long series of flights from western Africa. Someone put him in a taxi and directed him to SISO in Hamilton where he was sent on to Micah House, a home for refugee claimants. "She gave me such a wonderful welcome," he continued, "I had wondered if those kinds of people really existed. Here there is no shouting and no beating."

At the age of 14, Jeremiah was taken from his parents by a local police officer and trafficked into a neighbouring country to work on a farm with several dozen other boys. When he finally ran away eleven years later, he returned home to find his parents deceased. In March 2007, Jeremiah made the mistake of sharing his story with a man he met. The man was a police officer in plain clothes who came back that night with several other officers, took Jeremiah away, and began beating him. He escaped when some passers-by intervened, but the men threatened to return. The next day Jeremiah left his home. Eventually, Jeremiah met a pastor who cared for him and paid a smuggler to take him far away to a safe place. That place turned out to be Canada, and Micah House.

What is Micah House

Micah House takes its name from the vision described in Micah 6:8: *What does the Lord require of you? To act justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God.* The staff, volunteers and other supporters work toward this vision by welcoming refugees with God's love. They provide safe shelter, assist with settlement, and build bridges into the community. Micah House can hold only twelve guests at a time, so staff members continually seek safe, affordable longer-term housing for guests.

Since opening in May 2006, Micah House has provided temporary resi-

dence to about 150 refugees, referred to as "guests" during their stay. Most of them, including Jeremiah, are now living independently while waiting to have their refugee claims heard. The average stay at Micah House is six weeks, after which most residents move on to private rental housing.

Micah House exists thanks to the crucial support it receives from area churches. Without it, refugees such as Jeremiah would have ended up in a homeless shelter and would not have received the same support, Christian love, and friendship. He may have become lost among the numbers of homeless in Hamilton whose needs are much different than his. Instead, Jeremiah has built relationships at Micah House and frequently comes back to visit. Former guests often come back to offer volunteer services and stay in touch, evidence of their positive experiences at Micah House.

According to Executive Director Scott Jones, "The people who come here are intelligent, savvy, and sometimes self-conscious about receiving charity because they are proud. It's been all uphill for them. If we recognize that we could just as easily be in their shoes, we can be there to help, to help things level out for them. In the end, they are not just taking charity but will also contribute to our society."

Anglican Connections

A few Anglican congregations are beginning to develop ties with Micah House. St. John the Evangelist in Hamilton has this year adopted Micah House as one of its official missions. As such, Micah House has been added to the parish cycle of prayer, and its ministries are promoted within the congregation. Already, some parishioners have donated household items. Others have become regular financial donors. When I had a party for a significant birthday, I asked that guests make a donation to Micah House instead of bringing a gift. I set out brochures and a donations basket during the party. It was great way to raise awareness about a ministry that is close to my heart.

Retired high school teacher Al Duncan uses his small truck to pick up

beds and to help various people move out of Micah House. After hearing about Micah House at St. John's, he first got involved because he had some furniture to donate. Instead of just dropping off the furniture at Micah House, he helped a man from Haiti move the furniture and a few garbage bags full of possessions into an apartment. Duncan is now on a contact list used by Settlement Worker Gillian Matheson to assist guests with moving. Duncan says he keeps going back because "everyone is so appreciative of everything you do to help. The staff is so gracious and know exactly what they need." He has witnessed Micah House staff giving selflessly to the guests, in one case donating her own bed to a guest who did not have one.

St. Peter's Church in Hamilton has also reached out to Micah House. Both are located in the same neighbourhood near Gage Park, and parishioners have helped clean and renovate the house as well as cook meals. Now the parish is working with St. Giles United Church to provide a monthly meal and games night in which past guests come back to visit, parishioners can meet newcomers to Canada, and current guests of Micah House can feel welcomed outside the boundaries of their residence.

According to Sandra Copland, Rector of St. Peter's, the connection to Micah House is born of strong theological roots: "The children of Israel were strangers in a strange land, and the Gospel of John speaks of Jesus coming and not being recognized for who he was. As Christians, we ourselves are foreigners in a world that is sometimes hostile. Yet the Bible tells us to welcome the stranger." As such, Copland believes that we have a Christian responsibility to do so, and Micah House provides an opportunity for such a mission.

Volunteering at Micah House

Micah House relies heavily on volunteers to keep things running smoothly, and on financial and material donations. Katie, a regular volunteer, has moved furniture, escorted guests to banking and medical appointments, done laundry and more. She says of

her work there, "I have been blessed by people's willingness to share their lives with me. There are so many needs around the world. Refugees come here representing a lot of those needs—brokenness, injustice, hostility. I want to be part of the welcoming crowd to lend a hand, and to heal that brokenness."

According to Executive Director Jones, "People are starting to hear about us and wanting to contribute." Micah House needs volunteers for a variety of tasks. It needs a steady supply of them to prepare meals, drive guests to appointments, help guests

Other ways to support Micah House

Donations of household items such as furniture, kitchen supplies, and newer computers and televisions are always needed. Guests are in need of such items when they move into the Hamilton rental market with very few possessions of their own.

Of course, Micah House benefits from monetary donations as well. There are opportunities to make regular monthly donations to as well as to attend the Micah House annual banquet and support various fundraising activities such as the bikeathon.

Last but not least, Micah House



move, maintain the house itself, and tackle home renovations.

Gillian Matheson is setting up a new "befriending" program it will match guests with local residents who commit to seeing them regularly and helping them adjust to life in Canada. This Global Friends program will extend the level of personal connection that Micah House staff are able to show to refugees.

Jones encourages people to be creative, to think of new ways that you might contribute to the ministries of Micah House. He would like to see people taking residents on various types of outings, such as bowling or to a museum or to attend an event in Toronto.

needs your prayers. Pray for the staff to be able to communicate, assist, and support guests with warmth and understanding; for guests to be able to navigate the refugee determination process and to have positive settlement experiences in Canada; and for volunteers to be ready to fill the various needs that arise. Pray for harmony among guests who come from different parts of the world and who may be experiencing high levels of stress. Pray that Micah House will continue to provide essential services to refugees in Hamilton so long as there is need for them.

For more information about Micah House, please phone 905-296-4387 or visit www.micahhouse.ca.

All hail the humble rain barrel



FRANCEAN CAMPBELL-RICH
CHRIST'S CHURCH CATHEDRAL, HAMILTON

Down with the monster dryer! Up with the backyard clothesline! The wind and the sun are free. Compost winter and summer; plant a few herbs in a window. Some people grow worms in the cellar to make the best compost. Install a solar panel or two—and why not a few chickens near the back door? Don't kill the dandelions—they make good wine. In England, people buy dandelion seed. For that matter lots of things make good wine, except perhaps cigarette butts and bottle tops. Grow only things that can be eaten or at least serve a useful purpose. Bats and hummingbirds can keep your grounds mosquito-free, and mice won't find a house with two cats very healthy.

With most of these items, and many more, I am on familiar terms, if not outright eccentric.

My maternal grandfather was a country doctor who practiced in the city and had his office and laboratory at home. We were expected to identify correctly every growing thing including a 'carrot gone to seed'. All of which may or may not be relevant now in west central Hamilton, with the single exception of rain barrels. I have three, with a fourth soon to be installed.

I had craved a rain barrel from the day I bought this century-plus cottage with a large garden, but had been unsuccessful, until finally, in desperation, I took a simple step on my own; found a rain barrel in five minutes—and not a minute too soon. My water bill had skyrocketed into three figures.

Even an early rain barrel memory had not dampened my ardour: When I was four, I had found a robin's nest with four eggs in it, showed it to my older sister, and in my excitement had crushed the eggs in the palm of my hand. My sister, furious, had dunked my head in the rain barrel as punishment.

Now, of course, all things natural, organic, essential, polyunsaturated, eco-friendly, locally grown and socially responsible are very important indeed, with water looming on the horizon as potentially more expensive than single malt scotch or aviation fuel.

For those of us who have lived long enough, nothing of this is new. The Second World War thrust change upon us difficult even to imagine, let alone recall. From the common everyday

discipline of the ration book, the nine o'clock radio newscasts from overseas, the dreaded arrival of a telegram, the simple fact of living, working, not for oneself but for another—the other—the ones in the 'foxhole' from which it was said 'there were no atheists'. And when it was over, one saw the gaunt but relieved faces of internees, freed parents from far eastern prison camps, returning to homelands, with their children safe, and healthy.

If we are nowhere near those conditions right now, we could be in trouble; others are, and we pray for them in our intercessions. The scriptures talk about rain frequently—poetically and spiritually, as a gift: *Rain in abundance, O God, you showered abroad...* Ps.68.9, and *Sing to the Lord with thanksgiving... He covers the heavens with clouds, prepares rain for the earth, and makes grass grow on the hills.* Ps.147 But of water, the scriptures abound with references, countless times, as though with life itself, as indeed it is.

Like the Earth Hour of recent night, my rain barrel project may appear to amount to little more than symbol and good intentions. Last summer's drought, and my own lethargy, took a toll. I am determined to make a better job of it this summer. It takes ten trips with the watering can front and back of the house, every day or two, depending on the weather, to water the vegetables, the currants, and the young fruit trees. But there is no lawn, no noisy, polluting motors at work, no pesticides—just lovely soft rain water from the roof to the barrels, with a bit of oil on the surface to keep mosquitoes at bay. And I get no complaints about the wild look of my grounds—at least, not yet.

It is tempting to explore the old concrete covered cistern in the cellar that must have sustained the stalwart family that once dwelt in this cottage, but I'm uneasy as to what I might find secreted in it. It is also tempting, since virtually all waste listed by the city's Waste Management authority is reused, recycled, or composted, to request a refund of some of my property taxes, proportionate to the blue and green containers supplied but infrequently required.

