



Trinity 20/94

Spearhead

Saint Thomas's Church

383 Huron Street
Toronto, Ontario M5S 2G5
(416) 979-2323

Roy A. Hoult, Rector
(598-5400)

Assistant Priests

Brian D. Freeland, (461-7025)
Robert A. Ross (588-6946)

We live in a world of change

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★★★★

One of ABC's most recent publications proves the adage that good things come in small packages. Interpreting Present Time: History, the Bible, and the Church's Mission Today by Cyril H. Powles is just 83 pages long, but packs a lot of insight into such few pages. Following is an excerpt from the book which is available at the Anglican Book Centre. See what you think...

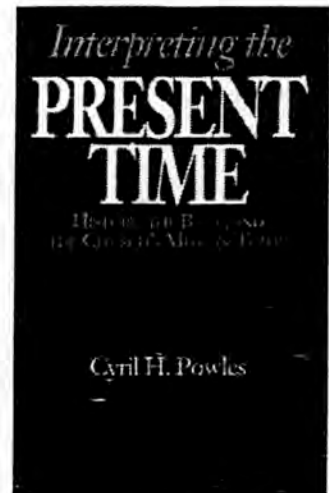
A world of change

"Change is a fundamental aspect of human life. We are born, we grow up, we grow old, we die. And the environment in which we live shows the same constant change: the sun stands still only in fairy tales. But the way we notice change is more complicated. We may take the cycle of life for granted if we can rest assured of unchanging powers supporting us. "Change and decay in all around I see," wrote the Victorian poet. "O thou who changest not, abide with me." Until fairly recently, we believed that tradition—the way it has always been done—derived its authority from God's unchanging nature so that, in the midst of change, we could stand fast, supported by "the eternal verities."

"The problem is that in certain ages, and particularly in this day and age, society changes so rapidly that even the eternal verities appear to be threatened. God seems to have deserted us. "Awake, Lord! Why are you sleeping?" cries the psalmist, echoing a desperation all of us must have felt at some time or other. Ever since the Industrial Revolution (that word *revolution* itself stands for uncontrollably rapid change!) things have been changing so fast that even God seems to have lost control. In our own day, the sixties represented a time of particularly uncontrollable change, expressions such as "future shock" and "death of God" reflected the near panic that people felt. And even today the pace does not seem to have slowed down much."

Dealing with change

"The information revolution is just one example of this rapid change. Those of us who grew up before World War II were accustomed to depend on two main sources for storing and finding information: our memories and books (libraries). But today, with the assistance of computers, the gathering, storing, classification, and recovery of information can be done in what seems to us oldsters to be a miraculously short and efficient way. One has only to master the intricacies of operating the machine. For those who have grown up more recently, it all seems matter of fact, but the use of computers to assist in thinking remains a basic
(Continued on page 3)



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Staff

Editor

Willem Hart

Editorial Associate

Carroll Guen-Hart

Production

Barbara Obrai

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★★ Official Opinion
★★★ News item, profile, book review, etc.
★★★★ Personal opinion. CAUTION: may be controversial and upsetting to some.

We're looking for your input! News, milestones, etc. Please supply copy on 3-1/4" computer disk (IBM Mac) in Word, Word Perfect or ASCII format.

Advisory Board rejects program recommendations

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At its most recent meeting on September 20 the Advisory Board decisively rejected recommendations of its Program Committee.

The Committee, composed of Carol Kysela, Gene Stewart, Mary Suddon, David Kent, Earl Barnsley, Don Garden, Fr Ross, Carroll Guen Hart, Glen Spurrell, and Willem (Chair), had dedicated a considerable amount of time (five meetings) during the summer to think about a meaningful theme and ways to engage the congregation in an exercise of self-examination and rediscovery of its baptismal ministry. Major questions underlying this examination were to be:

- 1) What is my personal mission in the world?
- 2) What is the corporate mission of St. Thomas's Church in the late 20th century and beyond?
- 3) How does St. Thomas's feed us personally and corporately to equip us for this (these) task(s)?
- 4) How can we promote community among ourselves?

Waiting on the Spirit

The main theme for this year's program was to be *Waiting on the Spirit: ministry of the laity*. The committee struggled with the questions and with the means to reach as many of the congregation as possible. Like many of our sister churches in the downtown area, St. Thomas's is a "gathered" community. Because people travel great distances to come here it is difficult to gather significant numbers of parishioners during week-days, so we needed to think about ways of making programs available when people are present. Sunday morning is the time when most parish-

ioners are available.

To take advantage of this, and presuming an interest on the part of the congregation, the Program Committee proposed some minor, experimental variations in our traditional practice.

To start the season (many of us do not return until after Thanksgiving) the committee proposed a combined 9:30 and 11 am service at 10:30 am on November 20, using the "centennial liturgy." This was an attempt to show that, in spite of a BAS service at 9:30, and a BCP service at 11:00, we are all "one in Christ." The suggestion was that Bishop Victoria Matthews be invited to preach and celebrate. The service was to be followed by lunch and (possibly) small group discussions facilitated by someone like Sr Anita of the Sisters of the Church. Special displays of books by ABC related to the upcoming Advent series and publication of a special Calendar to advertise all coming events were to be part of the package.

The most contentious item concerned the program suggested for the Four Sundays in Advent. The committee proposed that no sermon be preached at either the 9:30 or 11:00 am services, and that the 11:00 am service be delayed 'till 11:15. This would have left time to have "Bible study session" between the two services. Sessions might have been chaired by the preacher of the day or another designated convenor/facilitator and based on the Lectons of the day.

