The Burning Bush

Spring 2017

St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church Kingston
Thoughts from the Editor…

You could have heard a pin drop in the room. There was a collective gasp and then stunned silence. I had said the unspeakable.

It was during a lunch break, and there were several of us around the table having a lively discussion about Political Correctness. In true ‘Yours Truly’ fashion, I jumped in and opined that Political Correctness was not a healthy thing in our society. (All right, I may actually have said it was—well, evil…)

Like feathers to the wind, I could not retrieve these words. Nor did I really want to; but perhaps I could have presented my opinion with more political correctness.

The verbal daggers came out. What! Did I believe that it was acceptable for people to speak their minds with unrestrained unkindness? Did I believe that it was acceptable to speak in bigoted terms?

And so it went. Well, of course I don’t believe that it is all right to speak with cruelty and unkindness, to express bigotry. But for me it is all a questions of values and the origin of those values. Values are what we have within us; Political Correctness tries to impose society’s values on us from the outside. Transformations, spiritual or emotional, are only effective when they come from the inside out, not the outside in.

Too much Political Correctness eventually frustrates people. It becomes a dangerous repress of free speech, sometimes resulting in less independent thinking; independent thinking is essential in our society.

We are now living in the backlash of this PC movement and it is not a pretty thing. Our society, with our values no longer based on Judeo-Christian principles, is floundering. Society speaks of values but cannot determine whose values we should use or from where they should come.

It is my thought that Political Correctness is society’s response to this moral vacuum. It does so by creating its own value system and imposing it on all under the guise of goodness. Its values, however, are ever shifting.

Perhaps, as Christians, we might once again consider substituting Political Correctness with a more Faith-based Correctness?

My thoughts…

Ada Mallory, Editor

N.B. Be sure to read the words from our Moderator, Rev. Douglas Rollwage, concerning “Christian Values in Today’s World” in this edition of The Burning Bush.

Included in the Issue:

- Thoughts from the Editor
- From the Minister’s Desk
- ‘An Attitude of Gratitude’ autobiography of Rose DeShaw
- ‘2016 Draws to a Close’ Photo Album
- Lottie Sutherland: ‘Women of Faith Award’ Nominee
- Church Family Photo Album 1
- ‘Once Upon a Time I Ran Away’ by Ada Mallory
- Mission Blog: Greetings from Hungary
- Message from Moderator ‘Christian Values in Today’s World’
- Church Family Photo Album 2
- Presbyterianism and the Journey of Brian Osborne
- Church Family Photo Album 3
- News from The Presbyterian Church in Canada
- Presbyterian Record Ceases Publication
- PWS&D story from Nicaragua
- ‘Through the Eyes of a Child’ by Barb Zabel/Church Album
- ‘The World of Agnes Maule Machar’ by Brian Osborne
- Church Family Photo Album 4
- ‘Making a Promise for Life’ by Rose DeShaw
- The Lighter Side of Saints
From the Minister …

‘God’s thoughts are not as our thoughts, and God’s ways are not as our ways’. This insight of scripture (Isaiah 55:8) is an oft quoted reminder that, after all we know of God through revelation and experience, there remains a great dimension of mystery. Trust of God is not only the foundation of faithful living but also its sustenance and confirmation.

A corollary saying might be ‘The Burning Bush schedule is not as the Minister’s schedule, and the publication seasons are not as the Church Year’. Our editor is terrific; this congregational ‘family album’ is much enjoyed. But what a challenge I have today. This issue encompasses both seasons of Lent and Easter, both the passion and suffering, but also the resurrection and triumph, of our Lord for us and our salvation. How can some words from me be true to both of these critical emphases of Christian faith?

Inspiration was received just in time. I was reminded of a painting that I saw first in Nice, France – it is by Simon Hantai (1922-2008), who was born and raised in Hungary but lived and painted in France from just after WWII, and became one of the Europe’s great twentieth century abstract artists.

On a silent canvas our eyes are focused upon a cross. We are invited to meditate how Jesus lived and died the love of God for humanity.

The cross is empty, reminding us of the resurrection, but note that it is central and yet not at the centre of the painting. Neither has Hentai placed the cross on the left of the canvas, as an event relegated to the past. The cross is placed between centre and right, between today and the end.

This painting is entitled, ‘Souvenir de l’avenir’ or ‘Memory of the Future’, and I am moved every time I reflect upon it. (The fact that Hentai painted it in the very year of my birth makes it most personal!) On this canvas the seasons of Lent and Easter are both depicted. In this painting, the life, death and resurrection of both Christ and Christian are celebrated.

Thanks be to God.

Two Forthcoming Celebrations…

Hosting the 143rd General Assembly

It will be our honour, with the Presbytery of Kingston, to welcome this gathering of 325 representatives from across Canada. Opening worship will be held in our sanctuary on Sunday June 4, 7 p.m. with a massed choir. Mark it in!

And there is a whole host of ways that your assistance is needed between the arrival of the first commissioners on Friday June 2 to Wednesday June 7. Might you pick up a commissioner or two from the train or bus station? Or bake muffins, cookies and other pick-me-ups to offer during a snack break during meetings? Please have a look at the sheet in St. Andrew’s Hall, and consider how you might provide support.

200th Anniversary of St. Andrew’s Kingston

It was in 1817 that a group of Kingston residents gathered in Moore’s Coffee House on Store Street (now Princess) and committed themselves to establish a Presbyterian congregation in their city. We are going to celebrate! We will begin on Saturday September 16 with an Anniversary Dinner. Add it to your calendar, and send out the invitation to former members and all friends. Would you be interested in joining an organizing committee? Do you have a suggestion of an event or project? Speak to Donna Delacretaz asap.

Warm seasonal and celebratory greetings,

In Christ,

Andrew
An Attitude of Gratitude
By Rose DeShaw

When I was appointed at 29, to the board of St Mark’s Anglican Church at the top of the Jacob’s Ladder in Port Hope, Ontario, I was bemused enough to write about it to the Canadian Churchman. “I’m a hippie…” I began, “while they have tradition and history behind them in their suits and ties…”

Hugh McCullum, the editor, wrote back and offered me a regular monthly column on the spot. He also wanted a picture of me barefoot with the board. It was the time of Malcolm Boyd’s, ‘Are You Running With Me Jesus?’ and Pierre Berton’s, ‘The Empty Pew.’ The Churchman was looking for someone young and prone to getting into the sorts of situations that people in the explosive seventies often did. My mandate was to write about the world outside the church and God in it.

