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On his recent trip to Toronto, Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby celebrates the eucharist at the convent of the Sisters of St. John the Divine. He met privately with Archbishop Fred Hiltz, primate of the Anglican Church of Canada, as part of his commitment to meet with primates throughout the Anglican Communion to foster friendship and mutual understanding. See coverage at anglicanjournal.com

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A TIMELINE TO RECONCILIATION

Anglican Healing Fund co-ordinator Esther Wesley kept hearing people refer to “empty apologies” whenever they talked about the sad legacy of Indian residential schools in Canada.

That bothered Wesley, who was aware of how many people within the Anglican Church of Canada—indigenous and non-indigenous—have worked to change an unjust and unequal relationship. The church has also offered close to $6 million for projects that promote healing and reconciliation between indigenous and non-indigenous Anglicans. “Our apology hasn’t been empty,” Wesley said.

Realizing many people were unaware of the church’s efforts to atone for the past, she came up with the idea of a timeline poster that would trace the relationship, good and bad, between indigenous people and the Anglican church.

With support from the primate, Archbishop Fred Hiltz, and the general secretary, Archdeacon Michael Thompson, the “Timeline of an evolving relationship” came into being. The primate presented a copy to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission at its final national event, held in Edmonton, March 27 to 30.

Laden with powerful images, text, quotes and graphics, the timeline begins with the arrival of Anglicans in North America in the 1400s, bringing with them the Doctrine of Discovery. Repudiated by the Anglican church in 2010, the doctrine decreed that “non-Christian nations have no rights to their land and sovereignty...” Today, it underpins laws and policies in nations founded by European colonizers, and indigenous people still feel its discriminatory effects.

The timeline was produced with help from Nancy Hurn (General Synod archivist), John Bird (special assistant to the primate on residential schools), Henriette Thompson (public witness director for social justice) and Saskia Rowley (General Synod graphics and print production manager).

In Hurn’s opinion, the timeline’s underlying message is this: “Before we can move forward in reconciliation, we have to understand our shared history.” —MARIETE N. SISON

TAKEN

Unwed mothers pressured to give up their babies

Valerie Andrews says the memories are burned into her mind. She was 17 when her family sent her to stay in a maternity home for unwed mothers in 1969.

On the surface, these homes—many of which were run by or supported by churches or individual church members—provided a refuge, shielding girls and women from the social stigma attached to having a child out of wedlock, but Andrews and other women say there is another side to the story. They say they were coerced into giving up babies they wanted to keep, by methods that included shaming, intimidation and withholding information about alternatives.

Andrews recalls her amazement when a new roommate told her she was keeping her baby. “Are we allowed to do that?” Andrews
At Welcome Home, we not only eliminate the addictive behavior, we also resolve the underlying issues that led to the addiction. In addition, program participants receive extensive career training and gain the healthy life-skills and other abilities needed to stay sober. Program participants develop mentally, socially, physically, emotionally, and spiritually until they are ready to live as responsible, contributing members of society - for life!

Similar programs cost $10,000 to $30,000 per month. However, Welcome Home is funded by the John Volken Foundation, a private charitable organization dedicated to fighting addiction. Thanks to this funding, the Program is FREE, except for the one-time intake fee. No strings attached. We only require your solid commitment to change.

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www.WHrecovery.org
E VERY CANADIAN gardener knows the rule that it is not safe to plant anything before the Victoria Day weekend. That’s particularly true on the prairies, so my family’s annual trip to the outskirts of Camrose, Alta., to the greenhouses to buy bedding plants was a spring ritual that I eagerly anticipated while I was growing up. It was so wonderful to follow my parents down the hothouse aisles, breathing the warm, moist air, heavy with the scents of flowers and green things, and admire the bursts of colour when spring was still just getting started outside. My mother loved flowers, and I learned from her many names, as they dropped regularly into her conversation. We would drive home, our trunk full of red and pink geraniums, bright margaritas, an array of petunias and begonias, purple and white lobelia, spiky dracaena and silvery-soft dusty miller to mix into planters.

The rest of the spring and summer were intimately connected with the welfare of the garden. There was joy and satisfaction when plants flourished, impatience when cold weather stunted them, concern when heat wilted them or a hard rain pelted the blooms down to the bed of tulips and roses. Gardens for me, like her, were places to seek peace, solace and joy amidst the slings and arrows of everyday life. I loved to read the quote from a poem by Dorothy Frances Gurney, inscribed on a plaque: “One is nearer God’s heart in a garden/ Than anywhere else on earth.” My mother shared my wonder on a visit, admiring the English-style gardens and huge trees. “You’ve got to see the magnolia trees,” I told her, raving about that brief springtime window of a week or two when those big, delicate waxy-pink blooms cover the trees.

Two years ago, my mother came to help me care for our year-old daughter, Alia, while my husband was abroad. It seemed like the magnolia timing was right. She was here for the beginning of spring, but an unusual warm spell that March moved everything far ahead of its proper time. The magnolia buds were starting to open when a hard frost came. Almost all the flowers were ruined. We were both disappointed but told ourselves there would be other springs, other magnolia seasons.

