

The Prayer Book Society of Canada Newsletter

Easter 2018

The Art of Compromise: *Considering the Prayer* *“For the Conversion of the Jews”*

By the Revd. Gordon Maitland, PBSC National Chairman

There has been considerable publicity in the *Anglican Journal* and even in some secular media regarding a current proposal aimed at removing the prayer “For the Conversion of the Jews” from the Book of Common Prayer. How did we get to this situation in the first place, and what is the response of the Prayer Book Society of Canada (PBSC) to this initiative? This article is an attempt to address these questions, and to give the reader some background regarding the issues at hand.

The prayer at the centre of the controversy is found in a section of the BCP entitled “Prayers and Several Occasions”. This section contains a variety of prayers that were primarily intended to be used with Morning Prayer, Evening Prayer, and the Litany, which is why it follows immediately after those services in the Prayer Book. They can, of course, be used on their own for special occasions or for personal use, but their primary purpose is for public worship. This latter point is important because if the prayer for the conversion of the Jews has been ignored or forgotten altogether, it might be found in a collection of prayers that is officially sanctioned for the worship of the Anglican Church of Canada, a person reading this prayer would have to conclude (rightly) that it is expressive of the ethos of the Canadian Church. The prayer in question is found on page 41 of the BCP.



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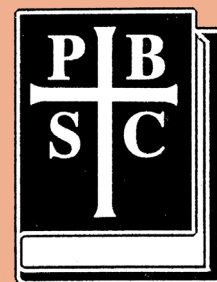
Notice to remove the prayer “For the Conversion of the Jews” first appeared in a section entitled “Housekeeping Resolutions” in the convening circular for General Synod 2016. This fact is itself revealing and needs to be further remarked upon. Approximately twenty years ago there was a motion to remove the third collect for Good Friday from the Book of Common Prayer. Removing this prayer from various national prayer books was part of a wider movement within the Anglican Communion in the 1990s, and had the backing of various liturgical commissions such as the International Anglican Liturgical Consultation which is a part of a parent body, the Anglican Consultative Council. The reason for this movement was to foster improved relationships with Jewish people,

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especially in regards to Christian-Jewish inter-faith dialogues. The third Good Friday collect, in its original form as found in the 1662 BCP, lumped Jews together with “Turks, Infidels, and Hereticks” when praying for their salvation, as if there were no difference between a Jew and a pagan in their relationship with God. This runs counter to contemporary theological currents which are far more nuanced and sympathetic when considering the place of the Jews in God’s overall plans for the redemption of the human race. Although the 1962 Canadian version of the third Good Friday collect toned down the language of the original version of this prayer, it was agreed that, in solidarity with our Anglican Communion partners, the prayer would be deleted from future printings of the BCP. After a favorable vote of a two-thirds majority in each of the houses of Bishops, Clergy and Laity in two successive General Synods, the resolution to delete the third Good Friday collect was carried and the prayer has been absent from printings of the Canadian BCP for more than a decade. Ironically, the one church that did not remove this prayer from their Prayer Book was the Church of England, but this is because, as a state church, it would require an act of Parliament to have the prayer deleted and this has proved politically impossible for all sorts of reasons.

When the third Good Friday collect was in the process of being removed, no one who was involved in the process apparently took notice of the prayer “For the Conversion of the Jews” in the occasional prayers section of the BCP. We were told at General Synod 2016 that this prayer had been mistakenly “overlooked”, but the truth of the matter is probably more embarrassing. Apparently, those who were keen on having the third collect for Good Friday removed were unaware of the full contents of the Book of Common Prayer. Anyone familiar with the

BCP knows about the prayer “For the Conversion of the Jews”, and I remember being surprised at the time when the Good Friday prayer was removed that nothing had been said about the latter collect. If those who were responsible for the deletion of the Good Friday collect had consulted some competent liturgical authority (such as the Prayer Book Society of Canada!) they would have been told at the time that there was another prayer they should consider in the “Prayers and Thanksgivings upon Several Occasions” section of the BCP. This whole episode shows what happens, practically speaking, when there is widespread ignorance concerning the Book of Common Prayer. This ignorance was also on display at General Synod 2016 when it was quite apparent that many delegates had no clue as to what the prayer in question said. In fact, there was a pause in the proceedings while someone hunted around for a copy of the BCP so that what was printed therein could be read out. But at this point we are getting ahead of the story and need to pick up the narrative from where we left off.