I have been a writer my entire life, basically as a form of personal insurance. When I publish something, bearing my name and sometimes a picture, it is proof that I am still alive on this planet. Given a spotty childhood with indifferent parenting in the Alaskan bush, day to day survival was often in doubt. I wasn’t raised in this culture.

As I write this, I count up the 42 times throughout my life I begrudgingly moved house, never wanting to go, always desperate to stay and belong and have a garden and neighbours.

When I turned 50, I published a series of essays in the Globe & Mail about my life, most notably when I attempted to get myself killed by hanging around in a nasty part of Portland, Oregon where I had been assured, only murderers and other felons lived. Like a Christ figure, an older student found me and brought me back.

That particular essay, about all the joy I would have missed, had I succeeded, was picked up by the United Church, used for a year in their teenage Sunday school materials and eventually chosen for their ‘best of,’ collection.

‘An attitude of gratitude,’ is what I got. ‘Gratitude, the hinge on which the spiritual life swings’
O my how it does swing! For all of this, I am most grateful.

Having the column for many, many years, I stuck my life bit by bit into it. How I graduated with a degree in theology from a west coast bible school, married my Sunday school teacher, immigrated with a baby and all the draft dodgers, had a second baby in Peterborough, adopted my dear daughter and opened an out of print bookshop in Kingston in 1979, living over the business like the Queen.

It all came to an abrupt halt when after much checking, I allowed my sons to enroll in the boys’ choir at St George’s cathedral. I had never questioned my belief that God only lived in church, not out in the community with the rest of us. But when abuse by the choirmaster, accompanied by denials, came out, I knew that I had to picket what I thought of as God’s house, in order to see justice done. This proved to be the end of the column.

The bookshop had a run of about the same length till the ice storm of 1998 where all our pipes froze and broke (with 35,000 books stacked on them). Then the furnace died and we spent 3 months out of our home, 2 of these living over the Kingston Community Credit Union who gave us their staff room floor to sleep on till repairs were completed. By then, all the books were gone.

It wasn’t until I came to St Andrews and 12 step programs at about the same time that I began to understand how completely God is in every bit of His creation. ‘Church’ is just a tiny segment of all the places and ways to find Him. In particular, I discovered, God is to be found in ‘others.’

Two and a half years ago, when my husband died suddenly and I began to walk with everyone else on the street, I began to see the God I had so belatedly come to understand and his compassion and love. I was a spiritual being having human experiences.

Note from Editor: Rose DeShaw is a tough negotiator. In exchange for the submission of this autobiography, I had to promise to submit an autobiography of my own. I agreed reluctantly, arguing that as the editor, I should be more invisible, and this might demonstrate inconsistency. The argument fell flat. So now you may all look forward (or not) with great anticipation to the short and highly edited story of my life in the next edition. Perhaps I might entitle it, “My Rocky Road to St. Andrew’s”? Ada Mallory
2016 Draws to a close...

Above: Crystal practices lighting the Advent Candles. The Christ Candle symbolizes that for which we have been waiting. The virgin has conceived and borne a son- God has come amongst us as one of us. The Advent wreath is completed with the Christ Candle in the center. With this we pray that Christ be the center of our lives.

Right: Christmas Day Service: held in the John Barclay Memorial Chapel with our Minister officiating.

Some members of The College & Careers Group sharing an end of the year meal at Ali Baba's- across the street from St. Andrew's. The building in which this restaurant is located, was one of the first homes of Queen’s College.
Saying 91 year old Lottie Sutherland lives a busy life is an understatement. It might be safe to say that Lottie Sutherland has never had a dull moment in her 91 years.

She has raised a family and run for political office.
She has been a telephone operator and a tea room owner.
A Sunday School teacher and School board trustee.
A kilt maker and underwear inspector.

“There’re only two things I don’t do: embalm bodies and drive a hearse,” said Sutherland with a laugh.

Mrs. Charlotte (Lottie McDonald Sutherland) was born in Glasgow, Scotland, in 1925. Lottie worked for the Telephone Company before immigrating to Canada as a war bride in 1948. She came to Elora, Ontario, where she was united in marriage to her husband, then retired Navy Officer, Bob Sutherland (himself a well-known author of 18 children’s books). While there and seemingly with boundless energy, she taught Sunday School, sang in the Choir, led a Bible Study and a ‘Canadian Girls in Training’ (CGIT) group from which, in 1952, she received life membership.

In 1952, they moved to Woodstock, Ontario, attending Knox Presbyterian Church for 35 years, raising their family, and serving in leadership positions. While there Lottie owned a tea room, was a quality control manager at the Harvey Woods men’s underwear factory (“I worked in the men’s underwear [department]” she tells people), and in the 1980’s was promotions manager for Downtown Woodstock. ... “I tried to disguise my voice because I didn’t want people to know who I was,” she said.

Also while there, Lottie was an executive member of the local Women’s Missionary Society (WMS), became Children’s Secretary, eventually Vice President of the Paris Presbytery, and with Bob, co-councillor to the ‘Young People’s Society’. She worked with Vietnamese Refugees as well as being an adviser. Within the community, she became a Board of Education Trustee, served on Municipal Committees and ran for the Liberal Party.

During her 23 years in Westport, Lottie owned a tea room, in which she also sold her handmade kilts, scones and meat pies and goods imported from Scotland. She later owned a tea room in Smith Falls and taught Scottish country dancing in Perth.

Now semi-retired, Lottie and Bob moved to Kingston in 2010. They joined Strathcona Park Presbyterian Church (SPPC) and quickly became active members. Lottie, after completing 3 years as President of the combined WMS for St. Andrew’s/Strathcona Park churches, now serves as Program & Devotional Convenor.

Lottie and Bob have three children, seven grandchildren and 5 great grandchildren. Life has been full for Lottie; she has been blessed with an amazing memory, with God given abilities that she uses to praise and glorify Him, and with the ‘wildest imagination’ that keeps her ‘young at heart’. Lottie walks the talk, always ready to help or just listen, such a willing servant.

“I live. I don’t just exist”, she said.

