Rejoice

There’s something special about Advent concerts, which draw Christians and non-Christians alike. See story p. 7

Traumatized as a child, Rwandan Anglican works to heal genocide-scarred youth

Tali Folkins
STAFF WRITER

Emmanuel Gatera was only five when trauma of a kind so familiar to his fellow Rwandans first began to afflict his young brain.

It was Christmas Eve, 1963 at his family’s home in southwest Rwanda. The family had just sung Christmas carols, and he and his seven-year-old brother, excited about what the next day would bring, had to be reminded by their parents that it was time for bed.

About an hour later, a mob of more than a hundred people had gathered outside the house. They tried to bash their way through the front door, but Gatera’s father, a carpenter, had built it to withstand such an assault, and it held. So the mob

See Trauma, p. 12

Welby, Francis vow to strive for social justice

André Forget
STAFF WRITER

While decisions by some Anglican churches to ordain women and allow same-sex marriage have been major hindrances to formal unity between Anglicans and Roman Catholics, a common declaration issued by Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby and Pope Francis October 5 reaffirmed their commitment to ecumenical work.

“While we ourselves do not see solutions to the obstacles before us, we are undeterred,” the declaration says. “We are confident that dialogue and engagement with one another will deepen our understanding and help us to discern the mind of Christ for his church.”

See related story, p. 3.

‘A vision of enough’

André Forget
STAFF WRITER

On October 18, an Anglican Church of Canada task force released “On the Theology of Money,” a report calling the faithful to embrace a “vision of ‘enough’” when it comes to material wealth.

Many Christians in the 21st century are torn between their faith, which teaches that hoarding wealth is wrong and that Christians should support each other, and an economic system that values individualism, limitless growth and commodification.

See Theology, p. 10

BIBLE READINGS on p. 15

Emblem of pain and hope

5

‘I was sick, and you visited me’

11

9

Bells toll for Aleppo
PWRDF launches appeal for Haiti

Matthew was the most powerful storm to have hit the island nation in almost 10 years.

PWRDF announced an initial grant of $15,000 for Haiti relief October 4, and has since then sent $25,000 more (plus $20,000 for Cuba). The money will help provide food, medical aid, shelter, clean water and electricity for maternal health clinics.

The money comes from the diocese’s Our Faith – Our Hope fundraising campaign, which has brought in a total of $33 million so far to support a wide array of projects, said, “The fact that faith-inspired giving is such a great ministry and good news in action,” said Johnson.

A big portion of the donation—$343,000—will go to PWRDF’s All Mothers and Children Count program in Burundi, Mozambique, Rwanda and Tanzania, where there are high rates of child and maternal illness and mortality. In Mozambique, for example, there are 500 deaths per 100,000 live births, compared to 12 per 100,000 in most of Canada. The program aims to combat these high rates by upgrading health-care facilities in rural areas and providing better access to clean water.

Because PWRDF is eligible for matching grants from the Department of Global Affairs Canada, the program will receive an additional $1.9 million, for a total of almost $2.3 million.

PWRDF’s Women Empowerment Project, which helps women in Mozambique secure access to bank loans for the purposes of creating small businesses, will receive $35,000 of the remaining funds. The balance of $52,000 will fund a Canadian delegation to the diocese of Masasi to learn about the programs in action and to act as “champions for the food security and maternal, newborn and child health work of PWRDF” when they return to Canada.

The elections co-ordinator. PWRDF can be confident their money will be well spent. PWRDF staff make regular visits to the offices of their partner agencies to assess how projects are being administered, and inspect their books for receipts and other important documentation, says Simon Chambers, PWRDF communications co-ordinator.

Donations can be made online, by phone (contact Jennifer Brown at 416-924-9192 ext. 355; or 1-866-308-7973) or by mail. Cheques should be payable to PWRDF marked “Haiti Response,” and sent to: PWRDF, The Anglican Church of Canada, 80 Hayden Street, Toronto, ON M4Y 3G2.

Diocese donates $500,000 for PWRDF health projects

The diocese of Toronto will be donating $500,000 to The Primate’s World Relief and Development Fund (PWRDF) to support maternal, newborn and child health in Indigenous communities in Canada and in several African countries.

The money comes from the diocese’s Our Faith – Our Hope fundraising campaign, which has brought in a total of $33 million so far to support a wide array of local and international initiatives.

In a press release, Archbishop Colin Johnson, diocesan bishop of Toronto and metropolitan of the ecclesiastical province of Ontario, said he was “delighted” that the diocese was supporting work with women and children outside its own jurisdiction.

“In Africa, it is the church that has the trusted responsibility for medical and social support of vulnerable people to a degree unknown here. In the North, the needs of families are enormous…This is such a great ministry and good news in action,” said Johnson.

PWRDF executive director Will Postma said, “The fact that faith-inspired giving is translated into really important deeds of mercy and compassion where the needs are highest—that says a lot.”
Church unity ‘for the sake of the world’

André Forget

Since their inception 50 years ago, ecumenical dialogues between Roman Catholic and Anglican churches have often focused on arcane points of doctrinal similarity and difference. But there is a growing desire in both churches to see unity as more than an end in itself, said Archbishop Fred Hiltz, primate of the Anglican Church of Canada, reflecting on his recent trip to Rome.

“The unity of the church is not for the church itself, and if it is, we might as well stop talking,” Hiltz said in an interview. “The unity of the church has to be in the interest of a common and faithful and united witness to the gospel, and the gospel is clearly for the world.”

Hiltz travelled to Italy October 4-6 as part of a delegation of Anglican primates and bishops led by Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Anglican Centre in Rome. It was his first time in Rome, and his first time meeting Pope Francis, whose work he admires and whom he often quotes.

“It was an amazing experience,” Hiltz said, noting how impressed he was by the pontiff’s humility and grace. He recalled one particular moment, when Welby and Francis had just entered the courtyard of a church and were about to proceed into an ecumenical service together when there was a burst of applause. Assuming it was for the Pope, Welby stepped back. Francis, however, gestured for him to continue to walk shoulder to shoulder with him. “[Francis’s] first words to Justin Welby when Justin made his first visit to Rome were, ‘We must walk together,’” Hiltz explained. “There is such integrity to the man—you know, we must walk together, literally as well as figuratively.”

During the visit he was also struck by the comparison between the current Archbishop of Canterbury and the Pope—both of whom are similarly interested in the practical ways the church can shape the world—and their predecessors, Rowan Williams and Benedict XVI, who were more scholarly and contemplative in their approach.

It was a point underscored by the joint declaration signed by both leaders October 5, which highlighted common views on issues like poverty and the refugee crisis. (See related story, page 1.)

