

# Newsletter

DECEMBER 2000

## Profile: Michael Edward, New National Chairman for PBSC

By Desmond Scotchmer

I WAS TRYING to get hold of Michael Edward, new National Chairman of the PBSC, to make arrangements to meet him, in order to get material for this article. I had been told that he was visiting mutual friends at their farm, two and a half hours northeast of Toronto. I phoned, hoping to talk to him.

"Hi, Becky! I hear Michael Edward is up at your farm. Can I talk to him?"

"Oh, not right now, he's out in the fields, cutting hay".

I was horrified. "You put your guests to work in the fields?"

Becky laughed. "He's a country boy. He likes it."

Later, when I met him for supper, he confirmed it: "Oh yes", he said, "Farmwork. It's a wonderful way to relax."

That first encounter says a lot about the man. Farmer, vice principal, chorister, teacher, family man, descendant of Joseph Brant.

The connection with Joseph Brant fascinated me. As a child, I had seen his portrait at Syon House, home of the Dukes of Northumberland, and one of the great houses of England, just outside London, at Kew. Chief of the Mohawks, devout churchman, Canadian hero, Joseph Brant was born on the banks of the Ohio River in 1742. He fought with the British in the Seven Years' War, during which he distinguished himself through his daring



leadership and personal bravery, and his political and diplomatic skills. He remained loyal to the British crown during the American Revolution, and after the war, led the Mohawk people northward to the Grand River Valley in southwestern Ontario, where they founded the Six Nations reserve.

The connection between the Mohawk people and the Anglican Church and the British Crown is an old one. Living in what is now upstate New York, the Mohawks had con-

TOP: The new National Chairman of the PBSC tries out a tractor at the Creese Farm, Holstein, Ontario.

## INSIDE

4  
St. Michael's  
Conferences

6  
Archbishop Nutter  
speaks out on the  
crisis in the  
contemporary  
Church

7  
Spong "Proclaims  
Christ"

### Also Enclosed:

An update from the Essentials coalition, and details of the upcoming National Conference "Lift High the Cross" in Langley, B.C, June, 2001.

Essentials is a coalition of three movements within Anglicanism, including the PBSC, dedicated to recalling our Church to the Faith of Jesus Christ, Lord and Saviour, as revealed in the Holy Scriptures, and articulated in the Creeds.



verted to Christianity and to Anglicanism some 300 years ago: Queen Anne presented them with a silver communion service (now split between the only two Chapels Royal in North America, at the Six Nation Reserve outside Brantford and the parish church at Tyendingaga Mohawk Territory, near Deseronto). Joseph Brant himself was an ardent missionary, translated the Book of Common Prayer and the Gospel of St. Mark into the Mohawk language, and founded the first Anglican church in Upper Canada.

Roots are important to Michael Edward. “My paternal grandfather was a farmer of Scots-English ancestry, who settled in Canada at the turn of the 20th century. He was a lover of books who had a massive library in his Brantford area farmhouse, filled with first editions of Hardy and Kipling, shelves and shelves of all the great English authors. He was also an accomplished gardener who surrounded the old farmhouse with a huge English garden which he planted ‘in his spare time’.

“My father was born there and later took over the farm as a dairy operation. He was also a pilot and when he was courting his Indian princess he used to “buzz” her home on the Six Nations Reserve! My mother was Mohawk, descended from Joseph Brant through both her father and her mother. She was a music teacher and a splendid pianist, who once accompanied the Canadian Choir in a con-

cert at Carnegie Hall. She was an Anglophile and the house that my mother and father built on the edge of Grandpa's garden was filled with books and music. I grew up with Beatrix Potter and Kenneth Graeme.”

“My parents had six children and we grew up comfortable with the ethnic mix—moving between the two

conviction that when you wanted to speak about or to God you did so properly in the language and style of the Prayer Book . . . and I confess I do remember, even at a very young age, attending services in other traditions and thinking they just didn't measure up! So I guess I've been a smug Anglican ever since I was six or seven!



cultures, Mohawk and English. I remember vividly from my childhood the Oshweken Fair, with dignitaries of the Six Nations in full regalia. I had a wonderful childhood, steeped in the agricultural way-of-life of mid-twentieth century Canada . . . and steeped also in the Anglican Church. We were parishioners of St. Jude's Church, Brantford. Father took us every Sunday . . . he didn't believe in the effectiveness of Sunday School so we sat through the whole service under his watchful eye . . . and hand! I grew up with the quiet

“I had a very happy school experience in the Brantford public system—attended Pauline Johnson Collegiate—was heavily involved in drama, and enthralled by Shakespeare. I went to University of Toronto, learned a lot, then to Toronto Teacher's College, and finally back to Brantford to teach, to coach, to become a pilot like my father . . . and eventually to meet my future wife, Catherine Gallant, an associate producer with CBC national radio.”