Sections in italics are from the Whig Standard article on February 18, 2017, entitled, “I Believe in Being Active”, and were written by Mike Norris.
White Gifts: Collected December 18, 2016

Last December on White Gift Sunday, the congregation was invited to reach out with some of the joy of Christmas to our neighbours at Interval House. Women, youth and children find temporary shelter here through the year, in 18 apartments.

The suggestion was that we offer a white envelope with a $10.00 gift card from nearby shops like Food Basics, Metro, Shoppers or Dollarama, or a cash contribution that can be pooled to purchase something larger like a needed housecoat or slippers.

Presentation of Gifts to Interval House

On January 4th, 2017, Donna Delacretaz, Clerk of Session, presented these gifts to an Interval House representative- an envelope containing money- and a table full of gift cards. The half dozen Children’s Bibles were donated by Ron Axford.
I ran away from home once when I was a child. I feel a bit sheepish writing about it to this day. What was I thinking? I was only 9 years old and really didn’t have an unhappy childhood that would have provoked such an event.

But I had a best friend who really did live in difficult circumstances in her home. Her mother was an alcoholic-although I was unclear what that really meant since there was never alcohol used in my home- but her mother certainly behaved strangely and said terrible things to my girlfriend. Even when I was present.

Then there were those stories that my friend told me her father did to her. Quite honestly, I didn’t know what to think about some of the things my friend told me. She often had bruises on her arms and legs.

But at that age I was quite naïve about intimate things that happened between a man and a woman. My life was centered around school and church and Sunday school events. And nobody talked about such things.

When one day my friend told me how she dreamed about running away from home, I suggested we run away together. It seemed like a great adventure!

So in our own childish and naïve way, we prepared for this running away event.

Looking back on it, I can still recall- with a half smile on my face- what I packed in my little bag, a bag which I tied to the end of a stick, Huckleberry Finn style. A loaf of bread, some teabags and a few of my mom’s cookies. A couple packages of Freshie. We were going deep into the woods and we were going to live off of the land.

So away we went one fine sunny summer day, and walked. And walked. I knew my parents wouldn’t miss me for a long time that day. My childhood and that of my sisters, was largely unsupervised and that the only really great sin in my family was to not show up in time for supper...

But as the sun began to rapidly go down that day, our excitement evaporated with equal rapidity. This was unforeseen. We both were terrified of the dark anywhere; let alone walking into the darkness of the woods. Who knew what evil and terrifying creatures might be lurking there?

With few words we turned and ran all the way back home. Breathless I arrived home thinking how very grateful my parents would be to see me. I had run away but I had come home! Surely they would intuitively understand this.

This fanciful reception was not to be. I had arrived late for supper. And for this infraction, I was punished with a few swats with the Mattenklopper- a bamboo rug beater that was used by Dutch families mostly as a disciplinary tool. I recall my indignation to this day.

It was many, many years later that I told my parents what had really happened that day. I never told them about the terrible things that had happened to my friend in her own home though. Even then. I don’t know why.

So why does this little incident still matter to me today? Certainly I see God’s hand of protection on my life. Our little childhood game, as humorously as I may have presented it, could have ended with disastrous results.

Over the years, I have often wondered what happened to my friend after this incident. I never saw her again. Her parents forbade us to be together and within a few months, the whole family quietly moved away.

I am left with residual sadness at my inability as a child to understand and help my friend.

As an adult I understand more about the dark side of human beings, and my dismay is how very close I had been to it, unknowingly.

I am thinking now that even as adults the urge to ‘run away’ is more common than we like to admit, perhaps from the frustrations and complexities of life or perhaps simply from the very ordinary-ness of daily life.

Might it be the simplicity of our childhood for which we long? To which we might return, however briefly?

Or perhaps, do you think, we might just like to know that somebody would care enough to find us when we had run away? I wonder.
Greetings from Hungary

Hello! My name is Jackie Bannerman and I am a PCC young adult intern working in Budapest for 8 months with the Reformed Church of Hungary.

I spend the majority of my time working at Kalunba, the RCH’s refugee ministry implementing organization.

So far I have started teaching English to refugees and translating for those coming from French-speaking African countries. I also spend some time at the national church office where I help with communications projects, such as coordinating with international delegates for the Starpoint Festival this summer.

In addition, I spend two afternoons a week at an after school program for Roma youth, where I lead activities and English programming.

I was fortunate enough to join Glynis Williams and Ian Ross-McDonald on a trip to Debrecen last week, where we celebrated 500 years since the Reformation with many other international guests. We enjoyed a beautiful service in the Great Reformed Church in Debrecen and learned about the Reformation’s lasting impact on Hungary.

We then went just across the Hungarian border to Ukraine, where we learned from the Bishop of the Sub-Carpathian Reformed Church and PCC partners David and Anna Pándy-Szekeres about their work with Roma people. We caught a glimpse of the extreme poverty they live in while visiting a high school and primary school for Roma children.

During my short time here, I have already learned a lot about the struggles refugees in Hungary face due to the government’s removal of social assistance and their discrimination from the general public. I am also learning about the discrimination of Roma people and how, even though they are marginalized, they are still generally more accepted and supported than refugees in Hungarian society.

I am learning about the extreme privilege I have in comparison to many of the people I work with simply because of where I was born and what language I grew up speaking. It has only been a few weeks, so I am looking forward to what I will learn and how I will grow by the end of my time here.

Jacqueline Bannerman, February 16, 2017

The Presbyterian Church in Canada sends International Ministries personnel to work with international partners to support programs in Christian education, evangelism, Bible translation, food security, health care, human rights work and leadership development.

Web: http://presbyterian.ca
Canadian values are in the news. Conservative leadership candidate Kellie Leitch has proposed screening immigrants for anti-Canadian values, which raises the question, “What are Canadian values?”

The Charter of Rights and Freedoms begins: “Canada is founded upon principles that recognize the supremacy of God and the rule of law,” but reflecting upon this, CBC columnist Neil Macdonald opines: “The sentence is true only insofar as Canada’s founders were a group of professed Christians who no doubt regarded the conversion of heathens as some sort of good… But belief in God, with the moral dictation that usually comes with it, can actually be offensive to atheists.”

It increasingly appears as though Canadian values can no longer be automatically equated with Christian values. This is hardly breaking news, but for many in the church today, it comes as a nasty surprise. Christianity was, after all, the dominant religious and cultural force in the founding of our nation. Canadian and Christian values and morality were to a large extent regarded as synonymous.

