

The Prayer Book Society of Canada

# Newsletter

Christmas, 2006

## General Synod Asked to Consider Revision of the Book of Common Prayer

By Sharon Dewey Hetke

C. S. Lewis once said, with reference to public liturgy, "I know there must be change. But is this the right moment? Two signs of the right moment occur to me. One would be a unity among us which enabled the church - not some momentarily triumphant party - to speak through the new work with a united voice. The other would be the manifest presence, somewhere in the church, of the specifically literary talent needed for composing a good prayer ... as a stylist, [Cranmer] can play all the moderns, and many of his predecessors, off the field. I don't see either sign at the moment." (From *Letters to Malcolm: Chiefly On Prayer*).

Is this the "right moment"? It will have been only three years since a process of prayer book revision was most recently proposed and rejected, but General Synod 2007 will consider the following motion put forward by the Faith, Worship and Ministry Committee:

"That this General Synod directs the Faith, Worship and Ministry Committee to prepare principles and an agenda for revision of common worship texts."



The Rev. David A. Harris, Chairman of the Prayer Book Society of Canada, expressed his grave concern over this proposal saying, "First, the Book of Common Prayer is currently the official theological grounding of our life as Anglicans in Canada - to attempt its revision in a time of such theological uncertainty and confusion is irresponsible and dangerous.

"Second, we are concerned for the (literally) tens of thousands of Anglicans across Canada who still love and use the Book of Common Prayer." Harris pointed to the "many parishes in Canada who live the life of the Book of Common Prayer as a coherent and consistent spiritual system (daily, not just weekly)" and warned that "... to attempt a revision at this time could possibly alienate them entirely from the life of the Anglican Church of Canada."

At the 2004 meeting of General Synod, when the prayer book revision motion was brought forward, the Rev. Dr. Stephen Andrews, Principal of Thorneloe University in Sudbury, Ontario, and who was then chair of the Faith, Worship and Ministry Committee, spoke against the motion and it was defeated. According to Andrews, "the liturgical consultations ... had come to the conclusion that it was premature to try to [set down] the liturgy in any kind of fixed form ... [They] indicated to us that liturgy was in a great state of flux across the church." As for this new proposal, Andrews wonders why it is being raised at this time and asks "whether or not the church is ready to do that."

Dr. Walter Deller, Principal of the College of Emmanuel and St. Chad in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, and a member of the Faith, Worship and Ministry Committee, explains the committee's motivations by describing the many and

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## General Synod Asked to Consider Revision of the Book of Common Prayer

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diverse responsibilities the Committee has to manage – including updating the BAS collects to correspond to the Revised Common Lectionary, meeting the demand for online worship texts, dealing with requests for more inclusive language in the psalter, etc. Deller said, “It has become clear to the Committee, as it has struggled to coordinate all these diverse pieces with more and more stretched resources, that the time has come to step back and look more seriously at the need for a comprehensive approach to all our common worship texts.”

Dr. Diana Versegghy, president of the PBSC Toronto Branch, warned, “Attempting such revision at this time is a sure recipe for chaos, and would send a powerfully destructive signal of instability to members of our church, many of whom are already suffering a crisis of confidence in the Anglican Church of Canada.

“In these times when more and more parishes are struggling

financially, and the national church facing ever greater deficits, surely it is the height of frivolity for us to consider undertaking a project so expensive and so fraught with potential theological pitfalls.”

As for what a revisionary project might entail, Dr. Deller acknowledges that, reflective of the diversity of the committee and indeed of Canadian Anglicans, there are likely “diverse hopes” for such a project and adds that for his part, he does favour a “common unified Prayer Book”.

The possibility that revision might mean a combined BAS and BCP is a concern for many. Regarding this possibility, Dr. Andrews said, “Let’s not kid ourselves. If the idea is that you want to combine the BAS and the BCP ... the BCP’s not going to go in as it is. Things are going to get expunged all over the place.” As an example, he points out that it’s “highly likely” that the existing BCP propers would be changed in order to fit the use of the Revised Common Lectionary.

