

The church and Donald Trump



Bishop Mariann Budde of The Episcopal Church's diocese of Washington meets U.S. President Donald Trump after her sermon at Washington National Cathedral Jan. 21.

PHOTO: REUTERS/KEVIN LAMARQUE

Anglicans in Canada face second term with concern

Sean Frankling
STAFF WRITER

Amid the rising international tensions and overwhelming flood of executive orders under the new Trump administration, it is the duty of Anglicans in Canada to speak up for the marginalized and vulnerable, says Canon Maggie Helwig, rector of St. Stephen-in-the-Fields Church in Toronto. In a phone interview she took while multitasking on preparations for the church's homeless drop-in program, Helwig told the *Anglican Journal* her goal was to bring that message to her parish.

"We need to keep speaking so that people understand that welcoming the stranger is a fundamental Christian value, so that people understand that vulnerable people—including trans people, who are being heavily targeted—are the people the church is most called to value and protect," she says.

Helwig is one of many Anglicans in Canada who are deeply concerned about the effects Trump's presidency will have both in the United States and Canada. Like Helwig, Archbishop Anne Germond, acting primate of the Anglican Church of

See 'MEANER,' p. 7

"We need to keep speaking so that people understand that welcoming the stranger is a fundamental Christian value."

—Canon Maggie Helwig

Looking for God in 'the devils' gospels'

An interview with Christopher Gasson

Matthew Puddister
STAFF WRITER

If God is truly the Almighty and the basis of our existence, Christopher Gasson says, then everything anyone can say about life and the world will tell us more about God's nature—to the point, he believes, that "we can find God in works that are savagely opposed to God."

A journalist, publisher, Anglican and amateur theologian, Gasson is the author of *The Devils' Gospels: Finding God in Four Great Atheist Books*. Inspired by conversations with a youth discussion group he led at the University Church of St. Mary the Virgin at Oxford University, Gasson's book examines four key atheist texts, which he attempts to read as "holy scripture" to seek traces of the divine: *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* by Friedrich Nietzsche, *Writing and Difference* by

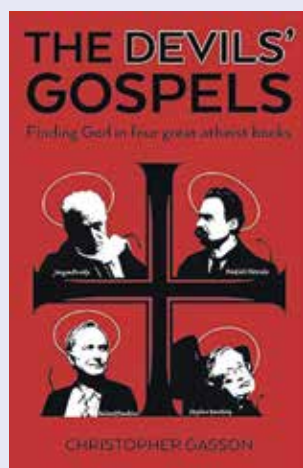


IMAGE: COLLECTIVE INK

Front cover of *The Devils' Gospels* by Christopher Gasson

Jacques Derrida, *A Brief History of Time* by Stephen Hawking and *The God Delusion* by Richard Dawkins.

To help promote the book, Gasson commissioned an online survey of 10,000 people in Britain, which found that people in their teens and 20s, known as Gen Z, are much less

See LEARNING, p. 8

Arctic diocese forms development corporation to offer housing, community spaces on church land



▲ Logo of the Anglican Arctic Development Corporation

PHOTO: DIOCESE OF THE ARCTIC

Matthew Puddister
STAFF WRITER

Moving forward with a plan nearly 40 years in the making, the diocese of the Arctic has announced the formation of a body tasked with redeveloping buildings on church-owned land into housing and multi-use community centres.

The diocesan executive committee describes the goals of the Arctic Anglican Development Corporation (AADC) as improving availability of housing, working towards stabilizing rents and increasing housing affordability across

Northern Canada; and providing resources for investment in Arctic mission and ministry.

Formation of the AADC as a separate corporation was necessary for the diocese to comply with rules set by the Canada Revenue Agency for charities involved in housing projects. The AADC will begin its work in Nunavut and expand over time into Nunavik and the Northwest Territories.

Executive Archdeacon Alexander Pryor says discussions on forming such a corporation have come up

See NEW, p. 11

THEY WILL SOAR ON WINGS LIKE EAGLES

GENERAL SYNOD 2025



44th session of the General Synod and the Election of Primate

June 23-29, 2025
London, Ontario

PRIMATIAL NOMINEE INFORMATION

NAMES POSTED ONLINE
April 3, 2025, at 9 a.m. ET

BIOS POSTED ONLINE
April 11, 2025, at 9 a.m. ET

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April 22, 2025, at 9 a.m. ET

Visit anglican.ca/gs2025

*Almighty God, giver of all good gifts, look on your Church with grace, and guide the minds of those who shall choose a Primate for this Church, that we may receive a faithful servant who will care for your people and support us in our ministries; through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.*

—BOOK OF ALTERNATIVE SERVICES



The Anglican Church of Canada

Nominees for next primate to be announced this month

Matthew Puddister
STAFF WRITER

The list of nominees to become the next primate of the Anglican Church of Canada will be announced April 3, General Secretary Archdeacon Alan Perry said in a Feb. 14 statement laying out the timeline for the primatial election process.

Electing a new primate is a major agenda item at the upcoming meeting of General Synod, which will take place June 23-29 in London, Ont. All bishops of the Anglican Church of Canada are eligible for election to the primacy.

The Order of Bishops will meet from March 31 to April 4 and hold a ballot on April 2 to select the nominees. A full list of nominees will be posted the following day at 9 a.m. Eastern time on anglican.ca/GS2025. Biographical information about each nominee will be posted to the website on April 11, followed by video responses from the nominees to a series of questions on April 22.

The primatial election will take place June 26, when clergy and lay members of General Synod gather to vote at St. Paul's Cathedral in London. Archbishop Anne Germond, acting primate of the Anglican Church of Canada, will then announce the results. The installation of the 15th primate

of the Anglican Church of Canada will follow on June 29.

"The election of a new primate is a profound moment of spiritual discernment in the life of our beloved church," Perry said. He invited prayers for the orders of bishops, clergy and laity; for the nominees, their families and dioceses; "for the person who will be elected—whom God has already chosen to be our next primate"; and for Germond as she leads the church through the coming months.

Germond, deemed senior metropolitan in the Anglican Church of Canada by date of election, became acting primate Sept. 15 after General Synod voted in 2023 against a resolution that would have extended primatial terms to the following General Synod if that meeting fell within a year of the primate's 70th birthday, when primates in the Anglican Church of Canada are required to leave office. That meant Archbishop Linda Nicholls, who was primate at the time, had to resign by the time of her 70th birthday. Nicholls served as primate from July 2019 to September 2024.

While Germond is eligible for nomination, she told the *Anglican Journal* in October that she would not let her name stand for primate if nominated. ■



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CHURCH FINANCES ▶



▲ Ed Willms
PHOTO: CONTRIBUTED

Parishes struggle with money woes, uncertainty

Sean Frankling
STAFF WRITER

Many parishes in the Anglican Church of Canada are finding themselves torn between their own desire to survive and their obligation to support the higher structures of the church, says Ed Willms, a parishioner at All Saints Anglican Church in Huntsville, Ont.

Willms reached out to the *Anglican Journal* after reading in its January edition about a presentation on finances at the fall meeting of Council of General Synod (CoGS). At that meeting, CoGS discussed making cuts to national church programs to remain financially sustainable heading into the latter half of the 2020s. Willms wonders whether leaders at those levels are talking about parishes' situations, and about what they can do to help parishes support themselves, as much as they talk about diocesan and national funding concerns.

"The national church doesn't exist without an intent by all these lowly cash-strapped parishioners," he says.

A frequent topic of conversation in church circles across the country is how to handle the real estate of a church with declining membership. Maintenance and repair projects on churches in Canada—buildings in some cases hundreds of years old—can amount to hundreds of thousands or even millions of dollars. Especially for parishes with falling memberships, that can be a heavy burden on top of the costs of heating and building insurance. Many would like to sell, says Willms. But not all can.

Ownership situations of church property differ across the country. In some cases, properties are owned by the diocese, not the parish, and while the parishes are responsible for upkeep, if they sell their building some, most or all of the money from the sale may go to the diocese. Willms says he has seen the way that can paralyze a parish—knowing both that it cannot afford to keep paying to keep its property but also that if it sells (which can be a costly process in itself) it might not be able to apply the money from the sale to its own ministry.