The service leading up to the signing of the joint declaration was only one part of the three-day trip. In addition to touring the Anglican Centre, which serves thousands of pilgrims every year, the bishops participated in a colloquium of Anglican and Roman Catholic theologians discussing the history and future of ecumenical dialogue between the churches.

Hiltz said one of the most stimulating talks was by the Rev. Étienne Vétö, a Roman Catholic priest from France, on the future of the Anglican and Roman Catholic churches. Vétö noted that in the next 50 years, both churches will be facing similar changes. For example, in addition to issues around gender inclusion, Anglicans and Catholics will both have to adapt to a change in the centre of gravity away from traditional European cities like Rome, Canterbury and Geneva and toward metropolises in the Global South, like Buenos Aires, Manila and Mombasa.

Hiltz noted that the bishops also learned a little more about the future direction the ecumenical dialogues will take. While questions about the doctrinal differences between the churches remain important, the dialogues themselves are shifting to discussions about how the churches could “live out” the statements of agreement they already have.

Hiltz said that one of the themes that emerged from the conference was the sense that “ecumenism has to be built on relationships… if it is built on relationship, then it is not what I bring to the table to correct you, it is what do I have to learn from you, and what do you have to learn from me?” For example, Hiltz said that one area Catholic theologians identified where they could learn from Anglicans is the inclusion of laity in conciliar structures and electing new bishops.

Their Anglican counterparts, on the other hand, said the Communion might be able to learn something from Catholicism’s non-parliamentary approach to decision-making to strengthen the Instruments of Communion.

Practical expressions of unity between the two churches were also evident during the trip, according to Hiltz.

On the night of October 5, ecumenical vespers were held at the Basilica of San Gregorio al Celio, where the choirs of the Sistine Chapel and Canterbury Cathedral sang together. During the service, 19 pairs of Anglican and Catholic bishops were commissioned for united mission.

The next day, they were presented with Lampedusa crosses during a service at San Francesco Saverio del Caravita.

Named after Lampedusa, an island between Sicily and Tunisia, these crosses are made of wood from the wreckage of boats carrying migrants and refugees that capsized between North Africa and Europe in 2013.

Hiltz said the crosses were given “as a reminder to us of our call to unity and mission, and that mission is for the sake of the world, and the suffering peoples of the world.”

For him, it was yet another reminder that ecumenical dialogue is not only a matter of discussing doctrine.

“What is the point of our unity?” he asked, letting the question hang in the air. “Is it for the sake of the church alone, or is it for the sake of the world and a common witness to the gospel?”

 Afr. Archbishop Fred Hiltz, primate of the Anglican Church of Canada, meets Pope Francis after ecumenical vespers held at the Basilica of San Gregorio al Celio October 5.

PHOTO: SERVIZIO FOTOGRAFICO L’OSSERVATORE ROMANO
Where’s the world’s outrage for Syria?

In 2014, unable to get safe access to Syria, the UN stopped independently counting the number of deaths, which stood then at 250,000. The war has now killed more than 470,000 people, injured 1.8 million others and displaced half the country’s population of 21.8 million. According to the Syrian Cen- ter for Policy Research. About five million Syrian refugees are living in neighbouring countries and beyond, including Canada; about 6.6 million are internally displaced. According to the Canadian Red Cross, half of the remaining population is depend- ent on relief agencies for food, household items and health services—a challenge, since even those who are delivering aid are being targeted by air strikes.

And yet, where is the world’s outrage for Syria? On Feb 15, 2003, an estimated 15-30 million people from 800 cities and 75 countries around the world took part in a co-ordinated day of protests to oppose the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq. It was, by some accounts, the largest anti-war rally in his- tory. It didn’t stop the war, but it still meant something. The U.S. and its allies lost in the court of public opinion; years later, many leaders acknowledged that the war had been a mistake. The unprecedented action sent a powerful message to govern- ments that they were going to war without their citizens’ consent, hence the rallying cry: “Not in My Name.” Its impact was immediately felt in countries like Canada (where 250,000 people marched in Mon- treal alone), which decided not to join U.S. President George W. Bush’s “coalition of the willing.” Equally important, it estab- lished solidarity with ordinary Iraqis who became victims of the ensuing violence.

In contrast, the international response to Syria has been muted, to say the least. We do not minimize what churches, NGOs and some governments have been doing to offer prayers, host refugees, provide vital humanitarian relief and press for a negotiated political solution to the problem. (See related stories, pages 8, 9.) But it is troubling that what passes for a global manifestation is Twitter hashtag #PrayForSyria each time a child gets killed in the airstrike.

There is no doubt that the situation in Syria is complicated. There are too many players involved. The U.N. and some world leaders have been trying to negotiate a political solution and the European Union has imposed sanctions on top Syrian officials, all to no avail. Western powers, including the U.S., acknowledge there is “no appetite” for a military intervention, and with reason. Putting the U.S. in direct confrontation with its Cold War rival Rus- sia will only exacerbate the situation.

Many of the world’s political and reli- gious leaders believe the only viable option is for Syrian President Bashir al-Assad to go, and for Russia and Iran to stop prop- ping up his regime. A coalition government could then be set up to rebuild the nation and address threats to its national security, in particular, ISIS. “His [Assad’s] stepping aside would be the most heroic thing to do in his life and the best decision he’ll ever taken,” said Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby.

Assad, however, is digging in his heels. The citizens of the world need to send Assad and his allies a strong but peaceful message that he has to go and the carnage has to end. There’s no guarantee it will work. But we will all have failed Syria if we do nothing.

Email: tsison@national.anglican.ca

LETTERS

‘A marvelous opportunity’ to learn how to love

I have just finished reading Homosexuality and Christian Faith: Questions of Conscience for the Churches. As the mother of a gay son, I quote from the Afterword: “We can treat this controversy, not as a sign of the church’s decadence or its disobedience, but as a marvelous opportunity to learn to love as Jesus commanded us to love.”

Sheila Hawkins
Midland, Ont.

Changing marriage

I have a compromise solution for the same-sex marriage debate. There are two elements to marriage. The first is the rela- tionship between two persons, upon which the current debate is centred. The second, upon which it was originally founded, is procreation or the creation of life.

My suggestion is that the traditional form of marriage be altered to provide two forms, one specifically recognizing the creation of life, and one not. To equate heterosexual with homosexual marriage is to eliminate procreation as a factor, and by implication, of importance.

Michael Jarvis
Victoria

Would photocopies work?

I can understand that many of the hymns in Common Praise sound alien to Indig- enous Anglicans. Coming from Switzerland, a republic for hundreds of years, all these refer- ences to “King of Kings” and “golden crowns” don’t make sense to me. “Father, Almighty God, Creator” is what I feel comfortable with. The melodies are familiar, since they come from the European culture. But that is not the case for Indigenous Anglicans. With the struggle for funds overall, new hymn books might be way down the line of priorities.