In light of the imminent challenge revision poses to the Prayer Book, the Rev. David Harris said, “If this motion is defeated at

General Synod, it will be in the House of Bishops. It’s the bishops who have to go back to their dioceses and face frustrated clergy and laity who simply don’t want to lose the integrity of the Book of Common Prayer, and don’t want to have to face another agonizing round of liturgical upheaval.”

Harris urged PBSC members to take action: “... the most effective thing people can do to oppose this motion is to contact their bishop (in person, by telephone or email), and let him/her know what a great mistake it would be to attempt a revision of the BCP at the present time.”

As for the Lewis criteria for revision, no one knows whether another poet like Cranmer will come along, but we can certainly pray for “unity among us” and that in these days of theological and ecclesial instability, the Prayer Book may continue as the “standard of faith and worship for the Anglican Church of Canada” (PBSC website).

*Sharon Dewey Hetke is a freelance writer and proofreader. She lives with her husband and three young children in Nipawin, Saskatchewan.*

## First Cranmer Conference Held in Dunnville, Ontario

*By S. Blacker*

The weekend of June 9-11 saw Dunnville, Ontario swell as people flocked to the town’s 32nd annual ‘Mudcat’ festival. However, this event was not the attraction that drew a group of young ‘Cranmerites’ to the first annual Cranmer Conference. Two dozen 19-29-year-olds came from across Ontario, and one even from Newfoundland to embark upon a weekend journey exploring ‘The

*Eros of Liturgy*’ in the Book of Common Prayer.

The conference participants were warmly welcomed by the rector of the host church St. Paul’s, Fr. Haynes Hubbard, and his family, as well as by several friendly members of the congregation. The tone for the weekend was set at the first sung Compline, which allowed participants to imagine themselves as sixteenth-century contemporaries of Cranmer as the chapel was

illuminated by candlelight. The next day, conference participants were transported back to Cranmer’s time musically at St. John the Evangelist church in South Cayuga, where they were led in the singing of Merbecke’s 1550 Evensong by Dr. William Renwick, Music Director at St. John the Evangelist Church, Hamilton, and professor of music at McMaster University.

The participants heard insightful sermons by Dr. Ranall Ingalls,

rector of the parish of Stanley, New Brunswick and professor of Philosophy at St. Thomas University. Images of love and desire in popular culture were critiqued by the Saturday evening banquet speaker, Dr. George Sumner, principal of Wycliffe College. Other highlights of the weekend included a salsa dance, gourmet meals cooked by chef Nancy Campbell accompanied by rich conversation, and a visit to Rock Point Provincial Park on Lake Erie. There conversations continued as participants began to absorb the content of the lectures and sermons. The irrepressible Walter Raybould, the conference organizer and Chair of the Greater Niagara Branch of the Prayer Book Society, kept all in good spirits.

The feature speaker for the conference, the Revd. Canon Dr. Gary Thorne, Chaplain at the University of King's College, Halifax, delivered beautiful lectures on desire and love in the Prayer Book tradition, the content of which was completely novel to many conference participants. Thorne captured the attention of his audience by exclaiming: "The BCP is boring! I've heard it recited countless times in countless boring ways by countless boring priests!" This introduced his main argument, that it is urgently necessary to reintroduce the language of desire, or *eros*, and passion to the church in order to retain young members and to attract newcomers to the church, and to ensure the survival of the Prayer Book tradition.

Dr. Thorne reminded the participants, who were mainly students, that Cranmer's writing of the BCP was not an academic



endeavour, but was instead shaped and inspired by the monastic tradition in which a passionate and ultimately insatiable desire for God is central. Thorne asserted that the Holy Communion Service in the BCP is indeed *erotic liturgy* that has been passed down to us by the Church Fathers, and that this is our only link to a time in which the focus was not on understanding Scripture, but on our desire and yearning for God, which is the source of humility. Describing a human experience marked by restlessness and insatiable desire, Thorne revealed to conference participants the manner in which the spiral structure of the Holy Communion service in the BCP reflects the workings of human desire through its liturgy (as opposed to the linear, rational, post-Enlightenment structure of the BAS). Thorne explained the functioning of the liturgy of the BCP as that which excites and increases our desire for God, rather than satiating it, which allows us to develop an ever-deepening relationship with God over time.