Morning Prayer would have been held as usual at 10:30. Members of the 11:00 am congregation who did not want to attend Bible study would be encouraged to

spend 15 minutes in silent meditation (very appropriate for Advent) or we might have offered a mini organ recital.

Other suggestions from the Program Committee included:

- a "baptismal ministry" theme for Advisory Board meetings
- Hosted (pot luck) dinners in various people's homes throughout the parish during Epiphany-tide, to strengthen and encourage community.
- if the Advent series were to prove successful we might repeat it during five Sundays in Lent.

Other possibilities suggested were

- ways of learning new hymns
- a special residential retreat event in spring or summer concentrating on corporate and personal prayer. What is it? How do you do it?

In failing to deal with many of the specifics of the program suggestions the Advisory Board left many other items in limbo at least until its next meeting in November:

- an informal Pub Night
 - left over from last year: "Our own in concert"
 - in view of our theme ("Waiting on the Spirit") we suggested the possibility of a new service: Pentecost Vigil.
 - a newcomers luncheon
- Already scheduled are the October 5 Poetry Reading (see report on pg7); the November 26 Arts & Crafts Fair; the Mardi Gras on February 26.

In view of the extremely negative response to the Program Committee's suggestions, the Chair *pro tem* has offered his resignation from both the Program Committee and the Advisory Board to the Rector. The offer has been accepted.



Dr. Cyril H. Powles

"One [way to deal with change] is to act like the proverbial ostrich: bury our heads in the sand and pretend that nothing is happening. Not only Christians but also members of other faiths have chosen this way. The growth of fundamentalism in North America and elsewhere reflects the reaction of those who try to take refuge from change in an authoritarian religion which stresses the unchanging nature of belief and practice."

DEALING WITH CHANGE (Continued from page 1)

change with which many of us have problems. We feel lost and scared: out of control.

"Now there are at least two ways that we can deal with change. One is to act like the proverbial ostrich: bury our heads in the sand and pretend that nothing is happening. Not only Christians but also members of other faiths have chosen this way. The growth of fundamentalism in North America and elsewhere reflects the reaction of those who try to take refuge from change in an authoritarian religion which stresses the unchanging nature of belief and practice. Although not so extreme as fundamentalism, such conservative causes as the Renewal Fellowship in the United Church, or the Prayer Book Society and the Anglican Catholic Church of North America in the Anglican Church of Canada reveal the unease felt by so many at changes in the language used in worship or at practices such as the ordination of women and homosexuals. But such Christians need to remind themselves about St. Paul's description of

Christ Jesus, who, though in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, and living a human life.
Philippians 2.6-7

So Christians who respond to change by trying to act as if it did not happen show that they have forgotten their vow to follow a Person who has embraced human life with all the changes and chances that involves.

"Christ's birth, life, death, and resurrection provide us with a model of salvation (liberation): not by running away from, but by becoming involved in and grappling with change. "Look! I am making everything new!" says God in

St. John's heavenly vision (Revelation 21:5). In baptism we have been born again into a new society, becoming part of Christ's resurrection body, in which God has changed us and raised us up to a new beginning after our death to sin (Colossians 2:12-13). Thus our life as Christians is itself interwoven with change. The Holy Spirit blows, like the wind, wherever he/she wills, and we are given the courage to follow."

"If we identify ourselves with this Christ who was "obedient to the Law" (i.e., to the fabric of human existence which involves constant change), we shall view the way that the faith has been passed on to us (tradition) with freshly opened eyes. No longer shall we be able to accept a kind of static definition of tradition — that which has been believed "everywhere, always, and by everyone"—but we shall come to think of ourselves as little fishes, swimming in a great river. From time to time this river has been enlarged by tributaries, bringing in fresh water. St. Paul shocked the first-generation church by proposing that Gentiles might become Christians without first accepting circumcision. This was something that had never been explicitly mentioned in the gospel, though admittedly implied in Jesus' life and teaching.

"Three hundred years later, St. Athanasius and others introduced ways of describing Christ's nature that were just as new to the biblical tradition as St. Paul's had been. The New Testament had never come to grips with what it meant, exactly, to say that Jesus was God's child. This problem led to much controversy and was eventually answered by saying that Christ was both human and divine, "of one substance with the Father." Because this definition appeared to contradict the biblical teaching that there is only one God, many people objected. Yet in time, though not without opposition

and even violent struggle, the doctrine was accepted and has become part of our universal tradition, enshrined in the creeds. And the church's history is littered with many similar cases.

"One example closer to our own Day, and very relevant to the theme of mission, relates to the change that has taken place in our understanding of the eucharistic liturgy. As late as the last century in the Anglican Communion, the eucharist was celebrated infrequently and, in common with other denominations' communions, was understood principally as an act of private devotion. But the Liturgical Movement, which began about a hundred years ago, recalled Christians to the practice of the early church, where the eucharist represented the corporate offering of the People of God assembled for their weekly worship. Historic works such as Dom Gregory Dix's *The Shape of the Liturgy*, or Father Hastings Smyth's *Discerning the Lord's Body*, also taught people about the intrinsic relation between worship in the liturgy and action for social justice in society."

