

# ANGLICAN JOURNAL

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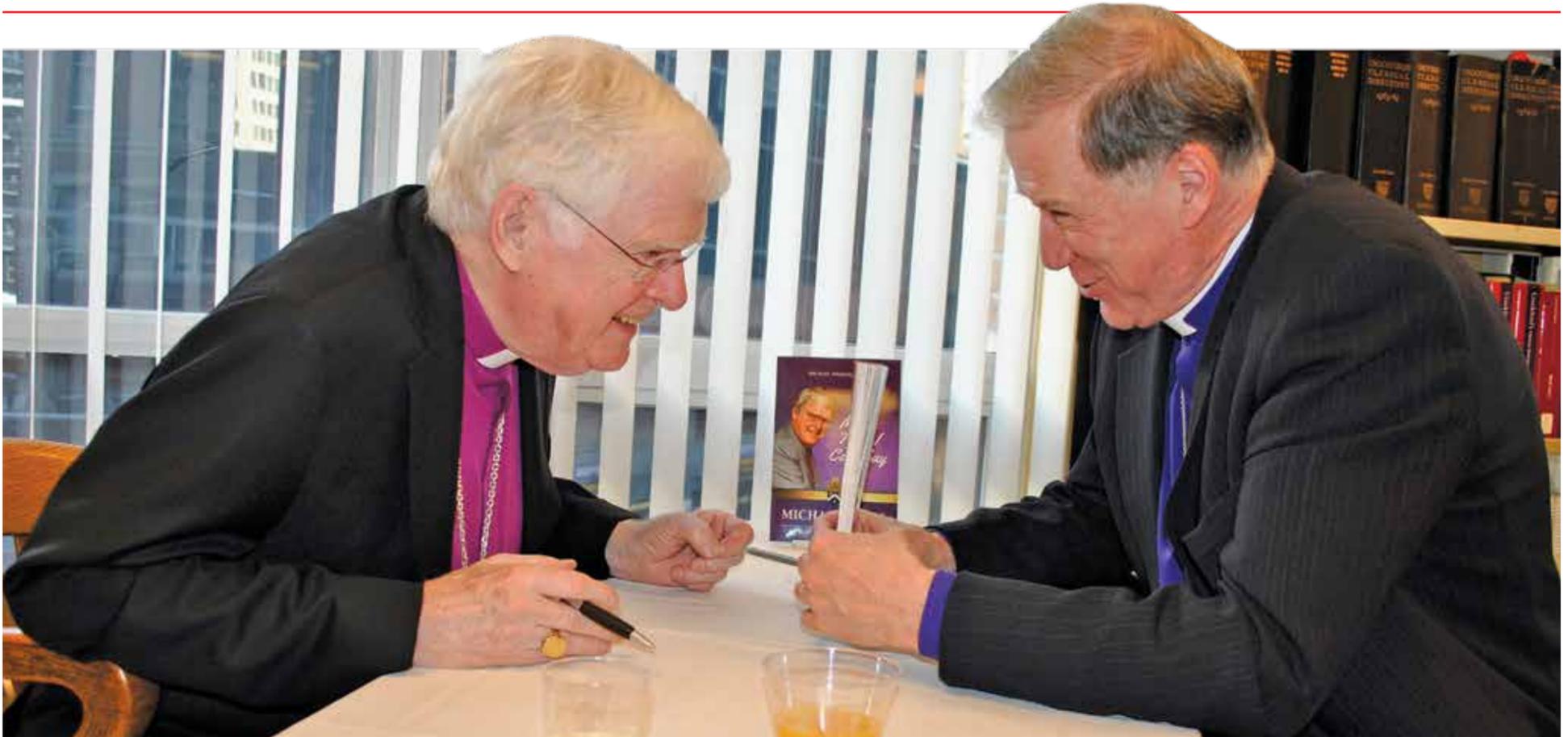


PHOTO: MARITES N. SISON

## Bonds of affection

Archbishop Michael Peers (left) and Archbishop Fred Hiltz share a laugh at the book launch of *More Than I Can Say: Michael Peers – A Memoir*. BOOK REVIEW, PAGE 13 ▶



▲ The many facets of ministry in the diocese of Eastern Newfoundland and Labrador on pages 8, 9 and 10

PHOTO: ANDRÉ FORGET

### Church responds to migratory lifestyles

André Forget  
STAFF WRITER

It is known colloquially as “the turnaround.” Every few weeks, thousands of Newfoundlanders make the long commute to northern Alberta to work in the oil industry. They stay there for a “shift” of two to four weeks, and return to their families on their weeks off.

See Seasonal, p. 10

## School records submitted to TRC

André Forget  
STAFF WRITER

It has been a long process, but on Jan. 16 the Anglican Church of Canada submitted its digital records relating to Indian Residential Schools—over 300,000 pages of documents—to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC).

For General Synod archivist Nancy Hurn, who co-ordinated the seven-year digitization process, it has been a journey filled with hard work. It has also, however, been a rewarding one.

“I’ve been an archivist for 30 years,” said Hurn, “and this is predominantly the first time that I have looked at historical records that have such an impact on people’s current lives.”

Between 1820 and 1969, the Anglican church operated 35 residential schools across Canada, and as part of the 2007 Indian Residential School Settlement Agreement, it was required to provide the TRC with all information related to the residential schools held in its archives.



This was the task Hurn and the church archivists faced: finding all the relevant documents and making copies available for the TRC. Approximately half of the digitized records came from the General Synod archives in Toronto, which also holds records from the Arctic and Keewatin dioceses. The rest of the records came from the archives of 30 dioceses

▲ Archdeacon Jim Boyles assists General Synod archivists Nancy Hurn and Laurel Parson (middle).  
PHOTO: ANDRÉ FORGET

See It’s really, p. 15

### INSIDE



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PM# 40069670

# Church can help open up space for dialogue

Leigh Anne Williams  
STAFF WRITER

As the new director of the University of Toronto's Munk School of Global Affairs, Stephen Toope stands at an interesting spot where academia intersects with the public square. This son of an Anglican priest arrived here by a fascinating road that took him from his hometown of Montreal, across Canada and around the world.

After graduating from Harvard, McGill and Cambridge as a lawyer, he helped to create the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples in Canada in the 1990s, and later, to prove that Canadian citizen Maher Arar was unjustly tortured in a Syrian prison. From 2002 to 2007, he also represented Western Europe and North America at the UN Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances. Most recently, he was president of the University of British Columbia. Toope has also devoted time to the Anglican Church of Canada as a member of a task force working with then primate Archbishop Michael Peers, considering the church's future and relevance in an increasingly secular world, advising the diocese of New Westminster on canon law as it considered blessing same-sex unions, and as the chair of the Primate's World Relief and Development Fund (PWRDF) Committee.

## How are you feeling about this new position?

I'm very excited by it. The more I learn about the Munk School, the more opportunity I think there is for it to really play a role as one of Canada's principal interlocutors in global affairs, outside of government.

## Are there new directions that you'd like to see for the school?

I'm always careful when I go into a new job not to purport to know more than I do before I get into it. I certainly wouldn't want to say that things have to change radically. In fact, I think that this school is on a great trajectory. There is one program area where I'm pretty sure one of the reasons I was hired was to explore this further. There's a program called Global Justice, and so far it's focused a lot on international tribunals, criminal courts... There's a shared desire to expand beyond



## ▲ Stephen Toope: An Anglican and noted international law scholar

PHOTO: COURTESY OF  
MUNK SCHOOL OF  
GLOBAL AFFAIRS

that and to be thinking more about what it means to try to conceptualize justice at a global level. Does that mean institutions? I think it does. But does it also mean policies that actually try to pursue more just outcomes for people who have been marginalized? There's some real opportunity to think more creatively in that space. It relates to another question, which is religious intolerance, religious extremism. I would broaden that out to say deep cultural difference. How do we navigate in a world of extraordinary cultural chasms that have opened up? Do you simply accept that? It's all very well to say we need more dialogue. But how do we accomplish that in an institutional sense at an international level? What are the roles that civil society organizations can play?

## Is there a freedom being in the school, as opposed to the UN or a government body?

I remember Michael Peers used to describe the Anglican church as a place for people to be together. I think that's true. What he was getting at was, "Well, we don't all have to have exactly the same belief structure on every doctrinal issue." You could have differences, but we wanted to be together. I think that a place like the Munk School is that, in a secular sense. It is a place...that can convene across great differences because we're not representative of any particular ideological view; we don't have a political position; we're not a governmental organization.

## Are there some big-picture things that you think are important for the church and

## organizations, like PWRDF, to think about now?

One of them is this question of how to facilitate cross-cultural connections. We are creating terrible divisions that seem quite impenetrable at a political level, so finding ways within civil society to create open spaces for people to connect [is vital]. I remember one of the first trips I did with PWRDF—there was a session in Thailand for Sinhalese Buddhists and Tamils to get together in a safe space, partly supported by the Primate's Fund—to be part of that creation of open space for some dialogue... Another area that strikes me as increasingly important is income inequality. How do we get societies to be thinking about the unfairness of ever-increasing Gini coefficients, where you've got the bottom part of the population having access to almost no resources and the top one per cent—10 per cent, 20 per cent—having access to almost all resources?

## You helped advise the diocese of New Westminster on canon law as it considered allowing same-sex blessings. Now the national church is considering the question of allowing same-sex marriage. Would you have any advice for the church in terms of handling a potential conflict?

I was not, happily, involved so much in the small "p" politics of it because we were brought in to give our interpretation of what was allowed and what was not allowed under the rubric of the diocese, and what were the bishop's powers, and all those things.