My cousin Margann, who lives in Kingston, was so pleased by the rain barrel that I took to her for Christmas that she asked for another, and I took her another. My source of barrels is secret and carefully guarded, but if any of my fellow Anglican diocesan parishioners, upon application, is interested in acquiring one, kindly call the Cathedral and leave a message for me.

As Red Smith would say, we're all in this together. Thanks be to God.

Domestic abuse must be prevented



COLLEEN SYM
SOCIAL JUSTICE COORDINATOR, DIOCESE OF NIAGARA

The work of social justice advocates including all the Anglicans who have been involved in the campaigns for affordable housing has resulted in a response by the provincial government to take steps towards the implementation of a comprehensive poverty reduction strategy for Ontario. In a news release leading up to the budget and confirmed in the March provincial budget were the announcement of funding related to affordable housing:

- New investment of \$100 million to all 47 municipal service managers to repair existing social housing units, including improvement of energy efficiency (that's supposed to repair about 4,000 units, and help about 10,000 Ontarians)
- Expansion of the Ontario Strategic Infrastructure Financing Authority (OSIFA) loan eligibility to include key public-sector social housing providers who would be able to access up to \$500 million in low-cost loans to assist them in making necessary social housing infrastructure investments/repairs (this is supposed to repair up to 20,000 units across the province)

Also included in the budget was an announcement of a two per cent increase in Ontario Works (welfare) and Ontario disability benefits rates that helps ensure that some of the most economically vulnerable Ontarians don't fall further into poverty while the province develops its poverty reduction strategy.

These measures in addition to the previously announced funds for dental coverage for low-income Ontarians and nutritious food for children in schools are good harbingers of the province's commitment to reducing poverty.

Here in Niagara we look forward to continuing our advocacy work by participating in the upcoming community-based consultations promised by the province regarding a comprehensive poverty reduction strategy that works for all Ontarians.

Domestic violence: Endemic and increasing

In my previous articles about affordable housing I haven't addressed the importance that having access to affordable housing has for victims of domestic violence fleeing from their abuser. Under the legislation which determines who and how people

access rent geared-to-income housing, people fleeing domestic violence have special priority status as a way of enhancing community supports to victims of domestic violence.

As part of the work of the World Council of Churches, Decade to Overcome Violence an Overcoming Violence against Women Project was setup. In August 2001 consultants to the project brought together thirty representatives from the major worldwide church traditions in a pioneering consultation in Dundee, Scotland.

A statement from the Dundee consultation acknowledged the fact that violence against women is endemic and increasing, and that it happens everywhere including in churches of all traditions and communions. It also said that in recent years, churches, and denominational and ecumenical bodies, have begun to respond to this issue at different levels, but that much more remains to be done if churches around the world are to become places of safety, compassion and justice for all women.

Preventing acts of domestic violence

The participants at Dundee agreed on ten principles which should form the basis for any action on this issue, and committed themselves to practical steps, as appropriate in different contexts, to move towards fulfillment of these objectives.

Included in The 'Dundee Principles' was a commitment to implement educational strategies which will develop awareness and training in all parts of the church community and to work in partnership with the wider community in overcoming violence against women.

In many cases of domestic violence, it is common for several people to be aware of the abuse, either personally witnessing it, or by the victim confiding in someone. However, it is difficult for most people to know what to do about it. Many individuals may believe that what occurs in an intimate relationship is a private matter and that no one should meddle in other people's affairs.

Nevertheless, if more people were aware and educated on appropriate responses to domestic violence, many acts of violence including domestic homicides will be prevented.

In Ontario there is a Domestic Violence Death Review Committee (DVRDC) which is an advisory committee reporting to the province's Chief Coroner. In six of the cases reviewed for its 2006 report, several people were aware of the domestic abuse that was occurring, including

in the workplace or in the presence of family and/or friends. Examples include witnessing the victim and the perpetrator arguing outside of the victim's place of work, or the victim's family and friends being aware of the abuse and knowing that the perpetrator had access to several guns even though on probation.

Rebuffed by the victim or perpetrator

It is common for people to be aware of the perpetrator's troubling behaviour and to not know how to effectively engage with the perpetrator in a safe and appropriate way. Many people want to offer help and provide support, but there is a definite fear and hesitation in getting involved. Sometimes people do try to intervene but are rebuffed by the victim or the perpetrator.

The DVDRC reported seeing examples where several people were aware of the abusive relationship and the high risk posed by the perpetrator, but the victim did not feel that her partner posed a threat of lethal violence. There were opportunities for friends, family, and even community professionals to intervene, however they felt hindered because the victim believed that she could handle the situation on her own. Thus, if the community, including professionals, were more aware and educated on the dynamics of domestic violence and how to effectively intervene, fears and hesitations might subside and appropriate support to victims and perpetrators could be provided.

Neighbours, Friends and Families is a public education campaign to raise awareness of the signs of woman abuse so that those close to an at-risk woman or an abusive man can help. Specifically, this campaign provides communities with information about how to:

- Recognize the warning signs of woman abuse
- Support women and other members of the community who are affected by woman abuse
- Locate supportive resources in the community.
- Look for opportunities to promote and work collaboratively on the Aboriginal and the Francophone communities' campaigns.

Questions or general inquiries about the Neighbours, Friends and Families campaign can be directed to 519-438-9869 (ext. 222).

If you are in crisis, the Assaulted Women's Helpline at 1-866-863-0511 offers a 24-hour telephone and TTY 1-866-863-7868 crisis line for abused women in Ontario.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2 » Reaching deep into the heart of outreach

We recently became aware of the amazing work being done by an organization in Toronto called The Stop Community Food Centre (www.thestop.org). The Stop began in the early 1970's when Rev Cam Russell of St Stephen's in the Fields opened the doors of that church to assist people living on low incomes. By the mid 1980's, in addition to a food hamper program, The Stop was

helping people with landlord-tenant disputes, unemployment and welfare programs.

By the 1990's, three apartment buildings were purchased to provide affordable housing units. Since then, a community kitchen, community garden and drop-in programs have been added, in addition to the provision of a voice mail service, legal aid, a settlement worker and ID clinic. The Stop states that

"committed to the principle of social justice, it aims to play a leadership role in the food access sector, challenging the charitable food delivery model and serving as an example of how a wider approach can lead to social change". While The Stop is no longer affiliated with the church, it provides an excellent model of how the change from charity to justice can occur.

The Social Justice group at Incar-

nation wants to learn more about what it would be like to approach Outreach from the model of justice rather than the model of charity.

Charity responds to the immediate needs of people and is the comfortable model for most of us. Justice looks at the root causes of the problem and asks "Why are people hungry? Why is it impossible to live on social assistance? Why is there a lack of affordable

housing?" Justice takes longer, upsets the apple cart, and takes bigger risks. Justice involves advocacy and looks to effect change in inequitable systems in our society.

Please join us on our journey of exploration, and register for the workshop by calling the church office at 905-825-2851. The workshop will run from 10 to 2 and lunch will be provided.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10 » Getting to know you

I became secretary-treasurer for Rexdale Ecumenical Social Action, an incorporated interdenominational organisation which ran a good used clothing store in Rexdale. All the churches donated. The money sent needy children to summer camp and filled Christmas baskets for families."

Over four and one half years, Ted gradually transformed into Susan, becoming physically the person he had always known he was meant to be. In early 1981, Ted's mother died in England: "I could not go to the funeral. I had a passport but I couldn't go back to the male role." Ted did everything legally, retaining only his citizenship in his male name, and making statutory declarations for everything else. "Now, my passport is in the name of Susan Huxford-Westall. I like the 'Huxford' in there because it was my mother's maiden name, and some people knew me as Susan Huxford."

Susan's daughters had very different reactions to the transformation. Sadly, Susan's second daughter, Wendy, "doesn't want a relationship," but her elder daughter Julie's reaction to her father's experience was an amazed "You haven't changed!" Susan replied, "I'm still me," and they remain close. Julie and her husband, an Inuit she met while nursing on Baffin Island, live in Edmonton.

Homecoming and new life

Susan moved back to Hamilton in February, 1982, first as Susan Huxford, then adding Westall. "I went to my parish church, All Saint's, but was rebuffed by the Rector at first. It was my parish church! I joined the choir, and became Warden when I was 76."

Reflecting on her experiences, Susan explains, "I've had the marvelous experience of having two lives in one. I've been a man, and a successful man. And I'm a woman, and I'm beginning to say a successful woman too." Then, with typical honesty, "There are some things I haven't experienced because I haven't been a woman all my life.

"I don't have to say it any longer! I am a woman and people accept me as such. It's how they see me and how we interact. It's true of all people: we all say 'How do people see me, accept me?'"

Typically, Susan has applied her transformation to enabling others. "As a teacher, you get some psychology, but I've run a group for transgendered people. Among gendered males who have gender dysphoria (feeling and thinking of themselves as female), the fantasy level is amazing. I blame Hollywood; it has built up beauty and led (men and women) into fantasy. The latest development is to prevent aging—but we *do* get old!"

Susan has been interviewed on television and radio, counselled many transgendered people, organised a seminar for the Gender Identity Clinic at the Clarke Institute (Toronto), and, as a member of the Harry Benjamin International Gender Dysphoria Association, presented a paper in Bordeaux, France. She has been a member of the Canadian Sex Research Forum, and recording secretary of the Western New York Society of Sexuality Professionals.

Susan continues to encourage others experiencing gender dysphoria, and to educate Canadians about them. "Transgendered men feel at home in the gay community, but... they're not realistic. They have little or no education or training, because they left school because of bullying, and some were sexually abused. The stable ones are genetic females who go to males because they know they're going into a dog-eat-dog society. As many women become men as the other way. The insignia for female-to-male is the appearance of a beard, and for male-to-female is the development of breasts. What causes transgenderism? There's now some thought that our sex centre in the brain is displaced."

