



# Niagara Anglican

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## The Epiphany Experience

**CHRISTOPHER GRABIEC**  
EDITOR

On one of these clear and cold nights, it's a good thing to go out and look into the sky. Find the brightest star that you can. Stare at that star for a little while and allow your inner spirit to connect. You may well find it a profound source of faith. I once remember camping in the Smokey Mountains. (Yes, I slept on top of ol' Smokey!) I remember lying on the ground looking at the stars which seemed infinite in number. I tried to stare into dark spots in the sky, but it seemed that when I did so, eventually in the farthest distance there would be small glimmer of light – yet another star. It was a prayer night, as I recognized the immensity of God's handiwork. I knew then that this was no accident and that the divine artist was probably still at work creating the magnificence of what we call the universe.

Another time, I wrote once before in this paper about a star. It was on Christmas Eve, in San Francisco and the star helped me to understand the divine touch in three Jewish women that I had met that night at the city's Episcopal Cathedral. I was overwhelmed (and continue to be) with the ongoing work of God in my life and the world around me.

It is so important for us to use this 'Christmas-time' in the way in which it was intended. In this issue Nissa Basbaum shares her faith about the adult Christ in Christmas. Her article makes a great point. We can't continue relegating this incredible celebration of the incarnation of God to the legendary birth of a baby in a romanticized stable in the midst of loving animals. Celebrating the birth of Jesus is only one part of the mystery.

There is nothing wrong with enjoying Jingle bells and Santa Claus. It's a lot of fun and we are, after all, capable of multi-tasking as human beings. Keeping social justice in mind, it's fine to enjoy the 'fun' of Christmas.

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Epiphany acknowledges and celebrates God's manifestation to us in our own individual and communal lives.

## The Pursuit of Excellence in Ministry

The Bishop's Challenge to doing Church Differently

**ANDY KALBFLEISCH**  
MISSION STRATEGY COMMITTEE

How many of us, Sunday after Sunday, sit comfortably in our pew and ask ourselves – Where are the people? Where are the young adults? Where are the children? We often comfort ourselves with a response like – people lead busy lives in our 24/7 world and can't find time to fit church into their schedules. We would then add – it didn't used to be this way. We are quick to blame Sunday shopping, Sunday sports, in fact Sunday everything and then remind ourselves again that it didn't used to be this way. No it didn't, but nor was church always this way either!

In the twenty-first century we live in a different, hostile and isolating world where we can no longer assume people are Christian or for that mat-

ter that they have any understanding of what being a Christian means. In fact I sometimes wonder if we, who call ourselves Christians, have also lost sight of what being a Christian means.

So what went wrong? The first century church at the time of Paul was organized around community, faith and action. Over the centuries, people in their wisdom re-ordered church into what most of us know today – a priest, a building and a service. Looking back we see a growing church where people *would* engage, not by opening their doors and waiting for people to enter, but by going out into their communities to spread their new-found faith in Christ and live out that faith by helping others less fortunate than themselves. This is Bishop Michael's challenge to us.

In a way this is a "back to the future" moment. That is, to move forward we must reach back and adopt the first century model of church where people worked together using their gifts and talents for the benefit of all.

This transformation can only happen if we adapt a new leadership model. Again Bishop Michael challenges us, leading by example. Through his visioning process he has encouraged an open and consultative leadership style, a model in which those who *participate* have a personal interest in a successful outcome. For many of us this will be a challenge – for the clergy to relinquish some of their authority and for the laity to assume new leadership roles.

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## Rebirth of a Church

**SUSAN KALBFLEISCH**  
ST. JOHN'S ANCASTER

In early November, my husband Andy and I had the opportunity to visit a variety of Anglican worship gatherings in London England as well as engage in conversation with a number of church leaders, both lay and clergy. The Church of England (C of E) finds itself in transition as it moves to serve not only its traditional albeit declining base, but to also re-imagine itself as a missional church in a changing world.

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## Canon Lynda Kealey retires

**SUE CRAWFORD**  
ST. MICHAEL'S CHURCH HAMILTON

I believe that spiritual faith comes from within, but that faith needs someone without to guide and help us build on that faith: someone to enable us to realize that what we believe is where we should be and what we should do with that faith to the greater good of humankind. That someone to my way of thinking has been Canon Lynda Kealey.

On November 23, 2008 Lynda celebrated her final Eucharist at St. Michael's at 4 o'clock in the afternoon.

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## The fall-out from a state religion

**NISSA BASBAUM**  
TRANSFIGURATION ST CATHARINES

Some years ago, when I was religious about my attendance at a fitness class, I had a short and rather bizarre conversation with the person who was exercising beside me. As we both gesticulated to the dulcet tones of Christmas carols, this woman said to me, "Well, give it a few years and we won't be able to do this anymore."

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# Rebirth of a Church - St Paul's Hammersmith

Their Fresh Expression initiatives, in partnership with the Methodist Church, are only part of the story. What impressed me was the journey that St. Paul's Hammersmith has been on in recent years. Before proceeding I should mention that although the C of E is the state (or established) church in England, it has not received funding from the state since the 1970s. Today's C of E parishes are funded by their members, and through endowments, rentals and fundraising initiatives.

St. Paul's Hammersmith began in the late 1600s as a small chapel. The present church was built in the late 1800s and is a massive structure with an enormous worship space. Although the original design specified pews, they were never installed thus providing a flexible worship venue. Although successful in its early years, like many Anglican churches in London it eventually found itself in decline. By the late 1990s the average Sunday attendance was less than twenty – by our standards, a candidate for either closure or amalgamation. However, the Bishop decided that Hammersmith was an important area to continue a presence for the C of E. He requested that approximately 180 people transfer from their current healthy growing parish (Holy Trinity Brompton) to St Paul's Hammersmith to replant or restart the parish. And so the rebirth of St. Paul's began.

Today, eight years later, St. Paul's is an active and vibrant community with a roster of 750-800 active regular attendees and a budget in excess of \$1,000,000 CDN. Many of the original "transplants" have returned to their home church. There are three services each Sunday; a traditional service at 8:30am with 20 attendees with weekly Communion, a family service at 10:30am with 300 attendees including 100 children with monthly Communion, and a young adult service at 6:00pm with 200 attendees, generally singles and

married without children, also with monthly Communion.

I attended the 10:30am family worship service. The service was non-traditional – the clergy did not wear vestments or any other sign of their office and there was no liturgy. The service had three elements; worship songs of praise, prayer and teaching. Overall the service lasted one and a half hours and there didn't seem to be any restlessness about the time. The children stayed for about twenty minutes at the beginning. They were engaged in the worship songs with numerous arm and body actions with the adults joining in enthusiastically. To be sure, it was a welcoming and joyous worship experience, albeit something I wasn't used to in an Anglican church.

But there is a lot more to the new St. Paul's than Sunday worship. First they are very intentional about evangelism. This is partly because there are large numbers of people continually moving into and out of London so there are always people entering the area in which St. Paul's ministers. St. Paul's, through its affiliation with Holy Trinity Brompton, runs the Alpha program three times a year. Alpha is but one of many evangelism courses for the unchurched, de-churched or members who want to explore their faith anew. Other similar programs include Simply Christian, Emmaus, Christianity Explored and Via Media, to name a few. Coupled with this is a three evening "Newcomer's Course" that introduces newcomers to all aspects of and programs at St. Paul's.

St. Paul's focus is on relationships following these three guiding principles – GATHER GROW GO...

■ Gathering – the building of community

■ Growing – deeper in a relationship with God

■ Going – reaching out in love, word and action to a needy world.

An integral part of St. Paul's is their small group ministry called "Life

Groups". Presently there are over 25 Life Groups that meet weekly for fellowship, to read scripture, share stories and pray.

A wide range of programs focus on children and youth both within St. Paul's and connected with the community. Sunday mornings the 10:30am SPARK (St. Paul's Ark) program for about 100+ children up to age eleven incorporates worship, songs and activities in seven age appropriate groups. Youth programs include "Express" and "Extreme" for grade 7 to 9 students, "Youth Church" for students in secondary school, and "The Bridge" Friday night club for local youth.

W6 Youthworks is a project set up by St. Paul's to support socially excluded and disadvantaged young people in their area to encourage them to develop into well-balanced, confident and secure young adults. This "hands-on" program provides "somewhere to go and something to do" for groups of youth, to create an alternative to possible destructive, inner city environments.

The church also works in close partnership with the St. Paul's Primary School through homework clubs, reading and special projects. As well, the Queen Caroline Toddler Group is a bridge between church and community through work with disadvantaged parents.

A debt advice service helps people in financial difficulty to rearrange their affairs with new insights and attitudes towards money. This not only helps on the financial side, but also reduces stress and a sense of hopelessness that often accompanies financial difficulties.

In 2004 SPEAR was formed and now operates as a separate charity. SPEAR is an employment preparation program for unemployed sixteen to twenty-four year olds in West London and specifically in the Hammersmith area. The course runs for eight weeks and aims to equip young



people with skills for work and life as well as offering them an opportunity to get formal qualifications in Marketing or Customer Service. Students are assigned a volunteer mentor to walk them through the first six months after they complete the course. Members of St. Paul's are encouraged to become SPEAR mentors, provide work experience placements, become a volunteer mock interviewer or become a volunteer recruiter.

Another program that started at St. Paul's and now operates as an independent charity is "Insights for

Life". This is a program committed to equipping couples/families for change as they go through the various stages of life together. Programs include "As 2 Become 3" for first time expectant couples, "As Children Become Teenagers" and so on.

And finally, St. Paul's is raising funds for Stretch 21 a \$9,000,000 project to develop and expand their facilities to provide additional space for their mission including additional space for their child and youth programs.

And to think that there were less than 20 at worship in 2000!

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# How are we doing?



**COLLEEN SYM**  
SOCIAL JUSTICE COORDINATOR

In the Bishop's Charge to the 134th Synod, Bishop Bird identified a challenge – to reclaim our prophetic voice in a troubled and broken world and to lead the fight against poverty, violence and injustice that continues to pervade our communities and our societies. He takes that challenge seriously and in the last six months has himself been an active advocate for the province to adopt a comprehensive poverty reduction strategy.

It started last May, just a few weeks into his episcopacy, when Bishop Bird wrote a letter to the chair of the province's cabinet committee for poverty reduction. In that letter, he expressed support for the 25 in 5 Network for Poverty Reduction's Founding Declaration. That letter also contained a call for justice that has been incorporated into the message of the 25 in 5 coalition.

The 25 in 5 coalition is a multi-sectoral network comprised of more than 350 provincial organizations and individuals working on eliminating poverty. The coalition is organized around the call for a Poverty Reduction Plan with a goal to reduce poverty in Ontario by 25% in 5 years and 50% in 10 years.

On November 21, 2008, the Bishop attended the Hamilton stop of a 22-stop provincial tour by 25 in 5 to promote a realistic and achievable plan that would make Ontario a leader in poverty reduction. The tour, "Leadership in Hard Times: 25 in 5's Tour to Promote Poverty Reduction" was scheduled to take place just weeks before the Ontario government was to announce its poverty reduction strategy.

One of the main architects of the plan and the key note speaker at

the Hamilton tour stop was Marvyn Novick. Professor Novick was a co-founder of Campaign 2000 and since his retirement from Ryerson University where he taught social policy and community practice, has donated his time and expertise to 25 in 5.

The opening slide of the Tour presentation quoted from Bishop Bird's letter to Minister Matthews. With the slide projected up on the screen, Professor Novick called the Bishop to the podium to address the audience. Bishop Bird shared with the audience his vision for social justice making, referencing the story of his grandfather that he shared at Synod.

Two weeks later, on December 4, 2008, Minister Matthews released "Breaking the Cycle, Ontario's Poverty Reduction Strategy". The target of the plan is to reduce the number of children living in poverty by 25 percent over the next five years.

The Hamilton Working Group on Ontario's Poverty Reduction Strategy met the next day in Myler Hall at Cathedral Place. It was a rally of response and celebration. An opportunity to reflect on the accomplishments of the people from across the province who work to improve the lives of those in poverty and of people living in poverty who have hope that we can do better as a society to respond to their need; an opportunity to assess the government's plan; and an opportunity to acknowledge that the work is not over.

The province's focus on children has to be broadened. While Hamilton has the slogan the best community in which to raise a child, the best communities in which to raise children are communities without poverty.

Bishop Bird was the closing speaker at the rally. Thanking everyone for their hard work, expressing his admiration for what has been accomplished and pledging diocesan support of the work still to be done.

As the province's plan moves into implementation, the 25 in 5 coalition will focus on making sure that all low-income Ontarians escape poverty and



**Professor Marvyn Novick, cofounder of Campaign 2000, speaks about poverty reduction in Ontario.**

that progress is achieved quickly on affordable housing, early learning and child care, better education and training, and that social assistance is transformed into a program that advances the living standards of the people who are forced to rely on it.

"We expect poverty reduction to become a central feature in the next five provincial budgets – and the 25 in 5 Network will continue to hold our government to its promise to make this plan a reality," says Peter Clutterbuck, executive director, Social Planning Network of Ontario.

The next chapter for advocates is to get to work on ensuring a down payment on the investments needed for the plan to succeed in the next provincial budget. This will be the next test of the government's resolve on its poverty reduction strategy.

Bishop Bird has already taken that

step, writing to Minister Duncan, the provincial Minister of Finance and Revenue he said:

"I write to you as the Bishop of Niagara. We believe now more than ever that we, as Church, must look to the future as a community of faith and a people of hope. In so doing we will stand in solidarity with those living in poverty in our province.

We recognize that it is a challenge to us all in these troubled times to lead the fight against poverty, violence and injustice that continues to pervade our communities and our society. However, we confirm our commitment to serve our neighbours in need and our belief that government is instrumental in God's purpose for humanity when public officials work for justice, peace, order and the common good.

During this period of global economic uncertainty and fiscal challenges,

the top priority of Ontario's government for the 2009 budget should be the implementation of a strong poverty reduction strategy.

A strong poverty reduction strategy makes good economic sense. It is a way to invest in the skills and knowledge of the most vulnerable in our province and increase incomes to low income households - increases that will flow directly into local economies as payments for adequate housing, a healthy diet, child care and other critical needs.

We extend a hand of partnership to ensure long term and lasting solutions to poverty. The best way to start is through a comprehensive multi-year poverty reduction strategy with a significant down payment on the plan in the 2009 budget."

