



THE LAMP



"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." (Psalm 119)

PBSC TORONTO BRANCH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2:30 PM, Saturday May 11, at St. Olave's Church, 360 Windermere Ave.

Refreshments will be served; the annual President's and Treasurer's reports will be presented, and elections of branch officers for the coming year will be held. These will be followed by an address by the Revd. Daniel F. Graves on "Richard Hooker and Common Prayer".

The Rev. Daniel Graves is priest-in-charge of Trinity Anglican Church, Bradford, ON. He is also the new editor of the *Journal of the Canadian Church Historical Society*, a member of the Richard Hooker Society, and a graduate student at Trinity College, Toronto. For many years he was a member of the Bishop's Committee on Healing (Diocese of Toronto) and is the editor of *Prayers for Healing from the Anglican Tradition* (Toronto: Anglican Book Centre, 2010). His most recent publication is *Iure Divino: Four Views on the Authority of the Episcopacy in Richard Hooker*, in the Spring 2012 edition of the journal *Anglican and Episcopal History*.



Revd. Daniel Graves

The event will end with a service of sung Evening Prayer at 4:00 PM.

ST. MICHAEL'S YOUTH CONFERENCE, AUGUST 26-31



Now in its seventeenth year, the St. Michael's Youth Conference offers a week-long programme of worship, discussion and relaxation aimed at stimulating and enriching the spiritual growth of teens, and enhancing their knowledge and understanding of the faith. Activities include swimming, archery, canoeing, on-site games, interactive courses on Christianity and Anglicanism, music instruction, and daily Prayer Book worship. The cost of registration, which includes all meals, activities and outings for the full week, is only \$225! For registration forms or further information, contact Diana Versegby at diana.versegby@sympatico.ca, or visit the conference website at www.stmikesontario.com.

THE MARTYRDOM OF THOMAS CRANMER

(The following is a sermon given by the former Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Rowan Williams, at a service held on March 21, 2006, at the church of St. Mary the Virgin, Oxford, commemorating the 450th anniversary of the martyrdom of Thomas Cranmer, author of the Book of Common Prayer. It was at St. Mary's Church that Cranmer was tried, and from there he was led to his death. It was on another March 21, this year that Justin Welby was enthroned as Dr. Williams' successor.)

From today's epistle: 'The word of God is not bound'.

When it was fashionable to decry Cranmer's liturgical rhetoric as overblown and repetitive, people often held up as typical the echoing sequences of which he and his colleagues were so fond. 'A full, perfect and sufficient sacrifice, oblation and satisfaction'; 'Have mercy upon us, miserable offenders; Spare thou them which confess their faults; Restore thou them that are penitent'; 'succour, help and comfort all that are in danger, necessity and tribulation'; 'direct, sanctify and govern'; and of course, 'earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust'. The liturgical puritan may well ask why it is not possible to say something once and for all, instead of circling back over what has been said, re-treading the ground. And in the same vein, many will remember the arguments of those who complained of the Communion Order in the Book of Common Prayer that it never allowed you to move forward from penitence to confidence and thanksgiving: you were constantly being recalled to your sinful state, even after you had been repeatedly assured of God's abundant mercies.

Whether we have quite outgrown this reaction, I'm not sure. But we have at least begun to see that liturgy is not a matter of writing in straight lines. As the late Helen Gardner of this university long ago remarked, liturgy is epic as well as drama; its movement is not inexorably towards a single, all-determining climax, but also – precisely – a circling back, a recognition of things not yet said or finished with, a story with all kinds of hidden rhythms pulling in diverse directions. And a liturgical language like Cranmer's hovers over meanings like a bird that never quite nests for good and all – or, to sharpen the image, like a bird of prey that never stoops for a kill.

The word of God is not bound. God speaks, and the world is made; God speaks and the world is remade by

the Word Incarnate. And our human speaking struggles to keep up. We need, not human words that will decisively capture what the Word of God has done and is doing, but words that will show us how much time we have to take in fathoming this reality, helping us turn and move and see, from what may be infinitesimally different perspectives, the patterns of light and shadow in a world where the Word's light has been made manifest. It is no accident that the Gospel which most unequivocally identifies Jesus as the Word made flesh is the Gospel most characterised by this same circling, hovering, recapitulatory style, as if nothing in human language could ever be a 'last' word. 'The world itself could not contain the books that should be written' says the Fourth Evangelist, resigning himself to finishing a Gospel that is in fact never finishable in human terms.