Taking risks

"These changes did not take place without conflict and opposition. Priests went to prison for putting candles on the altar and wearing vestments. And that opposition to change has not ended in our own day. Congregations still exist where Morning Prayer according to the 1959 *Book of Common Prayer* represents the standard service. But a weekly celebration of the eucharist according to the *Book of Alternative Services* has become much more widespread. Its language is now the English that all of us speak, rather than an imitation of how people talked four hundred years ago. Its call to mission at the end—"Go forth in the name of Christ"—now reminds us that God sends each one of us into the world as
(Continued on page 4)

"Does what is being proposed deepen and widen our understanding of Christ's teaching and example? Is it more loving? That process of discernment may take a while, even generations, to work itself out. But we need to take risks, as Jesus did when he challenged "orthodox" interpretations of his own tradition."

DEALING WITH CHANGE (Continued from page 3)

witnesses for Christ.

"So we need not be surprised if change should continue to crop up (e.g., the ordination of gays and women, female imagery about God). We need only to be assured that the changes do not run contrary to the mainstream. Does what is being proposed deepen and widen our understanding of Christ's teaching and example? Is it more loving? That process of discernment may take a while, even generations, to work itself out. But we need to take risks, as Jesus did when he challenged "orthodox" interpretations of the Law (his own tradition). When he taught (Matthew 5:21), "You have heard that it was said to those of ancient times [i.e., traditionally] . . . But I say to you," he threatened the leaders of his community who saw their duty to be one of a strict guarding of the tradition. And it was this clash that eventually led to Jesus' death. Today, in the case of woman priests, such statements as those contained in Genesis 1:27 or Galatians 3:28 push us to review the tradition and to strive for greater equality in both church and society. That this striving may lead to conflict and disagreement for a while cannot deter us. We live in a world of change."

Cyril Powles received his theological degree from Montreal Diocesan College, his MA from Harvard, and his PhD from the University of British Columbia. Following postings in various parishes, he served as professor of church history at Central Theological College in Japan and at Trinity College in Toronto. He also taught modern Japanese history and graduate religious studies at the University of Toronto.

IN MEMORIAM ★

Wendy Elizabeth Fleming died quite suddenly on Thursday, September 8, 1994, at Toronto General Hospital, in her 56th year. She is survived by her daughter, Karen, and her grandson, Matthew.

Because we do not, as yet, have wheelchair access, Wendy caused us some effort while she attended St. Thomas's. She would arrive in her motorized wheelchair at the parish hall door requiring the assistance of strong backs to get her into the hall for a cup of coffee. She would then have to be taken into the church by whomever was available. She sat in the front pew, and would often require a steadying hand to prevent her from toppling over as she reached for her Prayer Book.

All of us who had the privilege of helping her were blessed by her invariable cheerfulness. While most of us had some trouble understanding what she said we were all impressed by her perseverance in attending services. We miss you, Wendy!

Father Gregory Lee died on September 17, 1994 at the Wellesley Hospital. He was 80 years old. Many parishioners will remember Fr Lee who was an honorary assistant here for some years. He was also the Rector of the Church of the Epiphany, Scarborough, St. Matthias Church, Bellwoods, and St John's Church, Portland Street.

I used to think of him as "Fr Fuzz" because his appearance was, well, untidy. Visiting him in his apartment was a mixed blessing. Tea cups appeared not to be too clean, and cats seemed to be everywhere. At the 10 am Saturday morning eucharist he always wore a pair of colourful, yellow- and blue-striped trousers which clashed

with the vestments required. But he insisted on being helpful in driving "old people" to church.

One Saturday morning, some years ago, Fr. Lee was celebrating the eucharist when he stopped in mid-sentence and stood, speechless, for several minutes. He then proceeded with the ceremony as if nothing had happened. When asked in the vestry why he had paused, he admitted to being totally unaware of this lapse. Eventually it was diagnosed as "petit mal." Proper medication kept him going. He was tireless and invariably cheerful. He served the Sisters of St. John at their convent and at Cana Place, and at any number of other parishes that required his presence.

His funeral at the Church of the Epiphany was evidence of his creativity. Gregory read the Gospel and preached the sermon. He had ordered his funeral service, and videotaped his participation, years in advance. It's a little unnerving to hear a "live" Fr Lee referring to, and pointing to his earthly remains.

James Gregory Lee, 1914-1994, priest, a man whose life bore testimony to the love of God in Christ Jesus. It was a privilege to know you. Rest in peace, and rise in glory!



St. Thomas's Church, Huron Street

"St. Mary Magdalene's now operates a clothing depot called The Thrift Shop, where people short of warm clothing in the winter months can come for what they need."

INTCH is very active in our neighbourhood ★★★

The history of the Spadina - Bloor Inter Church Council has been outlined in *Household of God*. It has recently been suggested that our INTCH representative give a full report on INTCH activities in 1994-1995 and St. Thomas's participation therein.

The Council consists of

Bathurst, United
Bloor St., United
Messiah, Anglican
Redeemer, Anglican
St. Alban's, Anglican
St. Mary Magdalene's,
Anglican

St. Peter's, Roman Catholic
St. Thomas's, Anglican
Society of Friends, Quaker
Trinity-St. Paul's, United
Walmer Rd., Baptist
Korean United

Knox Presbyterian and the Christian Reformed Church have expressed an interest in joining.

The Executive Council meets monthly from September to June in the member churches on a rotational basis.