We could start with photocopying a few hymns created by Indigenous Anglicans and take it from there.

Lisbeth Mousseau
Neepawa, Man.

We acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada through the Canada Periodical Fund of the Department of Canadian Heritage.
The Lampedusa Cross

By Fred J. Hiltz

A T HE HEART of Christmas is The Child, that “holy infant, so tender and mild,” the Son of God, cradled in the loving arms of Mary and guarded by the loving watch of Joseph. In Luke’s gospel, this is the image of The Holy Family: safe and secure in a manger behind an inn in Bethlehem. Shepherds adore The Child and angels sing. In Matthew’s gospel, this is the image of The Holy Family: unsafe and on the run. Magi gift The Child, and angels warn of Herod’s plot to find and destroy him. Joseph abides by the same direction to “take the Child and his mother and flee to Egypt” (2:13) and to remain there until it is safe to return. When they can, they settle in Nazareth, in the region of Galilee.

As we prepare to celebrate the birth of this Holy Child whom we know as Lord of Life and Prince of Peace, we remain ever-mindful of the millions of refugees who are fleeing the rage of their oppressors. They carry little more than their children. Sadly, some of them have to leave their elderly behind. All of them bear the scars of trauma through the atrocities they have witnessed, including the relentless bombings of their cities, the merciless targeting of hospitals and the blocking of convoys carrying humanitarian aid. Most of them know they will never return. Many of those seeking refuge in other countries have boarded vessels and made treacherous voyages across the Mediterranean Sea, enduring overcrowded conditions and the danger of sinking. Many have survived shipwreck. So many others have not.

The wreckage of these boats has washed up on the shores of the Italian Island of Lampedusa. It is a destination point for those seeking refuge in Europe. Moved by the immense suffering and the great hope against all odds of those who have taken this voyage, local carpenter Francesco Tuccio started picking up pieces of wood from this debris and making crosses. They are absolutely amazing. They are not evenly proportioned and bear many colours and many nail holes. They are neither fine nor finished. They are rough, ragged, weather-beaten and worn. Each is a sacred piece of work, crafted out of a heart of mercy and love for those who are so vulnerable and valiant, so strong in their hope for a better future. Francesco has made hundreds of these crosses, which are finding their way around the world.

The formal description of this Lampedusa Cross reminds us that it is “a sign of the plight of refugees…and the call to the church to respond with the death-defying compassion of Christ.” This Christmas, let us pray for all refugees—those on the run and those in camps, those on the high seas and those at border crossings. Let us give thanks for all nations that have enabled their resettlement. Let us rejoice in all those who open their hearts and hands to welcome and accompany them in a new life.

I commend all of you who have done this very thing this year. Thank you for the love, generosity and friendship you have shown in the name of him whose birth we celebrate and whose own refuge we remember, Jesus our Lord.

Archbishop Fred Hiltz is primate of the Anglican Church of Canada.

The second coming of Christ

By Mark MacDonald

I N MANY CIRCLES of our church, outside of the liturgy itself you don’t hear much about the second coming of Christ. It is a major article of our faith, with the same status as the birth of Christ or the Resurrection. To our ancestors in the faith, the proclamation that Christ is coming again was not just a doctrine to believe, it was a source of constant hope and great inspiration. Certainly, not everyone has forgotten, but the return of Christ does not flavour our preaching and teaching in the way it used to among our ancestors of faith.

Perhaps we have lost sight of it in the comforts of our time. Perhaps it is too fearful an idea. For some, it might appear too fanciful. In any case, its disappearance should make us wonder.

For the poor, marginalized and threatened, knowing that Christ is coming again—and, as Scripture insists, soon or perhaps quickly—has always been a cherished hope, perhaps even an expectation. Some claim they experience the second coming, here and now. We can see it in the Eucharist; we know it in justice and experience—some claim they experience it as the return of Christ. It is a major article of our faith, with Christ being the primary focal point. Since Christ is coming again, all our actions are subject to editing.

Unhappy with coverage

I wasn’t happy with the Anglican Journal’s coverage of General Synod. The LaRche Spirit Movers dancers, who took part in the opening Eucharist, weren’t even mentioned. These dancers are members of the LaRche Daybreak community and practised for weeks to get ready for the service.

The girl in the wheelchair who was the first to appear is Rebecca. Rebecca has cerebral palsy and had had a seizure that day. Yet, she insisted that she come and take part in the liturgical dance, along with my daughter Lesley and her friends.

Barbara WhiteScarborough, Ont.

L’Arche Daybreak members perform a liturgical dance at General Synod 2016. PHOTO: ART BABYCH

From the Web

Pray for Syria

Thank you for the appeal (Pray for war-torn Aleppo, asks primate, Sept. 29, 2016, anglicanjournal.com). It is really our prayer, as Christians, that a peace agreement might be reached in Syria. What is happening now is disheartening. May the God of peace and love bring sanity in Aleppo.

Ishanesu S. Gusha

Christian guilt won’t work

St. Augustine may be of some help when analyzing what is posted with deliberation, perhaps especially in cases where the [commentator] is not concealed by anonymity (We are what we post, Sept. 26, 2016, anglicanjournal.com). When one is looking at social media information emitted from people who respond immediately, reactively, and especially anonymously, then St. Augustine must yield to more modern insights on the value of love is likely overrid-
Do we ignore the women at the centre of Advent?

By Paul Knowles

Advent—a time for sober reflection, or joyous celebration; a time when the church honours women in the gospel story or ignores them.

Former United Church moderator the Very Rev. Gary Paterson thinks of Advent as "a strange season in the life of the church." It has a tradition of being dominated by men creating a myopic tradition largely ignoring the female perspective! Might our focus on Advent as distinct from Christmas be a roadblock to evangelism?

Church lectionaries feature readings for each Sunday of Advent. This year there are four segments from Isaiah; four Psalms; Paul, James, and John, without John the Baptist; and Joseph and the angel.

One alternative reading is suggested—the Magnificat (Luke 1:46–55), but this optional reading omits the first three words of the passage. Those words are, simply, "And Mary said." The song is there—the female author is omitted.

Does all of this represent an anti-female bias among those who created the lectionary? Opinions vary.

Paterson says, "I only give John the Baptist one Sunday despite what the lectionary suggests. Mary always gets a Sunday...often Elizabeth gets one, too!"

Canon June Hough, rector of the Church of the Ascension (Anglican), in London, Ont., has no doubt there is a problem: "The women are supporting characters. Even at the temple, we have a Song of Simeon, and Anna is secondary...A strong patriarchal spirit pervades most of how we interpret Scripture.