Dr. Thorne referenced several sources both ancient (Dionysius the Areopagite, Gregory of Nyssa, and

St. Ignatius) and contemporary (Bob Dylan and the Smashing Pumpkins) all of which speak of our longing for the divine. Thorne's seamless transitions between discussions of thinkers and artists from the sixth, sixteenth, and twenty-first centuries established a theme for the conference - an abbreviation of temporal distance between the ancient and the contemporary that allowed participants to feel a sense of belonging in the BCP tradition, which can sometimes seem impossibly remote for young people. The inaugural Cranmer Conference was indeed successful in reducing a seemingly insurmountable distance between Cranmer's world and the diverse, multicultural, postmodern world that has shaped the young participants. In this collapsing of time, a new tradition was also created, and it is hoped that an even larger number of young Cranmerites will congregate once again next June to take up residence in this space within time.



# Easter in Advent and Christmas in Lent

*By the Revd Gordon Maitland*

The Church's calendar - the yearly cycle of feasts, festivals and fasts - has a long and complicated history. The calendar used by Christians actually has its origin in the Jewish calendar regulated by Mosaic Law. In that calendar were prescribed the festivals of Passover, Pentecost, Tabernacles, etc. Christians developed an ecclesiastical calendar in which the arrangement of saints' days and other feasts of our Lord have a subtle relationship with one another. These interdependent relationships only become apparent over a long period of time spent actually living and ordering one's life around the ecclesiastical calendar. One of these subtle relationships is demonstrated in the fact that the Feast of St. Thomas the Apostle falls in Advent and the Feast of the Annunciation usually falls in Lent.

The feast of St. Thomas always occurs in Advent because his day in the traditional Church calendar is the 21st of December, just before Christmas. On the feast of St. Thomas the Gospel is from twentieth chapter of John and is, of course, the appearance of the risen Christ to doubting Thomas. The collect for this day also makes reference to the resurrection:

ALMIGHTY and everliving God, who for the more confirmation of the faith didst suffer thy holy Apostle Thomas to be doubtful in thy Son's resurrection: Grant us so perfectly, and without all doubt, to believe in thy Son Jesus Christ, that our faith in thy sight may never be reproved. Hear us, O Lord, through the same Jesus Christ, to whom, with thee and the Holy Spirit, be all honour and glory, now and for evermore. *Amen.*

Thus, one could say that we have a

bit of Easter in the midst of Advent when we observe St. Thomas' Day.

The Feast of the Annunciation falls on the 25th of March. It usually falls in Lent, but if Easter is early the Annunciation might occur in Holy Week or even Easter Week, in which case it is transferred to the week after Low Sunday. The Gospel for the Annunciation is from the first chapter of Luke's gospel and is about the appearance of the angel Gabriel to the Virgin Mary to tell her that she will conceive in her womb and give birth to the Saviour of the World (March 25th to December 25th is exactly 9 months). The Annunciation is generally regarded as a Christmas theme and this gospel scene is almost always a part of Sunday School Christmas pageants. The collect for this day is

significant insofar as it refers to the incarnation in relation to Christ's death and resurrection:

WE beseech thee, O Lord, pour thy grace into our hearts; that, as we have known the incarnation of thy Son Jesus Christ by the message of an angel, so by his cross and passion we may be brought unto the glory of his resurrection; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Therefore, we can say that a hint of Christmas in the midst of Lent is provided when we observe the Feast of the Annunciation.