Sometimes, when a parish sells its property, it is able to make a deal with the diocese to use some of the money to push its ministry forward. Graeme Leadbeater, incumbent's warden at the Anglican Parish of Kokanee in Nelson, B.C., says that was the case in his parish. Kokanee is a multipoint parish which has sold two properties in the past few years for prices between \$120,000 and \$140,000, he says.

The diocese owned title to the properties, he says, but by making an agreement with the bishop, the parish was able to use the proceeds from those sales to subsidize the cost of hiring a full-time incumbent priest to split time between its remaining sites. "That's been really the only thing that's been enabling us to carry on with full-time ministry," Leadbeater says. Between paying diocesan apportionments, utility operations and building insurance, he adds, the cost of an incumbent would otherwise have been out of reach for Kokanee, as it is for many small parishes.

Other parishes, like St. Michael and All Angels in St. John's, Nfld., have bumpier experiences. St. Michael's shut down in 2023, says Hazel Pritchett Harris, former rector's warden at that church. When the parish's finances were flagging after the pandemic, she says, it was difficult to get fellow parishioners to recognize what was about to happen.

"I think sometimes the whole idea of



PHOTO: EMILY ROWE

Hazel Pritchett Harris, former rector's warden at St. Michael and All Angels in St. John's, Nfld., addresses parishioners at the church's 2023 disestablishment service.

“ Even when we tried to say, ‘Look, this is how dire the situation is becoming,’ several people came up and said ‘Yes, but we’ll be alright,’ which was—I couldn’t say anything. I just said ‘No,’ finally. ‘Did you not see the figures?’ ”

—Hazel Pritchett Harris

not having your church building any longer when you've become really attached to it is so appalling that you can't even think about it for a while," she says. "But even when we tried to say, 'Look, this is how dire the situation is becoming,' several people came up and said 'Yes, but we'll be alright,' which was—I couldn't say anything. I just said 'No,' finally. 'Did you not see the figures?'"

At the time, she says, she had thought the congregation might all worship at another church in the area, possibly using some of the money from the sale to contribute to upkeep of that parish's building. They also discussed starting some kind of charitable work such as an outreach program to street-involved youth with the money from the sale. But a combination of the surprise with which the congregation seemed to take the closure and the difficulty it had finding a local church at which to convene delayed its planning.

When the building sold and it became clear the diocese would not be making any of the proceeds available, Pritchett Harris says, the congregation ended up scattering, save for a few who still sit together Sundays in the front pews of the Cathedral of St. John the Baptist.

At the time, she said, she told the bishop it had been a frustrating process. Whether the breakdown in communication was between the diocese and the parish or between the parish committee and the rest of the congregation, it wasn't clear to her why none of the sale money was available to the parish to pay for a new space, start a new ministry or retain their rector.

Asked by the *Journal* for details on the decision-making process surrounding the sale, Bishop Sam Rose of the diocese of Eastern Newfoundland and Labrador forwarded a pastoral letter he wrote at the time of the parish's closure in which he expressed, among other things, his sorrow that there was "no option moving forward in continuing to be a parish in the diocese," but declined to comment further.

The difference between outcomes like the one in Kokanee and that at St. Michael's is often decided by strategic thinking at the diocesan level, says Canon Grayhame Bowcott, rector of St. George's Church in the parish of the Blue Mountains, Ont.

Bowcott studied closing parishes across the diocese of Huron as part of his DMin

thesis. He says there are some cases where the diocese may choose to reinfuse a struggling parish with resources to hold on to a location it sees as "strategic"—for example, because the church is doing ministry there that the diocese considers especially important. Sometimes, however, the closure of a struggling parish, as painful as it is, is needed for the diocese to plant seeds of new growth.

"I hate to say it, but sometimes a congregation does need to die in order for rebirth to happen because those who have been holding onto leadership are so worn out, they can't envision a new future," he says.

Bowcott was not familiar with any of the cases discussed in this story and was commenting in general based on his experience with the closing of parishes.

Usually the step to sell a building and disestablish a congregation comes after a long series of conversations about the location's viability and options, though these are not always communicated clearly to each parishioner, he says.

In many ways, Bowcott adds, dioceses are making the kind of investment in parishes that Willms would like to see more of, aiming to prop up the church's presence where it can do the most good, sometimes at the cost of pulling resources from somewhere else. "And so the strategic plans, the actions that are carried out on behalf of local congregations by the leadership team of the diocese, sometimes that's not communicated and creates that 'us vs. them' culture," he says. "But generally my experience with bishops is they are scaling everything back at a level that directly relates to giving at the local congregational level."

One way to prop up parishes that are facing eventual dissolution, Bowcott offers, would be for dioceses and the national church to encourage parishes to look at what they might do to break out of their existing patterns. In a time when the prevailing narrative is decline, the parishes that manage to turn that around are often those that try several new approaches to ministry or outreach and find one that fits their local needs. In his opinion, the best investment the church's larger structures can make in parishes is to connect them to the resources to study what has worked elsewhere and how they might apply it to improve their own vitality. ■

LETTERS ▶

Artist pleased *Journal* showed work—but would have liked to have been asked



PHOTO: LUIZ COELHO

Virgin of the Amazon, painted in 2019, hangs in Santa Maria Anglican Cathedral in the diocese of Amazonia, Belém, Brazil. The artist, The Rev. L.C. Teixeira Coelho, says the painting “depicts Virgin and child as typical povos originários (‘First People’), as we call them, of the Amazon.” He adds, “They are on a lake, sitting atop a Victoria amazonica, a gigantic water lily typical of the Amazon forest.”

I recently learned from colleagues that one of my paintings was featured in the *Anglican Journal* (“Madonna and child,” December 2024, p.1). While I am pleased to see my work shared, I would have appreciated being contacted beforehand. This would have given me the opportunity to provide additional context about the piece and share my website, allowing readers to learn more about my work. I could also have supplied a proper photograph of the painting, with corrected parallax and distortions, to better represent its details.

As you may know, many of the clergy in Brazil are non-stipendiary, and my artistic contributions are offered freely. I strongly believe that liturgical resources should remain accessible without charge, and I have never asked for compensation for such work. However, I balance this with my secular role as a college professor and my efforts to support my parish.

Our parish in Rio is currently navigating significant challenges: advancing a capital campaign,

supporting ministries for trans people at risk, and addressing the urgent need to renovate our property to better serve these activities. The visibility from this painting’s inclusion in your publication could have been an opportunity to share our mission and invite donations—support that would be especially meaningful during Christmastide.

Thank you for your attention to this matter, and I hope we can collaborate more directly in the future.

The Rev. L. C. Teixeira Coelho
Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

Editor’s note:

The Journal sincerely regrets not having sought the Rev. Coelho’s permission before publishing his artwork. More information on the Parish of St. Luke’s ministry to trans people can be found on YouTube, at: <https://bit.ly/41aFZjX>. (The video is in Portuguese, but English subtitles can be automatically generated using YouTube’s Settings/Closed Captions feature.) Donations can be made through PayPal, at: <http://bit.ly/3CZi9uf>.

Why publish stories about priests in trouble with the law?

I am baffled about why you thought it was necessary to publish the pieces about Canon David Garrett (“P.E.I. cathedral rector serves three-day prison term for impaired driving,” February, p. 3) and Canon David Harrison (“Toronto priest, *Journal* contributor successfully appeals public indecency

conviction,” February, p. 7). Surely these two men have had enough embarrassment and personal pain that this news didn’t have to be published by their national church newspaper. Isn’t there enough good news about clergy to be published? I know it seems there is very little for us to be happy about these

days with declining membership, income, and seemingly no idea of what the problem is. But I resent the idea that if I ever get caught with too much alcohol in my blood, it would become national news via the *Journal*.

The Rev. John K. Saynor
Diocese of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island

It’s good when the church confesses its sins publicly

The Archbishop of Canterbury has shown courage by resigning because he was tangentially implicated in an abuse scandal. Should the Anglican churches of the world not be following his example?

