Anglicans! Who are we?

By Bishop George Elliott, Bishop-in-Residence, St. George's, St. Catharines

Introduction

Some of you, like me, were born into Anglican families and never really made a choice about being an Anglican. For others, you made a conscious choice to be an Anglican or are still wrestling with that decision. I find it interesting that you don't need to sign up to belong to the Anglican Church. You don't need to show credentials about your faith or your beliefs. We come, no questions asked and share in the life of St. George's or any other Anglican community to which we choose to belong. Of course there are expectations, but nobody is checking off a list or reprimanding us if we aren't meeting those expectations. There will be those who find this quite frustrating. I find it liberating. It models for me God's unconditional love for all of humankind and provides an environment in which we are loved and supported in our individual journey of faith.

I have often been asked, "What is an Anglican?" It brings to my mind many other questions. Who are we? Where do our origins lie? What does our Anglican Church look like today? How are we organized? What is a Bishop or an Archbishop, a Diocese, or a Church Province? What do we believe? How are decisions made? What role does the Archbishop of Canterbury play in the life of our church?

I am going to explore with you, in a series of articles, my attempts to answer these and other questions about being an Anglican. You will discover that Henry VIII did not create the Anglican Church in the 16th Century CE (Common Era). We Anglicans are part of the Christian family, whose common witness to the crucified, risen, and ascended Lord Jesus, dates back over 2000 years. We are part of "the one, holy, and apostolic church", to quote from the Nicene Creed. In baptism the Holy Spirit makes a home in our heart of hearts drawing us, in love, into God's universal family, the Church! We are Christians, living out our faith in the context of being Anglicans.

I hope you will find what I share informative, interesting, and helpful in understanding who you are as an Anglican and what our Anglican Church is all about as we journey together into the future that God has for us and for all of humankind.

The Origins of the Anglican Church - #1

Have you ever asked yourself what is an Anglican? It is easy to answer from the perspective of your own parish church. You are part of a community that knows you and seeks in a variety of different ways to support you and all of its members in a journey of faith. It calls you to worship and prayer. It calls you to respond to the needs of others. It calls you to offer yourselves in service to God and to God's world.

We belong to a church whose roots date back to the first century CE (Common Era). The Roman Empire expanded into Britain in the first three centuries CE. With the Roman Legions came women and men who shared the good news of Jesus Christ with the people of Britain. The church flourished. Three Bishops from Britain attended the Council of Arles in 314 CE.

In 2008 Linda and I attended the Lambeth Conference in Canterbury. I will have more to say about Lambeth Conferences in future articles. We visited St. Martin's church, in Canterbury, which is the oldest continuous place of Anglican worship in Great Britian. In the early 590s CE, King Ethelbert of Kent, a pagan, married Bertha, a Frankish princess who was a Christian. Pagans held beliefs contrary to Christians. Franks were a western European people living in what today would be Germany and France. Ethelbert supported Bertha's faith and converted a small Roman-British building into St. Martin's chapel for her use. He also sent to France for a priest to support her faith journey. That chapel became St. Martin's Church. Ethelbert was baptized in 596 CE after the arrival of St. Augustine, the Prior of a monastery in Rome who had been sent on a mission to Britian. A Prior is the head monk of a monastery. St. Augustine used St. Martin's for his base before establishing a monastery in Canterbury. In 601 CE, St. Augustine was appointed the first Archbishop of Canterbury by Pope Gregory I. The original Christ Cathedral in Canterbury was started. Since then, the See of Canterbury and its Archbishop have been seen as the first among equals in the eyes of Anglicans. The word 'See' comes from the Latin word for 'seat' and refers to the chair occupied by the bishop in the cathedral in the diocese where the bishop serves. Hamilton is the See City of our Diocese of Niagara. St. Martin's has continued to this day as a parish church.

Over the last two millennia and more, there is a long list of women and men who have served faithfully and nurtured the Christian witness in Great Britain and beyond. The majority by far are ordinary folk who, with God's help, sought to follow Jesus and witnessed in word and deed to God's love. Others carry the name Saint, like Alban, Columba, Bede, George, Dunstan, David, Chad, Cuthbert, Patrick, Hilda, Anselm, Julian of Norwich, Margaret, Thomas Cranmer, John Wyclif, Thomas Ken, Thomas a Becket, and William Laud to name but a few. You can google these folk to find out more about them.

From these deep roots has emerged a world-wide Anglican Communion that I will begin to explore with you in my article next week.

The Anglican Family Today - # 2

Having looked at the deep roots of our Anglican church, I want to turn now to our Anglican family today. Anglicans can be found in 165 countries around the world. There are approximately 85 million Anglicans living in 41 Ecclesiastical Provinces and 5 Extra-Provincial areas. An Ecclesiastical Province is a designated geographical area made up of a number of Dioceses. Some provinces, like Canada, are comprised of one country. Others are made up of a number of countries like the Church Province of Southern Africa which includes South Africa, Mozambique, Lesotho, Swaziland, and Angola. Extra Provincial Areas are smaller, one-diocese areas, overseen by the Archbishop of Canterbury and his delegate bishop. The Anglican Church in Bermuda is an example of an Extra-Provincial area. For a complete list of all these provinces and extra-provincial areas go to: https://ww.anglicancommunion.org/structures/member-churches.aspx.

Each Diocese, a defined geographical area, is overseen by its Diocesan Bishop. The word 'diocese' is derived from the Greek word 'dioikesis' meaning, 'administration and management'. Suffragan and/or Assisting bishops may work alongside the Diocesan Bishop. Suffragan comes from the Latin word 'suffragium' which means 'assistant'. Suffragan bishops are elected. Assisting bishops are appointed by the Diocesan Bishop to serve for a fixed period of time. Susan Bell is the Diocesan

Bishop of the Diocese of Niagara. Colin Johnson works with her as a parttime Assisting Bishop. I was a Suffragan Bishop in the Diocese of Toronto.

Each Province is overseen by an Archbishop. Archbishop Linda Nicholls is the Primate of the Anglican Church of Canada. Primate is the term used for the senior Archbishop of a Province. I got a kick out of hearing a number of years ago that the National Church office received an inquiry from a university in the United States that was doing research on 'primates' (apes).

In 1215 CE, the word Anglican was first used in the Magna Carta, an historic English document, drafted by Stephen Langton, the Archbishop of Canterbury. It stated that King John and his government were not above the law. It prevented the king from exploiting his power over the Barons and the English people. The word Anglican is derived from the Latin phrase 'Ecclesia Anglicana', translated as 'The English Church'.

In the mid-sixteenth century, the Church of England joined other groups across Europe in separating from the jurisdiction of the Bishop of Rome. This movement is known as the Protestant Reformation. It began on October 31, 1517, when Martin Luther, a German monk, nailed on the door of a church in Wittenburg, Germany, his 95 Theses of the reforms he sought in the Roman Catholic Church. The movement spread quickly across Europe. Reformers in England included Thomas Cranmer, the Archbishop of Canterbury and author of the first Book of Common Prayer, and King Henry VIII, whose divorce from Catherine of Aragon had been denied by Pope Clement VII. The Protestant Reformation saw the separation of the Church of England from the Roman Catholic Church, and the emergence of the Lutheran Church in Germany and Scandinavia, and the Presbyterian Church in Scotland, to name but a few.

The Church of England was now an autonomous church, marking a new chapter of ministry and organization. As you will read in the next article, the Church of England would continue to flourish and spread around the world.

The Early History of the Anglican Church in Canada - #3

On September 4, 1578, Canada became the first country in which Anglican worship took place outside of Great Britain. The Rev. Robert Wolfall was part of Martin Frobisher's second voyage to the Canadian Arctic. They were searching for the Northwest Passage to the Orient and the prize of gold. The ship moored off Baffin Island and the crew went ashore. To quote Frobisher, "Master Wolfall preached a Godly sermon, which being ended he also celebrated Communion. The celebration of the divine mystery was the first sign, seal, and confirmation of Christ's name, death, and passion ever known in these quarters."

In 1783, Samuel Seabury was consecrated a bishop and became the first bishop of the Episcopal Church in the United States. Having battled the English in the War of Independence, the American Anglicans looked to the Church of Scotland to ordain their new bishop establishing a second autonomous Anglican Church. The Church of Scotland preceded it. Instead of using Anglican, they chose Episcopal, indicating a church led by a bishop. They continued to be in communion with the Archbishop of Canterbury and were part of the growing Anglican family.