Poets often reinvent their language, the 'register' of their voice. Shakespeare's last plays show him at the edge of his imagination, speaking, through Prospero, of the dissolution of all his words, the death of his magic; Yeats painfully recreates his poetic voice, to present it 'naked', as he said; Eliot, in a famous passage of the Quartets, follows a sophisticated, intensely disciplined lyrical passage with the brutal, 'that was a way of putting it'. In their different ways, all remind us that language is inescapably something reflecting on itself, 'talking through' its own achievements and failures, giving itself new agendas with every word. And most of all when we try to talk of God, we are called upon to talk with awareness and with repentance. 'That was a way of putting it'; we have not yet said what there is to say, and we never shall, yet we have to go on, lest we delude ourselves into thinking we have made an end.

So the bird is bound to hover and not settle or strike. Cranmer lived in the middle of controversies where striking for a kill was the aim of most debaters. Now of course we must beware of misunderstanding or modernising. He was not by any stretch of the imagination a man who had no care for the truth, a man who thought that any and every expression of Christian doctrine was equally valid; he could be fierce and lucidly uncompromising when up against an opponent like Bishop Gardiner. Yet even as a controversialist he shows signs of this penitent scrupulosity in language: yes, this is the truth, this is what obedience to the Word demands – but, when we have clarified what we must on no account say, we still have to come with patience and painstaking slowness to crafting what we do say. Our task is not to lay down some overwhelmingly simple

formula but to suggest and guide, to build up the structure that will lead us from this angle and that towards the one luminous reality. 'Full, perfect and sufficient' – each word to the superficial ear capable of being replaced by either of the others, yet each with its own resonance, its own direction into the mystery, and, as we gradually realise, not one of them in fact dispensable.

You can see a poignant concomitant of this in Cranmer's non-liturgical prose. When he wrote to King Henry in unhelpful defence of Anne Boleyn and Thomas Cromwell, the convoluted sentences and sentiments show, not only a constitutionally timid man struggling to be brave (and all the braver for that), but a man uncomfortably capable of believing himself deceived and of seeing the world in double perspective. What both letters in effect say is: I thought I saw the truth about this person; if I was wrong, I was more deceived than I could have thought possible. How in this world can even the King of England know the truth of his servants' hearts? I see both what I always saw and the possibility that it has all been a lie. Is this a world where we can have certainty enough to kill each other?

And in his last days, this was Cranmer's curse. If there was no easy certainty enough to kill for, was there certainty enough to die for? That habit of mind which had always circled and hovered, tested words and set them to work against each other in fruitful tension, sought to embody in words the reality of penitence and self-scrutiny, condemned him, especially in the midst of isolation, confusion, threats and seductions of spirit, to a long agony, whose end came only in this church minutes before his last hurrying, stumbling walk through the rain to the stake. It is extraordinary to think of him drafting two contradictory versions of his final public confession, still not knowing what words should sum up his struggles. But at the last, it is as if he emerges from the cloud of words heaped up in balance and argument and counterpoint, knowing almost nothing except that he cannot bring himself to lie, in the face of death and judgement. What he has to say is that he has 'written many things untrue' and that he cannot face God without admitting this. He cannot find a formula that will conceal his heart from God, and he knows that his heart is, as it has long been, given to the God whom the Reformation had let him see, the God of free grace, never bound by the works or words of men and women. Just because he faces a God who can never be captured in one set of words, a God who is transcendently holy in a way that exacts from human language the most scrupulous scepticism and the most painstaking elaboration possible, he cannot pretend that words alone

will save him. 'If we deny him, he also will deny us'. He must repent and show his repentance with life as well as lips; 'forasmuch as my hand offended in writing contrary to my heart, therefore my hand shall first be punished'.

He is not the only theologian to have found at the last that words failed: Aquinas after his stroke, speaking of how all he had written seemed so much straw; or, disarmingly and mischievously, Karl Barth summing up his Church Dogmatics to an interviewer in the words, 'Jesus loves me, this I know, For the Bible tells me so'. But neither Barth nor Aquinas would have said that there was any other way to this simplicity and near-speechlessness except by discovering in the very experience of struggling to talk about God that limit beyond which no human tongue can go. 'The word of God is not bound'. At the boundaries of speech, we are only at the beginning of the fullness of the Gospel.