The Gathering Spot

This is a social recreational facility that seeks to provide a caring supportive community for anyone, but especially for persons who are socially isolated or have experienced mental or emotional distress.

Meetings are held every Tuesday evening at Walmer Rd. Baptist Church and include a hot meal (minimum charge) films, games, entertainment, conversation and occasional

outings. Those attending may volunteer in the preparation and serving of the meal as well as helping in the other activities. St. Thomas's has contributed financially and has provided the present treasurer, Sonia Huie.

Annex Fall Fair

INTCH mounts a display at the Annex Fair held annually in the Huron St. School grounds in September. The purpose is to make sure there is a Christian presence in an otherwise secular activity.

The Advent Carol Walk

About two weeks before Christmas INTCH organizes a walk along Bloor Street, ending at St. Peter's on Bathurst. With our banner leading the way those taking part sing carols and hymns with a small instrumental group accompanying. Brochures are handed out to shoppers and other interested passers-by.

Stop 103

All St. Thomas parishioners know about this project - our local version of the Food Bank Program. We are urged to send food or money to Stop 103 now at 1120 Ossington Ave. for the dozens of local people who lack the money to feed their families.

Tel. 588- 1963

Thrift Shop

At one time Stop 103 handled clothing as well as food. Now there is a more satisfactory method. St. Mary Magdalene's now operates a clothing depot called The Thrift Shop, where people short of warm clothing in the winter months can come for what they need. The Shop is open every Saturday from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. and is staffed entirely by St. Mary Magdalene volunteers. Tel. 531- 7955

Out-of-the-Cold

This program is an effort to assist the homeless and street people who need shelter and food in the cold winter months. At least a dozen churches in the city are involved; St. Peter's was the pioneer in our community. Anyone, male or female, is welcome to come in out of the cold for a hot meal and a bed for the night. Simple but clean mattresses and blankets are laid out on the floor in warm, segregated rooms. Toilet and washing facilities are available. In the morning the visitors are given breakfast.

Trinity-St. Paul's has now followed St. Peter's lead and offers the same comforts to those who need them.

St. Peter's - Thursday

Tel. 534-4219

Trinity-St. Paul's - Tuesday

Tel. 922-8435

Senior Adult Services

INTCH takes an active interest in the elderly of this neighbourhood, whether they live in institutions or in private homes, though it no longer manages the program. The older folk are encouraged to meet two or three times a week (Mondays at St. Thomas's) to share in conversation and companionship, crafts, games and occasional films or lectures.

The White Box Program

This was devised as a means of coping with the persistent pan-handlers that bother both pedestrians and shop-keepers on Bloor St. from St. George to Christie. But it is also to help people in real need of social or personal assistance. When such folk enter a store begging for food, money, clothing or shelter, they are given a printed list of regular agencies in the areas that can assist them. Each store has a white box prominently displayed into which shoppers can drop spare change. The money collected is distributed regularly to selected agencies



"The purpose of the Centre is to create a warm supportive environment in which women (especially young mothers) will have an opportunity to share life experiences and participate in programs that will assist them to make positive decisions in such areas as family life, parenting, housing, health, finances, and education."

each month. INTCH pays for the printed lists. The program, now in its third year, seems to be working; there are fewer pan handlers, and those in real need are getting the help from official agencies. So far over \$4,000 has been contributed. Two members of the INTCH Council are on the White Box Committee.

Common Ground Woman's Centre

This developed as an outreach project from Trinity-St. Paul's Church; it is located at 736 Bathurst Street. The current newsletter contains the following statement: "The purpose of the Centre is to create a warm supportive environment in which women (especially young mothers) will have an opportunity to share life experiences and participate in programs that will assist them to make positive decisions in such areas as family life, parenting, housing, health, finances, and education."

The Centre, which is open Monday to Thursday 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., has a trained nurse available; professional advisors from the Public Health Department along with regular agency workers are on call for discussion and advice.

In 1985 the Centre received three years' funding from the United Church of Canada. Today, however, it is in serious need of financial assistance. Michele Landsberg recently wrote an article in the Toronto Star urging support for the Centre. Tel. 588-1646

The Bridge

Few of us have spent time in prison. If we have, we may know of the immense difficulty is making the transition to normal community life again. The Bridge is an ecumenical arm of the Church which seeks to "bridge" the gap. It consists of ex-prisoners who have made the transition successfully, along with three regular professional advisors who work both in the prisons

and in community support groups. One of the INTCH Council members is sharing in this work, but more volunteers, and financing are urgently needed. Tel. 534-9133

The Annex Housing Group

This volunteer association works closely with the Homes First Society (Carroll Guen-Hart is a member of its Board of Directors) to provide low income housing in the inner city. It has successfully acquired a number of low income properties for homeless people formerly living in shelters. At present it manages three houses in the Annex area, one for ten men of Central American origin, another for ten men from Toronto, and a third for six women. Several members of the INTCH Council are assisting in this project. Tel. 787-0537

The Lighthouse Centre

Located at 1008 Bathurst St. this ministry is sponsored by the Christian Reformed Church. Its purpose is to give help and support to immigrants and other newcomers from Spanish speaking countries and from the Far East. Friendship, advice about language education, housing, local laws, and a dozen other areas confusing to new Torontonians, are available from volunteers and employed staff. Tel. 535-6262

At Home

Originally there was an "exchange" program among the churches. Now every month one of the churches invites members of other congregations to share in the main Sunday worship services. This gives everyone an opportunity to see the interior of another church, to learn about other ways of worship, and to make new acquaintances.

