



Niagara Anglican

NEWS • PERSPECTIVE • REFLECTION • FOR A GROWING CHURCH • SEPTEMBER 2008



Bishops and their spouses on the Walk of Witness in support of the Millennium Development Goals in London England during the Lambeth Conference.

We are funny, we humans

MARTHA TATARNIC
PRIEST, ST JUDE'S OAKVILLE

My friend and I had, after numerous emails back and forth, finally arrived at a time and place for a Playdate for our babies, when the inevitable question dropped: "So, is Cecilia walking yet?"

I could feel a tightening in my chest as I sent my reply. My thirteen month daughter is able to walk, and she does sometimes, but she still crawls as her chosen form of transportation. I explained this to my friend, and then, because there was nothing else to do, I asked the inevitable return question: "How about your little one? Is she walking yet?"

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Unpacking emotions and stories

A Lambeth Reflection



MICHAEL BIRD
BISHOP OF NIAGARA

At one particular point during the opening service of the Lambeth Conference, I experienced one of those rare moments that one has in the course of a lifetime, when a wave of disbelief and emotion hits and the question arises: "Can this really be happening to me?" I sat in the quire of Canterbury Cathedral surrounded by over 600 Bishops from around the Anglican Communion and beside me the men and boys choir sang the words of Psalms 42 and 43: "Athirst my soul for you, the God who is my life!"

We began our time at Lambeth with a bishop's retreat led by the Archbishop of Canterbury, which culminated in this magnificent service in the Cathedral. I had the privilege of walking in procession with one of the female bishops of the Communion, the new Suffragan Bishop of Toronto, Linda Nicholls. We began in the crypt and then made our way outside to the

front doors and past hoards of media and news cameras. The procession made its way into the nave, greeted by a capacity congregation; up the steps below the Bell Harry Tower and into the quire where we were sitting. The Archbishop of Canterbury sat behind the high altar on St. Augustine's ancient chair as we shared in a service rich in ceremonial and music. The liturgy had a great diversity of prayers and hymns from around the world and the gospel procession was led by a dance troop of Melanesian Brothers and Sisters in traditional costumes. The sermon was quite wonderful and the preacher, Bishop Duleep de Chickera, the Bishop of Colombo, Sri Lanka, challenged us to reflect seriously upon what it means to be "in communion" with one another and to be gracious and inclusive in our determination of who we are in communion with.

Throughout the course of the next two weeks both the bishops and the spouses began each day with bible study, with six to eight bishops in each group (and the same for the spouses) and then five of the bible study groups gathering together for the "Indaba" sessions.

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Life in its fullness

Charity and justice in our communities



COLLEEN SYM
SOCIAL JUSTICE COORDINATOR

"The goal of our faith is that all may have life and have it in its fullness."

These words of the Archbishop of Canterbury, contained in a message delivered to world leaders at the completion of the Walk of Witness in support of the Millennium Development Goals in London England on July 24, 2008, are an expression of faith that is shared by the Niagara Anglicans who over the past months have tirelessly laboured in their justice work and parish outreach activities.

On May 31, 2008, a group of twenty five Niagara Anglicans and friends came together to participate in a workshop run by Deacon Maylaine Maybee, the Coordinator for Justice Education and Networks of the Anglican Church of Canada. Hosted by the

Church of the Incarnation in Oakville, we spent half a day exploring the concepts of charity and justice and how they relate to parish outreach efforts. Through worship, reflection, conversation in small groups and in plenary, we sought ways to encourage a justice-oriented approach in the social justice work undertaken in the Diocese both at the diocesan level and in the parishes.

Mission requires that we not only work to meet the immediate needs of our neighbours but also to reform the structures of society that exclude their full participation in a society of plenty. Our efforts must not only focus on poverty but also injustice.

As Michael Bird, Bishop of Niagara said in his letter to Minister Matthews, Chair of the Ontario Government's Cabinet Committee on Poverty Reduction, "Our mission as Church calls us to both loving service of our neighbours and to action to transform the structures of society that oppress our neighbours, leaving them living in poverty."

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Penguins don't fly, do they?

JOHN RIPLEY
INTERIM RECTOR, HOLY TRINITY, WELLAND

I, like many of you, receive from a variety of different sources the sometimes cute, sometimes serious and sometimes whimsical forwards of websites that are prolific on the World Wide Web. So many of these are now mini-productions with fairly high production values. As you engage with the production you are totally taken up with the content that you forget the creative and technical skills of the individual, or individuals, responsible for the production. One such site, sent to me, had me flummoxed. It was so real!

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Why Arius was wrong

JOHN BOWEN
PROFESSOR, ST JOHN THE EVANGELIST HAMILTON

Like all good editors, Chris Grabiec loves controversy, and, if necessary, will stir the pot himself. So, not wanting to disappoint him, I want to respond to his innocent-sounding but deliberately provocative question about the Arian controversy of the fourth century, "Who knows who was right?" [June 2008]

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SHOOT READY AIM >

Lights with different messages

HOLLIS HISCOCK
RETIRED PRIEST - BURLINGTON

SHOOT - The photograph

Port Dalhousie, Ontario, describes itself as 'a village within a city (St. Catharines)', and, according to its website 'is the terminus for the first three Welland canals, built in the nineteenth century.

We spent a marvellous afternoon there celebrating our daughter's birthday. We strolled the beach, visited the shops and restaurants, rode on the restored carousel (a nickel a ride) and walked along the long breakwater extending into Lake Ontario. There I photographed the white and turquoise lighthouse.

Two boats approaching the lighthouse from opposite directions lined up at the exact second for me to capture my desired photograph. This picture captured the reason why lighthouses pepper strategic coastal locations around the seas, oceans and lakes of the world.

The light is there to warn of dangers, and the light is there to reassure the traveller that a safe harbour is nearby. For mariners, the flashing lights warn of impending and immediate troubles from dangerous rocks or cliffs and hidden shoals and protruding sand bars. In addition, savvy navigators employ the light as a beacon to guide and steer their craft through rugged passageways to a secure sanctuary. Similarly, we look to 'the light' (Jesus Christ) to warn us about life's trials and temptations, to avoid being thrown upon destructive life situations, and to keep following 'the light' as a beacon or guide to achieve the full potential of being a person for God in our world.

READY - Words behind the photo

A long standing joke illustrates the message of the photograph:

Shortly after midnight, the captain peered out from the bridge of his ship and saw a light directly ahead

of him. Quickly he sent a message requesting that the other craft change its direction.

The light replied asking the captain to change his direction.

After several heated messages, the captain fired off an order, 'I'm a navy captain, I command you to change your direction now'.

A minute later the reply read, 'I'm an ordinary seaman, you do what I ask and change your course'.

Frustrated at this insolent subordinate, the captain fired his biggest threat, 'I'm a battleship and will not change my course'.

'I'm the lighthouse keeper', came the reply.

No doubt the humbled captain realized the consequences of sticking to his guns and gave orders to change directions.

The 'Sermon on the Mount' (Matthew chapters 5-7) could be viewed as a more detailed dialogue between Jesus (the ordinary seaman) and us (the captain). You may wish to read it, in one sitting, from this perspective to gain new insights into the teachings of Jesus Christ.

In the sermon, Jesus spoke about the importance of 'the light' both as a guide and a warning, and reminded his followers of their responsibility in responding to its message.

A city built on a hill cannot be hidden (Matthew 5:14), said Jesus, and you are like cities or towns or villages built on a hill. Jesus seemed to be saying to us that no matter how much you wish to be inconspicuous, once you accept me as your 'lighthouse' you in turn become a 'lighthouse' for all to see.

Then Jesus made the light theme a little brighter (Matthew 5:15). When people light a candle or switch on a lamp, they do not hide them 'under a bushel basket' or cover them with a dark sheet. That would defeat their purpose. Instead the candle is placed on an elevated stand or the lamp is



secured high on the wall or the light fixture installed on the ceiling, so that those in the room can receive the maximum effect of the presence of the light. In our world, Jesus calls us to place ourselves, as His lights, in places and situations where we can have the maximum effect to guide and warn others.

Listening to Jesus deliver His 'Sermon on the Mount', as the sun danced on the water ripples scurrying across the Lake of Galilee, some of His listeners knew where His message was heading and prepared themselves for the punch line or climax. It came swiftly in the next sentence.

'In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works' (Matthew 5:16), commanded Jesus to his audience, not unlike the communication from the light-

house seaman to the battleship captain. And like the good captains we are, we respond by perhaps changing our course in life so that 'the light' can illuminate our works of faith and action.

Generally we are hesitant and reluctant to broadcast our 'good works' of helping others and especially our outreach projects, both locally and globally, but in a world driven by YouTube and Facebook and iPhones, if we do not take advantages of these God given communicative tools, then we are not following the course or direction which Jesus/God wants us to pursue.

We should not be timid about 'shouting from the housetops' (or anywhere else) what we do as Christians, especially when we truly understand the reason for our actions. We do it, according to Jesus, to 'give glory to your Father in heaven (God)'. So to put this portion of Jesus' sermon even

more succinctly:
*'Jesus is THE light'
I am a light for Jesus
Let my light shine today
Do it all for God.'*

AIM - Questions and actions for you

- What kind of light am I for God?
- Where does my light shine best and where do I hide my light?
- List the areas of your life where you want to improve your light; then ask God to guide you and give you courage to change course.
- Hollis would appreciate your feedback on this series.

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

Diocesan average giving has increased

CARL SNEYD
DIRECTOR OF STEWARDSHIP & FINANCIAL DEVELOPMENT

There is good news! A study on individual giving in the Diocese was recently done by Stewardship and Financial Development using the on-line vestry reports and PAP monthly parish reports.

The Diocesan average annual giving has been calculated for 2008 to be \$954! That's an increase of over \$200 since the last calculation was done a few years ago when the average was found to be \$750. This is quite a remarkable increase of more than 27%.

Equally remarkable is the rate of giving using the free, no fee Pre-Authorized Payment plan offered to all parishes by the diocese. The annual average PAP giving has been calculated at \$1,425. This annual figure was extrapolated from a typical month based on the monthly reports that go

from the bank to the parishes. There is no historical average comparison available yet. According to the figures, a full 25% of identifiable givers in Niagara use the free PAP plan offered by the Diocese. Their givings, moreover, represent more than one-third of the total givings reported. In the parishes using PAP offered by the diocese, the range of percentage of givers using the free, no fee PAP plan went from a high of 67% of identifiable givers to a low of 1%.

The \$1,425 figure is just the regular monthly amount. What is even more heartening to parish financial people is that, in addition to their regular monthly gifts, very often PAP users also will give additional gifts at Easter, Harvest, patronal festivals, anniversaries and Christmas. By using the Pre-Authorized Payment plan, parishioners demonstrate a high level of commitment to their parishes and

their church. PAP helps even out parish income, reducing the highs and lows during the year while increasing average giving.

Full data was received from 81 parishes, 85% of the parishes in Niagara. PAP figures were used from 82 parishes. Every size parish in every diocesan and geographic region, urban, suburban and rural was represented. The data for the on-line vestry reports was entered by parish representatives on the diocesan website. Data for a few parishes was taken from paper copies of vestry reports. Data submitted late, after June 30, was not included.

Other reports were created from the data. Some of the reports detailed the ranking of parishes, comparing their position in the list of the rest of the diocese in areas of average giving, number of givers, and totals reported givings. There are comparisons with other parishes of a similar size, per-

centage of givers using PAP and inter- and intra-regional comparisons.

Regional reports will be available during the fall to regional archdeacons and individual parish reports will be prepared for incumbents and corporations.

Rough "back of the envelope" calculations using financial and demographic reports and studies from Statistics Canada and Revenue Canada, show that people in the Diocese of Niagara appear to be giving in the same range as other givers connected with faith communities at a rate of about 1.7% of income. The rate of charitable donations for all Canadians is about .75% of income. Both are very far away from the biblical tithe of 10% or the so-called modern tithe of 5%. Individual donors are invited to compare their giving with these figures and averages.

The calculations show that par-

ishes that participate in a full year-round stewardship program have seen substantial increases over the years. While we advocate using the full five part program, any one part can be of benefit to a parish. The advantages of using the free, no fee Diocesan PAP programs are obvious from the data collected and the analysis reported above. In another area, one congregation reported an almost 7% increase in pledged giving following the introduction of a narrative budget. Planned stewardship works and is effective!

If you have questions about the data and methodology used in the study, get in touch with the Director of Stewardship at the Diocesan Resource Centre. When your parish decides it needs help with its year round stewardship program that is already demonstrably successfully used by other parishes, contact the Director of Stewardship at the Diocesan Resource Centre.

Loving one's neighbour - As easy as apple pie?



MICHAEL BURSLEM
ST. GEORGE'S, GUELPH

Part of my summer reading this year was John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt's *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy*. The thrust of this pivotal book is that the close ties between the Israel lobby in the U.S. and the administration in Washington



The same theology that makes Christians Islamophobic, which I've previously written about, also makes them anti-Semitic.

has been to the detriment of both U.S. and Israeli foreign policy. We had long suspected that Israel had some influence on American politicians, especially after Paul Findley's *They Dare to Speak Out* of the mid 1980's, but never to the extent shown by Mearsheimer and Walt. Of course this was predicted by Alfred M. Lilienthal as early as 1953 in his book *What Price Israel?* Part of the price of Israel is that Jewish Americans would in years to come

be unable to distinguish the security of Israel from that of the United States. He had earlier (1949) written an article in the Readers' Digest *Israel's Flag is Not Mine*. Now Lilienthal's prediction is upon us, with a vengeance.

Mearsheimer and Walt show that whenever a U.S. president or secretary of state tries to be even handed with Palestinians he, or she, is publicly humiliated on the world stage. But why this close affinity between the United States (and Canada too) and Israel? Why this love for Israel? I believe the answer lies in the years before the founding of Israel in 1948. In 1946 Ernest Bevin, then Foreign Minister in the British government, charged that the United States was pressuring Britain to allow more displaced Jews to go to Palestine because they didn't want them in the United States. He was immediately branded an anti-Semite, a charge that has been leveled against many ever since.

I was in Britain during the wartime and post-war years, and I really do not believe that many were anti-Semitic. In our home we had two Jewish Russian ladies, Natalie and Helen S. Helen actually died of cancer in our home, and her place was taken by a close friend of Natalie, a German lady, a refugee from Hitler. Both were highly educated ladies, and fluent in many European languages. They would converse with one other in their own language, which amused us very much. In 1949 they migrated to Brooklyn, rather than to Palestine.

When I came to Canada in 1951 I found this country much more anti-Semitic than the Britain I had left behind. I had several Jewish friends, one of them, Irving Z., who came to be president of the Zionist Club of McGill. He and I went to U. of T. to study meteorology after graduation, and we roomed together on Borden Street, just west of Spadina, in the midst of the Koshier district of Toronto. I experienced what it felt like to be rejected, as my uncle on seeing Irving with me at lunch at Hart House, even before I asked, requested I not bring him home, "as people wouldn't understand." I understood.

After the 1967 war it became politically incorrect to be anti-Semitic in Canada. But I wonder if things have really changed, though, perhaps, we're now a bit more subtle about it. Just 10 years ago, after I retired from medical practice, I took courses in invertebrate zoology and parasitology at the University of Guelph. The lab instructor told us to pair up for the projects. I found myself sitting alone, as no one wanted to be my partner as an older student, but then he brought Jonathan S. to me, whom he said had no partner. I very soon detected that Jonathan was Jewish. It was a great partnership, and I think we enjoyed working together. I know I certainly did.

I do believe that Ernest Bevin was right; that North America is infected by anti-Semitism, in a way that Britain is not; by and large - I know there are bigots in all countries, but I don't feel

the anti-Semitism there as I do here. After the atrocity of the Holocaust there was a strong moral pressure for the establishment of the state of Israel. But what about the Palestinians whom they displaced? I believe North Americans are unable to view them objectively, because of their ingrained anti-Semitism, which overcompensates in support of Israel, right or wrong.

But why should North America be so anti-Semitic? I believe that's derived from our Protestant Founding Fathers. Our Puritan forebears put such emphasis on the doctrine of Justification by Faith, that it drove a wedge between Christians and everyone else. We knew that we were God's elect, and, therefore, no one else was. They could only be approved by God by becoming, and believing, like us. Britain had had a brief skirmish with the Puritans, but they were not smitten as we were, even though Charles I had lost his head.