On August 12, 1787, Charles Inglis became the first bishop of the Church of England in British North America, now Canada. Inglis had immigrated from Ireland to the American colonies and was ordained a priest in 1758, serving in Delaware and then at Trinity Church in New York City. After the American Revolution, which he opposed, he returned to England and was soon consecrated a bishop. He moved to Nova Scotia and served in a diocese that included the Maritimes, New Brunswick, Quebec, and what is now Ontario from 1787 until his death in 1816. It is hard to imagine the challenges and hardships he must have faced back then.

All of these ventures were initiated by the growth of the British Empire as explorers sailed the seas to discover new lands and claim them for Great Britain and its Monarch. If you are close to my age you will remember maps in school with countries highlighted in red all around the world representing the British Empire. It was said, 'The sun never set on the Empire". It was quite impressive. With those explorers came missionaries from the Church of England. As well as bringing the message of the Gospel, most also brought British/European culture which was imposed upon the indigenous peoples in many countries. Indigenous culture and spirituality were seen as inferior and pagan. Sadly, here in Canada our indigenous sisters and brothers still live with the legacy of residential schools and a loss of their cultures and languages. The road to truth and reconciliation continues to be long.

In 1867 Charles Langley, Archbishop of Canterbury, convened the first Lambeth Conference. This was a gathering of all the Anglican bishops from around the world. It was held at Lambeth Palace in London, the home of the Archbishop of Canterbury. 76 bishops attended that conference. 7 were Canadian bishops. The Lambeth Conferences have continued to this day, usually meeting every ten years to worship together, talk together, and to plan together for the future of our world-wide Anglican communion. When Linda and I attended the Lambeth Conference in 2008 there were 680 bishops and 450 spouses in attendance. Unfortunately, because of issues that were dividing Anglicans, especially around sexuality, over 200 bishops and their spouses chose not to attend.

Our Anglican family has certainly grown from its humble roots and continues to grow today. In my next article I will look at the growth and structure of our Canadian Anglican family.

How is the Anglican Church of Canada Organized? - #4

We often hear the words Diocese, Metropolitan, Rector, and Deanery in announcements and prayers. Let's take a look at what they mean in the context of the Diocese of Niagara in which St. George's, St. Catharines is located. As I have said earlier, the Anglican Church of Canada is one of 42 Provinces in the world-wide Anglican communion. It is the largest geographical province. Our Primate, Archbishop Linda Nicholls, is the senior Bishop in Canada.

The Anglican Church of Canada is divided into four provinces – Canada (the Maritimes and Quebec), Ontario (Ontario and portions of northwestern Quebec and eastern Manitoba}, Rupert's Land (Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, Nunavut, and the Northwest Territories), and British Columbia and the Yukon. The senior bishop in each of these provinces is referred to as the Metropolitan and is an Archbishop. St. George's, St. Catharines is located in the Ecclesiastical Province of Ontario. Archbishop Anne Germond is our Metropolitan and she is the Bishop of the Diocese of Algoma. The word Metropolitan is derived from the Greek words 'meter', which means 'mother', and 'polis', which means 'city'.

Within each of these provinces are geographical areas called Dioceses. The word diocese comes from the Latin word 'dioecesis' which is derived from the Greek word 'dioikesis' and refers to the area or district overseen by a bishop. The Ecclesiastical Province of Ontario has seven dioceses: Ontario (See City is Kingston), Ottawa (See City is Ottawa), Algoma (See City is Sault Ste Marie), Moosonee (See City is Timmins), Toronto (See City is Toronto), Huron (See City is London), and Niagara (See City is Hamilton). Each Diocese is overseen by a Diocesan Bishop. Our bishop here in Niagara is Susan Bell.

Within each Diocese are parishes, like St. George's, St. Catharines, led by priests who are referred to as Rector, Incumbent, or Priest-in-charge. Originally, parishes were defined as the community within a specific geographical area that is served by a clergy person. You were seen as a member of the local church closest to where you lived. Nowadays, in most urban and suburban areas, parish borders have little or no meaning. Folks today find a church where they are nurtured in their faith and can participate in the life and ministry of the parish community. In rural areas one cleric will often serves a number of churches in what are called multipoint parishes. My first parish, the Parish of Minden, had three points. On a regular Sunday I had services at 8:00 am, 9:15 am, 11:15 am, and 2 pm. The word rector comes from the Latin word 'regere' and evolved to the Latin word 'rector', which meant 'ruler'. Along with the Rector, a parish may have other priests and deacons working with her/him as part of the ministry team. Here at St. George's, we have recently embarked on having Co-Rectors, Martha Tatarnic and Tom Vaughan, who work together along with our transitional deacon, Mike Degan.

There are other ways in which a Diocese can be divided. The Diocese of Niagara is divided into five geographical areas called Deaneries. St. George's is located in the Deanery of Lincoln. The Diocesan Bishop appoints a parish priest to a be an Archdeacon and a parish priest to be a Regional Dean in each Deanery. Archdeacons and Regional Deans serve as a liaison with the bishop and provide support to the other clergy in their Deanery. The regular meeting of all the clergy in a deanery is call a Clericus. Our Archdeacon is Sheila Van Zandwyk, Rector of the Church of the Transfiguration, St. Catharines. Our Regional Dean is the Rev. Canon Pamela Guyatt, Rector of St. John's, Jordan.

If you have made it to this point in this article, well done. The church, like any organization, has its own vocabulary. There will not be a quiz. In the next article I will explore the structure of the Anglican Church of Canada at the national, provincial, and diocesan levels.

Episcopally led and Synodically Governed - #5

The Anglican Church is episcopally led (that is, by bishops) and synodically governed (that is, by elected lay and clergy members together with the bishops). The word 'synod' is derived from the Greek word, 'synodos' which means' gathering'. Until 1853, Synods were gatherings of bishops and later included some clergy. At these gatherings decisions were made about doctrine and practice in the form of Canon Laws. In our Canadian church we have General Synods at the national level, Provincial Synods, and Diocesan Synods.

In October 1853, Bishop John Strachan, the first Bishop of Toronto, met with clergy and laity, who were all men, in a Diocesan Synod. It was the first Synod which included laity in the Anglican

communion, marking a new chapter in the decision-making of the church. Eventually, laity were included at all Diocesan, Provincial, and General Synods. Laity is the term given to those members of the church who are not clergy.

In 1924, the first female lay delegate to General Synod was elected by the Diocese of Caledonia, a diocese in British Columbia. Sadly, she was not allowed to be seated as a member as it was ruled that, 'in the Constitution of General Synod only men were contemplated when the law was made'. General Synod would need to change the constitution before women could be seated as members. That change took place in 1943. Clearly, this was a contentious issue within our church at the time. In 1946, Madeline Wodehouse was appointed a member of General Synod. In 1955 the first two women lay delegates to General Synod were elected by the Diocese of Toronto and the Diocese of Yukon. Women are now eligible to be elected to all General, Provincial, and Diocesan synods.

As we look at how the Anglican Church of Canada is governed, it is important to understand that within our world-wide Anglican Communion each Church Province is an independent body. Unlike the Roman Catholic Church, we Anglicans do not have an international bureaucracy. Our roots lie in the Church of England, but the Anglican Church of Canada is self-governing, as are the 41 other Church Provinces and five Extra Provincial Areas. We choose to affiliate with the other Anglican Provinces as part of the world-wide Anglican Communion and look to the Archbishop of Canterbury as the first among equals. However, the Archbishop of Canterbury has no authority outside of the Church of England. I will devote a future article to the 'Instruments of Unity' that bind us together as Anglicans around the world.

Each level of our church, national, provincial, and diocesan, is governed by a constitution and a set of canons which were approved by a synod. The word 'canon' comes from the Greek word 'kanon' which means 'measuring rod' or 'rule'. In the early 2000s the Anglican Communion Legal Advisors Network identified the following common principles of Canon Law: Order in the Church, the Anglican Communion, Ecclesiastical Government, Ministry, the Rites of the Church, Church property, and Ecumenical relations.

The Diocese of Niagara was founded in 1875. Thomas Brock Fuller was the first Diocesan Bishop. He was a godson of Sir Issac Brock, a famous War of 1812 General. The Diocesan Synod today includes the bishop, all the licensed clergy, lay delegates elected from every congregation in the Diocese, and appointed youth members.

Next week I will examine the "Solemn Declaration" which is the founding document of the Anglican Church in Canada.

The Solemn Declaration 1893 - #6

The first General Synod was held in Toronto in 1893. It was a gathering of all the Canadian bishops, from the existing dioceses, and the elected clergy and laity, again all men. The General Synod members accepted the Solemn Declaration as the basis of General Synod's Constitution, and they agreed that the Provincial system of four Ecclesiastical Provinces within the new 'Church of England in the Dominion of Canada' be maintained. The Solemn Declaration, which follows, established the Anglican Church of Canada's independence from the Church of England while still preserving the bonds of communion. It is well worth reading in full.

