

The Prayer Book Society of Canada

Newsletter

Easter 2009

The Cranmer Conference 2009 “Grace and Free Will”

A weekend conference for young adults aged 19-29
May 22-24, 2009 at St. Paul's Church, Dunnville, Ontario

Website: www.cranmer.ca

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE SCHEDULE:

Friday, May 22

- 5:00 PM Informal dinner
- 6:00 PM First lecture on the Conference theme
- 7:00 PM Opening Choral Evensong with “Canticum Novum”,
Schola of the Gregorian Institute of Canada
- 8:30 PM Wine and Cheese Reception
- 9:30 PM Second lecture on the Conference theme
- 11:30 PM Candlelight choral Compline

Saturday, May 23

- 8:00 AM Breakfast
- 9:00 AM Mattins followed by informal time
- 10:30 AM Third lecture on the Conference theme
- 12:00 Outing to Christ Church, Port Maitland
- 2:30 PM Lecture on, and singing of, the Great Litany
- 5:30 PM Fourth lecture on the Conference theme
- 6:30 PM Banquet, with address by Ms. Sue Careless
- 8:30 PM The Cranmer Ball (Salsa dancing)

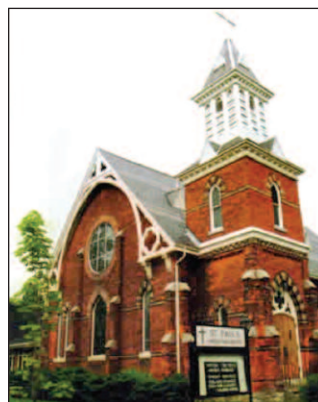
Sunday, May 24

- 9:00 AM Breakfast
- 9:30 AM Choral Eucharist with the congregation of
St. Paul's; final summation by Dr. Thorne.
- 12:00 Lunch with final blessing and closing

The cost of the weekend is \$50; \$20 for the banquet only.
For more information, see the website, or contact the
registrar, Mr. Walter Raybould at wraybould@cogeco.ca.
(Note: Those over 29 are welcome to attend parts of the
conference as observers. Accommodation is hostel-style
on air mattresses for the 19-29-year-olds; older attendees
are asked to find their own accommodation.)



*Main Conference Speaker:
The Revd. Gary Thorne
Chaplain, King's College, Halifax*



St. Paul's Church, Dunnville

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St. George's Church, Halifax

By Susan Harris

Currently there is so much "big news" from around the Anglican Communion that it is easy to lose track of the "little news," the regular faithful living of the Christian life in parishes across our country. In the interests of passing along some of this little news, I have been asked to offer an account of life at St. George's Church in Halifax.

Most of you will know that St. George's Church suffered a catastrophic fire in 1994 and subsequently launched a successful campaign which resulted in the complete restoration of our historic church. We are grateful to members of the Prayer Book Society from across the country who supported us through this challenging period of our parish life. Many also know that we have had a change of rectors in the past few years. Our current Rector, Father George Westhaver, came to us in January 2007 from the UK, where he had served as a parish priest and most recently as Chaplain at Lincoln College, Oxford and where he was very active in the English Prayer Book Society. As one of the relatively few parishes in Canada which still uses only the Book of Common Prayer at its services of public worship, we were especially happy to welcome a pastor with a deep love of the Prayer Book and a commitment to its continued use. During this period, we also had a change of music directors, welcoming Paul Halley to St. George's at the beginning of July 2007. Paul is a renowned musician and composer and we were delighted when he accepted our offer to come to St. George's, after an already distinguished career in Canada and the United States. (Paul is also Music Director at King's College and at the Atlantic School of Theology.) 2007

was very much a year of transition for us, with Father Westhaver and Paul Halley settling in and getting to know us and vice versa.