Soon after, though, our own hard frost came. My mother told me that the doctor had found a tumour. Since she had no symptoms, no pain, I told myself it was early and all would be well. There was a surgery, and we hoped and prayed. But five weeks later, Mum was gone, torn from our arms so quickly we were all left frozen in shock and disbelief in the icy wind of February. Not much grew on our balcony last summer. Maybe I didn’t have the heart or the energy to put into container gardening. I had to reserve my time and energy to tend one precious flower, the one that Mum loved more than any other—her only granddaughter, Alia, whose middle name is Jasmine. “Take care of Alia,” she told me when she was in the hospital.

“I wish Grandma could go back to Grandma’s house,” Alia said to me one day last winter. “I wish she could, too,” I said, “but she can’t come back from heaven, sweetie.”

“And heaven far away?” I faltered. How far is it?

“She is always with us, and Grandma is with God, so maybe she is close by,” I said. “Maybe she can see us.”

“Does heaven have a window?” Alia asked.

“Yes, maybe it’s like that,” I said. I often think I am still frozen. I have been reminded that no season is truly safe, but I lifted Alia up the other day to touch the big fuzzy buds on our neighbour’s magnolia tree. And I’m watching to see how the great big trees in the park, so broken in December’s ice storm, will begin to grow again. I think of the last stanza of Gurney’s poem: For he who in December / Lives in the wicket, / Lives in the garden / Where the angel of his love / Comes to him / And rests beneath his branches. / The soul of the world found ease.

My mother’s love for flowers, and the beauty of what was green and alive, were both in her will and now want to do more...right now, while they are both living.”

Martha and Selwyn are grateful to General Synod’s Resources for Mission project with a lump-sum commuted value payment. Their annual gift (with me), they have enquired about a charitable gift annuity which would make an immediate gift to their diocese for an ecumenical outreach project...and still receive some permanent life-long income and a tax break. Our department arranged a series of illustrations and chose the following:

A contribution of $75,000 from their GIC savings (earning at the moment 2.10% fully taxable). This would provide a life-time joint annuity of $273.10 per month or $3,277.20 a year, of which $801.41 is taxable (or tax-free, $2,475.79), along with a one-time donation receipt of $18,750. Assuming a top marginal tax rate in the province where they live, this arrangement will offer a tax credit of $8,812.50 with a one-time donation receipt of $18,750. Assuming a top marginal tax rate in the province where they live, this arrangement will offer a tax credit of $8,812.50

For further information about how you might follow the example of Martha and Selwyn, regardless of income or assets or particular passion about ministry and programme, please contact:

Archdeacon John M. Robertson, Senior Gift Planning Officer, Resources for Mission
General Synod of The Anglican Church in Canada
80 Hayden St., Toronto, ON M4Y 3G2
Telephone 416.924.9199 ext. 268 • Toll-free 1.888.439.GIFT (4438)
Kingston home study: 613.384.5608 • Email: jrobertson@nationalanglican.ca

Serving parishes, dioceses, General Synod, and our national partners.
**A ministry blessed by people**

A. PAUL FEHELEY

The date was May 20, 1979, and the place was the Cathedral Church of St. James, Toronto. I knelt before Archbishop Lewis Garnsworthy, who laid his hands upon my head and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit for the office and work of a priest in the Church of God...”

Some 35 years later, having shared ministry in five parishes and now in a sixth, and having contrived to persist for 35 years at the national office of the Anglican Church of Canada, I find myself feeling encouraged—and sometimes discouraged—about the church.

The discouragement centres on structures and processes that bind rather than liberate, on self-centredness, lack of honesty and the misappropriation of power. Richard Schmidt in Glorious Companions quotes the opening to his remarkable little book, The Authority of the Leity, by American lay theologian Verna Dozier: “A funny thing happened on the way to the Kingdom. The church, the people of God, became the church, the institution.” Schmidt continues the thought: “God calls the church, the people of God...to take the risk of faith in a world that denies the spirit. Very quickly, though, the church...like every institution, soon focuses its energy on perpetuating itself, not maintaining its power.”

And yet the church remains the people of God. For them, the people, have given me some very unique privileges over the past three and a half decades—from baptizing and sharing the eucharist to participating in weddings and funerals, to sharing in ministry in every diocese in this country and, on a few occasions, in different settings and countries around the world. More than ever, I feel people have blessed my ministry. I think of Malcolm, a gentleman who was financially and otherwise challenged, yet had travelled, alone, to Toronto from Montreal. He wanted to sing in a choir, and when I met him, he told me that churches kept telling him, “There isn’t a choir robe big enough for you.” I almost wept at how harsh a church can be—at how we can think God is more impressed with fine music than how the disadvantaged are treated. Malcolm proudly took a place in the choir of my parish.

I think of four-year-old Larry, and how he sat in his first Sunday school class, teaching him to say “amen” at the moment when the host would be placed in his hand. On that glorious morning of his first receiving the sacrament, I placed the host in his hand and, with the widest grin imaginable, he looked me in the eye and said, “Thank you.” Larry knew what the eucharist meant.

I think of an inner-city parish that I served, where drugs, alcoholism and prostitution were prevalent, and that existed near a large facility for the mentally challenged. Parish membership was increased by one when “The Torch” joined us. Faithfully the community stood with her and her incredibly ecumenical behaviour as she succeeded and failed continually to achieve sobriety.