"*In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.*
We, the Bishops, together with the Delegates from the Clergy and Laity of the Church of England in the Dominion of Canada, now assembled in the first General Synod, hereby make the following Solemn Declaration:
We declare this Church to be, and desire that it shall continue, in full communion with the Church of England throughout the world, as an integral portion of the One Body of Christ composed of Churches which, united under the One Divine Head and in the fellowship of the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church, hold the One Faith revealed in Holy Writ, and defined in the Creeds as maintained by the undivided primitive Church in the undisputed Ecumenical Councils; receive the same Canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, as containing all things necessary to salvation; teach the same Word of God; partake of the same Divinely ordained Sacraments, through the ministry of the same Apostolic Orders; and worship One God and Father through the same Lord Jesus Christ, by the same Holy and Divine Spirit who is given to them that believe to guide them into all truth.
And we are determined by the help of God to hold and maintain the Doctrine, Sacraments, and Discipline of Christ as the Lord hath commanded in his Holy Word, and as the Church of England hath received and set forth the same in 'The Book of Common Prayer and Administration of the Sacraments and other Rites and Ceremonies of the Church, according to the use of the Church of England; together with the Psalter or Psalms of David, pointed as they are to be sung or said in Churches; and the Form and Manner of Making, Ordaining, and Consecrating of Bishops, Priests, and Deacons'; and in the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion; and to transmit the same unimpaired to our posterity."

A few observations are helpful. In the second paragraph the word 'Catholic', which we see also in the Apostle's and Nicene Creeds, means 'universal' and has no connection to the 'Roman Catholic' church. The words 'holy writ' refer to the 'Holy Bible'. The 'Ecumenical Councils' refer to seven councils that brought together bishops from the early Western churches centred in Rome and the early Eastern churches centred in Constantinople. The Councils were held between 325 CE and 787 CE. The bishops sought to reach an agreement on an orthodox faith and a unified church. Significant differences of opinion had arisen, which were dividing the early church. These councils led to agreements on the wording of the Nicene Creed and a unified understanding of the Trinity and the person of Jesus. The word 'orthodox' comes from the Greek words 'orthos' which means 'right' or 'true', and 'doxa' which means 'opinion'.

The core elements of this 1893 Solemn Declaration were included in the declarations I made and signed when I was ordained a deacon, a priest, and a bishop.

My next article will look at the Book of Common Prayer, first published in 1549, which laid out the doctrine, worship, and discipline of our Anglican family after the Reformation.

Our Book of Common Prayer - # 7

Anglicans are known as people of the book. Part of the changes in the worship of the Church of England during the Reformation, which I wrote about earlier, included the publication of the Book of Common Prayer, the BCP, in 1549 authored by Thomas Cranmer, the Archbishop of Canterbury. The BCP was revised in 1552 to further highlight the break from Roman Catholic practice and theology. The first significant change was that the BCP was written in English. Prior to the

Reformation, worship was all in Latin. Added to the BCP was the publication of the 'Authorized Version' of the Bible in English, a copy of which was placed in every church in England. For the first time, the people of England could hear God's word Sunday after Sunday and share in common worship together in English.

Thomas Cranmer took existing Roman Catholic rites and reshaped them into the services of Morning and Evening Prayer, and the Divine Liturgy, also known as Holy Communion or the Eucharist, in his new BCP. The word 'rite' is derived from the Latin word 'ritulis' meaning 'religious observance or ceremony'. Liturgy comes from the Latin word 'liturgia' and means 'the public work of the people together'. Holy Communion is one of two major Sacraments. The other is Baptism. A sacrament is 'an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual reality'. In the sacraments we take ordinary visible things, the bread and wine of Holy Communion and the water of Baptism, trusting, in a way we cannot see, that God is acting as God promised in nourishing us in our faith and welcoming us into the family of God.

The first two versions of the Book of Common Prayer also included a liturgical calendar and daily readings from the Bible for the Church Year; a Collect and readings for each Sunday and Holy Day; a Psalter (the Psalms); and services for Baptism, Confirmation and Catechism, Matrimony, Visitation of the Sick, Burial, Purification of Women after Childbirth, and Ash Wednesday. Collects are prayers designated for each Sunday, that collect the theme for the Sunday found in the readings. The word 'Collect' is derived from the Latin word 'collecto' which means 'gathering of the people together'. The Catechism is 'a summary of Christian terms in the form of questions and answers used for the instruction of those to be confirmed'. Liturgies for ordaining deacons, priests, and bishops were not included in the original BCP. They were published separately in what was called 'The Ordinal'.

The next significant revision of the BCP took place in 1662 during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I. This edition now included the ordination services, forms of prayer to be used at sea (reflecting the growing commerce on the seas), and the Articles of Religion in the form of the 39 Articles, originally authored by Thomas Cranmer, which were designed to show the theological differences between the Church of England and the Roman Catholic Church.

As the British Empire grew, the BCP went with it. Soon national churches emerged, each adopting the BCP as their primary book of worship. The BCP has been translated into over 150 languages. The first Canadian BCP, modeled after the 1662 BCP, was published in 1918 for the 'The Church of England in the Dominion of Canada'. A revision of the Canadian BCP was approved in 1962. It is still authorized by General Synod and used in many parishes. In Canada, the BCP has been translated into French, Inuktitut, Mohawk, and Cree and parts of it in a number of other Indigenous dialects and languages.

Next week I will turn to the Book of Alternative Services.

Our Baptismal Covenant in the Book of Alternative Services 1985 - #8

In the 1960s and 70s, the universal church entered into a period of liturgical renewal. With their Diocesan Bishop's permission, Anglican parishes around the world experimented using new liturgies. Here in Canada this resulted in the publication of the Book of Alternative Services (BAS) in 1985.

For me, one of the most significant changes in the BAS was the new service of Baptism, in particular, the Baptismal Covenant (pages 158-159). In my thirteen years of ministry as a bishop I led the congregation I was with in renewing our Baptismal Covenant at least once a month when I presided at confirmation services. It was a common theme in many of my sermons. I have said many times that when I was asked what a Christian is called to believe and do, I would turn first to this Baptismal Covenant. As an aside, this covenant was taken by the compilers of the BAS from The Episcopal Church's (USA) Book of Common Prayer which was published in 1979.

In this Baptismal Covenant we are asked first to reaffirm our belief in God the Father our creator, in God the Son our redeemer, and in God the Holy Spirit our sanctifier, using the words of the Apostle's Creed. I have chosen in this paragraph to use the term 'Father' and 'Son' recognizing that the church and society at large are wrestling with the limitations of this kind of gender identification. I am often concerned about the lenses through which I interpret what I see and seek to understand. It is why I added the descriptive adjectives, creator, redeemer, and sanctifier, after each. These terms are used in some modern creeds to replace Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. God the creator brought all that is into existence and that ongoing activity of God's creating continues. The word 'redeemer' first appeared in Middle English in the early 1400s CE. It is used in reference to Jesus, who is the one who forgives our sins/debts and restores us into a right relationship with God. The word 'sanctifier' comes from the Latin word 'sanctificare' which refers to the one who makes us holy, which means we belong to God.

Then come six questions which take us from the theological to the practical, to where the rubber hits the road. We are asked to continue to learn about our faith, to regularly receive the eucharist, and to pray, all in the context of a Christian community. We are called to resist evil but when we do err, to seek forgiveness and reconciliation. We are called to a life where our words are lived out in our actions. We are called to love others as we would have them love us, the Golden Rule. We are called to be advocates for justice and peace and to respect the dignity of every person, seeing each one as God sees them, as God's beloved ones. In 2013 the Anglican Church of Canada added a sixth question calling us 'to strive to safeguard the integrity of God's creation, and respect, sustain, and renew the life of the Earth'. I have included the full wording as it is not included in the older versions of the BAS.

For me, the most important words we say when we renew our Baptismal Covenant are, 'I will, with God's help'. The God who is revealed to us in the scriptures is proclaimed as being ever present in creation, in our midst, and in the hearts of those who follow God as their Saviour and friend. We are not handed an instruction book and then left on our own to try to figure it all out. It is why the covenant calls us to be in community where we can be nurtured and supported and offer our love and support to those who walk with us into God's future.

I will return next week with a look at General Synod which is the governing body of the Anglican Church of Canada.

What is General Synod Part 1 - # 9

I have now shared with you an introduction and eight articles about our beloved Anglican family. There are more articles to come. I want to thank those who have said how much they have been

enjoying my reflections. Your comments have been very encouraging. Please don't hesitate to ask me to clarify what I have written.