Unchurched persons look at all the past actions of our church (such as residential schools, creating martyrs, “holy” wars,

excommunications, etc.) and wonder how a church that claims to follow Jesus could do such things. They do not want to be part of such a church.

Children at church camps often write their sins and regrets on slips of paper and burn these in a campfire to show regret and a desire for reconciliation. Could churches not light a campfire on the front

lawn, say on an Ash Wednesday, list their past sins and then burn the lists as a statement that they regret such past actions and intend never to do them again? We could ask members of the public to share in this act with us by using our campfire to burn a statement of their shortcomings also.

The Rev. William Craven
London, Ont.

Canaries’ song fainter with cuts to Council of the North

At a different time in what seems like a different world, I had the privilege of serving on the diocese of Huron’s diocesan council. Few meetings went by without there being a motion brought forward requesting approval of the sale of the rectory of a congregation or parish that felt overwhelmed by the financial obligations associated with the care and maintenance of a clergy residence. Each time it felt, to me, that another canary in the coal mine of our church was falling silent. As time has passed, those congregations have either closed or merged with other communities of faith.

I believe I hear the song of the canaries going fainter still when I read that grants given to fund ministry through the Council of the North—a part of the country where the support for the faithful witness of Anglican Christians has been a key element in the mission and ministry of the Anglican Church of Canada over the years—will be annually reduced by \$100,000. (“At a crossroads,” January, p.1) Reducing financial support in a part of our country where the ministry of the church is inextricably intertwined with the goals of Truth and Reconciliation may be argued with vigor as part of a business model but falls short by any pastoral measure.

In a presentation to the synod of the diocese of Huron Oct. 19, 2024, on behalf of the Huron Indigenous team, the Rev. Hana Scorrar, diocesan Indigenous ministries missionary, offered a vision of hope as she reflected on what it meant to move into new models of ministry which are still in the process of being shaped in response to varying circumstances and available resources. “I am only Anglican because of the radical love people of this church showed. And I believe the way I do because I know that there is immense power for healing and reconciliation within us,” she said. “Where we go we have not been before, but while this road is winding, we are going together, and that is something. So, take my hand, and let us travel with hope, with faith, and with abiding friendship.”

As I read those words, I believe that I heard the sound of a canary singing.

Canon Christopher B.J. Pratt
Cambridge, Ont.

The Anglican Journal welcomes letters to the editor.

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BRIDGES ▶

Where is God amid the evil of our time?



By Anne Germond

“**B**UT THEY WHO wait for the Lord shall renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles.” (Isaiah 40.31)

Where is God now? Where is God in the mess of the world around us? Where is God amid the deep evil and hate-filled speech of our time? Where is God when we are battered by the storms of life? How do we hold onto our belief in a loving God when everything around us seems to say that God is indifferent—or even worse, absent?

These are all questions that people of faith (and people of no faith) have been asking for centuries. While it often seems easier to give in to despair, our calling as people of faith is to keep looking for God and notice that God is present in surprising and unexpected ways and places.

Sometimes the gift of noticing God’s presence comes through the actions or words of someone courageous enough to speak truth to power, as happened in Washington National Cathedral at a national prayer service Jan. 21. The world took notice when Bishop of Washington Mariann Budde preached a powerful and prophetic sermon at a time when transgendered persons, refugees and undocumented migrant workers in the United States were asking, “Where is God now?” Her sermon ended with a plea to the new president to show mercy to the most vulnerable whose lives and livelihoods are in peril.

Budde also noted each person can do their part in realizing the ideal of a unity “that incorporates diversity and transcends disagreement ... with the solid foundations of dignity, honesty and humility that such unity requires.”

Our self-understanding as the Church, as a people made in God’s own image and likeness, demands that we stand with the suffering people in God’s world and hold

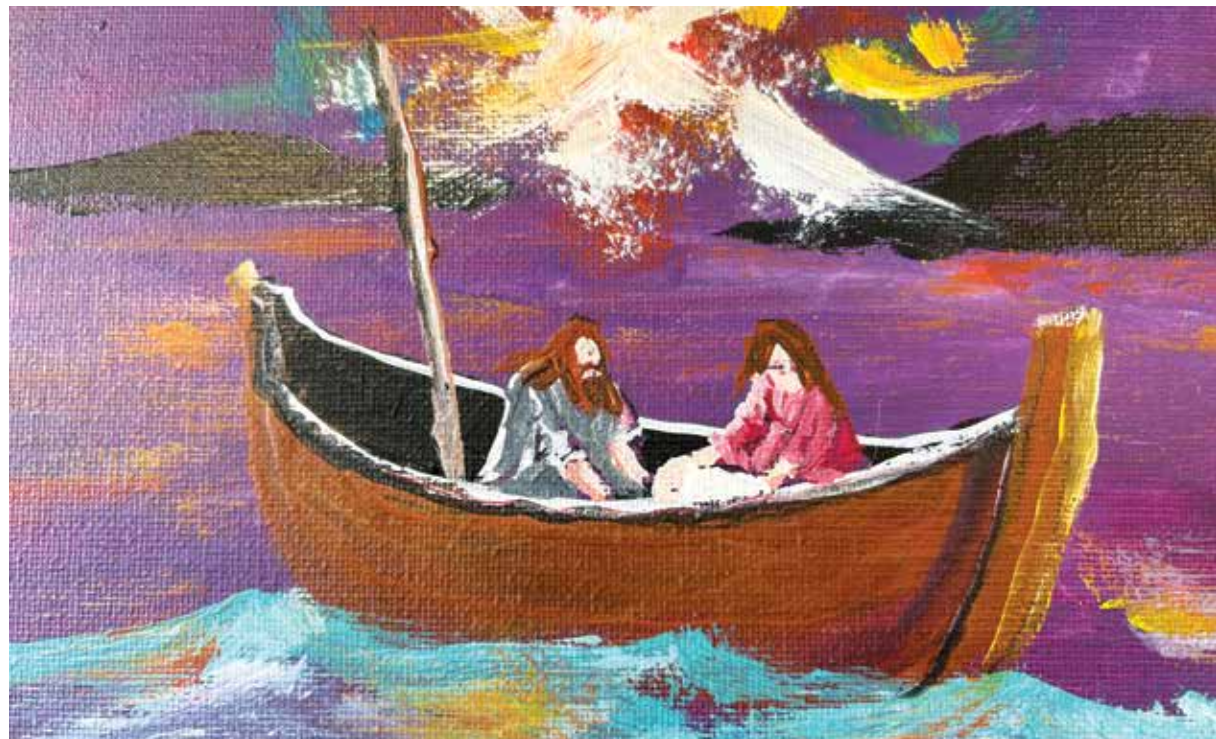


IMAGE: JOHN WATTON

one another accountable for its repair. There is a Hebrew expression for this work of world-repair—*Tikkun Olan*—and it’s something we have participated in and borne witness to through our acts of mercy, justice and kindness.

We will gather for General Synod this June under the inspiring theme from Isaiah 40:31, which speaks of hope, strength and renewal: “They will soar on wings like eagles.” In the Anglican Church of Canada, we share a common vision of God’s mission for the world, and are entrusted with being witnesses to Christ in our words and deeds. Bearing the name of Christ, we put our collective faith in God and maintain our hope even in an environment of suspicion and hostility.

When it seems as though we have come to the end of our strength, God, the Creator of all things, will renew us and care for us. We will soar like eagles, and our strength will be renewed. God, after all, has given

a pattern to guide us in our healing of this broken world through the life, death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. As light breaks through the darkness, we are invited to look beyond what we’re seeing, and to live boldly as a people of resurrection hope. God came in a manger and on a cross, and through both showed the possibility of something new.

In writing this month’s message I’ve felt inspired by a powerful image—a painting by Bishop John Watton, of the diocese of Central Newfoundland. It shows a couple with an infant, sitting in a little wooden boat which is being buffeted by rough and stormy seas. The closest land is far on the horizon. But look at the skies filled with streaks of beautiful light! This is the light that no darkness can overcome. ■

Archbishop Anne Germond is the acting primate of the Anglican Church of Canada.

