

# The Prayer Book Society of Canada Newsletter

Thanksgiving 2019

## Praise For the New Prayer “For Reconciliation with the Jews”

In the last few issues of the PBSC newsletter we followed the production of this new prayer, jointly crafted by the Revd. Chris Dow and our National Chairman, the Revd. Dr. Gordon Maitland. The prayer was approved by a nearly unanimous vote at General Synod this past July, and has received many enthusiastic comments. Here are a few:

“I am indebted to Bishop Bruce Myers for his wise and gentle leadership in this task, to the Prayer Book Society of Canada in composing the text for this prayer and the Canadian Rabbinic Caucus for their counsel throughout. Adoption of this prayer I pray will be a helpful step toward a path of renewal in dialogue and collaboration with our friends in the Jewish community in Canada.” - *The Most Rev. Fred Hiltz, 13<sup>th</sup> Primate of the Anglican Church of Canada.*



“It was such a lovely thing to see that you and others had worked on not just taking out a prayer that was not so comfortable for Jews or the current Anglican understanding of Jews, but replacing it with something very beautiful and powerful and meaningful.” - *Rabbi Adam Stein, Associate Rabbi, Congregation Beth Israel, Vancouver (speaking on behalf of the Canadian Rabbinic Caucus)*

“In this new prayer, the Anglican Church of Canada channels a spirit of repentance that is in keeping with the theology and piety of the Book of Common Prayer. The language of blame and reproach that has historically been directed towards the Jews is now replaced by the humble plea that God’s redemptive purposes might be fulfilled in all God’s people, among whom our Jewish neighbours hold a special place.” *The Rt. Revd. Dr. Stephen Andrews, Principal of Wycliffe College, Toronto, and Episcopal Visitor Emeritus to the PBSC*



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## Reflections on General Synod 2019

*(By the Revd. Dr. Gordon Maitland, PBSC National Chairman.)*

One of the great “spaghetti western” movies that came out of the 1960s was the film “The Good, the Bad and the Ugly”, starring a very young Clint Eastwood. Although this movie is a personal favourite of mine, the only reason for mentioning it in this report is that the title could just as easily be applied to General Synod 2019. My personal reflection on the proceedings of that Synod will look at what was good, bad and ugly, in the reverse order of the movie title.

“The Ugly” was definitely the debate preceding the motion to change Canon XXI (the marriage canon) to allow for same-sex marriage, and its aftermath. The debate was very emotionally charged; the Bishop of the Arctic got into a shouting match with the Primate, and there was clearly considerable pain afterwards on the part of gay and lesbian Anglicans who had pinned their hopes on the motion passing. This question has received a tremendous amount of publicity in the news and on social media, and I need not repeat what has already been said there, but I do want to offer some reflections. Since the motion to change the marriage canon failed, the *status quo* technically remains: marriage is defined as between one man and one woman and anyone

who supports this traditional view can point to that canon for support. However, relying on the chancellor’s opinion that Canon XXI does not specifically oppose the marriage of same-sex couples, a number of diocesan bishops have already announced that they will proceed with authorizing such marriages in their dioceses. The best analogy that I can think of



*Revd. Dr. Gordon Maitland*

regarding the post-synod situation for the marriage canon is that of the current status of the Book of Common Prayer. Technically, the BCP remains the official standard of worship and doctrine in the Canadian Anglican church, and all other authorized liturgical resources are alternatives to the BCP. But we all know that the *de facto* situation in the Anglican Church of Canada is that the Book of Alternative Services is

the most widely used book and the BCP has, in many places, been relegated to the margins. It is my opinion that the same sort of thing will happen with regard to Canon XXI. The urban dioceses in the south, which contain the majority of Canadian Anglicans, will authorize the celebration of same-sex marriages and essentially ignore Canon XXI, while the more sparsely populated dioceses in the north will hold to the traditional view of marriage. Of course, there will be individuals within each diocese that will dissent from the majority view, but this will not change the fact that same-sex marriage is here to stay.

“The Bad” refers to the terrible arrangements made for the display booths at General Synod. All of the displays were three floors above the room where the sessions took place (which was in the sub-basement of the conference centre). Most of the display booths were in a windowless room that people only passed by on their way to the room in which meals were held, and because the meal plan at this particular General Synod was very expensive, many delegates opted out and thus had no reason to go to the area where the displays were. We at the PBSC booth were more fortunate than many displayers insofar as we were on a corner that faced out into the corridor where people passed by, but we were still at a disadvantage. Many of the displayers were

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angry at the arrangements and demanded to be moved to a more visible location. In short, we had less traffic at our booth than at any other General Synod that I can remember, and many of our giveaways remained undistributed.