The Anglican Church of Canada is overseen by our Primate, Linda Nicholls and by General Synod, our national governing body. General Synod is made up of three Houses: the House of Bishops, the House of Clergy, and the House of Laity. Under normal circumstances, General Synod meets every three years in different locations across the country. In addition to attending to the business of the day, General Synod also elects the Primate. I have attended eight General Synods, three of which were occasions when a new Primate was elected - Michael Peers (1986), Andrew Hutchison (2004), and Fred Hiltz (2007).

The House of Bishops is comprised of all the active diocesan and suffragan bishops in the Anglican Church of Canada. An equal number of Clergy and Lay Delegates are elected by each diocese. The number of diocesan delegates is based on the membership population of a diocese, with there being a minimum of two clergy and two laity per diocese. In recent years, each diocese has also elected a Youth Delegate. They are part of the House of Laity. For the 2023 General Synod in Calgary, the Diocese of Niagara elected 3 clergy and 3 lay delegates, and a Youth Delegate which added to the 212 members who attended that General Synod.

For regular business the members sit either in diocesan groups or in predetermined clusters that mix up everyone. Motions are moved and seconded by their presenters and then debated by the members before a vote is taken. Most decisions require a simple majority vote in each of the three houses to pass. Motions requiring a change to the Constitution or Canons require a two-thirds majority vote in all three houses.

At the first session, the Primate presents her/his Primatial Address reviewing what has happened since the last Synod and setting the tone for all that lies ahead. The Anglican Church of Canada invites international guests from the Anglican Communion and Ecumenical guests who share their reflections on General Synod with its members. The word 'ecumenical' emerged in English in the 16th century CE from the Greek word 'oikoumenikos' which meant 'from the whole world'. Today it refers to all the denominations within the entire Christian community. There is also the opportunity to hear from the Indigenous Archbishop Chris Harper, and from the Council of the North, representing the remote dioceses of our church, and from the members of the Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples, ACIP.

General Synod elects members to the Council of General Synod, which carries on the business of the national church between General Synods. It meets twice a year in between General Synods. There are also elections for the six Standing Committees – Communications; Faith, Worship, and Ministry; Financial Management; Partners in Mission; Social and Ecological Justice; and Resources for Mission. Reports are received from each of these committees.

General Synods were one of my favourite church gatherings. Yes, there were times for business but also times for worship, fellowship, and celebrations with the local Anglican community. At some of the General Synods members had the opportunity to visit local churches for their Sunday morning worship.

Next week I will look at the scope of General Synod's authority and some of the important decisions it has made in recent years.

What is General Synod Part 2 - #10

Welcome back. In looking at the structures of our church here in Canada, it is important to remember two things. Firstly, each diocese, ecclesiastical province, and the national church are incorporated bodies governed by provincial or federal laws. Secondly, at every level, each is responsible for the oversight of specific aspects of the church's ministry and mission.

The Solemn Declaration, which I looked at in Article # 6, outlined the responsibilities delegated to General Synod by the dioceses that existed at the time. It affirmed that General Synod would consist of all the bishops and an equal number of clergy and laity, men at the time, from every diocese. At this first General Synod, Bishop Robert Machray, the Bishop of the Diocese of Rupert's Land, which covered all the land from Hudson Bay to the Rockies, was chosen to be the first Primate of the 'Church of England in the Dominion of Canada'. Our church's name was changed to the Anglican Church of Canada in 1955. Until 1969 the House of Bishops met in a separate space from the House of Clergy and Laity, communicating back and forth by notes! Since then, the only time the bishops meet separately is during the election of a Primate. The House of Bishops nominates candidates for Primate. The Houses of clergy and laity do the voting. A simple majority in each of the two houses is required to elect the Primate.

General Synod was given oversight for the doctrine and worship of the Anglican Church of Canada. Any change to the doctrine of our church or to resources for worship needs the approval of General Synod before it can be accepted or used in a diocese. Examples of doctrinal changes are allowing divorced persons to be re-married in the church, and for women, and later for gay and lesbian people, to be ordained deacons, priests, and bishops. The publications of a revised Prayer Book in 1962, the joint Anglican/United Church Red Hymn Book in 1971, the Book of Alternative Services in 1985, and Common Praise, a new hymn book, in 1998, were approved by General Synod.

General Synod was also given oversight for our relationships with the Anglican Communion, with other Christian denominations, and with those of other faiths. The best example of this was General Synod's approval of the Waterloo Declaration in 2001 which brought the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, the ELCIC, into full communion with the Anglican Church of Canada. I was at that Synod and watched with delight as our Primate, Michael Peers, danced around the arena floor with the Presiding Bishop of the ELCIC, Telmor Sartison, after the decision was made.

As an aside, one of the highlights of my ministry as a Suffragan Bishop in the Diocese of Toronto was playing a role in the merger of St. David's Anglican Church in Orillia with the local ELCIC congregation, Holy Cross. Martha Tatarnic was the Incumbent of St. David's at that time. The current pastor at St. David's Anglican-Lutheran Church is Lori Pilatzke, a rostered ELCIC cleric.

General Synod's mandate has expanded over the years especially in the area of social justice and advocacy. At every General Synod I attended there was always a long list of resolutions challenging policies and injustices around the world and offering our support to stand in solidarity with those who are suffering. Many of these resolutions were related to the efforts of our Indigenous sisters and brothers, both within our church and beyond, who sought justice, truth, reconciliation, and healing for the wrongs done against them by the church and by governments at all levels. I will have more to say about that journey in future articles.

In the next article I will look at the Primate's World Relief and Development Fund, PWRDF, which was created by General Synod in 1959.

The Primates World Relief and Development Fund - # 11

If you are a long time Anglican you will have heard about the Primate's World Relief and Development Fund, PWRDF. For a number of years St. George's has been involved with the group Pimatisiwin Nipi, (Living Water), created in 2013, to support PWRDF's water programme, initially in the northern Ontario Community of Pikangikum. In 2021, the scope broadened with the initiation of the Mishamikoweesh Water Partnership with 25 First Nations communities in Northern Ontario and Manitoba. This is one of many national and international development projects supported by PWRDF.

The church has been called from its very beginning to care for those in need. St. Paul's letters and the Acts of the Apostles speak regularly about raising funds to support widows and those facing famine.

On October 23,1958 news spread quickly of a coal mine disaster in Springhill, Nova Scotia. 174 miners were trapped by an underground explosion in the #2 Cumberland mine. 75 men were unable to be rescued and died in the mine. The Anglican Church of Canada made an appeal to every parish across the country for funds to support the families of those who had died. Over $100,000 was raised. In 1959 the General Synod created the 'Primate's World Relief Fund' in order to be able to respond quickly to similar disasters within Canada and beyond. In 1969 the fund was renamed the 'Primate's World Relief and Development Fund' in order to broaden its scope to include development projects. Since that time PWRDF has raised over $100 million.

Using the worldwide Anglican network, PWRDF has been able to work directly with local partners in responding to a disaster or in working on a development project. Its current focus for relief and development includes:

- "Educating people on wellbeing to improve the quality of life and promote human dignity promoting the quality of life."
- 'Adapting to climate change with conservation agriculture."
- 'Ensuring women and girls have the same rights and protections as men and boys.'
- 'Supporting reconciliation with Indigenous peoples through culture and language reclamation, responsive grants, and more.'
- Providing short-term and long-term support for people affected by natural and humanmade disaster.'
- 'Accompanying refugees and displaced people at home and abroad.'
- 'Inspiring Canadians to learn about PWRDF's partners and programmes.'

I encourage you to read more about the ministry of PWRDF at https://pwrdf.org and to support PWRDF.

Ministry to Indigenous Anglicans - # 12

I am back after a summer break ready to share some more insights into our beloved Anglican Church. I am writing this article on the ancestral lands of the Anishinaabe, the Haudenosaunee, and a multitude of Indigenous peoples. This land acknowledgement, which we use at the beginning of our worship services, is part of the ongoing process of healing and reconciliation with the Indigenous peoples of Canada in which our church has been engaged for many years.

What you will read comes from reflections on my experiences over the past 45 years of ministry in our church. I write from the perspective of a settler, whose ancestors arrived in what is now Long Island, New York thirty years after the Mayflower's arrival in 1620. Later, many of their descendants were United Empire Loyalists who moved to Canada after the American Revolution in the late 1770s. Other relatives of mine immigrated to Canada in the 1800s.

The story of the journey of Indigenous peoples in Canada is not mine to tell. I will do my best to write about what I have learned from my Indigenous sisters and brothers. However, I encourage you to find opportunities to learn directly from our Indigenous sisters and brothers themselves and listen to their stories. A brief bibliography is included at the end of this article.