I think of the mother who joined me in the hospital chapel where I had paused for a feel-good song, who asked, “Will my baby die?” Indeed the baby girl did die, but I was able to walk the journey with her parents while struggling with a thousand unanswered questions as to why.

Other memories include working with a traditional parish to help a transsexual feel welcome part of the community...sharing a community supper with a guest who was moved to tears because he was “allowed” to decorate a Christmas tree...staying with a schizophrenic man who walks miles every Sunday morning to be present with God in the parish in ways that I will never understand.

I thank God that over the years, these people and many others have touched my life and showed me what the gospel of love really means.

**CHOICES LIMITED**

I read with interest the centre spread on the ordination of women in the May 2014 issue of the Anglican Journal ([pp. 6–7](#)). My sister, Charlotte, described her sadness when, as a 19-year-old schoolgirl, she knew that our father opposed the ordination of women—a reality that limited her career choices, yet not that of her two brothers. I was 13 years old at the time and remember thinking to myself of our father’s view, “He is wrong.” A thought that in the short-term I kept to myself. I was ordained in 1992. My life has been deeply enriched by the ministry of ordained women, who have been for me, mentors, teachers, partners, friends, colleagues and partners. I cannot imagine a church without them. Charlotte would have been, and who knows might still be, a very fine priest.

P J Hobbs

**RETURN UNDELIVERABLE CANADIAN ADDRESSES TO CIRCULATION DEPT.**

10 Hayden St., Toronto, ON M4Y 3J2

**LETTERS**

The RIGHT STUFF

I was deeply moved by Todd Russell’s story [Russell: True Son of the Land](#), March 2014, p. 31. His dedication, his faith in humanity, his courage and his ability to forgive. I would encourage him to return to politics. He is just the person we need in our government.

We need his understanding of the social and the intellectual aspects of our lives and his ability to balance these. The present government has slowly and systematically eliminated persons and groups that might object to its laws or appointments. This is how a dictator gains power.

Todd Russell understands this and we need him.

Margaret Back

Ottawa

THOUGHTS

Two items in the Feb. 2014 issue require comment and context. Mark MacDonald’s piece “Only God can save us,” p. 57 recalls the story about God...to take the risk of faith in a world that denies the spirit... Very quickly, though, the church...like every institution, soon focuses its energy on perpetuating itself, not maintaining its power.”

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The mother city of us all

FRED HILTZ

IN HIS BOOK A Walk in Jerusalem, John Peterson writes: “No road in the Holy Land has been more travelled than the Way of the Cross in Jerusalem. It is an ecumenical phenomenon and never more so than today.” Moving through the Old City, using Peterson’s guide to the road Christ walked on his way to the cross, we stop briefly at gates, arches and doorways surmounted by one of the Stations of the Cross.

At the last one—XIV, commemorating Jesus’ body being laid in the tomb—we find ourselves inside the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. “What other church,” writes Peterson, “what other cathedral, where else in the world hosts an empty tomb?” None other does. Such a church is found only in Jerusalem. Our roots stem from this empty tomb. This empty tomb makes us all citizens of Jerusalem.

With hundreds of other pilgrims from all over the world, I have stood in line to spend a moment or two in the Holy Sepulchre. That’s all you get before you are moved along. In that tomb, I have been reminded that death had no dominion over Christ, and that in him we have the sure hope of a resurrection to eternal life.

That truth is at the heart of the church’s preaching the gospel through the seven glorious weeks of Easter. I am delighted that, by resolution of the General Synod in 2013, our church has designated the Seventh Sunday of Easter (June 1, this year) as Jerusalem Sunday. In the readings for that day, we are in the Holy City, between the ascension of the Lord and the coming of the Holy Spirit, according to Jesus’ promise. We are reminded of his words to his disciples, then and in every age, even our own, “you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

Indeed, while Canterbury is the cherished see of our unity in the spirit and tradition we call Anglican, Jerusalem is truly the mother of all who call themselves Christian, indeed all who call themselves Jew and Muslim. As Bishop Suheil Dawani of the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem has said, “There is room for everyone in Jerusalem.”

With gratitude, let us pray for the people of Jerusalem, saying with the psalmist, “May they prosper who love you” (Psalms 122:6).

ARCHBISHOP FRED HILTZ is primates of the Anglican Church of Canada.
It all starts with listening

ANDREW STEPHENS-RENNIE

Music was a deeply formative part of my adolescence. Along with Bible reading and daily prayer, my Christian music collection was incredibly meaningful to me. Audio Adrenaline, Amy Grant, DC Talk, Michael W. Smith, Petra and White Cross were just some of the bands in my collection.

I remember being on a bus trip one time, on my way to see Australia’s buses in concert. I overheard one of my friends explaining to a new member of our youth group that going to see this band was going to be a way better experience than going to see the youth group that going to see this band was friends explaining to a new member of our bus trip one time, on my way to see Australia’s buses in concert.

In my adolescence, this was the litmus test. Not the musicianship, not the creative spark, not the way in which music engaged the complexities of the world around us, or opened up new possibilities. The test for good music was: Did it put on when life is getting you down?”

We must listen continually, because they turn to the artists who can articulate (perhaps more clearly than they can) precisely what they’re feeling. So how do we engage? It all starts with listening. It always starts with listening. Listening to young people, listening to their music and listening to the struggles and joys of their daily lives.

