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Two faiths, one wedding



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'The nastiness refined me'

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SINCE 1875



PHOTO: LAMBETH PALACE

Best. Selfie. Ever.

In September, 36 Christians from around the world, ages 20-35, became the first members of the Community of St. Anselm, the Archbishop of Canterbury's "unique experiment" of opening up Lambeth Palace to young adults who will live, pray, study and serve together for a year. Here, a few of the participants get their pose on after a commissioning service.

Commission offers rationale for same-sex marriage

Tali Folkins
STAFF WRITER

The church may want to look at same-sex marriages as partaking "in the same covenant" as heterosexual unions, but "on somewhat different terms," and possibly involving alternate liturgies, recommends the report of the Commission on the Marriage Canon, released September 22 (<http://bit.ly/1ivbKrq>).

Just as the New Testament describes

“The church will still have to discern whether this is God’s will for the church.”

— ‘This Holy Estate,’ the report of the Commission on the Marriage Canon of the Anglican Church of Canada

the Gentiles in the early church as drawn into the people of Israel’s covenant with God, but not required to observe Jewish tradition, so might the Anglican Church of Canada understand same-sex couples as drawn into the same covenant as heterosexual couples, but in a new way, commission member Stephen Martin told members of the Council of General Synod (CoGS), who gathered for a special session September 22-23 at St. Paul’s Bloor Street,

in Toronto, to receive the report.

“We’re suggesting this might be the more accurate, faithful and biblical way of thinking about what might be happening in the church today,” said commission member Canon Paul Jennings, who explained the report’s section dealing with models for same-sex marriage. “That is, it’s not a question of us redefining marriage in the abstract to be more inclusive and

See Same, p. 6

Syrian boy’s photo spurs donations

Tali Folkins
STAFF WRITER

The dramatic spike in donations for Syrian refugees this fall has left some officials at Canadian aid groups with mixed feelings—on the one hand, moved by the sudden outpouring of compassion they’ve seen, and on the other, mindful of the fundraising challenges that have faced them for most of Syria’s four-year civil war.

There seems little doubt about the cause of the increase: the publication, starting on September 2, of a photograph of three-year-old refugee Alan



THOMAS KOCH / SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

Syrian refugees protest erection of fence barring their entry into Turkey.

Kurdi lying dead on a Turkish beach.

“It was just after that that we were inundated with phone calls... It was just unbelievable,” said Fikre Tsehai, manager of Canadian Lutheran World

See Alan, p. 8

Arctic diocese aims for ‘Freedom 2015’

By Art Babych

The Anglican diocese of the Arctic is hoping that by the end of this year it will be free from its decade-old debt for the rebuilding of St. Jude’s Cathedral in Iqaluit, Nunavut.

But for “Freedom 2015” to become a reality, the diocese needs \$723,000 by the end of 2015 to clear off the \$10.3 million debt incurred following the destruction by arson of the iconic igloo-shaped St. Jude’s.

To help the northern diocese pay off the debt, the Anglican Church Women (ACW) of the diocese of Ottawa hosted another of its several fundraising events in support of St. Jude’s on September 20, at St. Stephen’s Church, drawing about 100 people.

The event coincided with a visit from the suffragan (assistant) bishop of the Arctic diocese, Darren McCartney, who is based



PHOTO: WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

St. Jude’s Cathedral was destroyed by arson in 2005 and rebuilt in 2012.

in Iqaluit. He was in Ottawa to attend the ordination to the priesthood on September 21 of Deacon Aigah Attagutsiak, an Inuk who serves both Inuktitut and English congregations at St. Margaret’s Anglican Church

See Arctic, p. 12

WORLD ►

Welby calls for primates' meeting in 2016

André Forget
STAFF WRITER

Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby has invited the 37 primates (senior archbishops) of the Anglican Communion to a face-to-face meeting in Canterbury in January 2016.

A September 16 press statement by Lambeth Palace said that the meeting would be an opportunity for a "review of the structures of the Anglican Communion." It quoted Welby as saying that he has suggested that primates "need to consider recent developments but also look afresh at our ways of working as a Communion."

The press statement has caused some controversy. *The Guardian* ran an article under the headline, "Archbishop of Canterbury urges breakup of divided Anglican Communion," to which Lambeth Palace responded—on Twitter—by tweeting, "Just to clarify, the Archbishop of Canterbury is NOT planning to break up the Anglican Communion." The headline was later changed.

The Guardian reported that the archbishop would propose that the worldwide grouping be reorganized "as a group of churches that are all linked to Canterbury but no longer necessarily to each other." It quoted an unnamed Lambeth Palace source as saying the proposal would allow Welby to maintain relations with both liberal and conservative churches in the Communion, which have been deeply divided over the issue of human sexuality.

Fuelling the controversy was an invitation extended by Welby to Archbishop Foley Beach, head bishop of the Anglican Church in North America (ACNA), to be present for part of the meeting. ACNA is composed of clergy and congregations that have left the Anglican Church of Canada and The Episcopal Church over the blessing of same-sex unions by some dioceses in Canada, and the election of bishops in same-sex relationships in the U.S. The creation of ACNA, which has its own episcopacy, has led to a complicated situation where it is considered fully Anglican by some provinces in the Communion, but is not in communion



with Canterbury—one of the traditional requirements of Anglicanism.

In the statement, Welby acknowledged that "we each live in a different context" and that "the difference between our societies and cultures, as well as the speed of cultural change in much of the global north, tempts us to divide as Christians." But he pressed for unity, saying, "A 21st-century Anglican family must have space for deep disagreement, and even mutual criticism. We have no Anglican Pope. Our authority as a church is dispersed, and is ultimately found in Scripture, properly interpreted."

Welby expressed the hope that the meeting will enable the Communion "to set a course which permits us to focus on serving and loving each other, and above all on the proclamation of the good news of Jesus Christ."

In an interview with the *Anglican Journal*, Archbishop Fred Hiltz, primate of the Anglican Church of Canada, said the invitation was "not a surprise," nor was Welby's stated desire to review the structures of the Communion. "He's been quite open about that from early on."

When it came to his own thoughts on

▲ Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby: The meeting will be an opportunity "for a review of the structures of the Anglican Communion."

PHOTO: LAMBETH PALACE



Anglican Communion logo

what a review of the structures should involve, Hiltz sounded a note of caution. "My hope would be that we don't just come at a conversation like that from the point of view of saying, 'nothing's working and everything needs to be fixed or made new.' Because I, for one, don't believe everything is broken," Hiltz said. He pointed to the Anglican Consultative Council (ACC) as an example of a "pretty healthy" instrument of communion.

Regarding Beach's participation in the meeting, Hiltz noted that membership in the Anglican Communion is a process overseen by the ACC, and stressed that Beach's participation does not mean ACNA is a part of the Anglican Communion.

"I think considerable care has been taken with regard to how Archbishop Foley will be present," Hiltz said. "My understanding is that he will be present for some time in conversation with the primates in advance of the formal meeting... The provision that Archbishop Justin has made, I know... comes out of his passion for and hope of reconciliation."

Invitations have been sent, but how many primates will come? "I'm hopeful everybody will come, but my honest answer is it remains to be seen," said Hiltz, adding that he does not feel his hope is unfounded. "I think the fact that everybody showed up for [Welby's] installation two years ago was a really good sign."

The meeting, the first to be hosted by Welby since he was enthroned in 2013, will also give primates a chance to "decide together their approach to the next Lambeth Conference," said the press release. The conference, which is an opportunity for the world's Anglican bishops to discuss and make decisions about issues facing the Communion, is usually held every 10 years. The last conference was held in Canterbury in 2008.

The primates last met at the Emmaus Centre in Dublin in 2011, a gathering attended by 23 primates.

Seven boycotted the meeting over concerns about the Anglican Church of Canada and The Episcopal Church's acceptance of same-sex blessings in some jurisdictions. ■

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ON MENTAL HEALTH AND SPIRITUALITY ▶



A short booklist

The amount of relevant books is vast, and the following list is intended only as a sampling, suggested by some of the authorities cited in our article, of what's available.

ON MENTAL HEALTH AND SPIRITUALITY

- Lyn Klug, ed., *All Will Be Well: A Gathering of Healing Prayers*
- Gerald G. May, *Addiction and Grace: Love and Spirituality in the Healing of Addictions*
- Kathleen Norris, *Acedia & Me: A Marriage, Monks, and a Writer's Life*
- Parker J. Palmer, *A Hidden Wholeness: The Journey Toward an Undivided Life*
- Richard Rohr, *Falling Upward: A Spirituality for the Two Halves of Life; Breathing Under Water: Spirituality and the Twelve Steps; Simplicity: The Freedom of Letting Go*
- Ron Rolheiser, *The Holy Longing: The Search for a Christian Spirituality; Sacred Fire: A Vision for a Deeper Human and Christian Maturity*
- Ann Weems, *Psalms of Lament*

ON COPING GENERALLY

- TED talks by Brené Brown; books, including *The Power of Vulnerability: Teachings on Authenticity, Connection and Courage*
- *The Book of Job*, especially the dialogue with his friends and God's response
- *The Psalms*, especially those of lament

Out of the shadows and into the light

Tali Fokins
STAFF WRITER

SOON AFTER THE Rev. Claire Miller arrived at her new parish of St. Thomas Anglican Church in Owen Sound, Ont., she complained to a parishioner about feeling drained. Now, years later, she still remembers his response.

"He said, 'But you're holy. You're closer to God. You shouldn't be feeling these things.'"

If only he knew. For most of her life, Miller says, she has struggled with anxiety and, in her words, "times of deep clinical depression." Medication has helped her a lot, she says. So has prayer—especially in the form of singing hymns or writing a journal to God.

Every 10 years or so, however, the drug she's using fails to be effective anymore, and she needs to switch to something new. The adjustment can take two or three months, she says—and put her in places that don't seem particularly holy.

"There are times that I wonder where God is in this, especially when it goes on too long and I'm thinking I should be feeling better," she says. "When you're in the depths of it, that often happens."

Miller is definitely not alone. To many people of faith struggling with mental health problems, religion can at times seem like a double-edged sword, suggests Sr. Dorothy Heiderscheidt, chief executive officer of Southdown Institute, a psychological treatment facility for clerics outside Toronto. It can be a priceless font of hope and healing, but also a source of particular challenges—putting pressure on clerics, for example, to be almost immune to normal fluctuations of mood.

"We expect them to be a perfect model just short of being God or Jesus Christ," she says.

For many believers, too, the notion that one can simply pray one's way through mental distress leads to a form of prayer that is both a "masquerade" of real piety and a barrier to seeking help, says Canon Megan Collings-Moore, chaplain at Renison University College, at the University of Waterloo.

"Because the prayer is masquerading as religious language, it's harder for them to then move to the point where they say, 'actually, maybe I should get some help; maybe I should see somebody about that,'" she says.

Or mental illness can even be seen as a sign of sin; the hopelessness of depression necessarily means a lack of faith.

Religion often seems like a blessing to Melanie Delva, archivist at the diocese of New Westminster in Vancouver. Formally diagnosed with recurrent major depressive disorder in 2007, as well as post-traumatic stress disorder and anxiety disorder, Delva says she has suffered the symptoms of mental illness since around 1995, when she was a teenager. Medication helps her, Delva says, but faith is even more important in helping her cope and grow with her challenges.

"Medication can keep me on the rails to a certain extent, but faith animating life—there's no medication that can animate life for you," she says.