We are learning today, however, that Justification by Faith is not the means by which we're saved. It's merely the badge we wear, having been saved. From such writers as Bishop N.T. Wright (*What St. Paul Really Said*) and Robert Farrar Capon (*The Fingerprints of God* and his book on Christ's parables) we learn that God really loves, and has saved, everyone, man, woman and child, not only those who say they believe in Jesus as their personal Lord and Savior. The only thing is that we do need the eyes of faith to see what God has actually done, and

is doing, in history, because with our natural eyes it looks so very different. The same theology that makes Christians Islamophobic, which I've previously written about, also makes them anti-Semitic.

What Jesus and Paul were really telling us was that Religion is not the way to God; Jesus is. For the first 300 years after Christ people really believed that. But during that time Christians were bitterly persecuted. After Christianity became the legal religion of the Roman Empire, Christians made the Jews the scapegoat for all their suffering, and they have borne the brunt of persecution for us ever since. I think it high time we return to truly orthodox Christianity, as it was in the time of the early church fathers. It's time we stand up and bear our own persecutions.

Just this morning, July 18th, Benny Morris, the American/Israeli historian, in a New York Times Op-Ed article, predicted that in order to preserve the state of Israel, within four months there would be a nuclear holocaust with Iran, if the mullahs don't stop their nuclear proliferation. Before the world goes completely mad, I think it's time for someone to shout STOP! - no matter what the Israel lobby may say. As Jesus' disciples we should be the first to be peacemakers. We can only be that if we cease to be so exclusive, that we can't even be in communion with ourselves, let alone a Jew or a Muslim. Loving our neighbor ought to be as easy as apple pie, but is it?

Another season of life



RICK JONES
SECRETARY TO SYNOD, ST. PAUL'S CHURCH WESTDALE

Cottage life, for me, is a time to spend hours in a kayak celebrating the texture of water, the spirit of the wind, and the ever changing light and sky. This year, on all too frequent occasions, the added elements of thunder, lightning and torrential rain made retreating indoors with a book the prudent choice. I had no intention of reading anything churchy or serious but by some accident of packing I placed, among the mysteries and historical fiction, a new book by the Rev. Dr. Michael Knowles. Michael is an Honorary Assistant at St. Paul's, Westdale and the G.F. Hurlburt Chair of Preaching at McMaster Divinity College. The book in question was his just published *We Preach Not Ourselves: Paul on Proclamation*. I must confess that it wasn't the first book I read this Summer but as rainy afternoons progressed I picked it up and found myself caught up in a drama that all too closely mirrored many of our contemporary ministry situations.

Paul is in trouble with his Corinthian congregation. There has been a conflict, perhaps a personal attack on his leadership, or integrity. He has resolved to visit them but is delayed, and the Second letter to the Corinthians becomes a vehicle to explain not only his delay but to respond to the

criticisms levelled at him. Paul does this by trying to explain his culturally counterintuitive spirituality.

As Michael Knowles points out, "for Paul the cruel death and unexpected resurrection of Jesus provide not only the *content* of his preaching, nor merely the *means* by which preaching is made possible; they determine also the *manner* and *method* by which he preaches." The "super apostles" of the Corinthian church are preaching a gospel of success, power and influence. They seem to the congregation to be articulate, successful leaders, nothing like Paul. In our contemporary situation we have many such parallels. Prosperity gospel churches abound and charismatic preachers promise a God of protection and blessing in a troubled world. Much of the Church Growth movement seems to be selling something, and measures success by the same standards as any secular corporation: numbers and wealth. Everyone wants to proclaim resurrection, nobody notices the faithful death of Christ. It is like the urban proverb, "Everyone wants to go to heaven but nobody wants to die."

Paul has come to realize that, "whenever I am weak, then I am strong" (2Cor.12:10) for only through human weakness can God's grace and power be manifest. To claim Resurrection without submitting ourselves our churchly ambition, culture of success, even our institutional structures themselves, to the Crucifixion is to ignore the witness of Jesus.

Michael Knowles demonstrates in his exegesis of Paul's writing that for Paul the way of preaching and the life

of discipleship is the cruciform pattern of Christ the Lord. This insight is as badly needed today as it was in the first Century. As Michael writes,

"In a culture - particularly a religious culture - that values status, success, and personal well-being, Paul offers a firm word of reassurance and hope. The many reversals that typically characterize the life of faith (both the preacher and that of the congregants) indicate neither lack of faith on their part nor lack of blessing on the part of God. On the contrary, Paul proposes that these are the normal conditions of discipleship from which faithful testimony and proclamation arise. Reversals are not ends in themselves as much as occasions for grace, opportunities for acknowledging the proper limitations of human endeavour, and for yielding to the steadfast faithfulness of Christ."

For me, looking out into the rain and contemplating another season of life in the Church this insight was good news indeed. Many of us in the Church are struggling to find an expression of church life that is missional and faithful to the witness of Christ in a post modern context. We are looking for resources and support and recognize that innovation always produces as many setbacks as successes. Our primary resource in this process is the witness of Scripture and particularly the first emergent expressions of Christian community. Michael's book is a helpful window into a first Century church drama. It contains both helpful insights and challenges to our contemporary cultural assumptions. I am very glad that it got packed for the cottage. (by mistake...sorry Michael).

Imagine Music and Word



MICHAEL DEED
DIRECTOR OF YOUTH MINISTRY

Gather in any Anglican Church for worship on a Sunday morning and you are likely to hear two things- music and word. The music comes in many shapes and forms; from organs, guitars to choirs; and the words pervade our worship, be they the well-worn prayers of the BCP, the BAS, newly crafted liturgy or the whole spectrum of sung worship; hymns, contemplative chants, choruses or contemporary worship songs. Not just Anglicanism, but the whole history of Christian worship is threaded through with a rich tapestry of Music and Word, each evolution different to the last, each evolution necessary so that the Gospel and the worship of our God is expressed and experienced afresh in each generation. Here in the Diocese of Niagara a small group is working to bring about an experience that will continue to equip the Church for new, innovative and fresh forms of music and word in the years to come.

"Imagine Music and Word" is a training, leadership and networking conference which will be taking place at Canterbury Hills, October 24 until October 26. The experience will bring together musicians, song-writers and liturgists both lay and ordained, to learn, create, develop, dream and re-

imagine the Music and Words of our Church and equip us with future new skills for leading worship.

This is not a weekend for the faint of heart! The plenary sessions and workshops will ask us to explore new skills and ideas and challenge assumptions about the forms of worship. We will have the rare and exciting opportunity for musicians, lyricists and liturgists to work, create, learn and worship with one another, to find new voices which express and nurture our spiritual life in forms that speak to this new millennium and ever-changing generations.

Our keynote presenters for the weekend will be a team well-versed in working together to explore word and music to serve the worship of the Church; Rev. Andrew Asbil, John Campbell and Mike Daley from the Church of the Redeemer, Toronto. Workshops will include: The Basics of Lyrics, Rewriting Scripture, Equipment for the New Paradigm, and Music Practicum.

A flyer and application form will be mailed out to your parish during August. More information is available from Joyce Wilton and Christyn Perkons at the Diocesan Office. There are a strictly limited number of places on this conference and applications will be considered before places are granted. Preference will be given to applications from Parish teams so that this conference can have a significant impact creating new and meaningful worship experiences throughout the Diocese. If this sounds appealing, exciting and engaging to you, come join us!

Culture meets religion



NISSA BASBAUM
RECTOR, TRANSFIGURATION ST. CATHARINES

A few years ago, Robin and I were invited to a friend's for dinner. It was pot luck but not just any pot luck. The meal was Greek and each guest's contribution was to be something of Greek origin. Robin and I were to bring dessert and, after checking out the various possibil-



Being a member of the Canadian Anglican Communion is a blessing for me because it embraces not only my religious ideals, but my culture.

ities, I settled on the most obvious and well-known – baklava. I soon discovered, however, that there are various renditions of baklava, each slightly different from the other. I needed to find the most appealing of these.

Those people who know me are aware of the numerous cookbooks that line the shelves of our kitchen. Yet, even possessing as many cookbooks as I do, there are no Greek ones so I began to scan the indexes of all my general cookbooks for baklava recipes and I found many; unfortunately, none quite suitable. Some seemed too sweet, some didn't seem traditional enough, some contained a variety of nuts of which I am not particularly fond.

Having exhausted the general cookbooks, I started scanning some of the other books on the shelves and landed in the Jewish section. Some people might wonder why in the heck I would search a Jewish cookbook for a Greek recipe but the answer to this is easy. Jews can be found all over the world, not dissimilar from the experience I had when I moved to Grand Falls, Newfoundland in 1977. There were perhaps only five restaurants in town. Yet, among these five was a Chinese one, even though the majority of the people in Grand Falls were of British descent and the population was just under 6,000. Members of certain races and nationalities are found everywhere. Jewish and Chinese people are a prime example of this.

In one of those Jewish cookbooks, I found what I regarded as the perfect recipe for baklava – relatively easy to make, not too sweet and containing pistachio nuts rather than walnuts. Now, here is the sixty-four thousand dollar question: was the recipe Greek or Jewish, or was it both? At that precise moment in time, I couldn't have cared less. It was baklava and it was the baklava recipe I was going to make for the Greek dinner to which we had been invited. The fact that its source was a Jewish cookbook was frankly immaterial.

More recently, by virtue of my

position as one of the priests at Transfiguration, I was asked to participate in a service that turned out to be both foreign and familiar. Ayo, the husband from one of the couples in our congregation was born and brought up in Nigeria. Ayo and Carrie were expecting a child in mid-July and, prior to the baby's arrival, they requested that I be present at a "naming" ceremony which, in Nigerian tradition, takes place eight days after the birth of a baby. I was asked to lead the Christian part of the service – essentially the liturgy found in the BAS describing a thanksgiving for a safe pregnancy and delivery, and a welcoming of the new child. Thankfully, someone far more Nigerian than I would be leading the African ritual. The service took place at eight o'clock in the morning in their home.

Years ago, when the diocese requested the implementation of the screening and management process in each parish, I, like all other parish priests, was required to draw up a job description for my position. While most of this description was factual information, there was one question that was not. Asked to describe the benefits of the job, I put just one thing down: the privilege of being allowed into some of the most intimate moments in people's lives.

Being with this family only eight days after the birth of their child – praying prayers that were familiar to me while at the same time sharing in customs and prayers that were foreign – was one of the keenest examples of this privileged access into people's lives. It was also one of the keenest examples of how ministering is a two-way street. I received from this experience as much as I gave to it; in fact, perhaps more.

During this ceremony, I discovered how closely intertwined are culture and religion and how, as Christians, we often forget the importance of the former in a bid to emphasize the primacy of the latter. With respect to this, one of the most interesting aspects of the liturgy was the verbal response following the presentation and offering of each symbol to the new baby. In the same manner that Christians say amen, the African word "ashair" repeatedly affirmed what the officiant was doing, making it obvious that much of Christianity, rather than being unique, has a commonality with other traditions. As someone who was brought up Jewish, I have some sense of this commonality, since Judaism generally exhibits both a marriage and a tug-of-war between culture and religion. Witness, for example, my search for a Greek dessert recipe in a Jewish cookbook; Jews are a combination of both their religion and the culture in which they reside.

What I learned from my participation in this Nigerian ceremony, however, is that Christians are much the same, and to submerge this connection to culture is to deny a huge part of our existence as human beings. Perhaps even more concerning, to submerge this connection is to deny how so much of our religion has evolved from culture, making it

seem as if Christianity somehow stands alone and apart, as somehow superior to all else. It doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure out just how negative a force this can be.

The following are some of the symbols and their meanings that were used to welcome Tayo into this world:

Water: Water purifies and cleanses the new baby. It is a thirst quencher: whatever thirsty situation the baby comes across in life, may there always be water to quench her thirst. Water has no enemy; no one can do without it. Just as no one makes an enemy of water, so may the new baby have no enemies.

Salt: Salt is an essential ingredient in cooking, a soup without salt is tasteless; may the baby's life never be tasteless. As salt is significant in cooking, may the baby never lose her significance in the family, among friends and in society.

Sugar: As sugar brings sweetness into whatever it is added, may the new baby's life be full of sweetness and may her addition to the family bring more sweetness to the family.

Honey: No one tastes honey and spits it out; may the new baby's life be as sweet as honey and may people love her, as children love honey. Just as honey is the fruit of the bees' labour, so may the new baby's labour in life be fruitful.

Palm Oil: Palm oil is the enticement to Yoruba soups; a soup without palm oil loses its beauty and never looks appetizing. May the baby's character and personality be as endearing to people as palm oil is to soup. Also, palm oil is an antidote for so many afflictions, and just as it brings relief to people in terms of distress, may the new baby's life be pain and stress free.

Alcohol: Just as wine gets better with age, so may the new baby's life get better as the child grows. Also, just as alcohol never spoils, may spoliators never be able to spoil the goodness in the new baby's life.

Fruits: Fruits are seasonal and they never miss their seasons. May the new baby continue to be renewed in strength and wisdom every new season. When a seed is planted, it grows into a tree with many fruits; so may this child's seed bring forth many fruits. Also, just as a banana tree planted by a stream never goes barren, may this new baby never be barren.

In Nigeria, there are many more items used in this naming ceremony – all natural edible things not available in Canada. They have been utilized for prayers from generation to generation, their significance found in the metaphorical ways in which they are employed.

In his thanks to me regarding my participation in the naming ceremony, Ayo wrote: "Words are not enough to express what this means to us, especially to my people back home who are both highly religious and cultural. Being a member of the Canadian Anglican Communion is a blessing for me because it embraces not only my religious ideals, but my culture."

To this, I need only say amen – or perhaps I should say "ashair."

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1 »

Life in its fullness

As people of faith, we seek the development of a just society where all can flourish, even the most vulnerable, poor and dispossessed."

An important part of our parish and diocesan advocacy work to promote the building of a just society is our capacity to bear witness and give voice



We must speak up and name the injustices experienced by those who live in poverty.

to the injustice and suffering that surrounds us in our communities whether that be in our neighborhoods or as members of the global community. We must speak up and name the injustices experienced by those who live in poverty – those people of aboriginal background, those living with mental illness, newcomers and refugees, visible minorities, single people, the elderly, the disabled, women fleeing abuse and those suffering due to HIV/Aids.

This is what was behind the Walk of Witness along with the determination of those who participated to help end extreme poverty. Bishop Bird who participated in the Walk and was quoted in the UK press said: "We are here supporting the millennium development goals to halve poverty by 2015. We are making a statement to the world about ending poverty in the third world. This is an issue we have to deal with."

Niagara Anglicans were also making statements about ending poverty

in Ontario by their presence at meetings across the diocese as part of the Poverty Reduction consultation in our province. At least a half a dozen of the Charity to Justice Workshop participants were present at the June 27, 2008 Community Conversation with MPP Kevin Flynn in Oakville and Niagara Anglicans have been active participants on the Hamilton Working Group on the Ontario Poverty Reduction Strategy.

Together, we need to continue to hear and respond to God's message of reconciliation through action by doing our part to work on solutions to suffering and injustice. This work is more easily done when we come together.

Following the Charity to Justice workshop, an informal networking group of Niagara Anglicans for social justice has formed. Derek Wood of St. Aidan's describes this outcome of the workshop: "The big takeaway for me was the wonderful opportunity to meet people of faith with similar justice concerns. The networking opportunity alone has made that day very productive and useful to leverage our practical outreach effort. And there is the positive impact on morale, on our spirits, a 'we are not alone' feeling that recharges the energies. We simply will have more influence as a larger group, a wider geography, than simply our own parishes. That is important to actually effect any change."

The group, which has no formal name yet, has been communicating on an ongoing basis by e-mail and has pledged to hold a face to face networking meeting in the fall of 2008.