Michael has remained true to his country roots. “We then moved to Prince Edward

Island, where we bought a farm that turned out to have a fine woodlot—a remnant Acadian forest—and an antique house with a lot of problems!” Michael tree farms, teaches, and is vice principal at the local school. “I love the Island. It reminds me of the rural Ontario I loved and knew as a child, but which was fast changing and disappearing, even then.” He is a parishioner and chorister at St Peter’s Cathedral in Charlottetown, and a former Superintendent of the Church School.

“I can’t tell you how important St Peter’s has been in my own story, and in the story of my family. Of course, as you know, we use the Book of Common Prayer at St Peter’s. It’s a wonderful companion to the Christian religion; it’s a great teacher. I had always been curious about theology, but it was being Superintendent of the Church School that gave me a real reason to begin a journey into theology and Christian doctrine.

“In 1983 I was granted a sabbatical to complete a degree and the same year I took over the Church School at St Peter’s. That was when my own struggle to glimpse “how-it-all-works” began, prompted in part by my university program, in part by the gaping holes in my knowledge of the faith that I was preparing to teach to others. That is when I began the journey toward the realization that God is, simply and in the most true way, Love. Liberal theology, it seems to me, wants that Love, without having to endure the full

I see contemporary theology wanting to remake Christ in the image of the modern world with its pitifully truncated vision of “luv”-without-cost

embrace of it, the profound knowing of it.

“Canon William Hubert Vanstone, in *Love’s Endeavour, Love’s Expense*, talks about the marks of Love, its signs of authenticity. Self-emptying—the kind that sets no interior limits to its own self-giving—is one of these identifying marks of Love, the real thing. The Son of God gives himself to be crucified, naked. Can there be a greater expression of self-emptying? This is what the “world” cannot bear. It wants love desperately but without its price. I see contemporary theology wanting to remake Christ in the image of the modern world with its pitifully truncated vision of “luv”-without-cost. The Prayer Book, bearing so powerfully as it does the very Image of Christ Himself, gets completely in the way of the modern vision.

“One of our tasks, I think, as orthodox Christian believers and as members of the Prayer Book Society is to make clear the distinctions between liberal and orthodox theology. It’s rather like a railroad: the train approaches the switch point, and the switch is thrown; at

first it appears as if nothing has happened. Only later does it become apparent that the train has switched tracks. I think you can make an analogy with what has happened to the Church. One of our tasks within the Church is to locate the switch point, where the train switched tracks.

“This endeavour bids us return . . . and return joyfully and charitably . . . to our roots in that unimpaired faith that our forefathers of but a few generations ago saw with such clarity and with such devotion. It is a return that I see happening already in the life of my family. It is a return that has captured and enthralled all of us together. Who would imagine that theology would be the hot topic of conversation at dinner time, in the woods, in the garden, in the car even the middle of the night! By attempting to teach the unimpaired faith to the young people of our parish, and discovering how much I didn’t know, I became fascinated with the problems we face today in recollecting and re-teaching teaching ourselves and each other, in order to articulate the basics of our faith. And I have to wonder how we could have had the Book of Common Prayer so long in our midst, and yet manage to be so inept in the field of traditional Anglican apologetics? It is a question that haunts me and it is one of the real reasons, perhaps, why I have taken up the job of chairing this Society.”

OPPOSITE: Michael Edward (left, second row) with friends. Class party, Belfast Consolidated Elementary School, Belfast, Prince Edward Island.

## St. Michael's Youth Conferences Summer 2000

St. Michael's Youth Conferences offer fun, learning, and traditional Anglican worship from the Book of Common Prayer for young people aged 13 to 19.

Four St. Michael's Youth Conferences were held this summer—in Newfoundland, New Brunswick, Ontario, and Saskatchewan.

Teaching centres on the Scriptures, on the challenges to Faith presented by the modern world, and on an orthodox understanding of the Christian religion.