When it was pointed out to the Prayer Book Society by a priest delegate from the Diocese of Saskatchewan that a motion to delete the prayer “For the Conversion of the Jews” was being put before General Synod 2016, there was some consternation from members of the Society. The concerns raised at the time by the Society had nothing to do with Christian-Jewish relations (more will be said about this later) but were motivated by other issues. First was the fact that any change to the Book of Common Prayer is supposed to involve the lengthy process of securing a two-thirds majority in each of the houses of Bishops, Clergy and Laity in two successive General Synods, because it potentially means a change in Anglican doctrine or discipline. By lumping this change with “housekeeping motions” that only require a simple majority at one General Synod to pass, it appeared

that this change was going to be presented “under the radar” as it were, via the simpler process that the other housekeeping motions were going through. There was no preparation for the change by providing the wording of the collect in the convening circular, nor was there any background rationale as to why the change was being put forward. Even more importantly, there was apparently no consideration being given to the possibility that the collect might be modified or reworded so as to be perceived as less objectionable. With the deletion of the third Good Friday collect and now the impending deletion of the collect “For the Conversion of the Jews” it appeared to be the trend in the Anglican Church of Canada that anything found by anyone to be offensive in the BCP could be removed until the Prayer Book was completely deconstructed. After all, there are those who have issues with the Prayer of Humble Access in the Holy Communion rite, so could that prayer be the next on the chopping block?

As it turned out, someone else must also have had misgivings as to how the motion to delete the collect was being handled, because before it made it to the floor of Synod it was removed from the “housekeeping” motions to be considered on its own. The motion was finally presented for consideration on the last day of General Synod. By this time the mood of Synod was quite sour owing to the chaos that had been engendered by earlier problems with the electronic voting system, and it did not make for a favorable climate for reasoned debate. There was certainly no time left for proposing that the collect could be modified rather than deleted. However, to everyone’s surprise, the motion ended up being defeated in the House of Bishops. With time running out, and more rancorous debate regarding the motion to change the Marriage Canon on the horizon, things moved

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on and nothing more was said regarding the prayer in question.

Last year, Bishop Bruce Myers of the Diocese of Quebec indicated to the Council of General Synod that he intended to bring forward a motion to consider once again the deletion of the prayer “For the Conversion of the Jews”. This is an issue that is close to the heart of Bishop Myers because he was for many years the person responsible for ecumenical and inter-faith dialogues for the Anglican Church of Canada, and thus he has been directly and personally involved with discussions concerning our Jewish friends. Because the present motion was brought forward with ample time for discussion, it has opened up a new possibility for us to discuss ways in which the prayer might be modified rather than replaced altogether. Late last year another priest and I approached Bishop Myers to ask if he would consider a modified or revised collect in place of the existing prayer. He was reasonably concerned that modifying a collect in the BCP would set a precedent for modifying other collects in the BCP, to the detriment of the integrity of the Prayer Book. However, the argument that modifying a collect sets a precedent for modifying other collects can just as well, *mutatis mutandis*, apply to the argument that deleting a collect will lead to the deletion of other collects. As a Society, we would at least like to be part of a process of revision rather than being excluded from a potential process of dismemberment. At any rate, Bishop Myers has graciously allowed us to submit to him a collect or collects for consideration as substitutes for the present collect.

At this point it should clearly be stated that the Prayer Book Society of

Canada understands and appreciates why the governing authorities of the Anglican Church of Canada want to see this prayer deleted. Anyone acquainted with Church History will know that there is a long, sad, and regrettable history of Christian violence directed against Jews. In the wake of the atrocities perpetrated against Jews in the Nazi Holocaust, it is completely reasonable that our Jewish neighbours and dialogue

Thanksgivings upon Several Occasions” section of the BCP (pp.40-41) are not being altered in any way, and we will continue to pray that our Lord’s Kingdom will be extended and that people will continue to be called into fellowship with Christ in his Church.