EGYPT – JORDAN – ISRAEL

March 11-30, 2009

\$300 Early Booking Discount

Highlights: Sound and light show at Pyramids, morning climb of Mount Sinai, four-wheeled drive into the Wadi Rum, Petra, time of rest and relaxation on the shores of the Gulf of Aqaba, boat ride on the Sea of Galilee

ALL-INCLUSIVE – FIVE STAR

Information meeting: 2 PM Sunday Sept 28

St. John's Church, St. Catharines

OBERAMMERGAU

June 2-16, 2010

\$300 Early Booking Discount

Highlights: Oberammergau Passion Play, Musical/Folklore Show in Prague, Hungarian Dinner and Folklore Show

Information meeting: 2 PM Sunday Oct 05

St. John's Church, St. Catharines

For brochures or information, contact:

Canon Gordon Kinkley M.A., M.Div.

St. John's Church, 80 Main St., St. Catharines

(905) 934-1020; OR

Rostad Tours 1-800-361-8687

St. Mark's began our diocese, and continues a fine ministry

ALAN HAYES
THE ITINERANT CHURCHGOER

St. Mark's, Niagara-on-the-Lake (NOTL), is the most historic church in our diocese, and it has the extra advantage of being located in one of the loveliest and most charming towns in Canada.

Odd, that it's only now in my 47th column that I'm talking about the very first Anglican church in Niagara.

It's not that I haven't spent time there. In fact, St. Mark's was the first church in Niagara that I visited. That was in 1976, thanks to a hospitable invitation from the then rector, Hugh Maclean, who loved church history as much as I did, and liked nothing better than to explore the past dramas and scandals of his parish. (He sure found lots of both.)

New parish history

Happily, two retired teachers from Niagara College have written a history of St. Mark's that is both handsome to look at and enjoyable to read. Donald Combe and Fred Habermehl's "St. Mark's: Persons of Hopeful Piety" was launched in December 2006.

The parish archives committee recently contributed a copy to the Graham Library of Trinity and Wycliffe Colleges, and the theological librarian, Tom Power, a parishioner of St. John's, Hamilton, let me know immediately. You can get ordering information at www.stmarks1792.com.

The pre-history of St. Mark's begins in 1790 with John Butler, who was the area's most prominent citizen at the time. An Indian agent and trader, he was the military leader of "Butler's Rangers" on the British side during the American Revolution. He and many of his soldiers settled in the area after the war, and created Butlersburg, the predecessor of NOTL. The population was over 3000, and Butler wrote the S.P.G., the mission society of the Church of England, to ask for a priest. He and his friends promised a salary of £100 a year.

Robert Addison

The S.P.G. sent Robert Addison. He was 37 years old, with an M.A. from Trinity College, Cambridge, and several years of pastoral experience. He came over with his two young daughters, his sister, and his wonderful theological library of over a thousand volumes. Contemporaries described him as having kindly manners, an intellectual countenance, an exquisite wit, a delicate constitution, and, when he led worship, a "finished style of reading."

He began holding services in the court house, the Indian Council house, or the Masonic lodge, until the

town got around to building a church. St. Mark's began as a small but, in the circumstances, "commodious" stone church, rectangular except for a squared apse, and furnished with a pulpit, communion table, and reading desk. It was partly burned down when the Americans torched the town during the War of 1812, and had to be rebuilt.

Addison's travels

Addison also regularly visited every settlement between Fort Erie and London, and took a special interest in the Mohawk church at the Grand River. For many of our Anglican churches, including Fort Erie, Chippawa, Queenston, St. Catharines, Jordan, and Grimsby, he was the first priest.

His parishioners in NOTL never coughed up his salary of £100. They felt bad about this, though, and tried to make up for it by helping him secure land grants. Combe and Habermehl estimate that Addison wound up owning 18,000 acres of land around Niagara.

He ministered in Niagara for 37 years. Then his assistant, Thomas Green, succeeded him. Green established a school, developed the government of the parish, and enlarged the church building.

In the 1850s, unfortunately, Green was drinking too much, and was writing some unfortunate letters to married women. As happens so often in Anglican history, churchwardens were "the sheet anchors to hold the church steady," in Hugh Maclean's worthy phrase. Green's friends persuaded Bishop Strachan that the rector was suffering from a medical condition, which qualified him for a full pension.

Early women's groups

In the 1880s a number of women's groups began to flourish, including the Ladies Guild and the Women's Auxiliaries. In fact, women were admitted to the councils of parish government at least as early as 1885.

The authors are candid and probably a little controversial about the time of troubles in the 1980s. The division and hurt in the congregation became so great that a reconciliation committee had to be appointed and a pastoral worker hired. In the episode that garnered the most press at the time, one rector unloaded and the next rector bought back one of the gems of the parish, Robert Addison's library, the oldest collection of books in Ontario.

A happier section of the book concerns Ian Dingwall's rectorship in the 1990s. Among other things, Ian gave impressive leadership in setting up

the church's splendid lectureship. The names of the annual speakers are an honour roll of internationally prominent theologians and bible scholars. The next two will be Stanley Hauerwas (Oct. 24-25, 2008) and Walter Brueggemann (June 12-13, 2009). Count me in!

Cherry festival I always find an outing to St. Mark's enjoyable. Last year I took my family, including my new granddaughter, to the annual Cherry Festival in July. It was a treat to be part of the buzzing activity in the church's lovely gated garden under a blue sky in the fresh air. At one side were the barbecues and baked goods and jams; at another side were children's games; in between there was a big yard sale; inside there were some very tempting items on offer in a silent auction; and you could tour the historic church and grounds.

And on the Sunday before last Easter, which I'm supposed to call the Sunday of the Passion but which I still really want to call Palm Sunday, I joined the congregation for worship. We began in the parish hall, then processed behind a real live donkey across the yard to the church, which was great fun for the kids, and not only for them.

I needn't describe the church, which you can tour online at www.stmarks1792.com. I'll just tell you that it was a thrill to sit among the cool stones and warm woods and elegant furnishings, and to sense the company of many generations of saints.

Beautiful reading

Jennifer Phipps, one of the finest actors in the Shaw Festival, read a lesson that morning. In some churches scripture readings are assigned to, well, whoever; but it's absolutely transporting to hear the bible read by someone who totally grasps and fully expresses its meaning and beauty and drama.

The rector showed his extraordinary gift for teaching. He spoke engagingly and comfortably and warmly, and his homily brought Jesus' entry into Jerusalem to life in its social, political, and theological context. He helped me understand why Jesus was, and remains, so compelling.

And the rector clearly keeps up with his reading, without, however, being taken in by modern authors. He was right on when he said that one Irish-American biblical scholar (he meant John Dominic Crossan) is inclined to read the conflicts of modern Ulster back into first-century Jerusalem.

How blessed our diocese is that St. Mark's is part of our cornucopia of Christian life, thought, art, worship, and witness.

SUSAN WESTALL
ALL SAINTS HAMILTON

Some two thousand five hundred years ago the prophet whom scholars know as the Second Isaiah wrote "the former things have come to pass, and new things I now declare" (Isaiah 42:9). The Hebrews had been repeatedly warned that their ways would lead to disaster and Jerusalem had



In spite of a Reformation, the new heaven and the new earth still remains before us.

been destroyed by the Babylonians. The people were in exile, as Psalm 137 must always remind us.

The twentieth century is now a period of the past. During it God's world saw two catastrophic wars brought on by mankind's greed and lust for power. The British Empire that had dominated the world during the previous century collapsed as its resources dwindled away as the result of those two great conflagrations. There had been prophets who warned of the danger, one of whom wrote a poem that finished up as a hymn in our old Hymn Book. Hymn 316 is Rudyard Kipling's *Recessional*, written in the year of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee when the British Empire was at its acme and Victoria had been proclaimed Empress of India a few years earlier:

*God of our fathers, known of old,
Lord of our far-flung battle line,
Beneath whose awful hand we hold
Dominion over palm and pine;
Lord God of hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget, lest we forget.*

How often have those last three words appeared on war memorials since they were written!

Former things have come to pass, for Kipling goes on to remind us: *Lo, all our pomp of yesterday
Is one with Nineveh and Tyre!*

His final verse might well be born in mind by that other English-speaking nation that appears to desire the glory of its former parent:

*For heathen heart that puts her trust
In reeking tube and iron shard;
All valiant dust that builds on dust
And guarding calls not thee to guard:
For frantic boast and foolish word,
Thy mercy on thy people, Lord.*

"The former things have come to pass, and new things I now declare", as was written so long ago. The former things have come to pass and God's world must now be ready for new things to appear. But the third "Isaiah", writing after the exiles had returned to Jerusalem and the rebuilding of the Temple was being undertaken wrote, "the new heaven and the new earth which I will make shall remain before me" (Isaiah 66:22).

Alas, it is still before us. The new world for which the Jews hoped after their return from exile did not materialize and God, after all his efforts through a long series of prophets, resorted to his long shot. At the time of humanity's development God had in his mind the perfect model towards which he expected humanity to advance. That model was with God in

the beginning, but was in the process of being developed here on earth. In a sense the model was instrumental in the creation of humanity for it was alive in the mind of the Creator. So God sent his model into the world to show us what he expected of us. That model was Jesus, the ultimate human model.

Mankind has proved to be contrary, perhaps because God gave us the gift of freewill. Experience has shown us that if a child is told not to do something, the chances are that that child will try it in order to find out what happens. Fortunately, most children learn from such experiments, but humanity as a whole does not seem to profit from its waywardness. For six thousand years of recorded history mankind has persisted in its search for wealth and power, with the inevitable result of repeated warfare, strife and poverty. The example of Jesus, God's perfect model for us, has made little difference. In spite of all that the Old Testament prophets said, in spite of the example that Jesus has set us, we still struggle for riches and power.

Even worse has happened. God's model taught us that we are all God's children and that God is our "heavenly father". Instead, as time progressed, it served our purposes to declare Jesus as God's only son and to add so many circumventions that the Church was able to profit from the ignorance of its vast uneducated adherents and build great cathedrals, monasteries and bishop's palaces. In other words, the Church itself sought riches and power by modelling itself on the great secular empire from which it was born.

In spite of a Reformation, the new heaven and the new earth still remains before us. As the twenty-first century draws towards the end of its first decade do we feel the sense that God is calling us to review our past shortcomings and start afresh? He sent his model for our guidance, but in many ways we have portrayed that model to our own advantage. In spite of this, we have had modern prophets who have shown us how to live as Jesus taught, who have remembered that Jesus said "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the son of man has nowhere to lay his head" (Matthew 8:20).

Is God to be frustrated? Had the writer of the Book of Revelation, said to be John, lost so much faith in humanity that the world had to be destroyed in a great cataclysm? Did he really believe that a God of Love could prepare such fiendish punishments for the "Ungodly"? Did he realize that his writing would open the way for Dante's *Inferno* and make Jesus's teachings a source of fear for the uneducated? Did he not realize that God is still waiting for humanity to follow the example that He has set us so that His kingdom may be established upon earth and God can truly say "Behold, I make all things new"?

The world as we know it will end when humanity learns to live by God's rules and when God's Kingdom is established upon earth because humanity has learned the meaning of the prayer "Thy Kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven". God's will must be done by humanity, not by God's further intervention.

We'd love to hear your opinion

You can write your letter to the editor online at www.niagara.anglican.ca/newspaper

or mail to

Editor, Niagara Anglican
252 James North
Hamilton ON L8R 2L3



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1 »

Unpacking emotions and stories

The bible study was taken from John's Gospel and focused upon the "I am" sayings of Jesus and each day I joined three Tanzanian bishops, two bishops from England and one from Texas and together we poured over the words of the passages that proclaimed John's central theme; that we see the "glory of God" in "the Word made flesh." It was incredible how each of us approached and encountered those passages differently; the stories they evoked as we went around the circle provided me with some of the most powerful and moving encounters I had at Lambeth.

The Indaba gatherings provided the bishops with an opportunity to discuss the more serious issues facing the Communion and the topics included: Anglican Identity, Evangelism, Social Justice, Dialogue in a Multi-faith World, Environmental Concerns, Abuse of Power and Authority, Mission, Interpretation of Scripture, Human Sexuality, the Windsor Report and the Covenant. In the afternoons hearings were often held that allowed for further discussions with the Windsor Continuation com-

mittee and the Covenant working group and there were also self-select presentations and workshops. A "listener" was appointed for each indaba group who was responsible for gathering all of the material produced from the discussions each day (news print, written reports and individual submissions). This work was then somehow distilled and passed on to those charged with producing a final report that would echo these conversations and reflections under the headings of the discussion topics.

One of the highlights of the Conference for me was the day we spent in London that included a visit to Lambeth Palace and Buckingham Palace. The most memorable event on that day, however, was the experience of walking through the streets of London in support of the Millennium Development Goals and later to be greeted by Prime Minister Gordon Brown who called our Millennium March one of the greatest demonstration of faith that the City of London had ever witnessed. This experience - together with the encounters that I had with so many bishops from third world

countries - have had a profound effect upon me both emotionally and spiritually, and in my reflections and my prayers I continue to discern what God has revealed to me in the midst of it all!

As the Conference moved along, draft copies of the reflection document were presented, reviewed and commented on quite thoroughly as new material was being added, in about three day blocks. The draft sections pertaining to the Covenant, the Pastoral Forum and the moratoria however, were presented on Saturday August 2nd with only an hour left in the time allotted for the hearing (due to a photocopier problem) and the completed report in its final form was given to us the next day, the last day of the conference.

I have tried to explain the process in detail because I want you to appreciate some of the difficulties and frustrations of trying to ensure that any one voice is heard and so that you will also understand how the document, entitled "Lambeth Indaba Reflections," was produced. Despite the fact that some are already calling the contents of the

document, Lambeth "recommendations" or "directions" it is important to remember that this report is primarily an attempt to capture the conversations of over 600 bishops, speaking many different languages, in a variety of small groups and larger forums.

Having said this, it is important to report to you that it was clear that the Covenant process had a great deal of support, building upon the encouragement that was given in the opening presidential address by the Archbishop of Canterbury. I have heard first hand, the deeply held convictions and the hurt and pain that surround the challenges we all face at this moment in time. I have also had many in-depth conversations with bishops from around the world and in those encounters I endeavored to present, as accurately as possible, the life and ministry of the Diocese of Niagara. There is no doubt that despite some fundamental disagreements, there was a widespread desire to keep the Communion together but it remains to be seen what the demands of such unity will be and how we can respond to them in Niagara.

It will take many days and weeks to even begin to unpack the range of emotions I have experienced, the stories I have been privileged to hear, the relationships I have developed and the friendships I have made. Certainly the highlights for me were the opening retreat in Canterbury Cathedral, the walk supporting the Millennium Development Goals and the holy ground that I found each day in my bible study group.

In one of those bible studies my group of bishops looked at the passage from John 6:35-59 that began with the words: "Jesus said to them, 'I am the bread of life.'" Our study book on that day makes the point that throughout John's Gospel and in this passage in particular, a characteristic of Jesus is his willingness to frame his teaching to respond to the specific concerns of those listening to him. I hope that we can explore together in the months to come, how that "bread of life" might be made known afresh among us in the Diocese of Niagara and how we might share that bread of life with the people we are called to serve.

It's not complicated, God loves us

GRAHAME STAP
RETIRED PRIEST

It is hard to realize that I have been retired for three months. No getting up at six thirty on a Sunday morning. No preparing a sermon or getting ready for a service. It has been

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We seem to put our own ideas and comfort before the needs of those seeking for some thing...

wonderful to just go to church and worship; to actually listen to what is going on and not have to participate. At least it was like that for the first month and if I am honest a little like that in the second month.

During the third month I came to understand that something was missing. I started to realize what a huge part of my life is involved in being a priest and how difficult it is to leave it all behind. I also realized that I can't go back nor do I particularly want to but I needed something to fill the void and for me the answer is writing.

Then the question came, "Writing what?" Well you might find this a little strange but a lot of what is said in church I still find hard to get my head round. The politics and that run rampant biased on each person's interpretation of scriptures.

The unbelievable difficulty in getting people to understand that change must take place if we are going to do what we are called to do and help all people understand God loves them and wants them to know they are loved. We find it more important to cling to the old ways.

If they are honest, most would like to bring back the *Book of Common Prayer* because it is what we grew up with and feel comfortable with. We forget that even Thomas Cranmer wrote in the thirty-nine articles of religion (found at the back of the B.C.P) that the service must be in the vernacular of the people. He understood you cannot attract people if they cannot understand what is being said. They just give up and leave. We seem to put our own ideas and comfort before the needs of those seeking for some thing, but don't know what.