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

One of the days in this special

week is designated for ecumenical worship. Members of all twelve churches are invited to one church for a joint service, with hymns, prayers, intercessions, scripture readings and homilies led by individual clergy or lay people. Afterwards a pot-luck supper is enjoyed by the whole group. Such services have been held in St. Peter's, St. Alban's, St. Thomas's, and Trinity-St. Paul's in the past few years.

Ten Days for World Development

INTCH encourages all its members to play an active role in this education program. Occasionally special speakers or musical performances from developing countries are guests before a gathered audience.

Retreats

Occasionally the INTCH Council organizes a one-day retreat for prayer and discussion of some important theme. The location varies but it is usually some setting appropriate in or near Metro. In 1995 the retreat will take place in January, the date and place to be announced. An outstanding Christian individual will be the conductor.

Readers of these notes may be surprised to learn how much is being done by the INTCH churches in this part of Toronto. This ecumenical organization has now been going for 23 years, the first and oldest of its kind.

You may have noticed that the great amount of work involved is done by volunteers from the various parishes and congregations. If anyone feels that he or she would like to share in this Christian service, please contact any one of the programs or projects by telephone. Better still, why not visit any one that appeals to you to see how it is managed? You will be welcome.

Stewart Bull

★★★

7th Annual Poetry Reading at St. Thomas's

Snick Snick

1 'Look before you bite'
the snake's last words...
he flopped, choking
in the dust.

'Too late, too late'
I hissed
apple on my chin,
reaching for a second skin
to pull around me.

2 Nibbles, nibbles my earlobe.
The *snick snick snick*
of his tongue nips a notch
where beads of blood
an venom glitter.

With a whirr he uncoils,
drops, trails about my ankles.
The sweet bite sings sings
at the base of my skull.

Maureen Harris

this morning I went out

this morning I went out
and walked the imaginary beach
the long stretch just out there
where the field turns blue
and the sky is lighter above it

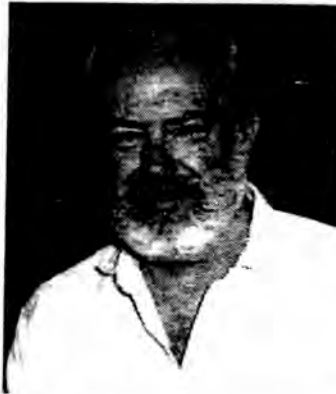
it was a crowded place
of gulls, turnstones, plover,
all their quick skitter and cry
the earnest play
of their survival

then into it, the low surf,
a dream-wave crashing, a long lip
of turning, which meant
something in my own turning,
the eyes seemed no part of it

and to the red ripples of sand
as the wind shapes the Arctic snow
and it is a solid map for Innu
but the rest of us are lost
so the ripples wave at last

when, I think I remember, I walked
the same beach to see the growth
and wreckage of it, it was I think
more exciting to try its measure
its stretch of dream that time

Douglas Lochhead



Over the past several years (since 1988) the St. Thomas's Poetry Readings have given parishioners the opportunity to hear many outstanding Canadian poets—including, among others, Robert Finch, J. M. Cameron, Maggie Helwig, Tim Lilburn, Barry Dempster, John Reibetanz, George Johnston, and (just last year) James Reaney and his wife Colleen Thibaudeau.

The readings take place in the church and last about one hour. They are followed by refreshments in the parish hall and there you also have the chance to meet the poets and the opportunity to purchase their latest publication. This year the book table was supervised by Peter Harris (husband of Maureen) in the absence of Sue Shanks, a

representative of Brick Books, who was ill. Hugh Anson-Cartwright also brought along several books by Douglas Lochhead, some of which he had himself published.

The readings are supported by the work of several volunteers. Again this year I am especially grateful to Harold Jones (who does the set up and the take down); Willem Hart (who does the poster and the program); to Pat Kennedy, Glen Spurrell, Mary Suddon, and Linda Schofield (who regularly organize the refreshments); Bill Martin (who has faithfully taped all the readings since their inception); and to all who help promote the readings (in particular, Hugh Anson-Cartwright and Earl Barnsley).

On Wednesday, October 5 at 8 p.m. we welcomed Douglas Lochhead and Maureen Harris as our readers. Maureen gave us some fascinating glimpses of how poems evolve from her experience and her reading, while Douglas delighted the listeners with his occasional renditions of East Coast voices. Here are the biographical "blurbs" that appeared in our program:

Douglas Lochhead is Fellow Emeritus and Founding Librarian of Massey College, University of Toronto. He is also Professor Emeritus of Canadian Studies at Mount Allison University and was its first writer-in-residence from 1987-1990. He now serves as Chairman of Goose Lane Editions (Fredericton, N.B.). He has published fifteen volumes of poetry, including *The Full Furnace: Collected Poems* (1976), *High Marsh Road* (1980), *Tiger in the Skull: Selected Poems* (1986) and, most recently, *Homage to Henry Alline* (1992).

Maureen Harris was born in British Columbia, grew up in Manitoba, and has lived in Ontario for slightly more than half her life. She is a librarian by profession, but is currently (*Continued on page 8*)

POETRY

(Continued from page 7)

enjoying a leave-of-absence from the University of Toronto Library. She has published poems and essays in various Canadian periodicals, and her first book of poems, *A Possible Landscape*, was published by Brick Books (London, Ontario) in 1993.