What are the next steps forward? A small committee is considering various alternative collects that might replace the existing one on page 41. Since Bishop Myers will not consider any prayer that singles out the Jews for conversion, we are looking at two options. The first is to have another generic collect for mission that can be added to the existing three prayers “For the Extension of the Church”. The other is to consider a collect that prays for reconciliation and the end of hostility between Jews and Christians. Whatever prayers are considered will be shown to reputable theologians in our Church so that we can receive feedback as to whether the prayers are orthodox and consonant with

*The prayer in question:
“For the Conversion
of the Jews”*

*O God, who didst choose Israel to be thine inheritance: Look, we beseech thee, upon thine ancient people; open their hearts that they may see and confess the Lord Jesus to be thy Son and their true Messiah, and believing, they may have life through his Name. Take away all pride and prejudice in us that may hinder their understanding of the Gospel, and hasten the time when all Israel shall be saved; through the merits of the same Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.*

(BCP p. 41)

partners would be concerned about any prayer or message that would seem to imply that the Church is singling them out for aggressive proselytization. And lest anyone should think that the days of bigoted anti-semitism are over, one need only recall the events in Charlottesville, Virginia, last year. Among the racist slogans being chanted by the crowd of white supremacists and neo-nazis was the phrase, “Jews will not replace us!”

None of this implies that the Prayer Book Society is giving up on mission and witness to the uniqueness of Jesus Christ and his saving message of peace and reconciliation for all the world. The three prayers “For the Extension of the Church” in the “Prayers and

the theology of the Anglican tradition. This is a compromise by which we hope the integrity of the Prayer Book will be kept intact while at the same time remaining open and flexible to the challenges presented to us in our contemporary world.

This is still a work in progress, and thus there is not much more that can be said at this time. A future newsletter will update you as to how things turn out. In the meantime, please pray for success in this venture, that we may make a positive contribution to the ongoing life of the Anglican Church of Canada and continue to be faithful stewards of our heritage in the Book of Common Prayer.

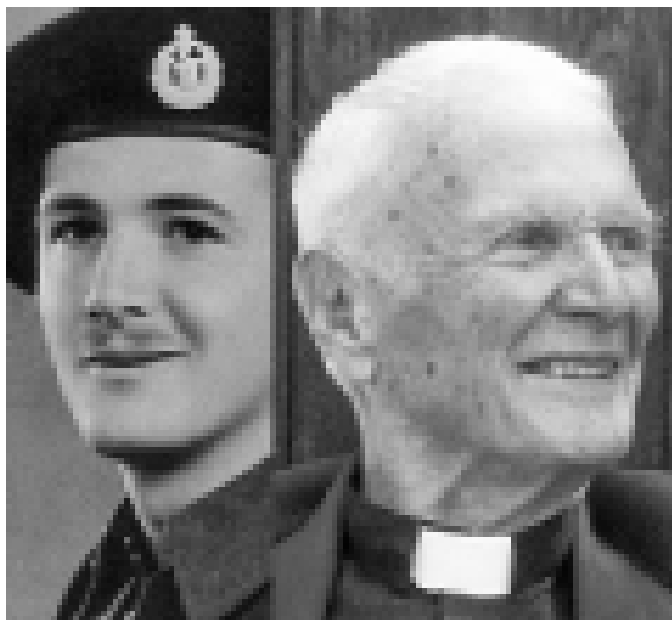
“Sock-it-to-Em”: The Extraordinary Life of the Rev. Canon R.S.H. Greene

(In our Thanksgiving issue of last year we ran a photo of the Revd. Canon Robert Greene – one of the “founding fathers” of the PBSC – and his wife Marion on the occasion of their 65th wedding anniversary. Sadly, Canon Greene passed away only a month later. This article, by the Revd. Dr. Norman Knowles, is a tribute to his memory.)

The descendant of a long line of Irish priests, Robert Greene was born in Toronto in 1923. His mother Marjorie was a devout Methodist and his father Arthur the son of Canon R.W.E. Green, the inspiration for Dean Drone in Stephen Leacock’s *Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town*. Young Robert enjoyed a happy and comfortable childhood with his

take on those in authority). The family prospered during the boom years of the roaring twenties and enjoyed summer holidays at the family cottage at Pointe au Baril near Orillia. These early years impressed upon Robert the importance of family—something that remained with him throughout his life.