What I was struck by, and it made me quite sad, was the number of people who, I felt, exhibited no generosity of spirit. If I had any advice, it is to say that people can legitimately disagree on these issues... you can have a more fair-minded discussion if people enter not with the presumption that the other side has some evil intent, if I may put it that way... And maybe I'll say something slightly provocative: I think that the bishops have a very important role. If [they] model discourse that is not exclusionary, I think we have a better chance. ■

(See full interview at [anglicanjournal.com](http://anglicanjournal.com): *Church can help open space for dialogue.*)

“ I think that the bishops have a very important role. If [they] model discourse that is not exclusionary, I think we have a better chance.

— Stephen Toope, director of the Munk School of Global Affairs, University of Toronto

## Committed parishioners establish endowment fund for mission projects

Paul and Heather, ages 69 and 67, feel passionately about outreach projects and the importance of having a clear sense of mission and purpose for their parish church. After consultation with other parishioners and the wardens, they have agreed to make a significant gift to the church to establish a permanent endowment fund for mission projects. They envisage the fund will allocate most of the interest earned each year to specific projects in the local community and beyond, selected by a small task force of the parish council.

Paul and Heather also would like to earn more on a portion of their savings, now held in GICs and earning a very modest return, fully taxable. They have decided to make a contribution to General Synod of \$40,000. The Resources for Mission department has prepared a Gift Plus Annuity agreement for them, in cooperation

with a major insurance company. This will provide a guaranteed annual income for the rest of both lives of \$1,712 (\$ 142.66 a month), with a rate of 4.2798 %. 82.51 % of the annual payments (or \$1,412) will be tax free. A donation receipt will be issued for the gift amount of \$10,000. The tax credit earned by making this gift is expected to be \$4,640. Assuming the top marginal tax rate, this is equivalent to a before tax yield of 8.3% from a guaranteed income investment.

The gift of \$10,000 will be paid immediately to their church and invested according to the guidelines prepared by the parish council and their legal counsel. Paul and Heather are delighted they have the capacity and opportunity to make this gift and hope it will generate additional acts of generosity for vitally important ministry.



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FOCUS ▶



Rabbi Reuben Poupko



Rabbi Jarrod Grover



The Rev. Dr. Carol Wood



(Ret.) Bishop Michael Ingham



Imam Imtiaz Ahmed



Imam Syed Soharwardy

## FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION VERSUS RELIGIOUS SENSIBILITIES: What's the balance?

Diana Swift

**I**N LIGHT OF January's tragic events in Paris, Western democracies are reflecting on one of their core values: the right to freedom of expression even if that freedom offends people. A legacy of the 18th-century Enlightenment, this value has given Westerners wide latitude to mock social institutions from the monarchy to the church.

But after 17 people were killed in attacks, including staff at satirical magazine *Charlie Hebdo*, some are asking whether a line should be drawn—is unbridled freedom to pillory religion worth the sometimes brutal consequences? Others counter: is respect for religion merely code for fear of religion?

The *Anglican Journal* put two questions to six religious leaders representing the Jewish, Christian and Muslim faiths: How do you feel/react when your religion or its most revered figures are satirized? Should respecting religious sensibilities trump freedom of speech?

**Rabbi Reuben Poupko, rabbi, Beth Israel Beth Aaron Congregation, Montreal**

It depends on the nature of the satire. Some images of Judaism can be hurtful and offensive. But in society, no one has the right never to be offended. Sometimes you are wrong to be offended. And some religious cartoons can be genuinely funny. I recall one showing Moses descending from Mount Sinai with God's commandments on the stone tablets. Moses says, "The good news is, I got 'em down to 10. The bad news is, adultery's still in." I laughed out loud.

When religion is mocked in a secular society, it's not against the law, and 2015 is hardly the first year religion has been satirized. Blasphemy is not a crime, and it's hard to make the case that laws restricting speech—even hate speech—are in the long run beneficial since they turn the perpetrators into martyrs. This is the price of living in a secular state: we must learn to live with our most precious ideals and beliefs being mocked. Ultimately the benefits of free speech far outweigh the drawbacks.

**Rabbi Jarrod Grover, rabbi, Beth Tikvah Synagogue, Toronto**

For me personally, seeing my faith mocked can be very angering. I feel the same way any person would when something valuable to them is not being treated respectfully. Judaic teaching has little to say about this. But though freedom of expression is sometimes hurtful, it's the price we pay for living in a vibrant and prosperous democracy that allows our most cherished values to be questioned. I have Mormon friends who are deeply offended by the satirical Broadway musical *The Book of Mormon*, but they absolutely defend the producers' right to put on the show.



▲ Marchers hold panels depicting the eyes of slain *Charlie Hebdo* editor Stéphane Charbonnier.

PHOTO: CHARLES PLATIAU/REUTERS

There is a line, however, that most first-world countries recognize—when depiction falls into the category of hate speech or incitement to violence. I would draw the line there, but it is very unclear where free speech becomes hate speech. It's a constant tension we must deal with, especially in the wake of the Paris attacks, but that does not mean we should get rid of the tension.

**The Rev. Dr. Carol Wood, ecumenical chaplain, McMaster University, Hamilton, Ont.**

It is hurtful when Jesus and the central parts of our faith such as the eucharist are belittled. But such occasions also call us to self-examination and awareness of our social location, our own biases and our need for repentance for the perpetuation of stereotypes and misconceptions about other faith traditions. Such an experience did happen to me in a public venue with a comment from someone equating the eucharist with cannibalism.

Freedom of speech is a privilege exercised in the context of community. Satirizing religious figures or doctrines runs the risk of alienating communities, fostering stereotypes and polarizing religious groups. But if there were exemptions to criticism made for some people, it seems we would not be a democracy. Throughout history there have been religious leaders, like Jim Jones of the People's Temple, who have clearly caused harm to their followers. Balance between freedom of expression and respect for religion can be approached through dialogue and engagement.

**(Ret.) Bishop Michael Ingham, former bishop, Anglican diocese of New Westminster, Vancouver**

If religious criticism is intended deliberately to offend, to vilify or to slander, it is not acceptable and I would be outraged. And not just for my own religious faith, but also for others'. I am not against satire. I am against hatred. If satire is intended respectfully to challenge or question a fundamental belief, or to expose the

hypocrisy of the institution or its leaders, it is perfectly okay.

There is no unlimited right to freedom of speech and no absolute right to freedom. To exist, freedom needs self-imposed restraints, and democracy requires a consensus based on mutual respect. What we have in the Paris cartoons is a misuse of freedom...it is secular fundamentalism that insists on the right to cause offence in the name of freedom. Religious satire is not off-limits when it serves the public good by exposing hypocrisy and causing us to live up to our ideals in a better way, but when its purpose is deliberately to offend, how is that different from hatred?

**Imam Imtiaz Ahmed, Ahmadiyya Mosque, Ottawa**

I am hurt when a sacred person is ridiculed or belittled—be it Moses, Jesus or Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon all of them), it is equally offensive. Muslims hold every prophet very near and dear to our hearts, and any satirical depiction of them is offensive to us. I recently suggested that no caricature or satirical cartoon of any religious figure should be published, as it can potentially harm peaceful coexistence. That being said, this does not give anyone the right to take the law into his hands and start killing and committing atrocities against mankind.

Freedom, whether freedom of religion or freedom of expression, is a cherished Canadian value. Islam teaches us not to say anything about any sacred person of any religion that could hurt the sentiments of its followers. We already have laws in place to prevent hate speech, libel and slander, so I don't think freedom of expression has to be sacrificed to accommodate religious sensibilities. I believe both are important and can coexist.

**Imam Syed Soharwardy, executive imam, Al Madinah Islamic Assembly, Calgary**

When someone insults Islam, it bothers me; it is quite disturbing. But either he does not know Islam or he has a hateful disagreement with Islam. So it is our duty to have a dialogue with that person and educate him. Respectful disagreement is absolutely fine. Disparaging depictions of Christ bother me so much I feel sorry for my Christian brethren. And while I cannot make fun of the Torah or the gospel, non-Muslims are mocking us, knowing that the Qur'an prohibits us from responding in the same tone.

In a free society, people have the right to offend, but people do not have the right to incite hatred or to stereotype an entire community. When you depict Muhammad as a terrorist, 1.6 billion Muslims worldwide are considered terrorists, when 99.9 per cent of them are peaceful. We must use freedom of speech with responsibility. That is the price of keeping a civil society. ■

“ I recall [a cartoon] showing Moses descending from Mount Sinai with God's commandments on the stone tablets. Moses says, “The good news is, I got 'em down to 10. The bad news is, adultery's still in.” I laughed out loud.

— Rabbi Reuben Poupko, co-chair, Canadian Rabbinic Caucus and rabbi, Beth Israel Beth Aaron Congregation, Montreal

# Window of opportunity



**Marites N. Sison**  
EDITOR

**T**HIS NEWSPAPER'S website, [anglicanjournal.com](http://anglicanjournal.com), has launched *Eyewitness, Special Coverage of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission* (TRC). The web page (<http://bit.ly/1uJLMap>) compiles the newspaper's extensive and award-winning coverage of the TRC national events, beginning in 2010 in Winnipeg.

The collection of more than 150 stories, photographs and videos offers a comprehensive look at the impact of the Indian residential school system on aboriginal people across Canada. It also documents how the Anglican Church of Canada—which operated 35 of these schools between 1820 and 1969—has responded to the enormous challenge of healing and reconciliation. The stories feature former students and their families, former staff, church and government representatives, foreign observers and interested Canadians who chose to take part in an undertaking unprecedented in Canadian history.