The Bishop is meeting his challenge. How are the rest of us doing?

# To dream the impossible dream?



**JOHN RIPLEY**  
INTERIM RECTOR, HOLY TRINITY WELLAND

Bizarre: there is no word that better captures developments over the past few months. Bizarre, according to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, means 1) strikingly out of the ordinary, 2) odd, extravagant, or eccentric in style or mode, and 3) involving sensational contrasts or incongruities. For most of my generation the events in the world and our country of late have been running amok – a frightening time indeed.

As I write this article Canada faces the rare, but not unprecedented, possibility of having a coalition government. In retrospect I am sure that Prime Minister Harper would like to withdraw the implications of his government's economic update delivered by Finance Minister Jim Flaherty. Whether you agree, or disagree, with the prospect of a coalition government it would seem to me that the opposition's bizarre response is a response to a bizarre economic update. Harper in a bid to save his job will approach the Governor General to prorogue parliament thus buying him some time. (at time of writing the G.G. has done this) Regardless, the update and the response fly in the face of a

cooperative spirit of collaborative government for the good of the Canadian people. Obviously power and control is the driving force behind the leadership of our country. Now, I am not naïve, power and control seems to be what government is all about, what does rile is the fact that power and control is not directed to the greater good of the country, but, to the ego of those who provide the leadership. Whatever happens in the months ahead it would seem to me that a pragmatic power sharing is necessary to deal with the fall out from the economic collapse on the world scene.

The political turmoil in our country has been generated by the economic downturn in the world, as

well as petty political machination. The implications of an economic recession for our country are profound. Granted we seem to be well positioned to deal with the economic challenge, but, the personal fallout for individuals is frightening. I did not live through the depression, but, have lived through recessions. Certainly I did not anticipate the demise of Eaton's, a victim of a recession and an aggressive retail market. Never in my lifetime did I ever expect the potential bankruptcy of General Motors. Things that have been accepted as givens are now challenged. Things that have been corporate icons now face the reality of bankruptcy. People stand to lose considerable investments, Financial

loss, coupled with the emotional trauma of change, puts everything that was sure before in jeopardy. It is into this mood of uncertainty that the baby Jesus is born anew.

Power and greed manifested in political agendas, sadly, drive the human agenda. The baby born in Bethlehem continues to bring to us the message of hope generated by his birth. What is that hope? It is the hope that all might one day live in the spirit of love and peace. As we deal with the realities of our world in the twenty-first century the message of Jesus is lost in posturing and accusations. Love, give me a break, but then again, I, like Don Quixote continue to dream "The Impossible Dream".

## REFLECTING ON A NEW VISION IN NIAGARA

### Standing Strong in our Faith

HOLLY LLOYD  
ST. PAUL'S, SHELBURNE

On Wednesday October 22nd 2008, my minister Reverend Susan Wilson and I attended the Pre-Synod meeting in Guelph at St. Matthias. This was the third of four such meetings to occur in the region before the Synod Meeting on November 8th 2008. By now I am confident most people are aware of the Vision of the Diocese.

Bishop Michael Bird spoke passionately about the Vision and encouraged us to do so as well. We broke into five groups and began to talk. The discussions were inclusive, forward thinking, open-minded, and relaxed. People were eager to participate by sharing stories and brainstorming. Everyone

was enthusiastic, warm and inviting, and I felt very comfortable. We talked about who we are and where we are going as Anglicans.

Personally, as I reflect on the Vision I have learned this: As Anglicans we need to be brave and stand strong in our faith. We need to communicate more openly with each other, in our churches and in our Diocese, in our community and in our world. We need to stand together. As light bearers, we need to confidently shine in our words, actions and deeds to radiate the reflection of Christ, who is in us and around us, to others. We need to share how God loves us all. We need to be open and welcoming to all people not just

in church on Sunday, but everyday, with everyone, everywhere. We show by example who we are and to whom we belong thus attracting others to seek Him.

At St. Paul's in Shelburne, we have been living the vision for several months now. The Holy Spirit is present, well and thriving in our little church. This is strongly evident through our Children's Program and Youth Yak, Bible study, Book discussions and by the many unspoken of volunteer hours and community support by our clergy and church members. We support one another, our community and our world through the small acts performed daily. And, God has so richly blessed us!

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### The Pursuit of Excellence in Ministry

But what is church anyway? Is it the building where we go on Sunday? If Christ is in us then are we ourselves not the church? Simply put, yes we are the church. When we speak about excellence in ministry what do we mean - our priest doing a better job? Or are we, the people, also ministers called to commit ourselves to live out our faith on a daily basis by offering aid and service to one another and strangers alike. Bishop Michael is not asking our clergy to do more; he is asking us all to do more.

We are being invited to enter into a new and renewed relationship with Christ as we journey forward in His name to embrace each other and the world around us. We can no longer sit in our comfortable pews and wonder what went wrong. We, with the help

of the Holy Spirit, must consider what we are called to be and do in this place at this time. It will require us to move beyond the age old question - how are we going to pay our bills, to the first century question - how can we serve our communities and spread the Gospel to those who have yet to hear it?

Yet there are risks in our Pursuit of Excellence in Ministry. It might transform not only the church as we know it into something new and exciting, but it might also transform our very lives as well. We, the people of God, might engage in conversations about our faith with others. We might stop on the street to help a stranger. We might invite a friend to attend an innovative worship gathering of which we are a part or helped

to create. We might volunteer at the local homeless shelter. We might comfort someone at a time of need. We might become involved in social justice initiatives. In fact we might become more Christ like in our daily lives.

- Let us *create* a culture of innovation and life changing worship.
- Let us *engage* in effective resource management and outstanding leadership.
- Let us *participate* in social justice.
- Let us *boldly* go forward and take risks in His name.

Thank you Bishop Michael, for challenging us and inviting us to journey with you to make a difference in our lives, the lives of others and in the world that God has entrusted to our care.

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### The Epiphany Experience

However, the more important track for us is growing in our understanding of how we meet Christ in our everyday lives - for he is indeed incarnate and alive. There is no force that will make us see him. Instead, we must open our eyes and behold the wonder of His being. We must observe the ongoing work of the divine creator that we call God.

When we do this, then we will be prepared to follow the 'vision' of our Bishop - and only then. Michael Bird, our Bishop, has prayerfully called us to renewal. It's up to all of us to find the path. This will only happen when we become a people of the Incarnate God.

No more fighting in our churches about advent wreaths, candles, altar

frontals or the appearance or non-appearance of our priest or deacon. No more fighting about who makes tea and who doesn't, what songs we sing and what prayers we use. No more silly battles with our brothers and sisters in Christ. It's all far too small for this vision. If we really looked at those stars and saw and believed what the wise men and women have in the past - that God continues to reveal God's very self every moment in history - would we get ourselves into petty arguments that so many of us have experienced in our churches?

In this paper you will find a few more articles reflecting upon the vision. Nothing is definitive; it's all about continuing to look and observe and explore the reality of God's pres-

ence among us. When we do, then we will burst with the joy of the shepherds and wise people, wanting to announce the goodness we experience in life. We won't have to work at converting anyone. The change in our lives will be witness enough - and they will come one by one, wanting to be part of our journey.

Let's listen to each other from here on in. Let's listen to the voice of some of our gifted writers. Let's listen to the voice of God in our prayer. We'll build a church that is more effective than we ever imagined. We'll be at the heart of creating a world of justice and peace - for ourselves and our children and for all who long to see the face of God.

Happy Christmas and Epiphany days to all!

### We can with God's help

WILLIAM CONNOR  
ST. ANDREW'S GRIMSBY

A few weeks ago I listened with great interest as Bishop Michael Bird shared his vision for the Diocese of Niagara with members of the Mission Strategy Committee. During the discussion that followed, it became apparent to all of us that his vision for the future direction of the diocese presents a unique opportunity for the people of God to continue their journey of faith with a renewed sense of hope and confidence. As I listened, I could not help but reflect on what the outcome of such a journey might be and the transformation we might experience as we seek to discern the mission to which God is calling his church in a changing world.

The Bishop's Charge to pursue excellence in ministry is undeniably a call to action: a call to proclaim, without reservation, the Gospel message of hope and resurrection in a broken and troubled world. It is a call that challenges us, in this place and at this particular time, to reach out to our community and to the world around us as instruments of God's love. It is a call to support our clergy and laity, to set aside those things that sometimes get in the way of what is really important. It is also a call for the church, as an agent of social justice to speak out boldly on behalf of those who cannot speak for themselves, and to do everything it can to reduce poverty and injustice wherever it is found.

There are, of course, many challenges to be met and overcome if this vision is to be realized. To begin with, it is essential from the outset that priorities are established, and that the plan of action thoughtfully and pragmatically articulates what must be done, and realistically, what can be done given

the uncertain realities confronting the diocese at this time. We know too, from past failures, it is important to guard against creating expectations that cannot be fully realized. As in any significant undertaking, there will be issues that are more immediately compelling than others, some more easily accomplished, while others will require a greater expenditure of time, wisdom, and effort. Arguably, the most difficult challenge confronting us relates to our ability, and indeed our willingness, to bring to bear the human and financial resources necessary to ensure the success of this significant initiative.

The question remains, can we do this? Surely our answer must be a resounding yes we can - we can with God's help. But it will require an unwavering commitment on our part and a willingness to explore new kinds of creative and empowering partnerships between clergy and laity. It will also require of us a willingness to arrive at a deeper understanding of what shared ministry is really all about and the demands it places on each of us. And if past experience is to be relied upon, it will, I am certain, require the laity, of which I am a member, to again rise to the challenge and give unconditionally of their time, their talent and their resources.

I share the view expressed by many in recent days that this is the right thing to do. I believe too that the Holy Spirit is leading us to a place where we need to be. It is for us then, as individuals to whom much has been given and from whom much is required, to make Bishop Michael's vision our vision, and to step out together on this journey of faith and renewal, confident in the life changing affirmation that it is Christ in us, the hope of glory.

Caralei Peters MSc, ND  
DOCTOR OF NATUROPATHIC MEDICINE

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A safe place to become...

# An exciting vision guides St. Aidan's, Oakville



**ALAN L. HAYES**  
THE ITINERANT CHURCHGOER

In the Old Days, in the Old Country, the neighbourhood Church of England was the heart of the community. In addition to being a house of prayer, it oversaw the constables, maintained the highways, administered the poor laws, lit the streets at night, ran the school, enforced morality, held ales, and recruited men for the militia.

With modern government activism and the end of Christendom, what was the church left to do? New models emerged. Anglicanism in Canada and the United States, where the Liturgical Movement was most powerful, focused itself on attracting people who liked a certain kind of religious programming centred on a Sunday morning liturgy followed by a coffee hour.

### Religious consumerism

Sociologists like Reginald Bibby criticize this system as religious consumerism. They say that churches have descended to serving a religious marketplace; different denominations cater to different market niches. Unfortunately for Anglicans, only a minuscule piece of the general population has much of a taste for Anglican liturgy.

Are there other models? Why, yes. Here's one. While secularization was in progress, some Anglicans and others advocated what was called "Christian sociology." This umbrella term covered various approaches to building healthy societies and addressing social ills in the spirit of Jesus.

Participants included Dorothy Sayers and T.S. Eliot, but the most famous exponent of Christian sociology was William Temple, the archbishop of Canterbury during World War II. He's the person who invented the term "welfare state". He blew apart the mentality of religious consumerism when he said, "The Church is the only society on earth that exists for the benefit of non-members."

Christian sociology as such disappeared in the 1950s, but it spawned the social work movement, and some of its ideas have been revived and expanded from time to time by writers like Gregory Baum.

### Beautiful vision

This is a long way of getting around to telling you why I was so thrilled recently to visit St. Aidan's, Oakville. What I discovered there was a really extraordinary and beautiful vision for making the church the heart of its neighbourhood. I feel sure that William Temple would have absolutely adored St. Aidan's. I know I do.

St. Aidan's catchment is the West River area between Kerr Street and Sixteen Mile Creek. This is still a largely anglo neighbourhood, and its mixed housing includes everything from seniors' apartments to bungalows to grand riverside homes.

The area was developed after the War, and St. Aidan's was dedicated in 1952. Church attendance and revenues were considerably helped by the fact that the Central Command Headquarters of the Canadian Army was located there, with a barracks and (west of Kerr Street) officers' housing. People still remember with great warmth the incubency of the very popular John Bothwell, 1956-1960, when the little church was literally packed to the rafters Sunday after Sunday.

Attendance was badly hurt when St. Hilda's was created down the road in 1959, and again when the army headquarters was closed in 1970. A couple of ineffective clergy identified in a mimeographed history of the parish for the years 1952-1994, written by a former churchwarden, Gordon Taylor, completed the rout. Since then the church has been struggling.

### Interim minister

But the church is now writing a new and very exciting chapter.

The current chapter starts with the interim ministry of Terry de Forest four years ago. Note to future church historians: Pay attention to interim ministers. You might miss them because they usually don't show up on the lists of rectors. But in several Niagara parishes, De Forest has been a miracle-worker.

During his interim, St. Aidan's faced up honestly to a stark choice: go on as before (and die), or identify a viable mission. Through a careful process of prayerful discernment, it chose the latter. Its mission would be to become the heart of the community. This would involve a big extension of the community partnerships it already enjoyed.

Now, to be the heart of the community, and to know how to serve it, you need to build relationships in it, and you need to understand its character, needs, resources, and structures. How do you do that? Theological schools don't teach pastoral sociology any more. (They used to.)

### New rector

This was the mission which the church and the bishop had in mind three years ago when they chose Cheryl Lynn Fricker as rector. And that was the best decision they could have made. She

really likes people, she's confident in God, she's lively, she's smart, and she works very, very hard.

She's also almost pathologically modest, and in the course of a long conversation with me, she never took any credit for anything at all. (Actually, I'm sure that's part of her effectiveness.) But I can't see that the successes so far would have happened without her. She obviously has an intuition for what questions to ask, where to seek advice, how to evaluate input, how to wait on God, how to recruit good people to a task, and how to rally them around a vision.

She's had big support from people at St. Jude's, Oakville. She's had an energetic Wycliffe theological student with a professional and financial background, named Sue Channen. She's made use of connections with people she's known in other contexts. She's kept in close touch with the diocesan resource centre.

### Talking to neighbours

Twenty-five volunteers went out to talk with dozens of parishioners, neighbourhood associations, business organizations, social agencies, municipal officials, and school and kids' groups in the West River and Kerr Village areas. They gathered information, discussed ideas, made friendships, and heightened the church's profile.