Though researchers work to unravel its mystery, human sexuality still has many secrets. Humans tend to fear what we do not understand; fear

unsettles us, and leads to strong reactions. Openness to learning and compassion for others, especially those different from oneself, can reduce that fear and bring humanity to new wisdom, wholeness and fulfillment of that phrase in the baptismal covenant, "Will you respect the dignity of every human being?" Susan chuckles as she says, "What an uninteresting world it would be if we were all the same! There'd be no challenge!"

Explorations in faith

With courage and commitment, Susan continues to challenge spiritual complacency. She explores the work of the Jesus seminar, a group of internationally renowned scholars who study the Bible, especially the New Testament, trying to determine what is truly authentic and what is editorial comment. "Pitman's shorthand hadn't been invented, and nobody had a tape recorder! I've been reading Luke's Gospel, the seven last words. Not one of them is accepted by scholars as said by Jesus, but they were written in later. How can they be anything else (but editorial commentary)?" Then another challenge: "The four symbols of the Gospels? The very same figures were used in the Gnostic Gospels." (The name, Gnosticism, derived from the Greek word for 'knowledge,' refers to a complex religious movement, ancient in origin and appearing in the Christian community in the second century A.D.)

Susan's exploration of her deep faith leads to clear questions: "One of my big problems with the Church is that the Number 1 work of the Church is to worship God. Is God narcissistic? Because if he is he did a rotten job on creation! God did not want puppets on a string; if he wanted a creation to do exactly what he wanted, he would have created worshipping people who would bow down and worship him. God took a gamble on us and gave us free will—even though the early Church couldn't accept that—but God gave us free will, the opportunity of returning to him." Susan grins, "Some people would say some others

wouldn't make it!" Asked about them, she continues, "That's the question. What about reincarnation? There are people who seem to have had the experience."

On another tangent: "Hell is a place where we keep repeating the same mistakes. I believe that from earliest times God has wanted us to know him. Early humans could only understand the things around them. I believe that God has revealed himself through his creation in many ways that could be understood by various cultures."

"What is God? We must worship (God) in spirit and in truth. We cannot measure, see (God), but I have a strong sense that (God) is there. In part we can sense, (because God) manifests itself in other forms. Is God pure energy?—because that would account for the life in *anything!* There's certainly plenty of energy in the core of the planet; it's all part of God's creation."

Susan grins, adding "These are the things I want to write about. I've already referred to it in my article about Stephen Hawking (the brilliant British physicist). I've started a book called 'God's Great Adventure.' It's a scientific fact that nature abhors a vacuum. (Perhaps) God said, 'Let's put part of my Spirit into something that's alive, and it will find its way back to me!'"

Never one to conceal her reactions to the unfolding Anglican history, Susan says, "I have seen a wake-up call—God is at work! The enthronement of Bishop Michael is an indication of that!" In her column in this paper, Susan has revealed much of her sense of God's participation in this life, but there is more: "If I was to write about my faith, the old-timers would call me heretical." Susan explains "my own thoughts about what happens when we die: your spirit passes into another dimension, 'surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses' (Hebrews 12:1)." Susan interrupts herself to ask a rhetorical question: "Where is heaven? We can put out our hands to touch it, but we

cannot feel it!" She continues, "We move through into this other dimension. When I die, I will face God, but Jesus will be standing beside me, and God will say, 'There's your model. Judge yourself! You've had the example; how did you measure up?'"


Past President of the St. George's Society, and a founding member of the board and recording secretary for the Friendship Centres for the Psychiatrically Impaired (formed to support people trying to reintegrate into the community but sadly closed three years ago), Susan remains an active participant in the life of the Church, intrigued with Anglican events far beyond this Diocese of Niagara. Signed on to the website for the Anglican Church of Canada, she gets "news up to four times a day! It's very useful."

Life!

At 87, Susan Westall's enthusiasm for life remains undiminished: "There is so much in life! I've been told I should write my story, but I get distracted. I have started, got through my teen years, up to the War. Now I want to write about my faith, my life, what life's all about! I could say so much; I've had time to think about it!"

"I've kept going, and now I've taken up writing for the Niagara Anglican, encouraged by Chris Grabiec (Editor) and my friend for years, (the Reverend Canon Charles Stirling, member of the Publisher's Advisory Board). My prayer is 'Lord, it's in your hands; I'll go on working as long as you want me to.' I can say I love life, but I can also say I'm not afraid to die."

Rose gardens have thorns. Some people complain because God put thorns among the roses, but others praise God because he put roses among the thorns. Susan Huxford-Westall has dealt with thorns most people never imagine, but remains an example of faithfulness, courage and compassion. Standing before God, with Jesus beside her, she'll probably measure up very well indeed!



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	PAYROLL		DMM		MISC	TOTAL
	2007	Prior Years	2007	Prior Years		
St. Alban's, Acton					125.00	125.00
Canterbury Hills	286.13					286.13
Canterbury Hills Camp						-
St. John's, Ancaster						-
Grace Church, Arthur			910.72	18,171.72		19,082.44
St. Alban's, Beamsville			3,350.25			3,350.25
St. Christopher's Church					(821.50)	(821.50)
St. Elizabeth's, Burlington				58,186.49		58,186.49
St. John, Burlington						-
St. Luke's, Burlington					(82.67)	(82.67)
St. Matthew's Church						-
St. Philip, Burlington			1,597.48			1,597.48
St. Paul, Caledonia					430.00	430.00
St. John The Divine, Cayuga						-
St. John's, Cheapside						-
St. James Church, Dundas					174.98	174.98
Dunn Parish, Dunnville						-
St. Paul, Dunnville					75.00	75.00
St. John's Church, Elora	6,368.61				(58.33)	6,310.28
All Saints Church, Erin						-
St. James, Fergus						-
Christ Church, Flamborough	4,801.40					4,801.40
Holy Trinity, Fonthill			25,488			25,488.27
St. Paul's, Fort Erie						-
St. George's, Georgetown					(1,127.88)	(1,127.88)
St. Paul, Glanford						-
St. Alban's, Glen Williams						-
St. Alban's, Grand Valley						-
St. Andrew's Church, Grimsby						-
St. Philip, Grimsby						-
St. David's & St. Patrick's						-
St. George's, Guelph						-
St. James The Apostle, Guelph			59,341.32	20,544.16	450.00	80,335.48
St. Matthias, Guelph	8,352.32	39,752.56	4,716.44	28,622.92	182.00	81,626.24
All Saints, Hagersville			2,543.34	27,302.49	145.06	29,990.89
All Saints, Hamilton			7,847.04	23,774.64	53,620.76	85,242.44
Church Of The Ascension	20,181.68					20,181.68
Christ's Church Cathedral					7,342.22	7,342.22
Grace Church, Hamilton	3,109.22	22,090.86		84,485.01		109,685.09
Holy Trinity Church, Hamilton			4,604.34			4,604.34
Church of the Resurrection						-
St. Alban, Hamilton					(53.81)	(53.81)
St. John The Evangelist						-
St. Luke, Hamilton				82,000.00		82,000.00
The Church of The Nativity						-
St. Matthew's House	7,300.45	105.63				7,406.08
St. Michael's, Hamilton						-
St. Paul, Hamilton					25.74	25.74
St. Peter's, Hamilton			2,172.26			2,172.26
St. Stephen, Hamilton				1,110.11	734.43	1,844.54
St. George's, Homer						-
St. Stephen, Hornby						-
St. Paul's, Jarvis	15,477.37	16,397.86	14,066.64	13,020.95	493.79	59,456.61
St. John's, Jordan						-
St. Mark's, Louth						-
St. George's, Lowville		2,484.56		3,002.73		5,487.29
Christ Church, McNab						-
Grace Church, Milton					150.78	150.78
St. Paul's, Mount Forest						-
Christ Church, Nanticoke			5,620.80	3,648.60		9,269.40
St. John, Nassagaweya						-
All Saint's, Niagara Falls	1,625.20	1,485.59				3,110.79
Christ Church, Niagara Falls						-
Holy Trinity, Niagara Falls						-
St. John's, Niagara Falls					110.01	110.01
St. Mark's, Niagara on the Lake						-
St. Paul's, Norval						-
Epiphany, Oakville					100.25	100.25
Church Of The Incarnation	11,607.88	43,637.34	577.20			55,822.42
St. Aidan's Church, Oakville					100.29	100.29
St. Cuthbert's Church			16,422.12		100.29	16,522.41
St. Hilda's, Oakville			24,198.10		100.29	24,298.39
St. Jude's Church, Oakville					(927.58)	(927.58)
St. Simon's, Oakville	15,715.53				100.24	15,815.77
St. Mark's, Orangeville						-
St. Luke's Church, Palermo		10,995.30		44,794.11		55,789.41
St. Brendan, Port Colborne		16,203.66		52,192.87		68,396.53
St. James, Port Colborne		12,165.08		56,618.27		68,783.35
St. James, Port Colborne-Youth						-
St. Paul's, Port Robinson	8,965	17,151.73				26,116.99
St. Saviour's, Queenston					150.00	150.00
St. John's, Ridgemount						-
All Saints, Ridgeway		28,387.42		43,194.15		71,581.57
St. John's, Rockwood					(228.81)	(228.81)
Church Of The Good Shepherd			6,150.10	18,043.65	45.50	24,239.25
Grace Church, St. Catharines					(40.81)	(40.81)
St. Barnabas, St. Catharines			10,120.43	64,586.46	1,626.92	76,333.81
St. Columba, St. Catharines						-
St. George, St. Catharines						-
St. James, St. Cath. (Merriton)						-
St. John, St. Catharines						-
St. Thomas, St. Catharines						-
Transfiguration Church						-
St. Paul's, Shelburne				25,520.52	247.00	25,767.52
St. Luke's, Smithville			3,230			3,229.55
St. John's, Stewarttown	1,421.01		1,285.53		223.53	2,930.07
Redeemer, Stony Creek	549.10					549.10
St. John's, Thorold			21,777.59		955.00	22,732.59
Christ Church, Wainfleet						-
Grace Church, Waterdown						-
All Saints, Welland			269.98			269.98
Holy Trinity, Welland						-
St. David's, Welland						-
Christ Church, Whitfield						-
St. John's Church, Winona					268.63	268.63
Christ Church, Woodburn						-
St. John's, York						-
MISCELLANEOUS	7,474.07				58,539.86	66,013.93
SUB-TOTALS	113,235.23	210,857.59	216,289.50	668,819.85	123,276.18	1,332,478.35
TOTALS PER CATEGORIES		324,092.82		885,109.35	123,276.18	1,332,478.35

New Advertising Manager for the Niagara Anglican

The publisher's advisory board (PAB) is pleased to announce that a new advertising manager for the Niagara Anglican began working with us on the first of April of this year. Colin Jacobs is no stranger to the advertising world. From 1993 until 2004, he was Senior Account Manager in the advertising sales department of *Macleans*' magazine, and from 1985 until 1992, Colin was National Account Manager for the *Globe and Mail*'s advertising sales department. He began his career in Canada in 1966 with J. Walter Thompson Advertising and has



worked for various other studios and graphic arts companies over the years.