“The Good” surely refers to the triumph of the Prayer Book Society of Canada in being a part of the legislative process to replace the prayer “For the Conversion of the Jews” with a prayer “For Reconciliation with the Jews”. Bishop Bruce Myers of the Diocese of Quebec was a genius in the way that he arranged for a good reception for the new prayer. Having a local Rabbi, Adam Stein, come and address General Synod with enthusiasm for the beauty and style of the new prayer went a long way toward ensuring that the motion to amend the Prayer Book was passed almost unanimously. The Prayer Book Society was named and given full credit for this initiative by Bishop Myers, Rabbi Adam Stein, and our Primate, Fred Hiltz. A number of National Office staff members also thanked me for the involvement of the Prayer Book Society in making the new prayer a reality. Personally speaking, I think that this initiative by myself and Fr. Chris Dow went a long way to show that the Prayer Book Society of Canada can make a positive and constructive contribution to the life of the Anglican Church of Canada when allowed to do so. While we as a Society will

continue to critique what we see as distortions and deviations from the orthodox Anglicanism embodied in the Book of Common Prayer, it is refreshing for the Society to be perceived as other than a merely negative and contrary organization. In this issue of our Newsletter you will find several other items acknowledging the positive impact of this initiative on the part of the PBSC.

There is considerably more that could be said about General Synod, for example about the legislation that was passed to give indigenous Anglicans a greater degree of autonomy within the Anglican Church of Canada, but space does not permit of a fuller discussion of everything that happened. There were new liturgical materials approved (*alternatives* to the Book of *Alternative Services*!) but I will postpone a more fulsome critique of these rites to a future newsletter. The most troubling aspect of this material, in my opinion, is that they allow an individual or congregation to arrange an entire worship

service devoid of Trinitarian references, which implies a kind of implicit Unitarianism. Again, this will be covered in a future newsletter.

Finally, I want to make special mention of the extraordinary contribution of Fr. Rob Taylor and his wife, Marie, in helping to man the display booth and in assisting the Anglican Communion Alliance with their worship at their hospitality suite. Fr. Taylor took his turn leading Morning Prayer and Compline, and celebrating the Eucharist from the Book of Common Prayer, for those who came to worship along with the ACA supporters. Fr. Rob’s and Marie’s joyful and positive presence were much appreciated. Although Fr. Rob Taylor is a “retired” Anglican priest, his help will be needed again when General Synod next meets in Calgary in 2022. Until then, we pray that the work of the Prayer Book Society of Canada will continue to enrich and uphold the spiritual life of all Anglicans in Canada and indeed North America.

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### SPIRITUAL FORMATION

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## On the New “Prayer for Reconciliation with the Jews”

(By Matthew Neugebauer)

My response to the *Prayer for Reconciliation* is a personal one. Its passage at First Reading occurred just as I was finishing a basic unit of Clinical Pastoral Education, a time devoted to intensive self-understanding as I respond to the suffering of others. And the details of my family of origin and life thus far have given me a unique appreciation for the profound nuance expressed by the *Prayer for Reconciliation*. This prayer deftly navigates a complex set of realities: the particular witness of Israel, Western Christendom’s historic treatment of Jewish minorities, and the Church’s universal witness that Jesus comes to us as both the “root of Jesse” and the “desire of the Nations.”<sup>1</sup> All these realities can be found in the concrete experiences of my own life.

The prayer is firstly an act of repentance for Christians’ “violence and wickedness against our brother Jacob”. This part of the prayer does not require any nuance, but straightforward confession: “the arrogance of our hearts and minds hath deceived us, and shame hath covered our face. Take away all pride and prejudice in us....” The example that immediately comes to mind is the murder of 6 million European Jews in the Holocaust. Included in that 6 million are my great-grandparents, their family, friends and neighbours, taken

from deplorable ghettos in Poland to the gas chambers in Auschwitz-Birkenau. *Not* included in that 6 million are the many others who endured the slavery and harsh conditions of the camps, such as my Zaida (grandfather), who scraped his way through to survival, finally enjoying the safety of Toronto’s growing Jewish community.

Of course, the Holocaust was the culmination of a long history of Jews in Christian Europe, which included some periods of hesitant toleration but was broadly marked by expulsions, systemic distrust and marginalization, and *multiple* examples of violent repression. Those violent outbursts include the pogroms in Russia and Ukraine on either side of the Revolution. My Bubby’s (grandmother’s) parents, their family and friends experienced a crackdown in Kiev as Christian authorities scapegoated them in retribution for the (atheist) Soviet uprising in Moscow. My grandmother’s family were able to escape to Canada, and helped found the first synagogue in Kitchener.