As I have said in an earlier article, with the early explorers to North America came Christian missionaries who saw the Indigenous cultures as being pagan and totally against Christianity as they understood it at the time. Their arrival also brought diseases that devastated the Indigenous people killing up to 80% of their population because of their lack of immunity. These missionaries had some success in converting indigenous people to Christianity, but often with little or no sensitivity to the richness of their indigenous culture or religious practices.

In 1853 Henry Budd became the first Indigenous person to be ordained an Anglican priest in Canada. His father was Swampy Cree, and his mother was Metis. After his father's death he was raised by an English missionary, John West. Henry Budd was ordained and served in Saskatchewan and then in The Pas, Manitoba. Sadly, because he was an Indigenous person, the Church Missionary Society in England, which financially supported Anglican clergy working in Canada at that time, chose to pay Henry only half the annual stipend that a white married missionary would normally receive.

In 1862 Robert McDonald began his ministry in the Western Arctic. For forty years he ministered among the Kutchin peoples of the Yukon and Alaska, supporting the development of Indigenous clergy. His mother was half Ojibway and as a result of this he was treated by the Church Missionary Society as a second-class priest like Henry Budd. Sadly, it was a sign of worse things to come.

Men and women, like Henry Budd and Robert McDonald, helped to build faithful Indigenous Anglican communities all across Canada. However, over the past 200 years and more, the mistreatment of indigenous peoples and the establishment of Residential Schools has left a legacy of alienation towards the church and has scarred the lives of thousands of Indigenous people who suffered from loss of culture and language and from physical and sexual abuse.

At my first General Synod in Winnipeg in 1983, I had my initial opportunity to engage directly with my Anglican Indigenous sisters and brothers. Information about Residential Schools and their

effect on Indigenous peoples and communities was just starting to emerge. The pain was palatable when they told their stories. All of this began for me a journey which has led me to look at myself as one in whose roots lie the mistreatment of Indigenous peoples and as one who has tried through my life and ministry to seek a role in the process of healing and reconciliation.

Next week I will look at Residential Schools, many of which were run by the Anglican Church of Canada.

Bishop George Elliott

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Braiding Sweetgrass by Robin Wall Kimmerer (2013)
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Residential Schools Part 1 - # 13

In today's article my focus will be on Residential Schools and their devastating effect on the life and culture of Indigenous peoples in Canada. I remind you again that although I write about these events, this is not my story to tell. Please take time to listen to Indigenous voices, especially those who are Residential School survivors.

The Anglican Church opened a day school for Indigenous children in 1831 in Brantford, Ontario. The Federal Government system started Residential Schools in 1883 with the Roman Catholic, Anglican, Methodist, Presbyterian, and United Churches operating the schools on behalf of the Government. These schools took children from their Indigenous communities to live in residence from the age of 4 to 16. At some schools the children went home for the summer, but at others, the children had no connection with their families and their communities for years. The purpose of Residential Schools, to quote Duncan Scott, Department of Indian Affairs in 1920, was to 'get rid of the Indian problem…Our objective is to continue until there is not a single Indian in Canada that has not been absorbed into body politic and there is no Indian question." It was an act of cultural genocide. Children were taken forcibly from their communities to schools that were often hundreds of kilometers away. The family had no choice as Federal law mandated these schools. The children were prohibited from speaking their native languages, wearing traditional clothing, and having long hair. For generations these children lost their language and their culture. Worst of all, there is a long list of documented cases of physical and sexual abuse by the school staff. The children, now young adults, returned to their communities totally alienated from its culture and language and left with the scars of abuse. In 1931 there were 80 schools in operation. The last Anglican school closed in 1969. It is estimated that over 150,000 Indigenous children attended

these schools between 1831 and 1996. Over 9,000 children died while at these schools, many buried in unmarked graves on site.

In the 1970s and 1980s what had happened at these schools began to emerge in the public forum. From my perspective these legal actions were initially frowned upon by government and many church leaders, some claiming that nothing like this happened at these schools. However, soon legal cases against the perpetrators of physical and sexual abuse and against the Federal Government and the churches which ran these schools made it to the courts.

During this time the Anglican Church of Canada took steps with Anglican Indigenous leaders to address the legacy of its role in running Residential Schools. It began in 1980 when General Synod established a Council on Native Affairs, which was the forerunner of the Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples (ACIP). ACIP continues to provide national leadership to our church. The first Sacred Circle, a gathering of Anglican Indigenous leaders from across the country, was held in 1988 at Fort Qu'Appelle, Saskatchewan. The 12th Sacred Circle gathering was held in 2023 at Ramara, Ontario. In 1991 a Residential School Working Group was formed.

On August 6, 1993, our Primate, Archbishop Michael Peers, offered an apology to the Indigenous people in our church at the Sacred Circle gathering in Minaki, Ontario. The apology followed three intensive days where Residential School survivors shared their stories of pain and abuse. Elder Vi Smith responded to the Primate acknowledging his words and accepting his apology. The apology began with these words. "I accept, I confess before God and you, our failures in the residential schools. We failed you. We failed ourselves. We failed God." For a video of the entire apology go to https://www.anglican.ca/tr/apology.

In 2005 the seventh Sacred Circle gathering in Piniwa, Manitoba proposed the appointment of a National Indigenous Bishop. I was at the General Synod in Winnipeg in 2007 when Mark MacDonald, the bishop of the Diocese of Alaska in the Episcopal Church, officially became our first National Indigenous Bishop. He was followed by Archbishop Chris Harper, the former bishop of the Diocese of Saskatoon, in 2023. There are currently ten Indigenous Bishops serving as either Diocesan or Suffragan Bishops in the Dioceses of Saskatchewan, the Spiritual Area of Mishamikoweesh, Toronto, Calgary, The Northern Lights (formerly Rupert's Land), and the Arctic.

I will continue next week looking at the on-going process of truth, reconciliation, and healing in our church.

Residential Schools Part 2 - # 14

I am continuing in this week's article to share with you my understanding of our church's response to Residential Schools.

During this time the Federal Government and the churches that operated Residential Schools were facing a growing number of lawsuits, which when completed, called for significant financial compensation to the victims of physical and sexual abuse. On September 19, 2007, government and church entities along with the Assembly of First Nations and other Indigenous organizations, came to a consensus bringing into place the 'Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement'. Part of the agreement called for the Anglican Church of Canada to contribute $15 million as its

share to the compensation fund. The agreement also called for the establishment of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

I remember well attending meetings of the House of Bishops, General Synod, and Provincial Synod during this time. The Diocese of Toronto had no Residential Schools, but the largest population of Indigenous peoples lived within the boundaries of the diocese. We continued to hear stories from Residential School survivors. We listened to diocesan leaders across the country who were concerned about being bankrupted by settlement costs. We dialogued with the Indigenous people of our church who were, along with us, seeking a way forward with truth and reconciliation. Our church did raise the $15 million dollars with the majority coming from Anglicans like you and me. You may have given to this appeal.

On June 1, 2008, the Federal Government established the Royal Commission on Truth and Reconciliation, (TRC), under the leadership of former Senator Murray Sinclair. The TRC was 'mandated to document the history and impacts of the Residential School system' and 'to create as complete an historical record as possible of the schools and their legacy.' The TRC spent six years travelling across Canada and interviewing over 6500 witnesses, most of whom were Residential School survivors. Many who were interviewed were Indigenous Anglicans. A significant resource for the TRC were the archives of the Anglican Church of Canada and of the Dioceses where Residential Schools were located. In June 2015 the TRC released its report with 94 Calls to Action. I encourage you to go online and Google the TRC and its Calls for Action. You will find summaries of the TRC's recommendations and written testimonies and videos, many of them very painful, of Residential School survivors sharing their journeys.

The Anglican Church continues to this day to engage in healing ministries with our Indigenous sisters and brothers. Although individual financial compensation can be of help, it does little to heal the wounds of abuse or to restore the loss of language and culture. I want to highlight examples of how we, as the Anglican Church of Canada, are engaged in this healing process.

For 25 years the Anglican Church of Canada's 'Anglican Healing Fund' has supported projects in response to the Residential School system. In 2022 alone, despite lingering COVIID, it supported the following new projects, and other ongoing work.

- Gatherings for children with special needs in McLeod, Alberta.
- The High Bush healing camp in Brocket, Alberta.
- The Kiskatsin Wellness project for disabled persons in Cardston, Alberta.
- The Mindoo Mnsing Buffalo Sundance ceremonial gathering of Indigenous peoples across North America in Wikwemikong, Ontario

As I have written about earlier, St. George's participates in the Pimatisiwin Nipi, (Living Water) project, which seeks to bring clean water to Indigenous communities.