Colin is a volunteer-at-large at the Royal Hamilton Yacht Club, holding the title of Communications Director. His position with our newspaper is part-time. If you or someone you know needs to advertise their business or events in our paper, please do contact him.

The PAB wishes to thank Ted Manning for his many years of faithful service as Colin's predecessor in the Diocese of Niagara.

What kind of Spirit?

RICK JONES
SECRETARY TO SYNOD

This is the season of the Spirit. Pentecost, mission and new life in Christ is the activity and message of the Church. As individuals and groups we want to proclaim that message and engage in that activity, in the power of the Spirit. The question for me is, "Are we talking about spirit or Spirit?"

We know there is team spirit, organizational spirit, even the spirit of a time. We know we need spirit, "Who wants to be spirited or part of a group or organization that lacks spirit?" We can point to organizations or individuals who are quite charismatic but we would not want to affirm this spirit. The Third Reich and its leader were quite spirited, but to our minds, misguided or even evil. There are many examples of charismatic individuals and groups who have lead others into human tragedy, fear, hatred, division and death. As we move into the Season of Spirit, can we reflect for a moment on how spirit comes about and how we tell the difference between spirit and Spirit?

When spirit declines

It seems that spirit is a quality of an individual or group that embodies energy and motivates. It is a quality we admire and seek in our lives and in our churches. We hope that we are inspired by the Holy Spirit. Both types of spirit seem to come from conversation. People talk to one another about things that matter to them, and sometimes in the midst of those conversations there is the stirring of energy. This energy motivates greater conversation and soon ideas and plans are underway. Often one or two people will be the ones to articulate this movement of spirit and make it known to others. In the Book of Acts it is Peter and Paul who are the primary spokespeople for this emerging common understanding of Spirit. Look at all organizations and you will find at the beginning there was a conversation, usually because of a need, then there were ideas, more conversation, and then actions that resulted in activities and usually organizational structures. Spirit and spirits are usually pretty high at the beginning of these movements or organizations, but over time can decrease. We know this is true and see it in all organizations including churches. If spirit continues to decline death is inevitable.

If spirit comes from conversation and the honest assessment of need, and if we are worried about the spirit of our organiza-

tions, it is time to have some real conversations. We need conversations about what is going well and what we appreciate and love, what works and what doesn't, conversations that will energize us to new creativity and actions. We need conversations with God in prayer. If you are looking for one idea to invite the transforming power of the Spirit into your church, this is it. Our example is the upper room experience of the earliest disciples who waited in conversation and prayer until the Spirit came upon them.

The second part of my question was, "How do you know that the ideas, actions and leaders that emerge are guided by the Holy Spirit or some other kind of spirit?" When we see new kinds of expressions of church, whether it be the Anglican Network movement or the Gathering (our diocesan youth expression) or your church's latest ministry, or perhaps it is the ordination of women, or some other kind of new idea in the church, how do we know if it is really guided by the Holy Spirit? This is an important question and one I don't pose lightly.

Actions bearing the fruit of the Spirit

Fortunately both within Scripture, and in our spiritual tradition, we have ways to judge whether or not new ideas and movements embody unhelpful spirit, or the Holy Spirit. In both cases, the rule is, "by their fruits you will know them". As time passes the truth is always revealed. Biblically, and in the spiritual discernment traditions, unhelpful spirit is known to produce disunity in community, fear, unkindness, lack of peace and joy, judgmental attitudes towards others, even hatred and persecution.

The fruit of the Spirit, on the other hand, is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self control. (Galatians 5) and added to that by the tradition, is unity and harmony in community. When we look at all the relatively recent changes in the church that sometimes flew in the face of Scripture, such as the abolition of slavery, the remarriage of divorced people and the ordination of women, we judge these actions after the fact. Was the Holy Spirit leading us into new truth? Have these actions born the fruits of the Spirit?

We all need spirit, the question is, "What kind: spirit or Spirit?" May we all continue to have conversations in our churches, and, may some of them be Holy, producing the fruits of the Spirit in revitalized communities.

Year-round giving

CARL SNEYD
DIRECTOR OF STEWARDSHIP & FINANCIAL DEVELOPMENT

We are well into spring, now and thinking about gardens and cottages and summer vacations. Summer is often a time of financial hardships for parishes, when there is reduced attendance and reduced giving. Churches usually receive well below average amounts in July and August. This often means juggling bill payments or using a line of credit or borrowing to cover expenses during the rest of the year or worse, deferring payments "until things look better". There are two ways to help alleviate the problem.

The first way is to tell the parish financial folks what they can expect to receive during the year. In late November and early December, many parishes have their annual stewardship initiatives, pledge drives or commitment campaigns, as part of their successful year-round stewardship program. Parishioners are asked to indicate, in writing, their level of support, often in time and talent as well as treasure or financial support. It's also budget planning time, a time when treasurers and wardens and finance committee members can make more or less solid plans, planning the work of building the kingdom, based on the return of the commitment or pledge cards. But, a lot of parishioners don't return their indicator card, which unnecessarily causes even more sleepless nights for treasurers, wardens and finance committee members.

Planning in our own lives and in the church

In our own personal lives, we have a pretty good idea from month to month and year to year what our income will be, whether it is from salaries, wages, pensions or other income. We count on that knowledge. It allows us to plan, either simply or grandly, for the future. Without that information, we become very anxious and stressed about our situation, (will our mortgage be paid, can we afford the gas bill next month, insurance is coming due, will it be Florida or Italy next February?).

Parish financial people get anxious and stressed, because, of course, churches have expenses, too. By filling out our pledge/commitment/indicator cards from that part of our successful, year-round stewardship program, we

tell our parish, "Yes, you can count on this level of financial support from me over the next year." The greater number of parishioners that make their intentions known to their church, the more solid the plans the corporation can make for the following years; mortgages will be paid, there will be heat in Februaries to come, the insurance bill will be covered on time and we will be able to take on that big project we have had on the back burner all these years. (We would hope that the treasurer's February trips to Florida and Italy will not be at the church's expense.) And as an extra bonus, treasurers and wardens can sleep a little better.

Using Preauthorized Payments

The second way the problem can be partially alleviated is by parishioners using the Pre-Authorized Giving (PAG) or Payment (PAP) option. This is an automatic withdrawal authorized by you for a specific amount to be withdrawn from your account on a day of the month of your choice. This amount is paid to your parish. It is a free service provided by the Diocese and it is available to all parishes. Some parishes use this extensively, with over 50% of their weekly/monthly givers using PAP; other have varying numbers from 50% down to only 1 or 2 individual givers.

Why use PAP? From another time, some of us will vaguely remember receiving, (or our parents receiving) usually on a Friday, a brown envelope that opened on the short end, containing, in cash, the earnings for the week, less the deductions written on the front of the envelope. The envelope was always checked carefully to make sure that there wasn't another quarter or dollar bill stuck in there.

Most of us will remember more recently, getting a window envelope containing a paper pay cheque mad out by hand. We received it twice a month or every other week and we went to the bank sometime between 10 am and 3 pm Monday through Friday and stood in line to deposit, waiting while the teller got our card from the file box and updated our pass book by hand.

Parishes are still in the Brown Pay Packet days

Virtually all of us, young and old, now

receive our salary, wages, pension or investment income by a monthly or bi-monthly automatic deposit, receiving only a statement that indicates that on a particular day, a certain number of dollars and cents was deposited directly to our bank account. We expect that money to be there, we count on it, and when the amount isn't just what we expected, we either complain bitterly and loudly (if it's less) or gleefully start planning our February trip to Florida or Italy (if it's more), after we assure ourselves that it really isn't a mistake.

Most parishes are still in the brown, pay packet days, with most parishioners using weekly envelopes, for which we are all grateful. But there are many advantages to suing PAP both for the parish and the parishioner.

With PAP, the parish receives a monthly statement, listing the parishioners and the amounts deposited to the parish's account. There is no confusion about how much was in which envelope and what exactly did they mean when they indicated that it should go to the "mission program"? For the parish, costs go down, accuracy in posting goes up, postings become more timely and accurate, and, for the parishioner, there are no missed envelopes.

For the parishioner, PAP means not having to make up contributions after the trips to Florida, Italy and Cuba in February and to the cottage in July and August. It means not having to make up for the snowy days we had in January, February and March this year, when attendance was down so greatly or services were cancelled completely. It means peace of mind knowing that your parish is looked after on a regular basis. Changes can be made easily. We are so sure that this will help out your parish; there is no charge to the parish from the Diocese for this excellent service. In effect, your money is transferred from you to your parish's account on the particular day of the month you stipulate.