The West River area has no community hall, so St. Aidan's volunteered itself. The residents' association meets there now, along with other local groups. Kids waiting for buses in the morning can keep warm inside. Even a lot of atheists like to sing Christmas carols, so the church organizes community caroling. They have neighbourhood parties and bazaars. They found they could be a non-bureaucratic, non-threatening space for various com-

munity groups and social services.

Right now the space in the church is rigidly configured for worship. With the new vision, the space will be reconfigured for community service. The pews will be taken out, the building will be made accessible, and designers have conceived some really beautiful renovations, which you can see pictured on the back wall of the church.

### Lindisfarne project

A visionary, thoughtful, and sensible project plan has been developed. (It's called the "Lindisfarne Project." The historical St. Aidan was bishop of the holy isle of Lindisfarne, you see.) Stakeholders have been brought on board. The diocese is investing some extra resources. Parish leaders haven't started public fund-raising yet, but large amounts of money have already come in.

And now that St. Aidan's is focused on serving the wider community instead of institutional survival, well, what do you know, Sunday morning attendance is up by about 50%. And a Friday evening Taizé service attracts a growing number of non-members who like quiet prayer and a bit of anonymity.

I visited on a recent Sunday morning and was impressed with the congregation's energy, friendliness, and happiness, as well as its strong acceptance of some folks who might get the cold shoulder at some other places. It happened to be a baptism service, and one of the nicest parts was seeing how much Cheryl enjoys kids. I liked the authenticity of that, and I think that churches do best when kids know that they're welcome.

What an exciting initiative the Lindisfarne project is. How gracious God has been in raising and guiding such inspired leaders for it.

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# May they all be one!



**SUSAN C. H. WESTALL**  
RETIRED TEACHER, ALL SAINTS HAMILTON

Advent has come and gone; Christmas will be over by the time many of you read this and the Epiphany is upon us -- the Epiphany that is heralded as the showing forth of the Christ to the Gentiles. My questions are: How successful have we been? Have we raised too many impediments in our messages?

What have we meant by "showing forth the Christ"? Who were the "Gentiles" to whom the "Christ" was shown forth? We sing "We three kings of orient are" at this time of the year. Who were the "three kings"? To whom did they come "bearing gifts we traverse afar"? To start with, there were no three kings; we are told that "wise men from the East came to Jerusalem" (Matthew

“  
Many people today talk of 'Jesus Christ' as if 'Christ' was his surname, or family name.

2:1). The wise men were certainly not Jews, they would have been known by the Jews as "Gentiles", foreigners. They were not kings, but they were probably astrologers who would certainly have been studying the stars and could thus say "we have seen his star in the East". Who was the child whom they had come to see? According to our story, it was a baby named Joshua, or Jesus, lying in a manger in Bethlehem. What is the significance of the fact that they *traversed* afar? Surely *travel* would have been a more understandable word. To *traverse* is to cross, or pass through. The wise men were from Persia, the modern Iran, and they had to cross what today we know as Iraq and Syria, the very countries which modern alarmists hold up as anti-Christian.

If the baby's name was Jesus, what has *Christ* got to do with it? Many people today talk of "Jesus Christ" as if "Christ" was his surname, or family name. If we are going to talk about Jesus and give him a title, then it should be *The Christ*, or using the original Hebrew word, The Messiah. If Jesus were to have had a surname, it would have been *ben Joseph*, or, in fulfilment of the prophet Jeremiah (23:5), *ben David*, for his contemporaries claimed him to be the fulfilment of Jeremiah's words "I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In his days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell securely." Can it be a wonder that the Roman conquerors of Palestine (as it was then called) executed a person to whom his followers laid such a claim? Think of the occur-

rences on Palm Sunday. You may be quite certain that the chief priests and the council knew this only too well when they brought their insinuations before Pilate.

But what of this word "Christ", or "Messiah"? The Jews of Jesus' day were a subject people, being ordered around by what the world has remembered as being one of the greatest empires of all time. They were looking for a "Saviour" who would save them from the conquerors. Quite a few of his contemporaries thought of Jesus as that Saviour, or Messiah. When translated into Latin, the *lingua franca* of the day, it became "Christ" and, as we are told in the Book of Acts, those who followed in *the Way* that Jesus taught became known as "Christians" (Acts 11:26).

After the Resurrection there was a new dynamism. The majority of Jesus' hearers, including the apostles, were Jews who were intent upon bringing their fellow compatriots into believing the teachings of Jesus. As Jesus had quoted the Scriptures as known to him, so his followers turned to those same scriptures to interpret his life and teachings. When we consider that one of the earliest writers (St. Paul, in his epistles) was what we might call a Biblical scholar who had studied at the feet of the great scholar Gamaliel (*vide* Acts 5:34 and 22:3), it is not surprising that many parallels were found in the Old Testament prophets that could be used as examples of Jesus' life and teachings. These were the best means of getting Jews to believe in their preaching. In spite of this, the majority of Jews failed to convert and have remained faithful to the teachings of Moses and Deuteronomy ever since. Their sacred book is the Torah, the first five books of the Christian Bible.

Paul, who had been a rabid persecutor of *The Way*, as the early followers of Jesus called their mission, had a traumatic conversion and turned to the Gentiles, the non-Jews, as his mission field. He had to battle with the early "church" in Jerusalem, led by St. James "the Just", who maintained that Jesus' message was for the salvation of the Jews (Acts 15). During his travels, Paul used local illustrations which could readily be understood by his hearers in order to draw their attention to the new truths that he was teaching them. A favourite example is his use of an altar "to an unknown god" that he spied in Athens (Acts 17:23). It is human nature, and a good teaching principle, to proceed from the known to the unknown. The Athenians knew the altar to which Paul was referring; from there he proceeded to teach them of the unknown.

Is it unreasonable to believe that such a principle has been followed on countless other occasions by teachers (preachers) who were less talented than St. Paul? In such a way unchristian aspects have been introduced into our faith by well-meaning preachers who have used examples very familiar to their uneducated audiences (congregations) who have grabbed onto such examples and accepted them as

"Gospel". Such examples are heathen goddesses who have been taken into Christianity as saints e.g. St. Bridget in Ireland. St. George has been decried as nothing more than a contractor to the Crusades.

So... the Epiphany. Has our message to the gentiles become befuddled? Have we departed from the Jesus whom we believe, in spite of Tom Harpur, to have existed and to have risen from the dead? Have we added so many superstitions as educational conveniences to the story of Jesus that the Christ has become a construct? Is it surprising that the Jews have clung through thick and thin to the faith that they believe to have been handed down to them from the earliest of times if they suspect that the Jesus story has been "dressed up" somehow?

What of the other "People of the Book"? Mohammed drew many of his ideas from the Hebrew Scriptures, including the Talmud. He also had some knowledge of Christianity, but it may well have been a skewed knowledge, confused by Apocryphal gospels and so-called Gnostic Christianity which may well have survived in parts of the Near East after Rome had made sure that it had been destroyed in the West. It is certain that he objected to the doctrine of the Trinity that had been promulgated after Nicaea in 325 A.D.

It has already been suggested that the doctrine of the Trinity was a political ploy designed to secure peace between rival Christian factions in the days of Constantine the Great. Jesus never claimed - if we can believe the synoptic gospels - to have been anything more than the "Son of Man", a phrase borrowed from the book of Daniel 7:13-14. It is in St. John's gospel, a great theological treatise written some time after the synoptic gospels, that Jesus is called the "Son of God". So what? Jesus himself is recorded as having said, "Stretching out his hand toward his disciples... 'Here are my mother and my brothers! For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother, and sister, and mother.'" (Matthew 12:49/50) If Jesus is the Son of God, then all who do His will are also sons and daughters of God. That is hardly surprising to those who believe that God is their Creator.

May they all be one! So Jesus prayed concerning those in whose company he was, and so the Church has prayed for unity among Christians who insist upon breaking away from their fellow Christians. But who are God's children? Is not Humanity part of God's Creation? The exclamation mark at the end of this title is significant. It may be regarded as a joke: some hope that it will ever come about! It may be regarded as a sincere wish, full of hope. This writer decided to include it as a New Year's wish, but could not find it in any version of the available Bibles... until James Moffatt's version was opened. There was the exclamation mark; and so it is in the title. May the People of the Book learn to work together that God's will may be done on earth as in Heaven.



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## Need Assistance with Parish Accessibility?

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# SERVERS FEST 2009



**CHRISTYN PERKONS**  
CATHEDRAL PLACE STAFF

Around one hundred servers from across the diocese converge on Christ's Church Cathedral every

February for a day of fellowship, learning, worship and fun. What's on the schedule for this year? On February 28th, the day's activities will revolve around Acolyte Olympics for the servers under 18 (and those adults who feel adventurous). So wear your fastest shoes and be prepared for team speed vesting, the recessional obstacle course, the taper relay and more! Medals will be awarded, of course. Adults look-

ing for something a little less action-oriented will take part in a workshop entitled *Worship Edges* with Rev. Stephen Murray.

Participants will enjoy lunch with their peers in the crypt or in Myler Hall followed by the largest procession in the Diocese of Niagara as servers (vested if they wish) process behind their parish banners into the Cathedral. Dean Peter Wall and Rev. Matthew Griffin will offer an instructed

Eucharist that will not only explore the various aspects of the Eucharist but will also address the servers' role at each juncture.

Don't want your servers to miss this day of fun? Then be sure to have your servers register through the Parish Server Contact by February 23rd. If you don't know who your Server Contact is, check with your Rector. For more information, call Christyn Perkins 905-527-1316 x460.

## For the feast of Saints Simon and Jude

We gather here at God's own call for story, bread and song. The Spirit beckons, draws us in, by Spirit we belong. A people gathered, met, and sent by Christ, the Holy One, encounter now the living God, and pray, "Your will be done".

We listen here to God's own word, entrusted to our care. We hear that word, turn to the world and enter into prayer – a new creation promised now to earth so hurt and torn: We pray "your kingdom come", we pray a new creation born.

We offer bread and wine from lives of wonder, work and care. We summon Spirit in our midst; that Spirit bids us share. With open hands we give the gift, with open hands receive – with open hearts we give ourselves, with open hearts believe

that as we bless and break and share a stranger enters in, who joins our meal, who calls us friends, not strangers now, but kin. Then sends us to the shadowed world as yeast, as bread, as light to be God's morning, graced and glad in earth's long tired night.

*Text: M. Thompson  
Music: "Resignation" (CP #583)*

# Was it really forty-six years ago?



**CHARLES STIRLING**  
RETIRED CANON, CHRIST'S CHURCH CATHEDRAL

I was rooting in one of my book cases because it is time to pare down a bit, and I found a set of ten copies of a four page paper marking the Anglican Congress of 1963. That event now seems a lifetime ago. I debated what to do with them and then thought it might be interesting to see what we have indeed accomplished in this world, or did not accomplish since then. I have mostly offered the headings from the pages as an overview of what was to come, and sometimes with a few comments. The Most Reverend and Right Honourable Arthur Michael Ramsey was then Archbishop of Canterbury.

The first issue was very much optimistic at the beginning of the congress. For some reason Toronto was seen as not typical of the Canadian Church, while American Bishops were backing civil rights action. Those days seem so long ago and yet have not been put completely to sleep. Cardinal Leger was leading Canadian Romans in prayer for

the Congress, and American Episcopal Bishop Stephen F Bayne discussed the needs of the Anglican Communion. Today Darfur comes to mind.

In the second edition we discover that 600 women volunteers were serving breakfasts and teas during the Congress. That might be a little harder to do in 2009 since many of the women now would be more actively involved. There were almost 1,000 drivers shuffling people about. The unified witness from far lands has radically changed, since now the greater numbers of Anglicans come from African and other emerging third world countries. Canadian, Archbishop Clark, in his address suggested that Christians must be ready to see God's name hallowed outside the Church as well as inside by philosophers, scientists and social scientists. He felt religious folk were in trouble, but yet God remains at work. God seems terribly patient with us. The Archbishop of Canterbury said that each nation must have churches that reflected that nation, and yet there needs to be both giving and receiving. He called for full union in the Catholic Church of Christ. Then, as now, The Church of England is the only state Church, but the controls seem fewer and fewer, no doubt because Parliament has a decreasing interest in the Church.

By the third day the focus was on

the great **Service of Witness**, held at Maple Leaf Gardens the day before. It was the largest religious event ever held in the Gardens. It was stupendous, as I remember it, seated about half way on the right side. There were bishops galore and at the top end sat archbishops and dignitaries before an enormous altar over which hung a cross with the Communion wide symbol of Anglicanism at the centre. The procession into the Gardens took 35 minutes, while 15,500 were seated and several hundred stood. It would certainly be very hard to produce such an event in 2009. Canon Max Warren declared there was no Anglican Monopoly in God. Who could deny that statement? Quebec Nationalists ignored the Church, and this has become a separation of church and state. Anglican influence was seen as strong in Modern African history, due no doubt to the English Missionary Societies. The figure of a few short of 1,000 registrants was impressive for the time.

By the fourth issue, American racial tensions reached the Congress floor and change begins to happen. In 2009 as the first African American President of the United States takes office we are seeing the fulfillment of that transformation. American Francis West of South-western Virginia censured the American Bishops' endorse-

ment of the anti-segregation march on Washington. There was discussion to discover English was essential in India because there were so many languages and dialects. The Philippine Independent Church looked to the days when it would be drafted into the Anglican Communion. Women delegates met to discuss their role in the Church.

The fifth edition of Congress Daily reflected on the day before, Sunday, where many primates preached in area churches. Automation was seen as a possible help to the Church in the future, while it was seen that indifference was the mark of the modern city. A selection of bus tours occupied Sunday afternoon and the Archbishop of Canterbury opened the Canadian National Exhibition.

The sixth issue celebrated the 'rebirth' of the Anglican Communion. There was another packed missionary service at the Gardens on Sunday evening which was seen as a launching pad for the Gospel. It was noted that American influence was strong in Japan. It turned out that there was a fake (non-ordained) bishop at the opening service. He was discovered to be under canonical age and was kindly advised to sign up for the next Congress.