At St. George's, our worship continues to form and inform our daily lives. Our use of the Prayer Book is by no means due to a thoughtless or reactionary clinging to the familiar. In words taken from our parish website, "we not only 'use' the

manifest itself in our parish, aside from our worship? Clearly without Christian Education for both children and adults, we would not be faithful in our efforts to live within this tradition. St. George's continues to use a Sunday School Curriculum developed within our own parish and made available to other parishes through St. Peter Publications in Charlottetown. We continue to hold programmes for adults which



St. George's Church, Halifax

Book of Common Prayer (1962) at all services of public worship, but we understand the Prayer Book to encourage a way of Christian living which helps us offer ourselves, our souls and bodies as a reasonable, holy and living sacrifice. The life of the parish is formed by its endeavour to be shaped by Holy Scripture and to be true to the spiritual integrity of the Christian Tradition."

It is of course easy to say that our lives are formed by the use of the Prayer Book, but how does this really

challenge us to understand our faith and its place in our contemporary world more and more deeply.

A recent session in the parish about the life of a Christian priest in Turkey followed Sunday Evensong and was given by Father Ron Evans, Rector of the Anglican Parish in Izmir (the current name of Smyrna, about which we read in the Book of Revelation). Other educational series have included *"Perilous Stuff: Poems of Religious Meditation"*; *"Christian*

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Questions", a Lenten discussion series in which a number of parishioners discussed issues that trouble them on their Christian journey; "Meetings Between Hellenism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam", "English Spirituality", a study of Martin Thornton's book; "Let Our Passions be for Christ: the Passions of the Soul Adorned by Grace"; and "Finding Christ in the Psalms". A small group meets to discuss such works as "Christ through the Centuries" by Jaroslav Pelikan, "The Shack" by William P. Young, and Augustine's "Confessions", and most recently a series was conducted introducing newcomers to the Book of Common Prayer and its lectionary. In Lent, three groups will discuss "The Screwtape Letters" at three different times and locations.

A key focus for our parish is outreach in our surrounding inner city community, the tangible expression of loving our neighbour as ourselves. Parishioners are encouraged to join together in helping with our Saturday Soup Kitchen, YouthNet, which is our mentoring programme for neighbourhood children, and a large

variety of Christmas and other outreach projects which are directed to local families, street people and children of our community, as well as to parishioners who are ill or who are unable to join us for worship or fellowship due to age or infirmity. A Deaf Ministry which has operated in our parish for about ten years continues to offer the deaf and deaf-blind an opportunity to participate fully in worship and fellowship at St. George's.

Many in our parish drive considerable distances in order to worship at St. George's and thus an ongoing challenge for the parish is finding ways to bring people together in Christian fellowship. A Quilters Group meets to enjoy time together and, of course, to make quilts! Another group, the Live Poets' Society, meets to read and discuss poetry, their own or their favourites. Others in the parish focus on events that raise funds as well as foster fellowship – for instance, for many years, a giant yearly Yard Sale has taken place in the spring and more recently a book sale in the fall, accompanied by food and fellowship.

Like most parishes, we face difficult practical challenges. Our lovely and historic church must be maintained and our huge old hall cannot continue in use much longer without major renovation or replacement. Trinity House, our old rectory, is also old and in need of work. We are always scrambling to find financial support for our many outreach programmes. Our congregation is growing, but our pockets are not as deep as we would like.

In the beginning and in the end, it is our worship that brings us together and keeps us together. Our Prayer Book liturgy, complemented by a deep repertoire of classical church music sensitively chosen to reflect the season of the Church Year and the appointed readings of the day, and beautifully sung and played by Choir and Music Director, draws us ever more deeply into worship of Almighty God and leads us to offer ourselves in his service.

If you would like to see what is happening at St. George's through the Church Year, please visit our website at <http://www.roundchurch.ca>.

PBSC Annual General Meeting: Saturday, May 9th

*At St. Timothy's Anglican Church, 8420 – 145 Street,
Edmonton, Alberta (780-483-5506)*

The main business of the meeting will be the presentation of the annual Chairman's and Treasurer's reports, and discussion of the activities of the Society. Elections will be held for the positions of Honorary President and national Councillors, and nominations are invited for these positions.