Next week, in my final article on our Anglican Indigenous sisters and brothers, I will look at the origin of Orange Shirt Day, September 30th, and at the emergence of training centres and schools for Indigenous church leaders.

Orange Shirt Day - # 15

September 30th is Orange Shirt Day. Its origins lie in Commemoration Project and Reunion events that took place in Williams Lake, BC in May 2013. The event brought together survivors from St.

Joseph's Mission Residential School which operated from 1891 until 1981. The idea of an Orange Shirt Day came from Chief Fred Robbins who was a residential school survivor. It was inspired by the story of Phyllis Webstad. On June 3, 2021, after a number of attempts, our Federal Government declared September 30th a National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.

Phyllis Webstad is Northern Seewpeme (Shuswap) from the Stsweem'c Xgat'tem First Nation (Canoe Creek Indian Band) in British Columbia. In 1973/74 she spent one year at St. Joseph's Mission Residential School. She was six years old. She lived with her grandmother on the Dog Creek reserve. Despite being poor, Phyllis' grandmother bought her a new outfit for school. She picked a shiny orange shirt with a string that laced up the front. When Phyllis arrived at the school, they stripped her, taking away all her new clothes which she never saw again. She did not understand why this had happened. To quote Phyllis, "the colour orange has always reminded me of that and how my feelings did not matter, how no one cared how I felt like I was worth nothing."

When Phyllis was 13 years old and in Grade 8 she gave birth to her son Jack. Sadly, her grandmother and mother had both attended residential schools for ten years, stripping them of their language and culture and the experience of being parented. Thankfully, with the help of her Aunt Agnes, she was able to raise Jack and have him know her as his mother.

Phyllis began a journey of healing when she was 27, finally regaining her sense of self-worth that had been lost in her Residential School experiences. She went on to earn Diplomas in Business Administration and in Accounting. In 2017 she received a Distinguished Alumni Award from Thompson Rivers University for her 'unprecedented impact on local, provincial, national, and international communities through the sharing of her orange shirt story'. Phyllis is the Founder and Ambassador of the Orange Shirt Society. She has written two books, 'Orange Shirt Story' and 'Phyllis' Orange Shirt' (a children's book) that I recommend to you to read. The link to the Orange Shirt Society is info@orangeshirtday.org.

Orange Shirt Day's tag line is 'Every Child Matters'. September 30th was chosen as this was the time of year when children were taken from their homes, often forcibly, to attend Residential Schools. It is interesting to note that the color orange has represented sunshine, truth-telling, health, regeneration, strength, and power in Indigenous First Nations for millennia. I hope you will find an Orange Shirt to wear this September 30th.

As I conclude this series of articles on our Anglican Church and its journey with the Indigenous people of Canada, I remind you again that what I have written about is not my story to tell. I hope I have opened the way for you to find ways to hear these stories directly from our Indigenous sisters and brothers.

Many years ago, when I was the Incumbent of the Parish of Minden, I learned this song one summer. It was part of our Vacation Church School material.

> Black and white and red and yellow, God loves us everyone.
> Black and white and red and yellow, God loves us all.
> God has no special people; they are all one to God.
> Black and white and red and yellow, God loves us all.

In its simplicity, we are reminded that in God's love, all children matter!

Mikwec (Thank you)

What should I call you? - # 16

A quick addendum to my articles on our church's relationship with the Indigenous people of Canada. There are a number of Anglican training schools across the country preparing Indigenous Anglicans for ministry. Here is a list of some of them and a link you can follow to get more information.

The Arthur Turner Training Centre www.arcticnet.org/atts
Iqaluit, NU (Diocese of the Arctic)
The Henry Budd College for Ministry https://henrybuddcollege.org
The Pas, MB (Diocese of Brandon)
The James Settee College for Ministry www.skdiocese.com/ministry/james-settee-college
Prince Albert, SK (Diocese of Saskatchewan)
The Dr. William Winter School for Ministry https://211north.ca/record/65300540/
Kingfisher Lake, ON (Indigenous Spiritual Ministry of Mishamikoweesh)

Now to a question I am often asked, 'What should I call you?' The Anglican Church, and others, have a lot of language around how ordained leaders are addressed. During my time as a Suffragan Bishop in Toronto, I attended an anniversary dinner for St. Andrew's Church in Aliston. I had a conversation with a woman in her nineties and her daughter. The older woman kept calling me 'Your Highness' only to be corrected by her daughter each time saying, "He is a bishop not your Highness." In the end the mother turned to her daughter and said, "I don't care what you say, I am calling him Your Highness."

My personal preference is for people to call me George, which is the name I was given at my baptism. However, as my illustration showed, everyone has their own preferences on how to address a person. Out of respect, many people are not comfortable calling a bishop, a priest, or a deacon by her/his given name. Personally, I am comfortable with whatever a person chooses to call me.

When I was a parish priest, the most common address used was Father George. I would also get Reverend George or Reverend Elliott. Technically, these latter forms of address are used in a written address. Priests and deacons are 'The Reverend'. A bishop is 'The Right Reverend'. An archbishop is 'The Most Reverend'. 'Right' reverend and 'Most' reverend are honorific titles given to bishops and archbishops respectively. The word reverend has its origin in 15th Century middle English and was derived from the Latin word 'reverendus' which meant 'to stand in awe of' or 'to revere'. In conversation, Bishops may be addressed as 'Bishop X', while Archbishops can be addressed as either 'Archbishop X' or 'Your Grace''. Occasionally you hear people refer to a Diocesan Bishop as 'Lord Bishop' which comes from English bishops being members of the House of Lords. In is not applicable in Canada.

At the parish level, the priest can be referred to in a number of ways. During vacancies, or in some cases during probationary periods, the cleric is referred to as the 'Priest in Charge'. Here in the Diocese of Niagara, the cleric in charge, or clerics in our case, are referred to as the 'Rector'. The word rector is derived from the Latin word 'rectour' which meant 'to rule. In the 15th Century, rector referred to the head of a college or religious community. The other term that is used for a cleric in charge of a parish is the Incumbent. In my early years as a priest in the Diocese of Toronto the

appointment as a Rector carried with it a clause that allowed the cleric to stay in the parish for as long as he or she wished. However, an issue arose of a Rector being incapacitated just before his retirement date which meant he was not able to tender his resignation. If the bishop withdrew the cleric's appointment there would have been serious implications to that cleric's pension. As a result, the Canons, the laws of the church, were amended by Diocesan Synod and clerics began to be appointed as Incumbents, eliminating the lifelong clause. However, many clerics still refer to themselves as Rectors. It is interesting how things like this evolve over time.

Next week I am going to begin a three-part series looking at the church year, how our Sunday readings are chosen, and the origins of our weekly Collects (the prayer for each Sunday).

The Church Year - # 17

The Church Year, or Liturgical Calendar, is different from the secular calendar. The Church year follows the events of Jesus' life. The key to it is the date of Easter. Once that is determined, you work backwards and forwards to get the dates that, like Easter, vary each year. Easter falls on the first Sunday, after the first full moon, after the Spring equinox. This method for calculating Easter came from the Ecumenical Council of Nicaea in 325 AD, following the pattern used in Judaism to determine the Feast of the Passover, which is the first Saturday, after the first full moon, after the spring Equinox. Are you still with me? Christmas (December 25th), Epiphany (January 6th), the Transfiguration (August 6th), and All Saints' Day (November 1st) are examples of feast days fixed to dates in the secular calendar.

The Church year starts with Advent, beginning on the 4th Sunday before Christmas. Advent is derived from the Latin words 'ad venire' which mean 'to come'. It is the season when we prepare for both the coming of Jesus' birth and for Jesus' coming at the end of time. The Christmas season follows Advent and lasts for 12 days, thus the 'Twelve Days of Christmas' and its partridge in a pear tree.

We then start the season of Epiphany on January 6th which takes us to the Sunday before Ash Wednesday. The word epiphany is derived from the Latin 'epiphania' which means 'to reveal'. It always begins with the Baptism of Jesus and ends with Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration. On both of those Sundays we hear the words, 'This is my beloved son, with whom I am well pleased'. We are reminded that God's plan in sending Jesus was to reveal the Kingdom of God to all people.

Ash Wednesday ushers in the penitential season of Lent. The word Lent has its origins in the Old English word 'lencten' which meant the 'spring season'. In Latin it is connected to the word 'quadraginta', meaning forty, which refers to the forty days of Lent. The forty days of Lent do not include the Sundays in Lent. The final week of Lent, Holy Week, takes us from Palm Sunday to Maundy Thursday, to the crucifixion of Jesus on Good Friday to Holy Saturday.