What comes next is the hard part accompanying young people in the midst of the pains and struggles of everyday life, and welcoming them into the story we call our own: the story of Jesus’ life, death and resurrection.

I said earlier that this is hard. But it shouldn’t be. In fact, in my experience, it isn’t hard at all. Looking for companions who, when forced to confront the limits of human existence, young people constantly blow me away with their deep desire for some good news. We’re good-news people. We’ve got plenty to share.

And yet we need to start by listening. We must listen to the depth of the wrestling in our young people’s thoughts and emotions. We must listen continually, because they might not tell us right away. And yet, if we asked the question: “What music do you put on when life is getting you down?”

It might not be Michael W. Smith’s “Friends Are Friends Forever,” but whatever it is, it might just be the beginning of an incredible conversation.

Andrew Stephens-Rennie is a member of the national youth initiatives team of the Anglican Church of Canada.

News Brief

Brandon fraud charges withdrawn

On March 10 charges were withdrawn against the diocese of Brandon’s Rev. Noah Njeogov.

A diocesan letter read out in churches on Sunday, March 16 explained that a withdrawal of charges is not the same as a dismissal or stay of charges; the Crown can proceed against Njeogov at a later date.

Njeogov did not enter a plea to the charge of fraud over $5,000. The charge resulted from alleged misuse of a diocesan business credit card for personal expenses in excess of $190,000, from March 2010 to September 2012 when he was executive archdeacon and assistant to his father, Bishop James Njeogov.

The letter also outlined new costs for forensic auditing, payable by the diocese. Bishop Njeogov previously declined to comment on the case because of his familial connection to the accused. —STAFF

Training Cuban farmers

Archbishop Hilts is urging Canadian Anglicans to help the Primates’ World Relief and Development Fund (PWRDF) raise $45,000 to train 250 people in sustainable farming techniques in Cuba.

Speaking in a video for Fred Says, the primates’ three-year campaign to raise awareness about food security, Hilts cited the inspiring case of a Cuban farmer named Roberto, who, thanks to training, has made himself more self-sufficient with a successful rooftop garden. According to the Episcopal Church of Cuba’s Bishop Griselda Delgado del Carpio, agricultural training has already impacted health.

“Before the training, people had a very static diet of pork, rice and beans. Many people had diabetes with this diet. Now, people are growing carrots, tomatoes, onions, mangoes and other crops,” she told PWRDF.

For more information, go to fredsays.ca. —STAFF

Bishops tackle climate change

Archbishop Thabo Makgoba, primate of the Anglican Church of Southern Africa, has invited 20 Anglican Communion bishops to join him in Cape Town in February 2015 in a “process of discussion and discernment” about what churches can do about change and ecological degradation.

“Our goal will be to develop a Communion-wide strategic plan that meets the challenges ahead and builds confidence in God’s future,” Makgoba said.

According to Makgoba, some Anglican provinces are already feeling the effects of climate change, including rising sea levels, stronger storms, longer droughts, shortages of food and clean water and waves of refugees. “Unless more direct and faithful action, in addition to the reduction of greenhouse gases, is taken soon, the consequences for the church and all of humanity will be even more profound,” he said.

National Indigenous Anglican Bishop Mark MacDonald and the diocese of Edmonton’s Bishop Jane Alexander have been invited to represent the Anglican Church of Canada.

Canada’s the Rev. Canon Ken Gray, secretary to the Anglican Communion Environmental Network, said this is the first time that bishops are gathering specifically to discuss environmental issues, “with the intention of speaking collectively to the Communion worldwide.”

—With files from ACNS

Mourning Bishop Mhogolo

Bishop Godfrey Mdimi Mhogolo of the diocese of Central Tanganyika died March 28 following a severe lung infection.

Diocese of Niagara bishop, Michael Bird, who met Mhogolo at the 2008 Lambeth Conference, described him as a “personal friend and a real inspiration.” Mhogolo was the first bishop in Tanzania to ordain women and he was “a strong advocate for the rights of women and children,” said Bird. Bird added that he and Mhogolo led a theological dialogue between their two dioceses around the issues of human sexuality that became part of a process of an Anglican Communion-wide dialogue.

In a statement, the Anglican Church of Tanzania paid tribute to Mhogolo, saying not only was he a theologian with a “remarkable intellect,” he also had a lot of energy and drive.

—STAFF
Hope and faith in a troubled land

Scott Brown captures pupils at Ramallah’s Arab Evangelical Episcopal School.

“The does the world care that we’re being pushed out of our land?” Lisa Barry, Anglican Video’s senior producer, by Palestinian Christians during a February trip to the Holy Land. Barry, along with Anglican Video’s production manager, Beverley J因素, Palestinian Arab Christians, and Palestinian film director, visited the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem, which has 27 parishes spread across Israel, Palestine, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria.

The trip was intended to “really listen, record and gather up the stories of the living stones of the diocese,” and to develop resources for parishes to use for Jerusalem Sunday, which the Anglican Church of Canada celebrates for the first time on June 1, said Mann.