But Canon Wendy Fletcher, principal at Renison College at the University of Waterloo, disagrees. "Of course, women as the child-bearers in our world are at the centre of Advent's meaning...The third Sunday of Advent, which focuses on Mary, her joy, her willingness to give everything for love, is an appropriate balance to Advent's call...to repent.'"

Bishop Linda Nicholls of the diocese of Huron, notes, "The lectionaries only need one Sunday on John the Baptist—I have not heard anyone explain the double Sunday emphasis." Nonetheless, she rejects the suggestion that male decision-makers have de-emphasized the role of women because of "male mystification" around pregnancy.

Current United Church moderator the Rt. Rev. Jordan Cantwell says: "The church is quite afraid of human bodies, and female bodies, in particular. So we do tend to ignore or downplay the very embodied experience of Mary and Elizabeth. That is a mistake."

Hough adds, "This is not Lent. A woman or man doesn't celebrate only the moment the child is birthed: there is the heartbeat, watching it move—even with adoption, there is the waiting, getting a room ready...a sense of joy."

Fr. Murray Watson, professor of theology, Huron University College in London, Ont., and a Roman Catholic priest, takes exception to the idea that there might be a male-dominated focus. "This represents a misrepresentation of the richness of what Advent means to the Christian church, and relies on stereotypes and caricatures of 'male thinking' that are, at best, reductionistic, partial and often incorrect."

The Rev. Dawn Hutchings, from Holy Cross Lutheran Church in Newmarket, Ont., is unequivocal: "I can't help wondering why the creators of the Revised Common Lectionary...have failed to remember the stories and names of our foremothers."

Watson thinks that Advent is often a season of misunderstanding. "The official documents of my own Catholic church say that 'Advent is...a period for devout and joyful expectation.' However, I think that this understanding has yet to trickle down to many parishioners.

Nicholls points to a symbolic change: "Anglicans have shifted from using the colour purple to using royal blue, leaving purple for Lent."

There is no consensus on whether Christmas cards should be sung during Advent—although Cantwell, for one, asks, "Why the heck not?!" Some see this card controversy as symbolic of a disconnect between the church and society: If the birth of Jesus is the second-most-important story in the Christian canon (Nicholls reminds us that "Christmas is meaningless without Easter"), Advent is a time for evangelism—and is the church succeeding at it?

Paterson suggests, "We are out of step with the cultural activities all around us...and that's both good and bad. Good, because it presents a counter-cultural voice to the building frenzy of consumerism..."The invitation to focus on an inward journey that celebrates life (and yes, pregnancy), and peace and joy and hope and love feels so important. Whether we do that well is another question."

There is no agreement about how well churches are celebrating the women at the centre of the Advent story; but the consensus is that they should be celebrated.

Somber reflection or joyful celebration? Everyone agrees, there should be both—but the emphasis should be on joy.

Paul Knowles is a writer, editor and lyricist who lives with his wife, the Rev. Nancy Knowles, in New Hamburg, Ont.

Advent devotions by Anglican, Lutheran leaders now available

Tali Folkins

Four Advent devotions, written by four leaders of Anglican and Lutheran churches in North America, have been made available to members of all four churches.

The devotions can be found on the Advent 2016 Resources page of the Anglican Church of Canada website, anglican.ca.

On October 12–13, Archbishop Fred Hiltz, primate of the Anglican Church of Canada, met with National Bishop Susan Johnson, of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC); Presiding Bishop Michael Curry, of The Episcopal Church (TEC); and Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton, of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). The meeting, held at the ELCA office in Chicago, was the four bishops' latest four-way dialogue, a tradition of informal annual meetings begun in 2010. It was Curry's first meeting with the group since his installation in November as head of The Episcopal Church.

One highlight of the meeting, Hiltz said, was the bishops' completion of the Advent devotions—one devotions for every Sunday of Advent. The devotions are on the theme of next year's 500th anniversary of the Reformation: "Liberated by God's Grace," and three of the theme's subheadings: "Salvation not for sale, human beings not for sale and creation not for sale."

Advent devotions this year began November 27.

The four leaders are also planning to issue a joint letter for Ash Wednesday, March 1, 2017, which will focus on the plight of refugees. "We looked at the Litany of Penitence for Ash Wednesday—the line that talks about our indifference to cruelty and human suffering, and we talked a bit about the situation in Syria," Hiltz said in an interview. "Some are saying already that the whole world will have a lot to answer for, in time, for what it has allowed to happen."

They also discussed the possibility of having "continuing education" by inviting guest speakers at the meetings to update them on shared concerns—Indigenous ministries, for example.

The bishops also agreed they would like to give more consideration to events in the two church's international entities—the Lutheran World Federation and the Anglican Communion, he said.

They also talked about "the value of having a quiet morning together," acknowledging that as national leaders, they are constantly on the move.

The four also heard reports on the progress of the two Anglican-Lutheran eccumenical bodies in Canada and the U.S. The Joint Commission for Anglican Lutheran Communion in Canada and the Lutheran-Episcopal Coordinating Committee.
By Desmond Devoy

For choirs across the country, you can have a concert during the Christmas season—just do not call them Christmas concerts.

“You should know that St. Margaret’s does not put on a Christmas concert,” wrote Ruth Widdicombe, music director for St. Margaret’s Anglican Church in Winnipeg, during an email interview with the Anglican Journal. However, she stresses that St. Margaret’s does put on an “Advent Festival,” on the first or second Sunday of Advent, with as many as 10 readings from Scripture, followed by a choral response. There are also Advent hymns and prayers.

“No Christmas lessons are read, no Christmas hymns are sung…This is because Advent is not Christmas backwards, but is a time of preparation for the mystery of the incarnation; and because it is such a great mystery, it must be prepared for,” says Widdicombe. “On Christmas Eve, and only then, does the church sing Christmas carols…lots of wonderful choral Christmas music,” and continues until the Epiphany.

Widdicombe adds that Charpentier’s “Midnight Mass for Christmas,” complete with flutes, strings, organ and soloists, has been performed at St. Margaret’s on Christmas Eve.

Sandra Bender, choirmaster at the Cathedral of the Holy Trinity in Quebec City, agrees that, at her church, there is “never a stand-alone Christmas concert,” but, like St. Margaret’s, the cathedral will host an Advent concert on the third Advent Sunday. (Coincidentally, Bender was a musical assistant at St. Margaret’s in Winnipeg before moving to Quebec several years ago.)

Bender prepares her 12-member choir for the Advent concert with two, two-hour rehearsals, with seven different pieces rehearsed on the Tuesday and Saturday preceding the concert. She gives credit to her choir in being able to turn things around quickly. “They pull off some rather amazing things,” Bender says.