"In my own struggle with mental illness, there has been surviving and there has been living...I can go through the motions. I can get up and go to work. But that's not living. The times when I have been able to



To many people of faith struggling with mental health problems, religion can at times seem like a double-edged sword. It can be a priceless font of hope and healing, but also a source of challenges.

PHOTO: CONTRIBUTED

▲ "I find that being able to move into my brokenness in a really intentional way actually helps me," says Melanie Delva.



▲ **The Rev. Claire Miller, who has struggled with anxiety and clinical depression, says there have been moments when she wondered "where God is in this."**

PHOTO: CONTRIBUTED

live have been times when I have been able to integrate my faith into my survival so that survival becomes life."

For Delva, this could mean anything from seeing a dandelion growing out from under a dumpster as somehow a miracle

of God, or reflecting on Lent to discern meaning in suffering.

"I find that being able to move into my brokenness in a really intentional way actually helps me," she says. "Lent...helps me to move through my depression, to be able to actually name the brokenness."

It wasn't always this way. Delva was raised in a church in which, she says, she was made to feel ashamed about the symptoms of her mental illness. She was told that her depression was the punishment of God for sins perpetrated by her ancestors of the third and fourth generation.

Members of that church, she says, saw her feelings of hopelessness as "me refusing to see the goodness of God in my life, me being selfish...it was my sin, the sin of my family" and suggested that she ought to deal with her despair by, essentially, praying harder.

The advice was intended to help her, she says. But it just made her feel worse.

"I took the messages that people were giving me as... 'this is God's people speaking God's word into my life.' So I saw it as: God is ashamed of me. God is angry at me. God thinks I need to clean up my act."

Eventually, she felt that God hated her and had abandoned her.

"It absolutely damaged my faith," she

says. "So if I didn't have that, what hope is there to animate my life? And if I lose my connection to faith and to God, there is nothing to animate hope anymore. So there isn't anything to get up for in the morning.

"The impact goes both ways. It can turn my life into something that's worth living and it can turn my life into something that's not."

Delva says that when she rejected the teachings of her family's church, it ostracized her as one of the "lost," and as a result, she no longer has any contact with her family.

Delva traces these teachings of her family's church's to what she says was its radical evangelical strain. Some evidence suggests there may be a connection between evangelical Christianity and the notion that one can simply pray one's way through mental illness. Nearly half—48%—of evangelical respondents to a 2013 survey said they believed prayer alone could overcome serious mental illness such as depression, bipolar disorder and schizophrenia, compared to 27% of non-evangelical respondents.

If this view is more prevalent among evangelicals, it seems that at least some of them worry about its effects. The 2013 survey was conducted by a U.S. evangelical research firm, LifeWay Research, whose president, Ed Stetzer, said he was concerned by its findings. In an interview with *The Guardian*, Stetzer said the survey showed churches need to work harder at understanding mental illness.

"You have to distinguish between character change and mental illness, and I think that's sometimes hard for people to do," he said.

For her part, Collings-Moore says she sees this kind of belief in Christians of all stripes. "I would say there's a huge base of Christianity that [believes that] if you believe, you'll always be assured that God is with you and you'll always feel that," she says. It's akin, she says, to the notion that nothing bad will ever happen to us if we have enough faith—a belief she calls "the total opposite, actually, of the gospel [teaching]."

"If that was the truth, then Jesus doesn't end up on the cross, so clearly that's not actually what we proclaim!" she says.

Trying to cope with mental illness through prayer alone can be especially dangerous if the illness is long-term. "Pushing through or just keeping going regardless is disastrous for chronic health issues, and a lot of mental health stuff is chronic," Collings-Moore says.

Perhaps it's not surprising that mental illness can pose special problems to people of faith, given the often problematic relationship that psychology and religion have had with one another—think, for example, of Sigmund Freud's view of religion as a kind of psychiatric problem.

Today, however, many people most concerned with faith and mental illness—Christians grappling with mental challenges, psychological professionals and spiritual counsellors—say that the landscape is changing. ■

In the next part of this series, the Anglican Journal will look at how a shifting understanding of the relationship between faith and psychology is helping mentally-ill Christians both cope with their condition and grow spiritually.

EDITORIAL ▶



Marites N. Sison
EDITOR

IT'S NOT A foregone conclusion. As much as those in some quarters would have everyone believe, there's no telling how the 2016 General Synod will act on a motion to change the church's law so that clergy can marry same-sex couples.

The answer will come in about nine months, when the church's governing body gathers for its triennial meeting in Toronto. But right now, there's work to be done, if the church hopes to arrive at a faithful and principled decision about this weighty matter.

In 2013, General Synod passed Resolution C003, which asked Council of General Synod (CoGS) to draft a motion "to change Canon XXI on marriage to allow the marriage of same-sex couples in the same way as opposite-sex couples." It also asked for supporting documentation that: demonstrates broad consultation about the motion; explains how this motion does not contravene the Solemn Declaration; confirms immunity under civil law and the Human Rights Code for bishops, dioceses and priests who refuse to participate or authorize the marriage of same-sex couples on the basis on conscience; and provides a biblical and theological rationale for this change in teaching on the nature of Christian marriage.

CoGS, in January 2014, established the Commission on the Marriage Canon to



IMAGE: YIENKEAT/SHUTTERSTOCK

“In the face of what is bound to be a momentous decision in 2016, now is not the time to bury one's head in the sand.”

dioceses and clergy to opt out of authorizing or officiating same-sex weddings. It also prepared the supporting documentation that would demonstrate "how such a change in the church's traditional teaching on Christian marriage could be understood to be scripturally and theologically coherent." (See related stories, pages 1 and 7.)

Not surprisingly, there were mixed reactions to the report. Several CoGS members described it as "deep, clear and respectful [of diverse opinions]." Elsewhere, the ink had barely dried on the report when critics dismissed it, some declaring they won't even bother reading it. Others simply regurgitated well-worn opinions on sexuality instead of examining the report in its entirety. Such insouciance is unhelpful and disrespectful of the discernment process that has been put in place to address this difficult issue.

Archbishop Fred Hiltz, primate of the

assist in this task.

On Sept. 22, 2015, the commission submitted a 65-page report, which includes recommended wording for the motion that will go before the 2016 General Synod, as well as the conscience clause that would allow

Anglican Church of Canada, acknowledged that it would be a challenge to ensure that delegates, when they arrive at General Synod, will have read the report so that they can join discussions in an informed and meaningful way. And, one might add, so they can vote confidently and independently.

A lot will depend, Hiltz said, on bishops making sure that everyone has done their homework. In the end, however, the onus should be on delegates to whom dioceses and provinces have conferred their trust.

The report—available online at the church's website, anglican.ca—is also there for every Anglican in the pew to consider and explore, no matter which side they're on.

Anticipating the need for guidance in understanding the report, the commission has prepared a summary of its work in a question-and-answer format, as well as a study guide for individuals and groups. The guide includes prayers and thoughtful questions designed to facilitate personal reflection and serious discourse on various sections of the report.

It is now up to individual Anglicans, parishes and General Synod delegates to take advantage of this resource. In the face of what is bound to be a momentous decision in 2016, now is not the time to bury one's head in the sand. Now is the time for honest engagement. ■

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LETTERS ▶

Divergent views on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict

Two letters in the September 2015 issue of the *Anglican Journal* miss the mark in regard to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (*One rule for readers and another for contributors?* by John Dalton and *One-sided* by M.C. Barnard, p. 4).

In his June 2015 article (*Christian Zionism a 'heresy,' says Anglican priest*), Neale Adams was simply naming Christian Zionism for what it is, a pernicious heresy. This is not name-calling, as Dalton asserts, but simple naming; it's the term you would use if searching the subject via Google.

Barnard's letter repeats the tired refrains offered by the Israeli government and Zionists in general, that Israel is the innocent victim and Palestinians the offending terrorists.

While calling Cheryl-Ann Archibald's letter (*Anti-Zionism doesn't mean anti-Semitism*, Jan. 2015, p. 5) one-sided, it then itself gives a one-sided (Israeli government) view of the situation.

Barnard chides Archibald for neglecting to mention various crimes of the Palestinians, and then neglects to mention various crimes of the Israelis, such as the ethnic cleansing of 750,000 Palestinians

in 1947-48, the building in Palestine of settlements illegal by international law and now housing some 600,000 Israelis, the destruction of thousands of ancient olive trees, and so on.

As for the two-state solution, far from being "the only way to resolve this situation," most commentators regard it as a political dead duck. The weight of current opinion has shifted from a two-state model to a one-state model of some kind—perhaps a federation or the use of overlapping electorates. In my view, the Israelis and Palestinians, both, as populations suffering from PTSD, are manifestly incapable of finding a resolution.

Only when international pressure is exerted to a sufficient degree is any resolution likely.

Donald Grayston
Vancouver

Congratulations on publishing letters (Sept. 2015, p. 4, *One rule for readers and another for contributors?* and *One-sided*) that dared to criticize the lack of balance displayed in an article and a previous letter about Zionism.

An anti-Israel bias makes one ashamed

to be the recipient of a publication that accepts these submissions. It's worse when one realizes the aim of such authors is to bamboozle Christians while using their very own Christian publications.

Facts, as well as kindred faiths, encourage support for Israel. M.C. Barnard ably presented many Israeli facts: their historic habitation in the area, Israel's legal establishment followed immediately by an attack from Arab nations, the continuing rocket and bomb attacks and calls for Israel's destruction.

We have, in addition, the primary fact of the extermination of six million European Jews during the Holocaust.

There are, as well, the facts of the long negotiation history of Palestinian refusals to accept two-state/peace plans and our own history of sharing Israel's standards of democracy and human rights. To recognize Jewish habitation in early Palestine, archaeologists in Israel continue to substantiate their ancient history.

We need to search out and present facts in order to balance what is published with an anti-Israel bias all too often.

Doris Leland
Kitchener, Ont.



IMAGE: BYMANDESIGNS/SHUTTERSTOCK

Picture Your Faith

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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.

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Canada

COME
AND SEE ▶



His view

By Fred J. Hiltz

I HAVE ALWAYS LOOKED forward to the festival of All Saints. It is a culmination of all those days when we remember, with thanksgiving, the work and witness of particular saints and the lives and labours of holy men and women throughout the ages. They include family and friends and colleagues and mentors and spiritual companions.

In this wonderful festival we are mindful of how we are compassed about—that is, surrounded and inspired by their examples. In that great company, too, are those who have been near and dear to us and who have great influence in shaping our own call to lifelong discipleship.

In our view of the communion of



PETER HERMES FURIAN/
SHUTTERSTOCK

saints, we so often find ourselves looking back, albeit with much gratitude for all those who have been chosen vessels of God’s grace at work in the world. While I honour that view, I often find myself wondering if that is our Lord’s view. While I imagine him looking around at all his saints who now rest in his presence, I see him looking ahead, anticipating the next wave of his faithful followers. Rejoicing in all those who embraced his gospel and became ambassadors of his love for the world’s healing and transformation, his gaze shifts from time to time to the future and to all who, in their respective generations, will become lights in the world. It seems to me this view of “the blessed company of all faithful people”

reflects the hope of the Psalmist:

“We will recount to generations to come the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord, and the wonderful works he has done...

“That the generations to come might know, and the children yet unborn; that they in turn might tell it to their children.”

(Psalm 78: 4,6)

Might his view of looking back, around and ahead become our view of the communion of saints in all its fullness. ■

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

WALKING
TOGETHER ▶



Our agenda, as we wake up

By Mark MacDonald

LAST MONTH, THIS column spoke of the institutional church’s captivity to the mindset of Western culture. We called it a kind of “hypnotism” whereby many of the assumptions of Christian faith were blunted or obscured by the powerful counterpoint of Western ideas. This is not to say that there weren’t many points of mutual agreement and benefit in this exchange. There were, however, many aspects of this mutuality that may be seen as negative, as in the way churches played an animating role in colonization.