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**TOP:** The St. Michael's Conference in Saskatchewan. Clockwise from the top: The Rev. Craig O'Brien, Meghan Weiderspick, Amy Wilkinson, Christopher Steer, Kevin Fabish, Karen Rascher, Jackson Daley, Andrew Piwtorak, Kristine Fabish, Pamella Stewart, The Rev. Lars Nowen, The Rev. James Siemens, The Ven. David Phillips, Walter Hannam, The Rev. George Daley, Sharon Washburn, The Rev. Peter Molloy, Tucker, Fr. Daley's dog & conference mascot. **Not Pictured:** Stacie Daley, conference registrar and programme coordinator.





OPPOSITE PAGE, BOTTOM:  
Class-time for Ontario Michaelites.

THIS PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM  
TOP RIGHT: Evening Eucharist at  
St. Michael's Youth Conference,  
Durham, Ontario. Some of the staff  
at the St. Michael's Conference in  
Wildwood, New Brunswick, August  
2000. Group Photo of St. Michael's

Conference, Wildwood, New  
Brunswick, August 2000.  
Group Photo of St. Michael's  
Ontario Youth Conference,  
Durham, Ontario. A class at  
the Maritime St. Michael's  
Conference. The dining hall at

the St. Michael's Conference in  
Wildwood, New Brunswick.  
Ontario Michaelites at Inglis Falls  
(left to right: Julie Purdy, Kim  
Parkhill, Caitlin Hase, Amy Hase,  
Veronica Martisius and  
Danielle Haslip).

# A Message from the Rt. Rev'd Harold Nutter

Bishop Emeritus of Fredericton, Retired Archbishop of Canada, and Episcopal Visitor to the Prayer Book Society of Canada

My dear friends of the Prayer Book Society,

The immediate past history of our Church in Canada is a story of attempts to relate to a changing culture and society. While commendable in many ways, it is also obvious that we have allowed secularized society to set the agenda and programme which we have tried to follow. There is no doubt that the effect this has had on many of our people has been to create a questioning about the faith to which they have adhered, and a tension in their relationship to the Church at many levels. This is not all bad; God has often allowed His people to be challenged and shaken out of a lethargy so that they can ultimately become more effective instruments of His Mission.

The present situation in which the Church finds itself can only be described as one of crisis, in organization, influence, and above all, in faith. Some persons point to God's choice of a few faithful as His instrument, a remnant. No group can presume to claim to be such an instrument; it is only for God to determine that, and such a role may be recog-

nized only in the perspective of history.

However, whenever there has been a crisis, especially when it is the result of human failure to discern the will of God, the door of opportunity has been open for faithful witness. That is the essential call to all of God's people today—faithfulness to the revealed truth as known in Jesus Christ. It is not for us to judge or condemn others who are trying desperately to cope with the challenges of our day. Our task is first, and foremost, to be faithful to the truth revealed to the apostles and passed on through the generations in the tradition of the Church to us. It is not ours to change or adapt that revelation, only to test our understanding of this teaching of Him who is the way, the truth, and the life.

This is the task to which all in God's Church are called, and we pray that all, ourselves and others, may faithfully fulfil the Mission to which He has called us.

Yours in His name,

Harold L. Nutter  
Bishop Emeritus  
of Fredericton

In the next issue of the Prayer Book Society Newsletter

The Rev'd Dr J.I. Packer , on the role of Scripture in Anglicanism, contrasting its place in the Book of Common Prayer and the BAS.

Also

Why Spong is Wrong, and Why It matters.

## MARGARET WEBB

Long time PBSC members will be deeply saddened to learn of the death of Margaret Webb, wife of Jack Webb, former Treasurer of the PBSC.

Margaret was a staunch supporter of the Society. For many years, PBSC National mailings were done by hand at the Webb's home, under Margaret's direction. Even then, our mailing list ran into the thousands. I well remember Margaret's courage, determination, and unflagging good spirits. We are all lessened by her loss. Deepest condolences to Jack and his family.

—Desmond Scotchmer



# Spong "Proclaims Christ" at Trinity College Divinity Conference, June 2000

By Carol Schiavetto

**B**ishop Spong can certainly talk a good game. The Faculty of Divinity at Trinity College has invited him to be the keynote speaker at the 17th Annual Divinity Associates Conference, one suspects because of his "controversial" views. The Ignatieff Theatre is packed to the doors and we sit on extra seating on the stage.