On 16 October 2017 the Canadian Church lost one of its most colourful and charismatic priests, the Rev. Canon Robert Stuart Harvey Greene. In a ministry that spanned more than sixty years and witnessed significant changes in both Church and society, Fr. Greene remained throughout an unwavering champion of Prayer Book Anglicanism, a stalwart upholder of Anglo-Catholic tradition, and a staunch advocate for social justice. In its “Personality of the Week” column on 14 March 1969, the Calgary Herald perceptively observed that behind “innocuous ecclesiastical trappings of black suit and clerical collar” was to be found “the no nonsense, sock-it-to-em approach of a man who’s too impatient to mess around with compromise and quiet diplomacy” when it comes to matters of truth and justice. Behind the outspoken and tenacious fighter was to be found a warm and welcoming personality with a disarming sense of humour who was ready to serve wherever he was called.



Fr. Greene as a young soldier, and at his retirement

two older sisters, Elizabeth and Dorothy, in the family home at 10 Montgomery Road in Islington, just two doors away from his grandfather, who epitomized the “high and dry” clergymen of his day. The family attended the Church of the Transfiguration in north Toronto where Robert was enrolled in Sunday school—only to be expelled for challenging his teacher (an early sign of a combative personality unafraid to

This happy world came undone with the stock market crash of 1929. His father had never been good with money and much of the family’s savings were lost. The financial pressures resulted in multiple moves which placed great stress on his parent’s relationship. Arthur and Marjorie separated in 1931. In the years that followed young Robert moved between relatives and addresses as the family struggled through the Depression. No doubt this instability created within Robert a need for stability and certainty—later reflected in his attachment to tradition and resistance to change. The Depression instilled within Robert an understanding of the need to meet challenges head on with hard work and perseverance. In 1932, nine-year-old Robert began to sell *Liberty* magazine. Beginning with just five subscriptions, his route grew to over 200, the largest in the city. To make ends meet, the family moved to Spadina Avenue to live with his maternal grandfather, Stuart Marvin, who

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had also been wiped out by the stock market crash. It was at this time that the family started to attend St. Thomas' Huron Street, one of the city's preeminent Anglo-Catholic parishes. It was at St. Thomas', where he began to serve as a boat boy at age ten, that Robert first developed his life-long love for the beauty and solemnity of Anglo-Catholic worship. There Robert joined the 104th Cub Pack and later the 104th Scout Troop, both led by Fr. Lyndon Smith, who was in charge of youth in the parish. Fr. Smith's active faith lived out in the community and his deep commitment to standing up for the underdog impressed Robert greatly and later informed his own ministry.

After completing grade twelve in 1940, Robert, just seventeen and determined to do his duty for God, King, and Country, attempted to enlist in the Royal Canadian Air Force. He was turned down, however, due to low blood pressure. After a brief career as a bank clerk, Robert enlisted in the army in August of 1942 and served in a tank crew with the Lord Strathcona's Horse (Royal Canadians) in Italy and the Low Countries. A devoted son, he wrote his mother as often as he could for the duration of the war. His letters convey the wry sense of humour to which he often resorted to diffuse difficult situations. For Robert the war against fascism was first and foremost a fight for justice—justice for the little guy against the bullies who had plunged the world into conflict to further their own maniacal pursuit of power and domination. The war had a profound impact on Greene. He encountered ordinary men from all walks of life and all parts of the country and developed a great empathy for the common plight of humanity.

After the war, Robert resumed his banking career but felt

unfulfilled. "Four times I dodged the bullet and men much better than I died in battle", he recalled. "And I was left asking, why? Why had these men, all friends of mine, lost their lives and I survived? Why had God spared me and not them? I knew that since I had survived I had better do something to make the world a better place." It was then that he decided to leave the bank and enroll in Arts at Trinity with the intention of completing a degree in Social Work. Social Work promised to provide an opportunity to really connect with people where they were at, whereas the churches, he complained, seemed content "just sitting there and drinking tea". Convinced by his volunteer experience among boys in Toronto's slums that there needed to be a spiritual dimension to the work if the lives of the disadvantaged were to be truly uplifted, Greene decided to switch from Social Work to Divinity.