And they had been, until a new cultural imperative began to replace the old. Canada, through its political processes and educational system and constitutional reforms and courts, has been rapidly transforming into a secular humanist society, where the rights and freedoms of the individual—the pursuit of personal gratification and self-fulfilment—are paramount, and where classic religious values—especially traditional Christian values—are being constantly challenged.

While the church was at one time the basis and judge of society, society now judges the church and finds it out of step; society now judges the Bible, and finds it goes against the new Canadian ethos.

The response of some within the church, disoriented and troubled by waning influence and shrinking numbers, is to say, “Well, we’ll simply disregard those parts of the Bible which no longer fit our Western cultural viewpoint. We’ll change what we believe in order to better blend in. Maybe then, people will come back to church.”

Although, if the church is simply a mirror of society, I’m not sure why people would.

A quick reading of the New Testament, however, reveals that we’re not supposed to blend in, and never were. We’re supposed to have different priorities, different behaviours, different core values. We are to be in the world, but not of the world. (John 15:19, 17:14-16; Romans 12:2, etc.) We’ve been reborn into a family called the Church, which is guided and led not by the societal values of individual rights and freedoms, gratification and self-fulfilment, but by the self-sacrificial and moral high ground of obedience to the Holy Spirit, through the teaching of Christ, as revealed in the scriptures.

I’m a proud Canadian. There is no country I would rather call home. But as much as I value Canada, I see Canadian values moving steadily away from their Christian foundations, and in some cases and more worrisome yet, bringing the church with it. As followers of Jesus, we must always and ever turn to the scriptures, creeds and confessions of the church, and remember what—and who, and why—we believe.

There are, after all, some values which do not change.

Rev. Douglas Rollwage is a minister at Zion, Charlottetown, PEI.

Originally posted in The Presbyterian Record October 1, 2016. Unedited.

Some time ago an evangelist, traveling on the train, was singing to himself the song, "I've been Redeemed." A fellow passenger, hearing, joined him in the song. After singing, the evangelist put the question to the stranger, "Have you been redeemed?" "Yes, praise the Lord," was the answer. "May I ask you how long since?" "About nineteen hundred years ago," came the reply. The astonished evangelist echoed in surprise, "Nineteen hundred years ago?" "Yes," was the reply, "but I'm sorry that it's not more than a year that I've known it."
Top Left: Larry Moore stands guard lest anyone try to make any changes to these old and cumbersome cupboards. But alas, he is too late! The contents have already been removed and placed temporarily in St. Andrew’s Hall. Check below, Larry…

Top Right: The new and almost mouse proof metal replacement cupboards and lockable drawers- for all. Now if we could just find those pesky keys!

Below: Our Executive Assistant, Jasmin, beams that life in the office is getting organized once again.

Mystery at St Andrew’s!

The folks in this photograph to the left have been hidden amongst those old cupboards for some time it seems. Jasmin spied this unnamed picture during the day of the demolition, and forwarded it to the Burning Bush Editor.

So does anyone know who these folks might be? Could one of them be you?
Presbyterianism and the Journey of Brian Osborne

There is a small community in South Wales by the name of Treharris, a coal-mining community established in 1872 with the sinking of the Harris Company’s Deep Navigation Colliery. With a depth of 2,280 feet, it was the deepest coal-mine in the South Wales Coalfield and produced the high-grade steam coal for the Cunard transatlantic ocean liners such as the R.M.S. Lusitania and R.M.S. Mauritania.

Brian Stuart Osborne was born into this community in 1938, and lived there with his brother, David Morley Osborne, in a three-generation household in which all the men were coal miners.

The Osborne family were strong Methodists, attending the Wesleyan Methodist Chapel and Brian recalled the Sunday routine as he was growing up: morning chapel service before dinner; Sunday School in the afternoon; and chapel again in the evening. In his early years, Brian led a children’s Bible class before joining the more challenging adult Bible class as a young adult. Brian recalls with a great sense of warmth the family closeness of this routine of chapel, Sunday mid-day family dinners, and family visitors after evening service.

Writing was not a primary goal during his adolescent years. Although he was studious in his youth and already subconsciously developing an interest in the relationship between geography, history and the essence of community identity, he describes himself as having loved sports. Rugby was the one in which he became very much involved and captained his school and university teams, and, eventually, was a founding member of the Rugby Football Club (R.F.C.). Brian wryly credits those years of playing rugby into his 60’s as accounting for many of his aches and pains today!

During his undergraduate years studying geography at Southampton University, Brian enlisted as cadet-pilot in the University Air Squadron with plans to join the Royal Air Force to fulfill his National Service commitment. But, on graduation with a B.A. Hons. in 1960, he was invited to enter the post-graduate program, had his National Service deferred, and found his life taking a different direction. On 17 August 1963, Brian married his wife, Ann, and, four days later, travelled with his new bride on the S.S. Maasdam to New York and then by train to Pueblo, Colorado to take up a position at Southern Colorado State College University. There, he taught anthropology, history, geography, and further developed his love of mountaineering! In 1967, two major events occurred: the completion of his Ph.D. and the birth of his first son, Geraint.

But the 1960s were difficult times in the United States, especially with civil rights issues and the controversial war in Vietnam, and Brian and Ann were involved in both. So, in 1967, he accepted a position in the Department of Geography at Queen’s University and Kingston became his home. Here, three more children were born to Ann and Brian: Llynwen, Gavin, and Huw. And this is where his life journey moves closer to that of St. Andrew’s.

Wanda Praamsma in a recent Queen’s Gazette article, wrote, “Historical geographer and Professor Emeritus Brian Osborne has spent life studying ‘place’ and the ‘layers’ of human presence that tells the story of people. He is fascinated by what connects people to the land, particularly at the local level, and he has published extensively on Kingston’s history and explored in depth the question of Canadian national identity.”

In Brian’s own words, “for both academic and populist reasons, I enjoy studying the place in which I live.”

In the 1990’s, Brian became a close friend of William Stephen, a member of St. Andrew’s War Veterans’ Association (WVA). In the ‘Acknowledgments’ section of The Rock and the Sword, Brian expresses appreciation for what “the veterans of past conflicts have already contributed to our society. It is typical of their commitment to service that they wished to make yet another gesture: a history of their church.” And William Stephen, himself a veteran, on behalf of the other WVA members asked Brian to bring their wish to reality.