What has all this got to do with writing? Well I believe we have complicated our relationship with God to the extent that we have forgotten that God is our Father in heaven and our relationship it that of Father and child. So I am going to start with year A and write sermons on the lectionary as I see them. Please understand these sermons will only be my interpretation and neither right or wrong or the only way to understand the word of God. I hope to put all this in a book and those who wish will be able get a copy and read my understanding of our relationship with the one who created all things.

My first book is already out and available at www.lulu.com. It's called *It's Not Complicated, God Loves Us (but it's only my opinion)* and I thank the one person that has gone to the site and bought a copy. It is in part the story of my own journey to find the God that loves me regardless of all my many faults. My only desire is to help as many people as I can find that no matter who they are or what they might have done God truly does love each and every one of us. Regardless of what we might be told it is not complicated.

Community Justice Camp

Live the change you want to see, May 9-14, 2010



CHRISTYN PERKONS
PROGRAM CONSULTANT, DIOCESAN RESOURCE CENTRE

Michael Bird, Bishop of Niagara, is pleased and honoured to announce that the Anglican Diocese of Niagara will be hosting the 2010 Justice Camp.

What is Justice Camp?

Justice Camps are intergenerational learning experiences in a residential setting organized around a local justice issue. Their goal is to develop justice leadership in the Anglican Church of Canada, with a focus on youth from 18 to 30 years of age.

Unlike a conference, Justice Camps are interactive with active learning through immersion experiences with local justice partners and guided reflection time with small group facilitators. Participants are at least 50% young adults (18-30) with 50% local participation and 50% of the participants being from all across Canada and may include representatives of the international partners of the Anglican Church of Canada.

What are Justice Camp Principles?

- Locally led – Justice Camps are developed by a local coalition of partners around a theme that is both locally identified and experienced while resonating at the national level.
- Experiential learning – Justice Camps are organized around immersion experiences hosted by local social justice leaders offering participants the opportunity for hands-on learning which is reflected through the lens of Scripture and worship.

- Prophetic – Justice Camps engage participants in reflection on issues and experiences in a way that challenges themselves, the church, and wider society to speak and live the vision of the prophets in the Judeo-Christian tradition.
- Expertise of participants – Justice Camps operate on the assumption that "the wisdom is in the room", that is, that participants bring their own wisdom and knowledge on a given issue in their local context augmented by sharing, networking, coordinating, and community development training.

Have there been other Justice Camps?

There have been three Justice Camps so far:

- Environment Justice Camp, Victoria B.C., May 2007: "Mending Creation" – 70 participants, with guests from Australia and the US, and intensive three day immersions on coastal waters, inland waters, lands and forests, climate change as it affects buildings, energy, transportation, and communities.
- Advocacy Justice Camp, Ottawa Ont., May 2006: "Seeking Justice, Engaging the Powers" – 65 participants from 18 to over 65 years, with immersion experiences on homelessness and poverty, development and aid, Indigenous justice, immigration and refugees, rights for seniors and those with disabilities, and ecology.
- Food Justice Camp, Winnipeg Man., August 2005: "Setting the Table: A Place for Everyone and Every Place Honoured" – 45 participants from 13 to 89 years of age with immersion experiences in a mixed farming community, an organic farm, urban food industries, and a fish farm.
- A 2009 Justice Camp focused on Poverty hosted by Diocese of Nova Scotia/Prince Edward Island is in the planning stages.

What is the theme for the Niagara Justice Camp in 2010?

The theme of Justice Camp 2010 is Community Justice: Live the Change You Want to See which will include:

- Considering the concepts of charity vs. justice, their strengths and limitations as they relate to parish outreach
- Discerning and interpreting local needs in a way that leads to action
- Learning techniques for grass roots organizing and developing a justice-oriented approach to outreach
- Striving to be prophetic
- Sharing best practices for community building, advocating and lobbying on the many issues of social justice we find in our world.

The goal of the camp is to enable individuals and communities of faith to be agents of transformation and reconciliation.

Who is organizing the Niagara Justice Camp?

We are in the process of building the local coalition to organize the camp and we need your help!

How to get involved!

The success of the Camp depends on the involvement of the parishes, individuals, groups, justice partners and local organizations in Niagara. We need organizing coalition members, campers, immersion group leaders, immersion group hosts and volunteers of all sorts.

If you are interested in learning more and becoming involved please attend our Community Justice Camp orientation on Saturday, October 18, 2008. To register call Christyn Perkons at 905-527-1316 x 460 by October 8, 2008.

Come alone, bring a friend, or bring a team!

PARISH NEWS



Ground-breaking for St. Mark's Orangeville

PAM CLARIDGE
ST. MARK'S, ORANGEVILLE

Big things are happening at St. Mark's Anglican Church in Orangeville, beginning with the first ground-breaking ceremony in half a century, which took place on July 13, 2008.

It was with great excitement that the congregation launched a "Building to Serve" fundraising campaign that's designed to make the 140-year-old church fully accessible and more welcoming while restoring a crumbling exterior.

For some considerable time the

congregation had been meeting to identify issues that needed to be addressed and decided on three main ones: a permanent fix to the problems with the Quickbrick coating of the exterior bricks; making the church and hall accessible to all, and changing the entrance to make it a more inviting space.

The exterior brick of the building erected in 1868 has been a cause of concern for some time with the Quickbrick falling in some areas. Over the years the cost of repairing and brick has cost many thousands

of dollars. To solve this problem the building will be clad with a material manufactured by Dryvit Systems Inc., a leader in the industry, which will allow moisture to evaporate and not cause the problem of deterioration. This solution will not only improve the look of the building but will maintain the historical integrity while eliminating the safety concerns.

According to the rector, Rev. Canon Peter Scott, every visioning session held identified the problem of lack of proper access for all to the church hall as a major issue. After

much discussion the decision was made to install a three-person lift that will allow wheelchair access on a level entranceway from the parking lot, then to the church and parish hall.

The third change will be to the main entrance of the church.

An addition will be made to the southwest corner of the building, the goal being to create an area that will be welcoming and provide space for fellowship opportunities.

The new front entrance will include large plate glass windows

along the front and the side of the addition, which will provide natural light for the existing stained glass windows.

At the same time the current main entrance will be extended towards the lawn and with new steps which will maintain and enhance the heritage of the existing entranceway.

Also, changes will be made to the tower. A section will be removed, with the possibility that in the future a steeple will be mounted, making it look more like the original 1887 tower.

The Mission of Seafarers

C.G. (BERT) HALLIDAY,
CHAIR, MISSION BOARD OF DIRECTORS

What is Sea Sunday? Sea Sunday is usually a Sunday in September that the church remembers the Seafarers that sail the oceans, seas and lakes to bring us raw materials, food and other goods to our country.

It is a lonely life out there on the high seas. Separated from your home and family for months on end. Yes. They are the seafarers that share long hours with initially a crew of strangers who may not even speak the same language. Usually, around 3,000 of them sail into Hamilton Harbour each year and many of them would go unnoticed, if it was not for the work of The Mission to Seafarers.

Here, right in our own backyard is a Mission that unfortunately is low on the radar screen that has the objective of meeting the requirements of seafarers from the many ships that dock at the port of Hamilton.

The Mission to Seafarers is part of a worldwide organization that was founded in Bristol, England in 1856.

However, although the Mission is part of the worldwide organization, the Mission has to operate on its own, relying upon volunteers and financial support from donations.

The Mission is located in the Port of Hamilton at Pier 10 - Wellington

Street dock building and is open from 12 noon until 7.00pm during the shipping season by a hostess and from 7.00pm to 10.00 pm by volunteers from local Anglican churches in the area. The Mission is sponsored by the Diocese of Niagara as part of their outreach programme and the Chaplain (part time) is currently the rector from St. Luke's Church.

In 2007, 100 foreign ships docked in the port and some 1400 seafarers visited the Mission. This year (as of August 1st) 48 foreign ships have docked in Hamilton with many of the crews visiting the Mission and the Mission is expected to get busier as we enter the fall season.

The Mission offers visiting seafarers, first and foremost friendship, hospitality and a place where they contact their families and friends through the internet and telephone service that the Mission provides. They can also relax, have a coffee, play pool, football etc., and if requested they can use the Mission's van, driven by volunteer drivers, to take them to Niagara Falls and the local shopping malls.

As mentioned earlier, the Mission is sponsored by the Diocese which pays the annual rent for use of the facility to the Port of Hamilton Authority and the Board of Directors thanks them for

that. However, over the many years that the Mission has operated (some 40 odd years), it has been funded by donations from various sources and from craft sales and monthly pub lunches etc., but at the annual general meeting in June, the financial picture was looking grim for 2007. The other concern expressed at the meeting was the lack of volunteers as most of the volunteers are seniors and have been giving their services for over 10 years and the numbers are diminishing. Therefore, we ask that you pray for the Mission, especially on Sea Sunday and bring this to the attention of your congregation for the need of volunteers and financial support.

Should any member of your congregation or even your church be willing to make a donation, please send it to The Mission to Seafarers, Group Box 12, 600 Ferguson St. North, Hamilton, Ontario L8L 4R4.

The Mission is a Registered Charitable Organization and a tax receipt will be sent to any person that makes a donation.

A service will be held on Sea Sunday 28th at 3 PM followed by refreshments. All are welcome.

The Board of Directors wish to thank the 12 churches that responded to our request last year.



Niagara youth meets Archbishop of Canterbury

WALTER RAYBOULD
PRAYERBOOK SOCIETY

Most likely the youngest person to be officially part of the Lambeth Conference 2008 was Niagara's own Alex Urquhart as seen here with the Archbishop of Canterbury, Alex who is the new President of the Greater Niagara Branch of the Prayerbook Society of

Canada was there as part of the team sent from Canada by the National PBSC.

Alex who is head server at St Paul's Dunnville had nothing but glowing praise for Archbishop Rowan whom he meet and got a chance to have a good talk with. Needless to say our young hero was thrilled by the whole adventure.

150 years celebrated at the Feast of St. James in Fergus



From Left: Mike McDermitt, Dave Sweeney, Carol Witcher, Cathy Sweeney, Bill Parker, Anne Warner, Archdeacon Stephen Witcher.



Greeting people at the Tea are Ivy Taylor and Davaleen Parker with Lillian Stewart in the background.

LINDA AUSTIN ST. JAMES, FERGUS

St. James Church is celebrating its 150th Anniversary. Events planned for the Feast of St. James brought together former and present parishioners to worship together and enjoy getting to know each other. On July 19th, there was a Welcome Tea from 2:00 – 4:00 p.m. at the church, followed by a dinner at the Fergus Legion. Entertainment included highland dancers and the St. James contemporary choir, Gospel Acclamation.

On Sunday, July 20th, the parish welcomed present and former parishioners to a church service at 10:30 AM followed by brunch. Several special guests attended from St. Catharines, Etobicoke, Listowel and Mississauga. Mrs. Gladys Loat-Richardson, the widow of Rev. C. J. Loat who was the rector between 1943 and 1947 and designed the present church in 1946, was present for the weekend with her daughter-in-law Trish Loat. Reverend Clarke Raymond and his wife Mary attended the church service on Sun-

day. Rev. Raymond is the son of the deceased Larry and Kathleen Raymond. Both were active members of St. James. Larry served as treasurer and warden at St. James for many years in the early and mid 1900's.

Fred Hotson, who was the "organ pumper" in 1929 was also in attendance on the weekend. Jack Berryman and his wife attended the church service and brunch. Jack's deceased grandmother, Cora was in the choir and played the organ during the 1920's. Helen Brightling-Luxton and

her husband attended the tea. Helen is the daughter of the deceased Reverend Gruer Luxton. Rev. Luxton was the rector at St. James from 1926-1933. Each of these guests enjoyed reminiscing about times gone by and meeting the present parishioners.

The history book "Cherish Our Heritage, Grow Our Faith" has been published. It contains stories written by present and former families sharing their involvement at St. James. A history of the church in three buildings and with 33 rectors and a history of the

pipe organ is also included. Each page is highlighted with photos of families and events. The final pages are dedicated to the 2008 anniversary celebrations. Extra copies of the history book are available by contacting the church office at 519-843-2141.

2008 has been a busy and enjoyable year for St. James. We have had three successful celebration events. The final celebration event will be a Pork Barbecue on September 20th. More information and tickets are available by contacting the church office.

Fall Fun Fair

Flamborough youth group responds to appeal for financial assistance from Cuba

DEREK KERR CHRIST CHURCH FLAMBOROUGH

The Youth Group of Christ Church Flamborough have undertaken a very special outreach project in aid of The Parish of Good Shepherd in Esmeralda, Camaguey, Cuba. By holding a Fall Fun Fair on Saturday, September 27th, from 10am-2pm the Youth Group hopes to raise the nearly \$6,000 needed for a building project that the congregation and community are undertaking. Archbishop Fred Hiltz, Primate, along with Bishop Michael Bird received the request for assistance from the Reverend Evelio Rubi, rector, while attending the Diocese of Cuba Synod in February of this year.

The Diocese of Niagara has, for many years, had a continued companion relationship with the people of the Diocese of Cuba as has Christ Church Flamborough. In the past, Reverend Canon Barry Randle has delivered medical supplies on behalf of the congregation of Christ Church to the people of Cuba, so it is only natural that we would respond positively to such a request for assistance.

The Church was constructed in 1927 with adobe walls, a mixture of stones, dirt and clay. The roof has deteriorated resulting in water damage and the foundation is crumbling. The project is to rebuild the entire building,

replace the right side wall, correct the foundation, replace the roof with flagstone from cement tiles, replace windows, doors, paint the entire building and build an addition to the property for a Hospice. This project will take approximately 3 years from beginning to end.

We are asking individuals and parishes in the Diocese of Niagara for their help to make this FUNraising event for the Parish of the Good Shepherd in Cuba a great success!

Events planned for the day of the Fall Fun Fair include a concert by new and upcoming recording artist Leah Speers, Children's Entertainer Febee the clown, Penny Sale, Rummage Sale, Dunk Tank, Bounce Castle and Slide, Bake Sale table, Candy Bags, Food and Popcorn along with games of Skill. An appearance by our very own Bishop Michael Bird has also been confirmed. I am sure with some persuasion Bishop Bird could be convinced to enter the Dunk Tank!

If you, your parish or region would like to donate funds to this worthwhile project, please send a cheque payable to Christ Church Flamborough (92 Highway #8, Dundas Ontario, L9H 4V5). Please specify the project "Youth Group Fall Fun Fair". Tax receipts for individual donor donations will be issued.



Outreach at St. Stephen-on-the-Mount

LYNNE TIMMINS ST. STEPHEN-ON-THE-MOUNT, HAMILTON

From January to June 2008 the children and youth of St. Stephen-on-the-Mount Church in Hamilton have been collecting pennies and popcans in order to raise money for this year's outreach project – the 'Live Piggy Bank'. Families in Cambodia that have a plentiful source of portable water are able to use their wells to further increase their income by raising pigs. Two piglets, purchased for \$35, can be raised and

and performed a skit, wrote and led the Prayers of the People, sang songs throughout the service and served hot dogs and salad during coffee hour. Due to the generosity of the people of St. Stephen-on-the-Mount, we were able to send enough money to Cambodia to buy 68 piglets – well surpassing our original goal of 50. Our thanks to the parishioners of St. Stephen's, all the children, youth and their families for making this project a complete success!

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St. George's Church provides a 'reuse and recycle' opportunity

WILLIAM PARKER
ST. GEORGE'S CHURCH

When you go by St. George's Anglican Church in Guelph, you can't help but notice the massive staging that provides the perches for a talented roofing construction crew. They are removing the 135 year old slate roof to be replaced by new slate shingles. The roofing contractor is sorting the old slates with the aim of saving the best for recycling.

In the spirit of environmentalism and to provide a practical opportunity to 'reuse and recycle', the slates are being offered for sale. Three different options have been developed for the souvenir slates. Artist Ted Clarke has volunteered to paint two different scenes on the slates; one will depict the three St. George's Churches; another one will show the church as it will appear when the reroofing project is complete in September. A third option is a blank slate which can be used for an individual's

creative project. The costs are \$50.00, \$35.00 and \$10.00. Tax receipts may be given for a portion of the cost.