Putting God and Church in your budget

Generally speaking, PAP givers tend to be more generous givers. It appears that special appeals and extra offer-

ings are given in addition to regular pledged givings, instead of, as sometimes happens, regular envelope donations being diverted in whole or in part to the extra envelopes.

PAP makes it easy to put God and your church in your budget, along with the house taxes, mortgage or rent, insurance and utility bills that you already have set up. PAP says you believe in the work your church has planned for the current year and on into the future.

Some people object that with PAP, there is nothing to put on the plate when it is passed during the service. Well, there are some congregations that, horror of horrors, don't pass an offering plate at all! Parishioners not on the PAP plan are encouraged to place their offerings on the plates before the service. Some parishes where the plate is still passed provide small cards to put on the plate that are imprinted with a "I give by PAP" message on them. Often the use of the cards lasts only a few weeks. They become a nuisance or redundant. With all the prayerful consideration and thought you put in before you filled in your pledge/commitment/indicator card as part of your parish's successful, year-round stewardship program, whose business is it anyway how much you put on the plate or how you make your gift; that's between you and God.

The Diocese provides the PAP service to parishes free of charge. There is no service charge or discounts applied. For every \$100 parishioners indicate they will give, the parish receives \$100 per month. Some parishes have negotiated PAP agreements with their own local banks. There is usually a service charge, often a 5% discount for these "private", non-diocesan, plans, so the parish will receive only \$95 of your pledged \$100. There is no 5% service charge for the Diocesan plan. There is no service charge at all for the Diocesan plan. There is a PAP form on the Stewardship page of the Diocesan website you can download and reproduce. Most treasurers will have these forms available and would be delighted to give you one.

When parishioners use the PAP automatic deduction, the parish is assured of a steadier, more even cash flow over the whole year. And that helps build the kingdom with a firmer foundation.

The Niagara Anglican

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Editor: Christopher Grabiec

Phone: 905-312-8444 (ext. 101)

Advertising: Ted Manning

Phone: 905-680-0615

Publishers Advisory Board

Pam Claridge
Phone: 519-941-6804

Geoffrey Purdell-Lewis
Phone: 905-628-4176

Charles Stirling
Phone: 905-383-1088

Carol Summers
Phone: 905-772-5641

Staff

Design/layout: Kayn Leduc
Proofreading: Bryan Stopps

Submissions

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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.

Bishop of Niagara: Michael A. Bird

Phone: 905-527-1316

Administrative Assistant: Alison D'Atri

Phone: 905-527-1316 (ext. 310)

Executive Officer: Michael Patterson

Phone: 905-527-1316

Program Department

Christyn Perkons
Phone: 905-527-1316 (ext. 460)

Joyce Wilton
Phone: 905-527-1316 (ext. 430)

Contact the Diocese

Cathedral Place
252 James St. North
Hamilton, ON L8R 2L3
Phone: 905-527-1316

Provincial Synod of Ontario Diocese of Niagara nominations

The Synod of the Diocese of Niagara is calling for nominations to the Provincial Synod which will meet October 14-16, 2009, hosted by the Diocese of Moosonee.

Niagara is entitled to elect 4 clergy delegates, 4 lay delegates, and 1 youth delegate. Youth Synod will be the nominations committee for securing the Youth Delegate names on the ballot.

Individuals must be members of the 2008 Diocesan Synod in order to be eligible for nomination. Members of Synod may self-nominate. The consent of a nominee must be given prior to his/her name being submitted.

Deadline for nominations is June 15, 2008, and must include Name, Parish and Location (city/town), Gender, Email address (if available), and Phone number(s).

The ballot will be presented to the November 2008 Diocesan Synod. Further information about this volunteer opportunity is available upon request.

Please send nominations to:

The Reverend Canon Dr. Richard Jones
Secretary of Synod
252 James Street North
Hamilton, ON L8R 2L3

Fax: 905-527-1281

What's in a name?



NISSA BASBAUM
RECTOR - TRANSFIGURATION, ST. CATHARINES

Of late, I have come into contact with more and more people who tell me that they struggle to call themselves Christian. I, myself, am one of those people. You might think, "What an odd thing for a priest to say." Yet, I can assure you, there are many of us saying it.

Years ago, a priest I knew, now long retired, told me the church was dead. I was fairly young and innocent at the time and argued vociferously that it was ridiculous to make such a statement when he and I and many others were making our livelihood by working for this ostensibly dead institution. It seemed absurd to suggest that the very thing which was putting food on my table and was about to provide him with a pension was actually dead—gone, deceased, departed, lying in the grave, *hasta la vista*, as they say. It seemed absurd and, more to the point, hypocritical and dishonest to be suggesting such a thing.

Now, as I find myself older and greyer, I wonder if my friend wasn't right. It no longer feels difficult for me to ponder the reality that the church, if not actually dead, is barely living on life support.

Jesus was a Jew

It's a metaphor, of course, a metaphor which describes the extraordinarily small impact which the church as we have always known it, actually has on our society. Heavens, years ago when my friend said this, shopping on Sunday was still illegal while hockey and everything else rarely took place on that day of the week. If my friend regarded the church's influence on society as dead then, there can be little question that it must certainly be so now! Hence, the huge dilemma in which many of us

currently find ourselves. If we continue to call ourselves Christian in the face of an institution that resembles a cadaver rather than a living, breathing body, what is it we are trying to say as we persist in assuming this title, and what is it that often makes us think twice about actually wanting to wear it?

I, for one, am deeply disturbed by the distance we seem to have travelled from the original message and person of Jesus. During a study which I led several years ago, one of the members of the group referred to Jesus' early followers as Christians. "Excuse me," I said. "The early followers of Jesus were Jews. Christianity was an unknown term in the time to which you are referring." This person brushed my comment aside with a response something like, "Oh sure, we all know that but that's not what's important here." *Au contraire*, I thought, it is extremely important because it's the very thing that the church has conveniently managed to forget. Jesus, himself, was a Jew; his first followers were Jewish and neither he nor they ever intended to start a new religion.

A new breed of Christianity

To its detriment the church has either forgotten or buried its origins and in doing this, it has managed to repeat the same mistakes of its ancestors. The following of rules and regulations—doing things the "right" way—has become the order of the day. Rather than being a religion which holds in highest esteem the loving relationship of God with God's people and people with one another, Christianity has become a religion of rights and wrongs, of being allowed in or being kicked out. Some of us are desperately trying to find our way back to the premise of a faith based on love because we understand this to have been the premise out of which Jesus operated. Only if we are able to discover that a thread of this still exists in the church will we then believe that we can continue to call ourselves Christian. To do this, we need convincing that the church is first and

foremost committed to following the commandment to love.

What I and others like me can't help but ask ourselves is whether or not there is a new breed of Christianity that needs to be birthed and if so, how can this happen in a world that is much larger and perhaps more complex than it once was, and in a church that is not only intricately entangled in a web of its own outdated orthodoxy but also seemingly averse to beginning the complicated journey of untangling this web?

Years ago, I remember participating in a clergy day in which one of the speakers, commenting on ministry in the context of individual parishes, suggested that it was easier to build a new church than to resurrect an old one. In more recent years, I have found myself wondering if it is actually possible to rebirth a new order of Christianity within the confines of a very old order or is it necessary to work outside the old order for a new one to be established.

Something must die

Interestingly, Jesus attempted to rebirth something new within the context of what was old. He had no desire to throw away the law but to have people respond to the spirit of that law. Yet history has shown that for whatever reason this didn't seem to work, and suddenly instead of his followers participating in a renewed Judaism, they produced a new religion called Christianity. Ironically, those who hadn't been so enamoured with Jesus and hadn't followed his lead ended up in a renewal movement which produced modern Judaism. It is difficult for those of us who are struggling with the church as it currently exists to figure out if the only way forward is a road that leads out of this same church, or if there may yet be hope for renewal within its walls.

There is no doubt that in order for something new to grow, something must first die. In this regard, perhaps the comment that the church is dead bespeaks hope rather than despair. In a

book which I recently read, this was certainly my understanding of the author's analysis of the malaise in which mainline churches find themselves. The book is *Christianity for the Rest of Us* and the author is Diana Butler Bass, a woman well-versed in modern church analysis. In this latest of her research projects, Butler Bass has attempted to discover if there is anything positive happening in those old mainline churches, the ones that once were at the top of the food chain and now have found themselves living very near to the bottom.

Rejoicing in the chaos

In her introductory chapter, she describes the village in which she grew up, a village in which "the vast majority of people shared a worldview based on order, reason, and objective truth—all based on the idea of a benevolent Creator" (Butler Bass, Diana. *Christianity for the Rest of Us*. New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 2006, p. 19). It seemed, at least in that time, that everyone agreed on the content of this objective truth. Looking at the world today, however, Butler Bass says, "There seem to be different sorts of Christians today, those who prefer to build walled villages and do not want to see, and those who take risks in the wilderness and are willing to open their eyes... those individuals on a journey of faith that moves beyond the faith traditions they have inherited into new religious territory" (Ibid, p. 25).

Apparently, based on her research, Butler Bass has surmised that a renewed understanding of Christianity does indeed exist even within the framework of the old order. Key to this, however, is that it is not the same in every place which she has visited. Each community named and described in her book is doing something different to express its Christian faith and practice. The *raison d'être* of all these congregations is not an adherence to doctrine or orthodoxy; rather, it is a commitment on the part of their members to sharing with the wider community their particular way

of understanding the gospel.

As they do this, the message of Jesus is preached, practiced and lived out among them. As Butler Bass describes each of these churches, it quickly becomes apparent that if there is one thing that is lacking in their message, it is the idea that uniformity of belief and practice is an expectation. These are Christians who rejoice in the chaos that is wilderness and recognize this wilderness as a place of diversity which produces hope.