…I have found the Shorter Catechism/a rock at my back and a sword in my hand.
Robertson Davies, 1987 (reprinted from The Rock and the Sword)
So began a long and complicated research project that eventually culminated in the book, *The Rock and the Sword: A History of St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church, Kingston, Ontario* published in 2004. Brian writes, “its production had to fit into an otherwise busy professional life and, ultimately, took longer than World War II.”

Asked about what might have been his thoughts on writing the history of a denomination to which he did not belong, he responded that this endeavor was completely compatible with his interest in Kingston’s history and with his understanding of the strong influence that 200 years of Presbyterianism had had on this city. As an outsider, Brian responded that he was able to approach the research for this work with respect but also objectivity. And even when asked to explain the Presbyterianism that came to Canada in the late 18th century as “a church, that while proud of its doctrines and origin, was built upon disputation and self-examination that often led to fragmentation”, his answer came with a smile: “Tis the nature of the Scots!”

Having spent so much time researching the intimate history of St. Andrew’s, Brian understands well the troubles the church has endured and how the many societal changes have resulted in declining church attendance. Yet, he remains highly respectful of its people, and their commitment to tradition, a tradition enhanced with an increased outreach to social concerns. He expresses optimism in the essential survival of St. Andrew’s even amidst the shifting values of the modern world.

The town of Treharris, South Wales, is today a different place than the one in which Brian grew up. The coal mine has closed, the lands where they were located have been landscaped and now provide parks where football and rugby teams train and play. He no longer has any family members still alive there.

For Brian and Ann, Canada and Kingston are now very much their home. They have a lively and closely knit family dispersed through Alberta, Saskatchewan and here in Kingston: four grown children, 8 grandchildren, 3 great grandchildren, yes- 3 great grandchildren!

And, as for Brian being retired, well, he is nearing the completion of an updated version of St. Andrew’s history, *The Rock and the Sword*. He is also currently involved in *The Jeanne Wolfe Memorial Project on Canadian Utopias*, and a study of the commemoration of the “Great War”: *What Should we Remember, What Should we Forget?*

Listed below are some of his other publications and memberships, but they are by no means a complete resume of his academic and community activities as a public scholar. Brian is a man who continues to this day, fully embrace life. I am honored for the time he so graciously shared with me in my preparation.

Ada Mallory, Editor

**PUBLICATIONS: BOOKS**


(In preparation) *Establishing the Centre, Encountering Edges: Constructing Canadian Identity in a Transnational World.*

**Memberships:**

Shrove Tuesday is the day before Lent starts on Ash Wednesday. The name Shrove comes from the old middle English word 'Shriven' meaning to go to confession to say sorry for the wrong things you've done. Lent always starts on a Wednesday, so people went to confessions on the day before. This became known as Shriven Tuesday and then Shrove Tuesday.

The other name for this day, Pancake Day, comes from the old English custom of using up all the fattening ingredients in the house before Lent, so that people were ready to fast during Lent. The fattening ingredients that most people had in their houses in those days were eggs and milk. A very simple recipe to use up these ingredients was to combine them with some flour and make pancakes!

www.whyeaster.com

Way to go, Annabelle! Sure looks yummy...

Excerpt from "Talking with God," by Henry Baron

I must follow you, Lord, on this Lenten journey

I must go where you went with eyes and ears wide open
if I’m to change.

... keep me listening, Lord of all
let me not get lost or hide among the heedless sons and daughters of my own Jerusalem.

(Talking with God; Exxel Publishing, 2010)
Nominations before the Presbyterian Church for election as Moderator of the 143rd General Assembly include one of the sons of St. Andrew’s, Mark Tremblay and the current minister of St. Andrew’s, Andrew Johnston.

Following is the personal resume of our Minister, Andrew Johnston as posted on www.presbyterian.ca.

The Rev. Dr. Andrew J.R. Johnston, B.A., B.TH., M.Div., D.D.

I was raised in Christian faith and life primarily within St. Timothy’s Church, Ottawa; Lagos Presbyterian Church, Nigeria; and MacNab Street Church, Hamilton. After studies in history at University of Toronto and Edinburgh University, I studied theology at Presbyterian College and was ordained in 1987.

I have served Briarwood Church Montréal (1987-1998), St. Andrew’s Church, Ottawa (1999-2013) and since October 2013, St. Andrew’s Church Kingston.

My activity within the denomination has included service as Moderator of the Presbyteries of Montreal and Ottawa, and as the convener of the national PWS&D Committee and the Norman M. Paterson Fund for Ministerial Assistance, and a member of the Board of Governors of Presbyterian College.

In the wider Church of Christ, I have been President of the Christian Council of the Capital Area, on the Board of Directors of KAIROS, and now on the Interfaith Reference Group of the Canadian Council of Churches.

In the wider community, I have been our denominational representative on the Quebec Superior Council of Education, Protestant Committee, and have served with community associations for the intellectually handicapped (Montreal), the provision of supportive housing (Ottawa) and care of creation (Kingston).

I have a particular interest in the relationship between Christian faith and contemporary culture, and have been a member of several international ecumenical film juries, including the festivals of Berlin, Cannes, Locarno and Montreal.

Family around Andrew includes his wife Béatrice, and three adult children Gabrielle, Emmanuelle and Michel, and a Cairn Terrier by the name of Mungo.

Rev. Dr. Andrew Johnston

Winter Study
Gospel in Life: Grace Changes Everything

Join our Minister for this ongoing 6 week informal study on the gospel and how it is lived out in all of life- first in your heart, then in your community, and then out into the world.

Running every Tuesday evening until April 4, 2017, 7-8:30pm in St. Andrew’s Hall

Life DVD session titles:
- Session 1. City-The World That Is
- Session 2. Heart-Three Ways to Live
- Session 3. Idolatry-The Sin Beneath
- Session 4. Community-The Context for Change
- Session 5. Witness-An Alternate City
- Session 6. Work-Cultivating the Garden
- Session 7. Justice-A People for Others
- Session 8. Eternity-The World That Is To Come

The author of this series is Timothy Keller, Minister of Redeemer Presbyterian Church in New York City
From the Staff...