Again, the Holocaust was the culmination of this history, and an important part of this story is the drum-beat of conversionary efforts: in order to be part of European society, you must cease to be Jewish and become Christian. Surrender a God-given part of yourself (literally, as in the “Gift of Torah”), or face the consequences. In the Lent 2019 issue of the PBSC Newsletter, Fr.

Chris concisely described this causal link between supersessionism and the Holocaust, and I would direct readers to that article. I can only add that Jews today naturally find targeted Christian proselytism to be a deplorable and threatening insult. We live in twenty-first century Canada, where outright violence against Jews is the rare exception rather than the rule and would never be carried out by a democratic government. I would argue that the “softer” practice of proselytism is a much greater source of anxiety among Jews than direct violence. It is therefore imperative for Christians to remove prayers targeting Jews from our liturgies and prayer books. At General Synod 2019, we witnessed first-hand the gracious way in which representatives of Jewish organizations hailed the removal of these prayers as a boon to Jewish-Christian relations.

So the Anglican Church of Canada is right to remove the prayer as it currently exists. However, the complex set of realities I mentioned above is still with us, and this complexity is ill-served by leaving nothing in place of the prayer to be removed. I will venture a step further: removing references to the intimate connection we have with Judaism would repeat the very supersessionist mistakes that led to Christian Europe’s violent treatment of Jews in the first place. And I can make this claim at the personal level: I am ill-served by ignoring the fact that I am a Jewish Anglican, a Jewish

<sup>1</sup> O Antiphons for December 19 and 22.



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follower of Jesus as God and Messiah, now in the context of a historically white European “Imperial” Church. I am in the ongoing process of discerning a call to ordained ministry in this Church, a process that requires me to *comprehend*, to examine, understand and *integrate* the various strands of my own story—including the awkward and complicated parts—at least enough to stand before God and my bishop with the awareness that my *whole life* is being presented for admission to Holy Orders. Of course, this is the very pilgrimage of discipleship that we all embark upon: that integration is above all the work of the Holy Spirit, and it is a pilgrimage that is not complete until we “attain to the fulness of redemption” at the Last Day.

I can provide an example that illustrates this integration. As part of my formation for ministry I have had the opportunity to officiate in BAS Good Friday services twice: once as a theological student and again as a lay curate. And both times, I have understandably struggled to hold back my tears when the service comes to God’s reproach of His Church for the Holocaust.<sup>2</sup> This reminder and reproach places me in contradictory positions: I am reminded of how my family, part of those whom God has called, has been the victim of “genocide and mass murder”. But as an officiant, and as one discerning ministry and leadership in the Church, I also *represent* the very institutions that have committed this evil. While the Churches of the

<sup>2</sup> It is perhaps telling that Fr. Chris “[proposes] that FRJ would be the BCP counterpart to” this part of the Reproaches.

Anglican Communion were not directly responsible for the Holocaust, we were complicit in it both in our silence and in the ways we promoted anti-Jewish attitudes and actions ourselves.

Yes: “we.” And here is where I need to face the awkwardness head-on: I am a Jew discerning a call to Christian ministry.



Matthew Neugebauer

Clearly, that didn’t happen overnight: it reaches back to the origins of the broader Hebrew Christian movement, including the London Society and the Nathaniel Institute here in Toronto.<sup>3</sup> The story continues with the Messianic Jewish

<sup>3</sup> It should be noted that these organizations did not exclusively focus on conversion, but also provided many social services to Jews such as job training, clothing and food. The Scott Mission near the University of Toronto, founded by Hebrew Christians in the Presbyterian Church in Canada, continues this legacy.

movement of the later twentieth century, which evolved out of the Hebrew Christian movement. My parents met at one such Messianic Congregation, and I was born into it a few years later. We can indeed look back with a tinge of embarrassment at the awkward targeting of one group, and I note again the problematic history of targeting Jews for “conversion” to Christianity, and the anxiety this raises in Jewish communities. I saw this anxiety expressed first-hand growing up: the presence of a different Messianic Jewish congregation in my own neighbourhood was the cause of a public and acrimonious protest.

However, God can still use a movement with problematic and awkward origins to bring about positive fruit. The fact remains that many Jews have found the love and hope of God as followers of Jesus the Messiah, committing their lives to Jesus as the God of Israel: many, including my parents. If I am to take my own story seriously, I must take seriously the way that evangelistic efforts, and my parents’ responses to those efforts, have had a part in the hope I now experience in Jesus.