For me, Butler Bass' book is one of the most uplifting and optimistic things I have read about present-day Christianity. Unbelievably, her research and description of many smaller, neighbourhood churches in the United States leave me feeling that there is something to be celebrated about naming myself as Christian in today's society, something with which even Jesus, I think, might be comfortable having his name linked. Not surprisingly, this something is not what most people in our society would regard as redemptive for it bespeaks vulnerability rather than power. As Butler Bass concludes, "The old Protestant mainline is no longer mainline. It no longer speaks from a pinnacle of cultural privilege and power. In some quarters, especially in those congregations along my journey, it has become a pilgrimage church, a community of exiles who practice Christianity" (Ibid, p. 282).

I, for one, am happy to be a part of this exiled community, practicing my faith from the edge rather than the centre. The fringe benefits of teetering on the brink are often quite exhilarating.

Diana Butler Bass will be the guest speaker at a one-day workshop in the fall, on September 27, which is being co-sponsored by Church of the Transfiguration, St. Catharines and the Diocese of Niagara. The deadline for early registrations and a reduced price for this workshop is June 15. Please see the advertisement for this event in the Niagara Anglican or visit www.niagara.anglican.ca for details on how to register.

So much to learn, so much to celebrate



PETER WALL
DEAN AND RECTOR - CHRIST'S CHURCH CATHEDRAL

As I write this, we have just begun the Easter season and have completed a Holy Week and Triduum cycle. How lucky we are as Anglicans to have the richness of our liturgies; at no other time of the year is that richness as evident as in Holy Week and as we begin to keep Easter. Our worship is comforting and challenging; deeply moving and, at times, deeply disturbing; it takes us from the depth of despair at the foot of the cross to the unfathomable joy of resurrection as we go *through* the cross to the empty tomb. It involves us in great drama, in deep serenity, and in fabulous exaltation. All of it requires our presence and our senses; it requires preparation and planning; it needs the gathered community to make it both

acceptable and efficacious.

If we are not left with questions and uncertainties, then our liturgies have not done for and to us what they should. If we are not lifted up and outside of ourselves, then we have probably not put ourselves wholly into them. What an amazing privilege it is to experience these riches.

I just completed my annual teaching cycle at the Renison Institute of Ministry at Renison College, University of Waterloo. The institute (or 'RIM') specializes in providing ongoing lay educational opportunities and specialized formation for Deacons. It has been my great pleasure for several years now, to offer a series of liturgical workshops, including training for Lectors, Lay Intercessors, Cantors, and Lay Eucharistic Ministers, as well as a seminar on the History and Development of Liturgy. I highly commend Renison and its programmes to all.

One of the best things about my time at Renison is how much I learn from others, and how much my commitment to liturgical learning and plan-

ning is affirmed. How do all those readings fit together? What is the *best* way, given all of the variables, to deal with the complexity of images and 'feelings' on Palm Sunday? The texts for Holy week, mostly from the fourth Gospel, say many things about 'the Jews'. Is this the anti-Semitism of the early church? How do you and I react to it? How should we name it and engage with it? How should we think about the many layers of symbols at work, not only in Holy Week, but throughout our liturgies? What does classical Anglican theology say about our understanding of the Eucharist? What layers of understanding do current practice and our own sense of church add to these theological underpinnings?

These are all most interesting areas of discussion, of learning, of debate. The abundance of new and meaningful hymnody can add immeasurably to our liturgies; the involvement of all of our senses in our worship; the sprinkling of water, the flashes of colour, the ringing of bells, the pungent aroma of incense—all of these things deepen our experience.

I do want to suggest however that none of these things just 'happens'—significant and involving liturgy happens because of careful planning by teams of people and equally careful execution of these liturgies.

I hope this summer to begin an experiment in creating a planning resource, perhaps using a month at a time, of themes, hymn suggestions, on-line links, prayer resources, and other aids for liturgical planning. I hope that this tool will be of assistance to clergy, parish worship planning groups, and to lectors and intercessors as they plan for the weeks which lie ahead. I hope to do them monthly; we shall see what works best. If you have specific requests or advice about what sorts of things should be included, please get in touch with me—I appreciate any and all input.

Meanwhile, enjoy these waning days of the Great 50 Days of Easter (hence: Pentecost). Try something wild—plan for an Ascension Day or Pentecost service which stretches you and your community. It's a wonderful season, have some fun!

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EVENTS

Finding Balance and Loving God with Heart, Mind and Soul

St. Cuthbert's, Oakville
Six week small group experience for women seeking a balance between doing and being, led by the Reverend Eleanor Clitheroe-Bell.
Cost: Donation for materials
May 2, 9:00 AM-10:30 AM

Treasures Sale

Holy Trinity (Chippawa), Niagara Falls
Come and check out our annual yard sale, and bake table. Lunch consisting of peameal bacon on a bun will be available in the parish hall.
May 3, 8:00 AM-1:00 PM

Niagara Regional Police Male Chorus Concert

Christ Church, Niagara Falls
This one hour concert will feature a half hour of sacred music and a half hour of show tunes. The choir features the voice of our very own Reverend Canon Jim Powell.
Cost: To be announced
May 4, 7:00 PM

Celebration of Ministry and Farewell

St. George, Guelph
Please join us for Archdeacon Thomas Greene's last Sunday at St. George's as we celebrate his 38 years of dedicated ministry. We hope that as many of Thomas's family, friends and colleagues will be able to be with him. There will be a reception in Mitchell Hall following the 10:30 AM service.
May 4, 8:30 AM and 10:30 AM

Luncheon Card Party

Holy Trinity (Chippawa), Niagara Falls
Sandwiches, pickles, squares, and lots of door prizes. In past years, it has been a full house. Call Mavis Doherty at 295-

4151 or the church office at 295-3212.
Cost: \$8.00 per person
May 7, 12:00 PM

Monthly Dinners

St. James, St. Catharines
This month's menu includes lasagna, caesar salad, garlic bread, a fruit bowl and ice cream.
Cost: \$5.00 per person
May 7, 5:00 PM-7:00 PM

Spring Into Summer Fashion Show

St. David's Parish, Welland
Join us for a fun social evening with fashions by Tabi and refreshments and door prizes.
Cost: \$8.00 per person
May 7, 7:00 PM

Kick-off party for Natural Church Development

Grace Church, St. Catharines
We're having a wine and cheese party for the entire parish to celebrate our first Natural Church Development survey. While everyone enjoys their wine, cheese and conversation, the survey takers will take about 30 minutes to complete their survey. They'll get to join us at the wine and cheese party when they have completed the survey.
May 7, 7:00 PM

Youth Dance

St. David's Parish, Welland
Dances are held every other Friday for those in grades 5-8. Pizza and pop will be available.
Cost: \$5.00 per person
May 9, 7:00 PM-10:00 PM

Parish Social

The Dunn Parish
All are invited to an evening buffet and

drinks at the Rectory (Dunnville) for fun and fellowship. Bring a bottle!
May 9, 7:00 PM

Music Night

St. Alban's, Grand Valley
An evening of musical offerings of many styles featuring local talent. Gourmet treats included at the intermission. Wine and beer will be available. Proceeds go to PWRDF.
Cost: \$10.00 per person
May 10, 7:00 PM

Pentecost Festival of Lessons and Hymns

St. Cuthbert's, Oakville
Celebrate the coming of the Holy Spirit in Scripture and Song. Special music by our choirs and the congregation is invited to wear something red.
May 11, 10:00 AM

ACW Card Party

St. Columba, St. Catharines
This popular card party will be held in both the Parish and Iona Halls.
Cost: To be announced
May 14, 12:00 PM

Yard Sale and Bake Sale

The Dunn Parish
Come and buy the delicious home baked goodies and other bargains that will be available.
May 17, 8:00 AM-1:00 PM

151st Anniversary Celebration

Holy Trinity, Welland
A barbecue celebration will follow the 10:00 AM service. All former parishioners and clergy are invited to join us.
May 18, 8:00 AM and 10:00 AM

Spring Luncheon

St. George's, Niagara-on-the-Lake
Celebrate the start of spring with this

delightful luncheon and presentation by Fruit Bouquets. Your choice of two hot soups, veggies and dip, and a selection of sandwiches. Dessert and refreshments will follow. Consider a bouquet of fresh fruit arranged like flowers for gift giving. See how this is done by the talented presenter.
Cost: \$8:00 Adults, \$3.50 Children, Free to Children under 6
May 21, 12:00 PM

Spaghetti Dinner & Salsa Dance

Saint Luke, Hamilton
No dress code so the teens are comfortable, no bar so the kids can come, and the music just a dull roar so you can still hear yourself think.
Cost: \$5:00 Adults, \$3.00 Children under 10
May 24, 6:00 PM

Communion and Cuthbert's K.I.D.S.

St. Cuthbert's, Oakville
Four week, fun and interactive exploration of the meaning of Holy Communion. Grades one and older with a special celebration on June 15 when children participating can receive their Communion from Bishop Michael!
Cost: Donation for materials
May 24, 9:00 AM-10:15 AM

Garage and Plant Sale

St. John the Evangelist, Winona
This is an opportunity for you to buy perennials that have been locally grown. We also have a garage sale and bake sale (this includes our famous cabbage rolls and perogies).
May 24, 9:00 AM-1:00 PM

Garage Sale

Saint Luke, Hamilton
The Ladies Guild is holding a super

garage sale of great stuff and treasures. You will find them on the rectory driveway rain or shine having a great time. Join them and pick up something you couldn't live without, or not.
May 24, Morning

Pot Luck Lunch & Social

All Saints, Hamilton
Join us for a pot luck lunch and social following the Sunday service.
May 25, Morning

Curate's Farewell Services

St. George, Guelph
Please join us as we bid farewell to the Reverend Doctor Derek Anderson as he leaves St. George's to become the rector of the Church of St. Matthew-on-the-Plains in Burlington. The 10:30 AM Family Eucharist will be followed by the Parish Barbecue and Picnic on the church grounds.
May 25, 8:30 AM and 10:30 AM

Concert

All Saints, Hamilton
Internationally renowned performers Valerie Tryon (piano) and Martin Beaver (violin) will perform in concert. Tickets are available at the church or by calling 905-527-5673 before April 21.
Cost: \$25.00 per person
May 27, 7:30 PM

Cellar Dwellers

Saint Luke, Hamilton
The Cellar Dwellers are holding a White Elephant sale in aid of refurbishing the lower hall. Lots of good stuff and it will be out on the lawn beside the parish hall.
May 31, Morning

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1 » The metaphor is the message

As a visitor to a Calgary United Church recently, I noticed its many attempts to make worship inclusive. Once we had begun the Lord's Prayer with the awkward but earnest "Our Mother, Our Father," I started looking at the diction in the rest of it, especially the word "kingdom." Typically, a kingdom is a tribal political structure maintained by male military might. The "king" "dominates" society. And "Lord" is another political term for a leader who has power over others and must be obeyed.