On Easter Sunday we move into a fifty-day celebration of Jesus' being raised from the dead. It often begins with the Easter Vigil on the Saturday Eve before Easter. In the early church, Christian converts spent weeks preparing for their baptism on Easter morning. They would spend the entire Holy Saturday night in a vigil of prayer and readings. At dawn they were led to the water's edge to be baptized and then shared in their first Eucharist. On the fortieth day of Easter, we celebrate the

Feast of the Ascension, on which Jesus was taken up to heaven.

Fifty days after Easter we celebrate the Feast of Pentecost, the day on which God sent the Holy Spirit to dwell in the hearts of all God's people. It ushers in the longest season of the Church Year, the Season of Pentecost or Ordinary Time. In the Book of Common Prayer, it is referred to as the Season of Trinity. The Sunday after Pentecost is Trinity Sunday celebrating the only Theological Feast Day in the Church year and the only feast with no connection to events in the Bible. During Ordinary Time we follow Jesus' earthly ministry of proclaiming the good news and offering healing and hope to all in need. The season ends on the Feast of Christ the King which brings the Church year to an end.

Each Season is marked by a liturgical colour which is why the church hangings on the altar and lectern and the clergy's vestments change from season to season. Advent is blue, Christmas is white, Epiphany is green, Lent is purple, Holy Week is red, Easter is White, the feast of Pentecost is red, and Ordinary Time or the Season of Pentecost is green. All the feast days related to Jesus' life are white. Scattered throughout the Church Year are the feast days of Saints, which are white, and the feast days of Martyrs (women and men who died for their faith), which are red. To read more about the Church Year calendar and a list of Saints Days, go to the Book of Alternative Services pages 14-33.

Next week I will look at how the Sunday readings are determined as the church moves through the Church year

Where do our Sunday Readings come from? - # 18

Today I turn to the scripture readings that we hear every Sunday and on Feast Days throughout the church year. The term used for these collections of readings is 'Lectionary'. It comes from the Latin, 'legere' which means 'chosen, read'. The early church followed the Jewish practice of reading passages from the Hebrew Bible, or Old Testament, at its services. In the 3rd century CE readings were added from the New Testament which had been recently compiled.

The original Anglican 1549 Book of Common Prayer included a two-year Daily Lectionary and a one-year Sunday/Feast Day Lectionary. The daily readings were used at Morning and Evening Prayer services. The Sunday/Feast Day readings were used at celebrations of the Eucharist/Holy Communion. In the 1958 Canadian Book of Common Prayer the two-year daily cycle is listed on pages xvi-xlvii. The Lectionary for the Sunday and Feast Day readings are printed out in full on pages 94-330. They include a reading from either the Old Testament or from Acts, the Epistles, or Revelation, from the Psalms, and from the Gospels, either Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John. The word 'epistle' means a 'letter' and is derived from the Greek word 'epistellein' which means 'send news'.

A major change in the Sunday/Feast Day Lectionary took place in 1969 following the Roman Catholic Vatican II Conference when a new three-year Sunday Lectionary was produced. It provided the opportunity for worshippers to hear far more of the Bible over three years, Years A, B, and C, as this new Lectionary included four readings each Sunday: an Old Testament/Hebrew Bible reading, a Psalm, a reading from either Acts, the Epistles, or Revelation, and a Gospel reading.

In 1978 a number of North American Protestant and Roman Catholic churches, including Lutherans and Episcopalians, formed an ecumenical group called the Consultation of Common Texts (CCT). In 1983 they published the 'Common Lectionary' modeled after the 1969 Roman Catholic lectionary. The Anglican Church of Canada adopted the Common Lectionary in 1985 and included it in the 1985 Book of Alternative Services, pages 262 – 449. As well as providing the opportunity to hear more scripture on a weekly basis, it also was a symbol of unity amongst the participating churches who were all reading the same lessons on the same Sunday. The BAS also includes a two-year lectionary of daily readings, which you can find on pages 450 – 497, and a two-year lectionary of readings for a daily Eucharist, on pages 498 – 523.

In response to criticism and to strengthen the relationship between Old Testament and Gospel readings, revisions were made to the Common Lectionary. In 1992 the CCT published the 'Revised Common Lectionary', which is still in use today by the Anglican, Lutheran, Roman Catholic, United, and Presbyterian Churches and others here in Canada as well as in the United States and in other parts of the world.

In Year A, most of the Gospel readings come from Matthew. In Year B they are from Mark and in Year C from Luke. Readings from John's Gospel are read at various times in all three years. On some Sundays the Old Testament/Hebrew Bible reading and the New Testament reading connect to the theme of the Gospel reading, particularly in the Advent, Christmas, Lenten, and Easter seasons. At other times the lectionary takes us through an Old Testament Book or through parts of Acts, or an Epistle, or parts of Revelation consecutively. The theme of the Psalm usually connects to the Old Testament/Hebrew Bible reading.

As a preacher who has used the Common and Revised Common lectionary exclusively through my 45 years of ministry, I have been enriched and challenged. The enrichment has come from being able to tap into the wisdom of God's written word from the Book of Genesis to the Revelation of John. The challenge lies in having to confront difficult passages of scripture which again and again push me to the edges as I wrestle with them in preparing my sermon. In both cases they have nurtured me, and I hope, have nurtured those who heard them read and then listened as I sought in my sermon to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ.

Next week I will be looking at the prayers we call 'The Collect of the Day'.

What is a Collect? - # 19

Each Sunday in the Eucharist the Celebrant offers a prayer before the readings. This prayer, which is different each Sunday, is called the Collect of the Day. The word 'Collect' comes from the Latin word 'Collecta' which means 'the gathering of the people'. It evolved to represent collecting the theme of the Sunday's readings into one concise prayer. There is a different Collect for every Sunday in the Church Year and for all of the Feast Days.

Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury, translated the Latin Collects, used in the Roman Catholic Mass, for the first Book of Common Prayer in 1549. The Collect generally follows a five-part format. Here it is broken down using the Collect for this Sunday, BAS p. 388

- An invocation to God – "Lord God 0ur redeemer,"
- Acknowledgement – "who heard the cry of your people and sent your servant Moses to lead them out of slavery,"

- Petition – "free us from the tyranny of sin and death,"
- Aspiration – "and by the leading of your Spirit bring us to our promised land;"
- Doxology – 'through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen"

The 1962 Canadian Book of Common Prayer, BCP, followed the same pattern of the Church of England's Books of Common Prayer. Challenges arose when the Common Lectionary was introduced in the Book of Alternative Services. In the BCP the Lectionary is just one year, so the Collect reflected the theme of those readings. However, with the three-year lectionary in the BAS, there are often different themes each year on the same Sunday. This was also true for the Prayers over the Gifts and the Prayers after Communion for each Sunday and Feast Day which were introduced in the BAS. In 2019, General Synod authorized the use of 'Alternative Collects' for each of Years A, B, and C and alternative Prayers over the Gifts and Prayers after Communion allowing for the specific theme in each Sunday over the three-year cycle of readings.

The authors of the BAS also moved around some of the Collects. As an example, the BCP Collect for Advent 1, "Stir up, O Lord, the wills of your faithful people…", began the Church Year. On a lighter note, it was taken to be a reminder that it was time to stir up your Christmas/ Figgy puddings in preparation for Christmas. This Collect in the BAS is now used in early September, encouraging folks to 'stir up their hearts' as they return after the summer and begin the church's programme year. Another change was to use the Collect and readings for the Transfiguration of Jesus on the last Sunday of Epiphany.

I have two favourite Collects. One is the Collect for Ash Wednesday. "Almighty and everlasting God (Invocation), you despise nothing you have made and forgive the sins of all who are penitent (Acknowledgement). Create and make in us a new and contrite heart, (Petition) that we, worthily lamenting our sins, and acknowledging our brokenness, may obtain of you, the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness (Aspiration); through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever (Doxology). Amen." (BAS p.281) I continue the tradition I grew up with and say this prayer every day in Lent after the Collect of the Day.

The second is the Collect that is used at the ordination of deacons, priests, and bishops. "O God of unchangeable power and eternal light, look favourably on your whole church, that wonderful and sacred mystery. By the effectual working of your providence, carry out in tranquility the plan of salvation. Let the whole world see and know that things which were cast down are being raised up, and that things which had grown old are being made new, and that all things are being brought into perfection by him through whom all things were made, your Son Jesus Christ our Lord; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen." (BAS p. 634)

The Instruments of Unity - # 20

I have often been asked, 'What holds us together as Anglicans?'. We are now a family of 41 national church provinces and 5 extra-provincial areas. In the latter part of the 20th century CE, four 'Instruments of Unity' emerged in an effort to understand how the Anglican family could continue to function and walk together amidst growing controversies and division. The four 'Instruments of Unity' are:

- The Archbishop of Canterbury

- The Lambeth Conference
- The Anglican Consultative Council
- The Primates' Meeting

In my first article I made reference to St. Augustine who was appointed as the first Archbishop of Canterbury in 601 CE. Since then, his successors have been looked to as the first among equals, as the head of the Anglican Church, first in Great Britain and then around the world. The Archbishop of Canterbury, currently Justin Welby, has no canonical, legal jurisdiction outside the Church of England. However, as a successor of St. Augustine, the Archbishop of Canterbury has been and continues to be seen as an Instrument of Unity holding us together as an Anglican family.