In issue number seven we discover there is always someone who seems to

have missed the point. This somehow reflects on the separated parishes of today. Protest signs were up that stated: **The Anglican Congress - Non Protestant - Non Biblical - Non Christian - The Anglican Conference Is Unfair To Canadian Youth, and The Anglican Congress - Now In Session - With Christ On The Outside.** It was ever thus! Ukrainians sent greetings. What has happened to Worker Priests (who were discussed), then engaged in Paris. Clergy were urged to reach out to laity with training in lay ministry. While we learned that Bishops are not monarchs in the U.S., there are probably still many left elsewhere. We must remember the American Church, in Chicago, gave us what became the **Lambeth Quadrilateral.**

Number eight gives insight into what **Mutual Responsibility** is all about and what could happen. This was and is a grand vision. There was reflection on the Caribbean and Latin American Churches of the Communion. They reflected on Institution of The Anglican Church in Korea.

Keeping International Anglicanism as a name or institution was seen to be very important for the future, said issue nine. Canada and the U.S. should share ecumenical activities.

» CONTINUED ON PAGE 13

## PARISH NEWS

### Flamborough youth group raises funds



Youth Group Leader Derek Kerr and The Reverend Canon Barry Randle of Christ Church Flamborough present Bishop Michael Bird with a cheque for over \$3,700. The funds were raised by the Christ Church Flamborough Youth Group who held a Fall Fun Fair in support of the parish of The Good Shepherd in Esmeralda, Camaguey, Cuba.

### Learning over lunch with Marylanne Maybee



**ANNE WASHINGTON**  
ST. JAMES' DUNDAS

The second Lunch and Learn session at St. James' Church, Dundas, hosted an informative and thought provoking Power Point presentation given by the Reverend Marylanne Maybee, Co-ordinator of Justice Education and Networks of the General Synod.

Following a tasty repast of home-made carrot ginger soup and sandwiches, the audience of 60 was given much more food for thought, as Rev. Maybee expanded on the Millennium Development Goals structured to address: poverty, hunger, and gender equality, empowerment of women, child poverty, primary education, maternal health, diseases, environmental sustainability and global partnerships for development. In her statistical analysis of progress in those challenging areas, it was clear that there has been some improvement, but there is still a lot to be done.

Although the percentage of extreme poverty dropped 13% between 1990 and 2004, and child mortality has been reduced from 13 million to 9.7 million, there are still 46% of girls in the world's poorest countries who have no access

to primary education. Of the world's illiterate adults, 75% are women. The number of AIDS deaths has increased, as has the amount of carbon emissions and deforestation around the world. The reaction of the caring audience to Reverend Maybee's many other disturbing statistics and elaborations was noticeable, as quiet comments and muffled gasps were heard.

However, hope emerged as the pictures of brightly clad bishops from around the world walked at Lambeth, carrying signs and banners reminding the people who gathered in the streets that there was concern for those less fortunate and that huge amounts of love, action and energy were on the march to address the inequalities and injustices prevalent on precious planet earth.

The words, "What Then Shall We Do?" flashed on the screen. Yes, we all recognize the 5 familiar answers that follow that question: 1. DONATE money to causes related to the Millennium Development Goals, such as PWRDF and Partners in Missions. The recommended amount is 0.7% of your income. 2. PRAY. 3. LISTEN to what others have to say. 4. CONNECT with

others. 5. ADVOCATE for re-education in poverty and increase in fairness and equality for all humankind.

The concluding segment of the Lunch and Learn session covered homelessness and affordable housing in Canada. The statistics were, and continue to be, alarming.

After Reverend Maybee was warmly thanked for her presentation, passion and obvious devotion to her role, people chatted over apple crumble, ice cream and Fair Trade coffee about ways to intensify our efforts within our Justice, Poverty, Environment and Outreach Teams. We know that there are many other people and organizations in the Diocese of Niagara and beyond, who are also working toward the same outcomes as those outlined in the Millennium Goals. We intend to continue to locate and work with them and hope that others will connect with us.

When challenges and projects emerged at St. James' over the past several years, we have asked ourselves the question: "Can we do it?" Long before Barack Obama adopted the slogan, our answer has invariably been, "YES, WE CAN!"

### A visit from John Bell

**JOHN STEPHEN**  
ST. CHRISTOPHER'S BURLINGTON

We arrived at the church at the usual time for Thursday evening choir practice. But instead of going into the choir stalls where we usually have our choral experience, we were directed toward the Great Hall of St. Christopher's. The twenty or thirty people, with whom we would normally share our time, had been added to by a crowd of other people swelling our number to almost two hundred. There were people from other choirs around Burlington and Hamilton, people from other towns in the diocese and even from parts of the United States.

John Bell stood up before us. He sang a simple phrase. Then he asked the sopranos to sing along with him. When they had the phrase correctly, he went to the altos and taught them the same words with a different tune. Then the two sections sang together. He added in the tenor and bass parts. Within a couple of minutes this group of two hundred people were singing in beautiful 4 part harmony without ever having seen a note or word written on a piece of paper!

The music he brings us is simple. It can be sung by everyone, includ-

ing those with limited musical background. It is easily taught and easily learned. Within minutes the songs can become an integral part of a liturgical experience.

John Bell will be returning to St. Christopher's this year and will be leading a workshop for singers on Thursday evening of February 5, 2009. We will be gathering in the church to be able to get as many participants as possible and to work with the outstanding acoustics of the church. It is on a Thursday, which in many churches is the day for the weekly choir practice, so that whole choirs can come and take part in this learning experience. We are looking forward to welcoming choirs of all denominations and singers who are interested in sacred music for meaningful worship.

On Friday and Saturday, John will be with us during the day to lead us in other learning opportunities. Friday is an interactive workshop on planning for worship during Holy Week and Easter. Saturday features a discussion of "Celtic Spirituality". For more information about registration, visit the website at St. Christopher's Church - [www.stchristophersburlington.com](http://www.stchristophersburlington.com).



### The child and family friendly church

**JANINA WRIGHT**  
ST. GEORGE'S GUELPH

How many of us have looked at our congregations and asked ourselves "Where are the children and young families?" St. George's Church in Guelph is not alone in seeing its young people and families decrease over the past decade or more.

Hoping to deepen their understanding of youth and family ministry, six members of the congregation joined parishioners from Kitchener, Waterloo and Brantford at a recent workshop about creating child and family friendly churches. The Rev'd Sue Malpus, Children and Youth Ministry Coordinator for the Diocese of Huron, conducted the workshop at Renison College, University of Waterloo.

Participants considered recent changes in our society and culture that have significant implications for this ministry, ranging from children and youth who have no recent family tradition of attending church to the significance and implications of a wired world.

They examined two case studies of typical, modern young families and discussed ways to help them feel welcome practically, relationally and spiritually, and brainstormed ways to keep families informed, encourage parents and get them involved in the church.

All of the participants left the workshop with a toolkit of ideas to take back to their parishes and to begin implementing.



# Requiem Mass at St George's



**FROM LEFT: Honorary Colonel Ian Purdie OSTJ, CD, Captain The Reverend Canon Rob Fead, Lieutenant Colonel Jeff Cairns OSTJ, CD, ADC and Lieutenant Colonel Matt Richardson CD (Commanding Officer, The Lincoln and Welland Regiment)**

The combined choirs of Saint George's and Saint Barnabas churches gave praise with the setting of Gabriel Faure's Requiem Mass on Remembrance Sunday last. The Mass was conducted by John Butler choir-master of Saint George's with Lesley Kingham director of Saint Barnabas choir playing the organ along with

soloists Lois Marsh, Jody Wieler and Dr. Harris Loewen and a wonderful orchestra.

It was a fitting setting to be at Saint George's with its Lincoln and Welland Regimental connections on this special day. The roll call of the brave heroes of the past was read out by Col. Ian Purdie. Then Reveille and the Last

Post echoed through the building. The whole service was a stunning memorial to our brave soldiers of Canada's current and past wars and all those present were moved. The choirs of Saint Barnabas and Saint George's and all those who were part of this Mass are to be congratulated for a magnificent offering to the Lord.

# New Rector at St. Luke's Burlington



**The induction of Stuart Pike as rector of St. Luke's in Burlington. Pictured, from left, are Stuart Pike (Rector), Peter Case (Honorary Assistant), Bishop Michael and Stephen Hopkins (Archdeacon)**

**Sister Mary Adela CSC (Mary Adeline Carthew)** died peacefully on Friday, November 14, 2008 at North York General Hospital. She was born March 15, 1912 at Moorefield near Palmerston Ontario, daughter of the late Alfred Morden Carthew and Ethel Margaret McIntyre. Predeceased by brothers Morden and Peter and sister Alice. Beloved aunt of Jacqueline Marinelli, Marlene Edwards, Anne Marie Heyneman, Don Carthew, Anne McLaughlin and Sandy Sutherland and great aunt of many. She graduated as a nurse from Hamilton General Hospital in 1932 and became the school nurse at St. Mildred's Col-

lege, Toronto in 1936. Sr. Mary Adela entered the Community of the Sisters of the Church in 1938 and was professed on September 28, 1943. She held several positions of authority in the Community here in Canada and was in charge of the Lightbourn School in Oakville from 1964 to 1967. For some years Sister lived in St. Elizabeth Village in Hamilton and from 2001 was lovingly cared for in the infirmary of the Sisterhood of St. John the Divine in Toronto. Visitation was held at the Kopriva Taylor Community Funeral Home, 64 Lakeshore Road West, Oakville (one block east of Kerr, 905-844-2600) on Thursday,

November 20, 2008 2-4 and 7-9 p.m. and on Friday, November 21, 2008 from 2-4 and 7-8 p.m. at St. John's Convent, 33 Cummer Avenue, Toronto. Requiem Mass was held at 10 a.m. on Saturday, November 22nd the Church of St. Mary Magdalene, 477 Manning Avenue (at Ulster). In lieu of flowers, donations please, to the Community of the Sisters of the Church, St. Mildred's-Lightbourn School, Oakville, or the Church of St. Mary Magdalene Toronto. Cremation and interment of ashes in the Sister's plot in St. James Cemetery, Toronto at a later date. Email condolences may be made through [www.koprivataylor.com](http://www.koprivataylor.com).

# Transfiguration celebrates 50 years of ministry

**NISSA BASBAUM**  
RECTOR, TRANSFIGURATION ST CATHARINES

In 1959, I was four years old. Naturally, I have few memories from that time in my life. Yet if I were to talk to my siblings, all older than I by at least five and a half years, they would be able to tell me something about our life as a family in the late 50s. By telling me their stories, I would be able to capture a part of my family's history that I would never have personally experienced. In other words, their tales would grant me entrance into a world I never actually knew.

As the year 2009 approaches, the Church of the Transfiguration in St. Catharines is about to embark on just this kind of storytelling. Fifty years ago, on Christmas Eve in 1959, the first service in the church's new building was celebrated. For three and a half years prior to that night, the congregation had been worshipping in a neighbourhood school. That Christmas Eve service marked the inauguration of a church community in its new home. Now, 50 years later, the present congregation will spend some time in the coming year telling Transfiguration's golden anniversary stories.

Many of our parishioners are so new that they couldn't tell you anything about the community prior to the past year. Others have been around for a few years; for example, those who came from Christ Church in St. Catharines upon its closure at the end of 2004 would be able to talk about the last four years with Transfiguration as an amalgamated congregation. The list goes on, with some of our current parishioners going back two, three and four decades. Although there are not many left, there are still a few who remember worshipping in the school before the development of the building. Like my siblings, our older parishioners are the ones who will best be able to tell Transfiguration's early stories.

Whatever the decade might be from which each of us comes and whatever the

memories are which each of us will have to share, all the members of our current Transfiguration church family are looking forward with great anticipation to the celebration of our community's golden anniversary. Over the last while, since we have started to collect the pictures and the stories of our first 50 years, people have already begun to recall and share many treasured tales from the past.

Without a doubt, in comparison to other congregations, Transfiguration is a relatively young community, but in our first 50 years we have experienced all that one would expect from a close-knit family – times of celebration and times of mourning; times of stability and times of change.

In 2009, we look forward to old friends and family members being able to share with us in various parts of our anniversary party. To that end, we have a number of events taking place and special guests who we are delighted to be welcoming during the coming year. These include some of our former rectors: Ted Heaven, Don Powell and Bill Blott; the Bishop of the Diocese of Niagara, Michael Bird, will be with us for the Feast of the Transfiguration on February 22nd; and, at a dinner scheduled for November 1st, the Primate of the Anglican Church of Canada, Fred Hiltz, will be our guest speaker.

If you have been a part of Transfiguration at some time during our first 50 years, we hope you will consider participating in some or all of these special events. Your presence among us will make our celebrations that much more memorable and your stories will add depth to the history we share.

For a complete list of our events and our guests during 2009, please go to our 50th anniversary blog at <http://transfiguration50years.wordpress.com/> or telephone the church office at 905-684-0722, Tuesday to Friday between 9:00 am and 12:00 pm.

# Burning of the mortgage



**FROM LEFT: Doug Downey (Rector's Warden), Heather Pattison (People's Warden), Canon Scott McNaughton (Rector), and Bishop Ralph Spence.**

On Sunday, November 30th Bishop Ralph Spence joined the Rector, Wardens and parishioners of St. Stephen-on-the-Mount Church, Hamilton, to help burn the mortgage to their Parish Hall built in 1999. Special thanks was given to the Building Committee for all of their hard

work, to the Diocese for their building grant, and to all the parishioners, past and present, who gave support through pledges and fundraising events. In addition, St. Stephen's surprised the Bishop by naming the parish hall in his honour. It will now be called: Bishop Spence Hall.

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# St. Michael's celebrates Lynda Kealey's ministry



Scott's son Sumbat helps Lynda show off the Mennonite Quilt.



Lynda's son John, dad James, and husband Jim.

The church was packed – wasn't that a testament to the impact that Lynda had on our parish. It was a sad day, but also a time for celebration and reflection.

The final Eucharistic service was simple (at Lynda's request). Members of the Mountain Ministry team, the Reverend Victoria Hedelius, the Reverend Leon Burke and the Reverend Stephen Murray processed with Lynda to the sanctuary. The Reverend Canon Scott McNaughton from St. Stephen on the Mount was also present in the congregation. Gina Newhall, Rector's Warden, gave a very moving speech highlighting memorable events of Lynda's ministry at St. Michael's. Following the speech, Paul Clarke, one of our stalwart youth presented Lynda with a gift from the parish a beautiful Mennonite quilt. People's Warden, Sue Crawford then presented a memory book filled with pictures and written "memories" from various parishioners.