The weeklong itinerary included meetings with the diocesan bishop, Suheila Dawani, and diocesan staff, touring ministries in and around Jerusalem and in the Palestinian cities of Ramallah and Gaza and engaging with people involved in diocesan programs. The team also saw the effects of the protracted Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Barry, who first visited Jeru-

salem 12 years ago, was struck by the growth of prosperous Israeli settlements on impoverished Palestinian land. “From little outposts, it becomes literally small cities with tens of thousands of people living in them, [even] up on hilltops,” she said. The settlements are illegal because they encroach on Palestinian land, Barry added. “Again and again, it was said to us, ‘How can they be talking about peace over there and doing this over here?’”

For Mann, the greatest shock came from seeing what former Israeli prime minister Ariel Sharon euphemistically called the “separation fence”—and, as it was up on hilltops,

it is important because ‘the living stones’ of the community cannot buy at Arab markets. On Fridays, as the sun sank, the Shabbat horns would wail to signal the approaching Jewish Sabbath. The current religious-political polarities were firmly entrenched on both sides of this patch of Christian ministry in a land both disputed and sacred. In 1983 I made my first tour of Israel. A decade later, I discovered the difference between a tour and pilgrimage. Tours tend to last eight to 10 days and offer a fast-moving overview of selected sites. Tours feed tourists well, let

peace and justice issues in the Holy Land. The package includes videos, photos, essays and feature articles. To view the web page, click on the Journey to Jerusalem Sunday icon found on the home page of anglicanjournal.com.

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Journey to Jerusalem Sunday

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Tourist or pilgrim? It’s up to you

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peace and justice issues in the Holy Land. The package includes videos, photos, essays and feature articles. To view the web page, click on the Journey to Jerusalem Sunday icon found on the home page of anglicanjournal.com.

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In an ancient land where ‘living stones’ enact their faith

FEB. 4 Tel Aviv

Our flight lands in bright sun in Tel Aviv, where we encountered the Holy Land’s ‘living stones’ people who are living out their faith on this ancient soil.

FEB. 5 The spirit of Palestine

A teenage Gazan girl, bespectacled and broad-shouldered, stood in front of a crowd of women. "I will teach you," she said. "I will teach you to dance." The other girls around her looked at her in amazement. She continued, "I will teach you to speak up and be heard."

The number of young girls studying advanced mathematics impresses me. A teenage Palestinian girl getting ready for her exams and physics says she wants to be a doctor. When I apologize for my limited knowledge of Arabic, she says, "I will teach you." Many times in the days ahead, I will encounter this eagerness to help and provide hospitality. This is the spirit of Palestine and Palestinians.

FEB. 7 College, our accommodation

Guesthouse at St. George’s Cathedral. Before Ramallah, we stop at a church named after HH Princess Basma Bint Talal of Jordan, a great patron of the diocese. This school caters to students with special needs and challenges, and we are moved by the courage and perseverance of the pupils and their teachers.

FEB. 9 Scenes from the Old City

Inside Ramallah

The West Bank in Palestinian land, yet we must get through an Israeli checkpoint to journey to Ramallah because there are Israeli settlements nearby. Palestinians travelling to work and school suffer daily delays and humiliations at such checkpoints.

We pass a huge Israeli settlement called Pagari. Ze’ev, which sprawls out over several kilometres. It seems prosperous and well tended in contrast to the surrounding Palestinian villages, where many homes are in disrepair. All these communities fall under the jurisdiction of the same Israeli municipal authority.

The Israeli soldier who stops us at the checkpoint before Ramallah smiles at Abu John, saying, "Biblical driver?" He waves us on through, a privilege not afforded Palestinian residents.

At the Arab Evangelical Episcopal School in Ramallah, we interview the headmaster, Lyndal Radd. "It is Saturday, but the children are in school. Muslim students have Fridays off, Christians Saturdays."

Next on our agenda is the diocesan’s Al Ahli Arab Medical Center, the holy city surrounded by the Haram, and the Haram Mosque. We are met at the steps by the Trappist monastery of Saint Mary of the Orient. We visit the Al Ahli Arab Medical Center. It is located in the holy city of Jerusalem.

The Rev. Saleem Dawani, an idealistic young priest, weeps as he describes the horrors of the 1967 battle between Israel and Jordan. A young woman is the one shouting commands at me. Confused, I see a team of Israeli soldiers behind a young Palestinian who is shouting in Arabic into a microphone. She is waving a white flag. The young woman is the one shouting commands at me.
Taking stock of the TRC

As the last of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s (TRC) seven national events came to an end in Edmonton on March 30, participants weighed in on the process. For National Indigenous Anglican Bishop Mark MacDonald, participation has been “a strange mixture of Good Friday and Easter.” He has found it “very painful, very challenging” to witness how the 150-year legacy of residential schools has affected former students and their families, but he has also seen “resilience, hope and the idea that we have reached a point from which we can’t turn back.”

Archbishop Terry Finlay, the primiate’s special representative on residential schools, described his TRC experience as “painful, challenging, truth-revealing, humbling and unsettling;” but also contributing to his own spiritual life. “I think the TRC has really given a voice, a face and a presence to a very, very painful and unjust period of time in our Canadian history,” he said.

TRC events have had the effect of “raising consciousness and healing of all people, especially the survivors,” said MacDonald, pointing to a growing understanding among non-indigenous Canadians that healing needs to happen not just among survivors and their families, but in all of Canada. While gratified by the increasing participation by churches, MacDonald said, “We have a long way to go, but it has been steady growth.” According to Finlay, local church involvement started slowly in some provinces and took off quickly in others.