The featured speaker will be **The Rev'd Joseph Walker**. The talk will be introduced by worship based on the liturgy for "The Churching of Women" in the BCP. Fr. Walker will then give an address entitled "Choosing Sarah in an Age of Options". This is a follow up to his September 2006 *Anglican Planet* article about his daughter Sarah Joy, a Downs Syndrome child, which concluded, "We as Gospel people need to become truly 'pro-life' which is not merely 'pro-birth'."

A PBSC Representative at Wycliffe College

Michael Edward, the past National Chairman of the PBSC, was recently made a member of the Board of Trustees of Wycliffe College, Toronto. Diana Verseghy interviewed him for the PBSC Newsletter on March 21st, 2009.

What is the Wycliffe Board of Trustees, and how are its members selected?

The Board of Trustees is directly involved in all operations of the college. While the Principal as CEO is ultimately responsible for the management of the College, the Board shares closely in the responsibility and authority for setting the policy direction, financial and otherwise, of the college. In this it works very closely with the Principal, of course, in a collegial relationship, but it is clear that the Board's role is integral to the direction of the College's overall mission and success. I'm keenly sensible of the honour involved in serving on it!

It's quite a large body – nearly 30 people – and it is responsible for electing its own members. It was the Principal himself, Dr. George Sumner, who asked me about a year ago to let my name stand for election. My son Gethin did his M.Div. at Wycliffe (he graduated in 2002, shortly after Dr. Sumner was appointed as Principal), and we've always been on very friendly terms since we first met in 2001. We had continued a very pleasant conversation on many topics over the years leading up to my election to the Board last November.

Is Wycliffe College friendly towards the Prayer Book and the PBSC?

Like most colleges, Wycliffe went through a period of liturgical experimentation a couple of decades ago. But since Dr. Sumner arrived, I know he has worked hard, in a very effective way, to foster a renewed appreciation of traditional, orthodox Anglicanism and of the Prayer Book as an integral part of that. We are



Michael Edward

very blessed to have him as Principal in these troubled times. And of course, from its inception as an institution with its roots firmly in the evangelical movement, Wycliffe has been a bastion of the defence of the authority of Scripture. So the College and PBSC really are natural allies.

On the Board of Trustees itself, I would guess that there are some members who might not entirely share Dr. Sumner's appreciation for

the Prayer Book. But my impression is that there is not the overt hostility that there might have been, say, a decade or two ago. If there is lack of appreciation, it more likely stems simply from lack of familiarity and knowledge of the Prayer Book.

So your election to the Board of Trustees can be seen as a very good and encouraging thing for the PBSC?

I certainly think it is. The opportunity to work more closely with Dr. Sumner, to contribute to the College, is exciting because I believe he is fully committed to recovering the fullness of our Anglican heritage. Being part of the operations at Wycliffe will provide unique opportunities to work with Dr. Sumner in encouraging the ongoing rediscovery at Wycliffe of the BCP, both the understanding and the use of it.

Wycliffe is the largest Anglican theological college in the country, and one of the very few that is doing well financially and in its enrollment. At our Board meeting yesterday, several members were saying how thrilled they were with the applications coming in – the number and the strength of the applicants. So Wycliffe will be playing an important part in forming the next generation of our clergy. This is critical for the future of our Church and I am honoured to be 'at a table' where I can be a strong voice for the Book of Common Prayer.

Commentary: “Be Strong, and Let Thy Heart Take Courage”

By Desmond Scotchmer

I must confess to having had a great deal of difficulty in writing this article, having started it several times, and been unable to come to any satisfactory conclusion. But here goes. Let me share my observations and thoughts with you.

The Primates of the Anglican Communion met this past February in Alexandria, Egypt, re-affirmed their desire for unity, expressed their continued support for the Anglican Covenant, re-affirmed Lambeth Resolution 1.10 on sexual morality (Christian marriage can only be between a man a woman) and urged that the Windsor Report moratoria (including, of course, that on same sex blessings) be observed. The Anglican Church in North America (ACNA), a new body of orthodox Anglicans which now constitutes a parallel jurisdiction to the Episcopal Church in the US and the Anglican Church of Canada, was recognized as legitimately Anglican, though its exact standing in the Anglican Communion remains to be determined. All of this should be reassuring to anyone who believes in classic, orthodox Anglicanism.