In my fourth article I wrote about the Lambeth Conference which draws together all the bishops of the Anglican Communion every ten years. The first one was held in 1867. Linda and I attended the Lambeth Conference in 2008. For me it was a life-changing experience. Along with 650 other bishops and 450 spouses, our common witness shone brightly for three weeks as an 'Instrument of Unity'. We worshipped, prayed, and broke bread together. We participated in daily Bible study. We partook in discussions on a variety of critical issues facing the church and the world. We ate meals together, laughed and cried together, and even did laundry together in the student residences. We walked side by side as sisters and brothers, all followers of Jesus and members of our beloved Anglican family.

The Anglican Consultative Council is the only 'Instrument of Unity' that includes priests and laypeople, along with Bishops and Archbishops. This council was created in 1968 by resolution of the Lambeth Conference. It meets every two or three years with representatives from all of the Anglican Church Provinces. Canada, being one of the larger Provinces, sends one bishop, one priest, and one layperson who are appointed by General Synod. Every province is represented by at least one person. Up to six members are appointed by the council, two of whom must be women and two of whom must under 28 years old. Remembering that the Council is a consultative body, it seeks to share information from the provinces, to advise on the establishment of new Provinces, to advise on policy setting for world mission, to encourage ecumenical and inter-faith involvement, and to advise on problems facing our church. The Council employs a Secretary General, currently Bishop Anthony Poggo from South Sudan, who acts as an ambassador between meetings. He works out of the Communion Office in London, England. In my mind, the Anglican Consultative Council is the broadest and most inclusive "Instrument of Unity'.

The 4th 'Instrument of Unity' is the Primates' Meeting. It was established by Donald Coggan, Archbishop of Canterbury, in 1978 as an opportunity for 'leisurely thought, prayer, and deep consultation.' The Primates, who are Archbishops of Church Provinces, generally meet every two years with the Archbishop of Canterbury as the Chair and the Secretary General. As with the other three instruments, the coming together of the Primates is a tangible sign of unity amidst all that would otherwise divide us.

As a final note, each Province within our Communion is independent and is governed by the canons, the laws, determined by that Province and by the Dioceses within it. Needless to say, there are often significant differences of opinion. Issues like divorce, the ordination of women, the marriage of gay couples, and so many others, have put enormous strain on the unity of our church family. In some cases, it has led to schism, yet the 'Instruments of Unity' remind us that we are still walking together as an Anglican family.

The Marks of Mission - # 21

I turn today to the mission of our Anglican Church. St. Matthew ends his gospel with what has been called the Great Commission: 'Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.' (Matthew 28:19-20) In word and in deed we are all called to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ.

In 1984 the Anglican Consultative Council, meeting in Badagry, Nigeria, received the report of 'The Working Section I; Mission and Ministry'. This report identified four 'Marks of Mission'. At the Anglican Consultative Council meeting in Cardiff, Wales in 1990, a fifth 'Mark of Mission' was added. The Anglican Church of Canada, the Anglican Consultative Council, and the Lambeth Conference have not accepted them by resolution, but all three and other Church Provinces have affirmed these five 'Marks of Mission'. As I read them, they echo for me our Baptismal Covenant in the Book of Alternative Services, pages 158-159. The 'Marks of Mission' are:

- To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom.
- To teach, baptize, and nurture new believers.
- To respond to human need by loving service.
- To seek to transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind, and to pursue peace and reconciliation.
- To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth.

How are these 'Marks of Mission' reflected in the life and witness of our community of faith here at St. George's, St. Catharines?

To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom

Each week our community gathers for worship on a number of occasions. In the readings, the music, the sermon, the prayers, and in the Eucharist, Good News is proclaimed.

To teach, baptize, and nurture new believers

Throughout the year we welcome the newly baptized who, along with their families and godparents, have participated in baptismal preparation. We also offer on-going opportunities for Bible study and learning.

To respond to human need by loving service

Our Breakfast programme immediately jumps out at me, along with our Community Dinners and Meal Bag programme.

To seek to transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind, and to pursue peace and reconciliation

On Wednesday, November 20th St. George's hosted the Diocesan Transgender Day Service to memorialize those who have died as a result of transphobia. The event is co-sponsored by Brock Pride and the Faith and Life Centre at Brock University.

To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth
For many years St. George's has participated in projects to bring fresh water to Indigenous communities beginning first in Pikangikum, in Northern Ontario. This has evolved into the Mishamikoweesh Water project in a number of communities in Northern Ontario and Manitoba.

Now it is time for some homework. I have deliberately only given one or two examples in each category. I invite you to do two things. First of all, identify other examples of the many ministries and activities that are 'Marks of Mission' here at St. George's. Then, take some time to reflect on the 'Marks of Mission' that you can identify in your own life.

Our baptismal call to journey in faith with Jesus sends us out into the world to be God's hands and feet in proclaiming God's Kingdom in our midst. Thank you for all you do here at St. George's and in your own personal witness to offer hope to the world today.

Conclusion

From mid-April until December 1st I have explored with you the history of our beloved Anglican Church of Canada and what I believe are some of the important elements of our Christian faith and practice. We are, first and foremost, followers of Jesus Christ who have chosen to express our faith within the context of the Anglican Church. Some of you were baptized as infants and grew into your faith as Anglicans. Others of you made a decision to become an Anglican later in your life. Regardless, we Anglicans are part of a world-wide family seeking, with God's help, to proclaim in word and deed the Good News of Jesus Christ.

I began by looking at the roots of Anglicanism which lie in the 1st Century CE Great Britain. I followed on from those beginnings to the Reformation in 16th century CE when the Church of England separated itself from the Roman Catholic Church. Next came the early history of the Anglican Church in Canada culminating in the Solemn Declaration in 1893 which marked the beginning of an independent Anglican Church in Canada. Our Church here in Canada is one of many independent Anglican churches that look to the Archbishop of Canterbury as a symbol of our unity and choose to walk together as a global Anglican family.

I shared with you articles about our worship which is centred around the use of the Book of Common Prayer and the Book of Alternative Services, the Revised Common Lectionary (RCL), the Church Year, and the Collects.

I examined with you the organizational structures at the national, provincial, and diocesan levels pointing out that we Anglicans are Episcopally led by bishops and Synodically governed by General Synod, Provincial Synod, and Diocesan Synod. One of my articles focused on the Primate's World Relief and Development Fund (PWRDF) which just adopted a new name, "Alongside Hope/Auprès de l'espoir".

This fall, I wrote a series of articles on our ministry with the Indigenous people of Canada. It included a look at the history of Residential Schools and the horrific legacy those schools left on thousands of Indigenous women and men who were physically and sexually abused and who lost their language, their culture, and their hope. I looked at the ways in which our Anglican Church has responded through apologies, a healing fund, and an on-going process of healing and reconciliation. I encouraged everyone to wear an orange shirt on September 30th which marks

Canada's National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. I find it very encouraging that St. George's has been active in water projects with Indigenous communities, initially with the Pikangikum community and now through the Mishamikoweesh Water Partnership with 25 First Nations communities in Northern Ontario and Manitoba.

My final series of articles focused on the 'Instruments of Unity' which holds us together in our world-wide Anglican family and the 'Marks of Mission' which identify the areas to which God calls our church to proclaim Good News in word and deed.

I want to thank you for taking time to read these articles and for your positive feedback. It has been an enjoyable experience doing the research and writing each week. I have put all the articles into a booklet format. If you would like a copy, please email me at bishopgeorge@sympatico.ca and I will send one to you.

St. George's Anglican Church has been a witness in word and deed to the Good News of Jesus Christ in this community of St. Catharines for 233 years. As the children's song goes,

> The church is not building, the church is not a steeple,
> the church is not a meeting place, THE CHURCH IS THE PEOPLE.
> I am the church, you are the church, we are the church together.
> All who follow Jesus, all around world, we are the church together.

We, my sisters and brothers, are the church, the people of God, Anglicans, who along with all who follow Jesus Christ as their Saviour and Redeemer, walk with hope into the future God has for us and for all of humankind.

Blessings,

Bishop George Elliott