For those of you who were unable to attend, on the preceding page are two samples of their work (reprinted with permission).

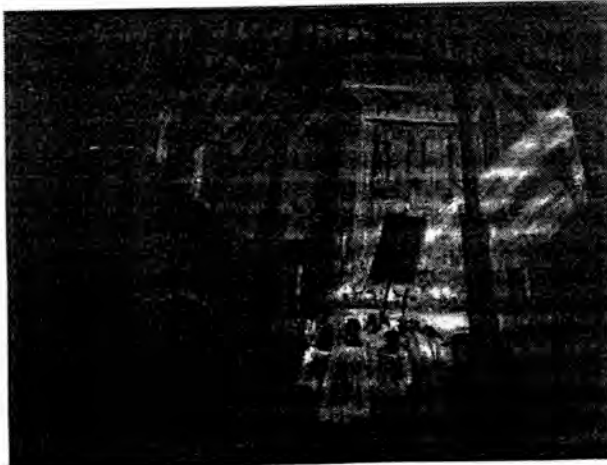
David Kent

Household of God: A Parish History of St. Thomas's Church, Toronto

The latest figures, supplied by Babara Obrai, show that the parish history has sold about 624 copies and that we need to sell only 24 copies more to meet all our expenses.

Please consider giving the book as a Christmas gift to help the parish pay off the remaining debt.

David Kent, general editor



Christmas Cards for St. Thomas's ★★

For many years the idea of producing Christmas cards by and for the parishioners of St.

Thomas's has been discussed, but the availability of attractive colour photos (taken for the centenary history) now make the undertaking especially appealing. A proposal we presented to the church wardens to produce cards has recently been accepted, so we are pleased to describe it here for parishioners.

Four pictures were chosen for reproduction as cards (approx. 3" x 5"):

1. "Procession" (1945) by Jack Bush: the painting used on the cover of the parish history.
2. "The Flame and the Rose": the Max Haas Memorial Window by Rosemary Kilbourn
3. "Adoration of the Magi": the north window above the choir
4. Christmas creche figures

All the cards can be used at Christmas, although two (3 & 4) are specifically on Christmas themes. The other two (1 & 2) can be used throughout the year for short letters and notes. All will be blank on the interior, with identification and credit lines on the back. The printers will be Friesen's (Altona, Man.), who did such



a fine job with the parish history. We have bundled the 4 cards into 3 sets (a dozen) for sale as a package.

We are hoping that the cards will be delivered in time for you to pick up at the time of the planned parish Guild Fair (November 26), but we would encourage interested parishioners to complete the order form below and pass it into the parish office as soon as possible.

David Kent (for Hugh Anson-Cartwright and Pat Kennedy)

CHRISTMAS CARD ORDER FORM

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REVIEW ★★★★★

THE FIDELITY CONFERENCE

The Homosexual Challenge:
a Christian Response

Fidelity is a group of nine Toronto area clergymen, including Bishop Douglas Blackwell, whose position paper, *Human Sexuality: A Traditional Christian Perspective*



Keynote speaker Dr. Elizabeth Moberly is an advocate for gender-affirmative therapy for "motivated" homosexuals who refuses to disclose, or discuss, the numerical success of her therapy.

has questioned the stance of some in the Anglican tradition in regard to homosexuality.

Their moderate paper is a welcome departure from the homophobic angst expressed in other such papers directed against homosexuality. It presents, they assert, "the [Anglican] church's classical wisdom on this subject...." It

concludes that there is no reason "for the church to move its moral counsel and pastoral discipline from the 1979 [Canadian] House of Bishops Statement."¹ Fidelity leaves the door ajar by saying that the above conclusion represents its "current stance," and that they are open to "continued correction, discussion and debate."

That's a good beginning because a sizable group of Anglicans rejects this position, and advocates vigorously for gay legal rights, as well as the morality of, and ethical propriety of, same-sex acts in fidelity, mutual respect and commitment.

On September 24, Fidelity organized a conference on the theme of "The Homosexual Challenge: a Christian Response." The title alone begs

the question: is the homosexual challenge – whatever that is – unchristian *per se*? And is Fidelity *really* open to continued correction, discussion and debate?

The answers, based on the presentations at the September 24 conference, must be a qualified "No!"

Fidelity is concerned that "...in too many cases the scriptures have been misused, tradition has been caricatured and the role of reason and personal experience has been overstated." To address this issue Fidelity invited Dr. Philip Turner, Dean, Berkeley Divinity School at Yale University, to be one of its two keynote speakers. Dr. Turner proved to be a worthy adversary for those who champion gay rights. His informed and thoughtful speech included a critique of what he called "revisionist exegesis"² of the Bible passages (only 5) concerned with homosexual practice. What he did *not* suggest is that for every theologian who disagrees with a progressive reading of Scripture, there are many more who agree that the Bible is not useful in condemning same-sex relationships as we understand them today. Among these is conservative, evangelical scholar John Stott. While Stott eschews homosexuality, he is nonetheless convinced that the standard passages do not apply and he retrenches to Genesis and creation order to shore up his views.