The problem is, of course, that these resolutions and developments are being either ignored or bypassed by church leaders here in Canada (and of course the US). In Canada, a minority of bishops continue to push ahead with their declared agenda to implement same sex blessings, in flagrant disregard for the Primates' Meeting in Egypt, the Windsor moratorium and the Lambeth Conference, the earnest,

repeated requests of the world-wide Primates, and the resolutions on marriage and a moratorium on same sex blessings requested by their own Canadian House of Bishops. They know full well that their actions, in the words of the Statement of the Primates of the Anglican Communion meeting at Lambeth in October, 2003, “tear the fabric” of Anglican unity “at its deepest level”. The rest of the Anglican bishops in Canada seem either unwilling or unable to do anything effective about it.

Flimsiest of Justifications

The justification for these actions is flimsy in the extreme, and exceedingly self-righteous. There is much cant about “prophetic ministry” and a Second Reformation, about “inclusivity” and the need for dialogue. Yet the role of the Biblical prophets was to recall the people to their duty, to righteousness, and to right belief. Prophets are chosen by God, they are not self-proclaimed, and they do not undermine the Teaching that has been handed down. The great age of Prophecy is over, and revelation is complete until Our Lord comes again. The Scriptures warn against heeding false prophets.

As for a “Second Reformation”, the original Reformation was the result of a deeply-felt need to return to the teaching of Scripture, not to overturn it or disregard it. The Reformers were convinced that the Church had strayed far from Scripture, become far too worldly, too secular, too much of its age and

of the world. To compare what is happening today to the Reformation is to exhibit the deepest ignorance of what the Reformation was all about.

As for the other two buzzwords: “inclusivity” has merely become a term used to bully anyone who disagrees into acquiescence – to exclude them, in fact. And how can there be any meaningful dialogue with those who have announced their intention to act regardless of what you say or think?

And to those who support same sex blessings out of generosity for those who feel same sex attraction, it needs to be said that there are numerous Christians who experience same sex attractions but deeply oppose this innovation, knowing that we are all sinners before God and must all wrestle with our temptations whatever they may be, and who see same sex blessings as an easy way out, a way to avoid the challenge of Scripture.

And indeed this is the point. We simply cannot override those parts of the Scriptures that challenge our own inner desires, or seem inconvenient, or do not fit in with our world view. To do so is to set up ourselves, our desires, our convenience, our own world view as idols before which we bow down and worship. It should also be noted that the arguments put forward for accepting same sex blessings can be used for advocating changes in Christian teaching on two other emerging issues: polygamy and euthanasia.

What it all boils down to is the notion that the church must keep

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abreast of changes in contemporary (Canadian) society. Nothing could be further from the classic Anglican concept of a church which is both catholic and reformed, part of the universal church descended from Apostolic times, and faithful to the revealed word of God.

Regardless of the Consequences, Some Bishops Will Press Ahead

Michael Bird, the Bishop of Niagara, has circulated a letter announcing that he has told the Archbishop of Canterbury in a personal interview of his intention to proceed with same sex blessings. The letter as worded implies some sort of complicity on the part of the Archbishop in the Bishop of Niagara's intended action. "It was a wonderful meeting and throughout our time together I felt listened to, respected and cared for and I am incredibly grateful for the privilege of having had this amazing experience." The Archbishop of Canterbury is a courteous and patient man, but courtesy and patience should not be confused with acquiescence. Significantly, though, even in this letter, the bishop acknowledges that the Archbishop warned him frankly there would be consequences for the Diocese of Niagara for any unilateral action it might take.

John Chapman, the Bishop of Ottawa, has also announced his intention to proceed with same sex blessings. The reason given in the diocesan press release is that this was "part of the discernment process". English journalist Andrew Carey commented wryly "It's an odd kind of 'discernment' to do something you are not agreed upon in order to reach agreement ... the very word 'moratorium' rules out this kind of discernment." Unbelievably, for a man determined to follow this

separatist path, Bishop Chapman has publicly lambasted those who separated from his diocese to join the parallel North American Anglican jurisdiction, stating that "to divide Christ's body, the Church" is "the most grievous of errors". Yet he knows full well that to proceed with same sex blessings will "tear the fabric" of the Anglican Communion "at its deepest level"!