Today, a spiritual resilience in the churches, from Pentecostals to the Pope, is leading many to rethink major elements of the institutional ethos and practice of the past few centuries. We might call this a kind of “waking up,” a rediscovery of truth and new life in ancient paths. As we wake up, I would like to make a few suggestions for a conversation of renewal. Though far from perfect and much less than exhaustive, here are the elements that I believe should be a part of our theological agenda. If we move toward them, these would preclude the kind of practice that led to the churches’ part in colonialism:

From just war to active non-violence.

As a church of worldly power, we compromised with power and formed alliances that directly contradict the active non-violence of Jesus. More than just practising pacifism, we are asked to walk the extra mile of resistance to confront evil with the power and truth of the one true God. This will often place us on the other side of the cozy relationships we have had with worldly power.

From the culture of money to non-possession. The early church practised non-possession, its members sometimes sharing with each other in common, but more often, practising an ethic of non-possession. We are trustees of God’s wealth and we are called to live this long abandoned ethic—sharing with each other, generous to those in need and grateful for God’s abundance.

From the dominion of creation to the eucharistic life. Western attitudes to the environment are often, at a practical level and in effect, a denial of doctrine of creation. The gospel asks us to embrace a eucharistic acceptance of the gift of creation; we use only what we need, respect-

ing and acknowledging the interdependence that is the vestige of the Triune God’s creating presence in our universe.

From flirtation with wealth to life among the poor and marginalized. Jesus said in Matthew 25 that we would meet him in the poor, the imprisoned and the abandoned. Our institutional life, even the placement and direction of our ministries, should follow this priority. This would, at minimum, impact where we place our congregations and how we house them.

From institutional membership to communion. Churches in Christendom were a vital organization, but later they became institutions of the larger culture. Can we become—in practical impact as well as in our theological theory—members, one of another? This desire, so urgent in our young people, would simultaneously make us less like members of an organization and more like family, living together in communities of moral imagination—rethinking our lives in light of the gospel. ■

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

LETTERS ▶

‘Jesus must weep at our lack of Christian charity and inclusiveness’

How unutterably sad this story is (*Roman Catholics weigh in on marriage canon*, Sept. 2015, p. 6). Every argument presented here against changing the Anglican church marriage canon echoes the long-dead protests against ordaining women clergy. Jesus must weep at our lack of Christian charity and inclusiveness. We can and must do better than this.

Jean Gower
Kingston, Ont.

Surprised and disappointed

The Anglican Church of Canada’s *Compassion, Justice, and Reason: An Approach to Election 2015* contains excellent recommendations prefaced by [the view that] “Anglican long-standing commitment to reason helps us hold opposing views in creative tension, finding the common good through prayerful discernment.”

However, I am surprised and disappointed there is no mention of discussing candidates’ views on physician-assisted death and abortion. Both the guide

available from the Canadian Council of Churches, *Federal Election Resource 2015*, and the one from the Episcopal Commission for Justice and Peace of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, *2015 Federal Election Guide*, mention euthanasia.

Should not views on such subjects also be considered in an Anglican guide as respecting “the dignity of every human being” (Baptismal Covenant) as taught throughout Christianity and indeed most other religions?

Brian Harvey
Gloucester, Ont.

Quiet acts of evangelism

It’s always interesting to be on the receiving end of someone else’s effort to share the Good News of Jesus Christ (*Random acts of evangelism*, *anglicanjournal.com*, Sept. 2, 2015). Sometimes it’s frustrating, because old wounds and hurts are reopened.

But sometimes there’s real excitement to participate in a happenstance way with the bearer.

Purposeful acts of evangelism by Anglicans do happen. I do the quiet stuff, like leaving tracts on bus seats or recycling a Christian mission agency magazine at the cafeteria at work. Sometimes I leave a magazine-style New Testament in the gym’s free magazine rack.

It’s easier to share my faith within a community event set up by the church. Sadly, I’ve been to various church events, typically a yard sale, and there’s no effort at linking the fundraising with an outreach component. Table workers should offer a bit of spiritual conversation that can move people along the road toward Jesus. And it’s easy to get a few Bibles from the Bible Society to give away.

Brian Johnson
Comment from the web



IMAGE: EATCUTE/SHUTTERSTOCK



IMAGE: VECTORS.1/SHUTTERSTOCK

Corrections

Canon Christyn Perkons was identified as the Rev. Christyn Perkons in the caption of a photo accompanying the article, *Diocesan leaders cautiously optimistic about the future*, Oct. 2015, p. 8. The same caption misspelled the last name of Joanna Beck (not Becks) and should have included an apostrophe in the name, Christ Church’s Cathedral in Hamilton, Ont. ■

Same-sex marriage 'theologically possible'

Continued from p. 1

thereby imply, I don't know what—that the previous understanding of marriage was wrong. But, it may be simply that God is calling same-sex couples into marriage and thereby broadening and enriching the institution without denying its previous meanings."

Jennings added: "Maybe God is intending to graft gay Christians into the institution of Christian marriage, sharing its root meaning, yet on somewhat different terms."

This conception of same-sex marriage, the 65-page report said, would involve revising the canon using gender-neutral language, and probably also new liturgies for same-sex couples that would "share the same core vows" as liturgies for heterosexual couples.

The commission cautioned that the model the report was proposing was a recommendation only. "This argument is not an attempt to prove something, to prove that this is the way to go forward," said Jennings. "We are offering a rationale—that is, a way of conceiving of it theologically in a way that we're suggesting might have integrity. But the church will still have to discern whether this is God's will for the church."

It is, he added, one of three "logical possibilities" being put forward by the commission, and something of a middle way between the other two. The other two possibilities, according to the report, are, on the one hand, to see same-sex marriages as an "undifferentiated" form of Christian marriage, essentially identical to heterosexual marriages; and, on the other, to see them as "blessed partnerships" rather than covenants before God.

The commission said it arrived at a conclusion that it is "theologically possible to extend the marriage canon to include same-sex couples, without thereby diminishing, damaging, or curtailing the rich theological implications of marriage as traditionally understood."

But, it hastened to add, "to say that it is theologically possible to make this change is not to say that the change is theologically desirable." What the commission sought to do was "to show how it may be done—not why or even whether it should be done," it said in its report. "These questions require more than theological argumentation: they require an act of corporate discernment."

The commission offered the biblical and theological rationale for same-sex marriage as part of the tasks it was assigned to do when it was formed by CoGS, which was acting on a General Synod 2013 resolution to craft a motion that would amend the church's Canon XXI on marriage "to allow the marriage of same-sex couples in the same way as opposite-sex couples."

The resolution, C003, also asked, among other things, that the motion have supporting documentation that "explains how amending the canon to allow same-sex unions does not contravene the Solemn Declaration," the founding document of the Anglican Church of Canada.

In its report, the commission concluded that changing the marriage canon to allow for same-sex unions does not directly

FOCUS: SAME-SEX MARRIAGE

To say that it is theologically possible to make this change is not to say that the change is theologically desirable.

— Marriage canon commission report



PHOTO: ANDRÉ FORGET

Marriage canon commission members present their report during a special session of Council of General Synod (L to R): Stephen Martin, Canon Paul Jennings, Bishop Linda Nicholls, Patricia Bays, the Rev. Paul Friesen and Archbishop John Privett.

contravene the Solemn Declaration of 1893, which reflects the Anglican Church of Canada's historic roots in the Church of England and its "theological and doctrinal heritage."

It noted that when General Synod allowed the remarriage of divorced persons, the ordination of women and the reception of holy communion by children prior to confirmation, these decisions did not contravene the Solemn Declaration "even

though the Church of England had not made those changes at the time they were implemented by the Canadian church."

However, the commission said it is the prerogative of General Synod to determine

whether the proposed change to the marriage canon is "in harmony with the Solemn Declaration." Among other things, General Synod 2016 will "need to discern whether this change is sufficiently rooted in the 'same Word of God' and discern its relationship to 'all things necessary for salvation,'" said the commission.

It is also up to General Synod to determine whether same-sex marriage "is an area of definition and interpretation of doctrine in which it can make change and, if it is, whether it is a change it believes is appropriate."

In its report, the commission also drafted a motion that includes a provision allowing dioceses, bishops and congregations to opt out of performing same-sex marriages. Along with formulating the biblical and theological rationale for allowing same-sex marriages, the commission was charged with developing a "conscience clause," included in the amendment, "so that no member of the clergy, bishop, congregation or diocese should be constrained to participate in or authorize such marriages against the dictates of their conscience."

The commission's view of the middle way in understanding same-sex marriage comes close to the end of the report. This reflection is located in what commissioners called two "clusters of meaning" around marriage: on the one hand, creation ac-

counts in the Book of Genesis, which refer to the goodness of the union of male and female, and the creation of new life out of that union, and, on the other, New Testament descriptions of the church—particularly in Ephesians 5—as the body of Christ. The latter points to the concept of Christian marriage as a way of living out the divine command to love one another, so that the basis of marriage is not procreation and the union of male and female but rather its ability to point to Christ's relationship to the church as a model of love.

In practical terms, understanding same-sex covenants as "a differentiated form of Christian marriage covenant" is also "compatible with the revision of the canon to include same-sex couples (as called for in the resolution of the General Synod)," said the report. "It would suggest a liturgy that allows for variation in the theological background and symbolism between same- and opposite-sex marriages, while retaining identical core texts, such as the vows." The draft resolution drawn up by the committee calls for, among other things, amending the wording of Canon XXI to be gender-

neutral, substituting "partners" for "husband and wife," for example.

Seeing same-sex and heterosexual marriages as essentially the same has a number of advantages, the report states, such as simplicity and formal equality. However, it continues, simplicity may not necessarily be desirable; "with respect to theological understanding, richness, complexity, and differentiation are desirable traits." Also, the report states, "this model would seem to change to some extent the definition of marriage for heterosexual couples" by removing "the rich symbolism of heterosexual love from the definition of marriage, leaving the institution more abstract."

Commissioners also articulated the view that "it may be that same-sex relationships have specific gifts to offer the church which would not be celebrated if we tried to fit them into a one-size fits all [category]."

Considering same-sex unions merely as "blessed partnerships" also has some advantages, the report states. For example, it "runs no risk of redefining traditional heterosexual marriage...No one need fear that marriage has changed." On the other hand, the report states, "as a blessing without vows, this model does not acknowledge the relationship's potential to be a place in which the couple exercises their vocation of Christian love by striving to be as Christ to one another in covenanted love." The question, said the commission, would be whether the church can discern in these partnerships "an instance of Christ's love for the church."

Commissioners took turns in introducing various sections of the voluminous report. Bishop Linda Nicholls introduced the report, the Solemn Declaration and the conscience clause; Patricia Bays discussed the background and terms of reference; Jennings explained the biblical and theological rationale for the proposed change in the marriage canon; the Rev. Paul Friesen introduced the theological starting points and

the authority of Scripture; Martin tackled the authority of Scripture, the definition of marriage and the theology of marriage; and Archbishop John Privett presented the report's conclusion.

The commission's work included a consultation process, in which it invited opinions on the issue. It received a total of 223 submissions from individuals representing 26 dioceses, two from theological colleges, three from specialists, three from full communion and ecumenical partners, and six from institutions and organizations. Several submitters argued against allowing same-sex marriages, although whether to allow them or not was beyond the commission's mandate.