And though fraught with risks, the full participation of former residential schools staff at the events is something both MacDonald and Anglican Healing Fund co-ordinator Esther Wesley would have liked to see happen. Most former staff stayed within the confines of the churches’ listening area. One or two gave public testimonies but were met with open hostility and weeping by some former students. In MacDonald’s view, the church could facilitate a process “in which we give proper due to [staff] who worked there... many worked courageously and sacrificially and displayed kindness.”

General Synod archivist Nancy Hurn expressed hope the church will have other opportunities to share its schools-related archival materials. She is astonished at the impact that photographs, drawings, memorabilia and documents, shared at TRC events, have had on survivors and their families. “People feel free to discuss their past when they see themselves in photos. There’s always lots of laughter [and] sometimes, tears, if people see a family member from the past.” Photographs and scrapbooks of student artwork donated to the archives by former staff have clearly demonstrated that school staff “has valued them [and] their presence at the schools—so much that they would keep track of them in this way,” she said.

On a practical level, said Wesley, both government and churches need a plan in place for dealing with the aftermath of TRC events in communities. The reopening of wounds has been healing for some but devastating for others, she said, citing how one former student who had been sober for 25 years fell off the wagon after a TRC event triggered memories of his horrific past.

Both churches and indigenous organizations are looking to what happens next. The TRC has “only opened the door and now, there’s much work to be done,” said Finlay. “The indigenous people are discovering their own self-determination and their own way forward, and we as Canadians, together, have got to continue the journey with them that, in some ways, the TRC has started effectively.”

—MARTES N. SISON

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The Anglican Church of Canada
Sorrento Centre faces a defining and encouraging moment in its history; our financial base and aging facilities need new investment to continue supporting recent program growth.

The “NEXT 50” Campaign will strengthen the financial and physical foundations of our work and reinvest in our vision and mission.

Our plans include $2.7 million in new and renovated facilities, and $3.2 million in support of programs and ministries, which are at the heart of the Sorrento experience.

This includes the establishment of permanent Endowment Funds to ensure the sustainability of Youth Leadership programs, which are vital to the future of Sorrento, and the Anglican Church.

The young people of today must become the leaders of our church tomorrow, but that will not happen without the programs and experiences of Sorrento Centre.

Please consider supporting our Campaign. There are many ways to donate, including pledges of gifts of cash and assets.

You can also make a legacy gift by including Sorrento Centre as a beneficiary in your Estate, with a gift that will live forever.

Complete details are on our website, or you can contact us directly for more information on how you can help ensure the future of Sorrento.
Many mothers say homes for unwed mothers treated them with the same stigmatization they were supposed to shield them from and that there was a punitive atmosphere of shame. Women who wanted to keep their babies were told they were being selfish.

Stokes managed to find out which foster home her daughter was in and secretly visited her regularly. She thinks her mother found her photos and alerted Children’s Aid Society staff, who arranged a quick adoption.

Stokes had contested her consent, but her plea was dismissed by a judge who deemed that her job did not provide sufficient income. He did not inform her of any social assistance available. Stokes feels the experience tainted her life; she never had another child. Efforts to reconnect with her daughter have been difficult.

Origins Canada has met with officials from the Salvation Army and the Roman Catholic, Presbyterian, Anglican and United churches. Andrews says she wants the churches to support Origins’ call for a parliamentary or a senate committee to investigate these issues. Origins is also asking the churches to make a joint statement in favour of open records across Canada. “Six provinces still have closed records, where... an adoptee cannot even get their own birth certificate,” Andrews said.

So far, she says she is very encouraged by the churches’ “participation, by their active listening, by their compassionate responses to the mothers.”

Michael Thompson, general secretary of the Anglican Church of Canada, said he is glad that this issue is "coming to light because it gives us an opportunity to respond to those emotional, spiritual needs that come out of a sense of abandonment on the part of many children and traumatic loss on the part of many mothers and fathers as well."

Origins Canada can be contacted at originscanada@gmail.com or by phone at 416-400-5770.
Addressing crimes against native women

On March 8, Toronto’s Church of the Redeemer hosted a teach-in on missing and murdered aboriginal women and girls in Canada.

Black signs (see below) bore the names and ages of murdered women. Keynote speaker Dr. Dawn Lavell-Harvard, vice-president of the Native Women’s Association of Canada, outlined challenges faced by aboriginal females—from poverty and predators to racism and systemic oppression. “Our women experience greater rates of poverty, incarceration, child welfare apprehension, more violence,” she said. “They are more likely to go missing, more likely to be murdered and less likely to ever see justice.”

Her presentation included a video by Claude Osbome, a young aboriginal mother of three who went missing from Winnipeg in 2008. Although her family reported her disappearance, police didn’t investigate for weeks. Lavell-Harvard contrasted this case with that of a white teen who ran away after his parents took away his Xbox. Police and volunteers doggedly searched for him until his body was found three weeks later. Around the same time, two aboriginal teenage girls were reported missing. Police said they were probably just partying and, again, waited weeks to investigate. “Where are the amber alerts, where are the search parties when our young ones go missing?” Lavell-Harvard asked.

