

# THAW!

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## IN THIS ISSUE – RATING THE PRIMATIAL CANDIDATES

Happily, I have been able to work through most of the effects of the death of my mother-in-law on March 24, including travel to Victoria to inter her ashes in the site of her husband's burial 22 years ago. While dodging raindrops I was able to collate various contributions to the May issue of THAW!, including a thank-you from Fr. Weir Shivering to Minister John Baird for his intention to stop global warming; a remembrance in praise of work, one of three expression of the Franciscan charism and a review of the resumes of the four candidates for the position of Primate; a review which amounts to a kind of rating of the candidates. It is hoped that these responses to the resumes of the candidates will be the beginning and not the end, of a conversation about them. It is not intended to be the last word.

## GEORGE L.R. BRUCE

Anglicans may expect in Bishop Bruce, a person of discipline, in his own life and in his expectations of those around him. For he has completed a career in the Canadian armed forces. Along with this, his brief resume reflects a person of healing and reconciliation. Most impressive, is his desire and ability to grasp the problems of the Church and to work out long-term plans to correct the difficulties. One feels the future issues of the Anglican Church of Canada, such as finance, deployment of resources, working relationships of various governing entities would be in good hands. Bruce would reflect to the church the "mood" of the House of Bishops, a carefully chosen word which is both personal and avoids the suggestion of a power conflict with the Council of the General Synod. He does not appear discontent with the role of the Council but he is actively engaged in reviewing and redefining the role of the Primacy. He is 64 His age would mean a relatively short Primacy which might be an advantage; if the report on the primate's role is to move forward with alacrity. In the near future, its recommendations could be considered by the General Synod and brought into effect with the election of the next primate. His resume has the tone of order through active listening and initiative with others to solve problems, both personal and institutional; both within the Canadian Church and internationally among Anglican provinces and national churches. Given the paucity of information, one must nevertheless say that he comes across as an excellent candidate for primate.

## FRED HILTZ

Bishop Hiltz is 53. If elected Primate, he would be able to lead the Church for a dozen or so years. That is a bit long if the task force on the role of the Primate is to have any effect on the future of the Church. Its recommendations would be obsolete by the time this primate retired. The trouble with the Hiltz resume is its lack of specificity; and so a lack of clarity. For instance, bishop Hiltz is enthusiastic about the Church being a united family; he quotes Gordon Light's hymn, "make the circle wide, make it wider still". Does this width include gays and lesbians? The bishop does not say; even though the hymn is a kind of code for inclusivity. Didn't Bishop Hiltz offer himself to help parishes in New Westminster who differed with their bishop over same sex issues? An offer well-meant but not widely taken up. So we get an exhortation to be family but the actual issues of inclusivity are masked. I do not receive, either, a sense of thrust in financial matters coming from this candidate. One can be in favour of something without having much experience in bringing it to pass. Like other candidates, bishop Hiltz feels the pain of the House of Bishops. He wants to help the bishops get along; he also wants to visit each diocese, to become familiar with the General Synod staff and the standing committees of the General Synod. Lumped in with them is the Council for General Synod. There is no recognition of the special role

and authority of the Council. Is this the programme of a micro-manager? He comes across as a gospel proclaimer and, heaven knows, we need such people. But there is not much about being a problem solver and healer and reconciler. He is not willing to share what he proclaims when it comes to Canada's relationship with Peter Ankola, or ECUSA or the Diocese of New Westminster. He does not seem aware of the need to redefine the Primacy in Canada. I see a leader without the experienced interests and skills to get us through specific issues in the next decade. And in view of the apparent need to clarify the role of primate, his possible tenure of 12 years or so (as I said above) might be an obstruction to necessary change. We lack information. I hope more is forthcoming.

### **BRUCE H.W. HOWE**

This resume reveals a person with all-round interests but with special passion for the servant ministry to the poor and with an enthusiasm for teaching. He even calls himself "Dr" Howe although his doctorate is an honorary one. Bishop Howe is 59 years of age and would have a primacy shorter than some of the other candidates.. An advantage to those who wish to bring changes to the role of the primate. The resume avoids reference to the current tension in the Anglican Communion about gays and lesbians and about the Windsor Report. It says that "The Anglican Church of Canada is important" and "The Anglican Communion is important" but there is no telling where he stands on the specific issues now before us. The resume is vague on the role of the Primate. There is no mention of the role and authority of the Council of General Synod nor his relationship to it. It speaks rather of the Primate as "An Instrument of Unity" and one hopes he does not model this phrase on the current behaviour of other primatial "Instruments of Unity" in the Anglican Communion. Despite bishop Howe's extensive ministry, including planning at the diocesan level, we receive no illumination about the directions in which the Anglican Church of Canada must move in the future. Some comments about planning and initiatives for the next 5 years, say, would have been helpful. While not a front-runner in a primatial election, it is hard to know if bishop Howe's presence on the list gives the electoral synod a sound "fall back position" if needed. Obviously bishop Howe has been happy in the service.