FEATHER AND SAGE ▶



Prayer and new life in the time of the Goose Moon

FEATHER: Almighty, we the children of your creation lift up to you our hearts, voices and needs. Hear us as we walk these uncertain days, when so much in our world is changing so fast that we cannot seem to grasp the truth in, or comprehend the depth of, our reality; thus we respond emotionally and without the long vision of your peace. These quick responses are not good for us or the community, we know, and yet pride demands that we try to defend our actions. Forgive us as we have forgotten and neglected to pause and remember that you walk with us; slow us that we might speak with you in prayer and listen for your voice. In that pausing, help us to open our hearts and spirits to hear and see you, that we might remember our calling and journey back to you. Help us this day to be better than we were yesterday and the day before; fill our hearts with humility, hope and peace that we might see others and invite them onto the good road that you have set before us. May your Spirit find always a welcome into our circles of community and family, and into our lives. This we pray in the name of your peace and promise. Amen.

SAGE: The month of April in the Woods Cree moon calendar is *Niski Pisim* or “Goose Moon.” The name of this month



IMAGE: ATHANASIA NOMIKOU

hints at changing seasons, when what we have known and lived with is made anew, new life begins, and a promise is offered.

April is a month filled with wonder and prayer, closing off the Lenten season when we in the church have walked with somber reverence and observance, right to the entrance of Holy Week. It’s a time when the church walks with our Lord and we together look into the mirror of introspection, at our role and place in the ultimate sacrifice for the redemption of all in our Creator’s great plan. Easter Morning opens our hearts with humility

and wonder as new life and a promise are revealed—the promise that death and the great sleep have no power and are defeated through Creator’s Son, and that like the seasons we too are renewed and enlivened through the great sacrifice.

Prayer and humility walk hand in hand through faith, in the believing in that which is beyond qualification and quantification. Prayer is for those strong and peaceful hearts where the willingness to forgive resides. Praying without ceasing is our calling as believers: to offer our voice of thanksgiving for the gifts seen and unseen, and to believe that every prayer is heard and answered by the grace of God—though not always as we demand or expect; only through the hand of God Almighty is all completed and revealed.

I was once told that prayer was for the weak, but I believe that prayer is for those who can shed every last remnant of self to the will of God the Creator—just as our Lord did when he prayed in the garden, “If it is possible, let this cup pass from me, but let your will be done, not mine.” (Matthew 26:39) Amen. ■

Archbishop Chris Harper is national Indigenous archbishop of the Anglican Church of Canada.

ANGLICAN VOICES ▶



When I walked through the doors of the little church, I experienced one of those instants Wordsworth called 'spots of time' or Freud (following his friend Romain Rolland) 'oceanic experiences.'

Nudged toward oneness

A 'coffin Anglican' on finding connection in a secular age

By Graham N. Forst

IMAGINE YOURSELF in my position. Seven years ago I, a lifetime non-believer, surrendered to a student's invitation and joined her at her church in a small wooded area in a suburb of Vancouver. I had researched the church: its mother church was the Dutch Reformed Church (renamed the Protestant Church in the Netherlands after a 2004 merger). As a Holocaust historian, I knew about the Dutch church's anti-Nazi activities during the war—and as well, I was pleased to see that the Dutch church had accepted same-sex marriage and the ordination of LGBTQ people for the ministry.

I arrived early, formally dressed, as I thought appropriate. (I soon realized I stood out amidst the shorts and T-shirts!)

When I walked through the doors of the little church, I experienced one of those instants Wordsworth called "spots of time" or Freud (following his friend Romain Rolland) "oceanic experiences": a feeling of oneness with everything around me.

I soon joined the church and enjoyed every moment of the services—except Communion, which I was not, by Reform conventions, permitted to share. Why? Because I had never been baptized.

So, as I said, imagine yourself me. I used to sit at the aisle, and when Communion was called, a line would form beside me as the congregants prepared for the ritual. But here's the moment: one Sunday, as the line began to move, it suddenly stopped. I turned around ... and there was a very tall blue-eyed elderly man of Dutch descent, whom I had earlier befriended, his long arms held out wide, blocking, for a moment, the other congregants' march to the pulpit. He looked down at me, and with mock irritability, nodded for me to get up and join the procession.

What option did I have?

So I walked up to the pastor, a gentle-speaking, warm and friendly Korean Canadian, and held my hands out—right hand on top as I'd seen—and took the wafer, put it in my mouth, and let it melt.

There I was, in front of everyone, participating in the Last Supper, the body of Christ melting on my tongue. How many millions upon millions—and this ran



▲ We are constantly being prompted to awareness of what Canadian philosopher Charles Taylor calls "cosmic connection," the author writes.

PHOTO: ARVITALYAART

through my mind!—had I at that moment joined in the rite's 2000-year history? The experience was overwhelming.

My experiences entering the church and taking part in Communion were moments of what the eminent Canadian Christian philosopher Charles Taylor would call "cosmic connection." His latest book, *Cosmic Connections: Poetry in the Age of Disenchantment*, which came out last year, speaks of the power of the arts to evoke what he calls "cosmic consciousness." I read and reviewed his book, and as a lifetime professor of the humanities, I knew exactly what he meant.

"It is poetry, not philosophy, which can tell the deep truth of our age," he writes.

As a musician, I must add that music also can evoke this feeling of connectedness; it has certainly evoked it more than once in me. For the tenth anniversary of the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks in New York, the New York Philharmonic arranged a special concert for the bombing's survivors, families, and firefighters. I had a connection with a flutist in the symphony and was given a ticket to attend. The featured symphony was Mahler's second, the *Resurrection Symphony*, which requires a large choir. Mahler, like me a converted Jew, saw in the Resurrection a symbol for hope and meaning amid humanity's suffering.

When the symphony reaches its ecstatic climax, the choir sings out *fortissimo* the passionate words, "Believe, my heart, believe! All is not lost! What has perished

will rise again. We die, so as to live."

And there I was, amid an audience of people who had lost their loved ones to those searing flames, listening to the words which echoed the meaning of the Resurrection: "The dead will arise," the chorus sang, "and be borne to God." Can you imagine the experience, and what it meant to the 9/11 widows and families? Yes, I was a non-believer then, but I felt my heart opening wide to the promise of the Resurrection.

Christians, but not only Christians of course, are constantly being nudged into awareness of the presence in their lives of cosmic connection: we are, after all, natural beings, but beings who, made in God's image, share such extra-natural faculties as free will, symbolic language, conscience, self-reflection, artistic creativity, altruism and moral values. Charles Taylor's "sense of connection to the cosmic orders" has become increasingly elusive in our age of secularism, although achieving this connectedness is still of course the goal of meditation and religion. (According to some scholars, the word "religion" etymologically means "a tying back together").

A very dear friend in conversation with me recently referred to herself as a "cradle Christian," as she was born and raised Anglican. I said to her, "I guess that makes me a coffin Christian!" But I have found that adopting Christianity at a late age has meant that such "connecting" rituals as prayer, baptism, hymn-singing and so on have a very strong effect on me. "Cosmic connectedness" comes to me especially in prayer. Since prayer is a new experience for me, it is often an arresting, almost intoxicating experience. No less is hymn-singing in my newly-adopted Anglican church where I have joined the choir (I left the Christian Reformed Church when, just after the COVID-19 pandemic, it overruled its mother church on same-sex union issues).

In retrospect, it's hard to express the privilege I, as a "coffin Christian," feel it is to belong to the Anglican church with its progressive policies. And I pray that others will learn to feel, like me, the "cosmic connectedness" that comes, as the song goes, with the privilege "to carry everything to God in prayer." ■

Graham N. Forst was born and raised in Vancouver, received his PhD in interdisciplinary studies in 1970 and has taught in post-secondary institutions in the United States and Canada for 60 years. A near-lifetime atheist, he converted to Anglicanism in 2022.

Eucharist at home a consolation in difficult times

My life partner has recently been diagnosed with blood cancer. Her ability to fight infection is significantly diminished, meaning that we are back to a COVID-19-style "shelter-in-place." Participation in Sunday public worship is no longer possible. So, we have embarked on a search for an online church experience—a search that has taken us from New Zealand to the community of Iona, from Washington National Cathedral to multiple places across Canada.