The talks are billed as "Proclaiming Christ". Not everyone agrees with his views—but he is an experienced, astute speaker—comfortable with his audience and his material and ready to be the "evangelist" of his reformulations of theology. He gives three talks, on consecutive evenings; the first on his life in the Church, dealing especially with the ground on which he departed from tradition, the second on Scripture, the third on the future of the Church (as he sees it). We know what to expect, having seen him in action at his book launching at the Anglican Book Centre in Toronto in April, where he was mobbed by adoring clergy and other fans—his autobiography *Here I Stand* was a runaway best seller in the Diocese of Toronto.

Here the audience is attentive, expectant.

Spong's first address recaps his book-launching talk—his early ministry in what he experienced as a racist, sexist and excluding church—a church from which he still sees himself as being "in exile"—like others: homosexuals denied full membership, women denied the priesthood and so on. He talks about the heady early days of Civil Rights activism—which many found to be a time which promoted their faith, but for Spong a time fraught with disappointments, limitations, and tests of faith. Simultaneously, major intractable mental illness visited his wife, and he managed to care for her and his family while retreating to Biblical scholarship, at that time entering upon the post-modern project, an experiment which brought little more than a retreat from tradition, and a compromise of Credal faith.

He continues the details of this journey in his second address. "I love this book," he begins, holding up the Bible. Sadly, he fails to see himself in the tide of history—moving further and further from any kind of faith, more and more

mired in strange Biblical exegesis, increasingly concerned with form and structure and less and less with meaning. He gives us a clever analysis of the structure of the Gospel as set up to enhance Jewish festivals in the First Century A.D. when new Christians were a Jewish sect. Here we have a Jesus who represents a type of Old Testament prophet—a Moses, a Joseph, an Elijah—but – alas! stripped of anything miraculous, and without the saving work of the Cross: no Resurrection, no Ascension.

The third address concerns the future of the Church. While now "retired" he is still very active—these three Lectures given at Trinity College will be published as a book in the near future. He is concerned that the Church will be split between Evangelicals (whom he labels fundamentalists) and "liberals"—he says in *Here I Stand* that he saw the spectre of the death of the Church at Lambeth in 1998.

His "vision" of its future—refocused and reformulated for Christians in exile is too bleak to detail here. How much interest it may be to believing Christians is another question, as Spong has now gone past belief in a "theistic" or transcendental God. For Spong, God is within people. Only.

What kind of Church can this leave us with? What we have here is a loss of faith—now paraded as a new theology. But it remains just that: a loss of faith.

Carol Schiavetto is a theology student at Toronto School of Theology and parishioner at St Bartholomew's Church, Toronto.



# The Prayer Book Society of Canada

## NATIONAL OFFICERS & BRANCH CONTACTS

### OFFICERS

#### National Chairman

Mr. Michael Edward,  
R.R.#1, Belfast P.O.,  
Prince Edward Island,  
C0A 1A0

#### Episcopal Visitor

The Rt Rev'd  
Harold Nutter,  
Retired Archbishop  
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#### Honorary Chairman/ President

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of Classics,  
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#### Vice Chairmen

The Rev'd David Curry,  
Anglican Rectory,  
531 King St,  
P. O. Box 2661,  
Windsor, Nova Scotia  
B0N 2T0

The Rev'd John Dinn,  
P. O. Box 100,  
Portugal Cove,  
Newfoundland A0A 3K0

The Rev'd Dr.  
James I Packer,  
Regent College,  
5800 University Blvd,  
Vancouver,  
British Columbia  
V6T 2E4

#### Correspondence Secretary

The Rev'd  
Stephen Sharman,  
374 River Road,  
St. Andrews, Manitoba  
R1A 2Y1

### Treasurer

Mrs Irene Bakos,  
3908 16a St. SW,  
Calgary, Alberta  
T2T 4K8

### BRANCH CONTACTS

#### St John's

Mr. Michael Donan  
(709) 753-5193

#### Conception Bay North

Mrs. Marilyn Murrin  
(709) 786-6270

#### Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island

Mr. Peter Westin  
(902) 875-2423

#### Annapolis Valley

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Prof. Wilfrid Alliston  
(506) 450-9584

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Mr. William Holder  
(506) 648-0682

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Dr. James Loudon  
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### Vancouver Island

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Critique of proposed  
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### PRAYER BOOK SOCIETY OF CANADA NEWSLETTER

#### Editor

Mr. Desmond Scotchmer,  
40 Park Road, Apt. 703,  
Toronto, Ontario  
M4W 2N4

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