The Journal hopes that *Eyewitness* will contribute to further understanding about what has been dubbed “Canada’s shame” and encourage more conversations and action.

A key component of the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement, the TRC was created to gather the experiences

of more than 150,000 former students and their families, to educate Canadians about the schools’ history and to inspire reconciliation “among individuals, families, communities, religious entities, government, and the people of Canada.”

At the first national event in Winnipeg in June 2010, TRC chair Justice Murray Sinclair urged those present to simply listen and be open. “You will notice a resilience and strength that is nothing short of remarkable,” he said, referring to former residential school students, many already in their twilight years and sharing their childhood experiences for the very first time. “There is an unmistakable, absolute truth experienced when the person across from you summons up immeasurable courage to tell you something they may never have told anyone.”

In June, the TRC will end its four-year term, with the seventh and final national event to be held in Ottawa. A key question that needs to be answered is whether Canadians have listened and, if so, what are they prepared to do about what they have heard. A statement made by TRC commissioner Marie Wilson at the Winnipeg event lends particular resonance: “What we have kept repeating is if the TRC ends up being a series of very well-intentioned activities that lead only to aboriginal people talking to themselves, our country will have missed the best opportunity that we had in nation

building, in possibly our entire history.”

The primate, Archbishop Fred Hiltz, has attended all TRC events so far. Each time, he has reiterated the church’s 1993 apology to aboriginal people for its role in running the schools, where some students suffered physical and sexual abuse. Hiltz also expressed the church’s commitment to the healing journey for the long haul, acknowledging that healing and reconciliation could take generations. After all, the schools operated for a century and the legacy of trauma and institutional racism continue to this day—aboriginal people suffer a higher incidence of poverty, addictions, family violence, depression, poor health, inadequate housing and incarceration.

In order for this commitment to take root, however, it will need to be fully embraced by Anglicans across Canada. The reality is that the residential school legacy remains either a polarizing issue or a non-issue in some parts of the church. The Primate’s Commission on the Doctrine of Discovery, Reconciliation and Healing will need to address this. Created on the recommendation of the Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples, part of the commission’s mandate is to move forward with reconciliation and address continuing injustices faced by Canada’s indigenous communities. There is much work to be done. ■

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**Editor’s Note:**  
*At press time, the Supreme Court ruled that Canadian adults who are mentally competent, enduring intolerable suffering and have “grievous and irremediable medical conditions” have the right to doctor-assisted suicide. The Anglican Journal will explore the religious and ethical perspectives of this decision in the April issue.*

## On ethical divestment: ‘Let’s give ourselves a big shake’

I was almost speechless after reading the article, *Ethical investment: ‘Not just avoiding the bad’* (Jan. 2015, p. 3).

How in God’s name can so many Christian groups, including the Church of England, put in place “hard screens” that prohibit investments in tobacco, alcohol, pornography and armaments, yet still invest in fossil fuel corporations whose products are driving global warming rapidly toward a climate cliff that has the capacity to destroy creation? Both the church and British Petroleum must be laughing all the way to the bank after their “hard-edged” conversations about reforming BP’s safety procedures.

The burning of fossil fuels is the energetic equivalent of exploding 400,000 Hiroshima-sized bombs every day. And yet, the focus of responsible investment is ensuring effective safety procedures? As Christian climate activist Bill McKibben said in a speech to the Riverside Church in Virginia last summer: “We don’t act, and for a particular reason, one that will be clear to those who are used to reading the gospels. Our richest people don’t want to act because it would reduce their wealth.”

Let’s give ourselves a great big shake, and divest!

**Liz Armstrong**  
Erin, Ont.

### In praise of restraint

I would like to praise most English Canadian media for their restraint in creating a potential backlash against people of Muslim faith (*Religious leaders condemn Paris attacks*, Feb. 2015, p. 8). It is important that we strengthen our interfaith relations at this trying time, when we could easily be tempted to abandon mutual respect and peaceful dialogue.

**The Rev. Fletcher Stewart**  
Winnipeg

### A letdown

The recent descriptions of the jihad murders of two Canadian Forces personnel (*‘Draw strength and courage from our faith,’* Dec. 2014, p. 1) were downplayed in my church “newspaper.”

The murder of Patrice Vincent was not a “hit and run.”

No Canadian, let alone Christians and

Jews, will ever thank you for your willful blindness. If you were a paper of truth and justice, you would print the truth about Islamic doctrine and the persecution of Christians in all Islamic geographies. You would also publish articles of concern regarding stealth jihad in this country.

Marites N. Sison in her editorial *The gift of possibilities* (Sept. 2014, p. 4) said her immediate goal was to “provide readers with more thought-provoking stories that will be told in new ways.” I was immediately hopeful, but remain disappointed.

**Robert Reid**  
Mississauga, Ont.

### An inspiring read

I really appreciated *Jonah’s journey to Nineveh, and mine* (Jan. 2015, p. 2). Eric Friesen writes in a way that is interesting, easy to follow and easy to understand. I admire the way he faced his fears all through his life and used his talents to help others. His story is inspiring and enjoyable to read.

**Eileen Akselson**  
Castlegar, B.C.



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Canada

COME AND SEE ▶



# ‘O Dearest Lord’

By Fred J. Hiltz

**I**N THE THIRD WEEK of Lent I will be making a visit to the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem with Andrea Mann, the director of global relations for our church. Our visit begins in Amman, Jordan, with an act of renewing baptismal vows in the Jordan River! Imagine wading into those same waters in which Jesus was baptized to renew one’s vows as a disciple and then to baptize others! That will be quite the experience.

From Jordan, we will visit several parishes and a number of schools and health care centres operated by the Diocese of Jerusalem. We will meet with lots of local clergy and people and then with Archbishop Suheil Dawani and his chaplain, the Rev. Canon John Organ. His ministry has been supported for three years by a generous grant from the General Synod of our church. We will make a visit to St. George’s College and I will preach at the Cathedral of St. George the Martyr in Jerusalem. We will return home with many stories, and I pray that in telling them, our Canadian Companions of the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem will grow. Check us out at [www.anglican.ca](http://www.anglican.ca) under Mission and Justice.

Throughout this visit, I will wear the pectoral cross that Archbishop Suheil gave me in 2009. It is a Jerusalem cross that bears five gems representing the wounds of Christ crucified—his head, his hands, his feet and his side.

This cross reminds me of an old Lenten hymn, “O Dearest Lord,” written by Henry Ernest Handy (1869–1946). It is, in fact, as you can see, a prayer, each verse a simple petition for the consecration of my life to the work of our Lord.

My hope is that this hymn may



## O Dearest Lord, Thy Sacred Head

- 1 O dearest Lord, thy sacred head with thorns was pierced for me: O pour thy blessing on my head that I may think for thee.
- 2 O dearest Lord, thy sacred hands with nails were pierced for me: O shed thy blessing on my hands that they may work for thee.
- 3 O dearest Lord, thy sacred feet with nails were pierced for me: O pour thy blessing on my feet that they may follow thee.
- 4 O dearest Lord, thy sacred heart with spear was pierced for me: O pour thy Spirit in my heart that I may live for thee.

*Text: Henry Ernest Hardy (1869–1946). Mowbray, an imprint of Cassell plc, London.*

inspire not only my keeping of Lent and Holy Week but all the days of my life in that Paschal Mystery into which I am baptized. I know this hope is the very same hope of countless others, and in that I rejoice. ■

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

▲ The Jerusalem cross represents the wounds of Jesus Christ.

PHOTO: MARITES N. SISON

WALKING TOGETHER ▼

# An Indigenous teaching that may surprise

By Mark MacDonald

**R**ECENTLY, I WAS talking with a friend who is, I think, a most important Indigenous theologian. As we discussed the church’s teaching on the Trinity, we observed that many non-



Indigenous commentators assume that Indigenous people would have no interest or time for this foundational Christian doctrine. Our experience, however, is that Trinitarian teaching beautifully complements Indigenous spirituality and life-ways. This harmony appears to have four interacting dimensions: the beauty and power of the scriptural presentation of the divine; traditional Indigenous conceptions of God and creation; the basic teaching of the church; and, most important, the experience and relevance of these ideas in the encounter with creation.

This relational God—a Sacred Circle—is mysterious and hidden, but definitively present in the traces of the divine life glimpsed in the communion of creation and, also, in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. These come together so wonderfully in the baptism of Jesus—a revelation of the divine life hidden in creation, the saving power of Jesus restoring life and the unity of the three in love. It is a very Indigenous scene.

Over the years, I have heard far too many preachers say with pride that they never mention the Trinity. It seems that this is related to an assumption that is at the heart of the prediction that Indigenous people would be allergic to the idea of the Trinity: it is falsely assumed that the philosophical explanations for the Trinity—often wordy, complex and seemingly far apart from real life experience—is all there is to this teaching.

It is my hope and prayer that another approach is possible, suggested by my experience of Indigenous teaching. Our ancestors, both Christian and Indigenous, approached God in ways that were more reliant on spiritual experience, interacting with scriptural revelation and the teaching of elders. Philosophical explanation has a place—philosophical speculation, less so, perhaps. But it is the interaction of teaching, prayer, the good walk of life and the love of God, received by grace in all these things, that opens a doorway to this teaching, a realm of a larger and more beautiful life. ■

**Bishop Mark MacDonald is national indigenous bishop of the Anglican Church of Canada.**

*The Anglican Journal welcomes letters to the editor. Since not all letters can be published, preference is generally given to shorter correspondence. All letters are subject to editing.*

LETTERS ▶

# Facing deep fears leads to growth

Eric Friesen’s eloquent, honest and brave article (*Jonah’s journey to Nineveh, and mine*, Jan. 2015, p. 2) addresses our need to tackle areas of fearfulness in our lives, and to search earnestly for the latent resources (faith) that we all have to overcome them.