As for the Advent concert itself, “it’s a service that has no sermon,” the trained opera singer said. “But it’s a lot like a concert,” and choosing the music, for her, is a matter of “how Advent-y versus Christmas-y you want to make it,” choosing between choral pieces and hymns. “I’m always looking at the whole experience. It’s like planning a dinner party.”

Bender is also the cathedral’s director of liturgy, so, by her definition, she helps “plan the variable parts of the service.” She chooses hymns, which she says helps, as she seeks to bring Advent lessons and carols back. Now, more performances outside of regular Sunday services have been added, like Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. Born into a Mennonite family, Bender began conducting church choirs when she was 17 in her native Winnipeg, Christmas was a “special” time for her as a child, but “finding that [right] music as an adult is difficult,” Bender says. Hearing the music of the Advent choirs when she was younger, “I was captivated by that, the ancient tradition of music…I do see music as something that draws people to a church in a way nothing else can.”

Widdicombe agrees that there is something special about an Advent concert. “The church is packed for this Advent Festival,” Widdicombe wrote. “The church is dark, with a few candles lit.”

Even though everyone is welcome in the church at any time of year, on Christmas Eve, “many people from the wider community attend these services, even those who would perhaps not call themselves Christians,” says Widdicombe.

Desmond Devoy is a newspaper reporter and broadcaster who lives in Smiths Falls, Ont.
A new life for church-sponsored refugees

André Forget
Staff Writer
Port Colborne, Ont.

It's a Friday morning in early September, and The Smokin' Buddha is still mostly empty when the owner, Kevin Echlin, brings a smiling young man out from the kitchen and introduces us—or rather, re-introduces us. The young man, Bilal Musa Agha, and I have met before, on an unreasonably warm day in early January shortly after he arrived in Canada.

Echlin ushers Agha and me out onto the sunny patio, and I marvel at how much healthier Agha looks.

Back in January, he, his wife, Hiba El Khoury, and their children, Jana and Fares, had just arrived from the northern Lebanese city of Tripoli, where they had been living since fleeing the civil war in Syria in 2013. Tripoli had been a refuge, but not a comfortable one: Bilal had worked 13 hours a day for about $400 a month.

But now, sitting in the sunshine on the patio of The Smokin’ Buddha—a restaurant serving Southeast Asian cuisine in the city’s Canal District—where he has been cooking since early summer, he seems relaxed, happy.

“My favourite new restaurant,” he says, smiling widely.

It all began back in April, when Echlin was approached by Canon Robert Hurkmans, the rector at St. James and St. Brendan Anglican Church, to see if he had any potential work for a couple of Syrian refugees—Agha and his brother, Abdul, who had come to Port Colborne shortly after Agha settled in.

Hurkmans’ church had sponsored Agha, El Khoury and their children, and was hoping to find them work in the community. Agha had worked as a cook in Lebanon, and Hurkmans, who has been friends with Echlin for years, thought it might be a good fit.

Echlin was eager to help. Years before, he had moved to Japan without knowing the language, and could sympathize with the challenges Agha was facing.

“Knowing that he had a background in culinary arts, I thought, ‘You know, let’s give it a shot, and even with the language barrier, there’s ways we can work through it,’” he said.

While Abdul moved to St. Catharines, Ont., in June, where he now works as a barber, Agha stayed on.

Echlin acknowledges that in a fast-paced kitchen, the language barrier can create problems—Agha spent the winter and spring attending English as a Second Language classes, but has found it more difficult than his wife and children—but says it takes a bit of flexibility.

“The crew here has been very accepting,” he says. “It’s nice to have him in, and everyone here is interested. It’s a challenge, and everyone’s up for the challenge.”

It doesn’t hurt that Agha is a fast learner when it comes to cooking. “He’s been absolutely fantastic—you show him one thing, one time, and he’s on it.”

Echlin isn’t the only person who has been willing to help the young Syrian family, though. Shortly after Echlin is called back to the kitchen, Barbara Yakobowski arrives at the restaurant with El Khoury, Jana and Fares.

They have just come from the park, which El Khoury says is their favourite place in town.

When I ask how her family has been received by the community at St. Brendan and St. James, she is enthusiastic.

“All these people are a part of our family, and they visit us and we visit them,” she says. “We have everything and life is good. We don’t have needs at the moment.”

Indeed, the affection between them is palpable. When I ask Yakobowski, who got involved with the family after meeting them at church immediately following their arrival, how they have developed such an organic friendship, she says it “just sort of happened.

“I don’t know that we had a plan,” Yakobowski says. “I think we are very lucky. The relationship we have with our two families is special or different, because they are just so open to being that way.”

El Khoury recalls that at the very beginning, she encouraged Yakobowski not to just come by when the family needed something. “I told them, I don’t want you to come just to help me, or just to feel, ‘Oh, I should help this family’—no, just come to visit!”

Now, Yakobowski doesn’t even bother to call before visiting—she simply drops by. Yakobowski jokes that the family have become celebrities in Port Colborne, a town of a little more than 18,000. “This is not only because El Khoury, who wears a colourful Syrian headscarf, stands out in ethnically homogenous small-town Ontario; the town is also sympathetic to their story.

“I would say that when we are out and about, people identify that this is ‘our family’ from Syria,” El Khoury says, noting that many shopkeepers refused to charge them during their first days in town.

But when I ask El Khoury if the cultural differences were ever a barrier for her, she laughs.

“We are not that different. When Barb comes to visit me, we are women, and we are human...I love her, what she is, not what she wears or what her culture [is]...I love what she is here, inside,” she says, placing a hand over her heart.

It is an attitude her daughter seems to have as well. Jana, who is days away from starting Grade 4, says she has already made friends at school, and has started playing basketball. And if her father is still struggling to learn English, Jana sounds like she has been speaking it her whole life.

But while Port Colborne has been a supportive community, the family still needs to travel farther afield to meet some of its needs. They go to St. Catharines frequently, to shop for halal food, attend the mosque or visit Agha’s brother and his family. However, when I asked why they had decided to stay in Port Colborne rather than moving to St. Catharines with Abdul, she answers immediately, and comes from Jana: “Because we like Barb!”
The General Synod of The Anglican Church of Canada gratefully acknowledges the generous gifts made in loving memory of the following individuals.

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Election of gay bishop spurs complaint to Canterbury

André Forget

Three clergy in the diocese of Toronto have sent a letter to Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby to register dissent and request an “intervention” following the election of Canon Kevin Robertson, a gay man currently living with his partner, to the episcopate in September. Welby, however, has no jurisdiction in Canada; all 38 member churches of the Anglican Communion are autonomous.