The commission dedicated the report to its chair, Canon (lay) Robert Falby, who died in June, prior to the completion of the report. "His knowledge of the church and deep commitment to its life and ministry, born of his many years of prolocutor, were gifts to our work," they said. ■

Maybe God is intending to graft gay Christians into the institution of Christian marriage.

— Marriage canon commission report

Council members react to report

Tali Folkins
STAFF WRITER

Council of General Synod (CoGS) members praised the report of the Commission on the Marriage Canon, released in September, as being both deeply reflective and highly readable—and are urging fellow church members to give it their time and attention.

“I was very impressed with the work of the commission,” said Archdeacon Lynne McNaughton of the ecclesiastical province of British Columbia and Yukon. “I can heartily commend the report [and] say, ‘Please read it.’” She described the report as “concise, fresh, [with a] biblical theological rationale that goes in-depth.”

The Rev. Norm Wesley, the Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples (ACIP) representative to CoGS, said he was impressed by how the commission was able to distill such a complex issue into a relatively short document. “A lot of prayer went into that, I’m sure,” he said.

Jennifer Warren, a lay CoGS member from the ecclesiastical province of Canada, said the report gave her the impression the commission had given careful consideration to the diverse views of the nearly 250 individuals and groups who had made submissions to it. “Every voice was heard,” she said. “They did a good job of reflecting that.”

This careful listening, Warren said, gave her the sense of a new conciliatory spirit at work in the church. “I feel like the Spirit is moving people to be open to other ideas,” she said.

However, National Indigenous Anglican Bishop Mark MacDonald, while commending the commission for what he called a careful and well-done report, faulted it for not including the cultural perspective of First Nations people. “It’s still very much a report from the larger church, which is Western in its orientation,” he said. “Even for people who might be supportive of the goal, the perspective is still very much that of the dominant culture.”

Some members voiced a mixture of hope and anxiety about General Synod 2016, when the governing body decides on whether to allow same-sex marriage.

“Both Winnipeg 2010 and Ottawa 2013 were not pleasant, warm, fuzzy experiences. So I do have some fears

and anxieties,” said Canon Terry Leer of the ecclesiastical province of Rupert’s Land. “Toronto 2016 will be tough,” he said, although he said he also expected it would involve processes encouraging face-to-face discussion. “It is very much harder to be angry with a person than it is to be angry with a position.” ■



Leer

Wesley



Warren

Queries, concerns about opt-out clause

André Forget
STAFF WRITER

The special session of Council of General Synod (CoGS) on September 23 drafted a resolution to change the marriage canon to allow for the marriage of same-sex couples, which will be brought to a vote before General Synod in 2016.

However, members still expressed concerns about the opt-out clause, which would allow bishops, clergy, congregations and dioceses to refuse to solemnize same-sex marriages on the basis of conscience.

For some, this was merely a matter of understanding what this means technically: Archbishop Percy Coffin of the diocese of Western Newfoundland, who serves as the metropolitan of the ecclesiastical province of Canada, noted that many of the parishes in his jurisdiction are multi-point and could potentially include, within a single parish, a number of individual churches that hold differing views on the issue. “Is it possible to have a multi-point parish where some congregations decide to have same-sex marriages, but not others in the same parish?” he asked.

Lt. Col. the Rev. Marc Torchinsky noted that as a member of the Anglican military ordinariate, he is under the discipline of the bishop ordinary to the Canadian Forces, but also serves in a particular diocese—in his case, the diocese of Ottawa. “If my diocesan bishop says, ‘no, you cannot,’ and then the Anglican ordinariate says, ‘yes, you can,’ there’s a conflict there,” he said.

In response, the chancellor of General Synod, Canon (lay) David Jones, said that in a multi-point context the individual congregations, and not the parish as a whole, would have the right to make decisions; military chaplains are beholden only to the bishop of the ordinary.

For his part, Dean Peter Wall, of the province of Ontario, felt that the conscience clause goes too far. “The drafters of the resolution were very generous—I think to a fault—with their interpretation of the word ‘congregation,’” he said. That the Anglican church “has always been



PHOTO: ANDRÉ FORGET

Lt. Col. the Rev. Marc Torchinsky, from the Anglican Military Ordinariate of Canada, raises a question after the marriage canon commission presented its report.

based on synodical and episcopal leadership and direction,” he said, adding that he is “concerned about congregationalism,” and the possibility of an individual church telling its priest whom he or she can or cannot marry.

Jones explained that the wording of the resolution was crafted to ensure that it would answer the requirements placed before CoGS by the 2013 General Synod resolution that sparked the creation of the marriage canon commission.

The resolution, C003, states that the motion to be brought before General Synod in 2016 must “include a conscience clause so that no member of the clergy, bishop, congregation or diocese should be constrained to participate in or authorize such marriages against the dictates of their conscience.”

Jones allowed that “technically, CoGS could amend what it’s sending,” but hastened to add, “what CoGS cannot do is amend it in a way that is not consistent with C003.”

However, that did not mean that CoGS members could not voice their concerns.

Archbishop Fred Hiltz, the primate of the Anglican Church of Canada, noted that these are issues that could be referred to the

marriage canon working group. The group includes the Rev. Karen Egan, representing the ecclesiastical province of Canada; Bishop John Chapman, representing the ecclesiastical province of Ontario; Don Wilson, representing the ecclesiastical province of British Columbia and Yukon; Tannis Webster, representing the ecclesiastical province of Rupert’s Land; and Bishop Linda Nicholls of the diocese of Toronto, representing the marriage canon commission.

Despite these concerns over the conscience clause, the resolution, which is a draft of the one that will be voted on in 2016, is otherwise fairly straightforward: it declares that “Canon XXI (On Marriage in the Church) applies to all persons who are duly qualified by civil law to enter into marriage,” and amends the language of the canon to remove references to “man and woman” and “husband and wife.” It presents two additional regulations to be added to the canon, which would prohibit same-sex marriage under certain circumstances—for example, if a diocesan synod should introduce a canon banning it within the diocese, if a bishop has banned it within his/her diocese or if a congregation has ruled not to perform such marriages in their church. ■

‘I do not want the church to divide over this’

André Forget
STAFF WRITER

Archbishop Fred Hiltz, primate of the Anglican Church of Canada, said he thinks the report of the Commission on the Marriage Canon is a “gift to the church,” even as he acknowledged the difficulty of the conversation that will take place when General Synod votes on same-sex marriage next July.

“I do not want the church to divide over this,” he said in an interview with the *Anglican Journal* after Council of General Synod (CoGS) held a special session, on September 22–23, to receive the report.

While concerns about the church dividing over same-sex marriage “keep me awake at night,” Hiltz said, he believes “there’s enough will and resolve within our church to have a good, focused, patient conversation about this.”

He expressed hope that the commission’s report will play an important role in how that conversation plays out.

Hiltz praised the report for bringing some much-needed theological analysis to debates over same-sex marriage.



PHOTO: ANDRÉ FORGET

Archbishop Fred Hiltz and Archdeacon Harry Huskins, General Synod prolocutor

The report offers “both a challenge and an invitation to go more deeply into our conversations about same-gendered relationships,” said Hiltz. “We had a conversation from the point of view of human rights, justice, pastoral care, but we didn’t have [a] deep, biblical, theological rationale, and that’s what General Synod, among other things, asked for.”

At the same time, Hiltz said, a lot will depend on how prepared General Synod delegates will be in 2016. CoGS needs to make sure that each delegate has read the report, he said.

Hiltz remained apprehensive, however, as to what impact the decision next summer will have on the Canadian church’s relationship to the Anglican Communion worldwide.

“We’ve been advised by the Communion not to pursue [same-sex marriage] but to continue with the local option [of blessing already-married same-sex partners],” he said. “I’m mindful of that.”

While Hiltz said he doesn’t expect everyone to agree with the report’s arguments for why same-sex marriage is theologically possible within the Anglican church, it still presents “an opportunity for some good and well-informed conversation. I hope people wouldn’t just dismiss it.”

The commission was responding to a request from General Synod for CoGS to provide a theological rationale for how Canon XXI of the Anglican Church of Canada, which governs marriage, could be changed to include same-sex couples. ■

**FOCUS:
REFUGEE
CRISIS ▶**

“If the government wanted to put the resources into it, we could process refugees more quickly. The government is not willing to do so.”

— Ian McBride,
executive director,
Anglican United
Church Refugee
Agency

Churches note spike in refugee sponsorships

André Forget
STAFF WRITER

The image of the body of three-year-old Alan Kurdi, a Syrian refugee, washed up on a Turkish shore, has led many to ask why more isn't being done to help vulnerable refugees.

The answer, according to those actively engaged in refugee work, is simple: it hasn't been a priority.

“If the government wanted to put the resources into it, we could process refugees more quickly. The government is not willing to do so,” says Ian McBride, executive director of the Anglican United Church Refugee Agency (AURA), an ecumenical agency that facilitates refugee resettlement.

It is not just the government that is to blame, says McBride. While AURA constantly receives requests for sponsorships, they are limited by what individuals and parishes are willing to do.

There has been renewed interest following Kurdi's death. McBride spent the entire Labour Day weekend responding to queries about refugee sponsorship.

McBride is aware of how powerful such instances are, but also how quickly public attention can shift. “My job is to maximize it at the moment.”

One parish that began working with AURA last year is St. Matthew's Anglican Church, Riverdale, in the diocese of Toronto, whose parishioners decided to sponsor a Syrian family after hearing the Rev. Nadim Nassar and Canon Andrew White (the “Vicar of Baghdad”) speak about the persecution faced by Christians in the Middle East, following the rise of the Islamic State (ISIS).



▲ Saeed (centre), his son Amjed, daughter-in-law Rawan and grandchildren Sareta and Saemn have been sponsored by the diocese of Qu'Appelle. They are currently in Turkey.

PHOTO: SASKATCHEWAN
ANGLICAN

“We're a small church—we have only 60 people on our parish list,” says the Rev. Catherine Sider-Hamilton, associate priest at St. Matthew's, “but in one year, we have raised \$27,000.”

St. Matthew's began its application to sponsor a refugee family in April 2015, through what is called a blended visa office-referred case, and had it approved shortly after. This kind of sponsorship allows Canadian individuals and groups working with sponsorship agreement holders and the federal government to bring into Canada families who have been designated by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees as people in need of asylum.

This process can take anywhere from a few months to several years for a family to arrive in Canada. “Now we're just waiting,” Sider-Hamilton says.

There are also sponsorships that are

called “named cases,” where Canadians can apply to sponsor a specific refugee or family of refugees. This is the process being used by the diocese of Qu'Appelle to sponsor the family of Saeed Abbo, an Assyrian Christian from northern Iraq.

Saeed's story begins almost five years ago, when his daughter Marleen and her husband, Safaa Mousa, and their daughter Majdleena, fled to a Syrian refugee camp. Safaa had been working as a chef for a government dignitary in Baghdad when a note was slipped under his door, telling him that he and his wife had 24 hours to leave Baghdad or they would be killed. They hid out in Mosul and then escaped across the border into Syria, which had not yet descended into civil war. From there, they came to Canada as office-referred refugees sponsored by the diocese.

Meanwhile, the rise of ISIS in northern Syria and Iraq had put the rest of Marleen's family—her father, Saeed, her brother Amjed, sister-in-law Rawan and her brother's children, Sareta and Saemn—in great danger. Amjed, who served his church as a deacon, was threatened by an ISIS militia and decided to go north with his family to Turkey. The diocese of Qu'Appelle began raising money to reunite the Abbo family in Canada, and they submitted an application to sponsor Saeed, Amjed, Rawan, Sareta and Saemn as named refugees.