"After 135 years, I think it is time for a new roof before the old one starts to leak," jokes Bill Parker who chairs the restoration committee at St. George's. "It's really exciting to see the project being put in place and the new slates look absolutely fantastic," adds Parker.

The award winning architectural firm of Goldsmith, Borgal and Company Ltd. of Toronto is managing the massive project which will take about five months to complete. Restoration architect Chris Borgal claims that the new slates will restore the church roof to how it looked back in 1873. "Its going to be an amazing roof restoration for a church that is an outstanding heritage building," adds Borgal.

The firm doing the work, Rooftile Management of Mississauga has done restoration projects on many

churches and buildings across Canada including the Parliament Buildings in Ottawa. The roofing crew is a team of highly trained specialists including a 'slater' who learned his craft in England. The new roof will be a noteworthy landmark both from the air and from the perspective looking down the historic Douglas Street. The roof restoration will add significantly to the heritage perspectives of downtown Guelph.

Details about recycling the old slates and purchase order forms are available from the church office at 99 Woolwich St., Guelph, (519) 822-1366. Samples of the artistic slates can also be seen at the church.

If you are looking for an opportunity to practice a 'reusing and recycling' philosophy, then here is your chance at the same time as having a souvenir of the 135 year old St. George's roof.



The message on the Church of the Resurrection sign, in the spirit of a greening church.

Resurrection wisdom

CARL SNEYD
DIRECTOR OF STEWARDSHIP & FINANCIAL DEVELOPMENT

The Church of the Resurrection in Hamilton has, like many churches, a sign out front that can be changed to present different messages. We also get a huge amount of vehicular traffic going past our sign, something in the order of 25,000 cars every day. That's a lot of people that we can reach with our messages.

A lot of the time, like most church signs, the sign is used to advertise church dinners, Bazaars and Mum-to-Mum sales, special seasonal services and so on. But we also use it for passive evangelism, presenting an idea or a thought, something for people to perhaps think about on their way to and from wherever they are travelling.

Our sign has three lines. The biggest challenge is getting a message down to those three lines of no more than 22 characters and spaces with minimal punctuations and special characters. It can take a lot of editing and thinking and finding shorter synonyms to get the essence of some profound concept down to our limitations. In the past we've had messages like:

- "An eye for an eye will blind the world"
- "The best things in life aren't things"
- "Healing happens, recovery is optional"
- "Vision can't predict our future, it creates our future"
- "Signmaker on vacation (or sign broken). Get message inside"

The message that created the most controversy and discussion within our own congregation was "Anglican, but not stuffy."

People are always sending in lists of sayings from the Internet, which can be very helpful, but, since Resurrection people like to have fun and are a clever lot, this summer we decided to have a parish fun raiser. The congregation was told that the first line of the sign would read, "In your life," and the third line, "& be at peace."

They were asked to put on their thinking caps and come up with some life wisdom and supply a second line of 20 characters and spaces. They should say something to the world that they felt was really important or that had made their life better or was something that would help create the Kingdom on earth.

Submissions would be edited and could not be to negative or too political; "Vote communist" (or "liberal," "conservative" or "NDP"), probably wouldn't be accepted, whereas "Vote your conscience" might be. Wonderfully uplifting messages like "Eat cookies" would have a much bet-

ter chance of making the final cut. If enough entries were received, the sign would be changed every week for from mid-June to mid-August, when it would have to go back to the regular, boring (but necessary) announcements and the short (but hopefully) thought provoking profundities.

Forms were provided and people got to work and really got into the spirit of things. There was no lack of entries; at least 83 were received over 4weeks. People put in multiple entries; some people would put in an entry one week, null it over for the next week and come up with a more profound variation. Of the 83 submissions, 75 were useable. The others didn't fit the length criteria, or, while being good valid thoughts, didn't fit with the first line "in your life" and the third line, "& be at peace."

Here are some of the submissions we got. Read them with the first and last lines in mind.

A lot of the submissions expressed the same idea. Variations on the Second Great Commandment were the most popular, entries like "Love god love others." One person submitted "Give some take some," while their partner upped the ante and put in "Give some take less." A further variation of that theme could have been "Give some get more."

The following three were submitted independently and individually all are good thoughts. But if they are put into the order below and presented over a week and a half, volumes are spoken:

- "Ease someone's strife"
- "Listen to your wife"
- "Really listen"

Our teens put in some of the best entries:

- "Forgive"
- "Stop and smell roses"
- "Dedicate yourself"
- "Dance dance dance"

After sorting through and editing, we ended up with sixteen different sayings to use, so the sign got changed twice a week. You can see all the submissions on the Resurrection website Announcements page (<http://www.angmtnparishes.on.ca/Announcements.htm>). Be patient, all the submissions cycle through.

Why not try something like this on your sign? If you don't like what the other church down the road has on theirs, rebut their sign with a positive thought of your own. Use your imagination, have some fun and reach out to your community and the great wide world. (& be at peace.)

The message on the Church of the Resurrection sign, in the spirit of a greening church.



Christ Church Woodburn annual picnic a great success

ELAINE HOOKER
INTERIM RECTOR, CHRIST CHURCH WOODBURN

On Sunday June 22, Christ Church Woodburn had a Grand picnic. We were pleased to have Christ's Church Cathedral join us. The invitation was extended, after the Cathedral had welcomed our parish with Interim Pastor Canon Elaine Hooker as preacher in February.

The grounds at Christ Church Woodburn are lush and green and there is room for children to run and play and for all to worship outside. We were delighted by the number of people, about 140, half of them made the trek to Woodburn from the cathedral for the service, pot-luck lunch,

and games for all ages afterwards.

The theme of this year's picnic was "Love". The Niagara Youth Band led by Jamie Barnes, gave us energy and set the tone for an uplifting experience. The children's participation in the Proclamation of the Word, readings, and stories, brought us the powerful message that God welcomes Everyone. The singing puppets reminded us to put the Love of God in our Hearts. It was the First Nations day of Prayer, and we heard the native story about how the butterfly came to be.

We celebrated the Eucharist with bread and wine administered by clergy and lay assistants from both parishes.

It was impossible to sample all the dishes at the pot-luck lunch, but most of us tried. Thanks to all who organized, setup and cleaned up. Fun and games were played by those who were young and the young at heart. Races for all ages often included getting wet. As it was a very warm day, the water was welcome.

Christ Church Woodburn would like to take this opportunity to thank the members of Christ's Church Cathedral for joining us and helping us to celebrate this year's Church Picnic. This was a wonderful celebration of God's LOVE for all of us. The message that God welcomes Everyone was very apparent.

St. Luke's Burlington celebrates its Terquasquicentennial

KEITH BRAITHWAITE
ST. LUKE'S BURLINGTON

The celebrations of the 175th anniversary of the Parish Church of St. Luke will begin on Saturday October 19th 2008 with a Parish Dinner when the featured speaker will be our former rector Bishop Michael Bird. Bishop Michael will also preach at our Patronal festival on Sunday October 20th.

The 175th anniversary committee has held regular meetings for the last several months & launched a preview of things to come at the fellowship coffee hour between services on Sunday May 25th. Among the events planned is a gathering of past & present churchwardens at a Wardens' Luncheon, a visit

by Lutheran Bishop Michael Pryse, a Seder Service, a Wine & Cheese evening and a Festival of Flowers in the Church & Parish Hall. In addition regular parish functions will be planned with an historical perspective in mind.

In the early 19th century the spiritual needs of the area which we now know as the Golden Triangle were met by itinerant preachers mainly Methodists. It was not until the early 1830s that the Church of England found the resources to expand the word of God into Halton County. The then Bishop of Quebec with the aid of his nephew organised the Stewart missions to provide funds for such traveling missionaries as Adam Elliot, William Mc Mur-

ray, Thomas Greene and others.

The ultimate result of the efforts of these missionaries was the birth of the first Anglican Church in Halton County, the Parish Church of St. Luke. St. Luke's is the oldest church in Burlington. The land, on which St. Luke's is built, was given to Joseph Brant, the famous Native leader, for his services to British forces during the American Revolution. Brant, who had been an Anglican since the age of twenty, gave the land to his daughter, Elizabeth. She, in turn, donated the land for the construction of a church, the first of its kind in the area.

The original church building was completed in the fall of 1834, and was

consecrated (dedicated) in 1838, by George Jehosaphat Mountain, Bishop of Montreal (then suffragan bishop and later third Bishop of the Diocese of Quebec). The Reverend Doctor Thomas Greene was appointed rector in the summer of 1838 and remained at St. Luke's for forty years. Doctor Greene, and several other rectors of St. Luke's are buried in the graveyard. In the 170 years since the Reverend Greene's appointment, St. Luke's has only had nine rectors, two of whom have gone on to become bishops of this diocese, as did one of our early curates. Our tenth rector, the Reverend Canon Stewart Pike will join us in celebrating our Terquasquicentennial

when he arrives in mid September.

Established with a strong missionary spirit, St. Luke's never lost its birthright. The inspiring leadership, and the stewardship of the people who set its course of action from one generation to another was progressive. St. Luke's has always been a powerhouse of activity, and enshrined within its framework and surrounding property, are echoes of bygone days.

We welcome fellow Anglicans to join us throughout the year to help us celebrate this anniversary and our vision for the future. To learn more about our 175th anniversary celebrations visit the St. Luke's website at www.stlukesburlington.ca.



All Saints Church, Hagersville, joins the twelve sites in Haldimand County's Doors Open 2008.

The Pope, the kids, and the Bird

FRANCEAN CAMPBELL-RICH
CHRIST'S CHURCH CATHEDRAL

I never thought the day would come when I would happily quote the Pope, but at World Youth Day in Sydney, Australia, Pope Benedict XVI condemned runaway consumerism (the Globe & Mail reported) and all the ills surrounding it. The lure of false idols, he said, has seeped into our lives, and although governments must be responsible for sustainability, it comes down to individuals - youth, by implication - to change behaviour and exercise restraint. He was greeted by cheers. To which we add our own.

Our young people know about climate change and sustainability; they have spoken up at their conferences, and we would do well to follow their lead to reduce, re-use, recycle. But consumerism - that's another matter. A new school year is under way; kids must have what they need. And kids must have what they want: "Everybody else has one, why can't I?" "All my friends wear those (jeans)". "I really need a guitar (speakers, mikes, digitals, etc)". "Can I have the car on weekends?"

God help the parent who must provide. God help the parent who must say No. And God help the parent who can't provide, can't say no, and can't explain. Can't explain why the child can't have that new video game, those neat shoes, that iPod...

Grandparents know who they are, if they are in the scene. Often they are not

Social workers know who they are. There was a news item on TV recently of a young mother describing how she felt as she tried to explain to a child who wanted some current toy or game that the other kids had. Talk of pain. Even I, childless old widow, felt for her, felt with her.

I had a brief chat recently with a Hamilton school administrator, mentioned what I had heard the Pope say about youth and consumerism. Her comment: "They are so vulnerable." I looked puzzled and she added: "Parenting. The kids are so vulnerable..."

It all comes back to us, to the world we have let happen by the standards and the examples we have set. Is it too late to change things? Pope Benedict acknowledges that this generation enjoys a better standard of living and arguably a better quality of life than its grandparents, and that human innovation and adaptability may yet prove itself. God grant it will be so.

In the meantime, churches search for new ways to attract young people by giving them what we think they want, not what we think they should have, by pleasing them at all cost, updating the liturgy to suit the generation: pop music, dancing, spontaneity, pizza for all. Sometimes it works, sensationally: witness the enthronement of Bishop Michael Bird: a glorious, very special occasion, a brief flash of light, for everybody, all ages. A hard act to follow.

It worked one sunny Sunday morning in the garden of Christ Church,

Woodburn, last June. We, from the Cathedral, had been invited for a picnic. The church is in the country, with wide grounds, and a cemetery where it is said that the ghosts of ancestors frolic around. Set way back from the road, we could hear the Niagara Youth Band as we approached, and there, seated comfortably in a wide semicircle under shady old trees sat the congregation of Christ Church and guests, ready for the service of June 22, the sixth Sunday after Pentecost.

First there was music, and songs, for 'gathering' Then, designed by the Rev. Elaine Hooker, came a charming mix of simple song and poetry, with a Celtic flavour gleaned from her pilgrimages to Iona, and from her own imagination, together with a pretty printed handout to make it easy for all to understand, to join in, blending into the eucharist.

The great point of all this: It was the children's service. That is, the kids provided the major elements of the Proclamation of the Word - even the sermon in the form of a puppet show, and with the NY Band underlining the action. It was all so right, and correct. It was followed by a bountiful lunch in the parish hall - with more than enough for what seemed like four thousand.

And while the happy crowd was lunching, Rev. Elaine led a little group of us to a spot in the parking lot to watch, in silent wonder, a little killdeer on her nest, wings a-flutter, parenting her young her holy way to alert us to keep our distance. Thanks be to God.

Doors Open Haldimand

Three Anglican churches to take part

KEITH BRAITHWAITE
ST. LUKE'S BURLINGTON

The Reverend Bold Cudmore Hill will be receiving visitors at Christ's Church, Port Maitland, on September 13, 2008, during Haldimand County's second Doors Open event. His wife, Isabella, will be at St. John's, York, to welcome guests there. All Saints in Hagersville will also be open.

Doors Open Ontario is part of a tradition that began years ago in Europe and came to Canada in 2000 as part of the Toronto millennium celebrations. Currently, 58 Ontario communities wel-

come visitors to cultural and heritage sites from late April through October. Admission to all sites is free and sites which are usually free offer a variety of additional experiences for visitors.

Last year, there were 2,336 visitors made to a variety of Haldimand County sites. General information about the event can be found at www.doorsopenontario.on.ca and at www.TourismHaldimand.com.

For information about all Haldimand County sites please call Lead Contact, Catherine Berry Stidsen at 905 772 3790.

Need assistance with parish accessibility?

In the spring of this year the Federal Government made available funds to assist large and small organizations with accessibility.

If you have any intentions in improving your accessibility issues in the parish please contact Ken Schroeder, Bishop's Advisory Committee on Church Buildings, at 905-561-7023. He will be pleased to help you with the process.

Entertainment brings tears to the eyes

Delicious lasagna dinner at St. Michael's Hamilton

SUSAN CRAWFORD
ST. MICHAEL'S HAMILTON

They say that if you repeat something over and over again you eventually "get it right". Well, St. Michael's Parish church didn't have to repeat more than once to achieve success for their Lasagna Supper.

Under the watchful eye of *master chef* Vito Marzoli (who better than Vito to cook Italian!) several men gathered in the kitchen for two days prior to the event cooking up a storm. All the lasagnas were cooked from scratch. 1000lbs of tomatoes were turned into a delicious sauce which took Joe Rocchi and Vito two days to prepare. 90lbs

of lean ground beef was simmered and prepared with help from Gord Melmer. 22-23 packages of lasagna were used and the mounds of cheese were all sliced by hand. Pat Melmer and Joyce Russell made bowls of Caesar Salad to complement the main course. In all 22 lasagnas were created. Dorothy McBride coordinated the portions and serving of the cakes donated by parishioners for dessert.

As with all our events, thanks especially to the Olsen's, Honeysetts and Fosters there was no short of help to set up the hall. Along with Bev Marzoli as the "Floor Boss", Vito's granddaughter Crystal assisted with

the serving. The food was thoroughly enjoyed by all.

The showstopper, though, was the entertainment. The "best was yet to come!" A delightful and unusual fashion show with the most attractive models ensued. Men that I never thought would participate became part of a side-splitting display of "unusual fashions". I just wish there was room enough to show individual pictures of Ron Hatoski as Miss Un-Canadian, George Foster as Penelope Van Kringle, Mike Thornton as Flossybelle Snap, Matt Farrell as Sarah Sucker, Bruce Honeysett as Olive Martini, John McBride as Lottie Rocks, Bob

Southall as Hattie Twinkletoes, Jerry Wase as Prissy Pot and Charlie Astle as Polly Pumphandle.