On Sundays we place a cup with wine on a small table along with a piece of bread. A candle is lit. We follow the interactive online service. When the Eucharistic prayer is



PHOTO: CONTRIBUTED

proclaimed, we lift the chalice and the bread in unison with the priest and participate, by our intention, in the sacramental grace given by Jesus.

Such an "at home" Eucharistic action might make a sacramental theologian wince. But as we communicate each other with the bread and wine we believe our action has brought us into

Communion with Jesus and with the community of Christians around the world.

Yes, some may say the efficacy of Communion requires the gathered community, the physical presence of a priest consecrating, or a deacon administering pre-consecrated elements, and so on. However, in this difficult time in our lives, we take consolation in Jesus' promise, "Where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them." (Matthew 18:20) That's who we are now; just us two, together.

My hunch is that online-at-home Sunday Communion practice may precede doctrine. Christians living in remote settings across Canada,

or where local churches have been closed, or where illness prevents in-person participation, can be greatly nurtured by being encouraged to join an online Sunday experience in which "with faith and thanksgiving" they can fully participate in the Eucharistic feast, as they have once known. I suspect such action will eventually be recognized as a pastoral extension of the Lord's Table.

Footnote: For those communities already investing in high-quality online worship: Go for it! Use the reach of the internet for your mission in the world.

Author anonymous, to protect the privacy of his wife

LETTERS ▶

(Continued)

The Anglican Journal welcomes letters to the editor.

Since not all letters can be published, preference is given to short correspondence (300 words or less). All letters are subject to editing.

‘Meaner attitude’ now feared in U.S., Canada

Continued from p. 1

Canada, encourages Anglicans to speak up on behalf of marginalized people. Asked by the *Journal* what she thought Anglicans should bear in mind during the Trump administration’s early days, she encouraged those suffering and struggling to remember God has not abandoned them.

“As Christians, the gospel imperative is for us to love and to show mercy to others. We continue our vital ministries of caring for the poor and the outcast, extending hospitality to refugees and strangers,” she responded in an email.

“The gospel challenges us to be like those who are ‘blessed’ in the kingdom—who do not hate when hated but rather do good to those who hate and pray for them.”

Helwig’s parish is in a poor, inner-city neighbourhood, and it focuses on outreach to homeless and street-involved people. The congregation includes Black, neurodiverse and gender-diverse people, and she says that in that context it makes sense to preach about the sin inherent in Trump’s uncompassionate policies toward the vulnerable. And while fighting the administration on the policies themselves is not a task for the church in Canada, Helwig says, pushing back against the attitude it promotes certainly is.

“We are already seeing a harder, meaner attitude here in Canada, too: things being blamed on immigrants, things being blamed on trans people, things being blamed on homeless people, on ‘drug addicts.’ Blame and targeting and othering.”

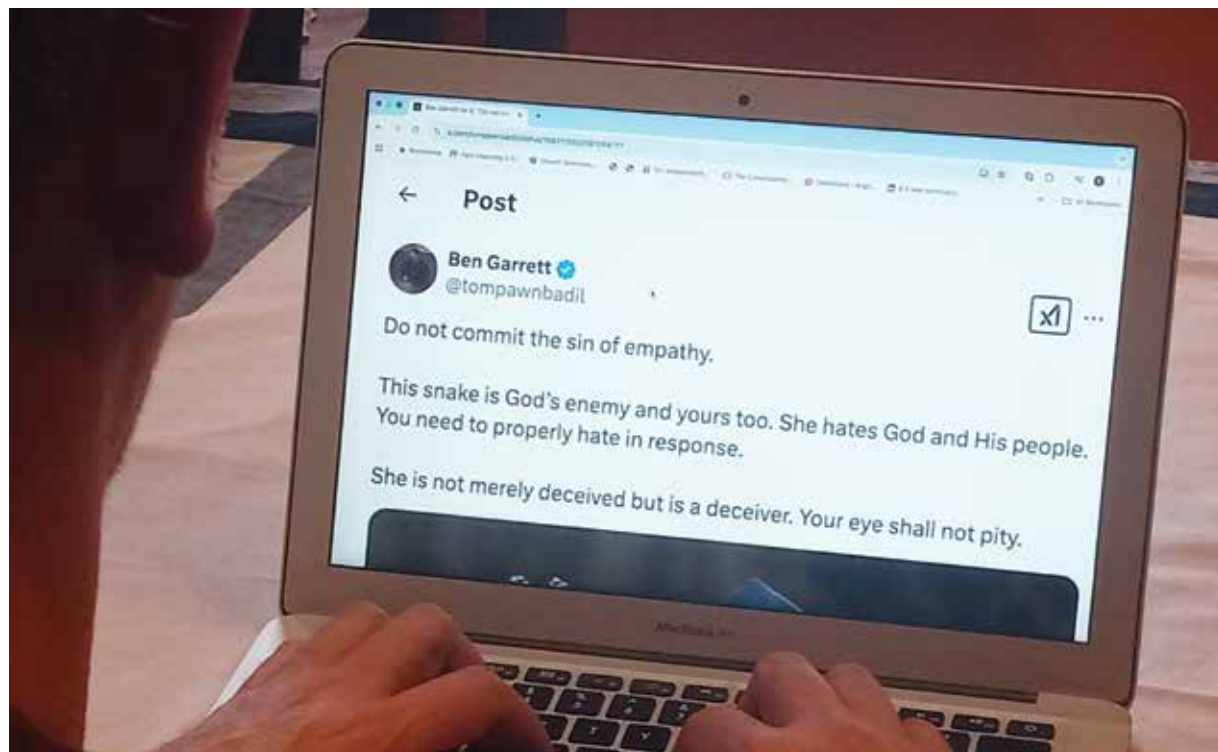
Helwig says she wants parishioners to know the church will speak out against that attitude. She believes churches should also expect a wave of demand for services like food banks, homeless drop-ins and other supports, both for Canadians affected if and when the tariffs land and for a potential wave of asylum seekers rebuffed by the United States.

Meanwhile, Alongside Hope, formerly known as the Primate’s World Relief and Development Fund, is seeing its partners affected by the administration’s massive cuts to development funding through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), says Janice Biehn, Alongside Hope’s communications and marketing officer. For example, Church World Service, an agency that provides food assistance and refugee aid in conflict zones in East Africa, has had to suspend its refugee settlement program in the United States.

Andrea Mann, director of global relations for the Anglican Church of Canada, says she agrees with a February call by the Canadian Council for Refugees for Canada to withdraw from the Safe Third Country Agreement, which refuses refugee protection to many would-be refugees entering Canada via the United States on the reasoning that there is no need to travel to another country once they have arrived in the presumed-safe United States.

Divergent ideas of Christianity

On Jan. 21, his first full day in office, Trump attended a national prayer service at which Bishop Mariann Budde of the Episcopal Church diocese of Washington D.C. gave a sermon outlining some basic principles of the Christian faith. She endorsed unity between the increasingly polarized political factions in the U.S. and honesty, humility and the dignity of every



▲ An X user reads a post critical of Bishop Mariann Budde after her Jan. 21 sermon.

PHOTO: THERESA FULLER

human being, founded on the image of God in every person. She concluded with a plea for Trump to have mercy on those who were afraid of what he might do during his term. (See also “Where is God amid the evil of our time?” on p. 5 of this issue.)

Trump responded by demanding an apology. Online, some of his supporters called Budde a false Christian, demanding her deportation and more. One post which was widely shared on X by Ben Garrett, whose bio identifies him as a deacon at Refuge Church in Ogden, Utah, warned Americans not to commit “the sin of empathy,” adding, “This snake is God’s enemy and yours too. She hates God and His people. You need to properly hate in response.” Garrett had just under 13,000 followers on X as this issue was being prepared in late February.

To Helwig, this backlash to what she calls a mild summary of Christian teaching is more than a little worrisome.

“There are now two extremely different things in the world which people are calling Christianity,” she says. “[There are] many people who are more conservative than me or more liberal than me and we’re clearly all still part of the same faith, religion. But whatever Donald Trump means when he says ‘Christianity,’ it has nothing to do with Jesus or Scripture.”