The Native Women’s Association of Canada has documented the cases of more than 600 missing or murdered women, and is tracking them at a rate of three to four new cases each month, Lavell-Harvard said. “These are just the ones we’re finding in media reports, just the ones that have made the news.” She cited media reports of girls who board freighters in Thunder Bay, Ont., for what they are told are parties and who are taken to Duluth, Minn., trafficked and never seen again.

Lavell-Harvard talked about the importance of addressing poverty and supporting aboriginal families. “How many times have you heard that our women choose to live a high-risk lifestyle? But I say to you, we were born into a high-risk lifestyle because of generations of oppression, because of abuse, because poverty in our communities creates a high-risk environment for our children.”

More than half of aboriginal children in Ontario live in poverty, and aboriginal children are more likely to be taken into care for poverty and neglect than abuse, she said. Time spent in foster care is cited as a common factor among girls and women who enter the sex trade, pointing to the current system’s contribution to a destructive cycle. Lavell-Harvard expressed anger at the federal government’s refusal to call a national inquiry into murdered and missing women. “The very people who...put themselves in the position of taking care of our indigenous peoples are the very people who are now denying the need for a national public inquiry. They’ll spend millions on inquiries looking into the future fate of salmon in the Fraser River...Do our women and our girls not deserve that same commitment, that same investment?”

—LEIGH ANNE WILLIAMS

Report on aboriginal women falls ‘short’

In the wake of the federal government’s report Invisible Women: A Call to Action, a report on missing and murdered indigenous women in Canada, the Anglican Church of Canada has pledged to help break the silence on this grave issue.

In a joint statement, the prime minister, Archbishop Fred Hiltz, and National Indigenous Anglican Bishop Mark MacDonald endorsed the recommendations to engage First Nations communities in improving front-line services for victims of violence on reserves. They also expressed support for a nationwide public awareness and education campaign on violence against aboriginal women and girls in Canada.

The report on missing and murdered indigenous women has been labelled a “short-shrift report,” according to Nellie Bruce, executive director of the Native Women’s Association of Canada. The report fails “short of completing the circle of concern,” because it does not recommend a comprehensive public inquiry despite calls from First Nations leaders, members of the opposition and the UN’s special rapporteur on the rights of indigenous people.

Released March 7, the report’s 16 recommendations include a national DNA-based missing person’s index and a police data bank on violence against aboriginal women and girls. The Native Women’s Association of Canada has put the number of known cases of missing or murdered aboriginal women and girls at 688, but says the number could be as high as 600. —CRAIG WATT

Leading discussions were (L to R): lawyer Mary Eberts, Lavell-Harvard, MP Carolyn Bennet and Crystal Basi of Toronto’s Native Women’s Resource Centre.

Bishops David Parsons and Darren McCartney are seeking such people who are inspired to Canada a similar call to ministry. They can’t offer you riches but an easy life, but for such a time as this, when many reject religious authority they can offer communities in the Canadian Arctic who are seeking bible believing clergy to teach, pastor and make disciples.

For additional information contact the synod office at 867-873-5432 or email arctic@arcticnet.org

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Christian drama prompts viewer to ponder nature of heaven

BY HOLLIS HISCOCK

Movies can entertain, inspire, make connections or pose questions. Heaven Is for Real is a Christian drama that covers all of these.

Undergoing major surgery, four-year-old Colton Burpo visits his heavenly paradise, meets his miscarried sister and long-deceased great-grandfather and returns. His adventure was original material written by his father, Todd Burpo’s 2010 book and returns. His adventure was original material written by his father, Todd Burpo’s 2010 book and returns.

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First time ever, a child’s experience of heaven for real?

After his close brush with death, Colton’s mother, Glorianna, asked him to draw the place he visited.

Colton drew a very detailed picture of his heaven experience. The picture was then sent to Dr. Vern Poythress, the president of the Kootenay School of Ministry.

Dr. Poythress flew down to Colton’s hometown in Nebraska to meet the boy and to hear more about his experience.

The movie, Heaven Is for Real, is a 100-minute, PG-rated film that opened on April 16, 2014 in theatres across America. It has sold millions of copies worldwide and remains on best-seller lists. While reading Burpo’s account of his son’s experience, his own reaction and the effect on his family, church and wider community, I questioned its reliability, accuracy and authenticity.

So, when invited to attend a special screening of the movie in the Greater Vancouver area, I accepted. The invitation came at approximately 1,000 people scattered in theatres across Canada. I jumped at the opportunity, hoping the movie would fill in the blanks left by the book.

I found the movie entertaining. The cast, headed by Greg Kinnear, Kelly Reilly and Connor Corum, portrays an ordinary family making ends meet amid the tides—joys, struggles, humour, sadness, pain and pleasure. The Manitoba countryside (standing in for Nebraska) provides breathtaking earthly beauty and a symbolic glimpse of eternity.

I found the movie inspiring. As an ordained minister, I related to Pastor Todd’s predicament, cast as he is between believing and sharing his son’s story, challenging his firmly held beliefs and dealing with responses from church and community people. Being a pastor does not exempt you from life’s happenings; if anything, it magnifies the situation.