The blessing and the peace followed. On many occasions our parish becomes so involved with the exchange of peace and greetings that Lynda has oftentimes had to "ahem" loudly, when announcing the offertory hymn to encourage us to return to our seats. This day she was the last to

return to the sanctuary. *God my hope on you is founded* was Lynda's choice for the processional hymn.

Following the Eucharist most of those who attended the service assembled in the Parish Hall for a Pot Luck supper. Again, the Hall was packed to capacity. The head or "family" table included one of Lynda's sons John, Jim Kealey, Lynda's husband and Lynda's father. Several members of the Mountain Ministry were able to stay for the repast and joined Lynda at the table along with Scott's wife and son, Isabella and Sumbat.

George Foster gave the blessing before people proceeded to fill their plates with the wonderful food that had been prepared by parishioners. Ron Hatoski did a fabulous job as emcee announcing the order of events. Anne Young presented Lynda with a beautiful bouquet of roses. During dessert, a PowerPoint presentation highlighting events of the parish since 1999 was shown. This presentation was well received not only by Lynda but by the parish who cheered and clapped when individual pictures and events appeared on the screen.

Lynda came to St. Michael's in March of 1999 as an interim but

somehow circumvented the Diocesan policy and became our rector in 2000. On October 22, 2000, Bishop Ralph Spence signed the notice of induction and Lynda began her ministry with St. Michael's joining the mountain Ministry Team. From speaking with many parishioners at St. Michael's, Lynda was the "shot in the arm" that the parish needed.

When I asked Lynda to list some of the highlights of her ministry she immediately answered "when the people from St. Augustine's came over". As a former St. Augustine member (although much later joining St. Michael's than the others), I can truthfully say that the parish warmly welcomed us. Thanks to Lynda we no longer think of ourselves as "the St. Augustine" people. We are true members of St. Michael's. The kitchen renovations and the installation of the new furnace and air conditioning were among others she listed.

On a lighter note, in asking if any particular event stood out she replied, "the day I baptized 11 children!" Lynda loved the children and youth of our parish. It was very important for her to see them present at her final service. A special invitation was sent out

by the Wardens to ensure they were present. Another event that stands out for her is attending the Synod that voted to bless same gender relationships. Lynda feels proud that she was a part of that Synod.

But there was one fall that Lynda will never forget. From the beginning of September until the end of October 2007, Lynda performed no less than 9 weddings. She had worked 16 days straight including attending Synod. She had been looking forward to a quiet and restful Monday. Unfortunately the quiet was shattered by a phone call informing her that a long-time devoted parishioner had passed away in his sleep.

Perhaps the most memorable event will be the trip to Israel this past November that she shared with 15 St. Michael parishioners. She is most grateful to have had this opportunity to travel with them.

What will we remember most about Lynda's ministry at St. Michael's? For me, personally, it was her incredible homilies which always gave me inspiration for the coming week. Her last homily at the 9:00 a.m. service on November 23 was particularly moving. She left us with two messages

from Jesus. The first one, "that when two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of you". It doesn't matter who will be celebrating at the altar, it is the people in the congregation that makes the parish. We are the church. This message is particularly important for us as we go forward in the life our parish to search out a new rector.

The second one, "just as you do it to one of the least of these you do it to me." "If you do that, then I am with you". We must continue to do kindness in Jesus' name. We have tremendous outreach in our parish with which we must continue but we need to take that ministry further out in to the community. Not all of us will be able to do this, but those of us who can, need to go beyond what we do now and find our calling.

I feel truly blessed that I chose St. Michael's as my parish. I feel even more blessed that Canon Lynda Kealey was there when I needed her most in my life. She helped me out of a dark corner into the light of God's calling. I know that many parishioners of St. Michael's feel the same way. Lynda, we wish you well in your retirement. Well done, good and faithful servant.

## The Wonder of Christmas



GRAHAM STAP  
RETIRED PRIEST

It is now the middle of December and as I look out of my window I see the sun glistening on the snow. It is about minus one, the snow is hanging on the trees, and it truly is a winter wonderland.

I am looking forward to the birth of Jesus with excitement and joy knowing that God so loved the world

that he sent his only son to be with us all.

However what about the people of Mumbai, or the Congo, or Somalia? Surprising as it may seem. God is in the midst of all these places as God is with each and every person on earth. It has been my experience that God does not play favorites. God loves without exception or qualification in spite of all we do or do not do. It is only humans that get in the way of God with greed, envy, and so on and spoil the beauty of the world that God created. Much as we would like to, we cannot change the world. All we can do is set the example. We must not set the example with a hammer but with a kind word

and a strong helping hand; sometimes as Jesus did, we also should not count the cost.

God came in the form of a baby, not with a flaming sword but with a helping hand and a lot of love. In coming to be with us, God experienced all the things we live through no matter what the pain or joy we feel whether we live in Canada or in the Congo. There is nothing God did not experience. The pain and joy of this world is shared with God in all ways and some of us carry the very large burden of our own cross.

I think Matthew chapter five, verses three to twelve tells us why God humbled the very essence of God

and came to be with us. Blessed are the poor in spirit. Blessed are those that mourn. Blessed are the meek. Blessed are those that hunger and thirst for righteousness. Blessed are the merciful. Blessed are the pure in heart. Blessed are the peacemakers. Blessed are those who are persecuted. Finally, blessed are those who follow the way of God. All right, I gave the last one my own interpretation but I do believe it to be true.

I believe that in this world we will always feel both joy and pain no matter where we live or who we are but Christmas year after year helps us to remember that God came to be with us as one of us. God did not come to

tell us, that what we suffer is a punishment for our wrongdoings but that we are loved in spite of all the things we do, that we should not do, or the things we do not do that we should do.

We are not favored as Christians above others. What we have is the indescribable joy of knowing that we are loved and that God through Jesus came to tell us that it is truly not complicated. God loves us all and it is Christmas that brings the truth to this. Although Christmas will be over when you read this, I pray that the spirit of what all Christmas stands for will stay with you all during 2009 and I pray you all have a blessed and healthy year.

# Truth in science



**COLIN C. M. CAMPBELL**  
TEACHER, DIOCESE OF NIAGARA

Both modern science and Christianity are predicated on the assumption that there is an absolute truth and that they have the privilege of knowing what that truth is. This month's article will describe the truth claims of science. Next month's will consider the truth claims of Christianity. Aristotle laid the philosophical basis for science in order to determine the purpose of our lives. His inheritance was a world of wealth and power on a scale, which he could never have imagined. The rewards of Christianity, by comparison, seem anemic and paltry. In these two articles, I shall contend that this is not the case. There is considerable common ground between the two faith claims. Aristotle found truth by a careful observation of nature. The truth of Christianity comes from a revelation from God. However, rather than conflicting with the truth found in nature, revelation builds on it.

We owe our Western idea that there is such a thing as absolute truth to Parmenides. He made the irrefutable statement that there must be an absolute reality because one thing cannot become something else. For example, dogs do not become cats. However, ice becomes water, caterpillars become butterflies, and acorns become oak trees. Some things seem to become other things. Building on Parmenides' idea, Aristotle argued that this is only an apparent change. The nature of the ice must be the same as the nature of the water. The nature of the caterpillar must be the same as the nature of the butterfly and the nature of the acorn must be the same as the nature of the oak tree. Whereas the nature of the dog must be completely different from that of the cat, since dogs never become cats.

Where does change come from? According to Aristotle, it must come from within the nature itself. We now know that he was correct. In the case of ice changing to water, the chemical bonds within the ice change their structure. In the case of the butterfly and the acorn, the change comes from each following the genetic code in their DNA. "But," Aristotle asked himself, "why do fixed natures try to change their appearance?" He concluded that it must be to reach some goal. Aristotle's word for goal was entelechy. The entelechy of ice is to become water when it is warmed. The entelechy of an acorn is to become an oak tree and the entelechy of a caterpillar is to become a butterfly. If we know what the entelechy of a human being is, then we can know what we are for and we shall know how to be happy.

This idea of a fixed human nature is not obvious in other cultures. I spent some time in Paraguay. When a Paraguayan Indian has a dream, he assumes that his soul leaves his body to travel. Another soul may occupy his body in the meantime, so he has no sense of a

continuous identity or a fixed nature. In our own culture, self-actualization theorists, such as Rogers and Maslow, emphasize our freedom to be whomever we choose. Meaning is located in emotional satisfaction and anything else is due to neurotic repression. In their view, questions about happiness and the meaning of life are completely subjective. Aristotle would have taken exception to this. According to him, we do have a fixed nature and that nature moves us towards some goal. Aristotle believed that he had developed a basic understanding of nature, change and goal, or entelechy, and he felt that this enabled him to do science.

His science led to the following ideas. He believed that the motion of all objects is due to their nature moving them towards some goal. Smoke rises because the natural place for smoke is the sky. Stones fall because the natural place for a stone is the ground. On the other hand, a perfect object would not need to relocate. It would be where it is supposed to be. Perfect motion for a perfect object would be motion in a circle. Since he regarded the stars to be perfect objects, their orbits must be circular. In fact, by considering the stars to be fixed on rotating spheres, it was found that most of their orbits could be accurately predicted. The only exceptions were Mercury, Mars, and Venus. Since they did not fit the scheme, they were called the "wanderers," - or "planets," after the Greek word for wanderer. The science of the ancient Greeks almost made perfect sense, did it not?

All that changed on Christmas Day, 1642, when the great Sir Isaac Newton was born. When Newton stated his first law of motion, he changed the course of world history forever. "All bodies stay where they are or keep on moving unless a force acts on them from the outside." That is, bodies do not move because something happens to them on the inside, as Aristotle said. They stay as they are, unless something happens to them from the outside. Aristotle was wrong. Furthermore, the law applies to all bodies - from red giant stars to tiny neutrinos. Aristotle believed that different objects would have different motions because they had different natures. Again, Aristotle was wrong. All bodies in the entire universe behave in the same way. In the seventeenth century, to a world used to thinking in Aristotelian categories, this was a shattering statement.

The German scientist, Johannes Kepler, discovered that the planets move, not in circles, but in ellipses. Because of the influence of Aristotle, the Continental scientists resisted this idea for many years. Newton was asked what kind of path a planet would have if it orbited the Sun under the influence of gravity. "An ellipse," he replied. This conversation resulted in the publication of the Principia and the world had entered the scientific age. Ever since Newton, we have believed that the reality, which we perceive, is not due to the working out of the inner principles of different natures.

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## PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

■ Correction to December issue: The Venerable Peter Moore has been appointed as interim pastor at Grace Church, Milton, and the Reverend Hollis Hiscock has been appointed as interim pastor at St. George's Church, Guelph, both effective November 1.

■ The Reverend Elizabeth Steeves issued a Bishop's Appointment as Priest Associate: Director of Youth Ministry on a part time basis, at St. John the Evangelist, Hamilton, this effective September 1.

■ The Reverend Jody Medicoff transferred from the Diocese of Montreal, was issued a Bishop's Permission as Director of Children, Youth and Family Ministry, at St. Paul's Church, Hamilton, effective October 14.

■ Best wishes to Canon Mark McDermott who retired from full time ministry on November 1.

■ Sister Mary Adela, CSC, passed away on November 14 in North York. Since 2001 she has been lovingly cared for in the infirmary of the Sisterhood of St. John the Divine, Toronto. Requiem Mass was held on November 22.

■ Our deepest sympathy to Mrs. Anne Case and the Reverend Peter Case, and family, on the death of Anne's mother, Mae Kay, on December 3.

■ Best wishes to Canon Lynda Kealey who retired from full time ministry on December 31.

■ The Reverend Martha Tatarnic has submitted her resignation as Administrator of St. Hilda's, and Curate at St.

Jude's, Oakville, effective December 31. Martha has accepted a position as Rector of St. David's and Holy Cross in Orillia, beginning January 1.

■ The Reverend Cheryl Barker, from the Diocese of Quebec, has accepted the appointment to be Rector of St. Paul's, Caledonia, effective January 15.

■ The Reverend Daniel Tatarnic has submitted his resignation as Rector of St. Stephen's Church, Hornby, effective January 31, 2009. Dan has accepted a position as Rector of the parish of Coldwater-Medonte in South Orillia, beginning February 1.

■ The Reverend Tim Morgan will conclude his ministry as Priest Associate from St. Columba, St. Catharines, effective December 31, 2008.

# Challenging our stereotypes



**IAN DINGWALL**  
RETIRED ARCHDEACON OF NIAGARA

I think most of us would agree that the Christian Church is currently confronted by huge challenges that demand responsible action by all who claim to be followers of the Christ. On the whole, I think we do not undertake this task, perhaps because of the complexity of these challenges. This leads me to offer you, in the hope of helping to think about these challenges, a couple of people and their thoughts.

The first of these, Thich Nhat Hahn, is a writer that I have already mentioned in an earlier article for the Niagara Anglican. The second, Hans Kung, is well known and admired in theological circles around the world. They are quite unlike in many ways; one is Asian, the other European; one is Buddhist, the other Christian. But in other ways that are perhaps more profound, we see great similarities.

Nhat Hahn is Buddhist and although his commitment to his religious roots is faithful and strong, he welcomes opportunities to speak with people of other opinions and religions. He will not compromise his own commitment in pursuit of understanding other points of view. In fact, his own faith is very often

strengthened in seeing it in the context of other ideas. This "ecumenical" attitude creates for him a wonderful sense of the "togetherness" of people of faith. For me his writings are so powerful and attractive that I am enriched when I read of how, for example, as a Buddhist, he can embrace Christian doctrines such as our idea of Trinity. He looks at the Christian Trinitarian idea and relate to it because there are similar ideas within his own religion. Perhaps we might experience the same kind of things in reverse and become more sure of our own commitments of faith.

Hahn's invitation to a lively and meditative life is important to consider. He teaches the practice of Mindful Meditation and says, for example, "Be mindful in meditation as you are walking, listening, breathing. All of which calms down our angers. We need one another as human beings who suffer just like us." His faith and his practice in meditation is no escape from the present, because his focus is always on the social implications of his thinking and actions.

Well now, I will end that introduction and suggest that you visit a library of bookstore and learn more of this extraordinary person's thinking.

Hans Kung, a Swiss Roman Catholic priest, theologian, author and teacher, is one who knows conflict. Still a bona fide priest of the Roman Catholic Church, he is nonetheless forbidden to teach in Roman Catholic universities and, until he retired,

he taught in secular institutions. This situation came from his questioning the Pope's claim to infallibility and other teachings that emanate from it. His quarrel with the Vatican and his distrust of Papal authority is a burr under the ecclesiastical saddle.