Why do we use the word "kingdom" twice in our most important prayer? The last sentence is a later addition to the model prayer Jesus gave his disciples. This sentence, "For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever," seems to emphasize God's power over an unspecified enemy as well as over his people.

When we pray, "Your kingdom come," what do we mean? Do we imagine God the King "dominating" our world as in militaristic hymns like "Onward, Christian Soldiers"? Niccolò Machiavelli, advisor to the Renaissance Medici family of Florence near the end of the era of Judaeo-Christian monarchs that stretched from King Saul to the French Revolution, argued that the

successful prince ruled through force, fear, treachery and cunning. Is such a "kingdom" a metaphor that is appropriate for us to use in our worship?

In the Old Testament, God was reluctant to allow the people of Israel to have kings; he seemed to prefer governance by men such as Moses and Samuel who functioned as prophets/priests/judges in a one-on-one covenantal relationship with him. And his Son was certainly not the typical Machiavellian prince. As a teacher, Jesus overturned the expectations of his contemporaries by telling them to love their enemies and society's outcasts and by rarely referring positively to the use of violence.

What was the political model proposed by Jesus? It has often been said that he was an early communist. We don't like to think this because, in our time, the two most obvious attempts at communism, the Russian and the Chinese, quickly degenerated into totalitarian dictatorships. And their seminal writer, Karl Marx, was an atheist who argued that religion was the opium of the masses. Other attempts at communal societies such as hippie back-to-the-land groups have flowered briefly before ending in fatigue or cultish self-destruction.

To pray "Your kingdom come, on

earth as in heaven," seems to involve the establishment of a theocracy, a society based on religious principles, but here, too, our experience of this model of governance has been seen to be disastrous. Contemporary theocracies such as the Taliban are violently oppressive.

Although today's North American and European Christians pray, "Your kingdom come, on earth as in heaven," what most of us really value is democracy. Is this sacrilegious? No, but democracy, deriving from Ancient Greek and Native American traditions of governance, seems to be the form of government most sympathetic to the values of Jesus.

What Jesus taught his followers was the presence of "the Kingdom of God" or "the Kingdom of Heaven" here and now. His was a radically unusual kind of domain and a totally original kind of king. This spiritual time/place, or state of being, was a present fact in his being and he promised that its consummation was still to come. This Messiah did not fight with swords against Rome for political power but instead called for a realm of peace, for God's heaven to be known in this life.

How, then, does Jesus teach us to pray in today's world? When we think

about his teachings and his actions, we can reinvent some of the metaphors that have become stumbling blocks to our contemporaries. The "Father" of Jesus, like the God understood by some modern theologians, is not an old man on a throne, jealous of power and generally irritable. God as the Ground of all Being is always creating, sharing, sustaining life and love, calling us to heaven on earth.

Such new language for God is hard for us to articulate and grasp, but Jesus seemed to enjoy challenging his followers to consider difficult new ideas. While respecting the wisdom and truth of his Jewish traditions, he was not afraid to reconsider and rethink them. In our age when the most powerful political leader in the world, the American President, is a Christian whose behavior seems destructively bent on world domination and the most powerful religious leader, the Pope, seems negative and obsolete, we need alternative Christian voices that speak the will of God in ways that are valid to both believers and our non-church contemporaries. We can do this by reconsidering the message of Jesus, a message that was at least 2000 years ahead of its time.

Theology is ignored by most people, including church-goers, so it

is important to realize that this article and the others in this newspaper are of less importance than our daily behavior. Christ's message is expressed most clearly in how we treat others: "They'll know we are Christians by our love." Each generation, nonetheless, must reconsider its beliefs and restate its metaphors so that its theology can make sense when people do think and talk about God.

What follows is an attempt to use modern metaphors in the "Lord's Prayer."

Our life-giving God, may all creation worship your holy name. May your love sustain us in our earthly life as in the spirit world. May we know and worship you and follow your way. Give us, here and now, what we need to serve you, and forgive our selfish fears as we forgive those who hurt us. Turn us from evil and death to goodness and life in you. For you are all wonder, truth and love, everywhere and forever. Amen.

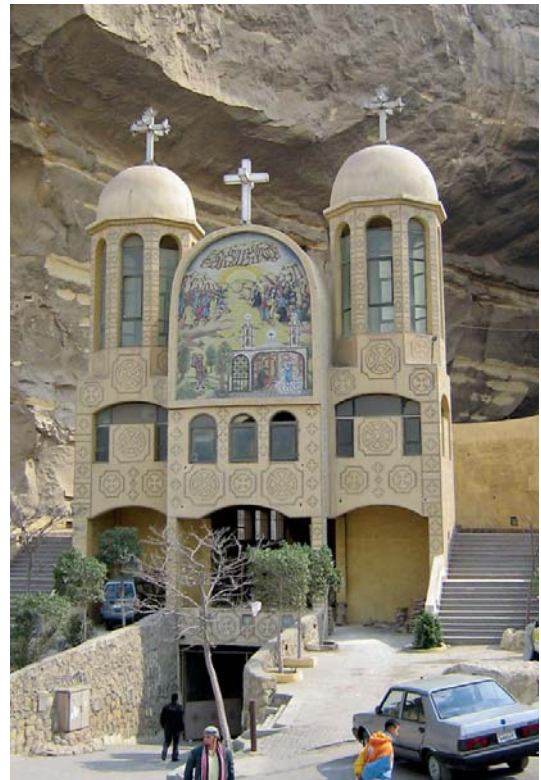
Whether our medium is a wise and inspiring biblical phrase, a picture of the earth taken from space, a welcoming smile, a gun, a homemade afghan, an act of justice, a surprise party, a malicious hurt, a heartfelt hug or an ingenious computer code, we, metaphorically, are the message.

ADVERTISE IN THE NIAGARA ANGLICAN

The cave churches of Samaan el Kharraz



Church of the Virgin and St. Simon the Cobbler.



The entrance to the Church of the Virgin and St. Simon the Cobbler.

MICHAEL BURSLEM
ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST, MAADI

Our visit to the cave churches necessitated rising with the first call to prayer at 5:00 AM to get down town to the YWCA, the ladies of whom were our guides to the churches. We drove to the Mokattam hills through Garbage City, the city of Cairo's garbage dwellers and the only access to the churches. Back in 1969 the governor of Cairo, decided to clean up by moving all the garbage collectors, with their ramshackle donkey carts, right out of the city and placed them at the foot of Mokattam. They pick up and take the garbage to their homes for recycling. There they separate it; discarded food for their pigs; the rest they sift and sort; some they sell to dealers. This provides an income for meagre necessities, but few luxuries. However, every Egyptian, including the poorest, has a TV dish on his roof and a cell phone. The former city dump was transformed into the Al-Azar Gardens, which we had previously visited with members of the Y.

Venturing into the Garbage City is quite an adventure, as the "streets" are unpaved, rutted and very narrow with no sidewalk, some so steep that the donkey with its loaded cart needs a helping hand from its master. They're congested with men, women and children, carts, and now some run down vehicles, that look as though they had been rescued from a dump. Everywhere there is evidence of their faith, as their houses and shops are decorated with crosses and pictures of the Virgin and Coptic Saints. There is a rich aroma of rotting garbage, which cling to our clothes when we got home.

The garbage collectors were first ignored by the church. In fact the priest sent by the patriarch to serve

them went, like Jonah, in the opposite direction. But in 1972 a Bible School was opened for the children and from that simple beginning has grown the church, with a school to teach literacy and a clinic for the sick. There is a Canadian connexion to this, in that Rebecca Atallah, the Quebecois wife of Ramez Atallah, the general secretary of the Egyptian Bible Society, teaches in this school. Some of the children came up to us, and spoke to us in French.

The church became well established, but had no where but the open air in which to worship. Some were in the habit of climbing up the mountain to caves in order to pray over the city in quiet and stillness. This was where they were told by the Lord to start to build the church building. The first was of corrugated iron, with no roof. Later they decided to use the caves and a natural amphitheatre in the side of the mountain, and they now have, not one, but four magnificent churches, each distinct in their own special way.

The largest and most spectacular is the amphitheatre, which seats 10,000, perhaps more, with an overhang of the cliff face over the front few rows and the sanctuary, behind the iconostasis, the screen with icons on it, behind which the liturgy is usually celebrated. This church was finished in the mid 1970s and dedicated by Pope Shenouda III, to the Blessed Virgin Mary and St. Simon the Cobbler, patron saint of the Mokattam. His story I wrote about in January. We were told that every Thursday evening it's packed with people singing hymns and praising God. They use modern visual aids, with a huge screen.

There are also other churches underground, St. Mark's, St. Bola's, and the one we attended the Sunday

liturgy in, whose dedication I don't know. I found St. Bola's and the church we attended more intimate than the larger churches. In that church there was no iconostasis. Usually the liturgy is celebrated behind closed doors, but it may be a trend now to do it in the open.