### **VICTORIA MATTHEWS**

This resume is the easiest of all to read, because the bishop of Edmonton is nothing if not clear about her priorities. If elected she will be the third primate in a row, from Trinity College Toronto. Almost 20 years with Michael Peers, 3 years with Andrew Hutchison and a possible dozen or more with Victoria Matthews. First, one cannot escape her commitment to the Anglican Communion as the primary shape of future

Anglicanism. Although the Communion was the creation of national churches, the latter, especially in the case of the Anglican Church of Canada would now be "Christian sects", if they did not go the way of compliance with the developing priorities of world Anglicanism. This means bonding in some form with the homophobic Peter Ankola, the Primate of Nigeria and the majority of provinces and national churches which more or less share his views. The reduction of a national church to a "sect" is a sample of the sarcastic invective which people might experience who disagree with this forceful person should she become primate.

One should also notice her description of the role of the primate between Lambeth Conferences. She sees the meeting of primates as the means of strengthening the bonds of affection which unite world-wide Anglicans. No mention here of the Anglican Consultative Council which until recently (when invaded by the primates), was the one instrument of unity which contained a significant number of laity, as well as (non-episcopal) clergy. One is aware that the tensions in the Anglican Communion are mostly portrayed in the primatial dance, where many move to reject the few and where most are moving in concert to the same tune. Bishop Matthews, it seems, would like to be one of them. One feels, in this resume, the development of a chief officer of the Church who is not always in relationship with the National Church, except with the House of Bishops, which appears to be the primary body of significance. In such an activist picture of the primatial role there is little need for the Church to "define the role of the primate". The resume brushes off the role of the primate with the remark that for her a teaching ministry would be an improved (and classical) role.

Bishop Matthews is associated with the title of theologian, being the chair of the Primate's Theological Commission. I must say, however, that judging from the S. Michael's report, (see back issues of Thaw!) her theological acumen is nothing to write home about. She is more adept at getting things from A to B. Consistent with her view of the importance of the Anglican Communion is the recommendation of the Rupert's Land House of Bishops to refer the issue of same sex blessings, etc once more to the PTC, a delay of at least another three years. Bishop Matthews has done nothing to separate herself from this memorandum. For those who wish to halt the movement of inclusivity in the Anglican Church of Canada for a rather long period of time, (3 year at least) and who wish to support the formation of a new heirarchy in the Anglican Communion, (the Windsor Report), bishop Matthews is your perfect choice. But be aware that it will throw the Anglican Church of Canada into a time of confrontation, hard edges, disobedience, and sarcasm. And maybe sectarianism. But be sure of this: it won't be dull.

## WORK, IN THE FRANCISCAN RULE

Frank PaxBon

Of the three activities which express the Franciscan life, I like "work" best of all. Not that study and prayer are without their charms. But doing things is the way creation takes place. It's the only way you can be creative. It's what you do to make the inside show itself to the outside it's the only way you can contribute to the sum total of artifacts. And the act of working, of translating the idea into the thing, contributes to the end product and you come up with something you never anticipated.

Franciscans are bidden to take up work which no one else is willing to do. Humble work. Menial work. Down there where sophisticated skills are unusual.

The work which I have learn to excel in is washing the dishes. It sounds pretty boring but once you get into it, washing the dishes can be a liturgy of innovation and invention. I have become so addicted to dish-washing that I have a fit if anyone tries to get into the kitchen after a meal and starts cleaning up.

There is an order to washing. First the glass ware, then the flatware, then the dishes proper and then the pots and pans. A large number of guests requires emptying the dirty water and starting up in mid course with fresh. Double sinks are a luxury. In one is the soap and in the other is a decontaminating rinse like bleach in especially hot water. The drying rack is important too. Last year I bought a new drying rack to my partner's consternation, because I could balance much more stuff on it, where, heated by the rinse water, things would dry by themselves. You can build a large structure of dishes, glasses and other containers in the right kind of drying rack.

In order to achieve this liturgy of cleaning up with perfection, I prepare with all the care of an acolyte setting up for mass. Everything would be placed in order on the counter to the left of the two sinks with the drying structure on the right. From the kitchen I would listen to the table conversation as the guests sipped coffee and liquere interjecting rarely, (only if they were getting ridiculous) or giving thanks that I didn't have to nod my head in politeness to some passionate nonsense.