Kung continues on many fronts – theological debate, social action and world politics – to act responsibly and forcefully in calling the Church and all Christians to a greater understanding of the Gospel and our need for positive actions. His conviction that what we have in common is more important than what we disagree about is an urgent call we need to listen to and act upon. The ultimate goal he expressed this way:

"No Peace among Nations until there is Peace among Religions." We will, he continues, to produce bad results if we make assumptions that are based on questionable opinions. For example, he declares that if in our thinking about the Divinity we exclude male and female characteristics, the next step will be to demean the equality of women in our society and allow a male hierarchical approach to predominate which is a situation that he would and does deplore. Kung's voice is an important one and needs to be heard and responded to, not only by the Roman Church, but by all of us.

These are two great contemporary figures. I commend them to you as you contemplate the world in which we live, and our need for clear thinking in these ambiguous times.

# Parish insurance premiums to fall

**PETER SWIRE**  
ASCENSION HAMILTON  
CHAIR, RISK MANAGEMENT SUB-COMMITTEE

Annually, the Insurance and Risk Management Sub-Committee meets to review a myriad of insurance matters ranging from our loss ratios, pro-active education events for new clergy and wardens as well as the rate proposal for the following year.

At our recent meeting, we heard an accounting of our improving claims experience. Also, our practices of training new clergy; offering refresher courses to wardens; parish inspections and so forth, our insurers are taking a more competitive eye to our business. This year, we were fortunate to see an offering of lower rates. Effective January 2009,

our rates will fall from 34 cents per \$100 of estimated replacement value for monitored systems (38 cents without) to 33 cents per \$100 of estimated replacement value (37 cents without). This full cent reduction (slightly over 3%) follows a decrease from 2007 into 2008. On a building valued at \$2 Million, the annual saving is \$200.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1 &gt;&gt;

# The fall-out from a state religion

Here was my first problem. As a fitness class regular, I was a bit of a sombre sort of "parishioner." I didn't come to class to socialize, I came to exercise. Each day, I would go to my regular spot on the floor – unless some newcomer had got there before me and had had the audacity to take my place – and wait for the music to start up. While I wasn't unfriendly, I also wasn't overly friendly, I was there for the workout, not for the conversation. So, when this person – who was not a newcomer – started to talk to me, I was more than a little taken aback. What in heaven's name could she be thinking, engaging me in social niceties like this? Then, there was a second problem. As I tried desperately to fight off my annoyance with her for speaking to me, I tried just as desperately to figure out what the "this" was that she thought we wouldn't any longer be able to do. With that second dilemma, she helped me out.

"The way things have been going, we won't be able to exercise to Christmas carols anymore. I heard something on the radio the other day suggesting that the government is going to ban the playing of all Christmas music in public places." Then came the kicker: "How are my children going to learn the words to these songs if they're banned from public arenas?"

"Uh, how about taking them to

church?" I thought. Of course, I never actually said this to her; I only fantasized saying it. Instead, I just nodded and shook my head in the best rendition of Anglo-Saxon politeness I could muster, and hoped against hope that she would realize I was there to exercise, not to talk... especially about this particular subject.

Thankfully, she did get the message. We both returned to our original gesticulations, although mine now included shaking my head at the mess in which Christians currently found themselves because the leaders of western society had once thought it a good thing to make Christianity the religion of the state. Here, in living colour, was the fall-out from this decision – a watered-down spirituality that had little, if anything, to do with what the Incarnation was intended to portray.

Sometimes our past comes back to haunt us. Mine tends to do this every December when I recall what it was like growing up Jewish in a city that was primarily Roman Catholic, in a school system that was Protestant and in a country that everyone regarded as Christian.

Living in Montreal, Christmas was both a wonderful and a difficult time for me, mostly because I loved the magic of the holiday. What the celebrations really meant for people was frankly irrelevant to me. It was the outdoor Christmas lights that captured my fancy, even more

than the presents my friends would get at this time of year. The gifts probably did not create much envy because the arrival of Chanukah around the same time as Christmas meant that I was happily taken up with our own ceremony of lighting the menorah on each of the eight days of this holiday and receiving presents at our extended family's annual Chanukah party. But the outdoor lights, well, they were an entirely different phenomenon. One of our annual family events was to bundle up in overcoats, get in the car and drive around many of the neighbourhoods in and about Montreal to look at these lights. I was undeniably envious of these window and door accoutrements; so envious, in fact, that one year I practically begged my mother for a Chanukah bush, an item she thought was utterly ridiculous. It took me many years to comprehend why she felt this way.

As a young Jewish kid in Montreal, did I want to celebrate Christmas? Well, sort of, if the holiday was about the lights, the presents and the carols. Did I know anything about the message of John the Baptist regarding the coming of Jesus into the world? Pretty much nothing at all, nor was I particularly interested in this. I had my own faith stories to keep me occupied. No, I was definitely not attracted to the meat of the turkey, just to the fixings. And herein lies the rub. Now,

in my position as a priest in the church, I am completely committed to the meat of the bird and could merrily trash all the fixings. Yet years ago, in the one and only sermon I ever preached about this, someone met me at the door following the service with these words, "Well, that was certainly a downer, wasn't it?" For this reason, on this subject, at least in sermons, I have since tried to keep my counsel to myself.

Christmas is a struggle for me, in a way that Easter is not. Physically, it's an effort because getting ready for this celebration is something that involves not only the work side of my life but also the personal. There is no question but that it is absolutely exhausting trying to create a balance between these two opposing forces. Yet beyond this assault on my physical stamina, Christmas often is an assault on my emotional and intellectual well-being, as well. Trying to proclaim the essential message of the Incarnation – that God comes into our world less to make us feel good than to expect us to question the way we live and how we function in relation to one another – in the face of the history of a "Christian" country that has reduced this message to pretty lights, presents and songs depicting a Victorian worldview, is not just difficult but damn near impossible. Nor do the fairytale-like scriptural passages from two of the gospel writers

provide much solace for me in this situation. While Mark's gospel and, somewhat to a lesser extent John's, takes us right off the bat to the meat of the turkey, the images of shepherds, angels, magi and a manger found in Matthew and Luke – not to mention King Herod, the required villain of the story – do little to discourage us from our pursuit of just the fixings.

Wow! Do I ever sound like a Scrooge?! Yet in all of this, the only thing I am trying to get a hold of is some smidgen of reality, some bit of truth that moves the story beyond the longings of my Jewish childhood for what I thought was the essence of Christmas, to my Christian adulthood in which I know that the message the church needs to proclaim is not that of a baby born in a manger ("no crying he makes") but of a God who lives and loves among us for only one reason – that we might witness to the way in which we are to live and love among others.

"Uh, how about taking them to church?" I wanted to ask that person in my fitness class so many years ago. All I can hope is that if and when she might have done this, she and her children will have heard not just the things they wanted to hear – that is, the fixings – but also those things that would lead them on a journey towards a truth that would change their lives forever.

# Excellence: A dialogue between me and my alter ego



FRANCEAN CAMPBELL RICH  
CHRIST'S CHURCH CATHEDRAL

Me: So why are you anxious?  
Ego: Because I don't know where I fit in anymore.  
Me: What do you mean?  
Ego: We are being asked to aim for excellence in ministry.  
Me: Is that a problem?  
Ego: I'm not a minister. I have no powers.  
Me: Jesus sent us out to do good; heal the sick, preach the word, all that stuff. They were simple working people.  
Ego: That was more than two thousand years ago. Things are different now.  
Me: People are still in need. Look around you.  
Ego: I can't do anything about those starving children in Africa.  
Me: You don't have to look that far.  
Ego: How many kids in Hamilton are dying of hunger?  
Me: Hunger is not the only need. There is hunger for love. Jean Vanier knows all about that.  
Ego: But we're asked to eradicate poverty. Just what is poverty? I know a woman here in the city with two children – one a teenager, the other a

six year old. She lives on welfare; her rent is paid, she's an alcoholic, smokes constantly, takes a taxi whenever she wants, goes shopping, leaving the six-year old alone, complains welfare doesn't pay her enough, etc. What's poverty in our society?

Me: I don't know. In France they have 'familias' – government subsidized restaurants. For a few francs families get a whole meal every day; poor people don't do their own shopping, I guess. Eliminates the nutritional problem, the fast-food, the 'Western Diet' syndrome.  
Ego: But we're up to our ears in social services here. Just take a walk around the most depressed area of the city – one service after another – not counting the City Jail, Townsview, the Salvation Army, the churches... and as for the churches, they are more than doing their part. As Colleen Sym points out, the churches and all those agencies are carrying a disproportionate load at the community level. How can they be asked to do more?

Me: True enough. And by the way, it's worth taking another look at the December issue of the Niagara; it's full of articles on the subject. The bishop's charge of excellence in ministry has triggered the thoughts of clergy and writers all over. Don't you see anyone place to fit in, as you put it?

Ego: Not really. I know one parishioner who feels she is expected to do something – not just go to church to

worship anymore. She doubts she is fitting in either.

Me: She should not have to feel that way. She is probably giving adequately already, especially if she is elderly.

Ego: Talking of the elderly, we're being reminded that our numbers are shrinking all the time and leaving only the 'grey heads' behind in the pews.

Me: That old saw. There is no such thing as 'that little old lady in the back pew' anymore and heaven help any new young clergy who makes the mistake of thinking so. That 'little old lady' is likely to be a retired neurosurgeon, or a brilliant writer, or at the very least a woman with a lifetime of experience and a shrewd sense of judgement. The great photographer Josef Karsh chose an aged, time tested woman for one of his greatest portraits. And those 'grey heads' are probably paying the church's major bills too.

Ego: As for bills and giving, Charles Stirling avers that the well-to-do of the 21st century are not acquainted with the church today and a five dollar bill is about as much as they can find as the plate goes by. They need to be taught, he says.

Me: Not all of them. Some of us know of individual parishioners who render services to the church worth many thousands of dollars. And there are some who, though they haven't much money, give of their time and talents without measure, voluntarily, cheerfully, effi-

ciently. How can they be counted? Do you still not know where you fit in?

Ego: Not yet. I couldn't begin to pay what the church needs and expects us to pay. Ten percent of my income would put me into the 'needy' class myself, and no social services are going to be available to an able, independent, white, Anglo-Saxon woman of eighty-eight who qualifies for government benefits. And I do not consider myself poor.

Me: So how do you manage? You appear well-dressed, drive a good car, enjoy good cooking, entertain often, if simply, buy books, and take course...

Ego: It's easy. Don't budget, but keep track of everything you spend. Buy everything second-hand, from household items at bazaars, clothes at Goodwill, to a good used car. And don't get into debt. It helps, of course, if you inherit nice things from long-deceased parents and take care of them – the things, I mean.

Me: You could do what Lady Churchill did after the war, and after Winston died: She had to sell some of his paintings to increase her income. Then you could give more to the church.

Ego: I'm not that saintly, at least, not yet. Who knows where the Holy Spirit will lead me.

Me: Saint Augustine said something like that. What about liturgy: could you fit in there?

Ego: Now you're talking. And I take it

you mean the worship of the church. I'm bothered by it. Clergy complain that the 'grey heads' are 'wedded' to the BCP – some of them anyway. And they even claim that the BAS is out of date. And it's not thirty years old. They don't listen to the people, they just tell them/us. In some cases they appear to scold us, suggesting we are resistant to change. They seem to think that changing the liturgy will bring young people into the church.

Me: You seem to be upset about it. If this is where you might feel you 'fit in', what would you suggest as a remedy?

Ego: I wish I knew. But again, another look at the December Niagara yields wise and relevant comment. First, Susan Huxford-Westall, in a rare critical tone deplores the indifference of readings of the Old Testament and the Epistles by a variety of lay persons, and is appalled by the slipshod treatment of the Lectionary. What could be more putting-off to youth? And conversely, what could grab anyone's attention more than the Rev. Mark Tiller's reading at the Synod Eucharist in November? And second, Editor Chris Grabiec claims that "ministry" is not the property of the clergy but of the baptized – a point in the pursuit of excellence.

Me: Well, you may not feel you quite fit in, but the Lord's mysterious ways may yet disclose a path in the right direction. Excellence in ministry must surely take many forms. Thanks be to God.

# As the world and the Church wag on



**PETER WALL**  
DEAN, CHRIST'S CHURCH CATHEDRAL

As I write this, the most popular word of the week is 'prorogue'. It has become both part of our Canadian lexicon and the source of many jokes. One CBC radio host, who posts a weekly blog 'question', decided that his question for the next week would be: 'If you could, what would you prorogue?'

We in the Church, of course, know all about funny and strange words – words like apse, and ciborium, and ambulatory, and aspergillum, and even vimpa! (Yes, a prize could be offered for the speediest and most succinct explanations of the above!)

When it comes to governance, the Church also has some odd words and practices. *Prorogation*, of course, is a very familiar term in the Church. We have, for centuries, *prorogued* synods and other assemblies. I well remember a significant conversation which took place through several e-mail conversations and telephone conference calls, over the exact placement of the *prorogation* at the 2004 General Synod. (The sessions were concluding in St. Catharines; the Installation of the Primate was taking place here in the Cathedral in Hamilton; all of General Synod was coming to a banquet following the service – when exactly, therefore, did Synod *prorogue*?) Such is the stuff of which

deep theological reflection (and the odd headache!) is made.

Governance, in the church, is also a hot topic these days. A national task force is at work for General Synod examining the many layers of governance – General Synod, four Provincial Synods, 29 Dioceses and one Assembly of associated parishes. Are we over governed as a church? (Many say a resounding yes!) In what ways can we move ahead with the mission of the church in the most effective way? How do we maintain historic and local cultural character while making the best use of the resources – human and physical – which we have? Are those criteria which determined the 'shape' of the church well over a century ago still appropriate and effective? How do we, for example, talk constructively about creating a new ecclesiastical province in Canada for our indigenous people, now that we have a national indigenous Bishop? What might the future look like? What do we need to do to build the promised future of the Church?

Some would think it simply to chuck it all – who needs all that stuff after all? And yet, we are the inheritors of important and functioning structures – we need to look at them critically and carefully, retaining and strengthening those that are effective, wisely developing new structures, and jettisoning those that are superfluous.