Since 2000, the Presbyterian Record has been independently owned and published by Presbyterian Record Inc.

In 1975, circulation stood at 88,000. By the turn of the century, that number had fallen to 50,000 and has continued the slide to about 10,000 today.

Over the past 25 years, readership has been declining at an average rate of 2,000 subscribers a year, while the denomination itself—the magazine’s sole market—has been declining at a rate of about 2,800 members a year.

The magazine’s publisher and editor, David Harris, said the magazine simply couldn’t transition quickly enough from a subscription-based model to a philanthropically financed model.

“Our donors have been fantastic,” said Harris. “Over the past 12 years, they have given us almost $1.5 million. Without that support, the magazine would have folded years ago.”

Harris said publishing an online-only version of the magazine was not an option. “Salaries, not printing and postage, are the biggest costs at a small magazine like the Record,” he said. “You need excellent staff whether a publication is online or print. And the Record could not expect to generate significant online revenue.”

In a statement board chair Botond Fejes wrote: “Arriving at this conclusion has been a difficult process for the board. Its members have struggled with this responsibility for a considerable time.

The continued publication of the Record, in its present configuration, was simply not sustainable ... therefore, we are sadly constrained to allow this ebb in the fortunes of the Presbyterian Record to run its course.”

Over its 140 years, 1876-2016, the magazine has had eight editors. Harris has led the magazine since 2002.

(Edited from Presbyterianrecord.ca)
February 7, 2017

Sandra couldn’t understand why her sons Erling, 4, and Gerson, 2, were chronically ill and underweight. She fed her children what she thought to be wholesome, filling foods. But in fact, the soup, tortilla chips and soda that made up much of their diet had very little nutritional value.

“We believed that the food we were giving them was the best,” admits Sandra.

In the Nicaraguan community she lives in, farmers grow more coffee than nutrient-rich produce because they depend on it for their livelihood. But drought has reduced yields and brought many rural families into deeper poverty. With little extra money to buy food, children aren’t getting enough nutrients and often experience illness and delays in growth.

**Growing Healthy Futures**

PWS&D partners in Nicaragua are working with vulnerable communities to improve nutrition and diets for 440 families. By training community promoters, they are dispelling myths about locally grown foods, developing healthy recipes and supporting families to start household gardens.

Sandra’s family is one that has benefited immensely from the project. She has learned that exclusive breastfeeding, and a diet that includes fruits and vegetables are important to decrease stunting and malnutrition among children.

“My family’s diet has improved because we have learned about the nutritional value of natural foods—those produced in the community and rich in nutrients for our bodies—and we are eating them.”

Sandra, like many others in her community, had believed that foods like bananas were meant only for livestock.

Now, gesturing to a garden plot bursting with colourful vegetation, she describes the stews and omelettes she’s learned to make with the fresh ingredients.

Mostly, Sandra is relieved to see that the health and well-being of her children have improved. “They are happier and they play and eat more,” she says. “They don’t have anemia anymore.”

For Sandra, this project is only the beginning of a brighter future for her family and community. “Our mission is to share what we have learned so that our community will prosper with healthy and active families.”

With their bodies and minds fuelled with healthy food, she hopes her children and future generations of children will continue to thrive.

This project receives support from Canadian Foodgrains Bank. PWS&D is a member of Canadian Foodgrains Bank, a partnership of 15 churches and church agencies working together to end global hunger.

www.presbyterian.ca  Photograph by CFGB

---

Attending a wedding for the first time, a little girl whispered to her mother, "Why is the bride dressed in white?"

The mother replied, "Because white is the color of happiness, and today is the happiest day of her life."

The child thought about this for a moment then asked, "So why is the groom wearing black?"

"What would men be without women? Scarc...mighty scarce." –Mark Twain
Last fall, while visiting our seven-year-old grandson Edan, we spent some time at the beach gathering shells, picking up coloured glass that had been tumbled in the waves, and hunting for unusually colourful stones. How well we remember, from raising our own children, that youngsters just love to find nature’s treasures.

Heading back into town, with treasures in hand, we chatted in the car about our discoveries. It was early evening and the sun had begun to set in the western sky. An amazingly beautiful sunset was forming before our very eyes. Bright azure blue strata were back lit by golden apricot puffs of cloud and we tried to find all the colour words we could to describe this beautiful sight. And then Edan said, "I think that's what God meant for 'precious'."

As I have thought about Edan’s observation many times since, I am reminded that children are so often entranced with the sights and sounds of nature. Do you recall your son or daughter carefully squatting beside a brown woolly caterpillar as it slowly crawled across the street? Or perhaps you have been able to watch a robin meticulously build a nest on your backdoor light......realizing that it will be several weeks before you will be able to open that door quickly or put on the outdoor light.

Our lives are so filled with noise and busyness, let alone the ever present intrusions of television and cell phones. Sometimes we need the wonder and observations of a child to remind us of the great beauty and intricacies of God’s creation.........that creation which He entrusted to our care. I'll try to remember that on my next walk through my neighbourhood.

I will look at the beauty around me as "through the eyes of a child".

New directions for their journeys…

Left: Helen McEwen is moving to Unionville to join husband, Mendal. There they will live together within a retirement community.

Right: Reverend Cheryl Horne has accepted a ministerial call to ‘Old St. Andrew’s Church’ in Colborne, Ontario.

New adventures.
New Challenges.
God bless you both!

?De-railment of a Children’s Sermonette?

Left: Our Minister seems to wonder how the train set became so small. When he was small, the train had seemed so much bigger...

Right: With an uncharacteristic look of consternation on our Minister’s face, he seems to ponder whether he is really willing to share this sentimental treasure (?).
Agnes Maule Machar was a child of the manse of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church. One of three children born to the Rev. John Machar and Mrs. J.M Machar, she was much influenced by her father who was renowned for his devotion to pastoral work and commitment to serving his congregation, and her mother who was equally Impressive formative force in her life. She emerges as one of the prominent women in Kingston's history.

Agnes Maule Machar's Strong Presbyterian social conscience was nurtured by her upbringing in a household where learning, intelligent discourse and Christian charity were a lived practice. Her connections with St. Andrew's Church and Queen's University ensured a constant in teraction with professors, politicians, poets, novelists, political theorists, and religious leaders. The social circle during her years at the St. Andrew's manse was a rich one: John A. Macdonald used her father's library, Olivia Mowat and Richard Cartwright were visitors, and she hosted such worthies as Canadian poet, Pauline Johnson, and famed British evolutionists, Alfred Russell Wallace. And then there was George Munroe Grant with whom she shared many common interests and affinities of outlook.