Ralph Paragg, refugee co-ordinator for the diocese, says the process has gone smoothly. The family has been interviewed and has had a medical exam, key steps in the admittance process. Paragg says he expects to get a definite answer “before the snow starts to blow in Saskatchewan.” ■

Alan Kurdi ‘reawakened the compassion of humanity’

Continued from p. 1

Relief's refugee resettlement program. “Sometimes I cry, ‘where was this before?’ It's just an outpouring of generosity.”

Naba Gurung, humanitarian response co-ordinator for the Primate's World Relief and Development Fund (PWRDF), agreed that before Kurdi's photo appeared, raising funds for Syrian relief was more difficult.

Donations to PWRDF for Syrian relief from January 2012 to early September 2015 totalled \$80,155—and seemed to be on a downward trend. Peaking at \$39,564 for 2013, they had dwindled to \$6,401 for the first eight months of 2015. There was a dramatic increase after Kurdi's death – as of September 12, it received an additional \$70,000 in donations, which the federal government will match.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) had been facing a funding shortfall also. It had set funding requirements for its Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan for Syrian refugees for 2015 at \$4.5 billion (U.S.). As of August 25, only 41% of that sum had been raised (\$90.95 million of it from Canada).

UNHCR Canada spokeswoman Gisèle Nyembwe said the agency, too, has been “overwhelmed” with donations, after the publication of Kurdi's photo. Asked whether raising funds was much harder before, Nyembwe said, “I don't think people have been less generous at that time than now—it's just that there are so many crises.” With almost 60 million refugees and multiple emergencies worldwide, donors are overstretched, she said.

John Longhurst, director of resources



▲ Some refugees fleeing the war in Syria have pitched tents near a train station in Serbia. Most hope to be resettled in Germany.

FOTOSR52/
SHUTTERSTOCK

and public engagement at Canadian Foodgrains Bank, a partnership of Canadian church agencies targeting hunger worldwide, said his group has been “relatively successful” raising money for the Syrian crisis, but admitted it hasn't been easy. The agency has raised more than \$1 million for Syria since 2012, when it first began appealing for donations.

“That's great, and we are grateful,” he said. “But to put that in perspective, one of our member agencies received \$2.3 million for Nepal within a couple months of that earthquake this year, and another received \$3.5 million.”

It's harder to raise money for people caught in drawn-out conflicts like Syria and disasters that play out over a long time, Longhurst said. “A sudden catastrophic

event is guaranteed media coverage to begin with...but a drought, for example, takes a long time to come.”

Conflict situations are also harder to understand. “There are competing stories about who's right and who's wrong, and which side you're on and who's responsible,” he said. “It goes on and on... and after a while, it all becomes... noise in the background, and who hears it anymore?”

The frequent news of wars and refugees worldwide may also have inflicted potential donors with “compassion fatigue,” Tsehai said.

Fundraisers for Syria, he suspects, are facing another challenge raising funds in an age in which Islam and terrorism are often associated in popular media. “This time around, what I'm observing more and more is fear—fear of the unknown,” he said. Potential donors, he said, seem to be thinking, “They have a religion which is different from ours, and that religion is just a religion of terrorism and so on—who are we bringing [into Canada as refugees]?”

For the time being at least, fundraisers are riding a wave of generosity following the news and social media coverage of the photo of Alan Kurdi. “That little boy literally jolted everybody globally to open doors and reach out, and reawakened the compassion of humanity which was missing for some reason,” agreed Tsehai. “This young boy for me, as a person, he's just saying, ‘humanity let me down. I'm at peace now.’ Then I think we have to ask ourselves whether we have been doing the right thing or not.” ■

Has Canada become less open to refugees?

BY THE NUMBERS

2,406

Total number of Syrian refugees resettled to Canada (early 2013 to Sept. 8, 2015)

22,405

Total number of Iraqi refugees resettled to Canada (2009 to Sept. 8, 2015)

623

Government-assisted Syrian refugees

1,754

Privately sponsored Syrian refugees

29

Blended visa office-referred Syrian refugees*

10,579

Government-assisted Iraqi refugees

11,826

Privately sponsored Iraqi refugees

*Referred to Canadian visa offices by the UN refugee agency, UNHCR

Source: Citizenship and Immigration Canada

IMAGE: NIKOLA M/SHUTTERSTOCK

André Forget
STAFF WRITER

The Conservative government previously pledged to resettle 10,000 Syrian refugees over the next four years, but in September—amidst criticism from its political rivals—Citizenship and Immigration Minister Chris Alexander announced new measures to speed up the processing of applications to bring Syrians “a full 15 months earlier than anticipated.”

Alexander did not indicate whether they would be government- or privately sponsored refugees.

These numbers may pale in comparison to the roughly 1.8 million refugees currently living in Turkey, the additional 1.8 million in Lebanon and even the 117,161 refugees the United Kingdom has welcomed, but they also pale in comparison to what previous generations of Canadians have been willing to do.

Following the fall of Saigon to Communist forces in 1975, Canada resettled a total of 110,000 Vietnamese refugees—the famous “boat people.” Of those refugees, 50,000 were accepted between 1978 and 1980, at a time when Canada’s population was only 24 million.

So what happened between 1978 and 2015?

“In the 1970s, there was a really quite remarkable confluence of different elements,” explained Michael Creal, a retired professor of religious studies at York University and scholar at the York University-based Centre for Refugee Studies. “The government was on side, the civil service was on side, the media was on side, the churches were on side... this is a very different situation from today.”

Canada did not have an extensive infrastructure for quickly processing refugees, but the broad support for the project allowed for creative and efficient solutions. Civil servants were dispatched to Hong Kong, for instance, and they processed refugees on the spot, said Creal. “They accepted them, arranged to have them flown by military aircraft to Edmonton and Montreal.”



PHOTO: RAWPIXEL/SHUTTERSTOCK

The changes in Canadian refugee policy can be explained by changes in mindset among government leaders, experts say.

Tom Clark, former interchurch coordinator for refugees for the Canadian Council of Churches, agreed with Creal that political will played a vital role in refugee resettlement in the past. But, he added, refugee resettlement in the 1970s took place in the context of the Cold War, and therefore also served an ideological purpose. “What happened in that time was the need for the U.S., and therefore for its allies, to do the traditional thing, which is you don’t leave your allies out to toast—so the friends of the U.S. in Vietnam needed to be brought out.”

What started out as careful politics morphed into a massive humanitarian undertaking, thanks in large part to the work of individual parliamentarians, most notably Progressive Conservative cabinet minister Flora MacDonald, said Clark.

“Flora was a little special,” he said. “She had NGO connections right up until her death, so she really was willing to gamble on pushing [refugee issues] out to the people.”

For Clark and Creal, the changes in Canadian refugee policy can partially be explained by changes in mindset among government leaders.

Both added that it was Joe Clark’s Progressive Conservative Party, one of the precursors to the current Conservative Party of Canada, which pushed for broad acceptance of the Vietnamese refugees in the 1970s. It was another Progressive Conservative, Brian Mulroney, who led refugee resettlement in the wake of the Soviet Union’s collapse and instituted the formal refugee board, which decides on appeals.

These governments represented a brand of conservatism that saw Canada as having a responsibility to the international community to do its part in resettling displaced peoples, a role the Conservative Party under Stephen Harper has downplayed. Harper has defended his government’s record, citing security concerns for the slow process of admitting refugees from the Middle East.

“I think this (Harper government) is something of an isolationist government, in many ways,” Clark said.

Creal did not mince words. “I think the record of the Conservative government with respect to refugees is, from my point of view, absolutely deplorable,” he said.

The Conservative government has created a climate within Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) and Canada Border Services that is hostile toward refugees, he said. “CIC and the border services have been set up primarily to get rid of people,” he said. “The culture there is ‘how do we get people out of Canada as fast as possible when rejected?’”

But Creal did not think this was representative of a cultural shift among the Canadian people.

“I think there’s no question that large numbers of Canadians are open [to having more refugees]. The calls from people saying they want to sponsor a refugee family have far exceeded the capacity of various agencies to handle.”

Clark agreed that the majority of Canadians are inclined to help refugees, but stressed that they usually need a push. If the government doesn’t provide it, it has to come from somewhere else. ■

Church asks Ottawa to loosen red tape for refugees

Tali Folkins
STAFF WRITER

A London, Ont., church is raising money for Syrian refugees at lightning speed—thanks, at least partly, to a very Canadian household material.

As of September 21, St. Aidan’s Anglican Church had raised roughly \$35,000 for refugee sponsorship after 15 days of its “Red Tape Challenge.” The appeal asks participants, after making their donations, to tear a piece of red duct tape and attach it to their vehicles, rural mailbox or other prominent place.

The point of the tape, says John Davidson, the St. Aidan’s parishioner who came up with the idea, is to pressure the federal government to reduce barriers to refugees in Canada—“to show Ottawa that yes, you can cut through red tape if you have the desire and the wherewithal, and you want to get the job done.”

The rector at St. Aidan’s, Canon Kevin George, says the appeal began after a sermon he preached on Sunday, September 6—the Sunday after the first publication



▲ As of September 21, St. Aidan’s Church had raised \$35,000 for refugee sponsorship after 15 days of its “Red Tape Challenge.”

PHOTO: CONTRIBUTED

of the photo of three-year-old Alan Kurdi’s lifeless body on a Turkish beach.

“I preached that Sunday from James 2 about how we’re called to be a people who don’t just speak about faith, but who act upon those things, particularly with respect to how James says that mercy triumphs over judgment,” George says.

Immediately after the service, Davidson approached him with the “red tape” con-

cept. Davidson is an accomplished fundraiser. In the mid-1990s, he pushed his son Jesse—afflicted with Duchenne muscular dystrophy—across Ontario, then walked across Canada to raise money to fight the disease. Davidson then founded a charity, Jesse’s Journey, which has since raised more than \$20 million.

“I think we were at 16 or 17,000 thousand dollars by the end of leaving coffee hour,” George says. By the following Tuesday, Davidson had made and posted a “Red Tape Challenge” Facebook page, with a short video piece. By the following Sunday, the appeal had raised \$30,000.

“We had people in our neighbourhood who don’t belong to our church take the challenge,” George says. One of these people, Gina Barber, donated \$5,000; George let his congregation know about the donation, and said he hoped someone in the parish would match it—which they did. Barber liked that the campaign isn’t just about raising money.

Initially planning to sponsor one family, the parish is now considering two. ■

“I preached that Sunday from James 2 about how we’re called to be a people who don’t just speak about faith, but who act upon those things.”

— Canon Kevin George, rector, St. Aidan’s Anglican Church

CANADA ▶



Padres join forces for interfaith wedding

Tali Folkins

STAFF WRITER

History was made this summer at Canadian Forces Base Borden, Ont., with a unique interfaith wedding, the officiating clerics say.

On August 29, Capt. Georgette Mink, a physiotherapist in the Canadian military, was married to Ahmad Osman, a soldier in the Lebanese army. Although technically a Christian marriage, it was attended by representatives from both the Christian and Muslim religions, and was followed by a Muslim blessing of the couple.

Capt. the Rev. Dwayne Bos, the Anglican padre who officiated, said he believes other weddings may have been done in the Canadian military involving Christians and non-Christians—he has heard of one involving a Wiccan partner, for example. But the fact that clerics from both faith traditions co-performed the liturgy made this one unique, he said.