Governance and its implications are also issues which we are examining here in Niagara as well. As we know from Bishop Michael's comprehensive vision and exciting challenges about excellence in ministry throughout the Diocese, one challenge is to re-think the structures and ministry of Cathedral

Place. How does the Cathedral parish complement the Diocesan vision? In what ways can we attend to historic and important buildings and support the excellent ministry of all at Cathedral Place. Should the Cathedral continue as a 'parish', as we understand a parish, or should the worshipping congregation of the Cathedral, which is a vital and generous congregation in the Diocese, find new expressions of its ministry within the overall shape of Cathedral Place? A small group of Cathedral members and Diocesan appointees has been looking at governance issues for some time. The Cathedral congregation is constantly living into the challenge of providing a suitable 'home' for Diocesan worship and, at the same time, ministering effectively to its own members and to the community which surrounds it. The members of the Cathedral Corporation, which already includes two *at-large* members from the Diocese, appointed by the Bishop, and I, as the *incumbent* of the Cathedral, are looking at creative and cost effective ways of providing sacramental, pastoral, liturgical, and musical leadership not only to this community, but also to the Diocese as whole. We are always trying, as much as we can, to look at holistic ways in which we can serve Cathedral Place, and the Diocese, and the Cathedral parish.

In this season of Christmas, we are focused on the Incarnation. The incarnation calls us to enflsh the Word in our world and in our lives; to give Jesus room, if you will. As we move forward as a Church, examining governance and structures, may the living Christ inform all that we do! Happy Epiphany, all!

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7 »

# Was it really forty-six years ago?

They felt that time was too short to be going so slow. The future of Anglicanism in terms of high church and low-church was seen as important, because the Church did not need uniformity as much as it needed mutual conversation that corrects and enriches the whole. Does this sound familiar today?

The last issue of Congress Daily told us that Anglicans departed on a note of realized fellowship. American, Bishop Pike noted that union negotiations were ongoing with Presbyterians, Methodists and the United Church of Christ. Curiously none of this came off, but in its place, many years later, came a global union with the Evangelical Lutherans. The Congress Message was - **It recognizes the Church that lives by itself will die by itself and recognizes four points; God has called us to be a serving Church - God has called us to be a Listening Church - God has called us to be one Church and lastly, God has called us all.. Clergy and laity together.**

This has been a rather very light overview of the 1963 Anglican Congress. It was a wonderful time of vision and growth. A few things from the Congress tended to peter out and others have grown beyond any imagination of that time. Things do change, and the Church can and must change. Not to do so is to die. To go on as many have, living life in the Church as if they were still youths is a hopeless waste of time. The King James Bible and the Prayer Book have been largely abandoned by the English speaking portion of the Communion and the Church moves on. We are the third largest Christian Communion and our lives are not meant to be focused solely on our parish, but rather on a Universal Church and the good we can bring to the world.

This brings us to today and to Niagara, where our Bishop has a vision for our Church. As Michael Patterson said, "Excellence in Ministry is an opportunity for our Church to be a vibrant faith

community giving witness to faith." The vision is not meant to be a program to get more money, or people in pews, or money to the Synod office. It is moving beyond the Bishop's articulation, we now move to concrete action and steps must be put into motion. We have a call to live justice and to show the world the Gospel is alive and well. There will be education of laity and clergy with respect to justice issues. We need to encourage lifestyles that are consistent with sustainability. We need to recognize our responsibilities as stewards of the Earth. We will need to respond to all of the issues of people around us, recognizing that our God is one of abundance. We need to improve our communication, which includes the Niagara Anglican and the Web-site.

Armchair leadership will not help. Talking about issues will not change anything. We can only live our way into newness. We need to try things and to make mistakes. Our parishes must be transformed. Bishop Michael has given us the vision and we need to own it, personally and intentionally. Some of what will be done, we are doing, but further than that there are those things which we ought to do. We have come to a new vision and a new witness that will include all people and parishes without reservation. We have no option but to make it work. God has not at all abandoned us, but calls us today to witness in his name.

And so, as the vision unfolds we need to be reminded that **Bishop Bird is calling each one of us** to make a difference, indeed many differences, in the way we worship and the way engage people according to their needs. It may sound like something quite beyond us, but it is not. There is work and witness for each of us the young, those engaged in our society through their work, and the elderly. Each of us must answer the vision of the Bishop and renew ourselves as we take up his call to action. Who knows, this could be our finest hour.

# Follow the leader



**MARNI NANCEKIVELL**  
DIRECTOR OF INTERIM MINISTRY

As I come to reflection on my life to which I am particularly prone over the holidays, I recognize that of all the things for which I am grateful, I am particularly grateful that I am not Barack Obama. This may seem like a surprising contrast, being that I am neither American, nor black, neither a politician nor male.

However, I am one charged in my own small way with leadership. Being so, I recognize all too well the pitfalls and challenges of leadership. The existence of a horrendous economy aside. The fact that his country is actively at war also aside. Even setting the omnipresent face of terrorism aside, President Elect Obama has a major problem. He sees that problem first thing in the morning when he looks in the mirror. The problem is: Barack Obama.

Now before you send me an e-mail in protest, let me be clear. I was thrilled to sit at home in election night and watch his sweet of victory as report after report came in to declare his leadership. So perhaps I should clarify my thinking to tell you that in my mind, the problem is not Barack Obama as much as it is how his leadership has been greeted. He is popular. The problem is he is too popular.

Early in my friendship with Canon Elaine Hooker, 'way back in the 1970s, we would observe the church, the world and individuals therein. One of the things that I recall learning from Elaine in those years was that the problem with being "put on a pedestal" is that the pastime of the day becomes "knocking the person off the pedestal". That is my fear for President Elect Obama. Think for a moment. How likely is it that one person, no matter how many brilliant advisors they have around them can affect immediate change in such a broken world.

The public, I fear has expectations that are too high, and memories that are too long. It will be very easy for people to grow impatient with President Elect

Obama if he does not produce change in lightning speed. And as I am aware from my small work in leadership, that is high impossible to do.

So, my concern is the same as what happened to Jesus in that Palm Sunday parade. That the same crowd who on Sunday were shouting his praises will by Friday be shouting "crucify him". And some wild individual may just think that is a good thing. I hope not.

In this Holy Season we celebrate the birth of another leader. At this time of year, we celebrate his birth as the babe of Bethlehem. One who taught as he led. As we think of him, let us recall the vulnerability of all who give themselves to the task of leadership. Let us remember too that the new President of the United States is not God in human form. He is but a finite person with gifts and flaws; who has offered himself for leadership in an incredibly complex set of circumstances.

And let us, as followers of the way of Jesus, not only remember with gratitude the leadership into which he grew, but recall that he calls each one of us into leadership in our own ways. We are called to be servant leaders; leaders to our community and for our God.

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| St. Catharines | St. Columba   | January 7 - 7:00 PM  |

For further information contact Jane Wyse at 905-527-1316 x420 or

# Our Home: The Mansion or the Alley?

Some thoughts on Naguib Mahfuz' *Children of the Alley*



**MICHAEL BURSLEM**  
RETIRED PHYSICIAN, ST GEORGES GUELPH

At the Cairo Book Fair this time last year I picked a book of Naguib Mahfuz, *Children of the Alley*. Mahfuz is such a great teller of stories. He claims to have heard them from the poet-storytellers in the coffee houses, a profession sadly no longer found in Egypt, due to patrons' preference for the TV.

*Children of the Alley* is about a typical alley in the outskirts of Cairo on the edge of the desert, in which the people are not only poor, but deprived and uneducated. Dirt is everywhere; garbage is scattered by scavenging dogs, cats and rats; there are flies and mosquitos and strong odors. Sounds are those of dogs barking, donkeys braying as they pull heavily loaded rickety carts, cries of merchants selling wares on the street, and shouts and screams from the houses; but there are no TV's and no automobiles. Everyone is terrorized by gangsters and extortionists. Protection money is paid to 'protectors,' but they're just as rotten as the rest. Life is brutally raw; fights frequently end in death, either by clubbing or knifing, (but no guns) and other less pleasant methods which I shall not describe. This is certainly not the Cairo I have known, or ever hope to know.

There are six main characters in *Children of the Alley*: Gabalawi, the master of the quarter, who lives in 'The Big House' with a walled, well watered garden of many trees and flowers; Adham, one of his sons, who is expelled from the big house into the alley; then three

characters, Gabal, Rifaa and Qassem, who in turn try to restore some sort of justice and order to the chaos following the expulsion, and finally Arafah, the magician. There is the promise throughout that one day all at Gabalawi's children will return to live with him in his mansion. These are independent stories, but it was only part way through Rifaa's that I realized that the whole was an allegorical historical epic. Adham represents Adam, cast out of the Garden of Eden, Gabal, Moses the lawgiver; Rifaa, Jesus, Qassem Muhammad, and Arafah, Nietzsche or Marx, or the founders of modern secularism. There is pathos in each story, but Adham's has more than all Dickens's novels together. To read history, or great literature, as this, more than just superficially, one needs a box of Kleenex.

It is the story of Rifaa that I found the most interesting, though it moved me much less than Adham's. In Rifaa's early life he develops an interest in exorcism to free the people from their evil spirits. He rejects marriage to the daughter of a wealthy family and flees to the desert where Gabalawi meets him and encourages him to return, telling him to use his 'inner strength.' He does return and speaks up against all the violence. "Violence does us no good," he cries. "Every hour... we see people fighting, injuring and killing... Where is justice?" Sound familiar? But he also affirms it is better to be killed than to kill. He saves the life of a prostitute who is about to be stoned, by marrying her himself, but he never consummates the marriage. She later betrays him, and Rifaa is captured, led out to the desert to be killed. He cries for help from Gabalawi, but his cry isn't heard, or not answered. His followers are unable to find his body, and rumor spreads that Gabalawi has carried it off to the garden of 'The Big House.' One

of his band of disciples, Ali, is determined on revenge, and so Rifaa's wife is killed. Following that, their behavior is indistinguishable from that of the other children of the alley. Rifaa's message is all but forgotten. In fact, none of the three 'saviors' is able to permanently rid the alley of the gangsters. Arafah thought he had the power to do so through his magic, but he ended up in causing the death of Gabalawi. The garden wall is penetrated with the intent to open the gate to allow everyone in, but his good intention backfires, and the final anarchy in the alley is far, far worse, with no one to cry to for help or relief from their oppressive suffering. (It was this allusion to the 'death of God' that infuriated the religious right, who tried to put Mahfuz on trial for heresy. Also no image of the final prophet, not even an allegorical one, is permitted. The novel was first produced in serial form in the Al Ahrum back in 1959, but the government, in order not to offend the religious authorities, prevented its publication in book form until Mahfuz received the Nobel Prize for literature in 1988.)

The novel poses three questions that I think are relevant for us to answer at the New Year, when we resolve to change our old familiar habits. The first, if Gabal, Rifaa and Qassem stand for the leaders of the three monotheistic religions, why after their death does evil win over the good? And is Christianity really any different from the other faiths? What Christians did in the Crusades, the Inquisitions, and more recently through Western colonialism, convince Muslims that it is Christianity that is advanced by the sword, not Islam. Perhaps Christians did initially teach that it was better to be killed than to kill, but they suffered the terrible consequence – persecution. This continued for their first

300 years, until Constantine founded Christendom. Did Jesus teach us to kill our enemies as Christians have done ever since?

That leads us to the second question: In imitating Christ, what does one do in the face of such appallingly evil oppression and aggression? (We shall be thinking of this at Easter time.) Rifaa is especially commended by Gabalawi for fighting evil by laying down his weapons, which neither of the other two 'saviors' were willing to do. I asked myself whether God was pleased with our war on terrorism. This is a political question which everyone must answer for himself or herself. But it's also a moral question, for which we are all responsible to God.

The third question is, who really was Gabalawi? I certainly thought him to be a Father like figure; not a loving father, but an autocratic one. In the end, however, he himself dies. For the people of the alley that didn't make too much difference, for as many times as they called up to him to open the gate to let them in, he never answered them. For the most part throughout the book they treated him as though he were already dead, even before he did die. I wondered whether we don't also treat God as though he were dead, especially when we don't get the answer we want to hear from him.

This book gave me so much to think about. I enjoyed it, in spite of all its brutality. (The Bible in places is even more brutal.) It's an important work because it gives one Muslim's perception of Christianity. What disturbed me most was not that there was no happy ending, in which everyone lived happily ever after, but that Christians, in Mahfuz' eyes, didn't appear too different from anyone else, or is that too much to expect of us?

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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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SHOOT READY AIM »

# 'Calving' - New Beginnings

**HOLLIS HISCOCK**  
 INTERIM RECTOR, ST GEORGE'S GUELPH

**SHOOT - The photograph**

A meteor embedded in a frozen lake in western Canada could not be any more fascinating than witnessing the birth of an iceberg at Portage Glacier, Alaska.

"Look, it's calving!" shouted our guide, pointing across the mid size lagoon.

Peals of thunderous sounds bounced and ricocheted from hill to crevasse to water, producing a symphony of ear splitting crescendos.

As twenty sets of eyes focused on the tonnes of falling ice cubes, an equal number of hands covered naked ears to stave off potential hearing loss.

"There she goes!" a lady screamed as a million year old massive chunk of perpetually frozen liquid separated from the glacial landscape, and dropped twenty metres unceremoniously, spraying bubbles of dark water in all directions.

While others transfixed their gaze on this awesome natural phenomenon, I whipped out my camera, and froze this 'calving' moment of history.

**READY - Words behind the photo**

'Calving', a term describing the birth of an iceberg, can be applied to other new beginnings in life cycles, whether human, animal, vegetable, time, situation or place.

January first marks the start of a new time period. In fact, the symbol often employed to highlight this transition is a baby wrapped in an over-stuffed diaper. Even though the first day of our calendar year may be somewhat arbitrary and artificial, nevertheless we accept it as our 'calving' or birth of a new time period. Generally we anticipate its arrival with huge expectations and plans to celebrate recklessly, to restore relationships and to make

resolutions to change or correct our personal flaws.

We take the New Year for granted, and look forward to the coming weeks as opportunities to put the past behind us and reach out into the unknown future, as we cast aside the baggage that may have hindered us previously.

Maybe that is what Jesus meant when He said, 'sufficient to the day is the evil thereof' (Matthew 6:34). He probably viewed each day as a 'calving' experience for us, realizing that during any twenty-four hour period we have enough on our plates with which to deal. So at the ending of the current day, He suggested that we put aside the evils (struggles, harsh words, unkind gestures, even certain thoughts, etc), and begin the next morning renewed and refreshed after another 'calving' encounter.