During Agnes Machar's formative and productive years, Kingston was a centre of progressive thought, and it had been argued that her emergence as "one of the most gifted intellectuals and social critics in late-nineteenth Canada" owed much to her lived-in world.

Agnes Maule Machar may have been a prominent social activist at the local level, but she was also a multi-faceted woman. An accomplished artist, she painted portraits of Exhibitions where, between 1859 and 1868, she won several prizes for pencil drawings, oil and water colour landscapes, and animal paintings. Furthermore, writing under the nom de plume, "Fidelis", she penned poetry, novels, histories, biographies, children's stories and made her mark in the realm of Canadian arts and letters.

In 1887, one of her poems was rewarded the prize of best composition honouring Queen Victoria's Jubilee. In 1893, she was the only woman among thirteen Canadian authors said to have attained international recognition, and in 1903, she was elected Vice-President of the Canadian Society of Authors. Active in her own community, the early records of the young Kingston Historical Society refer to a meeting on 19 April 1904 at which a motion was passed unanimously, "To consider the advisability of publishing a History of Kingston". At a subsequent meeting of a committee charged to pursue this task, Agnes Machar offered to compile the desired history, an offer that was accepted as "no one member had sufficient leisure to undertake the work".

Four years later, her story of Old Kingston was published and dedicated to the memory of "The Good Men and True Who Built Up Old Kingston; and To All Citizens of To-Day Who Follow Their Traditions and Example".

Agnes Machar was an ardent literary nationalist and her considerable literary productivity ensured her a platform to promote her vision of Canadian society and polity. Her declared mission was that of the public intellectual: "If there is something to be said for the right, a wrong to be redressed, or a warning word uttered, I think that we should always be ready with our pen."

Thus, prompted, Agnes Machar was a tireless advocate of causes that transcended ethereal Christianity and several major themes emerge: social justice; the power of nature; and British imperialism and Canadian patriotism.

...On her death in 1927, the congregation of St. Andrew's mourned the loss of a literary figure, social reformer, nationalist, and conservationist. Rev. John Stephen presided at the funeral of the oldest member of his church, and many of Kingston's prominent citizens gathered to pay their last respects to one "whose loss to the city in which she lived her long and useful life is realized with deep regret."

Reproduced with permission, this is an excerpt, from an article written by Brian S. Osborne, author of The Rock and the Sword, for The Limelighter, a publication of the Kingston Historical Society. Emboldening mine. Editor. To read the complete article go to www.kingstonhistoricalsociety.com/AgnesMachar
Left: Ron Axford at the AGM presents Donna Delacretaz with her gifts in recognition of her almost 6 years serving as a very hard working Clerk of Session. With deepest appreciation, Donna!

Right: Eva Barnes poses beside one of her paintings...

“After Jack and I moved to Kingston, I was homesick for the majestic ocean vistas and peaceful forest beauty of the west coast. This canvas was painted as a daily reminder of our Life rhythms back on Vancouver Island.

This style copies the whimsical and enthusiastically colourful brush techniques of a Nanaimo construction-worker-turned artist, Fred Peters.

I have always liked his strong, intrepid, boldly cheerful, and sometimes eccentrically original interpretations…”

Eva Barnes

Marg and Ken Irvine holding up two of the paintings that were done by Ken some years ago.
Making a Promise for Life
By Rose DeShaw

Trying to kill myself wasn’t something I talked about to anyone. I had just turned 16 when I went away to Bible school in Portland, Oregon, to live in a dormitory and pursue what was close to a convent curriculum.

The other students spotted the gap between their suburban lives and my mining-camp background before I did. Not just the bad haircut, wrong shoes, worse clothes, no table manners, different vocabularies and old army rations instead of homemade cookies in the mail. We didn’t seem to meet on any points at all.

I failed in the little things. I hadn’t been taught to chew my food, so I swallowed it whole and had regular stomach cramps after every meal. I hid boiled eggs from breakfast around the lobby in case I missed breakfast the following day, since my mother had always said if you don’t eat, you’ll die. But then I’d forget them and when I finally needed an egg I couldn’t remember whether the one I found was yesterday’s or two weeks old.

I wore black and they wore a lot of pink and talked about things from radio and television; my only reference points came from the sanitized classics and the Bible. Maybe loneliness and geekiness don’t seem a lot to be suicidal over, even throwing in my belief that it would be like this forever. But it mattered then.

Returning home certainly wasn’t in the cards. I didn’t think I’d manage to escape twice. And so with no place to run, I deciding that ridding the world of me was a worthy goal. God didn’t enter into it, despite the fact that my studies were theological. The deity was kept strictly between Genesis and Revelation and not invited to meddle with any part of my daily life.

I opted for stepping in front of a big truck, but every time I got ready to begin, there would be a baby near by whom I could not subject to the trauma of witnessing my death, or a particularly innocent-looking truck driver whose life I could not bear to blight.

So I chose another method. I was on the street team, students with a portable, off-key organ who went weekly to the most godless part of town to sing and preach on a street corner. All I had to do was stay behind after the group went back to school, and sooner or later in such a bad area, someone would surely attack me, thus taking the problem of suicide out of my hands.

Wearing baggy clothes and glasses and carrying an immense black Bible. I should have realized that any thinking mugger would take in the obvious lack of funds coupled with the likelihood of a sermon and take his trade in a less problematic direction. Nor had I ever heard of such a thing as prostitution. As the last notes of Just As I Am curdled the night air, I sidled off down a street to take up a stance under a lamppost. To be sure I wouldn’t chicken out, I hadn’t even brought bus fare.

The street I’d chosen was quiet, cold and very dark, with none of the drunken brawls or leering innuendoes that usually surrounded our gospel singing. When I heard footsteps coming towards me, clicking down the deserted street, I could see the outline of his body, hands jammed suggestively in his pockets, a tall man headed deliberately in my direction. I took a deep breath and braced myself not to resist. He reached out, took my arm, and began to walk me rapidly back up the street towards the bus stop.