The doctrines of the Incarnation (that the Son of God took human nature upon himself in the womb of the Virgin Mary) and the Atonement (that the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ on the cross reconciles us to God the Father) can



## Easter in Advent and Christmas in Lent

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never be separated from one another. If the Son of God became incarnate but did not offer himself for the sins of the world, nothing would have been done to save us. If the person who was crucified was not the Son of God, then his death was not a saving event but the unfortunate end of a well meaning prophet. We can now begin to appreciate the subtle but significant role the Feast of St. Thomas and the Feast of the Annunciation play in the overall scheme of the Church

Year. Just before Christmas we are reminded of the atonement, the death and resurrection of Christ, on St. Thomas' Day (please note that the death of Jesus is implied in the Gospel from John on this day because Jesus shows Thomas the *wounds* in his hands and side). Likewise, as Holy Week and Easter approach, we are reminded of the incarnation with the Feast of the Annunciation in Lent. Incarnation and atonement are never far apart.

It should therefore be apparent why removing St. Thomas' Day from Advent and moving it (as the BAS and the modern Roman Catholic

lectionary do) to July 3, in the middle of "Ordinary Time" or Trinitytide, is not a neutral change but rather completely destroys the balance the old calendar had in regards to incarnation and atonement. Thus, while the BAS retains the Annunciation on March 25, in Advent there is no longer a hint of the death and resurrection of Christ which was provided by St. Thomas' Feast. It is much to be regretted that for many Canadian Anglicans there is no longer Easter in Advent.

*The Revd. Gordon Maitland is a priest in the Diocese of Huron.*

# Editorial: Update of the Situation in the Anglican Communion

The General Convention of the Episcopal Church (the Anglican Church in the USA) met in June to debate their response to the Windsor Report, which had called (among other things) for a moratorium on the blessing of same-sex unions, and the withdrawal from "representative functions" in the Anglican Communion of bishops who had authorized same-sex blessings.

The Convention sent out conflicting signals (repeatedly expressing its support for the revisionist agenda, in defiance of the Windsor Report and the Instruments of Unity; it also claimed a desire to remain within the Communion, but on its own terms). Rejecting the requests articulated in the Windsor Report, it elected the Rt. Revd. Katherine Jefferts Schori as the next Presiding Bishop. Ms. Schori, a former oceanographer, was ordained priest in the Episcopal Church in 1994, and elected Bishop of Nevada (a small diocese with 6,000 members and 35 congregations) in 2001. She is a vocal supporter of same-sex blessings, and has authorized the

blessings of same-sex unions in the Diocese of Nevada, and voted to approve the election of Gene Robinson as bishop of New Hampshire, contrary to the concerns of the world-wide Primates of the Anglican Communion. The Revd. Canon David C. Anderson, President of the American Anglican Council, commented at a press briefing after her election that, of all the candidates for Presiding Bishop, Ms. Schori was "the farthest outside-the-box thinker of the lot" (at the 2003 General Convention, Ms. Schori voted against the Resolution B001 affirming the authority of Holy Scripture).

As a result of the Convention, seven U.S. dioceses have disassociated themselves from the Episcopal Church, and several have requested alternative primatial oversight (that is, oversight from a Primate other than Ms. Jefferts Schori). The wider Anglican Communion has generally seen the General Convention as a decision to "walk apart" from the global Anglican Church.

As part of the fall-out of General Convention, Rowan Williams, Archbishop of Canterbury, suggested the only way forward for the Anglican Communion is a sort of "two tier" church: he writes in a pastoral letter written in response to the American actions:

"The tacit conventions between us [the constituent parts of the Anglican Communion] need spelling out - not for the sake of some central mechanism of control but so we have ways of being sure we're still talking the same language, aware of belonging to the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church of Christ ... Those Churches that were prepared to take this on as an expression of their responsibility to each other would limit their local freedom for the sake of a wider witness, and some might not be willing to do this. We could arrive at a situation where there were 'constituent' Churches in covenant in the Anglican Communion, and other 'churches in association' ... The relationship would not be unlike that between the Church of England

## Editorial: Update of the Situation in the Anglican Communion

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and the Methodist Church, for example ... There is no way in which the Anglican Communion can remain unchanged by what is happening at the moment.”