In September of 1949 Robert entered first year Divinity at Trinity College. While at Trinity, Fr. Greene enthusiastically studied the leaders of the Oxford Movement. He admired Tractarians like Newman and Keble for their stand against the increasing secularization of the Church of England and their call for the Church to remember its heritage of apostolic order and the catholic doctrines of the early church fathers. He was also deeply influenced by later theologians such as William Temple, Charles Gore and F.D. Maurice and their efforts to reconcile some aspects of biblical criticism and scientific discovery with a catholic interpretation of the faith and sacraments and a commitment to social action. His greatest heroes, however, were the dedicated priests who toiled in the neglected slums of cities like London, often in the face of ridicule and persecution because of their

catholic convictions, socialist tendencies, and commitment to the poor and social outcasts. Hoping to follow in their footsteps, he asked to be assigned to an inner-city slum parish or an industrial mission following his ordination to the diaconate in 1953. His Bishop, however, decided to place him in one of the most distant and rural parishes in the diocese, Mount Forest, followed by a stint as curate at St. Paul's Bloor Street, a bastion of the Toronto evangelical establishment. Convinced that he was called to serve among the poor and forgotten rather than in a comfortable city parish, he appealed to the Bishop of Athabasca to send him to the most disadvantaged parish in his diocese after he was priested.

In September of 1954 Robert arrived in Lac la Biche, Alberta, with his indefatigable wife Marion, then pregnant with their first child. The rectory was a small two-story cabin without running water or indoor facilities. For the next five years, Fr. Greene ministered at Lac la Biche and surrounding communities to a diverse flock of English farmers and small businessmen, eastern European homesteaders, and local First Nations, visiting as many people as possible during the week—a pattern he continued wherever he served. Such visitations, he insisted, were essential in building relationships and getting to know the community. In later years, he often lamented the disregard for this practice shown by new clergy and attributed much of the church's decline to this neglect. The Greene home soon became a welcome refuge for anyone in need of a meal, a bed for the night, a listening ear or a helping hand. Such hospitality remained a hallmark of the Greenses' ministry over the years. When he was transferred to Fairview in 1959, Fr. Greene remembered the impact that Fr. Lyndon Smith had had

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upon him as a child and set about organizing an outdoor hockey league after the roof of the local arena collapsed. Sensitive to the rejection he had felt as a child because of his small size, all children were welcomed to play regardless of ability. Fr. Greene joined every organization in town except the Knights of Columbus. "I would have signed up with them as well", he joked, "if they had invited me." Such involvement in the community remained a hallmark of Fr. Greene's long ministry and reaped plentiful rewards. At Fairview he succeeded in building a new church entirely with volunteer labour and donated materials.

In 1961 Fr. Greene was appointed rector of the Church of the Good Shepherd in Calgary.

Certainly the amenities and opportunities offered by this comfortable middle class suburban parish made life easier for his wife and four children. These changed circumstances also enabled him to complete his Bachelor of Sacred Theology degree—nineteen years late. His thesis examined the viability of an Anglo-Catholic parish in suburbia and reflected his Calgary experience. Life as a priest in the suburbs, however, did not temper his fighting spirit and commitment to social justice. He worked hard to stir his parishioners from their 'comfortable pews' and

increase their social awareness and engagement. "I think it's a travesty to get up and preach on Sunday", he told the Calgary Herald, "if it's not related to the conditions under which people live." While a member of the Calgary Inter-Faith Social Action Committee, Fr. Greene discovered that the largest landlord in the city was engaged in a development scheme that threatened to throw hundreds of poor people into the street. When the developer

"meddlesome priest" to run for council if he was "so ruddy keen" on the issue. With the support of most of his parishioners and the reluctant permission of his Bishop, he did just that in 1969 and was elected in Ward 5, a predominantly working-class area in the city's northeast quadrant. He formed an alliance with Calgary's new mayor, Rod Sykes, and challenged "the real estate men and real estate mentality" that had previously dominated city council. The result

was a significant increase in the stock of affordable public housing.

In 1972, the Bishop of Toronto, Lewis Garnsworthy, invited Fr. Greene to assume the rectorship of St. Bartholomew's, Regent Park. The historic inner-city Anglo-Catholic church located in the midst of Canada's largest public housing project was Fr. Greene's dream parish. With the