She compares it to the kind of religion practiced in pre-Christian Rome. “It is remarkably like the context of power worship in which Christianity emerged as an alternative,” she says.

The Rev. Michael Coren, an author and pastoral associate at St. Luke Burlington, Ont., has a similar opinion.

“I do think that Christian nationalism—which is an oxymoron, really—has developed as an alternative to Christianity,” he says. “It’s actually pagan, it’s non-Christian.” He thinks many Christians who voted for Trump originally took the view that he was a flawed man who might nevertheless allow Christianity to flourish, a character in the vein of Roman emperor Constantine. Now, however, he says, it seems many have convinced themselves Trump is a believer himself.

Here in Canada, Coren says, he has seen few signs of similar inclinations. Evangelicals and conservative Christians here tend to be of a more moderate and thoughtful bent, he says.

Left, right and ‘social toxins’

The Rev. Ephraim Radner, retired professor of theology at the University of Toronto’s Wycliffe College, says he believes U.S. politics has become increasingly defined by both left and right wings trying to enforce moral principles in their governance and force changes that cannot happen at the speed they want on a national scale without significant upheaval. These duelling philosophies have left people outside the hardcore Democrat and Republican bases—himself included—feeling increasingly alienated. Radner is an American citizen, self-described conservative Democrat and the author of *Mortal Goods: Reimagining Christian Political Duty*, a 2024 book advocating a Christian political ethic that would focus on simple, pragmatic approaches rather than trying to force society to fit ideologies.

“Both parties, in my mind, do not understand the nature of social existence in this era: huge populations, utterly complex networks of economic and communal survival,” he says. “Everything can only operate at the most grindingly slow and tentative levels. While societies can be ‘changed’ rapidly, this can happen only at the cost of tremendous upheaval, and mostly of a destructive kind.

“Progressives have ignored this reality from their own direction, and brought enormous social toxins into our midst in their efforts to remake societies according to their ideal principles,” he says. “Now it is the turn of the Republicans, in a far different register.”

Radner compares Trump and Musk to Grade 7 students who have taken over a school to spite the teachers. “They’re having a lot of fun right now! Whee!” he says. “But very soon, the cafeteria won’t have any food, the toilets won’t work, and the heating will break down. Then the adults will have to take over again—assuming the school hasn’t burnt up in the meantime.”

Coren emphasizes that while it would be easy to villainize people we disagree with, Jesus’ teachings require Christians to pray for their enemies and their leaders—even Donald Trump. To have any hope of convincing Trump’s voters to change their minds or the president himself to make a compromise, he adds, it’s necessary to first treat them as people, not just enemies to attack. ■

Learning from atheists: Faith ‘needs to be more of an active seeking of God in the world’

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likely to be atheists than their parents and grandparents. The survey found only 13 per cent of people under 25 identified as atheists, while 62 per cent said they were “very” or “fairly” spiritual. Meanwhile, up to one-quarter of those between 45 and 60 identified as atheists, compared to 20 per cent among both millennials—those between the ages of 25 and 44—and baby boomers, aged 65 and older.

The *Anglican Journal* spoke to Gasson about what he learned from his study of four atheist books. This interview has been edited for length and clarity.

Where did the idea for *The Devils’ Gospels* come from?

I was faced with a group of teenagers who I wanted to engage in coming to my discussion group and I quickly realized that it wasn’t going to work just talking about Bible stories. What they were finding in the outside world was a lot of atheist challenges to the existence of God and it was even a bit taboo for bright young people to be considered Christians. They wanted better answers to atheist challenges to religion.

So we started to read atheist books. The big one’s obviously Richard Dawkins’ *God Delusion*. We worked our way through quite a few different angles on this. Then COVID came and everything wound up and I thought, “Well, this is quite interesting. Why not turn it into a book?” Because I know that the parents are actually more interested than the children in answers to this. Growing up, I really felt that I missed having any hard-talk discussion about what atheists say about religion. I was interested for my own self to see whether I could go through these things and actually come out of it feeling that my faith was as strong as it was when I went in.

You’re writing about religion as an interested lay person.

Yeah, that I think is quite important. I don’t know whether it’s the same in Canada, but clergy just can’t say anything. They’re so afraid of being considered unorthodox or not getting progression in the church because they say things which other people might disagree with. It ends up being incredibly difficult to know what the answers are to some of these questions. So I think it is important that I’m saying this as a lay person rather than as a clergy person.

Why did you choose these four texts?

They fit together quite well. Each of them addresses a different angle and they also open up to each other quite well.

With Nietzsche, I’m asking the question: Is God good? That is really the first question a lot of people have about religion. They look around and see religious violence and they see quite a lot of bad behaviour in the church. That is the first question: Is this good, or is it just some abusive group which should be avoided?

What you find in Nietzsche is that he imagines a world without God, and that is a world of power. I think that explains a lot about where the church has gone wrong and where a lot of other religions go wrong as well—that they turn religion into a vehicle for power. That is actually the opposite of love. I think that’s the first step—to understand that we are



▲ Author Christopher Gasson sought to discover what he could learn about God by studying atheist books from four authors (L-R): Friedrich Nietzsche, Jacques Derrida, Stephen Hawking, and Richard Dawkins.

PHOTOS: FROM LEFT, FRIEDRICH HARTMAN, CHINMOY GUHA, STEVE JURVETSON, ELHOMBRENEGRO

worshipping a God of love and a God that is good.

Derrida is probably the most obscure name in this list, but I use him to answer this question: How can we know God? The issue there is that we are finding God in scripture, and what Derrida is saying is that actually, you can never reach final truth in a text. You are always pursuing meaning through the deferral of meaning in the way that language works.

When you look at the Bible, it is a complete mess in terms of trying to make sense of it. The fact that we have four gospels rather than one shows that there’s multiple ways of looking at things and understanding things. What I take away from Derrida is that this idea of uncertainty that exists in the Bible—it’s a feature, not a bug, that tells us how we’re supposed to believe through this idea of continually following a scent, rather than feeling that one’s arrived at complete certainty in understanding who and what God is. That movie recently *Conclave* that speaks [of] certainty being the enemy of the church, I think that that’s very much what one can take away from Derrida.

The next one is Stephen Hawking, and he’s got quite an interesting challenge to religion, in that what he’s trying to say is that there was no time before the Big Bang. If you look at the nature of relativity and quantum theory, which were essentially operating together at the time of the Big Bang, you get this concept that time slowed to zero. Before the Big Bang there was no such thing as time, which completely messes up any concept of causation that you might have. [Note: In *The Devils’ Gospels*, Gasson writes that based on his reading of Hawking, “there is no space or time for God to exist in before the Big Bang” and that causality “simply does not exist in the absence of time.”]

Before I really read Stephen Hawking, I felt that God made the world with the Big Bang. But if you don’t have that causation, one does need to think a little bit about it. How can we have this situation where there isn’t causation? Obviously the first answer is, God is impossible to understand, so this kind of paradox is par for the course. But it also made me think of what placeholder we

should have for our understanding of God, and that probably the best placeholder is one where we think of God as being in the world. The whole universe is actually part of God. That’s how we should be imagining the relationship with physics—that it isn’t something which is separate, it’s something which is all part of the same magisteria.

Furthermore, this idea that we are all part of God makes this problem of evil, which is again one of the subtexts of Stephen Hawking, more understandable. Rather than thinking that God is out there somewhere beyond the universe and he’s just sitting by watching bad things happen and giving people like Stephen Hawking motor neuron disease, we should be feeling that we’re all part of God. That is how we can offer comfort to people in that kind of situation.

That then takes us onto Richard Dawkins. His main concern about religion is the idea that it’s both dangerous and idiotic; it’s dangerous because it’s idiotic. If you have a circumstance where faith means believing six impossible things before breakfast, then it becomes very difficult to find reason in anything. You become very much subject to what you’re told because you’ve essentially got to surrender your reason as soon as you get to religion.