“You weren’t with the others,” he said, “so I came back to find you.” I hadn’t met him before, but he knew me from school. Nobody official, just a noticer.

A lighted bus was just pulling up and he put me on it first and climbed in after, paying my fare as though he knew I hadn’t any money. Then he found us two seats, sat down and drew a deep breath.
“I want you to promise you’ll never do anything like that again,” he said. And I could see he was serious, that it mattered to him.

“All right,” I said. Well, suicide was out then. Although I was very surprised that he knew I was trying to kill myself. Having to find some other way to deal with the pain life was handing me took up most of that year, at the end of which they elected him student body president and he promptly appointed me head of the committee of artists that decorate the campus for upcoming events, a crowd of odder types among whom I found a certain amount of peace.

Only lately did I come to realize that he didn’t know about the suicide. His point must have been to stop me drifting off daydreaming when I should be getting on the bus. Nor could he know how seriously I would take a promise, all these years.

I had cause to remember it a few years back when I was sitting in front of my bookshop and a young teen on a bicycle went sailing right through the stop sign, looking back toward me with an odd expression on his face. I let out a scream and he laughed. He did it again the week following, and finally, just a while ago when he was darting as fast as he could into traffic, a speeding car was coming the other way.

There was a huge crash, and I ran over crying to where he lay on the pavement. I could see the driver behind the wheel, looking sick and hopeless.

“Right out in front of me. I couldn’t stop,” the poor man was saying to onlookers.

I knelt down. “Lie still. Someone will call an ambulance,” I said.

“Screw you! Lemme alone!” The kid struggled to get up. I stepped back, wishing all of this wasn’t familiar, wondering whether he could see the 16 year old inside of me who hadn’t known those words but had meant them all the same.

How could I tell him, in my grandmother disguise, what I’d discovered about the pain of living? That keeping on makes it tolerable. That some day joy will seep through the cracks in the wall you’ve built around yourself, the joy of lover, children, cats, dogs, sunsets, memories, and that supreme joy when you suddenly find you were designed for some purpose in this world and that the design is not a faulty one.

Knowing what I was made for was like discovering myself to be a hinge on a heavy door, capable of swinging it open to more surprises than I ever knew existed, certainly enough to keep the pain at bay for a long time. Not that I can ever forget the face of the pain, but now I have some ammunition.

Neither can I put the teenager on the bicycle out of my mind. He is always getting in my way, no doubt on purpose. He is that most dreaded of urban terrors, a skateboarder, insolent, mocking, no respecter of grey hairs or any adults, truant, bad as he can be without being arrested, and of course, very, very bright. Something passes between us when we meet. I seem to matter to him in some strange way I can’t account for, a point on his compass, sitting in my old shop as old as the hills, where he can find me when he wants.

Or maybe find the lonely, impossible 16 year old that still looks out from my eyes.

I wonder how he feels about promises?

Sing to him, sing praises to him; tell of all his wonderful works. Glory in his holy name; let the hearts of those who seek the LORD rejoice. Psalm 105: 3 NRSV

Kristen English as the new Choir Lead (Right) with an evergrowing St. Andrew’s Choir (above)- count them-19! Plus John Hall of course.

Thanks for all the great work, John! Their music is a great blessing to us all...
Falling Into Water

The Presbyterians were convening in Scotland. After a couple of days of sitting on hard pews, a group decided to stretch their legs in the countryside. Soon they approached a rickety old bridge over a river. They were so busy talking they missed the ‘Keep Off the Bridge’ sign.

A villager saw them step onto the dangerous span and yelled for them to stop. "That's all right," one of the ministers responded. "We're here from the Presbyterian convention."

"I dinna care about that," came the reply. "But if ye go much farther, ye'll all be Baptists!"

An engineer dies and reports to the Pearly Gates. Saint Peter checks his dossier and not seeing his name there, accidentally sends him to Hell. It doesn't take long before the engineer becomes rather dissatisfied with the level of comfort in Hell.

He soon begins to design and build improvements. Shortly thereafter, Hell has air conditioning, flush toilets and escalators. Needless to say, the engineer is a pretty popular guy.

One day, God calls Satan and says: "So, how are things in Hell?"

Satan replies: "Hey, things are going great. We've got air conditioning, flush toilets, and escalators. And there's no telling what this engineer is going to come up with next."

"What!" God exclaims: "You've got an engineer? That's a mistake. He should never have been sent to Hell. Send him to me."

"Not a chance," Satan replies: "I like having an engineer on the staff, and I'm keeping him!"

God insists: "Send him back or I'll sue." Satan laughs uproariously and answers: "Yeah, right. And where are you going to get a lawyer?"

A priest and a rabbi are in a car crash and it's a bad one. Both of their cars are demolished but amazingly neither one of them is hurt. After they crawl out of their cars, the rabbi says, "So you're a priest. That's interesting; I'm a rabbi. Wow, just look at our cars! There's nothing left, but we're unhurt. This must be a sign from God that we should meet and be friends and live together in peace."

The priest replies, "Oh, yes, I agree. It's a miracle that we survived and are here together. And here's another miracle," says the rabbi. "My car is destroyed but this bottle of wine didn't break. Surely God wants us to drink the wine and celebrate our good fortune," he says, handing the bottle to the priest.

The priest nods in agreement, opens the wine, drinks half of it, and hands it back to the rabbi.

The rabbi takes it and puts the cap back on.

"Aren't you going to have any?" asks the priest.

"Not right now," says the rabbi. "I think I'll wait until after the police report."

True: 3 out of 2 people have trouble with fractions.

Study Results: Termites eat wood twice as fast when listening to heavy metal music. You should know this...
Keeping On

I’ve dreamed many a dream that never came true
I’ve seen them vanish at dawn
But I’ve realized enough of my dreams, thank God,
To make me want to dream on.

I’ve prayed many prayers when no answer came
Though I waited patient and long
But answers have come to enough of my prayers
To make me want to keep praying on.

I’ve trusted many a friend that failed
And left me to weep alone
But I’ve found enough of my friends true blue
To make me keep trusting on.

I’ve sown many seed that fell by the way
For the birds to feed upon
But I’ve held enough golden sheaves in my hands
To make me keep sowing on.

I’ve drained the cup of disappointment and pain
And gone many days without song
But I’ve sipped enough nectar from the roses of life
To make me want to live on.

anonymous