An employee of 28 years with the same furniture retail outlet arrives at work one morning to find the doors securely bolted and a sheriff's noticed displayed declaring the company is bankrupt. Forced to reconcile his inner tattered emotions with the outward ramifications of this devastating situation, the employee is being forced into a 'calving' experience, where the person must break away from the comforts of past practices and enter unexplored avenues of seeking employment and related frightening lifestyle changes.

We see this scene being played out by thousands of terminated employees during the present economic recession in our global village. It means a colossal re-education, re-tooling or recalving of individuals in almost every aspect of each society throughout the world.

Similarly, a woman who suffers through an abusive relationship for years 'because of the kids' finally comes to the end of her tether. She runs away determined to begin a new life



by adopting another name and identity in some distant town or city where she is unknown. For her the 'calving' pangs may be extremely painful, but the emerging horizons could be peppered with exciting possibilities and satisfying happiness.

Jesus, to my knowledge, never uttered the word 'calving', but its meaning occupied His thoughts as He explained to his followers the essential difference between the new life He was advocating, and the traditional practices of their ancestors. Matthew, in his Gospel, brought these tenets together in a specific section of the Sermon on the Mount (5:21-47).

Matthew framed Jesus' teaching or 'calving' using this method. Jesus began each comparison with, 'you have heard that it was said' and then outlined the beliefs and practices of the past. Then He crafted the 'calving' or birth of His new way of life or Gospel

with, 'but I tell you', and related what God's standards are for such human activities as murder, divorce, adultery, revenge and relationships.

Let me give you three examples of this 'calving' of Jesus' new philosophy.

■ You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'do not murder', and anyone who murders will be subject to judgement. But I tell you that anyone who is angry with another person will be subject to judgement' (Matthew 5:21-22).

■ You have heard that it was said 'an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth'. But I tell you 'if someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to the person the other also' (Matthew 5: 38-39).

■ You have heard that it was said 'love your neighbour and hate your enemy'. But I tell you 'love your enemy and pray for those who persecute you' (Matthew 5:43-44).

'Calving' is any time of birth: an occasion when we break away from our past and embrace a different future, and a junction where God's presence becomes more prominent in our lives than our human nature.

**AIM - Questions and actions for you**

- Read the section of Matthew's Gospel (5:21-48).
- Think about 'calving' experiences in your own life?
- How have these 'calving' incidents shaped your spiritual beliefs and behavioural practices?
- Hollis would appreciate your feedback on this series.

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

# Community, compassion and hope



**JIM NEWMAN**  
 CHRIST'S CHURCH CATHEDRAL

In tough times, people are drawn to churches. "People are looking for community, compassion and hope", says Dr. Kennon Callahan, Presbyterian pastor, researcher, professor, and church consultant. The author of 15 books, Callahan also observes that "people are motivated by a theology of service, not a theology of survival."

His fundamental message is therefore: be a place of compassion, com-

munity and hope; and focus on mission and service. Though many of us might describe our parishes in these terms, too many parishes are static or declining, so clearly our message isn't getting through, at least not to the outside where it matters. And with conditions expected to get tougher, we can't sit idly by waiting for the economy to recover. This is no time for a theology of survival.

**Learning from the experts**

Have you noticed that hospitals and universities have their own messages of compassion, community and hope, and they're especially aware of their mission and service? They promote, inspire, and advance their causes continually. They project enthusiasm and

excellence in their public campaigns. The results are evident. They are highly respected and their fundraising thrives. Hardly a week goes by without a major gift of a million dollars or much more to McMaster, the University of Toronto, The Hospital for Sick Children, or some other educational or health care institution. They may or may not know about Callahan, but they utilize a Callahan-like approach supported by expertise in public relations, marketing, and advocacy.

**Our biggest need is Advocacy**

There's a role for public relations in every parish - "this is who we are, and what we do" web sites, ads, signs, posters, flyers, and it's where your published parish story and narrative

budget pay off big time. And there's a big role for marketing in every parish too: "how can we change (change?) to be aligned better with what people want and need."

But we must go further. Our biggest need is advocacy. Parish advocates enhance awareness, appreciation and support through relationships and partnerships in their communities. Some advocates tell stories, such as their own early childhood memories that encourage new families to get involved. Others create displays of parish history along side posters of current outreach ministries to confirm and promote parish identity. Advocates respect the views and priorities of others. They give generously and are positive about the future. In all

things they model the vision of their parish as strong, viable, and valuable. They are willing and able to make a difference; and they take our message of mission and service to the community and the world.

There are barriers to advocacy, of course. Some will say - that's someone else's job; or it shouldn't be necessary. Others will think it's too commercial, too flashy, and just not acceptable for a church. And we're much too busy, too powerless, and unskilled. But none of these statements is accurate.

Advocacy is the responsibility of all leaders, and by definition, all of us. Every one of us can learn to be a better advocate, and every parish in Niagara can be a place of community, compassion and hope.

# The trick is really the truth



**MARTHA TATARNIC**  
PRIEST IN CHARGE, ST. HILDA'S OAKVILLE  
PASTORAL CARE COORDINATOR, ST. JUDES OAKVILLE

My memory can play funny tricks on me. I'll be thinking back to a trip my husband Dan and I made three years ago, and I'll find myself wondering, "how did we manage to do that with Cecilia?" That might seem like a very normal question, except the fact that my daughter is only 18 months old and was nowhere close to being on the scene at that stage in our lives. I'll be trying to remember how we worked the trip around her nap and eating schedule, how we kept her entertained in the car, whether we left her at my parents' house, and then I'll catch myself, realizing with a start that there was actually a past that did not include Cecilia. Her arrival on our scene has been so all-consuming, her tiny little being becoming so immediately and intricately woven into our beings, that it is almost inconceivable to believe that there was a time when she was not.

Here is another memory trick. It is a less frequent trick, but it strikes with particular strength and predictability at this time of the year – Christmas. It is the mirror image of my imagining Cecilia back into occasions before her birth. It is the imagining of those who I have loved and lost forward into a present, a present long after their death. When I taste a square of Christmas almond cake – homemade from a recipe lovingly handed down by my Grandma Jean – it seems natural to feel the nearness of her gentle and creative presence, to lapse briefly into thinking that she is just in the other room. When I tell my daughter stories of Santa Claus, when Dan and I find ourselves being more generous and lavish in our groceries and gift shopping through the weeks of December, I am intuitively thinking of my Grandfather, hearing his hearty, deep laugh ringing in my mind, laughing to myself at his disorganized, boyish, and joyous approach to buying presents for loved ones. And when Dan throws himself into the Christmas season, when he tells me jokes and hangs our outdoor lights, and surprises me with buying my favourite seasonal treats, I see his father's face shining on his own, and it seems an impossibility that his father could have died two years ago, leaving us far too early, leaving before I got to know him as well as I would have wanted, before Cecilia got to know him at all.

My falsified memories of my daughter bring a smile to my lips, as I am struck once again by how completely she has changed my life. The

daydreams of my grandparents and father-in-law – while not unpleasant – leave me not with a smile, but with a sorrow. Because ultimately those daydreams are a reminder of how hard it is to accept that someone who lived, and breathed, and loved, and laughed yesterday could be no longer here today.

Mary Oliver – poet theologian – writes in her recent book *Thirst*, "It's not the weight you carry – books, bricks, grief – it's all in the way you embrace it, balance it, carry it. When you cannot, and would not, Put it down."

And perhaps it's not a trick of the memory. Perhaps it's no coincidence that Christmas is the time when we mostly keenly feel the people we love inextricably entwined into our past, present, future. Because this is the time of year when we are invited to contemplate the gift, blessing, and pain of love in the earthiest and most personal of terms. We meet Mary, saying 'yes' to all of the usual, plus a whole slew of unusual, circumstances which make motherhood and childbirth so risky. We witness the birth of Jesus in a cold and smelly barn, we wonder at the special guests who trek to that barn to meet him and to utter strange and heavy things about who he will grow up to be. Our hearts are opened to Mary and Joseph as they fall in love with this tiny boy who comes into their lives utterly dependent on them, and who will leave their lives amid heartbreak and scandal. We wonder at the words of our faith which tell us that this baby Jesus is not just the beloved child of Mary and Joseph, but is also the beloved child of God, that God is as deeply invested in the joy and trepidation of loving this fragile creature as any of us are in giving ourselves to another in love. More than that, the ways in which we carry the weight of love, and as Mary Oliver says, choose to 'embrace it, balance it, and carry it', can actually be said to be reflections of, windows into, the heart of God.

Maybe it's not a trick of the memory, because maybe this is the truth. Maybe this is something of the truth revealed to us in that barn, in that baby, in those angel hymns, ancient prophecies. The weight of love, heavy in our past, our present, our future, is worth building the muscle, learning the gracefulness, investing the spirit, to learn how to carry.

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Martha and her husband Dan, both priests in our diocese will be returning 'home' to the diocese of Toronto, beginning January 1st. We will miss them both. We will especially miss the wonderful contributions that Martha has made to our paper. We wish them (and Cecilia of course) the very best as they take this turn in their priestly ministry.

## EVENTS

### Family Movie Night

St. Cuthbert's, Oakville  
Watch a favorite film on our 8' by 8' screen. Bring friends, parents, pyjamas (if you want), sleeping bags, pillows and friends.  
Cost: \$1.00 per person  
January 9, 7:00 PM

### A Mile in Her Shoes

St. Cuthbert's, Oakville  
6 week bible study for women exploring the women of the Old Testament. All welcome!  
Cost: Contribution to Resource  
January 16, 9:00 AM

### Ice Skating

St. Cuthbert's, Oakville  
Join us for an hour of skating at a nearby frozen pond (weather depending). All ages enjoying the winter and building community.  
January 18, 1:00 PM

### Trinity Institute

Church of the Incarnation, Oakville  
Participate in the 2009 Trinity Institute via Live Feed: Radical Abundance - A Theology of Sustainability.  
January 21-23

### Social Night

St. Columba, St. Catharines  
Another night of cards, fun and laughter, snacks and prizes. Couples and singles welcome.  
Cost: \$2.00 per person  
January 24, 7:00 PM

### 'Reel' Faith

St. James and St. Brendan, Port Colborne  
Exploring the Connections between Film and Spirituality. This Week: 'Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind'  
Cost: \$5.00 per person  
January 28, 7:00 PM

### SpiritQuest

Crieff Hills Community, Puslinch  
Provides young people aged 14-23 years a nurturing environment that inspires spiritual self-discovery. Must register by January 22, 2009. Contact the Synod Office for more information.  
Cost: \$140.00 per person  
January 30

### Family Winter Retreat

Canterbury Hills, Ancaster  
Staffed programming for children, young teens and adults, worship, delicious food, music and lots of quality family time... and hopefully some snow for tobogganing. Includes two nights and five meals. This year's theme is "Praying in Color". For more information contact Christyn Perkons at 905-527-1316 x460.  
Cost: \$120 per person, \$385 per family  
January 30-February 1

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## Truth in science

Rather it is the consequence of forces acting on the atoms and molecules of which everything is made, in agreement with Newton's first law.

Since the formulation of the first law, all questioning of nature must be compatible with it. Newton's first law is axiomatic for modern epistemology. This is what it means to say that we live in a scientific age. It has become the standard by which all other cultures and philosophies are judged. Can Aristotle's ideas still be taken seriously? Is there any central organizing principle operating within human nature, as Aristotle believed, or is our behaviour simply the product of our atoms and molecules, operating blindly under the influence of Newtonian forces? Ever since Newton, to argue against this view with educated people has presented a severe challenge. When Laplace showed Napoleon his book on mechanics, he objected, "But M. Laplace, you have made no mention of God!" Laplace's famous reply was, "I have no need of that hypothesis."

Since the birth of science in the sixteenth century, its march has been unstoppable. Its goal is to understand the workings of nature and its means have been the scientific method. This way of discovering truth has four stages: First, hypothesis: for example, large stones fall faster than small ones.

Second, experiment: drop a large stone and a small one together from the Leaning Tower of Pisa. Third, law: large and small stones fall together at the same speed. Fourth, theory: this is due to a fictitious force, experienced by all objects in the same accelerating frame of reference.

The first three steps are certainly not unique to Western science. For example, a Paraguayan Indian, seeing a swirl of dust, believes that he is observing the passing of a spirit. This is a hypothesis. He does an experiment. He throws a stick at it. The dust cloud goes away. He formulates a law. If you throw a stick at a spirit, it goes away. Is our Paraguayan friend doing science? Certainly, he is. He has followed the first three steps of the scientific method. The triumphalist attitude taken by modern science towards other forms of science is not due to the success of the first three stages of the scientific method. It is the fourth stage – the theoretical model used to interpret the laws of nature – from which modern science derives its authority.

For some time, Western science had several different models, each of which explained different aspects of nature. For example, at one time, it was thought that light, electricity and magnetism were all completely differ-

ent phenomena. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, James Clerk Maxwell showed that light was simply a travelling electric and magnetic field, and that the magnetic field was simply an electric field in disguise. Maxwell's equations reduced the three earlier models to one.

The next stage was even more astounding. Using our scientific model of nature, we can predict the existence of new objects and perform experiments to find them. The positron, meson, neutrino, and quark were all predicted by theory before they were found to exist. This is the theory of pure totalitarian government. If something exists in a scientific theory, it must exist in reality. We now have the Standard Model of the Universe, or the TOE (Theory of Everything) and the GUT (Grand Unified Theory). We know that our universe is composed of two types of objects – fermions and bosons. The fermions consist of leptons and quarks and make up all matter. The bosons are the carriers of the various forces, which hold the matter together. There you have it. All the scientists chanted in unison, "Amen." The truth found in science is impressive, is it not? Next month, we shall see how Christianity shows that Aristotle was not as wrong as we, modern, twenty-first century people imagine.

## 2nd Session of the 134th Synod of the Diocese of Niagara Date Announced

The 2nd Session of the 134th Synod of the Diocese of Niagara will be held on Saturday, March 28, 2009 at Christ's Church Cathedral, 252 James St. North in Hamilton.

Lay delegates who attended Synod on Saturday, November 8, 2008 are the voting Members of Synod for the 2nd Session of the 134th Synod in March.

Please mark this date on your calendar.