Philip Turner seemed to retreat in the same direction. He advanced a rabbinical exegesis that suggests that passages in Leviticus 18.22, and Deuteronomy 23.17,18 were informed by contemporary

societal moral edicts, rather than being eternal rules from God. Israel was to be a nation set apart rather than following the idolatrous homosexual temple prostitution of its neighbours. Turner was, however, taken aback by a suggestion that "revisionist" exegesis suggests the same thing for New Testament passages about homosexuality. I.e. these passages address practices (pederasty, male prostitution, unnatural relations between heterosexuals) current at the time of writing, rather than eternal moral strictures against the committed relationships of gay and lesbian couples as we know them today.

In the end Turner was guilty of not following Fidelity's stated desire to "follow through with the *entire scholarly discussion up to the current stage*, and not simply plead the authority of one stage of the dialogue as being the scholarly opinion."

Turner, like many conservative theologians, continues to champion the "plain sense" (meaning), and "self-revelatory" nature of Scripture. It's clearly simplistic and not very helpful in coming to grips with what it means to be faithful to God's Word in our contemporary situation. The notion that the Christian is given two honourable and right alternatives in the matter of God's gift of sexuality: continence in singleness and fidelity in marriage is clearly open to debate and correction. As Peter Hannen writes in the October issue of *The Journal*, "Singleness or celibacy imposed by some external factor in life (injury, death, disability or sexual orientation) is no vocation from God." Trothful homosexual relationships are similar in every way to heterosexual ones, save for procreation. The emphasis is on mutual recognition, empowerment, growth, and enjoyment of each other. First we say that the church will only bless heterosexual unions; then we deny homosexuals not only that blessing, but the legal sanctions of marriage as well; and then we say that consummation of their



A candlelight vigil was held in front of Wycliffe College the evening before the conference.

sexual attraction outside the context of marriage is adultery or fornication. That's clearly a Catch-22.

Whether in the long run the

Church will acknowledge that those whose sexual orientation is different from the majority are entitled to love, intimacy, and the exercise of their natural inclinations, remains to be seen, but Christ's ministry was, and is, about diakonia, i.e.

inclusivity, welcoming the stranger, serving the marginalized. If we become too settled and fail to respond to the new word of the Lord from those on the margins, including lesbians and gays, we have failed to examine ourselves. Such examination, based on Scripture and experience, is an uncomfortable process, for the established order and the power vested in religious institutions usually carries far more weight than the cries of pain from the minority. The only thing Jesus recognized was whatever helps us to do good or evil to our neighbour.

There is no question that the Bible presents a negative view of homosexuality. The fact is, however, that there are

legitimate hermeneutical approaches to the Bible that allow us to at least suggest that the specific texts do not apply to our modern situation in much the same way that texts about women, eunuchs, usury, and slavery, do not apply. What is to keep us from accepting the leading of the Spirit in our conversation and in our decisions? The Spirit may well show us, through the testimony of our gay and lesbian brothers and sisters, that they, too, are children of God and are entitled to the intimate expression of their commitment. There is sufficient warrant for a review of exegesis and hermeneutics in regard to homosexual practice without setting preconditions.

Gender affirmative therapy

The Fidelity Conference also invited Dr. Elizabeth Moberly to present a keynote address. She is a psychoanalytical oriented psychologist, who holds to a view, based on her own evaluation, of the psychoanalytic position that holds that in his or her youth the homosexual has suffered from some deficit in the relationship with the parent of the same sex and that there is a corresponding drive to make good this deficit through the medium of same-sex relationships. "What the homosexual seeks is the fulfillment of these normal attachment needs, which have abnormally been left unmet in the process of growth." In her view, the abnormal development of the homosexual is an illness that can be cured.

In a book called *Against Nature?* author Pim Pronk suggests,

"'Abnormal' here means 'sick' but how does she know? She does not present evidence arising from research. Her position arises rather from her Christian view of life. That homosexual intercourse is wrong she does not leave in doubt. ...even if Moberly is right in saying that homosexuality is caused by factors in the relation to the parent of the same sex, we still have to reject her reason

for calling this different (statistically divergent) development wrong (pathological), for that reason is her moral normative starting point. That does not hold water: the homosexual condition is not an illness because the behavior is said to be sinful. What we have here is confusion between a medical and a moral norm."

One cannot really take Dr. Moberly seriously when the American Psychiatric Association totally rejects her "gender-affirmative" therapy. It doesn't work, and Moberly presents no statistical evidence that it does. Asked why she does not present statistics of her success, she pleads the "political incorrectness" of her position which deters publishers from exposing her views. Surely there are enough conservative publishers available to spread the word. One suspects that her method and data are so flawed that no self-respecting scientist will take her seriously.

Workshops

Finally there were workshop sessions at the conference. Philip Turner, who was to speak on *Norms and the nature of love*, instead launched into an angry critique of the General Convention of the Episcopal Church. He accused the American House of Bishops of taking progressively weaker decisions on race, women in office, and any number of other issues including human sexuality. What he was really saying is that none of the recent decisions were in line with his own conservative point of view, and therefore faulty and weak.

Elizabeth Moberly presented a workshop on her "reparative therapy" for gays and lesbians. The one convert presented admitted that seven years after having given up the "gay lifestyle" she was having problems. It is remarkable that, in spite of claims to the contrary, so few people have come forward to testify to their liberation from a supposedly sinful lifestyle. Moberly sug-



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gests that there are thousands of success stories in the files of counsellors. Where are the joyful human beings thus liberated?