As he rightly points out, we render our greatest service when it costs the full price of facing up to challenges; service has reduced value if (unlike the widow’s mite) it comes only from our surplus. If we confront only what we know we can easily overcome, where is the muscle growth? Pain and tribulation can deliver achievement, healing and strength.

While fear is a natural reflex for self-protection, and confronts us whenever we have to move outside our “comfort zone,” combatting it increases our confidence of success. Confidence snowballs with practice.

“Being brave” is not something only for the young or able-bodied. Herbert O’Driscoll’s hymn reminds us all, of any and every age, that “The love of Jesus calls us to go where he would go, to challenge all that limits, to change, to learn, to grow” (Hymn 434, *Common Praise*).

By strange contrast, a piece in the same issue (*Rois makes top 100 list*, p. 11) des-

cribes an award “intended to recognize Canada’s strong, fearless female leaders.” Not so! No one is fearless, but some practise the courage to overcome many fears, even very deep ones, and thence to render great service.

**Elizabeth Griffin**  
Royal Oak, Victoria

## CoGS as gear wheels

My eye was caught by the heading, *A constructive role for CoGS* (Jan. 2015, p. 9). Cogs, in times gone by, were what is now known as gear wheels, which, I am sure, your readers will recognize as those that have teeth around their circumference. A gear wheel, when placed between other gear wheels, can, depending on its size, and therefore number of teeth, be most helpful. It can increase or decrease the energy transmitted between an input and an output speed, up or slow down that energy transfer, or reverse its direction.

If CoGS members are considering their role, may I suggest that they become cogs as the word implies. All of the qualities of gear wheels will be useful in the contentious issues they are to address.

**John Morralee**  
Belleville, Ont.



# Welby's and West's recipes for justice

Leigh Anne Williams  
STAFF WRITER

Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby and author Cornel West opened the Trinity Institute's *Creating Common Good: A Practical Conference on Economic Inequality* that took place at Trinity Church on Wall Street from Jan. 22 to 25 in two very different styles of address. But in their messages about what Christians are called to do in the face of inequality and injustice, there was a remarkable convergence.

Welby held up the example of the way a Roman Catholic archbishop and an Anglican bishop in Liverpool worked together in the 1980s to help rebuild the city that had been torn apart by sectarianism, poverty and political dysfunction. "We are called to action. Seek the welfare of the city," Welby said, in a homily at the opening worship service.

"We are to get involved. We are to get our hands dirty, to speak of policy and of implementation, not merely to deal with the macro but also with the micro," he later told the crowd of about 300 conference participants. "The common good truly interpreted in the light of scripture... demands from us our own radicality that can only come from the overflowing of the spirit of God within us."

Jesus' words in Luke's gospel, Welby said, promise the gift of that spirit, which will "make possible the impossible revolution, the impossible revolution that is to be achieved without violence, to be achieved without hatred, to be achieved through blessing and loving and serving, and transforming the society in which we live."

In a keynote address that seemed to be part whirlwind and part jazz symphony,



▲ Cornel West at Trinity Institute's conference on economic inequality

PHOTO: LEAH REDDY

Cornel West, author of *The Rich and the Rest of Us*, held up Martin Luther King, Jr., John Coltrane, B.B. King, Malcolm X and dozens of writers from Socrates to Toni Morrison to W.H. Auden to Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel for wisdom when facing injustice.

West said the fundamental question is, "Will your righteous indignation be channelled through the venues of love and justice or hatred and revenge?" He added: "That's the question right now in Paris, isn't it? The question in Nigeria, the question in Sri Lanka."

West spoke about black children in America growing up with fears of walking down the street and being harassed, stopped, frisked or shot. "I know the president said the union is strong. I said, 'My dear brother president, you need to get off the symbolic crack pipe.'" He mentioned that he went to Ferguson, Missouri, not "to give a speech. I went there to go to jail. And that's where I ended up with a smile on my face in the name of Jesus."

West said his faith sometimes pushes him in the direction of "revolutionary

Christianity," or what some call the far left. "I don't mind talking about Wall Street crimes, when they commit crimes... The same is true with drones dropping bombs on innocent children in Yemen and Somalia." Following the cross, he said, is "a quest for unarmed truth and unconditional love, which means keeping track of the suffering."

He questioned why one per cent of the population in America owns 43 per cent of the wealth, when over 22 per cent of the country's children live in poverty.

Christians are called to speak out against wrongs and injustice on all sides, always being concerned "with the least of these," as Jesus said in Matthew 25, said West. "Any time we talk about creating common good, we are not talking about abstractions. We are talking about existential choices, concrete commitments that must be embodied and enacted in our fallen, finite, fallible lives."

And though Christians cannot be indifferent to suffering and are called to speak and act against it, he also noted that the results are in God's hands. "Any time we talk about creating common good, we're not talking about predetermining where we end up," he said. "It's more like a jazz orchestra under Duke Ellington or Count Basie or Mary Lou Williams or the inimitable John Coltrane with his Love Supreme—we don't know exactly where we end up. Be free enough to allow your soul and mind and heart and body to participate in the process."

What is required is "global vision, local practice, subtle analysis," he said, "but without love at the centre, it is sounding brass and tinkling symbol."

Webcasts of the conference are available at <http://bit.ly/1DtUo2Z>. ■

“Will your righteous indignation be channelled through the venues of love and justice or hatred and revenge?”

— Cornel West, author

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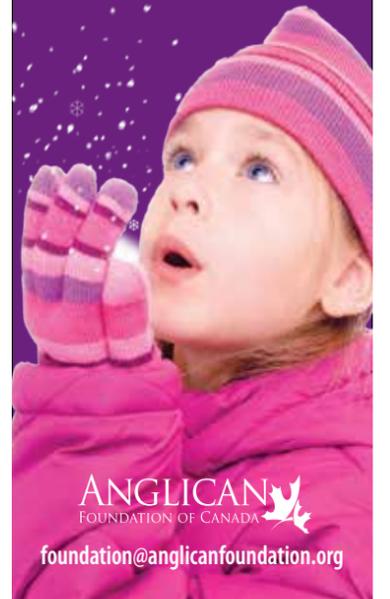
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NEWS ▶

# Ecumenism alive and well in Newfoundland

**André Forget**  
STAFF WRITER

**St. John's**—Students and faculty of Queen's College kicked off the annual Week of Prayer for Christian Unity with an interdenominational service featuring a sermon from Archbishop Martin Currie of the Roman Catholic archdiocese of St. John's.

In his sermon, Currie called on Christians of all denominations to come together on issues that all can agree must be addressed, such as poverty, violence and the environment.

In an anecdote from his own childhood in the small village of Marinette, Nova Scotia, Currie spoke about how far the church has come: "My mother used to tell me to pray for the Protestants, because they were going to hell," he said, chuckling.

When Newfoundland was first being settled by Europeans, Protestants and Catholics tended to establish communities separately, and from the mid-19th to the late 20th century the education system was run along denominational lines. This led to the deep entrenchment of denominational identity.

However, this sectarian past has been replaced by an increasingly ecumenical present. Denominational co-operation is the norm rather than the exception at Queen's, where the faculty includes both Anglican and Roman Catholic clergy and where the students represent just about every denomination in the province. The college is jointly owned and operated by the three Newfoundland dioceses.

Christine Lynch, a student from Harbour Grace in her second year of the master of divinity program, noted that



▲ Queen's provost the Rev. Alex Faseruk with M.Div. students Christine Lynch, Tryphena Vallis and Kay Short after a service in the Queen's chapel

PHOTO: ANDRÉ FORGET

studying in an ecumenical context has given her greater insights into her course material.

"I think when we close ourselves off and we just keep to ourselves, we don't know other people's perspective on things," said Lynch. "The more we get to know people, the more accepting we are of what they believe."

Lynch was quick to add that in the context of Newfoundland, Queen's is not unique.

"I've found that a lot of our communities now try to work together," she said. "We do a lot of ecumenical services in our town at special times, say, during Lent. We'll go to the United church one week and the Roman Catholic church the next week, [or] we'll go to the Anglican church—everyone from different

denominations—we walk through life together."

Kay Short, another master of divinity student, agreed. "In the parishes, the different denominations get together really well. They are invited to preach at each other's churches; they take part in different things like the World Day of Prayer and the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, and at times like Christmas and Easter," she said. "It works well."

Observations of the Week of Prayer will continue throughout the week at Queen's, with clergy from different denominations preaching at various services.

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, an initiative of the World Council of Churches (WCC), is held from Jan. 18 to 25 every year. It has been observed in one form or another since 1908. ■

“My mother used to tell me to pray for the Protestants, because they were going to hell.”