In another pastoral letter, Archbishop Williams confirmed that “It is clear that the Communion as a whole remains committed to the teaching on human sexuality expressed in Resolution 1.10 of the 1998 Lambeth Conference, and also that the recommendations of the Windsor Report have been widely accepted as a basis for any progress towards resolving the tensions that trouble us. As a Communion, we need to move forward on the basis of this two-fold recognition.”

Later, in an interview with a Dutch evangelical daily newspaper *Nederlands Dagblad*, Dr Williams indicated that “by no means is everything negotiable”. “Boundaries

are determined by what it means to be loyal to Jesus Christ”.

A meeting of American bishops held in New York City in September to try and resolve the deepening split within the Episcopal Church ended without any resolution.

The question for Canadian Anglicans is now: where does that leave the Anglican Church of Canada? Crucial, of course, will be the action of our bishops.

Andrew Hutchison, Canadian Primate, was recently reported by the *Anglican Journal* as denouncing the notion of a “two tier” church as “anathema” and “devilish”, an odd choice of language to many ears. Archbishop Hutchison, in an address at Southwark Cathedral in London, England, in June 2006, attempted to downplay the seriousness of the situation in Canada, going to lengths to show how the situation here is very different from that in the USA. Our readers may be interested to know that he defended the actions of the Bishop of New Westminster stating that “due process” had been

followed throughout the introduction of same-sex blessings there. But it is hard to see how “due process” has been followed in New Westminster, as no diocese has the authority to change Church doctrine, and the actions undertaken by the diocese contradict the Guidelines of the Canadian House of Bishops.

So, all will turn on next year's General Synod, and all eyes will be on the Canadian bishops. Let us pray that they will remember the solemn oaths sworn at their ordinations, before God and the congregation, to uphold the Faith “as this church has received it”. The Windsor Report is very explicit as to what constitutes the Faith “as this church has received it”: it is the classic norms of Anglicanism, catholic and reformed, which the PBSC has sought to uphold since its inception. Let's hope and pray, and watch.

*Desmond Scotchmer,*  
Newsletter Editor

## PARISH ALIVE! Releases “Christian Friendship” Video

Using filmed material from the 25th Atlantic Theological Conference, the newest PA! (Parish Alive!) DVD features the topical theme of “Christian Friendship”. Papers by Dr Edith Humphrey (*Love and Friendship in Biblical Theology*), the Revd. Dr Robert Crouse (*Love and Friendship in The Middle Ages*) and the Revd. Dr. Gary Thorne (*The Contemporary Response to the Notion*

*of Christian Friendship*), make up a six-part video that runs some 2 3/4 hours, ideal for weekly study groups or for private use. Order “Christian Friendship” at a cost of \$30, shipping paid, from: St Peter Publications, Box 713, Charlottetown, PE, C1A 7L3, or by e-mail at [stptepub@isn.net](mailto:stptepub@isn.net), or phone (902) 368-8442.

## Correction: Confusion Galore!

The article “Confusion Galore! Don't always believe everything you read!” by Joan Doig, which appeared in the Trinitytide edition of the PBSC Newsletter, was wrongly attributed to the Regina PBSC Newsletter. In fact, it appeared in the Saskatoon Branch Newsletter, of which Joan is Branch President. Our apologies to Joan, and to the Saskatoon Branch!

*Acknowledgements:* The painting on page 1 is “The Three Kings” by Leopold Kupelwieser (1796-1862), Österreichische Galerie, Belvedere, Vienna. The article on the Cranmer Conference, pp. 2-3, first appeared in the September 2006 edition of *The Anglican Planet*, and is reprinted with permission. The illustration on page 4 is the “Madonna of the Ververi”, National Gallery, Prague.