The letter, signed by Canon Murray Henderson (St. Matthew’s, Randolph), the Rev. Catherine Sider-Hamilton (St. Matthew’s, Yorkville) and Canon Dean Mercer (Anglican Church of St. John’s, Stephen-in-the-Valley), argues that the election was “irregular” and “out of order insofar as its slate included a candidate whose lifestyle is contrary to the teaching of the historic and universal church on chastity and marriage.”

They also claim that Robertson’s inclusion was “contrary to the present doctrine and discipline of the Anglican Church of Canada,” and that he was therefore “not duly qualified for the office of bishop.”

The letter adds that despite developments at this summer’s General Synod, step were taken to change Canon XX (marriage in the church) to allow for the marriage of same-sex couples, the definition of “Christian marriage” and the idea that “Christian marriage” is going in. When it was pointed out that no priests were required to marry a couple against the dictates of their conscience, Mercer and Sider-Hamilton serve the Anglican diocese’s nominations committee, the diocese’s pastoral province of Ontario, and protested again from the floor of the episcopal synod itself. Both Robertson and Johnson have been reported in the media as saying that Robertson is a priest in good standing with the diocese, and that he didn’t see any impediment to his election.

Neither Robertson nor Johnson was willing to comment on the letter when contacted by the Anglican Journal.

Theology of Money report criticizes capitalist economics

Continued from p. 1, the Rev. Maggie Helwig, a priest in the diocese of Toronto and member of the task force.

Using biblical texts, early church teachings, contemporary theology and political theory, Helwig’s essay, Non nobis, Domine, (Not to us, Lord) provides the main substance of the report, a result of two years of research, reflection and study.

Helwig makes the case that the current economic system and the value it places on money are antithetical to authentic Christianity, and should be seen as a kind of “structural sin.”

The essay takes its title from Psalm 115, which attacks the idolatrous worship of images made of silver and gold, “the work of human hands,” and argues that the money economy, as it is practiced today, is a similar form of idolatry.

Citing stories like God’s feeding of the children of Israel with manna in Exodus 16, to the early church practice of holding goods in common described in Acts 2, Helwig points out that the Bible consistently teaches that Christians are called to be satisfied with what they need, and to share with those who have less—an argument she believes is backed up by the Bible’s frequent denunciations of lending money on interest.

She notes, however, “This vision of ‘enough’ is not only very different from the ever-spiralling growth of the money economy, it is actually hostile to it. If we are satisfied with simple, basic human lives of good work and mutual care, we will fail according to the terms of our economy.”

Furthermore, Helwig argues, because the capitalist economic system sees no intrinsic value in human life, it is completely indifferent to the suffering of those who find themselves unable to succeed on its terms. “The inability of the market alone to ensure adequate human lives for the majority of the population is increasingly clear, as the gap between rich and poor, both globally and within nations, increases,” she says, quoting a report from Oxfam, an international federation of groups working to fight poverty that shows inequality as having grown dramatically over the past 30 years.

These statistics speak of human lives stripped down to the voracious needs of an economic system’s implacable internal logic,” she adds.

Helwig’s essay acknowledges, however, that living outside the market is not feasible. This is not only because, in a globalized world, the market “restricts the agency of persons and societies who may wish to live differently,” but also because the money economy has fundamentally shaped the way people think about themselves and the world around them.

As Helwig puts it, “We are embedded in a global money economy from which we simply cannot remove ourselves...nor are we able to create major rapid change to this system.”

Instead of trying to escape the world, Helwig argues that Christians should instead attempt to embrace “the healing and reordering of desire” and “return to a fuller understanding and practice of the works of mercy.”

Practically, this can be done through small actions, like living less wasteful lives and being satisfied with fewer possessions, and more systemic changes, like “declining to participate in interest-based investment profits, or at least investing in credit unions that support community initiatives.”

Helwig also believes Christians should have a voice in the political arena, pushing for more redistributive economic policies and resisting trade agreements that “have had profound to limit the ability of persons and societies to make choices for the local common good.”

Finally, Helwig encourages Anglicans to see the salvation offered by Christ as also being salvation from the collective sin caused by participating in the market. “We believe that we are saved from this matrix of sin,” she writes. “We believe that we are transformed by an act of free offering on the part of God, an act that entirely defies all the principles underlying the modern economy.”

The origins of the report go back to the 2010-13 triennium, when the Occupy Wall Street movement drew attention to rising economic equality in Western nations. General Synod, the church’s governing body, asked the faith, worship, and ministry committee to find a way to engage with the questions raised by the Occupy movement, and specifically to reflect on “the meaning of money.”

A task force, chaired by the Rev. Jeff Metcalfe, of the diocese of Quebec, was set up to discuss what a Christian approach to money might look like. In addition to Metcalfe and Helwig, members included Joshua Paetkau, of the diocese of Rupert’s Land; Bishop Michael Oulton, of the diocese of Ontario; Monica Patten, then-director of General Synod’s Resources for Mission; the Rev. Jeff Pynn, of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada’s Eastern Synod; and Elin Goulden, parish outreach facilitator for the York-Credit Valley area in the diocese of Toronto.

The report also includes extensive supplementary materials, including a discussion guide that outlines how clergy and lay leaders might help their parishes engage and respond to the work of the task force, and a collection of liturgical resources for those who wish to meditate on the task force’s findings as part of their regular worship.
I was sick, and you visited me’
Mt. 25:36

Parish nurses bring prayer back to health care

Tali Folkins
STAFF WRITER

It takes a while for Amy* to come to the door of her apartment, and when she finally does, it seems she isn’t up for a visit. “Did you get my message?” she asks Nancy Truscott, parish nurse at St. Paul’s Bloor Street, who has come to see her. “I’m not feeling too well today.”

Amy is 69 now, and has suffered from depression since her teens. Once she worked as a nurse; when her mother developed dementia, she devoted herself to taking care of her. But Amy eventually began to suffer from burnout, and was unable to continue. Her mother now lives in a hospital, waiting for a chance to get accepted into a long-term care home. Today, Amy lives alone, to take care of a cat, she says, would be too much for her.

She has arthritis, and uses a walker to get around her apartment. She used to attend services at an Anglican church, but now rarely gets outside. When she moved into her current apartment earlier this fall, her social worker asked Truscott to continue supporting Amy with visits.

At Amy’s door, Truscott proposes just a 10-minute visit, and Amy relents, letting us in. We take our seats in a tiny living room illuminated only by a window.

When Truscott presents Amy with a shawl, she smiles and says thank you. But it’s clear she’s having a rough day. Her doctor has recently taken her off an anti-anxiety medication, and she’s been having trouble sleeping.

Truscott has brought Amy some take-out chicken, and offers her a hot beverage, but Amy declines. Suddenly her face crumples with grief. “I’m really depressed,” she says, straining to speak through her tears. Truscott listens, and they talk for a little while. Truscott passes along thoughts from well-wishers. Every few minutes Amy starts to cry again. “I’m awfully sick, Nancy,” she says. “I don’t know what to do anymore.”