And now the Diocese of Toronto proposes to allow "a limited number of parishes" subject to the bishop's

permission to bless same sex unions. This proposal would make Toronto the first Canadian diocese to put in place a formal framework for same sex blessing without even a vote at the diocesan synod. The reasons given were that "a vote would cause more division than it would cause resolution", and that the provision was "pastoral not legislative", and therefore (it was claimed) in harmony with the recent House of Bishops statement advocating pastoral provision for same sex partners. The move was justified by Bishop Patrick Yu, one of Bishop Johnson's regional suffragans, and a self proclaimed evangelical, who stated "Tradition loses its authority when a lot of people no longer see the issues clearly." Whatever does this mean? That teaching loses authority because some people are muddled?

The fabric of Anglican unity is torn "at its deepest level", and this is all the proponents of change can



*The Ascension
(East window, St. James' Cathedral, Toronto, based on
Raphael's painting in the Church of San Sepulchro)*

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offer by way of justification. The Anglican Church of Canada has become a church which does not abide by its own rules, a church which says one thing and does the opposite, a church which is unable to think theologically. Christians in other denominations look on in disbelief at a church in deep moral, spiritual, and intellectual confusion.

The bishops in dioceses proceeding with these innovations are choosing to stand apart from the Anglican Church worldwide, from Christian revelation as it has been understood for two thousand years. Their actions are lawless, and fly in the face of the plain meaning of Scripture. Their innovations merely set up a new and debased form of Anglicanism, outside the bounds of the Church Catholic as that has always been understood by Anglicans, and outside the authority of Scripture.

They are really making a new religion, one that takes its tenor from the “progressive” end of secular, liberal, middle class North American and Western European norms. The assumption is, of course, that where middle class North America and Western Europe go the rest of the world will follow. I believe this to be a fallacy. The world is changing fast, and no longer looks to North America and Western Europe for leadership. This shift is mirrored in the Christian Church around the world - and with good reason. Many see the West as having passed its prime, mired in decadence, complacency and moral confusion. These developments in the Anglican Church of Canada and the Episcopal Church in the USA will only further contribute to their marginalization in the wider Christian world.

As I say, I have had a great deal of difficulty in writing this article, and have found myself unable to be polite - or even optimistic - in the face of such disappointing - and utterly inadequate - behaviour on the part of some bishops, all of whom, at their consecration and ordination, took a solemn oath before God and the congregation to uphold the faith of Christ as this Church has received it.

A Bleak Assessment?

Maybe my assessment is too bleak. The church has been rent by schism before: the Arian heresy of the fourth century comes to mind. The Old Testament chronicles God's faithfulness to a fractious, frequently faithless people. Many faithful Anglicans remain within the Anglican Church of Canada, to continue the struggle for the orthodox faith, and they are not about to give up. Others have simply left the Anglican Church altogether, and joined more faithful Christian denominations. Many Anglicans have gone to ACNA - the Anglican Church in North America - and, I should think, many more will follow.

Speaking of ACNA, it continues to grow, with 656 congregations, 800 clergy, and 31 bishops, over 100,000 members, and 81,311 people in the pews on Sunday morning (3,300 of them in Canada). This compares with the Anglican Church of Canada with 128,000 people in the pews on Sunday. St Matthias' Church, in Victoria, BC, has just joined, after a vote by 94.4% of ballots cast, becoming the 16th former parish of the Anglican Church of Canada, and the third on Vancouver Island, to do so. A third retired bishop, the much-

respected Bishop Ferris of Algoma, has also left the Anglican Church of Canada to join, as has the former Principal of Wycliffe College, Dr Michael Pountney.