— Archbishop Martin Currie, Roman Catholic archdiocese of St. John's

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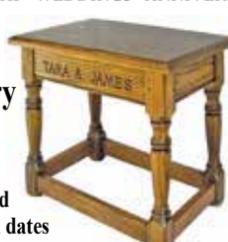
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**Day Reading**

- 01 Mark 14.1-11
- 02 Mark 14.12-72
- 03 Mark 15.1-41
- 04 Mark 15.42-47
- 05 **Mark 16.1-8**
- 06 Psalm 118.1-14
- 07 Psalm 118.15-29
- 08 Acts 10.34-48
- 09 1 John 1.1-2.2
- 10 John 20.1-18
- 11 John 20.19-31
- 12 **Acts 4.1-22**
- 13 Acts 4.23-37
- 14 1 John 2.3-17
- 15 1 John 2.18-29
- 16 1 John 3.1-10
- 17 Psalm 4.1-8
- 18 Luke 24.28-49
- 19 **Acts 3.1-21**
- 20 Psalm 23.1-6
- 21 1 John 3.11-24
- 22 John 10.1-18
- 23 Ezekiel 34.1-16
- 24 Ezekiel 34.17-31
- 25 Mark 16.9-20
- 26 **1 John 4.1-21**
- 27 Acts 8.4-25
- 28 Acts 8.26-40
- 29 Isaiah 5.1-7
- 30 John 14.1-21

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# Something unusual is happening here: Signs of growth?

## Newfoundlanders still see church as part of identity

**T**HE DIOCESE OF Eastern Newfoundland and Labrador is a place of contrasts. In its centre, St. John's, wealthy property developers rub shoulders with fishermen and oil workers just back from Alberta's Fort McMurray. In its farthest-flung regions, priests drive for hours to visit remote parishes in Labrador.

These contrasts are present, too, in the life of the church.

Like many other dioceses in the Anglican Church of Canada, Eastern Newfoundland and Labrador is facing serious questions regarding what to do with its property and buildings as its members age. And, like many other dioceses, it is trying to invest more of its energy in new kinds of mission.

But at the same time, there are signs of unusual kinds of growth.

"There are some weird things going on here," says Geoffrey Peddle, the bishop of the diocese. "In 1961, we were [baptizing] 18 per cent of live births. We're doing over 30 per cent now. Go figure. There is something happening."

Peddle celebrated the first anniversary of his consecration in January, but he has been studying what makes Newfoundlanders different from the rest of the church for years.

Drawing on his academic background in empirical theology, which uses statistical analysis to understand religious life, Peddle has come to some surprising conclusions about how the Newfoundland Anglicans relate to their church, and in a talk given at the diocesan synod in May, he presented some of his findings.

"The desire for the ministry of the church at times of deep significance in individual lives remains strong," he said, citing the increased rate of baptisms and the increased percentage of weddings in Anglican churches. He went on to suggest that there is a large number of "passive" members who, while not necessarily active in parish life, have not turned their backs on the church either.

For Peddle, this requires a refocusing of vision around what the church is for.

"We must consider the needs of the younger generations," he said. "When our maintenance and cemetery budgets vastly exceed our budgets for children and youth ministry, we need to look at what we are doing."

Peddle is not the only one in the diocese asking these questions. Many young clergy are actively engaged in figuring out new ways of meeting the needs of their parishioners. The Rev. Robert Cooke, for example, hosts theology nights in pubs, where people can ask questions about the church and explore answers in a more open environment.

St. Michael and All Angels, the only Anglo-Catholic parish in the diocese, has opened up space in its new church building to house a daycare. In a city with chronic childcare shortages, this is an im-

portant way to both bring people from the community into the church and to meet their needs in a tangible way, says its rector, the Rev. Sam Rose.

Jonathan Rowe, curate at the Cathedral of St. John the Baptist, has a hunch that, despite the supposed decrease in membership, the church may actually be growing—the growth just isn't being measured properly.

"I think that more people are coming to church now than there were 10 years ago, but they're not necessarily coming every Sunday," he said. "There might be negligible growth in terms of average Sunday attendance, or even some decline, but that doesn't necessarily mean that things aren't happening."

He suggested that this might be due to the larger demographic changes happening in Newfoundland: with many people engaged in work that takes them away from the city, the traditional metrics of weekly attendance don't necessarily yield an accurate picture.

But it is not as though the diocese is without problems. In the outports that dot the coastline of rural Newfoundland, the individual church buildings are a key part of local identity. The twin villages of Chapel Arm and Norman's Cove in the western area of the Avalon Peninsula, for example, each have an Anglican church.

"In Chapel Arm, they have to go to Norman's Cove for gas, they've got to go to Norman's Cove for groceries, and they've got to pass by each of the churches," said the rector, the Rev. Dianna Fry. "It'd be great if we could have one church and we could all come together, but that's not going to happen."

At the same time, though, this possessiveness can also lead to good things, as the Rev. William Strong saw at the 200th anniversary celebration of one of the parish churches, St. Peter's, in Upper Island Cove. The building was packed with parishioners and local notables, a brass band played and a banquet for more than 200 people followed the service.

Newfoundlanders in the outports, whether or not they attend regularly, tend to see the church as being part of their identity—and they are proud of their identity and work to maintain it.

So, what is the way forward for the diocese? In answering the question, Peddle stressed what he considers to be one of the most distinctive parts of his church's identity.

"Religious life here is relational," he said. "[Newfoundlanders] are not terribly concerned with matters of liturgy, theology, doctrine, ethics. There are no great theologians or musicians produced here; we produce pastors. That's what matters to us."

For Peddle, and for many of the priests in his diocese, the task at hand is simply to relate to Newfoundlanders in a way that accommodates the new realities its congregants face in the 21st century. ■

**“Religious life here is relational... There are no great theologians or musicians produced here; we produce pastors.”**

—Bishop Geoffrey Peddle



(Top) A young parishioner joins the Anglican Church Assistance Association brass band. (Left) The iconic "jellybean row" and (below) harbour at St. John's. (Right) Archbishop Fred Hiltz was guest of honour at the Upper Island Cove church's 200th anniversary.



## At Upper Island Cove, bishop urges parishioners to celebrate community, not church edifice

**J**ANUARY 18, 2015 may have been a day for important anniversaries in the small town of Upper Island Cove in the diocese of Eastern Newfoundland and Labrador, but it was a day that focused just as much on the future as on the past.

The town's Anglican church, St. Peter's, was celebrating 200 years of ministry. It was also celebrating the 125th anniversary of its current building, and was joined for the occasion by Archbishop Fred Hiltz, primate of the Anglican Church of Canada, who was celebrating the 20th anniversary of his consecration as bishop, and by Eastern Newfoundland and Labrador's diocesan bishop, Geoff Peddle, who had celebrated the first anniversary of his own consecration the day before.

"Our goal this year is to have more people worshipping in the pews at the end of the year than there were at the beginning," the Rev. William Strong, parish rector, told the more than 200 people who attended the anniversary celebration. "This service will only be considered a success if you folks come back," he said. "We're at a stage in the life of the church where the church needs you to step



St. Peter's Anglican Church celebrated its 200th anniversary with a service and a banquet.

forward and participate."

Peddle affirmed the same sentiment in his own address. "We sometimes focus on buildings at times of celebration like this, but I really believe that the most important thing for you to celebrate

tonight is actually not a building—it's a community," he said, "and you have clearly formed an absolutely incredible community here."

It is a community that is deeply rooted in the place, something Peddle acknowledged, to the gathering's delight and applause, by explaining to them that the pectoral cross he had chosen to wear that evening was the very pectoral cross worn by Bishop Llewellyn Jones when he consecrated St. Peter's new church building in 1890.

"In the tradition of this diocese," said Peddle, "when a bishop dies [the cross and the ring] revert back to the diocese. We can go to our cathedral vaults and I can go back 150 years now and find the pectoral crosses and rings of former bishops. I wanted to wear his tonight as a connection with your past, and with our past as a church."

Hiltz also spoke glowingly of St. Peter's Church.

## 'Patchwork ministry' requires balancing act for rural priest

**T**HE ROCKY AVALON coastline in the diocese of Eastern Newfoundland and Labrador presents many unique challenges to the clergy who work there, but it is also a microcosm of the challenges and opportunities facing the Anglican church across Canada.

"I call it patchwork ministry," says the Rev. Dianna Fry, who serves as one of three team rectors in the parish of the Holy Spirit in the western area of the diocese, "and I call it that because you try to do a little bit here, a little bit there and a little bit somewhere else."

Fry's parish has a total of 13 churches, of which she directly serves four. "The parish is over 100 kilometres across," she said. "I have to go 40 kilometres from the rectory to the last point in the parish."

This arrangement is a response to financial concerns—not all of the churches were economically self-sufficient anymore, and several parishes were amalgamated so that communities would be able to keep their churches.

This desire to preserve the buildings is one of the most significant challenges Fry faces in her work. "I find it even difficult to get them to come together for a service," she said. "I think because there's a fear that if we do that, then they'll eventually close our church."

"You can't do the Bible study as you would like because if you do it in one, you have to do it in all four," she added. "That's true of a lot of things—if you only have it in one, then you're favouring."

This competitiveness is compounded by an anxiety about the future of the church. "In a way, they see the writing on the wall, that eventually the church will have to close," she said. "I think in Little Harbour there are only 97 people there, and most of them are older. I mean, the people just aren't there."

Fry doesn't think, however, that there is no hope for the parish—far from it. "In rural Newfoundland, they still have the faith. The difficulty is being able to support the



▲ The Rev. Dianna Fry serves as one of three rectors in the parish of the Holy Spirit, in the western part of the diocese.



◀ Cape Spear is home to Newfoundland's oldest surviving lighthouse.

institution, the church building as such."

She has noticed the younger families in her parish relating to the church differently. "For the younger families, church is church, and it doesn't matter if it's in Chapel Arm or Norman's Cove," she said. "They don't see the distinction—they don't care which building it is, as long as all the children are together. They want a community. It's the parents and the grandparents who are saying, 'no way will I give up the church in this community.'"

