

The Report of the National Chairman of the Prayer Book Society of Canada to the Annual General Meeting of the PBSC

27 May 2023

I want to begin my report, as I have in times past, by thanking those members of the National Council (and beyond) who have been partners with me in the work and ministry of the Prayer Book Society of Canada. In particular, I want to recognize Diana Verseggy, Chris Dow, Ron Bentley, Anne Chisholm, Richard Spencer, Kerry Dickson, and Benjamin von Bredow for their respective tasks and roles in maintaining the day-to-day operation of the Society. Without them it would be impossible for this ministry and outreach to occur. There are other members of National Council who have been of tremendous help as well, and although I have not named them all, they can be certain that their contributions are gratefully received.

Work is ongoing with the many projects that have been started. The capabilities of the Prayer Book App continue to be expanded. The Penitential Service from the BCP was added in time for Lent this year, and the range of Inuktitut language material has been enlarged as well. There have been unfortunate delays in finishing the French language version of the Prayer Book (*Le Recueil Des Prières*) but progress continues and we hope this version will be published later this year. We have made some tentative inquiries regarding where to start on the Cree language version, which we hope to begin when the French version is done. Work continues on the project of a table of optional Old Testament lessons to go with the Epistles and Gospels found in the Prayer Book, and we hope to have a draft ready soon for feedback and further refinement.

Outreach to the wider Church through means of our website and social media has also been growing, and we continue to add new items to the website such as audio clips of psalms sung from the Canadian Plainsong Psalter. We are very thankful for Kerry Dickson's tireless efforts on this front, and her report for the AGM says far more than I can cover here.

I am very disappointed that we will not be able to have a display table at General Synod this June in Calgary. The reduced space of the Synod venue would not accommodate many displayers, and the fact that we will be sharing meeting space with the delegates of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada for their General Assembly meant even more restrictions on how many groups could be accommodated. However, I plan to be present for General Synod (as an observer) so that I can be on hand to witness the second reading and vote on the motion regarding the Prayer for Reconciliation with the Jews. Should the vote pass (and I have no reason to believe that it will not pass), this prayer will appear in future editions of the BCP (along with the necessary changes that need to be made in regards to naming Charles our King in the various state collects). I am thankful that the Anglican Communion Alliance is willing to let us display some of our materials in their hospitality suite at General Synod.

I recently had a conversation with a newly ordained young man in my parish office about the Book of Alternative Services. He was not from an Anglican background (which appears to be true of many young clergy in our church) and so was genuinely interested in the theological thinking that went into the production of the BAS. To this end he had attempted to read Michael Ingham's book that was published in 1986, *Rites for a New Age: Understanding the Book of Alternative Services*, and was baffled by the author's breezy optimism that the BAS would result in a great future renewal of church life in the Anglican Church of Canada. It is much easier to see now, almost 40 years after the publication of the BAS, how much of a capitulation to secular trends and modernist assumptions informed the language, structures, and content of that book. As we enter a postmodern age and the assumptions of modernity are not received without criticism by a jaded and sceptical youth, we can begin to appreciate how poorly the BAS has aged. The BCP can now be regarded as a countercultural icon of perennial wisdom and Christian truth, rather than an outdated relic of another era as portrayed in *Rites for a New Age*. I think it is important that the Prayer Book Society of Canada have the kind of institutional memory that can inform people of the origins of the alternative liturgies produced by our church, and the erroneous assumptions that often underlay their contents. All of this is to say that the Prayer Book Society of Canada has a role to play in whatever future God has planned for the Anglican Church in this country.

Finally, I ask that you continue to pray for the members of the National Council, for me personally, and for the work of the PBSC as a whole. It is worse than senseless to uphold a book of prayer without actually bothering to pray. Let us continue to bear witness to the Christian Faith in its Anglican expression, and to give glory to Almighty God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, to whom be all praise and honour, now and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gordon R. Maitland". The signature is enclosed within a large, hand-drawn oval shape.

The Rev'd Canon Dr. Gordon R. Maitland,
National Chairman of the PBSC