Now, the Church of England, the Anglican church, was founded on the three-legged stool of scripture, tradition and reason. The way I read Richard Dawkins is to say, what he’s really asking us is to not ignore reason. We cannot give up reason if we are going to be good humans. I think that obviously God gave us reason for a purpose and it wasn’t to ignore it.

How do you square that with this question of faith? Let’s look at what faith is. I suspect that what has happened over the years is that faith used to mean having trust in the promise of Jesus despite its unlikelihood or unclarity of the situation. It’s become that the more impossible things you believe, the stronger your faith is, and that’s incredibly dangerous.

If we can understand that faith and reason are completely compatible and that faith is in fact really a way of seeing the world and a way of seeing the possibility of

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If we can’t define what God is, though, a young person who has questions about faith might ask what the purpose of belief in God is.

But that is part of the joy of it. This question is what I think our job as Christians is: to think each day, what is the will of God? If we think we just come up with the answer one day and that is the only answer that is needed, then that’s probably where religion ends.

You conclude from your reading of Hawking that God is with us. Many religious people today believe God created the universe through the Big Bang. Philosophically, however, one could object that the notion of a time before time is an absurdity. You explain Hawking’s conception of time by comparing time to space, saying for example that nothing is more south than the South Pole.

This is the problem. If one’s saying that there’s no time before the Big Bang, there can be no causality, so you’ve just got to not use that language. Now, it could just be that this is part of the paradox that one has to swallow when one starts trying to figure out God. But I think that it is reasonable to try and consider how one might make things compatible with a world that has a finite beginning, before which there is no time.

Part of the problem is that people are trying to anthropomorphize God. Because we live in time, we tend to try and look for explanations for the passage of time which make sense to us. The fact that time didn’t exist before the Big Bang—[for] a human trying to anthropomorphize, what was happening at that stage is pretty difficult.

In the Dawkins section, you conclude, “Faith is a way of seeing.” How did you draw that conclusion from *The God Delusion*? What do we mean when we say faith is a way of seeing?

It’s active looking for things. It’s about looking for purpose, meaning and the potential for God in the world and seeing this; the nature of love and how that works in the world and seeing the God in that. It’s something with anticipation. Faith should be having trust that it’ll all come [out] good, rather than I have agreed that certain impossible things are true and therefore that gives me faith, but then I don’t need to be active in my engagement with God in the world thereafter.

The sort of faith that Richard Dawkins would be very unhappy with is one that says, “OK, I can now believe in impossible things and therefore from now on I am a Christian.” Whereas I’m saying that actually, it needs to be more of an active seeking of God in the world as one lives that is the faith, and the faith is what is driving one to seek that.

Dawkins was a leading figure in the New Atheism movement along with Sam Harris, Christopher Hitchens and Bill Maher. It’s interesting how each ended up on the political right, singling out Islam for criticism more than any other religion. You say conservatives have become more wedded to the cultural aspects of Christianity. It’s ironic that Dawkins is an outspoken atheist, yet recently declared himself a “cultural Christian.”

“I felt that Christianity was on this burning platform. On the one hand, young, more progressive liberal people were being drawn towards atheism. On the other hand, the church itself, particularly in places like Russia and in parts of America, is becoming a political instrument. At some point it will sell itself.”

I’d say he always was a cultural Christian. When our vicar retired, he came along to the retirement dinner and sat next to my wife. He’s always been quite keen on the cultural aspects of religion.

But what you’re saying is interesting because [of] this survey that we did looking at belief in Britain showing that atheism has tailed off among Gen-Z people. I think when one talks to Gen-Z people about atheists, it is that cultural turn that these atheists have made towards being more intolerant of particularly Islam which has really turned young people off atheism. Initially, they might’ve been attracted to atheism feeling, “I’ve been born into a Christian culture, therefore I could have been born into a Muslim culture and I could be any religion. Therefore, all religions must be false.” That argument in favour of atheism seems to be slightly negated nowadays by the intolerance that it’s now associated with.

In your book’s introduction, you talk about the culture wars and how nationalist politicians like Donald Trump and Vladimir Putin have used Christianity for their own ends. Can you tell me a little bit more about how the culture wars influenced your decision to write *The Devils’ Gospels*?

I felt that Christianity was on this burning platform. On the one hand, young, more progressive liberal people were being drawn towards atheism. On the other hand, the church itself, particularly in places like Russia and in parts of America, is becoming a political instrument. At some point it will sell itself.

You’ve probably been following this spat between [U.S. Vice President J.D.] Vance and Rory Stewart over *ordo amoris*. [Note: Vance recently argued about theology over Twitter/X with British academic and former Conservative MP Rory Stewart. Vance said it is a Christian concept to first love one’s family, then one’s neighbours, community, fellow citizens in one’s nation, finally the rest of the world. Stewart protested that Vance’s ideas were more “pagan” than “Christian” and ignored the Christian message to love one another. Vance retorted by invoking *ordo amoris*, a Latin phrase meaning “order of love.”] I think that’s really the point. When you start turning away people who are suffering because they’re not your people, that’s when you cease to be a Christian. The whole simple bit of Christianity is its universality. As Jesus said, even the pagans love their own.

This is the problem when we are seeing people associating Christianity and pro-gun groups and so forth. You feel the religion here is actually turning into something quite different. It is turned into a political identity, which is supposed to be an untouchable political identity because it is a religion rather than a faith and you can’t criticize people’s faith. That is a real danger. It’s certainly a big turnoff to young people joining the church. Equally, this idea that intelligent people should be atheists is also a danger to the church. I wanted to show that there was space between those two extremes which made sense. ■



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is a creative learning community rooted in the Anglican and United Church traditions, helping students to grow in spiritual maturity and exercise leadership in the church and world. The college is affiliated with McGill University and is a member of the ecumenical Montreal School of Theology. Our programs include Bachelor of Theology, Master of Divinity, Diploma in Ministry, Master of Sacred Theology, and Certificate in Bilingual Ministry. We also offer distance-education options such as the Licentiate in Theology program which prepares students for ministry in local contexts across Canada. We are located in downtown Montreal and have students from across the country and globe.

For information, please contact:
The Rev. Dr. Jesse Zink, Principal,
3475 University St., Montreal, Quebec
H3A 2A8. 514-849-3004 x222.
info@montrealdio.ca
www.montrealdio.ca

QUEEN’S COLLEGE FACULTY OF THEOLOGY

Though Queen’s College has been preparing people for varieties of ministry opportunities since 1841, we are acutely aware of the changing needs of the world today and are envisioning a new way to be church as we move into the future. We offer full-time and part-time programs for those preparing for ordained and non-ordained ministries in the Church and community. We have on-campus, on-line, hybrid and correspondence courses that help students complete M.Div., MTS, M. Th, B. Th., Associate, Diploma and Certificate programs. We collaborate and partner with other faith groups to strengthen our programs and the learning experience. Our programs include and foster theological education, pastoral training and supervision, spiritual development, participation in faith-based learning community, and a vibrant chapel life. Queen’s is situated on the campus of Memorial University in St. John’s, NL.

For more information about our programs contact The Provost,
Queen’s College Faculty of Theology,
210 Prince Philip Drive, St. John’s, NL
A1B 3R6. queens@mun.ca,
www.queenscollegenl.ca
709-753-0116,
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RENISON INSTITUTE OF MINISTRY (RIM)

The newly imagined RIM will now focus on offering retreats and workshops which address the learning longings of the local Anglican church, an annual Youth Event convened by our Chaplain, an annual Lenten lecture series which focuses on theologies of Social Justice and action toward the common good, and two co-sponsored programs offered in collaboration with parishes each year. We also invite you to make suggestions for future programming ideas: renimin@uwaterloo.ca

Please join us at one of our upcoming events. Participation is free. You can support the work of the Renison Institute of Ministry by making a donation during registration; there will also be freewill offering baskets available at the events. All events include parking and refreshments as part of the day’s activities.

Find out which of our events will interest you. Visit www.renison.ca/RIM

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Would you like to deepen your understanding of your faith and discover fresh ways of bringing it to bear on the questions and challenges of life? The Faculty of Theology at Saint Paul University has been preparing Anglicans for lay and professional ministry for over forty years. Students pursue practical ministry experience in the Anglican tradition in a rich ecumenical and bilingual educational context, beautifully situated in the national capital region. The Faculty of Theology offers a variety of programs: BA, MTS, MDiv, MA, and PhD. Courses are offered online and in person.