Truscott has brought the most church recent bulletin, and offers to read a Bible passage, but Amy declines. She can’t concentrate, she says.

She does join hands with Truscott when Truscott offers to pray for her. She asks God to show Amy the way forward. Amy joins Truscott at the end in a murmured “amen.” “I think you’ll get better, Amy,” Truscott says gently. “You’re a fighter. You really are.”

Truscott tells her that she will return next week, and offers to read a Bible verse then. Amy Says good-bye and as Truscott begins to leave, she calls out, “Thank you.”

We are spiritual beings as well as physical and emotional, so if our spiritual self is disconnected in some way, then that’s going to affect the rest of our health.

—Elsie Millerd, parish nurse, Church of St. John the Evangelist, Kitchener, Ont.

Parish nurses are required to take a special course on top of their regular nursing training. Few parishes can afford to hire full-time nurses, so generally, parish nursing work is part-time, Millerd is paid for eight hours of work per week, and donates a few extra hours of work in addition.

Much of her own work, Millerd says, is with the elderly—parishioners suffering from dementia, for example. But the work can be quite varied, she adds. It could include helping young families in the church develop healthy eating habits for their children, hosting mental health events at the church and supporting people undergoing cancer treatment.

Another important part of the work is advocacy—helping parishioners navigate their way through the health-care system and making sure their needs are understood by secular doctors and nurses. Parish nurses can also serve as organizers of “circles of care” around parishioners who are unwell, she says, by mobilizing other members of the parish to take part in visiting them and otherwise helping them in their need.

As Truscott’s visit, which has stretched to about 20 minutes, comes to an end, Amy remains despondent. “I don’t think I’ll ever go back to being myself again,” she says through tears.

I ask her if Truscott’s visiting her makes a difference. “It makes a big difference. It’s something to look forward to, because most of the time I’m sick,” she says.

She starts to cry again when I ask her specifically about the prayer. “It just makes a difference. That’s all. It’s uplifting.”

*To protect her privacy, the Journal has avoided using Amy’s real name in this article.
Trauma and the healing power of faith

Canadian Anglican to head Cambridge University

Tali Folkins

A Canadian Anglican has been chosen to head one of the world’s most prestigious universities.

Stephen Toope, who has served on a number of high-profile church bodies, was recently nominated as vice-chancellor of the University of Cambridge, according to U of T News. Assuming the appointment will be approved by the university’s governing body, Toope will begin in his new role on Oct. 1, 2017. He will be the 346th vice-chancellor in the university’s 800-year history, and is believed to be the first non-British to serve in the position.

Toope, who is currently director of the University of Toronto’s Munk School of Global Affairs, said he was completely surprised when he received the offer, unaware the university had even been searching for someone to fill the post. A Cambridge alumnus—he completed a PhD there in 1987—Toope told U of T News he was excited to be returning as an administrator.

Toope has also served on a number of church and secular bodies. He was a member of a task force on the church’s future in an increasingly secular world led by then-primate Archbishop Michael Peers. He advised the diocese of New Westminster on canon law when it was considering blessing same-sex unions, and also served as chair of The Primates’ World Relief and Development Fund (PWRDF) committee. He was fact-finder for the Mahers Azar commission, and helped create the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples in Canada. He was named an officer of the Order of Canada in 2015. Toope’s father was a priest, and his mother served for a time as secretary of their parish.

Toope has also held several high-profile roles in Canada, including as his eventual co-founder of YEGO, sprang from a desire he felt at this point to work with young Rwandans who had been traumatized by the genocide. YEGO stands for “Youth Empowered for Goals and Opportunities.” (The word also means “yes” in Kinyarwanda, Rwanda’s official language.) YEGO aims to help vulnerable young Rwandans on four levels: promoting their healing from trauma; empowering them to earn a living; reconciling Hutu and Tutsi youth with one another; and offering support to those struggling with HIV/AIDS. According to the United Nations, roughly 200,000 Rwandans were living with HIV in 2014. About 70,000 children age 17 or under were orphaned as a result of AIDS. As many as half a million Rwandan girls and women were raped during the genocide, sometimes by HIV-infected men.

YEGO offers a range of services: counselling, training, visiting orphans, sponsoring school studies, and more. Gatera’s doctoral dissertation looks at how spiritual counselling can work together with psychological counselling to promote healing from trauma, and one of the goals of YEGO is to combine these practices.

Gatera also believes in the power of music and dance to help in recovery from trauma, and YEGO holds a music and dance afternoon every Sunday that attracts 25 to 30 youth.

Andrea Mann, director of global relations for the Anglican Church of Canada, says she’s both inspired by Gatera’s personal journey as a survivor of childhood trauma, and hopeful about the potential of YEGO. Its emphasis on healing and reconciliation, Mann says, sets it apart from many of the NGOs now at work in the country, for whom the country’s physical infrastructure is more of a priority.

The Rev. Gordon Oaks, a United Church minister and former chancellor of St. Stephen’s, was one of YEGO’s founders, and has helped raise funds for the organization. Oaks says he’s amazed at what Gatera’s organization has been able to do with the modest amount of money raised so far. “It’s small, but it’s sort of saying you change the world one person at a time,” he says.
Pope Francis and Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby sign a common declaration reaffirming their commitment to foster closer ties between their churches.

Anglicans, Roman Catholics ‘undeterred’ by differences

Continued from p. 1

The declaration was issued during a visit to Rome by Welby and a delegation of Anglican primates and bishops to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Anglican Centre in Rome.

Established in 1966 by Pope Paul VI and then-Archbishop of Canterbury Michael Ramsey, the Anglican Centre was one of a series of initiatives intended to draw the two churches closer together.

Welby and Francis highlighted the progress that has been made in the intervening decades, and praised bodies such as the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC) for bringing theologians from both denominations together to examine the issues that have historically divided the two churches.

While they conceded that “serious obstacles” to full unity remain—including the “permanent question about how authority is exercised in the Christian community”—they stressed that “much progress has been made concerning many areas that have kept us apart.”

The declaration also affirmed that their differences neither “prevent us from recognizing one another as brothers and sisters in Christ” nor “lead to a lessening of our ecumenical endeavours.”

Among these, Welby and Francis highlighted the importance of their two churches expressing their shared faith by speaking with a united voice on pressing social issues, such as environmental degradation, poverty and religiously motivated violence.

“The world must see us witnessing to this common faith in Jesus by acting together,” the declaration says. “Our Christian faith leads us to recognize the inestimable worth of every human life, and to honour it in acts of mercy by bringing education, healthcare, food, clean water and shelter and always seeking to resolve conflict and build peace.”