I can't tell where all this will lead. Mother Teresa of Calcutta famously reminded us that we are called, not to be successful, but to be faithful. Likewise, Psalm 27 calls us to patience: “I believe I shall see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. O tarry thou the Lord's leisure, be strong, and let thy heart take courage, and wait upon the Lord”. The PBSC will continue to play its part to recall the Anglican Church of Canada to faithful witness, in the face of the contempt - some of it bemused, some actively hostile - of its detractors.

Meanwhile, events in this unseemly (and utterly unnecessary) charade continue to unfold. The Archbishop of the Church in Wales, Dr Barry Morgan, has announced his intention to fight formal recognition of the ACNA as an official province of the Anglican Communion “with every fibre of his being”, although ACNA now surpasses in size both the Anglican Churches in Wales (membership 73,353) and Scotland (53,553 members).

At the time of writing, seven of the Global South Primates are meeting in London with the man who has led the Diocese of Pittsburgh out of the Episcopal Church, and will likely be the first Primate of the fledgling ACNA, Bishop Robert Duncan. Time will tell which vision of Anglicanism will prove the stronger.

The Prayer Book Society of Canada

National Officers and Branch Contacts

OFFICERS

National Chairman

The Rev'd David A. Harris
P.O. Box 713,
Charlottetown, P.E.I.
C1A 7L3

Episcopal Visitor

The Rt Rev'd Harold Nutter,
Retired Archbishop
of Canada

Honorary

Chairman/President

The Rev'd Dr. Robert Crouse,
Professor Emeritus
Dalhousie University

Past Chairman

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

Vice Chairmen

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

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

Secretary

Mr. Ron Bentley
737 Hot Springs Way
Gloucester, Ontario
K1V 1W8

Treasurer

Anne Chisholm
P.O. Box 713
Charlottetown, P.E.I.
C1A 7L3

Branch Contacts

St John's

Mr. Michael Donnan
(709) 753-5193

Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island

Taunya Dawson
tdawson@ns.sympatico.ca
(902) 454-7588

Fredericton

Mr. Wilfred Alliston
(506) 450-9584

Montréal

Mr. Richard Lord
(514) 938-5349

Ottawa

Mrs. Joan Wilson
(613) 749-5058

Toronto

Dr. Diana Versegby
(905) 303-4490

Greater Niagara Branch

Alexander Urquhart
(905) 774-3395

Grand Valley

Mr. Brian Munro
(519) 756-3053

Windsor

Rev'd Gordon Maitland
(519) 254-2901

North Bay

Rev'd John Stennet
(705) 498-6549

Manitoba

The Rev'd S.C. Sharman
(204) 338-2348

Saskatoon

Dr. Joan Doig
jfdog@shaw.ca

Calgary

Mr. Peter Bentley
bentleyp@telus.net
(403) 269-3725

Edmonton

John Matthews
43 Stirling Road
Edmonton, AB
T5X 4C2
(780) 457-2207
cjmatth@shaw.ca

Vancouver

Mrs. Norah Johnston
(604) 224-8986

Vancouver Island

Wayne Murphy
968 Second Street
Courtenay, BC
V9N 1C3
(250) 338-7397

Opinions expressed in this

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reflect those of the Prayer Book
Society of Canada.

NATIONAL ADDRESS

P.O. Box 38060
1430 Prince of Wales Drive
Ottawa, Ontario
K2C 3Y7

PBSC Web site

www.prayerbook.ca

PRAYER BOOK SOCIETY OF CANADA NEWSLETTER

Editor

Mr. Desmond Scotchmer,
40 Homewood Avenue,
Apt. 401
Toronto, Ontario
M4Y 2K2
email:
desmond.scotchmer@mtg.gov.on.ca

Editorial Committee

Mr. Wilfred Alliston
Cynthia Cordery
Ms. Nancy Gall
The Rev'd G. Maitland
The Rev'd Dr. J. I. Packer
Mrs. Carol Schiavetto

If you wish to join PBSC,
please e-mail your name
and address to
billiefarmer@execulink.com
or mail it to: The Prayer
Book Society of Canada,
Box 1435, Port Dover,
Ontario. N0A 1N0.