Pat Melmer commentated the show. Unfortunately the writer of this article was out of the country at the time of the event, but Vito tells me that in all his years at St. Michaels he has never seen such a reaction from people. The audience was laughing so hard they had tears in their eyes! Non-parishioner attendees were totally amazed at the "talent" from our church. They commented that we should take our show on the road! One of our parishioners, Mike Thornton, displayed his hidden talents by writing a song for

the group and performing with his guitar. I understand a tape was made of the entertainment and I can't wait to see it.

About 120 people attended which really made serving the food more manageable than last time where we tried to crowd in over 150 people. Was the evening a success? I would definitely say yes. Our church is very fortunate to have such a dedicated group of individuals, who, when they put their mind to it, produce successful events time after time.

Many thanks to the ten men for overcoming their inhibitions to entertain all who attended the evening.

Changing world calls for a changing liturgy



CHARLES STIRLING
RETIRED CANON, CHRIST'S CHURCH CATHEDRAL

It is no surprise that we look at a very interesting and terrifying world today. Fuel costs and food shortages will undoubtedly affect those with few resources. The continuing war in Afghanistan and concerns about Iran along with the unfinished business in Iraq are overpowering. Where is the peace we so earnestly seek and that has been long promised? I rather suspect it has been lost in the condition of our humanity. More tragically, we are not too obsessed with the dilemmas we face. What do we do about the 'what ifs', in all of these troubled areas? What will the future hold?

Complete Openness is Essential

In our Anglican Church itself, many seek to move forward and to be open to all people from what in reality seems, at times, to be a somewhat closed society. I have lived long enough to remember most people seemed to have lived, in spite of their inherent and natural weaknesses, a life seemingly dedicated to some Christian organization. Churches were full and activities were in abundance. Then gradually, we seemed to move away from this, sort of testing, as it were, whether God would get folk for their growing lack of interest and more open lifestyles. What we have been surprised to discover is that God did not reach out to get these folk and they merrily went on their way, and we have made few changes or accommodations to try to counter that.

This of course brings us to the dilemma of the Church today. We

have seen some parishes close down and others struggling. I remember hearing someone talking about the current challenges of churches in general. The comment on the Anglican Church was at best dismissive. I began to wonder why and what we were missing or not doing or perhaps still doing, and discovered, it seems to find it the way we still do our liturgy.

The Fuss and Fiddle of Liturgy

Liturgy has always been important to Anglicans and as such has seemed to have taken control. There seems much fuss and fiddle about what we do and how we do it and not as much about really learning about faith and witness and how to live it. What we need to do is make liturgy relevant to our time and place. Not to dismiss them, but I suppose we could ask are processions really relevant and what do they teach us? Most hymns on

any given Sunday in most parishes are more than one hundred years old. I am still interested in epistles from Darfur or any other troubled spot where being a Christian is a major life risk. What we need to hear are some sermons that are not so abstract, but strongly urge us to undertake active ministry. Fundamentalists seem to do a better job than we do and have generally enjoyed a better growth pattern picking up lots of ex-Anglicans along the way.

We Must Embrace Society and Minister to It

We need to try to embrace the society in which we live in every age and minister to it, and not in the way we did it fifty to one hundred years ago. At the same time we need to deal with all of the depravity of society, for some things remain wrong and hurtful and still must be challenged. Yet, we must continue to work for

positive change and we must keep on changing what we do and the way we teach along with what and why we believe. Not to look at what we can do to advance new liturgies and understandings, our faith and our worship will surely result in the end of what we, in reality, have been changing and what have cherished for centuries.

Lastly, there is a strong appeal not to love your church building with all of your mind, body and spirit, save those three things for your faith and your witness. Buildings may come and go and to try to maintain them as they always have been will hasten the demise of the true Church of God, that being, people worshipping in faith and witness and in ministry. The word Church means a body of people the Body of Christ, not a treasured architectural building. We need to become alive, aware and working for positive change.



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Come sit at the table



LYNNE CORFIELD
ARCHDEACON, RECTOR, ST. JOHN'S, NIAGARA FALLS

In July I had an invitation from The Very Rev'd Peter Wall to join him in a panel discussion on the topic "The Future of the Anglican Church." Peter explained that the conversation was to be with two members of the Anglican Network of Canada and was for the Michael Coren Show. We would be taped and then later that day (July 31st) it would be broadcast on Vision TV. The invitation came in the midst of my sabbatical leave and I was somewhat out of touch with recent developments, but I said yes!

I would welcome an opportunity to talk about my passion for the church, its' people, and especially the future of the Anglican Church. To be invited to sit with people who interpret their faith (theology) in a way that is different than mine seemed like an important meeting. I was asked, "do you know Michael Coren." I did not, but he is described as being a conservative Roman Catholic. The real question was, "do you know what you have said yes to?" Perhaps I did not, but it still seemed like the right thing to do. To stay at the table means to stay in communication and for me that means there is always hope of finding a way forward.

The members of the panel met in 'the studio Green Room'. The panel members included Paula Valentine, a former warden of St. Hilda's, Oakville; Rev'd Ray David Glen formerly of St. George's, Lowville; The Very Rev'd Peter Wall, myself and of course Michael Coren, host.

Basically it went well. But I felt like Peter Wall and I didn't get much 'air' time in compared to the views of the ANC.

Michael asked us "why can't you people get along?" The panel discussion brought home the point that we are poles apart on how we approach scripture and its interpretation, also on what we mean by being Anglican. However, we can sit and talk with each other. Off camera, Ray David said that he felt no animosity from Peter and myself, and that this was good. That might have been the hidden jewel! When we end up in court having lawyers speak on our behalf we can begin to forget that on both sides of this argument are people who are also passionate about their own faith, living out the gospel message, and what it means to be Anglican in the church of our time.

Michael did say that one hour is not enough and that we could only scratch the surface of the topic – and I can agree with him. It was said several times by Paula and Ray that the Bible is black and white on the issue of homosexuality and this is simply not up for negotiation. In my view the Bible is the living Word of God; it has a heart that beats passionately into each new generation. It was frustrating to hear the same arguments that I and other people who believe in the blessing of same sex unions do not understand the Bible, nor the canons of the Anglican Church.

In my heart I cannot agree with people who believe that homosexuality is a sin in need of repentance to be received and loved by God. I find that view abhorrent. I believe our church has room for all those views and positions and that it is possible still to stay together. The Anglican church works at its best is when we include all people, all points of view and give those who

feel opposed to various issues the opportunity not to take part. We do not have to 'walk apart. However, I want to be part of a church that also allows me to live out my faith with integrity.

Overall feeling was that the ANC have drawn a line in the sand with the Bible and there is no room for negotiation – the only way forward would be for all Anglicans to say that homosexuality is a sin in God's eyes. Furthermore, unless gay, lesbian and transgendered people repent there will not be a place for them in the Church or in the Kingdom!! I am certain it will not come to this. What is the future of the Anglican Church, or is there a future for the Anglican Church?

The answer is YES of course there is a future for the Anglican Church. Do we know what it will look like yet? No, because we are in midst of the work that is being done and the issues that are being worked out in the courts. Sometimes we can't see that far down the road. However I am sure the Anglican Church and more specifically, the Diocese of Niagara will survive. I have hope, and I am going to tell you why that is!

I recently picked up the current copy of TIME magazine; on the cover was a photo of Mandela at 90 and the headline was 'The Secrets of Leadership: eight lessons from one of history's icons. We all know Mandela's story well. He is a man of great courage who spent years in prison because he had the courage of his convictions.

The article points out: "As he celebrates his 90th birthday next week, Nelson Mandela has made enough trouble for several lifetimes. He liberated a country from a system of violent prejudice and helped unite black and white, oppressor and oppressed, in a way that had never been done before." The article presents Mandela's leader-

ship style in eight not so easy lessons – however, "all of them are calibrated to cause the best kind of trouble that forces us to ask how we can make the world a better place." This is where we find ourselves in the Anglican church. We are in a pile of trouble and the world seems to think that all we do is fight and argue about sex.

What is at stake is how we treat people who are different in some way from ourselves. The Anglican Network in Canada – feel that they are starting a new church which expresses the true tenants, formularies and tradition of the Anglican Church. I believe, like Mandela that human rights are crucial and worth fighting for, especially in the church. I have a passion for social justice and so will continue to 'come to the table and draw the circle wide' because in my opinion God expects nothing less.

When we lay out our issues regarding union in the Anglican Communion beside Mandela's "Long Road to Freedom" it seems that to even ask the question "Will the Anglican church survive?" is ridiculous! In 1964 when Mandela was convicted of sabotage and treason and sentenced to life in prison he could not see down the road as far as 1994 when he would be elected President. I hope and pray it does not take us another 30 years to sort this out. Will the Anglican church survive? Of course it will. Will it take hard work and courage and tenacity and determination, blood, sweat, tears and much prayer?

Of course! What will the Anglican Church look like in the future? In the midst of the struggle we can't tell and sometimes we can't see the wood for the trees but I know it looks like HOPE. What does hope look like? Well it looks like a rainbow of course!

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1 »

We are funny, we humans

To one degree or another, almost every new parent that I count in my roster of friends has confessed to a similar anxiety. We compare our children to one another. We wonder how our child stacks up to other children. And we worry about the stacking. We maybe experience a wave of relieved pride when our child pulls out front and is noticeably "ahead". The tightening in the chest returns with a vengeance when someone else's child is in the lead.

We can rationalize our way through these feelings: every child is different, when they do or don't develop particular skills has a lot to do with a random set of variables, there is a whole range of "normal", and plenty of children that were late walkers, late talkers, late bloomers, grow to become brilliantly intelligent adults. We can quell the anxiety from impeding on our ability to delight in the unique developments of our children, or from affecting our ability to graciously relate to the parents and children with whom we are friends. But it is an uncomfortable feeling nonetheless. And it is also puzzling – what are we really worried about?

The obvious worry is understandable. With such an extensive array of tools and support systems and therapies

available, any child in today's world who is classified as developmentally delayed can receive remarkably effective help. Parents are particularly given "Developmental Milestones" as markers so that help can be sought and attention be given as soon as possible when a disability is detected. Parents want what is best for their child. Parents want to be aware and astute enough that every possible advantage can be attained for their child, particularly if that child has special needs.

But that is not the full explanation. Even with as much assurance as I could possibly have that Cecilia is on track developmentally, I still feel that twinge of worry. It is irrational. It is unattractive. Ridiculous. I couldn't possibly be *competitive about my child?* I couldn't possibly be so immature as to waste time worrying that *my child is winning at growing up?* What kind of a parent am I anyway?

I can only guess that I am a parent who is a product of biology. Competitiveness is a normal animal response to the program of survival. It is no doubt built into our DNA to want to be the fastest, strongest, smartest, most powerful, animal in the jungle. And it is no doubt also built into our DNA

to be unable to separate our children's prowess from our own. Bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh.

But if this unattractive, irrational, ridiculous tightening of my chest is something that is built into the fabric of my instinctual, animal brain, then being a parent has taught me that there is another innate capacity operating in our lives as well.

We have the capacity to nurture the life of a creature that comes with no guarantees, no warranties, no set outcomes. A creature who might need more from us than we think we can give. A creature who might not want what we do have to offer.

We have the capacity for courage to lose our hearts to beings who will undoubtedly make mistakes, who will cause us pain, who are fragile and won't live forever, who will have the freedom to make their own choices, to assume their own risks.

We have the capacity to be bound. To be bound by loving these creatures whose vulnerability will take our breath away, wake us with fear and panic in the middle of the night, lock us into the relentless inescapable reality of worry -- worry for all of the ways that we cannot protect the ones we love.

We have the capacity to think that the opportunity to know something of this heaviest of responsibilities is the finest thing about our humanity.

We are funny, we humans. A swirling, whirling collection of instincts and biologically driven chemical and hormonal interactions. We procreate and compete and want to come out on top, just like any other animal with whom we share this complex web of life. And yet, another program is also stamped into our beings and lays claim to the energy of our lives.

It is the program of the creative, creating God who calls us into being in love, who delights in our growth and beauty, who holds us in our brokenness and pain, who suffers in the harm that we bring to ourselves and to others, who chooses to bind himself/herself into the ongoing work of wanting for our lives of fullness, joy, healing, and abundance.

We do concretely know the reality of our DNA biological drive to survive. But so do we also concretely know the reality of this God in whose image we are created, in whose image we find ourselves embarking – with wonder and gratitude and courage – on the impossibly dangerous journey of learning how to love.

The Niagara Anglican

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The Diocese of Niagara

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

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PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

■ Sympathy to the Berry family on the death of Harold Berry, O.N., a long time and faithful member of St. Alban the Martyr, Hamilton, who passed away on May 10.
 ■ Happy 40th Anniversary of Ordination to the Reverend Ian Grieve of Oakville!
 ■ The Reverend Frank Mason issued a bishop's permission as honorary assistant at St. Alban the Martyr, Glen Williams, under the direction of the interim pastor, effective May 13.
 ■ Sympathy to the Tiller family on the death of Canon Mark Tiller's mother, Jayne, on May 20, in Uxbridge.
 ■ Congratulations to the Reverend Nancy Rowe, from St. George's, Georgetown and St. Paul's, Norval, on the birth of her granddaughter, Keira

Anne, on June 4.
 ■ Richard Jones, rector of St. Paul's, Hamilton, and Secretary of Synod, has been appointed Archdeacon of Undermount Region, effective July 1.
 ■ Stephen Witcher, rector of St. James, Fergus, has been appointed Archdeacon of Greater Wellington Region, effective July 1.
 ■ Sympathy to Mrs. Violet Whitehouse and the Reverend Paul Whitehouse, on the death of Violet's father, Ivan Hrastovsac, on July 4.
 ■ Congratulations to the Reverend William Mous and Ms. Courtney Evers who were married on July 12 at St. James, Dundas. Best wishes to you both in the years ahead.
 ■ Congratulations to Archdeacon Rick Jones and Tish Jones on the birth of

their second grandchild: Violet Frieda Jones Dewar arrived on August 9.
 ■ The Reverend Canon Carol Skidmore passed away peacefully on Sunday, August 10. Canon Skidmore was ordained in 1996 and ministered at St. Luke's Church, Burlington; St. Alban the Martyr, Glen Williams and St. Matthew on the Plains, Burlington. The funeral service was held on August 13, at St. Matthew on the Plains, Burlington. Our thoughts and prayers are with the Skidmore family.
 ■ Congratulations to Christopher Spence and Hilary Mitten on their marriage which took place August 23 in Cambridge, Ontario.
 ■ The Reverend Thomas Vaughan, from Diocese of Nova Scotia and PEI, has accepted appointment as Rector

of St. David and St. Patrick's, Guelph, beginning September 1.
 ■ The Reverend Eleanor Clitheroe Bell has accepted appointment as Rector of St. Luke's Church, Smithville, beginning September 7.
 ■ Happy 50th Wedding Anniversary to Roger and Joan St. Amour, faithful members of St. John the Evangelist, Niagara Falls, on September 13!
 ■ The Reverend Canon Stuart Pike has accepted appointment as Rector of St. Luke's Church, Burlington, beginning September 15.
 ■ The Reverend Bahman Kalantari has accepted appointment as Rector of St. John's Church, (Nelson) Burlington, beginning October 1.
 ■ Licensed layreaders: Linda Lamarche, Barbara Yakobowski, Leslie

Kennedy, Larry Peyton, O.N., and Patricia Davis, at St. James and St. Brendan's, Port Colborne, effective April 1; Arnold Lowenberger at St. Saviour, the Brock Memorial Church, Queens-
 ton, effective April 15; Pauline Smith, Nancy Scott, Shirley Densham and Beryl Holtam at St. James, St. Catharines, effective June 1; Pamela Angus, Fred Cousineau, Charles Williamson and Steve Rossiter, at All Saints, Erin, effective June 1.
 ■ Wendy Bernice Phipps will be ordained to the diaconate by The Right Reverend Michael A. Bird at 4 p.m. on Sunday, September 14 in St. George's Church, Lowville. The preacher will be The Reverend Canon Dr. Alan Hayes, Professor of Church History, Wycliffe College.