“From what we understand and know, this would be the first one of this type that’s ever been done in the Canadian Forces,” he said.

Bos said Mink, who has been a parishioner at CFB Borden’s Trinity Chapel for



▲ **Capt. the Rev. Dwayne Bos and Imam Suleyman Demiray co-officiated an interfaith wedding at CFB Borden, said to be a first in Canadian Forces history.**

PHOTO: CONTRIBUTED

some time, approached him earlier this year about her intention to marry Osman, and asked if the ceremony could be performed jointly involving a Muslim cleric.

“I said, ‘I’ll look into that—I haven’t heard of something like this being done, but that doesn’t mean no,’” Bos said.

Bos’s bishop gave his approval to the marriage, and directed Bos to the *Book of Occasional Celebrations*, which contains a section on interfaith marriages. Bos then invited the base’s Muslim padre, Imam Suleyman Demiray, to take part.

“I said, ‘Look, of course, this is a great idea!’” Demiray said.

Bos also contacted the Anglican Church of Canada’s faith, worship and ministry department—which was able to provide him

with an Arabic translation of the service.

Most of the ceremony was officiated in English by Bos, following Anglican rites and reading the famous passage on love from 1st Corinthians. Demiray helped Osman say, in Arabic, his vows and the words for the exchanging of rings with Mink, and blessed the couple.

“I was there just to bless them and to support them...mainly Padre Bos was the boss there,” Demiray punned, with a chuckle.

At Osman’s request, Demiray also chanted a passage from the Qur’an—its opening chapter known as Fatiha, comparable to the Christian Lord’s Prayer, he said, in that Muslims say it in their daily prayers. It praises God as merciful and compassionate and asks for his guidance in their lives.

“It was nice, because we were both there at the front for the service,” Bos said. “It really blended well to represent both the faith traditions.”

Osman, Demiray said, was amazed by the joint service. “He saw how we are welcoming and supporting him, both Christian and Muslim. He was so surprised and so happy, so pleased.”

Mink and Osman were not available for interviews at press time. ■

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CANADA ▶



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Opening of the database marks the first step in the journey to really start to provide meaningful access to the records that so many have worked so hard to collect over the past six years.

—Ry Moran, director, National Research Centre for Truth and Reconciliation

Residential schools national archive set to open Nov. 4

André Forget
STAFF WRITER

When Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) held its final event in Ottawa in June 2015, the phrase "this is just the beginning" was on everyone's lips. At the same time, however, there was widespread sentiment among concerned parties that spreading the news about the TRC's findings regarding the dark history of Indian residential schools in Canada, and pursuing the hard work of reconciliation itself, would be no small task.

On November 4, a key tool in this work will become available when the National Research Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (NRCTR) opens its doors.

Operating out of the University of Manitoba, in Winnipeg, the research centre holds the millions of records uncovered by the commission that detail the role government and churches played in the 150-year history of the residential school system, as well as the thousands of survivor testimonies shared with the TRC.

One of the NRCTR's most powerful resources is a searchable database that will allow survivors, families and researchers access to records relating to individuals and schools.

"Opening of the database marks the first step in the journey to really start to provide meaningful access to the records that so many have worked so hard to collect over the past six years," said NRCTR director Ry Moran.

Among the materials contained in the NRCTR are thousands of copies of records held in Anglican diocesan archives and the national archives of the Anglican Church of Canada in Toronto, which were provided to the TRC as part of the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement.

Although all relevant Anglican records have been handed over, Nancy Hurn, General Synod archivist, said the NRCTR and the Anglican archives continue to work closely. "People think we're finished—and yes, we're done producing the documents for them, but in terms of making the records understandable and accessible, there needs to be some input from the church archivists."

A large part of this work, Hurn noted, involved making sure that all documents



◀ A passerby inquires about the poster carried by a participant at the Walk for Reconciliation held in Ottawa, May 31.

PHOTO: ANDRÉ FORGET



▲ General Synod archivist Nancy Hurn

PHOTO: ANDRÉ FORGET

and photographs that have been provided are searchable, which requires providing detailed descriptions of each item. This was not done when the TRC originally copied the documents because of time and budgetary constraints.

Another issue is balancing the provision of information to survivors and their families with the need to respect individual privacy, and making sure that the church archives and the NRCTR are on the same page as to how this is done.

"Each province is slightly different," said Hurn. "[The NRCTR] records are held in Manitoba...and they have their own privacy legislation for the centre. It's different from the church—ours would be under Ontario regulations, so the records are covered by two different pieces of legislation."

In addition to the legal dimensions of the problem, there are also concerns over the sensitivity of some of the material, especially the material related to survivors' stories of abuse.

When Moran spoke to the *Anglican Journal*, he was in Iqaluit, meeting with residential school survivors and inter-generational survivors about how best to do this. He doesn't think there is a single, quick-fix policy.

"The task of really coming to terms with access to all of this material now and providing meaningful access to it will be an ongoing operation requirement for the centre for years to come," he said.

But while the NRCTR houses the largest archive of material related to residential

schools in the entire country, Hurn believes the church archives still have an important role to play in telling the story of the relationship between Indigenous people and Christianity.

"We hold much more information about a community that is beyond the residential schools," she said. "When you look at the history of the communities, you see the relationship between the church and the Indigenous peoples in the early years, and then you see what happens as a result of the residential schools."

One striking example of this dynamic, she noted, was a register kept in Cree for the first 20 years before switching to English, reflecting the encroaching colonialism that sought to strip Indigenous people of their languages.

But the archives, Hurn added, also tell the story of a church trying to atone for its sins, and understanding the whole breadth of that story before and after residential schools is a vital part of moving toward reconciliation.

Moran stressed that the research centre archive, too, is about more than just remembering what happened: it is about building a future in which Indigenous people are equal partners.

"Reconciliation moving forward is also about addressing many elements of Canada's colonial legacy," he said. "The residential schools are the most obvious one we've been dealing with, but the treaty relationship, the other failures in the relationship are all obstacles to reconciliation." ■



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The Anglican Church of Canada

CANADA ▶

Bishops call attention to Pikangikum crisis

André Forget
STAFF WRITER

In an open letter this fall, Archbishop Fred Hiltz, primate of the Anglican Church of Canada, National Bishop Susan Johnson of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada and National Indigenous Anglican Bishop Mark MacDonald urged Anglicans and Lutherans to follow the lead of their youth in “lifting up” the struggling Ojibwe community of Pikangikum in northern Ontario by writing to their political representatives in Ottawa.

Many of the 2,400 residents of the fly-in reserve community have long lived with inadequate or absent indoor plumbing and limited access to clean drinking water. But while the Canadian government has invested funds to build a new school, there has been little work done toward addressing the lack of basic infrastructure that plagues the community.

Last year, Anglicans and other con-



▲ **Former AFN National Chief Shawn Atleo checks the water tank during a visit to Pikangikum.**

PHOTO: BOB WHITE

cerned citizens participated in a fundraiser to provide clean water systems to 10 homes in Pikangikum.

Through the National Youth Project, Anglican and Lutheran youth have participated in the Right to Water program, which is raising money in partnership with

the Primate’s World Relief and Development Fund (PWRDF) and the Pimatisiwin Nipi (Living Water) group to help provide potable water to homes in Pikangikum.

But the bishops’ letter calls on Anglicans and Lutherans to push the government to do its part. A form letter is attached to the bishops’ letter that concerned persons can use to contact their members of Parliament and the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, Bernard Valcourt.

The form letter highlights the fact that less than 10% of Pikangikum households have access to clean running water or indoor plumbing, and that the community also lacks connection to the electrical grid, forcing them to rely on diesel-generated power.

It says the federal and provincial governments must commit to facilitating the connection of Pikangikum to the power grid. ■

Arctic diocese \$723,000 away from repaying \$10.3 million debt

Continued from p. 1

in Ottawa. McCartney, who preached at both services at St. Margaret’s earlier in the day, accepted the invitation to come to the ACW fundraising event, speak to the group and receive the freewill offering for the cathedral.

He also watched the screening of the documentary *Soul of the Arctic* with those gathered. The movie, produced by Northern Ireland television network UTV, focuses on the Irish-born McCartney and his wife, Karen, and their life together in what was described as “1.5 million square miles of freezing desolation in the high Canadian Arctic.”

It includes a segment in which McCart-



PHOTO: ART BABYCH

ACW representative Marni Crossley presents her group’s freewill offering to Arctic Suffragan Bishop Darren McCartney.

ney drives a snowmobile over the ice and snow from Iqaluit to Pangnirtung, a distance of 300 km, to preside at a confirmation ceremony. “In the earlier years of my ministry, Karen and I spent some time working in the Arctic and we know the terrain and the people well,” he says in the movie. “It’s a stunningly beautiful place, but temperatures can fall as low as minus 50, so we have immense respect for their background as nomadic hunters living in remote camps.”

In a question-and-answer period following the movie, McCartney spoke of the anguish he felt while being pastor in Pangnirtung from 2003 to 2006 and why he and his wife had to return to Ireland. “I needed to get out to clear my head,” he said. As pastor, “I

had 17 suicides in three years in a community of about 1,500 people,” said McCartney. “In that environment, in that culture and in that role, you are very close to people, and so there was a lot of pain and I suppose secondary trauma for me.”

Suicide rates for Inuit youth are among the highest in the world, at 11 times the national average. McCartney said although he needed to get away, he was hankering to get back after a while. The couple returned to the North when McCartney was elected as suffragan bishop of the Arctic in June 2012. ■

Art Babych, former editor of Crosstalk, diocese of Ottawa, is a regular contributor to the Anglican Journal.

December 2015 Bible Readings

Day	Reading
<input type="checkbox"/> 01	1 Thessalonians 4.1-18
<input type="checkbox"/> 02	1 Thessalonians 5.1-11
<input type="checkbox"/> 03	1 Thessalonians 5.12-28
<input type="checkbox"/> 04	Philippians 1.1-11
<input type="checkbox"/> 05	Philippians 1.12-30
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 06	Luke 3.1-18
<input type="checkbox"/> 07	Romans 14.13-15.13
<input type="checkbox"/> 08	Romans 15.14-30
<input type="checkbox"/> 09	Zephaniah 1.1-18
<input type="checkbox"/> 10	Zephaniah 2.1-15
<input type="checkbox"/> 11	Zephaniah 3.1-20
<input type="checkbox"/> 12	Philippians 2.12-29
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 13	Philippians 3.1-21
<input type="checkbox"/> 14	Philippians 4.1-23
<input type="checkbox"/> 15	Micah 1.1-16
<input type="checkbox"/> 16	Micah 2.1-13
<input type="checkbox"/> 17	Micah 3.1-12
<input type="checkbox"/> 18	Micah 4.13-5.15
<input type="checkbox"/> 19	Micah 6.1-16
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 20	Micah 7.1-20
<input type="checkbox"/> 21	Obadiah 1-21
<input type="checkbox"/> 22	Isaiah 7.10-8.10
<input type="checkbox"/> 23	Isaiah 8.11-9.7
<input type="checkbox"/> 24	Luke 2.1-20
<input type="checkbox"/> 25	Hebrews 1.1-14
<input type="checkbox"/> 26	Acts 6.1-15
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 27	Psalms 148.1-14
<input type="checkbox"/> 28	Revelation 21.1-21
<input type="checkbox"/> 29	Revelation 21.22-22.5
<input type="checkbox"/> 30	Revelation 22.6-21
<input type="checkbox"/> 31	Romans 16.1-27

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CANADA ▶



“We’re trying to honour two things: what’s going on in the lives of the community, along with honouring the Anglican rhythm of worship.”