Fr. Greene with Mother Teresa during her visit to Toronto in 1986

attempted to bulldoze homes in a poor neighbourhood, Fr. Greene joined the evicted tenants on a picket line and planted himself firmly in front of the iron jaws of a bulldozer. He appeared before the federal government's Task Force on Housing and Urban Development and complained that the mayor and city council had been "extremely unreceptive" to the Inter-Faith committee's suggestions to address the rental crisis and displayed a lack of "justice and charity" in their treatment of the urban poor. An angry alderman challenged the

assistance of Marion, the parish began a food bank in the rectory basement that served 600 families and initiated a free community breakfast on Tuesdays that dished out a nutritious meal to 300 street people. In addition to celebrating mass and the offices daily, Fr. Greene served as chaplain at the Don Jail. Every Sunday afternoon from May until October he could be found in cassock and biretta addressing the social, moral, and spiritual issues of the day at speaker's corner in Allen Gardens. Such was Fr. Greene's reputation as an advocate for the poor and the

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marginalized that when Mother Teresa visited Toronto in 1986, he was invited to take her on a tour of his parish. They visited a crack house, Regent Park and the Don Jail, and he introduced her to the many homeless persons who knew him well. Despite the satisfaction that came from parish ministry, Fr. Greene was increasingly disturbed by developments in the wider church. He was an outspoken critic of the ordination of women and the introduction of the Book of Alternative Services. Convinced that he was following in the footsteps of the leaders of the Oxford Movement whom he so admired, he argued that such innovations were signs of a Church more intent on conforming to secular trends and values than upholding apostolic tradition and order. Fr. Greene's "fighting Irish blood" was also aroused by the Diocese's move to close many inner-city parishes. Such actions, Greene protested, were short-sighted and represented an abandonment of the poor and

neglected that the Church was especially called to serve. Despite his reputation as a reactionary rabble rouser in some circles, Fr. Greene was made a canon in 1986. Having surpassed the canonical age of retirement, he left his beloved St. Bartholomew's at the age of 70 in 1993.

Believing that it was "better to burn out than rust out", Fr. Greene remained active in his later years. He served as an associate priest at St. James the Less, Philadelphia—one of the first Anglo-Catholic parishes in the United States. There he worked the dangerous streets of north Philadelphia's ghetto. In 1996, Robert and Marion moved to Calgary to be closer to sons Michael and David. Never one to be idle, Fr. Greene served as an honorary assistant at St. John the Evangelist, Calgary and took on priestly duties over the years at Holy Trinity, Medicine Hat, St. Aldhelm's, Vulcan, and St. Andrew's, Gleichen. He also served as padre to the Lord

Strathcona's Horse, assumed leadership positions in the Calgary branches of the Prayer Book Society and the Monarchist League, made mission trips to Guyana and Malawi and organized fundraisers for poor dioceses there, and visited schools throughout the city in the weeks leading up to Remembrance Day.

Few clergy can equal the mark that Fr. Greene has made or the countless lives he has touched over the years of his long ministry. The Canadian Church has truly lost one of a kind.

The Rev. Dr. Norman Knowles is Dean of Arts and Science and Professor of History at St. Mary's University, Calgary and serves as a priest in the parishes of St. Edmund's and St. Paul's. He is the author, co-author, or editor of eight books on Canadian social, cultural, and religious history and is currently writing a biography of Fr. Greene.

PBSC ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting of the Prayer Book Society of Canada will be held on Saturday, May 12th, at St. Barnabas' Church, 1407 - 7th Avenue NW, Calgary, Alberta, beginning at 2:00 PM. The annual Chairman's and Treasurer's reports will be presented, and the meeting will elect up to fifteen Councillors to serve on the National Council.

Nominations are invited for the positions of National Chairman, Vice-Chairmen, Treasurer, Membership Secretary and Recording Secretary. Nominations for these positions must be received by May 4th, since these officers are elected by the National Council. Nominations are also invited for the positions of Councillor and Honorary President, and these may be either submitted beforehand or presented at the AGM. Nominees for all positions must be members of the PBSC, and nominations require a mover and a seconder, both of whom must also be members of the PBSC. Nominations are to be sent to the national Recording Secretary, Ronald Bentley, at 737 Hot Springs Way, Gloucester, ON, K1V 1W8 (rwbentley@sympatico.ca).

Notice is hereby given that a proposal will be put forward at the AGM to amend the Society's constitution with the intent of extending the Society's mandate beyond the Anglican Church of Canada to include all Anglicans in Canada. Anyone wishing further information is invited to contact the National Chairman (e-mail gmailto1991@gmail.com; phone 519-564-5989).

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Opinions expressed in this
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