GREENING NIAGARA »

Disney has something to teach us

RUSS KELK
 CO-CHAIR GREENING NIAGARA

It has been a while since my last article. The forming of the Greening Niagara Committee is almost complete. We have members from almost every region in the Diocese. Everyone on the committee is eager to commit to the Greening of Niagara. One item that I am sure will be part of our guidelines will be that parishes form a Greening Committee either as a separate group or combined with the building maintenance one that exists currently. The Bishop's Advisory Committee on Church Buildings are able to help us with lots of information on how to make our buildings more environmentally friendly. We will continue to inform our parishes as to what is happening as we work together in this important aspect of our lives.

Recently I spent two weeks in Disney World, Florida. I was surprised that I did not see any recycling bins in any of the "kingdoms" or water parks. I asked some of the Cast Members (employees) who were cleaning the grounds and was told that underneath every kingdom were sorting areas where the daily flow of refuse was sorted into the various classes for recycling. This included refuse from the water parks. This was amazing that a major corporation was so involved with the environment. In addition they have veterinarians working with the animals keeping them in tip top shape. I saw many of them performing

operations on a few endangered species. They have quite an environmental education program happening in their Animal Kingdom and other areas. Many educational exhibits teach children and adults about our natural world and what we can do to improve it. Simple things like creating areas in our backyards where insects can live and prosper to bird feeders for our winged friends and many other things.

Think about what you can do personally in your parishes and family homes to help with this important opportunity.

Lord, we know that this world we live in doesn't belong to us. It is your creation. But sometimes we don't take care of it as well as we should.

We forget that animals and plants are living things that belong here too.

And they also have a right to some space on this planet.

Help us to be wise in the use of our resources.

By planting new trees for those we cut down:

By putting on a sweater, instead of turning up the heat.

By shutting off lights in empty rooms.

By recycling, instead of throwing away.

By walking carefully through the woods so we disturb as little as possible.

Help us, O Lord to respect nature and her needs and to remember that what we take from nature was placed there by you.

Jesus shall reign where'er the sun

Thoughts about Jesus' kingdom after a visit to Austria and Germany

GEOFFREY PURDELL-LEWIS
 PUBLISHER'S ADVISORY BOARD

I was on holiday in Austria and Slovenia this summer. This part of the world is the home of baroque architecture and the baroque decoration of churches. Until this summer I had been a near nihilist as far as church decoration is concerned – not bad enough to demolish religious statues and paintings, but nearly so. The baroque was not my bag.

Then, when visiting baroque churches I found that some had guides in English which described the intense symbolism of the paintings, frescoes and ornate crosses. They all have a purpose, if one looks for them, to extol God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, their work in redemption, and to edu-

cate us with biblical scenes. Whether church architecture or inside decoration, the work was designed and made by men – and probably some women too – who were giving of their best to God.

Much more sombre and emotionally demanding, for me at least, was the visit to the Eagle's Nest (1,837 metres) near Berchtesgaden in the German Alps. It was commissioned by Martin Bormann and the National Socialist German Workers' Party before being presented to the fascist dictator Adolf Hitler as a gift on his fiftieth birthday in 1939. Since then, the idyllic setting and remarkable architecture of the Eagle's Nest on the Kehlstein have been overshadowed by its close connection with the Third Reich.

Although Hitler rarely stayed in the building himself, the NAZI tyrannical image still hangs over it today. Just above the Eagle's Nest at the summit of the mountain is the Gipfelfkreuz – the Summit Cross – standing over everything – as a reminder that empires come and empires go and leave behind their debris while Jesus reigns forever. For me, Isaac Watts got it right way back in 1719 when he wrote the words:

Jesus shall reign where'er the sun doth his successive journeys run; His kingdom stretch from shore to shore, till moons shall wax and wane no more. Blessings abound where'er He reigns; the prisoner leaps to loose his chains; the weary find eternal rest, and all the sons of want are blest.

Stephen Ministers 'weep with those who weep'

Kenneth Haug, a pastor from St. Louis, was having great difficulty finding the time to give the kind of personal, Christian care he felt hurting people needed. In 1975 he trained nine lay persons from his congregation to help him. Thus began the Stephen Ministry, named after St. Stephen. It has since grown to include over 9000 congregations which represent over 100 different Christian denominations.

Stephen Ministers are caring Christian lay people who really listen as they walk beside others who are going through difficult times in their lives. This difficulty is quite often caused by some kind of loss. It could be loss of health, loss of a job, loss of a loved one, loss of independence, or any other loss with which people may struggle. Stephen Ministers (care givers) provide quality, one-on-one Christian care to these hurting people (care receivers). When a Stephen Minister asks "How are you?" that's a real question needing a real answer.

Care givers initially attend a 50 hour course which covers topics

such as listening, feelings, assertiveness, confidentiality, and maintaining boundaries. They then use these new skills to learn to minister to people in specific situations such as depression, hospitalization, childbirth, divorce, aging, long term care, terminal illness and grief. After the course is over and they have been assigned to care receivers (one-on-one), they meet regularly for ongoing education, support, supervision and fellowship.

One of the most difficult things for care givers to learn is that they are to be process oriented, not results oriented. They are the care givers, God is the cure giver. With a process orientation, Stephen Ministers encourage care receivers to depend on God and become more self-reliant and help them take responsibility for themselves.

A quote on the Stephen Ministry website from a care receiver is as follows. "I want you (my care giver) to call me and let me know that I exist, tell me you are there and that you care, ask me how I feel and then let

me tell you how I feel, let me express my anger and loneliness and let me cry if I need to, ask me if I want to be touched with a hug or a prayer and then let me decide—when I say no, accept it—when I say yes, do it. Hear me not only with your ears, but also with your eyes, touch and your heart. Let me feel your humanness, and please be honest with me. I need to trust you. Care for me, and let God cure me. If you try to do these things for me, we will both win. And when I'm healed and whole again, you must let me go."

If you would like to learn more about this exciting ministry there will be a workshop at Knox Presbyterian Church, 20 Quebec Street, Guelph on Saturday, October 4, 2008.

Registration begins at 8:00am and the workshop ends at 1:00pm. The cost is \$15 per person, or \$50 per congregation for four or more (payable in US funds). You can pre-register on line at www.caringministry.org or call Stephen Ministries at 314-428-2600.



Niagara Cursillo
www.niagaracursillo.org

The evolution of respect



ELEANOR JOHNSTON
ST THOMAS ST CATHARINES

We have been taught, by conservative theologians and fundamentalist preachers, that evolution is a scientific concept opposed to the basic tenets of religion. Let us consider,



...similar selective quotations from the Bible were used to exclude blacks from ordination and, in fact, to justify the lucrative business of slavery.

instead, Jesus as a great step forward in the evolution of the faith of the Judaeo-Christian people. What can we learn from the evolution of ancient Judaism through the two millennia of Christianity? Are we Anglicans still evolving?

An obvious indication that our faith itself is evolutionary is that we call the first section of the Bible the 'Old' Testament and the subsequent story of Jesus and his followers the 'New.' The gospels emphasize how Jesus was a fulfillment of the Old and explore how he was different, God Incarnate, a radically new being.

The Bible is itself a history that records and comments on what happened from creation to the time of St. Paul. Written in several languages by many generations of writers, its styles evolved from ancient,

oral stories through to the subtleties of Pauline theology and reflect the authors' sometimes contradictory or perhaps simply evolving beliefs.

In Moses' time justice was obedience to God and, between people, an eye for an eye; for Jesus justice was sharing. Moses' God was a jealous God, mighty, easily angered; Jesus proclaimed the God of love and mercy.

Jesus moved past Old Testament tribal laws to love of neighbor, even when the neighbor was an enemy. Moses lived in a time when humans could not look on God; Jesus was the first human to call God "Father" and to assert, "The Father and I are one." As believers we pray as well to the Holy Spirit, not mentioned in the Old Testament, but promised by Jesus and known to his followers. The Old Testament God rewarded obedience with physical prosperity in the promised land of Canaan. Jesus promised, for his followers, the continuing presence of God in their lives and the blessing of the Kingdom of God in life and death.

St. Paul, who explored the implications of this new message, described how he evolved from persecuting Christians as a Pharisee to become an influential apostle. He told how he grew from seeing or understanding "as a child" to seeing "as a man." He looked forward to full understanding, "face to face."

The next step in this history was apparently backward. Centuries later the Christian church in Europe had become the Roman Catholic Church that enjoyed power and wealth that Jesus and Paul could not have imagined, let alone condoned.

In reaction came the Protestant Reformation. The printing press

enabled access to the Bible and to education for the laity who soon demanded the translation of the Bible and the Mass into the vernacular. The strongest innovator, Martin Luther, argued for two other great changes: that priests could marry and that churches could be controlled nationally. In that time the division of the one "Catholic" Church into splinter traditions was constructive.

Copernicus, Galileo and Darwin thought of themselves as Christians, however radically the scientific facts that they discovered forced their contemporaries' faith to evolve. With the telescope, Copernicus and Galileo saw that the earth was not the centre of the universe and that God was not in the sky. Darwin traveled to the Galapagos Islands where he came to understand the evolution of species over time periods much longer than the six days recorded in Genesis. Darwin explained that the earth is several billion years old, not several thousand.

It seems that evolution is God's will, central to creation. But we, in 2008, suffer what has been labeled "future shock" because in our time there has been so much change that we find it overwhelming. In many ways our minds are still stuck in the Old Testament. Creationism vs evolution is still debated. We're still tribal and legalistic in our politics, including our church politics. We still picture God as painted on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel. What Jesus taught in the Sermon on the Mount and the Lord's Prayer and what he demonstrated in his ministry of radical love are rarely practiced by Christians.

We are still taught that our faith was best summarized by the Church

Fathers who wrote the Nicene Creed in the 4th century. To take seriously any contradictory concepts, such as evolution, is to deny the true faith, to start down the slippery slope of relativism, to be a heretic.

In terms of our treatment of non-Caucasians, women and homosexuals, the typical citizen of our secular society is more evolved, more respectful, more Christ-like, than the decision-makers of our church.

But liberals do persist in the church. One of their new ideas deriving from the technologies of mass media is that the study of all world religions has led to interfaith dialogue. Instead of converting heathens, liberal Christians approach non-Christians as brothers and sisters, eager to share resources and faith with an attitude of respect. Christians committed to rescuing our church from the stranglehold of the past no longer arrogantly presume religious superiority, but rather call for freedom of religion.

If we take seriously the idea of the 'priesthood of all believers,' then priests can be ordained regardless of their race, sex or sexual orientation. It is ironic that among the Anglicans who seem most determined to resist the ordination of women and homosexuals are the African bishops, since it was not long ago that similar selective quotations from the Bible were used to exclude blacks from ordination and, in fact, to justify the lucrative business of slavery.

Progress moves so slowly in the Anglican communion! No wonder our church is shrinking. No wonder our society has lost patience with us to the extent that it barely paid any attention to the decisions witnessed this summer at Lambeth. There the discussion model, the African

indaba, saw the bishops gathered in groups as equals who listen to each other closely and with respect. That sounds good, but women (for the most part) and particularly homosexuals were again excluded from full communion, respect and power.

Unlike other religions that are cyclic, we in the Judaeo-Christian tradition see events happening once, historically. Our perspective is linear, our holy book beginning with creation and ending with a vision of the end-time. It is appropriate that the concept of evolution developed within this Western concept of time, but it is ironic that, however much Jesus poked and prodded his followers to stretch their minds and emotions into new ways of believing and acting, our leaders seem not to want to share power or to think and feel in new ways.

Yet our church's only option for survival is to evolve, as Jesus moved past the beliefs and traditions of his fathers. Perhaps one step in overcoming our resistance to change is to recite in our services the Sermon on the Mount or First Corinthians 13, the essence of Jesus' and Paul's teachings, instead of the Nicene Creed. Let's focus on the evolving faith, the new wine, not the creeds written by church fathers as they struggled for theological understanding and ecclesiastical power so long ago.

When will we see "face to face"? What will we see "face to face"? How do we need to adapt in order to evolve? What will Anglican theology and the Anglican church be like later in the 21st century? We must grow before we can answer these questions. We cannot evolve backward.

The parable of the non-prodigal superstore



MARNI NANCEKIVELL
DIRECTOR OF INTERIM MINISTRY

A funny thing happened on my way home from church. I went into a grocery store, and came face to face with the "c" word – change.

On my way home from church one summer Sunday, I recognized that the apple crisp that I was planning to take



I am well aware of our very human resistance to change.

to our family dinner wasn't likely to stretch to accommodate eight hungry people. Now, as this was on Sunday at noon, and we were due to pick up my in-laws at 3:00, I did what any sane person would do. I decided to go to Loblaws to pick up a lemon

meringue pie! At the time, I was half way home, between Stewarttown and Oakville, and saw, on the right a Great Canadian Superstore in Milton. Quickly, I decided to turn in, and found a place to park.

While approaching the store, I calculated the state of my bank account, and thought of other things that my family needed for the weekend. Band-Aids, bread, sliced cheese, cold cuts and cheese buns were added to the list. As I picked up the cart and walked into the store, I glanced at the crowds around each check-out... then I glanced at the smaller lines at the self-checkout. It was there that I realized the change. There were no plastic grocery bags on the racks at the first self-checkout, to which I came. I craned my head to make sure that there were indeed no plastic bags at the other self-checkouts. I walked from the self-checkouts to the ones staffed by cashiers. Nope! Not a bag in sight. There were, however, an abundance of green bins and recyclable bags available at every checkout.

My first reaction was one of dismay. I hadn't planned this grocery

trip. If I had, I would have taken the heavy duty bags that constantly reside in my small car. However, this day, I was driving our van, which is not inhabited by my grocery bag collection. That meant that I would have to buy either a recyclable bag, which I find a bit small in this particular chain, or a green bin. That meant spending an additional \$4.99. However, purchasing a bin made more sense, and as I thought about its other uses, I began to get excited about having an extra bin at my disposal. My next thought was how forward thinking the chain is to have NO bags available to fill up the landfill sites of our country. I began to envision my kitchen without plastic bags, and started to wonder about how many plastic bags are spending years in landfills of the world. How big, I wondered is the mountain of plastic in Canada alone? Walking up and down the aisle, I began to wonder if the compostable plastic bags that have recently come to my area could be made into grocery bags, if it was absolutely necessary to have them? Would people pay extra to have their groceries packed in them? I certainly would!

As I checked out, thinking about all of these things, my sense of inconvenience translated to a sense of excitement with what is possible if we 'think outside the box.' As I walked to my car, I noticed that the same store had preferential parking (similar to that available for those with mobility challenges, or small children) for hybrid vehicles. How cool is that? Bishop Bird can easily park anytime at the Great Canadian Superstore in Milton!

As someone who meets with congregations frequently when they are in a time of transition, I am well aware of our very human resistance to change. For example, most frequently, I meet with Parochial Committees who hope to have a new Rector appointed no longer than a month after their current Incumbent leaves. When I meet with them to outline the Interim process, inevitably their initial response is dismay. Parishes are so anxious about "losing ground" that frequently, they are anxious about the prospect of having some "in between time" for discernment as they plan for the next Rector. Besides, they usually know

already who they want for their next Rector – either someone exactly like or completely different than the LAST Incumbent. When a community takes this stance, they are firmly looking backward, to their past, rather than forward, discerning their future. It is also my experience that very frequently, by about two months into Interim time, most parishes are beginning to relax with their Interim time, and enjoy the different emphasis on their communal life.

On my shopping trip, I bumped up firmly against my own resistance to change. Yet by the time the experience was over, I found myself 'thinking outside the box' (or is that the green bin?)

Anais Nin once wrote: "Life is a process of becoming, a combination of states we have to go through. Where people fail is that they wish to elect a state and remain in it. This is a kind of death."

May we all be preserved from the kind of death that keeps us static. May we live and grow, as individuals, as Christian communities, and in the human family, throughout time.

Getting to know you

The Reverend Valerie Kerr

Assistant Priest

St. George's Church, St. Catharines

FRAN DARLINGTON
PRIEST - ST. JAMES, GUELPH

A national story is Niagara's story

In Canada and around the world, the Anglican Church is confronting a time of challenge and change. The Reverend Valerie Kerr, Assistant Priest at St. George's Church, St. Catharines, is as concerned as most Anglicans, but for her, one issue is personal. Val is unique among clergy in the Diocese of Niagara, because she is a member of the First Nations People of Canada, Turtle Clan, Mohawk Nation, Iroquois Confederacy.