Moreover, I and other Jews in mainline Churches represent a silver lining in the Church’s self-understanding. The Messianic Judaism that I was born into has always maintained that Jewish understandings and expressions of faith in the Creator of Heaven and Earth have a necessary place among the followers of Jesus the Messiah. And we stand as witness to the unity of Scripture and against any creeping Marcionism, taking care to hear the Word of Gospel proclaimed *through* the Law and the

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Prophets. From childhood it was ingrained in me that Israel's Scriptures are "living and active" for the Church today, as a certain Rabbi from Tarsus once put it. While I am now at home in both broad-church Anglicanism and Anglo-Catholicism, I have never believed that my Judaism should be left in the narthex: it belongs in the nave, the pulpit and the sanctuary.

So what do we need to replace a "Prayer for Conversion", in light of the complexities I have described in the second half of this article? As I stated above, what we need is *nuance*, a prayer that is both clear enough and *open* enough to gather up—to "collect"—the various experiences and interpretations that people will bring to God through this prayer. It was always going to be more specific and doctrinal than, say, the *Prayer for All Sorts and Conditions* or the *General Thanksgiving*, but was always going to involve a greater variety of experiences and interpretations than the Collects for Solemnities such as Christmas and Pentecost (for example). It is a prayer that needed to be broad enough to receive the cooperation and approval of Jewish communities, but doctrinally clear enough to be an authentic expression of Prayer Book Anglican Christianity.

And I can confidently affirm that the *Prayer for Reconciliation* accomplishes this task with sensitivity and clarity. I can find *myself* in this prayer: through it, the Church can lift up to God all the tragedies, twists and turns of my origins and personal journey. The most nuance and clarity is

found in the "Aspiration,"<sup>4</sup> which is squarely centred on authentic *hope* in God's work and character. We ask God to "grant that we, together with the people whom thou didst first make thine own, may attain to the *fulness of redemption* which thou hast promised" (emphasis added).

The prayer clearly names that this is the hope shared by Jews and Christians, a hope that *binds* Jews and Christians together: "grant that we [Christians], together with the [Jewish] people...." The prophet Isaiah depicts this promise of redemption with the image of "the mountain of the house of the Lord", which "in the latter days...shall be established as the highest of the mountains...and all nations shall flow to it, and many peoples shall come, and say: 'Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths.' For out of Zion shall go the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." (Isaiah 2:2-3)

Again, the prayer offers us clarity by drawing us into the hope that Jews and Christians share: God promises to draw all Israel and the nations together, to draw all people to Himself, to his *torah* and His word. And perhaps this is the most important point: God's promise is to fully reveal His character—*hesed v'emeth* (merciful love and covenant faithfulness)—to His people, corporately and personally.

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<sup>4</sup> For a detailed examination of the structure of this and other prayers, see Fr. Chris' article in the Lent 2019 issue.

The prayer is nuanced, since it leaves open the various ways that Jews and Christians believe that God fulfills this promise. For some Jews, the "mountain of the Lord" is not simply a metaphor, but signifies the restoration of Mount Zion, the splendour of David's Jerusalem, and above all the bond between Heaven and Earth forged by the Temple. This also means a restoration of true *Torah* observance, since *Torah* is the full revelation of God's will to His people. For many Jews, this *Torah* observance will be realized with a *first* (and only) coming of the Messiah: David's descendent will lead all people in the ways of God. Christians (including, by definition, Messianic Jews) apply the meaning of Isaiah's vision and its Messianic Hope to Jesus of Nazareth. "The Word [of *Torah*] was made flesh, and [‘tabernacled’] among us." (John 1:14) "And I, when I am lifted up from the earth" as Priest, Sacrifice and perfect union between God and humanity, "will draw all people to myself." (John 12:32)

We cannot deny the differences that have emerged between Judaism and Christianity over the last two thousand years. But for the purposes of this prayer, we needed an expression of repentance for the way Christians have turned these differences into violence, and a celebration of our common hope. We can affirm a shared hope, because the God who fulfills His promise is both "leader of the House of Israel" and "King and desire of the nations".<sup>5</sup> Israel and the nations, you, me and all our stories, are drawn before the

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<sup>5</sup> O Antiphons for December 18 and 22.

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maker of Heaven and Earth. We will be freed from the deception of our arrogance, pride, prejudice and fear, the “dim mirror” will be removed. We will all “know the Lord”, see God and ourselves “face to face”, even as we are “fully known”. (1 Corinthians 13:12, Jeremiah 31:34, Hebrews 8:11) This prayer as written accomplishes both with generosity, economy, clarity and compassion.