— The Rev. Dan Cranley, pastoral associate, St. Christopher’s Anglican Church, Burlington, Ont.

New words for the old service

The traditional liturgy gets a reboot at St. Christopher’s Church

André Forget
STAFF WRITER

Across the Anglican Church of Canada, the *Book of Alternative Services* and the *Book of Common Prayer* are the liturgical foundation for Sunday morning services.

But at St. Christopher’s Anglican Church in Burlington, Ont., the traditional liturgy is getting a reboot.

“For the last six years we’ve hosted a gathering, to which everyone is invited, in the spring, to ask questions about what’s going on in people’s lives, what do we think God is trying to do with us,” says Archdeacon Steve Hopkins, rector at St. Christopher’s. Out of these conversations, themes for worship and education are identified for the coming year, he says.

This day—“discernment day,” as it is known in the parish—goes far beyond a simple planning session, though. Open to anyone who wants to attend, it is about creating new service texts that reflect the thoughts, feelings and concerns of the congregation.

While these services follow the traditional Anglican rhythm, their content changes based on the season and the theme. If the theme being explored in Advent, for example, is “letting go of busyness,” the confession will be written to reflect that.

“It makes Sunday morning alive and magical and powerful,” Jane Wyse, a member of St. Christopher’s, says of her experience with discernment day. “It relates to our life and what we’re going through, and it’s not something that you say over and over again every Sunday; it changes up and it speaks to you more.”

This is a feeling that other people relate to as well.

“The deepening and broadening of my own faith journey has been exponential in the six years that we’ve been doing this,” says Canon Christyn Perkons, who, in addition to being a parishioner at St. Christopher’s, serves as director of congregational support and development at the Niagara synod office. “I think the theology of so many of the things we deal with means so much more to me...I understand my own belief system around it in a way I didn’t before.”

For others, it is the ability to be honest about what they believe—or don’t believe—that makes the experience



▲ Back row (L-R): Canon Christyn Perkons, Archdeacon Steve Hopkins, Carol Henley, Gill Janes, Rodney Lott, John Stephen, Joanne Gallagher, Lynda Kealey, Ted Taylor. Front row (L-R): Betty Coombs, Jane Stephen, Jane Wyse and Allan Nicolls, with his dog, Akita

PHOTO: ANDRÉ FORGET

regenerative.

“I feel very liberated,” says Ted Taylor. “I feel that I am not being required to either mouth words that I have trouble believing or standing there silently while other people around me mouth them.”

But the new approach to liturgy is not only about innovation; it is also about maintaining a connection to the traditions of Anglicanism, according to the Rev. Dan Cranley, pastoral associate at St. Christopher’s.

“We’re trying to honour two things: what’s going on in the lives of the community, along with honouring the Anglican rhythm of worship,” he says. “Seeing those two things come together for me has been really powerful.”

But what led to such radical changes being implemented in the first place? In *Becoming a People of God: A New Approach to Liturgy and Learning*, a document Hopkins wrote detailing the process and rationale of the new liturgical changes, he explains how a story told to him by a fellow priest transformed his outlook on the purpose of liturgy.

In the story, a parishioner frustrated by congregational conversations about how the church could reach out to its neighbourhood more effectively, asks, “Why do we have to worry about these other people? Why can’t we just worry about ourselves?”

Hopkins argues that it is not that this parishioner hadn’t understood the church’s teachings, but that she

was expressing exactly what she had been taught by traditional liturgy: that the church is separate from the world and needn’t concern itself with its neighbours.

“The responsibility for this outcome did not lie with the woman,” Hopkins says. “It lay with those responsible for her formation in the faith and, ultimately, with the curriculum for that formation [the weekly liturgy and the life of the community that gathers to celebrate it].”

The changes to liturgy at St. Christopher’s are about being more intentional concerning teaching, he says, adding that he has seen some positive outcomes.

“I think there’s a shift in expectations,” he says. “I think a lot of folks never expected anything meaningful to happen in church, and I think there is some anticipation that something is going to happen—I’m going to hear something; I’m going to be challenged; it’s going to make me thoughtful.”

Taylor agrees wholeheartedly. “I would say that discernment day has moved [us from] the Church of England of the 16th century to the Anglican Church of St. Christopher’s of the 21st century,” he says. “It is bringing people into a connection where they can see the church as being applicable to their daily lives and their daily needs, not as an historical repetition of words.” ■



Tali Folkins

PHOTO: ANDRÉ FORGET

Journal welcomes new staff writer

Staff

Tali Folkins, a writer with extensive experience in print journalism, joined the *Anglican Journal* as a staff writer on September 9.

“The *Anglican Journal* is an important witness to the work of the Spirit in Canada,” he said. “I would love to put my skills and enthusiasm to work, giving its readers food for reflection and inspiration.”

Folkins said he was excited about working for the *Journal* because of the chance to “focus my writing career on spiritual issues.”

Folkins has worked as a staff writer for the *Law Times* and the *New Brunswick Telegraph-Journal*. His writing has appeared in *The Globe and Mail* and the *United Church Observer*.

He has also worked for *Atlantic Progress* (now *Progress Magazine*) and *U of T Magazine*, and as communications

manager for the Royal Bank of Canada.

In addition to his experience as a reporter and feature writer, Folkins has a strong background in academia, in particular medieval philosophy and the work of Italian medieval poet Dante Alighieri, and is a fluent French speaker.

He holds a BA in classics and a bachelor of journalism from the University of King’s College in Halifax, Nova Scotia, and an MA in classics from Dalhousie University. ■

OPINION ►



▲ **Michael Coren on his separation from the Catholic church: "It was rather like a ball of theological wool unravelling. As soon as it began, it was difficult to stop it."**

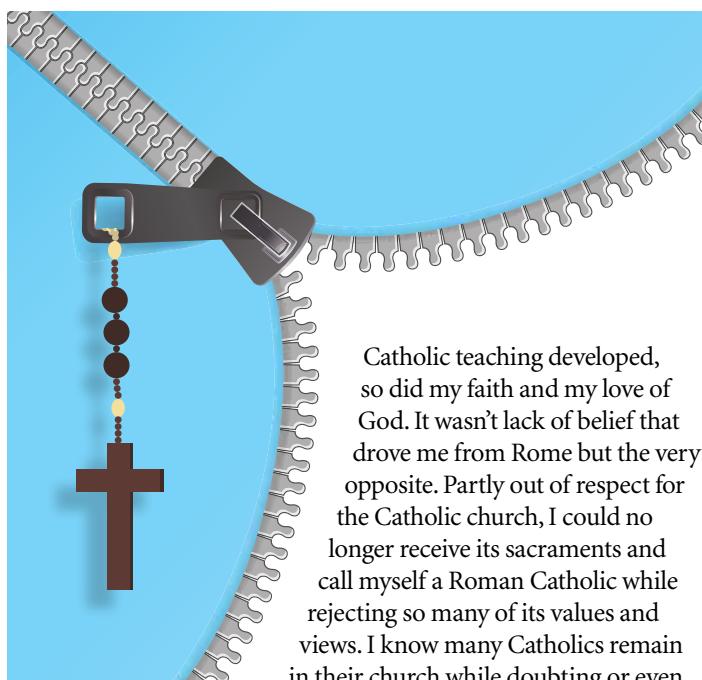
PHOTO: ANDRÉ FORGET

By Michael Coren

DID I SWIM the Tiber or was it a walk to Canterbury? Not sure. It felt at the time more like some sort of ersatz inferno. I suppose I have a certain media profile and was until relatively recently known as a very public Roman Catholic. My 2012 book on Catholicism (*Heresy*, McClelland & Stewart) had been on the Canadian bestseller list for 10 weeks; I was named columnist of the year for my work in *The Catholic Register* and had been given numerous awards by Catholic groups. I was one of Canada's most high-profile champions of Catholicism.

The separation was gradual, of course. While I never swayed from Catholic theology—and continue in my adherence—I began to question, then doubt, then reject Roman Catholic teaching on papal supremacy, authority, contraception and especially homosexuality and equal marriage. On the latter, I simply could no longer glue myself to a church that described gay relationships as sinful and disordered and caused so much pain to so many good, innocent people.

It was rather like a ball of theological wool unravelling. As soon as it began, it was difficult to stop it. The glorious irony of all this is that as my questioning of Roman



Catholic teaching developed, so did my faith and my love of God. It wasn't lack of belief that drove me from Rome but the very opposite. Partly out of respect for the Catholic church, I could no longer receive its sacraments and call myself a Roman Catholic while rejecting so many of its values and views. I know many Catholics remain in their church while doubting or even denying, but that wasn't for me.

Around 18 months ago, I began to quietly worship at Toronto's Cathedral of St. James, to meet with various Anglicans and to read Anglican theology. Then I started to regularly attend my local Anglican parish, then I was formally received—a photo of the event was posted online, and the inferno I mentioned began to ignite.

It was a noble infamy, but it still stung. In the space of one week, I lost three regular columns and 13 speeches. No matter. What did matter were the attacks on my children, the fact that people trolled their Facebook pages and alleged that they were gay—irrelevant to me and to them, but the attacks were intended to hurt. It was written that I was a thief, an adulterer, a liar and was mentally ill. Such fun!

But what I found was so much greater than any suburban persecution. Within Anglican Catholic orthodoxy, I could pursue socially liberal ideas; within a church of mingling theologies, I could be respected as a Catholic and respect those with different ideas and call them brothers and sisters; within Anglicanism, I could reach out in Christ's beauty to all people, irrespective of sexuality or religion, and love everything about them.

I have never been happier or felt more motivated as a Christian than now. The nastiness refined me; my new faith defines me. Regrets? Oh yes. That I didn't do this a long time ago. ■

Toronto-based author and columnist Michael Coren's email address is mcoren@sympatico.ca.

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ARTS AND
CULTURE ▶

BOOK
REVIEW

THE COLLAR:
Reading
Christian
Ministry
in Fiction,
Television, and
Film

By Sue
Sorensen

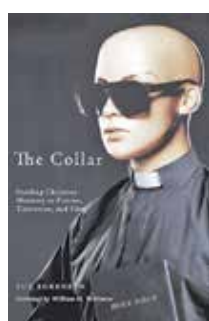
Wilf & Stock,
2014, 306 pages
ISBN: 978-
1625642486

Reviewed by Julianne Isaacs

IN THE OPENING PAGES of *The Collar*, Sorensen writes, “The ministry is a profession of vital importance, but it is also delightfully strange, even absurd. We need to look at it from a variety of angles and look at it honestly.” *The Collar* explores a wide swath of fictional narratives about men and women in church leadership. Sorensen’s goal, it seems, is to search out the truest readings of ordained life and reflect on how they cast light on the real tasks facing church leaders today. For this reason, *The Collar* will appeal especially to clergy, although lovers of fiction will find plenty to admire in Sorensen’s whirlwind tour through literature, television and film.

Sorensen, an associate professor of English at Canadian Mennonite University, has published a novel, *A Large Harmonium*, and is the editor of *West of Eden: Essays on Canadian Prairie Literature*. She has also published work on contemporary British literature and detective fiction, as well as her own poetry.

These interests heavily inform *The Collar*. Chapters are thematic, covering



**“The Collar’s
call to realistic
expectations
for clergy
and ‘de-
mystification
of Christian
ministry is
much needed
in the church.”**

—Reviewer

topics such as “The Collared Detective,” “Passion: for Better or for Worse” and “Frustration: the Collar on Screen,” each of which compares and contrasts a variety of texts that portray the clergy with strong emphasis in these particular areas. Chapters are interspersed with short “interludes” in which Sorensen does close readings of significant works, such as George Herbert’s poem “The Collar,” Iris Murdoch’s novel *The Bell* and Clint Eastwood’s film *Pale Rider*.