The remarkable feature is the carvings in the cliff face; sculpted by a Polish artist, Mario, married to an Egyptian (no one knew his last name.) This is an on going project, though we

one that moved me the most was that of the Resurrection.

After the liturgy people were reluctant to return to the city and picnicked outside the churches, in spite of its not being too warm. Boys played football on the road, even though it wasn't level ground. We were invited to lunch with the priests, though we weren't told in advance, and we had taken sandwiches, thermoses for coffee, and a large bag of oranges, I thought to feed 5000; but all that was provided

experience to see what had been done with so limited means. The people of these churches, like St. Simon the Cobbler, are nobodies, in the eyes of this world. But their gifts had been multiplied. The churches and the carvings are such a marvellous monument to their faith. What a lasting witness to their compatriots and to the world! The ladies of the Y told us that when Bill Clinton came to see them, his jaw dropped and he said that he had never seen such faith in America. I haven't either in Canada.



A rock carving depicts the raising of Lazarus.

did not see him at work, being Sunday, but I saw new ones since the last time we visited four years ago. Some had also been painted. They tell the story of Jesus, and Biblical references are also carved in Arabic and English. The

and I noted an orange tree baring fruit in their garden.

Living in Maadi, one of the more desirable parts of Cairo, one doesn't see too much poverty. Going to Mokattam was truly an eye opener. It was a moving

I call them a "Wow! Experience" (folk in St. George's, Lowville, who have attended the School with the Vicar, will know what I mean) and consider them a "must see" to any visitor to Egypt, who still believes in miracles.

SHOOT READY AIM » Garden of hope

HOLLIS HISCOCK
RETIRED PRIEST - BURLINGTON

SHOOT - The photograph

The words caught my attention.

We were walking the dogs in the gated community where our daughter and son-in-law live in Nashville, Tennessee, where they are pursuing a music ministry in Gospel singing and song writing.

"To make a garden is to believe in tomorrow" summed up the intentions of the gardener, who obviously saw her garden as more than dirt, weeds and fancy colours. She also wanted to make a philosophical and attitudinal statement with her garden. She did. She was telling each passer-by, who stopped to smell and soak in the aroma and ambience of her creation, that 'despite all the violence, troubles, struggles and wars of the world, I have planted a garden because I believe tomorrow will come'.

Her garden ornament resembled a book. On the opposite page to the above quotation were selected words from the Old Testament book Ecclesiastes (3:1-15), "to everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under heaven."

Ecclesiastes, also known as the 'preacher' or 'philosopher', described life with its raw stark realities. Among the many varieties of "times," he recommended "a time for planting." The Nashville gardener brought Ecclesiastes writings to life, firstly by planting flowers to beautify a small plot of God's earth, as well as through the ideas and thoughts she planted in the minds of all who stopped to read the opened pages of her stone book.

READY - Words behind the photo

"There's got to be a morning after" wailed the singer in the 1972 version of the movie, *The Poseidon Adventure*.

ture, the story of a group of passengers who struggled for survival when their ocean liner capsized and sank at sea.

'Build houses and settle down. Plant gardens and eat what you grow in them' was the advice given by the Old Testament prophet Jeremiah (29:1-10) to the exiles in Babylon. He was saying that there is hope in the future, and the people needed to carry on with confidence and trust in God.

"Tomorrow is only a day away" promised Annie in the movie of the same name. The 1982 musical, based on the comic strip *Little Orphan Annie*, describes the adventures of young orphan girls who were looking for families to adopt them.

Recently, a Church bulletin urged parents to attend a showing of the movie *Anne of Green Gables* with their children, and to talk about how Anne always had hope in her future.

My friend Marion always had hope about her future, especially as she took her final steps on this earth, and walked confidently into eternal life.

Her long drawn out illness restricted her human endeavours, but never daunted her human spirit or divine soul.

Once again she entered hospital to endure another medical procedure in an attempt to slow the advances of a terminal illness. We were having our regular conversation late one autumn afternoon, and the topic turned to planting spring bulbs:

"My son wants us to plant bulbs when I get home next week," she posed, "but I'm not sure if we should."

"Why not?" I inquired.

"I may be dead by spring," she responded.

"If you are, and next spring your son sees the bulbs that you planted together coming to life, what will he think?" I asked quietly.



She pondered for a moment, and replied, "Maybe he will cry, because I am no longer with him, or maybe he will look back at the wonderful time we had planting the bulbs."

"Now that would be a marvellous gift for both of you," I added.

They did plant the bulbs because they believed in tomorrow.

Marion died that winter believing that for her tomorrow was eternal life.

In an early dawn garden, another woman, Mary Magdalene (John 20:11-18) cried because she could not find her Lord's body and the future

loomed without any hopeful signs. Then the gardener appeared and encouraged her to have hope and faith in tomorrow, because He was returning to "my God and your God."

So whether the seeds or plants we sow in life are physical or spiritual, "to plant a garden is to believe in tomorrow."

AIM - Questions and actions for you

Take time to wander slowly through garden centres and other gardens, stopping often to reflect on the messages conveyed through nature and human

intervention.

What are other avenues, besides gardens, where we can believe in tomorrow?

Imagine what the 'eternal life garden' is like for you.

Hollis would appreciate your feedback on this series.

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.

Bridge building with our Muslim neighbours



MICHAEL BURSLEM
ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST, MAADI

Recently, while shopping in a Maadi pharmacy, in which the pharmacist was wearing a *hijab*, I saw a sign below the counter which read, "*BOYCOTT ISLAM BASHERS*." It was so faded and partly torn that it probably dated from the time of the first publishing of the Danish cartoons, which have just been re-printed. But my seeing this sign was after I had read a two full page article in *Al Ahram Weekly*, 6th to 12th March, by Franklin Lamb about Bridgette Gabriel, a lady from southern Lebanon, now a U.S. citizen, who is preaching about *Islamofacism*, which she terms the No.1 enemy of the West. She has a lot of backers, especially Christian Zionists. She's *Islamophobic* to the Nth degree. She borders on propagating hate against all Muslims and all Arabs, not just the few who have committed crimes. She feeds into the xenophobia and genuine fears that Americans have had since 9/11. It goes against everything

that a few people here in Egypt are doing to build bridges between Christians and Muslims, by learning of, and from, one another; dialoguing, not competitively, but amicably, one trying to understand the other, so to defuse the anger that has been building up as a reaction to things such as the cartoons and Western intervention in Arab lands. Actually, I believe that this anger is political; religion is just the excuse.

One example of bridge building has been the showing of movies on the life of the prophet, as a study on Islam at St. John the Baptist, Maadi, under the guidance of our rector, Paul-Gordon Chandler. I never realized that before Mohammed, one's only hope to survive in Mecca was to ally oneself to a vicious thug who would protect you, as in gang warfare, and that there were numerous such gangs with loyalty to their own 'god,' all fighting for the same turf; but he unified them all under one God, Allah. He was a man of peculiar greatness. I also learned from a study of the Coptic church at St. John's, under Jos Strenghold, that the expansion of the Arabs from Arabia into Syria, Palestine, Egypt and North Africa, was not so much to propel Islam, but to protect trade

routes, and that the Byzantine army was so weak from its wars with Persia, that these new territories were fruit ready to be picked, rather than conquered by the sword. Coptic Christians actually welcomed the newcomers, because they gave them a reprieve from persecution by the Byzantine church. So much Christians loved one another!

Another bridge builder here is Henrik Lindberg Hansen, a student of theology who is leading dialogue between Muslims and Christians once a month. We attended one on the subject of Grace. I learned that Muslims and Christians have similar ideas about God's grace; they differ only in how it's attained. That we didn't delve into. The evening confirmed my conviction, gotten by deep friendships with many Muslims over several years; that they are just like us.

A third bridge is Drs. Cornelis Hulsman, and his Arab West Report. He's a sociologist and journalist by training and profession, with a keen interest in the Arab world. The mission of the A.W.R., in his own words, is to "provide impartial, objective, independent reporting, interpretation, analysis and commentary of and on cultural, social and religious issues

concerning the Arab world with the objective of fostering greater understanding and tolerance between Arab and Western cultures in the belief that only this will result in reduction of tensions which is needed to enhance the development of this region." That in a nutshell means building bridges. He publishes this material through the web site at www.arabwestreport.info. It's an excellent source of information on what is really happening here. Much of what we see in the media is either exaggerated or just plain untrue.

A fourth bridge is the way by which we conduct ourselves with Muslims. A smile and just a few words like *essalamu aleikun* (peace be with you) or *sabah el khare* (good morning), and, of course, *Minfadlak* (please) or *Minfadlik* to a lady and *Shukran* (thank-you) (nearly all the words I know in Arabic) do wonders to convey good will and to establish understanding. I would venture to say that we see many more smiles here than we do in Canada. I don't think it's just the sunnier and warmer weather; it's something deep down inside the soul of Arabs.

However, it's not only the cartoons and the Bridgette Gabriels who are obstacles to bridge building, but

us. We bash Muslims by asserting that they're going to hell. As a reformed evangelical I do believe that Jesus is *the* way to God, (not just *a* way), and indeed the only way, but he is the way by which we all reach God, Muslim and Christian alike. To claim that we only are 'saved' is actually an offence, a stumbling block, to the Gospel, as it somehow conveys that we save ourselves by believing; that the finished work of Christ, his death and resurrection, is not the only foundation of our salvation. We need to do our little bit too; believe. But what of those who don't, or won't? As in Jesus' day there are still detractors, some of whom we should be wary, who reject outright what God has done for them. But God doesn't reject them; nor should we, no matter how *different* or how scary they may look. They may be sheep who don't yet know their shepherd, but they're still his sheep. We are all tarred with the same brush, Sin, but we have all been washed in Jesus' blood. This may not be very theologically correct, but if we're to imitate Jesus I suggest we discard our theological straitjackets. That is why I now try to build bridges to my Muslim neighbors, as to everybody else, by considering them brothers and sisters, in Christ.