Thoughtfully, Val addresses two issues. First: "the same-sex issue. I know what it's like to be in a community but ostracised, looked down on, even spat on." The words are uttered with absolutely no trace of self-pity; those fortunate enough never to have experienced such treatment, for whatever reason, simply cannot understand the bonds that may arise among those who have. She continues, "When people ask for baptism, we don't know what those babies will grow into, and we don't ask, but receive them into full communion. Now, when those people (baptised members of the homosexual community) come to us, we turn them away." Val's questions are echoed by many in the Anglican Church of Canada and beyond.

Val's second issue is the apology offered on June 11, 2008, by Canada's Prime Minister to the First Nations People of Canada, for decades of abuses inflicted through the Residential School system, by representatives of the Government of Canada and of mainline churches. "I took time to reflect on how I felt. I'm not negating it, but I'm left with a feeling of 'Now what?' The words are pretty well thought out, and well spoken, and I've never been one to believe that throwing money at something fixes anything. There are people in the First Nations who feel they should be compensated in that way, but I'm not sure that fixes anything."

Painful Stories - Healing Stories

Stories are told of grandmothers caring for children while parents worked in the city, and children being taken while the Grandmother was at the

back of the house hanging laundry. "How confusing for parents to have children taken away! Children are a gift from the Creator, given into our care. If someone takes them, (the parents would think) 'we weren't looking after them. Family and Children's Services were seen as power, and devastated parents turned to alcohol."

Val explains a tradition simply not known or understood by those responsible for the Residential Schools: when a woman's husband was killed in battle, the first thing she did as an outward sign of mourning was cut her hair. Cutting the hair of children taken to the schools was devastating for them and their parents.

Forbidding children to speak their own languages was also very damaging: "If you take our language, you take our spirit. (Reclaiming our language) is happening in a lot of our community." Val's warm smile appears, "I'm really proud of my family who have learned their first language."

Though Val did not attend a residential school, her life was directly affected by colonialism's attitude toward Canada's First Nations. "Our society traces lineage through our mothers; (previous governments) came into a society that has worked forever and changed it." Val's Mother was Mohawk, her Father Irish, which contrary to aboriginal tradition, meant the family could not live on the reserve, as the government had denied the matriarchal heritage of First Nations peoples. For decades, if a First Nations man married a non-native woman, she assumed all his native rights, as did her father's sister when she married Val's mother's uncle. "But," Val explains, "when my Mother married my Father, she lost all her rights (as a native person)." The family lived on land leased by the government. In an earlier effort to recognise the validity of native tradition, The Indian Act of 1983 acknowledged and corrected that situation.

Acknowledging tradition, Val says, "We need to tell our stories." These stories, and others, need to be heard by those beyond the First Nations people, if true healing for all Canadians is to happen. Val herself did not attend a

Residential School, but a great-grandmother and great-great-grandmother did. Her Mother's Mother did not, and Val saw "a great difference in the women and in their families." Val asks, "How then do we survive? My great-grandmother brought balance; she would say, 'No, that's wrong.' Women in Iroquois society are very strong; they bore life, were chiefs, keepers of the drums."

What Might the Stories Mean?

"The apology was very meaningful for a lot of people. Finally someone in authority was saying it to the whole world - but it left me with 'what are we going to do?' The words are hanging; where are they going to land? My concern is that we don't become so consumed with reading and hearing the words that we forget that there should be some action to go along with them. If all we say is, 'Isn't this wonderful?' we should frame it, carve it in stone."

Val continues, "There's a danger of lumping us all together... of trying to find 'A Solution to the Indian Problem.' It's fine for First Nations to talk about self-governance, to be responsible for ourselves, (but) I truly believe that if we're looked at as a problem, then that's what we're going to be! I want to be looked at as a solution, a people!"

"Honestly, I have my doubts about our capacity to be self-governing. Yes, it can come in time, because we have whole generations who have been raised in a social system. It's not looked on as a gift, (but) as a right, not as a hand-out but a hand-out. There's a difference!" (Val is Vice-Chairperson for Bethlehem Projects Niagara, which develops affordable housing, currently providing two homes and forty apartment units in St. Catharines and more in Niagara Falls. Val identifies this work as the "hand-out, not a hand-out" so important to her in lifting up the less fortunate.)

Since the apology, the local First Nations Community has asked Val to run two healing circles. "A Healing Circle is very simple," Val says. "We sit in a circle, people tell their stories, people listen. As we tell our stories, we take their power to control (us); they become more real as we hear ourselves speak.



An elder taught me, 'It's your story, only yours, so let go and let God!'"

"That's been one of the gifts of my coming to a city church." Val chuckles as she recalls her thought on the journey to ordination: "All I want is a small place somewhere where I can love the people.' And I end up at St. George's!" (St. George's Church, St. Catharines, is one of the larger parishes in the Diocese of Niagara.)

Tradition's Meanings Can Enrich Us All

Many things inform Val's understanding of the world and her relationships to it and to our Creator, especially her habit of usually going barefoot. She explains gently, "It keeps me grounded - there's something about a connection with Mother Earth... An elder asked a young man on a vision journey to name the most powerful animal in creation. (The answer is the mole, because it is always connected with the earth, it feels the vibrations, knows when anyone is walking above it. Mother Earth gives us everything we need. Elders teach about the gifts we are given in life (by the Creator, and) part of the journey is learning..."

"The drum is the heartbeat of Mother Earth. The first time I heard it, it took me to another place and time. It takes certain things to awaken us; the drum (does that). Now, (the drum) is calming people with learning difficulties, such as ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder). There are drums in many cultures. We're all connected!"

Val's office is an expression of her tradition and her spirituality as an Anglican priest. Her green chasuble is

decorated with a Celtic cross, but also with three feathers, each with a turtle in its design. "We have a symbolic culture - nothing complicated, just common sense." Indicating many turtles and angels among the books on her shelves, Val smiles, "People buy them for me!"

A woven basket holds seven smooth rocks, each one bearing a single word written on it. "In our tradition, some things we carry with us are innate. These are my teaching rocks, named for the seven traditional teachings. My Grandmother lived these. First of all, *Humility*, because it is essential not to think more of ourselves than we ought; if we think more of ourselves than of others, we can't respect them. Children are taught about *Respect* from an early age; respect for all God's creation, for all people, for one's self. Without respect, there is the possibility of becoming a bully. *Courage* is necessary to a lot of things in life. *Truth, or honesty*, is an important part of being, especially being truthful with one's self. *Wisdom* is different from knowledge; when knowledge moves to the heart, it becomes wisdom." The sixth rock is *Generosity* - twice, Val has made her own drum, and twice she has given it away. Finally, the seventh rock, *Love*, is placed in the centre of the circle of the six other rocks. Val's smile appears, "Love is at the heart of all"; love was Jesus' great commandment, for self, for neighbour, for God above all.

How has Val come to serve as a priest in the Anglican Church of Canada? Her story will unfold in the October issue of the Niagara Anglican.

» VALERIE KERR'S STORY WILL BE CONTINUED IN OCTOBER.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1 »

Penguins don't fly, do they?

Now I know, or thought I knew, that penguins don't fly. They are not for one thing aerodynamically nor anatomically created to fly. Their rather stocky body and stubby 'wings' would make liftoff impossible. But there it was, right on my computer screen, a flock of penguins flying and migrating to South America. It isn't possible, and, of course, it didn't happen. It was just an April Fools hoax concocted by the BBC. The only problem, for me, was the fact that I got this long after

April 1st and there was no indication that it was connected to April Fools. So I looked with amazement and awe at this phenomenal new discovery - penguins that can fly.

Pretty soon common sense, and some pretty clear information (yes, I looked up penguins on the internet to see if there was just such a species) forced the naïve believer in me to reject what I had just seen. I was disappointed, but, equally chagrined that I had so easily been flummoxed.

Things like 'flying penguins' and other internet and life phenomena do peak the skeptic in me. It gets to the point that it is sometimes difficult to discern what is truth. Often the discernment of the truth is totally dependent on the trust that one has on the communicator of the truth. This, of course leads to another question - "Who do you trust?"

More and more we face this challenge. Who do you trust? With internet creativity and media manipulation,

one, sometimes, just doesn't know what the truth is. Sad to say the skeptic, in us all, holds much new, and old, information as suspect... We are left with the very basic question - "What is truth?"

In John's Gospel (and only in John's Gospel) Pilate is interrogating Jesus. To the question "So you are a King?" Jesus tells Pilate that he came into the world, "to bear witness to the truth." Pilate in response says "Truth? What is that?" One can almost hear

Pilate spitting the words out in the spirit of a true skeptic - "Truth? What is that?"

Faith is based on 'truths'. Often we are forced to suspend rational understandings to accept irrational truths. The challenge for some is to grapple with Pilate's question - "Truth? What is that?" A question to be explored further next time.

(For your own view of this remarkable bit of footage just Google "Flying Penguins")

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1 »

Why Arius was wrong

Let's be clear first of all what that was all about. Arius (c.250-c.336) argued that Christ was a created being, although the most important of God's creations. Although he was the agent of the rest of creation, Christ should certainly not be thought of as "God." Athanasius in reply (c.296-c.373) argued the view which, historically, won the day—that Christ was in fact fully God, not created but "eternally begotten."

What a yawn! Who cares what obscure male theologians split hairs about 1600 years ago? Athanasius' victory is enshrined in the Nicene creed, with its mysterious phrases, saying that Jesus was "God from God, light from light, very God from very God." As Bishop Bothwell wrote in the Niagara Anglican in May 2005, "who the heck knows what [that] really means?" And—for goodness' sake, what does it matter whether Jesus was God? My guess is that most Anglicans have grave doubts about it. As Chris said in his editorial, issues like the ordination of women or the blessing of same sex unions seem much more "relevant" to life today.

I believe, however, that Athanasius was right and Arius was wrong, and that the church's choice to follow Athanasius was absolutely crucial for the future. It has affected such crucial areas as how we view God, how we view human nature, and how we view salvation. Historically, it led to a new value being placed on the lives of children and (according to Rene Girard) to the idea of the hospital as a place where anybody could get help. In the long run, Athanasius' view even plays into how we view women's ordination and same sex blessings. If we had followed Arius, the world would be a very different place.

So, for example, if Jesus is God incarnate, he gives us insights into

God that we will not find anywhere else. We can look at his compassion for the hurting and marginalized, or his impatience with religious hypocrisy, and say, "Wow! So God is like that!" Arius thought God was fundamentally unknowable, so no incarnation which could make God knowable was even possible. Athanasius, on the other hand, said (in effect), "Yes, God is beyond our knowing, and yet God has made himself known to us uniquely in the God-man Jesus."

So here is our first challenge: is Jesus God making Godself known to us? Or do we have to remain agnostic, with your guess as to what God is like being as good as mine? You can choose agnosticism, of course, if you think the evidence supports it. But what has driven the church over the centuries, and given it joy and energy for its work, is the conviction that Jesus was (in some mysterious sense) God incarnate.

Secondly, if Jesus is God incarnate, that gives immense dignity to human beings. It means that, in spite of our folly and sin, God still thought sufficiently highly of the human race to become one of us. God loved the world that much. If Arius was right, on the other hand, God did not actually stoop to become a human being. The unknowable God simply sent another of God's creatures to this world. Nice, but hardly the same thing.

One of Athanasius' main arguments against Arius concerned salvation. Human beings were in such a mess, he argued, that they could not be saved by another human being, even a supernaturally created being. Only God the Creator had the power to sort us out. He would agree with Paul: "God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself."

Whether you buy that piece of the argument depends, of course, on how bad you think the human situa-

tion was before Christ came: did we really need "redemption from sin" (whatever those words might mean)? If not, then you don't need an incarnation. It depends, too, on why you think Jesus came. If he came to offer us roughly the same good moral advice as other religious teachers, then—sure—he doesn't have to be God to do that. It also depends on what you think was happening on the cross: if it was merely the sad but inevitable end to the career of a man who challenged the status quo too much, then that has nothing to do with salvation: in fact, it's rather depressing.

So, yes, you can say it doesn't matter who was right, Arius or Athanasius, if you like. But make no mistake about it: the implications of that shrug of the shoulders are far-reaching. If Arius was right, it means that God is unknowable. It means that human dignity and worth are nice ideas but have no foundation in reality. And it means that the best God can do for us is to offer us a fine example and good advice.

There is, of course, a group which believes passionately that Arius was right, and that Athanasius only won by a power play. They are called Jehovah's Witnesses—very sincere and nice people, to be sure, but not following a faith known for its joyful exuberance. The reason for the difference is simple: Athanasius offers the world really good news: the Jehovah's Witnesses don't.

Finally, if this ancient debate really doesn't matter, then the motion of the last General Synod that the blessing of same sex unions does not go "against core doctrine (in the creedal sense)" is really a joke in rather poor taste, and nobody should take it terribly seriously. Doctrines do not come much more "core" and "creedal" than Athanasius' claim that Jesus was God incarnate.

How much fun is this?



PETER WALL
DEAN AND RECTOR, CHRIST'S CHURCH CATHEDRAL

Welcome back! As we begin a new 'season' in our parishes, and in this paper, I want to combine my regular column responsibilities with my work as Diocesan Liturgical Officer and use this space for the next few months to try to develop a planning method for Sunday liturgies. Perhaps this will eventually 'morph' into a web-based resource; initially I would appreciate your feedback and response.

Liturgical planning is an important role for worship leaders in parishes and worshipping communities. While there is much that is prescriptive – lectionary, readings, prayers, rites, there is much that can also be creative – hymnody, use of space, leadership roles, and so much more.

The church's calendar provides us with a guide to help us on our way – both the description of the church's calendar on pages 14-33 of the Book of Alternative Services and the more detailed calendar outlined in the 'Ordo' – McCausland's Order of Divine Service, a resource which I hope all parishes have at their disposal. Remember that the lectionary contained within all but the most recent printings of the BAS is the 'Common Lectionary' which differs significantly from the 'Revised Common Lectionary' which is what we currently use. Both McCausland and the Canadian Church Desk Diary contain the revised lectionary.

Because of the vagaries both of the calendar itself and the publication dates of this paper, I will try to look ahead at a five-six week period of time as we work through the autumn together. September this year is interesting, in that Holy Cross Day (September 14) is a Sunday, as is St. Matthew's Day (September 21). The Feast of St. Michael and All Angels

is a Monday. Certain 'rules' would dictate that both Holy Cross and St. Matthew should be observed on the Sunday; one can also use some discretion and keep Michaelmas on Sunday, September 28. It makes some sense to do so, since keeping Holy Cross and St. Matthew already interrupts the 'flow' of Exodus and Matthew which the Sunday lectionary immerses us in this year, and we tend, often, to miss these days on Sundays, so why not keep all three? There is a richness of both hymnody and scripture on all of these days, along with the interesting history associated with each one. Both Holy Cross and Michaelmas also have their own suggested hymns in the appendix of McCausland. If parishes do not already have at hand a copy of *For All The Saints* (compiled by Stephen Reynolds, ABC, 1994) they should – it is an invaluable resource for the background to these special days, readings, resources, etc.

Colours will also change – red for Holy Cross and St. Matthew; white for Michaelmas. Creative uses of silence, poetry or prose related to these saints and angels – all of these can provide new and potentially profound experiences for members of our congregations.

Looking ahead, many communities will incorporate the Blessing of Pets and Domestic Animals in their services around October 4 – the day on which the church remembers St. Francis of Assisi. Since Thanksgiving weekend also looms in October (surely, by the way, this is the Sunday on which we should keep our 'harvest' celebrations, and not on some other), continuing the 'interruption' to the Sunday lectionary could go right through October 12 – giving us an opportunity, because of the calendar, to observe special days and special activities in our parish communities.

Give it all a try. Plan carefully, involving those who exercise leadership in matters liturgical – lecturers, intercessors, parish musicians, clergy, and others. Let me know how they all work out!

Bishop's Diploma Course

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

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

Area	Parish Centre	Start Date
Burlington	St. Luke's	September 15 - 7:30 PM
Flamborough	Christ Church	September 17 - 7:00 PM
Grimsby	St. Andrew's	September 22 - 7:00 PM
St. Catharines	St. Columba	September 17 - 7:00 PM

For further information contact Jane Wyse
905-527-1316 (ext 420)

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