The Collar’s tone can only be described as warm, comfortably straddling the scholarly and conversational. Sorensen offers analyses of an astonishing number and variety of works by writers, filmmakers and actors, from George Eliot and George Herbert to Rowan Atkinson and Richard Burton. There is also a gem of a chapter entitled “The Canadian Collar,” in which Sorensen examines portrayals of clergy life in Margaret Laurence, Robertson Davies, Alice Munro, Warren Cariou and others—a study that fills a gap in Canadian literary analysis.

Sorensen’s scope is probably too broad: occasionally the buffet of texts

under examination forces parenthetical readings when close readings are called for, suggesting that a narrowed focus might have served *The Collar* better. But this breadth is also its strength; for a scholarly text, *The Collar* has an unusual and irresistible momentum.

Particularly strong is Sorensen’s splendid commentary on George Eliot’s “humanist religion,” her restrained critique of Jan Karon’s Mitford series and her romp through the subgenre of priest-detectives.

The Collar’s call to realistic expectations for clergy and “demystification” of Christian ministry is also much needed in the church. But Sorensen also quotes T.S. Eliot in describing the average Christian as “living and partly living.” Occasionally, she writes, great literature points to priestly ministry as “demonstrating the possibility of going beyond this halfway stage, becoming fully alive in relationship with God.” It’s a high calling, but one Sorensen approaches with generosity, humour and good grace. ■

Julianne Isaacs is a Winnipeg-based writer.

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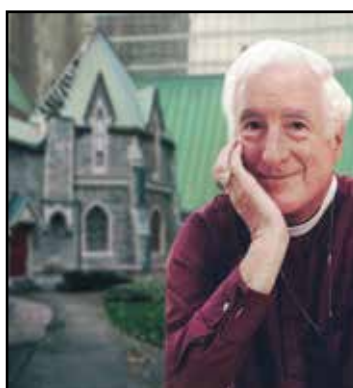
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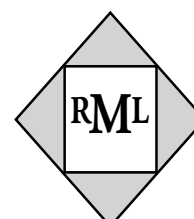
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—1 Peter 4:10 (NIV)



Gifts of remembrance

Supplement Section to the Anglican Journal • NOV. 2015 • VOL 1, ISSUE 3



A gift of
\$50

Support the Sacred Circle

Your gift will assist in bringing participants together for the next Sacred Circle and provide seed funding for a Sacred Circle gathering of young people.

Item 027



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Item 085



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Item 060



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Item 100



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—Archbishop Fred Hiltz, Primate

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Kids Rock
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Item 068-a (two goats)



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Item 068-b (one goat)
One goat \$80



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\$100

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Item 074



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Item 091-a
Half a spot \$150
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Item 091-b



IT'S EASY BEING GREEN
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Item 046



Have you eaten today?
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People living with AIDS in Mozambique are usually so sick that they can't leave their beds. Strong anti-retroviral drugs (ARVs) must be taken with food twice a day to control their illness. Bedridden patients don't always have enough food, so they stop taking their medications.
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Item 090



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Item 029



A gift of \$125

Support partnership and healing in the Canadian North
Your gift will supplement the church's annual grant to the Council of the North, supporting mission, innovation, partnership, and healing among the people of the North.
Item 028




A gift of \$600

Give a community access to health care
Your gift will provide a bicycle ambulance to a community—and save lives.
Item 069



A gift of \$25

Nutrition and income for refugees
Your gift will help a refugee group to produce 500 jars of peanut butter to provide nutrition and income to refugee families in Kenya.
Item 098

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A gift of \$35

Outfit a chicken farm in Africa
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Item 077

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Item 076



A gift of \$300

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Item 092



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085	End homelessness	\$55		
100	Support for offenders	\$50		
060	Bishop Ordariate	\$50		
GIFTS on PAGES 2 and 3				
068-a	Give two goats	\$160		
068-b	Give a goat	\$80		
074	Fund a rice mill	\$100		
091-a	Teach Cuban farmer (full)	\$300		
091-b	Teach Cuban farmer (half)	\$150		
046	Build a spirulina tank	\$250		
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028	Healing in Canadian North	\$125		
069	Access to health care	\$600		
098	Nutrition and income	\$25		
077	Raise chickens	\$35		
076	Birth safely	\$85		
092	Help refugee build a home	\$300		
022	Anglican healing fund	\$85		
GIFTS on PAGE 4				
097	Community-based radio	\$40		
096	Clean water	\$300		
087	Teenagers for Christ	\$50		
079	Staying connected	\$50		
999	EVERY GIFT HERE!	\$3,145		
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- Blue dot: Gift toward the General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada
- Purple dot: Gift toward The Primate's World Relief and Development Fund
- Green dot: Every dollar is matched by THREE dollars from the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Canada (DFATD).

Project ideas for ACW and outreach groups

Help others access community-based radio programs

Your gift will provide a crank radio to help people learn more about their health and to share the knowledge with their community.

A gift of
\$40

Item 097



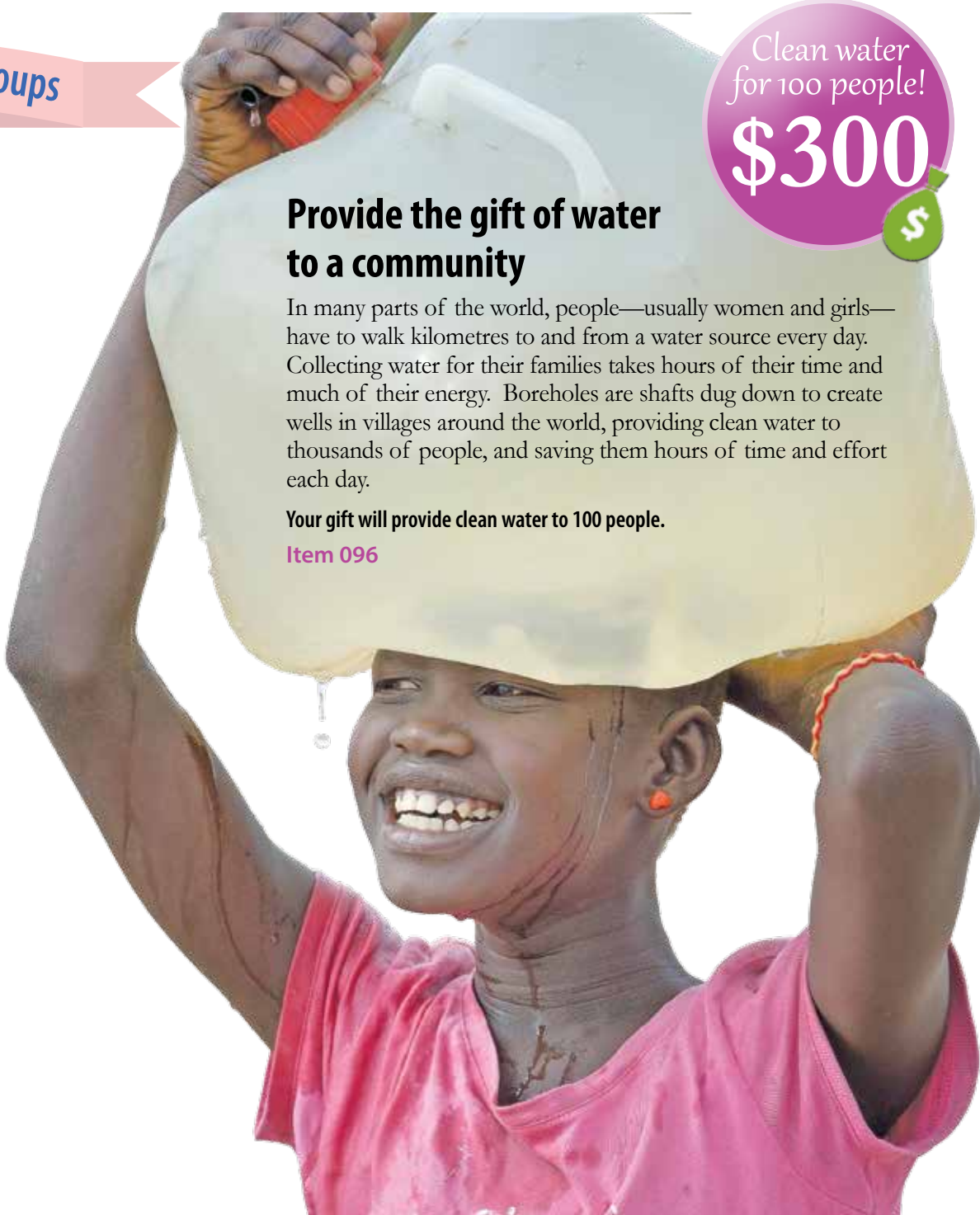
Provide the gift of water to a community

In many parts of the world, people—usually women and girls—have to walk kilometres to and from a water source every day. Collecting water for their families takes hours of their time and much of their energy. Boreholes are shafts dug down to create wells in villages around the world, providing clean water to thousands of people, and saving them hours of time and effort each day.

Your gift will provide clean water to 100 people.

Item 096

Clean water
for 100 people!
\$300



Place your GIFTS for MISSION order in 3 easy steps!

1 Select Your Gifts (on page 3)

2 Enter Your Name and Address

3 Choose a Method of Payment

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

Province _____

Postal Code _____

Phone _____

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Parish/Congregation _____

Please send one payment for your entire order! **Enclose your payment with this order form in the inserted Gift for Mission postage-paid reply envelope.**

You can also go to anglican.ca/giftguide to place your order online, or call **1-866-924-9192** to place your order by telephone. Your gift is tax-deductible.

Please make cheques and money orders payable to the Anglican Church of Canada.

- ☐ Cheque Enclosed
- ☐ Money Order
- ☐ Credit Card:
- ☐ VISA
- ☐ MasterCard

Card Number _____

Card Number continued _____

Expiration Date _____

Signature _____



You will receive an attractive card for each gift you purchase so you can personalize and send cards to your friends and loved ones.

☐ Please check here if you do not wish to receive cards.

Your donations go directly to their stated use unless an item is overfunded, in which case funds will be allocated to an area of similar need.

You can order Gifts for Mission gift cards year-round. If you would like to have your cards delivered by Christmas, your order must be received by Dec. 4, 2015.



For over 50 years, THE PRIMATE'S WORLD RELIEF AND DEVELOPMENT FUND has responded to emergencies, worked with partners to build communities, helped refugees, and striven for global justice.



The ANGLICAN CHURCH OF CANADA acknowledges that God is calling us to greater diversity of membership, wider participation in ministry and leadership, better stewardship in God's creation, and a stronger resolve in challenging attitudes and structures that cause injustice.

Charitable Registration
No. 10808 2835 RR0001

Empower young people to spread the Gospel

Teenagers for Christ in Cuba

A gift of
\$50

Your gift will support this important new ministry of the Episcopal Church of Cuba and help develop the next generation of young Cuban Anglican leaders, through Bible study, discussion, and friendship.

Item 087



Help leaders stay connected, stay strong

Your gift will bring diocesan youth leaders together annually for connection, formation, and visioning, and empowers youth leaders to deliver quality programming and youth outreach in all parts of the country. **Item 079**

A gift of
\$50



Every dollar is matched by **THREE** dollars from the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Canada (DFATD).