The second time I watched the movie, I found the movie posed questions. It prompted three of us who attended the preview to chat about heaven—at its existence, nature and openness. No doubt, viewers of other ages and levels of faith will do the same.

The Rev. Hollis Hiscock is editor of the Anglican Northwestern.

HEAVEN IS FOR REAL
Directed by Randall Wallace
Tristar Pictures,
April 16, 2014
100 minutes
PG

Based on the book Heaven Is for Real by a little boy’s astounding story of his trip to heaven... and back by Todd Burpo with Lynn Vincent. Nielsen, 2010.
Watched her mother write poetry, expressing something about truth, in southern Ontario.

Plot full of twists and surprises. Staged as a play, the Rev. Mia Anderson once more attended St. John the Evangelist Anglican Church in Elora, Ontario.

Act 1: A young Canadian son found lots of work to be done there. The play may seem to be a plot full of twists and surprises. As a priest in Quebec City, she became a shepherd of a different sort, using music, a garden and a labyrinth to rejuvenate the parish.

Act 2: She tends sheep on a farm with her husband in the northern part of the province, raising animals in the wilderness.

Act 3: As a priest in Quebec City, she became a shepherd of a different sort, using music, a garden and a labyrinth to rejuvenate the parish.

Here I am, training, and soon an audition for the Order of St. Luke.

After four years, she had attended an Anglican church. Along the way, she studied Akido, a Japanese martial art that has a spiritual side, and the hands-on healing practices of Japanese Reiki. Later, she and her husband attended a number of Anglican churches and studied healing ministries with the Order of St. Luke.

Together, the couple began attending St. John the Evangelist Anglican Church in Elora, Ontario. Anderson loved singing there so much that she later joined the choir at St. Thomas’s Anglican Church, Huron St. in Toronto, commuting from the farm twice a week. While singing one day in 1996, she heard a call that said “I should be a priest.” She dismissed it at first, but then began an intense discernment process. Three weeks later, she enrolled in a divinity program at Trinity College. In 1998, she interned with Bishop Rowan Williams, another poet-priest, when he was still in Wales.

Ordained in 2001 at Saint Michael’s Anglican Church in Quebec City, the only parish in which she served, Anderson found lots of work to be done there. The average age of parishioners was 75. The neighbourhood, predominantly francophone, assumed that an Anglican church would be English-only and have nothing to offer. During Anderson’s time, Saint Michael’s became a bilingual parish. A garden and labyrinth were built on church grounds to serve as an invitation to the surrounding community, and hymns were sung in French. When Anderson left, the parish was still small, but the average age was 34.

Her theater experience proved useful. “One wants to have some of the elegance of liturgy, the flow of it, the shape of it, when it peaks and when it unwinds, all those theatrical values,” she acknowledged, but said the connection to drama is not apparent. “The high point for me is always prayer...it’s the cure or care of souls, as the old expression goes.”

Anderson has also published books of poetry. Poetry, she said, seems most closely connected with her work as a priest. “The thing that astonished me...was to find that the sermons and poetry come from the same source inside me.”

Now retired from parish ministry, she and her husband live in the country in the Province of Quebec, joining the very few 2000 entries from 70 countries—she kept reminding herself that the praise and attention were a fleeting, if much appreciated, experience. And the $20,000 prize didn’t hurt. “Poets don’t get that kind of money,” she said. In 2012, she published The Sunrise Liturgies, a poem sequence that took some inspiration from the river. A new book, Light Tales, will be available in August.

—Leigh Anne Williams

The Rev. Mia Anderson won the 2013 Montreal Poetry Prize.
Leisurely Channel Islands  
September 15, 2014 • 14 Days  
Set in the heart of the English Channel, our discovery of the quaint and delightful islands of Guernsey, Jersey and Herm offer leisurely days with a balance of exploring and free time. These islands are a treasure trove of wonderful sights! Be sure to make a stop for some real Jersey icecream! With multi-night stays, there will be minimal packing and unpacking...just lots of time to discover the charming islands, plus spend two nights in glorious London before returning home.  
“The meals in Guernsey and Jersey were excellent!” AA

Heritage of Turkey  
September 17, 2014 • 15 Days  
Follow in the wake of a remarkable history created by Byzantine Christians, Ottoman sultans, Hittites and Romans, whirling dervishes and mysterious Lycians, Julius Caesar, St. Paul and others. This is one of the most fascinating counties, yet one of the least known. Located at the crossroads of Europe and Asia, its history has been long and varied with its more famous civilizations harmoniously represented in fully preserved monuments. Come along with us and uncover the Heritage of Turkey.  
“The hot air balloon ride was the highlight for me!” RN

St. Lawrence Splendours  
Crystal Cruises • Crystal Serenity  
September 29, 2014 • 8 Days  
This fall, set sail on Crystal Cruises’ luxurious ms Symphony as she sails from the idyllic archipelagos along the St. Lawrence stopping at the picturesque Magdalen Islands, Saint-Pierre and Miquelon. This is the ideal time of year to visit showcasing dramatic coastlines adorned with gilded mansions, historic lighthouses and world-class cities. It is also a wonderful opportunity to experience Crystal Cruises, and their new “All-Inclusive” policy with added value onboard. All you need to do is sit back and enjoy the experience!  
“Over all excellent, really enjoyed the Crystal line. Quebec City is beautiful.” RA

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