The challenge for Fry is balancing the needs of these younger parishioners with those of the older generations, and it is not an easy balance to maintain. While the church may be eager to see more young people in attendance, actually involving them might cause some serious changes. "If young people come in," said Fry, "they're going to see things differently." ■

"I had a real sense, from what I heard tonight in terms of remarks and conversations and so on, that yes, the church is here, we have a building—it stands on the hill, it stands as a witness, and it is the place where the church gathers." But he, too, stressed that the real life of the community was its people, and that the building exists to serve them. "So long as we can maintain our buildings as facilities for mission," he said, "we are moving in the right direction."

St. Peter's, the only church in the community, has long been a hub of the town's social life and has close ties to St. Peter's School, which stands just across the road. In addition to St. Peter's, the parish of Upper Island Cove also includes St. Andrew's Church in nearby Bryant's Cove and St. John the Evangelist in Bishop's Cove, both of which were well-represented at the celebration. ■

### PROFILE OF A DIOCESE ▶



**Diocese of Eastern Newfoundland and Labrador vital statistics**

**FOUNDED:** 1907  
**BISHOP:** Geoffrey Peddle  
**PARISHES:** 37  
**CLERGY:** 124  
**MEMBERS:** 44,856  
**AREA:** 196,984 sq. km

*An in-depth look at ministry on the Avalon Peninsula and Labrador.*

*Stories and photos by André Forget, staff writer*

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## PROFILE OF A DIOCESE ▶

**Torbay has grown by leaps and bounds. There are more young families... The challenge here is to connect with those young families.**

— The Rev. Betty Harbin, parish of Torbay/Pouch Cove

# Sweet homecoming after 22 years

André Forget  
STAFF WRITER

The parish of Torbay/Pouch Cove in the diocese of Eastern Newfoundland and Labrador recently celebrated the installation of a new priest in the person of the Rev. Betty Harbin, but it turns out that the new priest isn't that new, after all.

This is a homecoming of sorts for Harbin, who has just moved back to the diocese of Eastern Newfoundland and Labrador from the diocese of Central Newfoundland, where she served in the parish of Gambo. Harbin did a parish placement at St. Nicholas while studying at Queen's 22 years ago.

A lot has changed since then. "Torbay has grown by leaps and bounds," she said. "There are more young families... It's the second-fastest growing community in Newfoundland... and the challenge here is to connect with those young families."

The small wooden church, perched on a steep hillside overlooking Torbay Bight, serves a community of 7,397. While the place has been home to a small settlement since the 17th century, it has recently seen rapid population growth—17.8 per cent between 2006 and 2011—as it has become a popular bedroom community for



ANDRÉ FORGET

The Rev. Betty Harbin, with diocese of Eastern Newfoundland and Labrador bishop, Geoffrey Peddle, at her installation service on Jan. 19.

nearby St. John's.

When asked if she had a plan for how best to reach out to this new demographic, Harbin said that building a team would have to come first. "It's not something I do on my own," she said. "I need to give some leadership so they will take ownership, so they will do the inviting and be a welcoming church."

The bishop of the diocese of Eastern Newfoundland and Labrador, Geoff Peddle, in his sermon at the cel-

ebration service, encouraged Harbin to respond to parishioners by being gracious and open. "Where there is human need, the spirit of the law is always more important than the letter," he said. "If we are to err, let us err on the side of compassion for those in need."

In addition to St. Nicholas in Torbay, the parish of Torbay/Pouch Cove includes All Saints Church in Pouch Cove. ■

## Seasonal, migratory employment has its challenges

Continued from p. 1

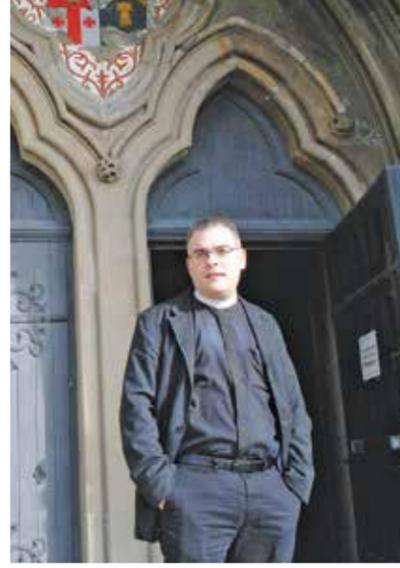
Since the collapse of the cod fishery in 1992, Newfoundlanders have had to be creative in finding work in order to continue to live on the island. The province registered an unemployment rate of 11 per cent last year, and in 2008 there were around 20,000 Newfoundlanders working in Alberta alone. The turnaround has funnelled money back to the island and allowed many families to continue living there.

But it has not been without its costs, and both rural and urban clergy in the diocese of Eastern Newfoundland and Labrador are aware of the impact it has on families and individuals. "The younger families don't seem to mind," said the Rev. Dianna Fry, a priest in the parish of the Holy Spirit in the western area of the diocese. "I suppose because they are young. But they also find it difficult in that the mother is alone with the children for three, four weeks at a time. They feel like a single parent sometimes."

The Rev. Jonathan Rowe, curate at the Cathedral of St. John the Baptist in St. John's, has noticed this problem as well. "It can have negative effects on people's families. I think that it's a whole lot more of a challenge than most people might like."

However, this kind of seasonal, migratory lifestyle is not new in that part of the world, he said. "It's not a long time ago in the Newfoundland cultural memory when this happened anyway, because men went away to fish on the Labrador coast, or they went off on the seal hunt, and they could be gone for stretches at a time."

But Rowe believes it's harder now than in previous eras. "Fifty years ago, if Dad had to go and work, well, things



ANDRÉ FORGET

The Rev. Jonathan Rowe, curate, Anglican Cathedral of St. John the Baptist

were pretty much the same whether he was home or not," he said. "But kids now have to be in after-school programs and things like that because Mom is working."

The church has largely responded to this situation through pastoral ministry. There are other reasons, however, that the turnaround may not be a long-term solution. Dropping oil prices have been cause for concern. Lower prices would not only affect the province's offshore drilling operations, it could potentially put Newfoundlanders working the turnaround out of a job. According to news reports, some oil companies have already started laying off workers.

But it isn't just the turnaround that leads to disruptions in family and community life. Long daily commutes have become common on the Avalon

Peninsula in Eastern Newfoundland, and many people who live in small outports are driving to St. John's for work. The Rev. William Strong, rector of the parish of Upper Island Cove, said that a significant number of his parishioners are professionals who drive the 100-odd kilometres one-way to the city every day. Many of Fry's parishioners make a similar commute.

This transient lifestyle limits the freedom of some Newfoundland Anglicans to participate in parish life.

While some of the larger parishes, like Strong's, have managed to maintain a vital ministry in their communities, smaller, more geographically spread out multi-point parishes have greater difficulty doing this.

Fry believes the church must make itself more flexible to respond to these changes in the lifestyle of its members. "We need to somehow be able to find out what the needs of these families are and meet them," she said, "whether it be a Tuesday or a Wednesday, and not necessarily a Sunday."

She herself has started to spend more time with parishioners in the evenings, when they are home from work, rather than trying to keep a regular nine-to-five schedule.

The Labrador region of the diocese has to deal with a lot of transience as well, but there the problem is the opposite—many come to work in the hydroelectric or mining industries, and leave when they reach retirement age.

"Our church family never stays the same," says Nellie Thomas, the territorial archdeacon for the archdeaconry of Labrador. "People mostly when they retire move away, either back to their own homes or to some community where they feel they want to retire." ■

# Confusion over Syrian refugee sponsorships

**Leigh Anne Williams**  
STAFF WRITER

Early in January, the Canadian government pledged to welcome an additional 10,000 Syrian refugees over the next three years.

The announcement answered a call from the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) for nations to help settle 100,000 refugees from Syria by 2016. It was also seen as a response to criticism from refugee advocates and opposition parties that Canada was not doing enough to meet the needs of more than three million Syrians who have fled violence in their country. In December, Canada had committed to resettle only 1,300 people.

Immigration Minister Chris Alexander said that he expected that about 60 per cent of the 10,000 would be sponsored privately by sponsorship agreement holder organizations, which include many church groups; the remaining 40 per cent would be government-assisted refugees. “Roughly, the same proportions we’ve always had,” the *Globe and Mail* quoted Alexander as having said.

That comment caused a stir among sponsorship agreement holder groups, who told the *Anglican Journal* that they were not consulted before the minister suggested that they should be responsible for sponsoring an additional 6,000 refugees over the next three years. They also noted that it represented a sudden shift away from the principle of “additionality” that has been a part of the private sponsorship program since it was created in 1979. “It’s always been that the government announces what they are going to do—that’s their commitment. They fill those spots and then we fill those additional spots as we’re able,” said Alexandra Kotyk, a member of the Sponsorship Agreement Holder Council and sponsorship director of the Toronto-based Anglican United Refugee Alliance. “To have us be part of the [government’s] pledge is pretty unprecedented.”

On the matter of proportions of sponsorship that would be private and government assisted, a source at Citizenship and



▲ **A Syrian refugee girl and her brother at a camp in Lebanon’s Bekaa Valley**

PHOTO: MOHAMED AZAKIR/REUTERS

Immigration Canada (CIC), who offered background information, said that Alexander mentioned “only notional numbers” for the commitment and that the government would be “very flexible through time as the situation evolves.”

Refugee advocates have also asked for some assurance that this will indeed be 10,000 refugees over and above the number of refugees Canada regularly takes in annually. In an open letter to Alexander, the Canadian Council for Refugees (CCR) expressed concern that the commitment would fall within existing resettlement numbers. “This would mean that the commitment to the Syrian refugees is at the expense of other refugees, who are also very much in need,” said the CCR.