*(Mr. Matthew Neugebauer grew up in a Messianic Jewish family in Toronto, and after attending various evangelical churches found himself in the Anglican Church of Canada. He holds an MTSD and a Certificate in Anglican Studies from Wycliffe College and an MA in Theology from Regis College in Toronto. He attended and served as an acolyte at St. Thomas's, Huron St. and from there embarked on*

*the process of discerning a call to ordained ministry. He has served student placements in Edmonton and Toronto, and a full-time lay curacy in Wainwright and Edgerton, Alberta. He is currently discerning his next steps and exploring various opportunities for ministry. He tweets about Anglicanism, Star Wars and soccer at @neug485.)*

## Victor Goldbloom Award for Bishop Bruce Myers



*Shimon Koffler Fogel, Bishop Bruce Myers and Dr. Alan Goldbloom*

On September 23 at the UJA Sherman Campus in Toronto, the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA) presented Bishop Bruce Myers with the Dr. Victor Goldbloom Award for Outstanding Interfaith Leadership in recognition of his effort to replace the prayer ‘For the Conversion of the Jews’ with the new prayer ‘For Reconciliation with the Jews’. Dr. Goldbloom, who died in 2016, was renowned for his work in fostering Jewish-Christian dialogue in Montreal and throughout Canada. In his presentation of the award, CIJA CEO Shimon Koffler Fogel heartily thanked Bp. Myers for this ‘gift’ to the Jewish people.

*“Behold, how good and joyful a thing it is for brethren to dwell together in unity.” (Psalm 133:1)*



“I want to thank you for your work with the proposed new prayer in the Canadian BCP. The draft of the prayer is almost too good to be true ... While (I hope) a huge majority of those who will pray it have not been personally guilty of the wrong for which it asks forgiveness, praying in this corporate way with historical consciousness cultivates habits of mind that can erode other prejudices and measures of tolerance for injustice.”  
*Jordan Friedman, rabbinic student, Hebrew Seminary, Skokie, Illinois*

# The Prayer Book Society of Canada

## National Officers and Local Contacts

### OFFICERS

#### National Chairman

The Rev'd Gordon Maitland  
1983 St. Mary's Gate  
Windsor, Ontario  
N8Y 1J8

#### Episcopal Visitor

Vacant

#### Past Chairman

The Rev'd David A. Harris  
Reading, England

#### Vice Chairmen

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

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

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

#### Recording Secretary

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

#### Treasurer

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

### Local Contacts

#### St John's

Mr. Michael Donnan  
(709) 753-5193

#### Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island

Mr. Benjamin Lee  
(902) 431-9899

#### Ottawa

Mr. Wesley Warren  
(613) 726-6341

#### Toronto

Dr. Diana Verseghe  
(905) 303-4490

#### Grand Valley

Mr. Brian Munro  
(519) 756-3053

#### Windsor

Rev'd Gordon Maitland  
(519) 564-5989

#### North Bay

Rev'd John Stennett  
(705) 498-6549

#### Saskatoon

The Ven. Richard Spencer  
72 Sparling Crescent,  
Saskatoon S7H 3M2  
(306) 649-3448

#### Calgary

The Rev'd Robert Taylor  
Fr.Rob@shaw.ca  
(403) 612-5721  
Branch website:  
www.bcp-calgary.ca

#### Edmonton

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

#### Vancouver

Mrs. Norah Johnston  
(604) 224-8986

#### Vancouver Island

Mrs. Heather Herbison  
Heather797ca@yahoo.ca

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Newsletter do not necessarily  
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Society of Canada.

#### PBSC Web Site

[www.prayerbook.ca](http://www.prayerbook.ca)

### PRAYER BOOK SOCIETY OF CANADA NEWSLETTER

#### Editor

Dr. Diana Verseghe  
12 Sherbourne Drive  
Maple, Ontario  
L6A 1G8  
diana.verseghe@sympatico.ca

#### Editorial Committee

Mr. Desmond Scotchmer  
The Rev'd G. Maitland  
Dr. Diana Verseghe

#### Mailing Address for Donations

P.O. Box 713, Stn Central,  
Charlottetown, PE  
C1A 7L3

**For address changes,  
or if you wish to join the  
PBSC, please contact our  
Membership Secretary:  
the Ven. Richard Spencer,  
72 Sparling Cres.,  
Saskatoon, S7H 3M2,  
(306) 649-3448  
E-mail: [kentvic@gmail.com](mailto:kentvic@gmail.com)**