## ESSENTIALS “GINGER GROUP” PRODUCES SOME “SERIOUS” THINKING

By Pat Bryan

A “ginger group” - most famously, that collection of young Liberal MPs who, in 1916, made possible the appointment of the energetic Lloyd George as British Prime Minister - is, by its very nature, bound and determined to prod an institution into action.

So “The Ginger Group” is the name informally given to the producers of the “Anglican Agenda” series of booklets. This collection of 20-page booklets is designed to place before Anglicans in Canada many of the points of discussion in our church today, leading up to the General Synod in 2007, and to provide us with an informed basis for prayerful thought on each.

The first three of these booklets, under the general editorship of the Revd. Dr. J.I. Packer, are now available. Jim Packer is well-known to members of the Prayer Book Society of Canada for his long service as a vice-chairman of the Society, and for his measured, thoughtful contributions to our discussions at National Council. He is one of the leading Anglican thinkers of our time.

Dr. Packer himself, Professor of Theology at Regent College in Vancouver, is the author of the first booklet *“Taking Faith Seriously”*. In it, he asks and answers such questions as “What Is Faith?”, “What Is the Bible?”, “Who’s There? Faith and the Triune God”, and finally, “What Went Wrong? Faith and the Meltdown of Biblical Truth.” Make no mistake. This is no abstruse theological treatise, but a concise, pithy, simple yet incredibly well-informed explanation of the dilemma facing Anglicans in Canada today. But then, I would have expected no less of Jim Packer.

The second in the series, *“Taking Love Seriously”*, is co-authored by the Revd. Dawn McDonald, who is Rector of the Parish of St Mary Magdalene in Fort Nelson, B.C., and the Revd. James Wagner, Minister of the Church of the Holy Cross (ANiC), Abbotsford, B.C. Dawn is also founder/chairperson of the Zacchaeus Fellowship, an organisation of men and women who hold to the church’s historic view on sexuality in the face of former or present struggles with same-sex attraction.

Given these backgrounds, it might be expected that this booklet deals with the current crisis over same-sex blessings. But it is much more than that. The authors start by asking us to make the clear distinction between love as a human hunger, an aspect of our natural make-up, and love as a Christian virtue, an aspect of our discipleship to Jesus Christ. Not doing so, they say, can lead to a state of confusion; perhaps even to the fallacy, as C.S. Lewis expresses it “... *the truth that God is love may slyly come to mean for us the converse, that love is God*”.

We are taken through the various lessons given us by the ordering of God’s love by Law, through an explanation of God’s love for us and our love for God and Man, to what we need to do to “take love seriously” as the booklet title suggests.

The third booklet currently available, by the Most Revd. Terry Buckle, Bishop of the Yukon and Metropolitan of British Columbia, and the Revd. Dr. Archie Pell, Rector of the Church of the Resurrection (ANiC), Hope, B.C and a lecturer at Regent College, is an informative outline of the worldwide Anglican Communion and our place in it.

As the authors state *“To most Anglicans the Anglican Communion is more of an idea than a reality in their lives” and yet “It unites us to Christians who share the same heritage of beliefs, same worship patterns, same history, and same ways of expressing our faith.”*

This booklet sets out in a very readable manner the history, the growth and the many things which unite us in this communion. But it does not shrink from an outline of the Anglican Communion in crisis, and tells us just how this crisis has come about, bringing us up to date on the seriousness of the current situation.

Finally, it suggests a number of actions that we, as Canadian Anglicans, can take to further the work of continuing Anglican unity.

Each of these booklets contains a final page of questions for further study and discussion, making them ideal for small group examination by parishes or concerned Anglicans everywhere.

A further three booklets in this “Taking Seriously” series - Future, Church Year, and Unity - are planned to be available by the end of 2006. As Dr Packer says in his introduction *“It is hoped that the series will spark deep personal reflection and group discussion within and between parishes, so that we all may be better prepared for the difficult and demanding era into which, it seems, our Church is now entering.”*

Amen to that.

To order copies of the Anglican Agenda Series, contact:  
Anglican Essentials Canada, Box 266, Milton, ON, L9T4N9.  
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