The declaration, delivered at the Basilica of San Gregorio al Celio, was part of a series of events in which 19 pairs of Anglican and Roman Catholic bishops selected by the International Anglican Roman Catholic Commission for Unity and Mission (IARCCUM) were “sent out” to work together on mission in their native countries.

Representing Canada were Archbishop Fred Hiltz, primate of the Anglican Church of Canada, and Bishop Dennis Drainville, of the diocese of Quebec.

Drainville was paired with the Catholic Bishop of Victoria Gary Gordon to work together on ecumenical ministry in Canada.

Diocese of Algoma elects first woman bishop

André Forget
STAFF WRITER

When the diocese of Algoma gathered for an electoral synod October 14, Archdeacon Anne Germond’s name was not on the ballot; nor was she featured among the official candidates for the position on the diocesan website.

In fact, as synod began, Germond—who was elected 11th bishop of Algoma, the first woman in the diocese to hold that title—had not planned on standing for election. Though she had been approached to let her name stand, she had decided against it. Her husband, Colin, has been struggling with lymphoma for several years, and she wanted to spend as much time with her family as she could.

Besides, she said, she was happy to continue serving the growing Anglican Church of the Ascension in New Sudbury, Ont.

But as the synod approached, she was asked if, as the diocesan canons allowed, she was nominated from the floor, she would allow her name to stand. She agreed. On the sixth ballot, she was elected.

When the results were announced, Germond said she felt “overwhelmed” and shocked that synod had put so much trust in her.

Unlike many bishops, who come to their positions through traditional channels such as academia, Germond’s knowledge of the church comes from the bottom up.

During her years at Anglican Church of the Epiphany, she held just about every role imaginable, from Sunday school superintendent to parish council member to warden. When Germond took up the incumbency at Ascension, she had not yet even been ordained to the priesthood—then-Bishop of Algoma Ron Ferris had offered her the position as a short-term lay incumbency while she finished her bachelor of theology studies at Thronedore University, in Sudbury, Ont.

After she became a priest in 2002, the community asked her to stay on as rector. In the 16 years since she took up the post, the church has grown in size and structure. ■
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Photo: contributed

Avant-garde vespers service renews ancient tradition

The service was a meditation on summer past.

HAYVERGAL COLLEGE 

For centuries, the organ was the foundation for Anglican and Lutheran liturgy, and in Europe’s great Gothic churches and cathedrals, some of the greatest organs of the Western tradition held dayjob writing music that might never be played as services, rather than concerts. Now, two young organists are hoping to inject new life into this tradition, starting at a vespers service held October 21. The “ Electro-Acoustic Vespers,” composed by Joel Peters and Adrian Foster and based on the vespers service found in Evangelical Lutheran Worship, combines electronic sounds and organ sounds for hymns like “The Magnificat” and the “Phos Hilarion.” But it also includes a kind of ancient tradition, but infuse it with some of the greatest composers of the early church, including a practice becoming increasingly common in the composition of classical music and in the adaptation of electronic elements to enhance and change the sounds created by acoustic instruments.

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Unlikely heroes

By Michael Lapointe

Recent History is full of moments when an individual’s moral convictions have been at odds with the expectations of that individual’s community. It is less frequent, however, of examples where ordinary people exercise incredible acts of moral courage in the face of overwhelming odds, particularly in situations where the vast majority of others remain silent.

Beautiful Souls: The Conscience of Ordinary People in Extraordinary Times by Eyal Press is a profile of four people separated by time and place, but united in their resolve to resist every form of injustice and stand apart from the crowd. It’s a book about individual courage in times of unimaginable violence, like the story of Paul Grüninger, the Swiss state police commander who defied orders for providing “special permission” for hundreds of Jewish refugees fleeing Austria to remain in Switzerland in 1938, or Aleksandr Ivlev, the Serb who made the institutional, split-second decision to save scores of Croatian detainees from brutal mistreatment in 1991. “For both Grüninger and Ivlev,” Press writes, “what changed was the state of the world around them, not their ideas about it.”

But Beautiful Souls is also a book about cultural and political defiance in situations where circumstances don’t change much, but an individual’s ideas and assumptions do.

Arner Wishnitzer, the once loyal Israeli Defense Forces soldier-turned-peace-activist makes the agonizing decision to (very publicly) refuse to serve in the occupation of Palestinian territories in 2003, seeing it as a systematic violation of the group’s basic humanity. “Saying no to the [Israeli] army—exercising moral courage—was ten times harder” than the physical courage required to serve in a special forces unit. Wishnitzer tells Press, “because virtually no one approved.” Resistance to the status quo required breaking his loyalty to an institution lying at the very core of his identity and history.

Press’s final account is the story of Leyla Wydler, a Houston-based financial adviser, whose anonymous letter to the Securities and Exchange Commission in 2003 becomes the first in a long series of steps involved in revealing a multi-billion dollar Ponzi scheme and bringing down a financial empire. It is another example of “an army of resistance that is arguably no easier and no less important” than those forms exercised by Press’s first three subjects, and Wydler’s story is illustrative of the personal costs involved in raising your voice at a time when it’s just so much easier to keep your mouth shut.

Well aware of the consequences of their defiance within their communities, whether those be military, cultural or financial, these individuals did so with a level of humility few of us can understand—and would do so again without hesitation.

Press combines narrative journalism with a wide range of psychological and philosophical explorations to learn “the mystery of what impels people to do something risky and transgressive when thrust in a morally compromising situation: stop, say no, resist.”

Beautiful Souls is required reading for anyone curious to better understand the limits and potential of their own convictions.

Michael Lapointe is a freelance writer based in Toronto.
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<td>Paris, Nantes and the Loire Valley</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alaska, Denali and the Yukon</td>
<td>Baltic Adventure</td>
<td>May 16, 2017 • 14 Days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holland America • ms Volendam</td>
<td>Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia</td>
<td>Romantic Danube</td>
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<tr>
<td>August 11, 2017 • 13 Days</td>
<td>May 22, 2017 • 15 Days</td>
<td>Prague to Budapest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Dalmatian Coast</td>
<td>A Taste of Wales</td>
<td>May 20, 2017 • 12 Days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cruise and Land Journey • ms Equator</td>
<td>June 10, 2017 • 12 Days</td>
<td>French Savoir Vivre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 23, 2017 • 15 Days</td>
<td>Hiking the Scottish Highlands</td>
<td>Paris to Lyon</td>
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<tr>
<td>and more...</td>
<td>Mongolia, Nomads of the Steppes</td>
<td>September 4, 2017 • 11 Days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>July 8, 2017 • 16 Days</td>
<td>and more...</td>
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<td>and more...</td>
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