For more information, please contact Dr. Sarah Kathleen Johnson at Saint Paul University, 223 Main Street, Ottawa, ON K1S 1C4
sarah.kathleen.johnson@ustpaul.ca

THORNELOE UNIVERSITY

is an innovative Anglican college in Sudbury, Ontario offering creative programs in Theology. Largely through distance education, the School of Theology offers courses at the certificate and diploma levels, as well as a Bachelor of Theology. Thorneloe University has 58 single rooms in its community-focused residence, which is open to students at Laurentian. For more information, please contact the President of Thorneloe University at: president@thorneloe.ca
Website: www.thorneloe.ca

TRINITY COLLEGE The Faculty of Divinity is an ecumenical community of theological education located at the heart of a leading university and theological consortium, rooted in the Anglican tradition’s embrace of diversity and social engagement. Seeking to serve students by deepening knowledge, encouraging hope, and practising love, Trinity prepares Christian leaders to participate in God’s mission to the world. The college offers professional and graduate level programs that prepare students to engage with the needs of contemporary churches and society. We enjoy particular expertise in historical and contemporary liturgy, church history, ethics and theology, Anglican and Eastern Orthodox studies, philosophy of religion, and congregational studies. We offer the following degree programs: MDiv, MTS, MA, ThM, DMin and PhD. Short-course Certificate programs are available, with concentrations that include Anglican Studies, Orthodox Studies, and Diaconal Ministry. For more information please contact: Faculty of Divinity, Trinity College, 6 Hoskin Avenue, Toronto ON M5S 1H8 416-978-2133
divinity@trinity.utoronto.ca
www.trinity.utoronto.ca/study-theology

VANCOUVER SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

is called to educate and form thoughtful, engaged, and generous Christian leaders for the 21st century. With a deep grounding in the gospel and attention to the local context, VST is committed to building a community of disciples of Jesus Christ to serve the world that God so loves.

A theological education at VST will stretch you academically, spiritually, and emotionally. Students from all across Canada and the world come to study at VST, bringing their own unique backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives to the common life of the school. As students gather on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded lands of the Musqueam people, VST emphasizes the importance of learning with Indigenous churches and those of other faith traditions. VST graduates are thoughtful people, reflective about how to interact with the challenges of our time on the basis of the deep resource of faith.

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WYCLIFFE COLLEGE

at the University of Toronto is an evangelical graduate school of theology which provides high quality education. Rooted in the Anglican tradition, the College has a long history of fostering spiritual formation and academic excellence since its founding in 1877. Understanding the Bible as the Word of God written, Wycliffe posits the theological interpretation of Scripture as central to the identity and work of the College.

As a founding member of the Toronto School of Theology, Wycliffe offers conjoint degrees with the University of Toronto at both the master’s and doctoral levels, as well as certificate programs. With Master of Divinity (MDiv), Master in Theological Studies (MTS), Doctor of Ministry (DMin), Master of Theology (ThM), Master of Arts in Theological Studies (MA), and Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) programs, the College aims to equip students who graduate from its programs for readiness in leadership for Christ’s Church and a variety of vocational settings globally. Certificate programs are also offered in Theological Studies and Anglican Studies.

Learn more at www.wycliffecollege.ca or contact admissions@wycliffe.utoronto.ca for program information. Renee James
Communications Associate
Wycliffe College at the University of Toronto
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CHURCHES AND HOUSING ▶



PHOTO: GENERAL SYNOD ARCHIVES

Exterior of the then-site of Arthur Turner Training School, and previously St. Luke's Hospital, in Pangnirtung, Nunavut circa March 1974.

New buildings for Arctic church lots

Continued from p. 1

at the diocesan executive and synods for decades, but that the main impetus for launching the AADC came from changes to how General Synod funds the Council of the North. In 2023, General Synod began to reduce Council of the North funding by \$100,000 annually, until its annual block grant is equal to 25 per cent of donations the national church receives through proportional giving from dioceses.

When the diocese was building new churches in the late 1970s and early 1980s, Pryor says, it was aware there was a need in communities for meeting space. Anglicans were also concerned about how to best use their buildings in a sustainable way, given the high cost in the North of heating spaces the church might only use for a few hours a week.

“The change in the funding for the Council of the North has made it so clear that now is the time to go forward with developing the land that we have across the North to make our churches more sustainable, so that we’re not spending as much on utilities and maintenance for standalone church buildings when communities really have a need for office space and community hall space—and especially for housing, because we’ve got a housing crisis right across the North,” Pryor says.

When many northern communities were being formed in the 1950s and 1960s—much of the Arctic population beforehand had lived primarily nomadic lives—the church was given land right at the centre of the communities, Pryor notes.

In most places they built a small church on a large plot of land. That land, he says, is now “perfect to develop into a multipurpose building that can provide housing for the communities that is desperately needed.”

The diocese has several projects in the works on land where there is currently a church or vacant space to replace old buildings with new multi-story buildings, Pryor says. The main floor would serve as a space serving many purposes, including worship.

“On Sundays it’s the church,” Pryor says. “Throughout the week, it can be used for community groups, for afterschool clubs.” A daycare society in one



PHOTO: GENERAL SYNOD ARCHIVES

Church at Baker Lake, N.W.T. under construction

community has already expressed interest in using this space, he says.

Remaining floors above would consist of affordable housing units, including one to serve as mission housing for a minister and their family. The AADC will collect rents from these units and maintain the buildings, with proceeds going back to the diocese every year.

Currently the AADC is looking to secure funding to help support these projects. One potential source is the Nunavut 3000 project, also known as Igluqatigiingniq (“Building Houses Together”). A joint initiative by the Government of Nunavut and Nunavut Housing Corporation largely funded by the federal government, Nunavut 3000 aims to build 3,000 new housing units across Nunavut by 2030.

The AADC has three projects on its radar for the near future, Pryor says. One in Apex, a small community outside of Iqaluit, is closest to breaking ground. The AADC has drawn up plans to replace an Anglican church built there in the 1940s, which now has a severe mould problem, with a multi-purpose church and hall and 12 housing units.

A second project is at a building built in the 1930s in the Inuit hamlet of Pangnirtung, Nunavut, that was the former site of the Arthur Turner Training School until the structure was condemned in 2002. The building is currently being demolished and the AADC will partner with the hamlet to develop a new structure that includes 18 housing units. The third project is in the hamlet of Baker Lake at the former site of a church that was demolished, where the AADC is looking to build a new three or four-level structure. ■

“The change in the funding for the Council of the North has made it so clear that now is the time to go forward with developing the land that we have across the North to make our churches more sustainable.”

—Archdeacon Alexander Pryor

CLASSIFIEDS

BOOK



REBELS WITHOUT A CAUSE: Two Unfinished Symphonies

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DAY READING

- 1 John 14:1-14
- 2 John 21:1-19
- 3 Revelation 4
- 4 Revelation 5
- 5 Acts 9:1-19a
- 6 Acts 9:19b-31
- 7 Acts 9:32-43
- 8 Psalm 30
- 9 Revelation 6
- 10 Revelation 7
- 11 Proverbs 23:15-25
- 12 John 10:22-38
- 13 John 13:21-38
- 14 Acts 11:1-18
- 15 Psalm 148
- 16 2 John

DAY READING

- 17 3 John
- 18 Revelation 21:1-8
- 19 Revela. 21:9-21
- 20 Revela. 21:22-22:5
- 21 Acts 16:1-15
- 22 Psalm 67
- 23 Psalm 68:1-18
- 24 Psalm 68:19-35
- 25 John 14:15-31
- 26 Psalm 47
- 27 Luke 24:13-35
- 28 Luke 24:36-53
- 29 Acts 1:1-11
- 30 Revela. 22:6-21
- 31 Luke 1:39-56

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Illustration: Mary Magdalene at the Sepulchre by Harold Copping (1863-1932) PUBLIC DOMAIN

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—John 20:16-17

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