So Cranmer draws the terrible and proper conclusion from a lifetime of skill and balance, of 'rightly dividing the word of truth': what appears bit by bit in our words about God as they are prompted and fired by the Word Incarnate is the realisation of the God who is always in excess of what can be said. The rhetorical excess of repetition and rhythm is not just a stately game to decorate or dignify a basically simple act of acknowledgement directed towards God. It is the discipline that brings us to the edge of our resource; just as the insistent reversion to penitence in the Communion Order is not neurotic uncertainty but the sober expression of the truth that we never 'move on' from being saved sinners, and our amazement at God's free forgiveness has to be spoken out again and again. The edge of our resource: that is where faith belongs, and that is where the language of worship has to lead us.

It led Cranmer – as it led so many others in that nightmare age, as it led the martyrs of our own age – Bonhoeffer, Maria Skobtsova, Janani Luwum – to something more than a contemplative silence: to a real death. When we say that the word of God is not bound, we say that death itself can be the living speech of God, as the Word was uttered once and for all in the silence at the end of Good Friday. Cranmer speaks, not only in the controlled passion of those tight balances and repetitions in his Prayer Book, but in that chilling final quarter of an hour. He ran through the downpour to the town ditch and held out his right hand, his writing hand, for a final composition, a final liturgy. And, because the word of God is not bound, it is as if that hand in the flames becomes an icon of the right hand of Majesty stretched out to us for defence and mercy.

ONTARIO REGIONAL CYCLE OF PRAYER, JULY - SEPTEMBER

(Over the coming months, please remember the following parishes in your prayers. You might consider using for this purpose one of Prayer #8 or #9, found on pages 43 and 44 of the Book of Common Prayer, or the prayer "For the Parish" found on page 736.)

JULY	7	<i>Trinity VI</i>	St. John's Church, York Mills (Toronto)
	14	<i>Trinity VII</i>	Trinity Church, Cambridge
	21	<i>Trinity VIII</i>	St. Mary Magdalene's Church, Toronto
	28	<i>Trinity IX</i>	St. James' Church, Guelph
AUG.	4	<i>Trinity X</i>	St. Peter's Church, Erindale (Mississauga)
	11	<i>Trinity XI</i>	St. Simon the Apostle, Toronto
	18	<i>Trinity XII</i>	Christ Church, North Bay
SEPT.	25	<i>Trinity XIII</i>	St. Clement's Church, Toronto
	1	<i>Trinity XIV</i>	St. Peter's Church, Scarborough (Toronto)
	8	<i>Trinity XV</i>	St. John's in the Wilderness, Sarnia
	15	<i>Trinity XVI</i>	St. Matthias' Church, Toronto
	22	<i>Trinity XVII</i>	St. Paul's-on-the-Hill, Pickering
	29	<i>St. Michael & All Angels</i>	St. Joseph's Church, Brampton

The Prayer Book Society of Canada was founded in 1986 by Anglicans who were alarmed at the erosion of classical Anglican doctrine, worship and spirituality that was proceeding alongside the adoption of new liturgies. The Society's aim is briefly to support the continuing use of the Prayer Book for all who value it as their preferred medium of worship, preserving as it does faithfulness to Holy Scripture and adherence to the orthodox Anglican doctrine of the Christian faith. The Mission Statement of the Society, adopted in 1995, is: "To promote the understanding and use of the Book of Common Prayer as a scriptural system of nurture for life in Christ".

The Society operates on two levels: the national level and the branch level. The National Council is responsible for setting policy and direction for the Society, and for overseeing activities with a national scope. All branch presidents are *ex officio* members of the National Council. The branches are individually responsible for organizing local activities and initiatives in their own geographical areas, in support of the aims and objectives of the Society.

The Ontario Council of PBSC Branches is an informal coalition of branches in southern Ontario, formed in 1994. It serves as a forum for the planning of joint activities, and provides a network of support for the branches. It publishes this newsmagazine, "**The Lamp**", which appears quarterly in the months of March, June, September and December. Opinions expressed in these pages are not necessarily those of the Society as a whole. Contributions of articles and news items are welcome, and should be sent to the editor (see opposite).

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