The habit of washing dishes grows, I should warn you. In a guest's house, I catch myself drifting sink-ward. In parish halls I can dip my hands in the water and not have to make idiotic conversation with people whose names I should know when the only thing that occurs to me is the question "Why haven't you been coming to Church?" For there are people who frequent the parish halls of the nation but never darken the church door. The sink is my escape from social responsibility, where I can talk to the true and blue, who also frequent the kitchen..

I came by this talent, if it can be elevated by such a name, at an early age. In my school days, the wartime lack of staff meant that we, boys, had to clear tables and, yes, do the dishes. When I graduated to University, there was money to be made washing dishes and I was, by then, a skilled guy.

Then you should be aware of the "worker mentality". Not a communist thing, but a way of looking at life. You immediately think of "moves". How many moves would it take to get from here to there? Someone would say, "Let's go to the show". I would think, "I'll have to go to my room and get my coat; then find enough change in all my pockets to pay admission. Then meet in the main entrance and wait for the slowpokes to arrive; then walk to the theatre, then pay for a ticket, then find a seat in the dark. I would know from all the moves that came to mind that we would be too late for the show and that there was no point in going. Since few others thought this way, we would go anyway and, of course, there wasn't time for all the moves to get done. My partner still tells me it takes an hour to get by car to the city. Yes but it takes 15 minutes to get ready and out to the car; another 10 minutes to find parking and another 5 to walk back to the theatre. Guess what?

Creative people are all workers. One friend is an artist, (painter). Hard at it, morning and afternoon when the light is good and a show is in the offing. Writing is work; poetry is work or should be.

The saddest thing in the world is the person whose work does not express what he or she is really all about. In that case work is a drudge; it's value only in the money earned. How terrible when work is "way down underground" and your lungs are filled with coal dust and it's dark when you go down and dark when you come up and dark while you're there.

We speak of the work of salvation. Jesus' effort, His putting out day by day in His earthly humanity. And God's work: it's unimaginable. God not only creates: God holds all things in existence. If God didn't put out the effort everything would vanish into non-being. Like anti-matter but more permanent. Does God sweat? Does God get tired? Does God wonder if it's worth it? But when you wake up in the morning and find that there IS a morning, the sun somewhere in the east, the stars dimming out, then you know that God is doing it for no other reason except God loves what God does and you'd better put your feet onto the cold floor and start making the moves that will bring help and not hindrance to those who will make up your day. Work! You lucky person!

## KYOTO

By Fr. Weir Shivering,

Chesterfield Bay

We're glad to know that people care  
if Greenland's ice cap will be there  
and not a feature in a photo  
when comes the kingdom of Kyoto.

Mr. Baird's a case in point  
displayed reluctance to anoint  
but now denies not. Voce sotto  
a new believer in Kyoto.

And where'd we be without Ms. May  
by gum, she surely saved the day  
she knows statistics all by rote  
she's the prophet of Kyoto

"Unemployed" you say, "we'd be;  
a crimp in our economy?"  
Greedy one, you've surely sinned  
if you've ignored the power of wind!

Green is the future, I'm at ease  
knowing that I'll always freeze  
Thank you God it's very nice  
to think of everlasting ice;  
how we'll restore the planet's quota  
as in the gospel of Kyota.

## THE LAST ENEMY

When old people die, we like to say, "They lived a long life; they had it all". And so we let down our guard. It is comforting to the bereaved to have some explanation; something that makes us feel death is OK. Sometimes, we feel, death is a friend; ending a time of pain. Even though the pain itself is part of the death being experienced. Parts of the body are dying away, succumbing, losing their function

before the rest and that causes the agony.

In my most recent experience of a family death I was surprised and alerted by the death mask of the deceased, whom I saw an hour after she died. Her eyes were open. Her face was the essence of determination, even anger. While, in her last days and hours she was docile in sickness, when death struck she was undoubtedly not pleased. She did not acquiesce. In her way, 101 years into life, she did not go peacefully into the night. I left her death bed feeling stronger. That was her final gift: a sense of affront, of something which had no business in her experience. Like a nurse saying "Let's get your hair done, dearie?" and taking liberties. Death violated her body but she would not let it touch her spirit.

Yes. S. Paul was of similar mind. "The last enemy which shall be overcome is death". It is never a friend. Only sentimentality pretends the enemy has a legitimate place in our existence. To say that death is anything less than a foe is not to love life to the full. And to love life is to treasure the gift which comes from God. The look of outrage on the dead face of my old friend was the measure of her love of life.

We play death's game when we act to harm the body. I don't like to preach the dietary cause; or sing the addiction lament. But at times like this, I see that some habits are treaties with the enemy; sell-outs, flagrant resistance to the goodness which God wishes to share with us.

Even so, there will be victory and in spite of our foolishnesses, "all things work together for good to those who love God".