Bill Brown, a CIC media relations officer, told the *Journal* in an email that “those commitments would be accomplished within the levels plans that the government tables in Parliament each year.” The 2015 plan estimated that the total number

of refugees accepted would be between 11,000 and 14,000.

Refugee advocates have pointed out that the 2015 estimates are not higher than the 2014 estimate of between 11,800 and 14,200 refugees.

The CCR also urged the government not to restrict its commitment to Syrian refugees to religious minorities, which it said would “mean discriminating against Muslim refugees in need of resettlement.”

When the *Journal* raised that issue, the CIC said that the UNHCR, which works with the international core group on Syria, has identified eight priority groups for resettlement. These include women and girls at risk, people with physical protection needs (including persecuted ethnic and religious minorities), and sexual minorities. The email also said that “Canada’s commitments give priority to the most vulnerable, for which—as Minister Alexander has said—‘we will not apologize.’” ■

## Toronto’s SSJD to welcome new reverend mother in May

**André Forget**  
STAFF WRITER

In early May, the Toronto-based Sisterhood of St. John the Divine (SSJD) will have a new reverend mother.

Sister Elizabeth Rolfe-Thomas, who has served as prioress since 2008 and as novice director since 2003, was elected to replace the incumbent, Reverend Mother Sister Elizabeth Ann Eckert.

“I feel it’s an awesome responsibility, a challenging task,” she told the *Anglican Journal*. “I’m happy to accept it.”

Rolfe-Thomas acknowledged that she is stepping into the position during a time of uncertainty. “The church is getting smaller,” she said, but she added, “one of our great hopes is to see more vocations as a community.”

Rolfe-Thomas has a strong belief in the importance of the ministry of religious orders to



**Sister Elizabeth Rolfe-Thomas**

the life of the church. “We are part of the church,” she said, “but we’re on the edge of the church, and it gives us a certain freedom of

thought that not everyone has. We give our whole life to what we believe, to the Christian journey, and we want to help others on their Christian journey.”

Originally from the diocese of New Westminster, Rolfe-Thomas has been a member of the SSJD since 1997. Before becoming a postulant, she taught at Crofton House School in Vancouver for 26 years.

Rolfe-Thomas will be the seventh reverend mother to serve the SSJD since it was founded in 1884. ■

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# The Spirit surprises

Leigh Anne Williams  
STAFF WRITER

The speakers who kicked off the 2015 Vital Church Planting Conference in Toronto, which ran from Jan. 29 to 31, reminded those attending that for new ministries or fresh expressions of church to thrive, they have to grow naturally out of the existing community and they must be tended with honesty and authenticity. What emerges may surprise even those who did the planting, they added.

National Anglican Indigenous Bishop Mark MacDonald offered the example of the Navajo nation, which, he said, in the 1970s was considered among the least responsive to missionary efforts in the world. “After hundreds of years of attempts at mission, only two per cent had converted,” he said. Now, however, about 70 per cent of the population of 300,000 have converted to Christianity. But, he said, this remarkable change “has not registered on any church’s radar screen,” because the conversions happened in a way that was so “non-Western that no church has noticed that they happened.”

In the Canadian context, MacDonald described the current popularity of gospel jamboree hymn-singing events that take place every weekend in most indigenous communities in northern Ontario, Manitoba and Saskatchewan. The events often stretch through the evening until 1 or 2 a.m. and are broadcast to other communities as well. “This is pattern of worship you can find well-documented in the early 1800s—it was very popular, it spread across the land,” MacDonald said, “but the missionaries didn’t like it because it seemed to compete with Sunday morning worship.”

Today, in many pockets across the land, indigenous people are the most Christian-



▲ (L to R) VCP attendees, the Rev. Bonnie Dowling and skateboarder Jordan Smail with Shred la Messe founder Nicolas Morin

PHOTO: LEIGH ANNE WILLIAMS

ized population in Canada, MacDonald said. “Praise God for this, but also remember that, as it happens, it looks very different than the Western church does, and very different than you might expect.”

Nicolas Morin, an evangelical minister, started a church for skateboarders, Shred la Messe (which he translated as “Ride to the Mass”) in Montreal. Skateboarders are invited to skate free on Monday evenings from 6:30 to 9:30 p.m., with a break in the middle of the evening for donuts or pizza and a time to talk about God, life and spirituality. What began in October with 18 people, including the organizers, has now grown to about 90 people attending, he said. The success attracted people from outside the skateboarding community who wanted to volunteer, but he had to explain that his group has reached skateboarders because the group was already part of the community. “In whatever we do in the church, in mission, in the way we express what it means to be a Christian, what life was intended to be, we have to be natural,” said Morin. “It has to be who we are as human beings but also as followers of Christ.”

The Revs. Jasmine and Terence Chandra, a married couple who have started an

“incarnational” ministry, living among the marginalized in subsidized housing in the inner city of Saint John, N.B., drew a very similar message from their experience.

“Incarnational ministry, yes, does mean living with the people you are serving. It doesn’t mean trying to fit in,” said Terence. He and his wife are “incurably middle class,” he quipped. “If we were to go into our community and try to hide this aspect of ourselves and try to blend in, so to speak, it would be really inauthentic and it would defeat the purpose of trying to build trust with our neighbours,” he said. That requires being humble and admitting that they are ignorant of many things. “So, no, I have no idea what it is like to support my family on a welfare cheque. Tell me what it is like.”

As they began their ministry, which is supported by the Stone Church in Saint John, Jasmine said they were advised to “just hang out with people on their own turf.” Unlike many of their neighbours, they have a car, so they have gotten to know people while driving them to appointments and the hospital. They’ve met inmates at a halfway house, invited new immigrants to their home for dinner and been invited for dinner by people who rely on the food bank. “Every day we ask God to give us eyes to see, to give us ears to hear and to give us the words to say,” she said. “And what we’ve found is that God has led us to people in ways that can only be directed by the Holy Spirit.”

Jasmine added that she thinks Christians are unnecessarily burdening themselves by looking for measurable success. “What if having a successful ministry... was not a matter of what programs we’re running or how many people are coming out to our events, but what if success meant how we are connecting with the poor in our midst?” ■

**“In whatever we do in the church, in mission, in the way we express what it means to be a Christian, what life was intended to be, we have to be natural.”**

— Nicolas Morin, Shred la Messe



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“Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ has forgiven you,” so says Ephesians 4:32.

Do you have photographs that illustrate “kindness”? We invite you to share them by sending a photograph or more to Picture Your Faith, our monthly feature. Deadline for submissions is **Monday, March 23**. Photos should be high resolution (at least 2500 x1674 and 300 dpi) and sent by email to [pictureyourfaith@gmail.com](mailto:pictureyourfaith@gmail.com).

The goal of Picture Your Faith is to tell stories of faith through photographs, and each month the Journal invites submissions based on a particular theme. Pictures chosen will be showcased in an online photo gallery and occasionally in the newspaper. The photo gallery can be viewed at <http://bit.ly/1wDLDCa>.

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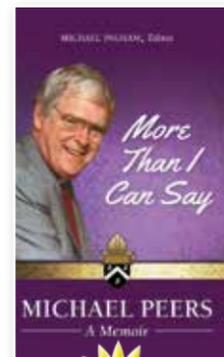
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 158 pages  
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# Portrait of a leader in tumultuous times

By Solange De Santis

**A**S PRIMATE OF the Anglican Church of Canada from 1986 to 2004, Michael Peers faced turbulence in nearly every aspect of church life.

He delivered a landmark apology in 1993 to native people for abuses suffered at church-run schools, chaired debate on the place of gays and lesbians in the church and celebrated a full communion agreement with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada. The Anglican church was also facing restructuring in the face of declining numbers and finances.

Peers is now 80. His leadership, nationally and internationally, will be the subject of analysis and debate for a long time. While those learned treatises are being written, *More Than I Can Say: Michael Peers—A Memoir* adds a layer of warm, personal perspectives on a life lived very much in the public eye.

Initiated by the current primate, Archbishop Fred Hiltz, and edited by Peers' former principal secretary, Michael Ingham (later bishop of the Vancouver-based diocese of New Westminster), the book stakes out its territory on the first page: "a tribute to Michael from a grateful church."

Criticism, therefore, is in short supply, but when the 70 contributors range from Peers' wife, children and boyhood friends to Nobel laureate Desmond Tutu, former Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams and former Governor General Adrienne Clarkson, honesty is not.

More than one reminiscence describes Peers' legendary impatience with tedious process (or people), heedless attitude toward attire, obsessive attention to lists (and maps while travelling) and dry, sometimes cutting, wit.

Tutu refers to Peers' linguistic abilities



▲ Archbishop Michael Peers with former Gov. Gen. Adrienne Clarkson at the Jan. 22 book launch

PHOTO: SIMON CHAMBERS



▶ Archdeacon Michael Thompson gives Peers a hug at a eucharist held before the launch.

PHOTO: MARITES N. SISON

(he speaks five languages), recalling how he presided in French over a session of the 1988 Lambeth Conference. It was the first

time that had occurred in a language other than English.

Williams—and others—recall Peers' deeply felt concern that all voices be heard on difficult issues. "He was one of the people who showed how to listen, who brought to the conversation a sense of willingness to go deeper and take the time needed to absorb and cope with the underlying feelings," Williams writes.

Clarkson remembers being "dazzled" by Peers' "very evident brilliance" when she was a third-year undergraduate at Trinity College and he was a divinity student, and they engaged in long conversations and evenings at the movies.