Sue Careless, journalist, writer and educational consultant, conducted a workshop on *The politics of sex education in Ontario*. John Russell, information officer for the AIDS Committee of Toronto, characterized her session as "45 minutes of diatribe and 10 minutes of questions." Careless has been a vocal critic of the proliferation of pamphlets relating to safe (including homosexual) sex in Toronto schools. The best refutation of her views may be found on page 5 of the October *Anglican*. In a thoughtful letter, recent high school graduate Shelagh Rowan-Legg of Toronto writes,

We should be grateful that pamphlets like *Safer Sex Generation* exist, to make sure children know the facts.... Their [some Toronto parishioners to Bishop Finlay] statement that this pamphlet would be "repugnant... to the majority of people in this city" because of its safe sex and homosexual messages is a gross exaggeration.... Con to popular belief homosexuals are not out to convert the population. They wish, like all of us, to live their lives in peace, and not to have to defend or feel ashamed for their views or way of life.

Convictions like this from the next generation give hope that there is a future in the Church also for homosexuals. Homophobia has no place in the church of Jesus Christ, who promises "Come to me all you who are suffering under a heavy burden, and I will refresh you."

Willem

NOTES:

1. The 1979 Statement accepts persons of homosexual orientation as equal before God and eligible for ordination while explicitly not accepting homosexual acts, the ordination of persons engaging in same-sex acts, and the blessing of homosexual unions.

2. Readers interested in "revisionist" exegesis are urged to read Robin Scrogg's *The New Testament and Homosexuality*.

SYNOD/94

Following are excerpts from a presentation to Diocesan Synod, 1994, on the restoration of the permanent diaconate



Once upon a time there was a congregation struggling with what it means to be the salt of the earth. They were sadly lacking in leadership and were floundering. As precious time went by they were beginning to feel guilty about their lack of commitment to do the work of mercy and justice called for by Christ.

Then one day, in one of their interminable meetings, Ethelbert rose to inform the group that he had had a vision in the night. "God has called me to lead you!" he proclaimed. The meeting was stunned. This was unexpected. Could it be true? They remained skeptical. At the next meeting Ethelbert rose again and explained that he had experienced yet another vision in the night in which God had called him to be their leader.

At this time some wise and experienced people in the congregation rose and suggested that the next time Ethelbert had a vision, that he take the time to ask God to also inform the rest of them of his leadership capabilities.

Three offices

From its origins the Church has recognized three official offices, Bishop, Priest and Deacon. In our time the office

of deacon has generally dwindled to an office that's occupied for a brief time by men and women on the way to becoming priests. It's called the transitional diaconate.

Here today, priest tomorrow.

Since 1989, The Anglican Church of Canada has recognized the need for the restoration of the office of deacon as a permanent office. Not a waiting office, but a working office. Not a waiting room, but room to work.

Through our baptism we are all asked to seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving our neighbour as ourselves. Deacons are committed to a special ministry of service, especially to the poor, the weak, the sick, and the lonely. This they do together with all of the baptised, not in their place.

Footwashing

It's called footwashing. Not the ceremonial kind we engage in on Maundy Thursday, although that is a good symbolic gesture, but real footwashing. Think of going to downtown Toronto and selecting the dirtiest, saddest streetperson you can find - it's not hard - and inviting that person into your home. When you get him or her there, you offer to take off their well-worn shoes and socks, if they have any, and to wash their feet. Those feet are likely to be very dirty. They are likely to be full of sores. They are likely to stink! But you wash them, and massage them, and put some cream on the sores and put them in clean socks. That's footwashing. That's diaconal service. That's servant ministry. Ask Sr. Teresa, she does it in the slums of Calcutta. Ask Jesus, He did it!

A revitalized diaconate is meant to give leadership to



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John Tuttle
Organ Scholar:
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such servant ministry in a parish setting. For that reason you cannot, as an individual, apply to become a deacon. You have to be part of a team, you have to be a member of a congregation. More importantly you have to be a member of a congregation that is serious about footwashing. And that congregation, together with a diaconal candidate, has to go through a process to discover their commitment to servant ministry. Together.

Only after the completion of such a process will a congregation, not an individual, recommend a candidate to the bishop.

Discernment involves many people and communities, and many stages..

It's a joint, open-ended initiative. Just because a congregation wants to have a deacon doesn't mean they're going to get one. Just because a person wants to be a deacon doesn't mean they'll become one. There's every possibility that the congregation is not ready for diaconal work and that a person may not be perceived by the Church as being called to the diaconate.

We're making progress

The diaconate is not a panacea for the problems facing the church, nor an easy step for individuals to becoming part of the clergy. It involves

sacrificial work on the part of the parish and the individual. Although deacons will be asked to "model" their diaconal service in the liturgy, their main objective will continue to be to show servanthood to the marginalized.

Three parishes in the diocese have declared their eagerness to embark on a process of discernment. All three have proposed a specific candidate who is willing to consider becoming a deacon.

Ready to examine and test the new model are the parishes of Grace Church-on-the-Hill, Toronto, Washago, and St. Wilfrids's Church, Etobicoke. They will be asked if they have a clear mission and commitment to the poor, the weak, the sick, the lonely, and others on the margins of our society. Candidates will be asked to examine if their individual ministry provides a "fit" with their parish's commitment.

Information

In order to help clergy to give leadership on the diaconate, two clergy days have been scheduled on October 18 at St. Mathew's, Islington, and on November 14 at Holy Trinity Church, Ajax.

For more information Contact Maylanne Whittall, Coordinator of the program, at the Diocesan Centre.



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