What the book does particularly well is provide a readable, sometimes amusing, journey through the extraordinary depth as well as the breadth of Peers' career and life (so far), although there could have been more voices reflecting on the human sexuality debates.

There is, inevitably, something of an insider's feel to the text, but one doesn't have to be a Canadian Anglican to enjoy or appreciate it. Ingham has wisely written an engaging 15-page introduction that succinctly sets out the accomplishments and difficulties of Peers' primacy, against the background of family life.

Beyond facts and conclusions, however, the underlying emotions running through the contributions are affection and admiration and a sense that the Canadian church was fortunate to be deeply loved and well served by a man paradoxically possessing both intellectual genius and humility.

Solange De Santis was a reporter for the Anglican Journal from 2000 to 2008. Now based in New York, she is editor of Episcopal Journal. ■

# A misfit-dreamer soars on a headstrong dragon's back

**MOVIE REVIEW**  
**HOW TO TRAIN YOUR DRAGON 2**  
 Dreamworks Animation  
 Directed by Dean DeBois  
 102 minutes  
 Rated PG-13  
*Not suitable for young children*

By John Arkelian

**L**IKE ITS FIRST-RATE 2010 predecessor, the animated fantasy adventure *How to Train Your Dragon 2* will bring tears of joy to the faces of those moved by the sight of a boy atop a jet-black dragon soaring into the clouds and swooping down toward the glistening sea.

Based on the books by Cressida Cowell, the films put their own unique twist on the familiar trope of a boy and his faithful dog, reimagining it as the story of a boy and his inseparable dragon. Each of the pair is one of a kind. "Toothless," as the boy dubs the dragon, is a "Night Fury"—the only one of its kind in a world filled with dragons of every quixotic shape and size. For his part, the teenage "Hiccup" is a dreamer who's good at devising gadgets—like the prosthetic tail fin that permits the injured Toothless to fly. Hiccup may be the chief's son, but he is a perennial outsider who doesn't fit the mould in the blustering, brawling Viking society. His bond with Toothless initially puts him beyond the pale, as Vikings and dragons are implacable foes, until Hiccup shows them a better way in the first film.

Learning truths from those whom we are so quick to dismiss as eccentrics or misfits is at the heart of the series, as it is at the heart of the Christian faith. Being outside the mainstream can give one



▲ The teenage Hiccup and his playful jet-black dragon, Toothless

Cast of characters ▶

PHOTOS: CONTRIBUTED



distance and objectivity, often equipping the outsider with insights and a self-critical perceptiveness that eludes others. And Hiccup's predilection for peacemaking rises to even greater heights in the second film. Canadian actor Jay Baruchel, who lends his distinctively nasal voice to Hiccup's humourously ironic observations and quips, says that his character is downright "Canadian," according to the popular ste-

reotype of what it is to be Canadian: "He's a peacemaker. He wants reconciliation... He wants cooler heads to prevail, and he knows we're better off if we can all find a way to get along."

When an aggressive threat arises—one that imperils Vikings and dragons alike—Hiccup is adamant that reason and reconciliation are preferable to violent conflict. He bravely tries to reconcile new enemies in the spirit of live and let live. The refreshing theme of finding heroism in unexpected places is continued, with a protagonist who does not fit the expectations of his normally "fight first, ask questions later" kin.

Composer John Powell, whose beautiful, emotionally moving score for the first film deservedly earned him an Academy Award nomination, is back. His sweepingly emotive main score and Celtic melodies from the first picture return here, and they give this film remarkable emotional heft. The scenes of flight, to that glorious music, are some kind of wonderful, and conjure beauty, freedom and exhilaration in ways that entrance and move the viewer.

The film won the best animated feature film prize at the 2015 Golden Globes ceremony. ■

John Arkelian is an award-winning author and journalist.

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## VOICES ▶

## A generation lost?



By Daniel F. Graves

There was a general feeling amongst the elderly in the community that a whole generation was being lost. Their adult children had fallen away, and their grandchildren knew nothing of the faith at all. One of them proclaimed, "O sir... our children are growing up faithless and our little ones have never been baptized!"

This might very easily be the lament of any of our senior parishioners on any given Sunday in one of our churches. Yet, these were words spoken to the Rev. Featherstone Osler, the first resident clergyman of West Gwillimbury and Tecumseth in Upper Canada, shortly after his arrival in 1837. The shortage of permanent resident clergy and the failure to build churches over the preceding 30 years had led to a whole generation of settlers falling away, and their children never coming to faith at all.

It was into this world that Featherstone Osler was thrust. Recognizing the urgency of the situation, with a profound sense of calling and a fortitude that can only be considered remarkable, Osler went about the work of building the kingdom in the two townships and outlying areas committed to his charge. He wore out more



than one horse, proclaimed the good news fervently, and in 20 years founded 20 congregations, established Sunday schools, trained bush clergy and built at

▲ The Rev. Featherstone Osler

PHOTO: OSLER LIBRARY OF THE HISTORY OF MEDICINE, MCGILL UNIVERSITY

least a dozen church buildings. He could have flagged; he could have returned to England and taken up a more comfortable sinecure, for his was a family of means. But no—he laid hold of the yoke his Lord laid upon him, trusting in the faithfulness of God and embracing the hope of the kingdom.

Our age is not so different. We lament the loss of a whole generation in the church. But shall our faith falter? Will our fortitude fail? We may not be called to answer the problem the same way Osler answered his call, but we are called to rise to the challenge. We are called to believe that God will give us the tools to meet those challenges.

And we have that one thing that Osler and so many others before and since have had: the good news of God in Christ. The means of proclamation will vary with the age and place, but the hope of salvation is sure, and our God is faithful as we proclaim the words of life to a hurting world. ■

The Rev. Daniel F. Graves is the incumbent of Trinity Anglican Church, Bradford, Ont., and editor of the Journal of the Canadian Church Historical Society.

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CANADA ▶

# 'It's really important that we get this right'

Continued from p. 1

across Canada, including those that did not have residential schools within their boundaries. The documents Hurn and the other archivists compiled will be held at the National Research Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (NRCTR) at the University of Manitoba in Winnipeg.

Hurn said her feelings about the work have evolved over the course of the process.

"In the first few years, during the litigation and alternate dispute resolution period, I was working late nights trying to really understand the schools and the staff, to research the records—it was pretty intense and disturbing and stressful," she said.

However, once the settlement agreement was established, things began to change. "It felt like we could actually do something that would make a contribution that might help the survivors understand their experience," she explained. "Doing everything we could to make sure they were getting the compensation they were due was important... It was just a piece of what the church needed to do." Former students and their families, academic researchers and media have full access to the church's schools-related documents.

One of the important goals of the archival work is ascertaining the number of children who died while attending residential schools run by the Anglican church. Hurn said records from the General Synod archives and the diocese of the Arctic have identified more than 100 children who died while at Anglican-run residential schools. These records were among those submitted to the TRC. Hurn noted, however, that there "could definitely be more Anglican deaths in places across the country." Archival research such as this has helped the TRC to estimate that at least 4,000 students died in residential schools across Canada.

But it is not just about the numbers. As Hurn noted, many of families have little or no information about how their children



died. "Anything that can be added to the understanding of what happened to these children at the time of their death is so important," she said, adding that another ongoing question has been where the children were buried.

Aside from the digital documents, the church has also submitted almost 12,000 "electronically-created documents" and over 6,000 photographs relating to residential schools. Hurn said that among the most useful records are monthly reports from the schools, photographs, superintendent and field secretary reports, diaries, parishes registers, newsletters and circular letters detailing policies. Which documents are most useful, she added, depends in part on what people are looking for.

"The survivors are looking at the photographs and anything that identifies them as attending the school," she said.

Part of the settlement agreement, Hurn explained, involved giving indigenous people control over their own information. "For them to have this body of records that they can control and decide how it is to be used is really valid."

This has raised other issues, though. Because both the church and the NRCTR (which will open in June 2015, following the official closing of the TRC) will hold the information, they must work together

▲ The General Synod archives shared its school records at every Truth and Reconciliation Commission event.

PHOTO: MARITES N. SISON

to ensure that they offer similar degrees of access.

Ry Moran, director of the NRCTR, said this matter is very much on his mind.

"We're really going to be looking to all the entities that have produced records to us to understand what materials are publicly available in their archives right now, and ensuring that we're in lockstep with that," he said. "It's a big task."

For Hurn, though, there is great symbolic importance behind the records being kept by both parties. "We share the records so that both the church and the survivors can learn about the residential school history," she said, "and so that we can move forward in healing based on those records."

But the biggest priority for both Hurn and Moran is meeting the needs of the survivors.

"It really isn't about us. It's about the survivors," said Hurn, explaining that during the process she had been driven to "hunt harder and make sure that every document we could find that was relevant could be made available" because "no one quite knew what it would mean to the survivors."

Moran, faced with the "gargantuan task" of organizing and putting the information at the public's fingertips, said this involves "thinking through things in a manner that will render the records accessible in ways that make sense for the users that are looking to have access to them."

The NRCTR plans on making the records electronically available online in ways that will allow survivors to access them remotely. It has also promised to "provide personal assistance with navigating, using, and understanding the records" for those who don't have familiarity with computers.

The guiding principle in all of this, Moran said, is based on the survivor's desire to "do no harm," and to ensure that the records are provided in a "respectful and dignified manner."

"It's really important that we get this right." ■

“It really isn't about us. It's about the survivors... Doing everything we could to make sure they were getting the compensation they were due was important.”

—Nancy Hurn, General Synod archivist

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