

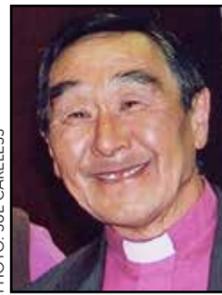
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Cultural Sanctification:

Engaging the World Like the Early Church



Dr. Stephen Presley, Associate Professor at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, is the author of *Cultural Sanctification: Engaging the World Like the Early Church*. He spoke on this topic at the Mere Anglicanism conference held Jan. 22-24 in Charleston, S.C. Here is an abbreviated version of his talk.

COME back with me to third-century North Africa, where the Christian theologian Tertullian records the story about a soldier. The soldier was part of a legion that was receiving gifts bestowed upon them by the emperor in exchange for their loyalty and allegiance. At this ceremony, the soldiers were all given a small laurel crown to wear. But one Christian soldier refused because of his religious convictions. He removed the crown off his head and held it instead.

And this act seemed to symbolize the Christian conviction of honour for the emperor, but allegiance to God alone. Tertullian tells us that the soldier's uncrowned head stood out among the throng of soldiers. They mocked and threatened him and reported him to the tribune. The tribune asked the Christian soldier, "Why are you so different in your dress?" The soldier explained that his religious convictions would not permit him to wear such a symbol of adoration to the emperor. He was willing to serve the empire, but he drew the line at imperial worship.

But in the tribune's mind, refusing to wear the emperor's crown was tantamount to treason against the paganism that united the empire. This disrespect would not be tolerated. They arrested him and condemned him to prison, where he likely died. The episode is clearly a flashpoint in the early Christian community, which is why Tertullian entitled his letter, *On the Crown*.

Not all the Christians appreciated the soldier's actions. Why does this soldier make such trouble for us Christians over a trivial matter of dress? Why must he be so inconsiderate and rash and act as if he were anxious to die?

While some Christians thought the soldier's act was selfish and put Christians at risk, Tertullian wrote to defend him. Scripture does not permit Christians to wear the emperor's crown. The only crown Tertullian finds in Scripture is the crown of righteousness that the Christians receive [in heaven], a crown they

actually take off and lay at the feet of their Saviour.

That incident exemplifies what Christians were facing living in a pagan society in the early Church. If we swap out the time, location and people, that story could be told today in so many parts of our world.

Now I want to make two key arguments. First, that the ancient world has come back to us in so many ways, and I want to show that the early Church is as relevant as ever for thinking about cultural engagement.

Caught between the emerging diversity of religious options, the ancient Christians were forced to ask: What are the fundamental assumptions that unite us? What are our first principles? By the second century, Rome was a ferment of religious choice. You could believe anything or nothing. You could put your trust in astrologers or snake charmers, prophets or magicians. You could take your pick from half a dozen creation myths, several varieties of resurrection. Or, if you belong to the educated elite, you could read the poetry of Lucretius or subscribe to a materialist view of the universe.

In short, it was a time when anything goes. And the weirdest, most frenzied creations of the mind jostle with the most beautiful visions and most inspiring spiritual challenges. It's hard to think of any period quite like it until now. Or citing Carl Trueman at the end of *The Rise and Triumph of the Modern Self*: "In the second century, the church was a marginalized sect within a dominant pluralist society. This is where we are today."

But the early Church can encourage and inspire us because at some point we might be asked, "Will you wear the crown?"

I want to explain a fourfold approach to cultural engagement that I found in the early Church: catechesis, citizenship, cultivating leaders and celebrating hope. In my mind, these four actually map pretty well onto Peter's words in 1 Peter 2: 17: "Honour everyone, love the brotherhood, fear God, honour the emperor."

First, catechesis. This is the heart of cultural engagement. There is no cultural engagement without being formed in the teachings of the scriptures and embodying them in your communities.

In the second century, the Bishop of Lyon, Irenaeus, wrote a little catechetical manual called *The Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching*. Since man is a living being composed of body and soul, it is fitting to be formed both in morality and doctrine, body and soul. "For what use is it," Irenaeus writes, "to know the truth in words and to defile the body by performing evil deeds? What profit can come from the wholeness of the body if truth is not in the soul? For these, rejoice together, join forces and lead man to the presence of God."

If you want to see what is truly beautiful, you find a person and you find a community that is living according to the doctrine and the morality of God's revelation. There you find true beauty on display for the world to see. The fathers also knew that catechesis was not going to be easy. Formation takes time. It's not instantaneous. And there's syncretism that's always lurking, taking things of the culture and polluting the truth of the scriptures.

I recognize that even among the faithful, Christians will not
See **EARLY CHURCH** p.5

... The early Church can encourage and inspire us because at some point we might be asked, "Will you wear the crown?"

Court sides with Prince Albert church in tax battle



SUPPLIED PHOTO

church was paid \$50 for the use of its space, would thwart the tax exemption for that building.”

Embassy Church's building at Plaza 88 hosts long-term commercial tenants and a daycare, and rents space for events such as wedding banquets, trade shows, meetings and children's birthday parties. Rentals include an event supervisor while an on-site caterer is available.

For the 2023 assessment year, Prince Albert valued the property at \$2.85-million, a figure Embassy Church did not dispute, according to Justice Tholl's decision.

The 2023 assessment determined only the portion of the property used for the independent school was exempt from tax, in line with provisions of the Cities Act. The two sides differed, however, on how much should be tax-exempt given the property serves as a place of public worship.

Embassy Church agreed that a stand-alone convenience store and space leased long-term should be taxable. But it disputed the bill for the rest of Plaza 88, arguing that it serves primarily as a place of public worship.

The court's decision noted that Ms. Meghan Mayer, the lead pastor, in her affidavit, said Plaza 88's room rentals comprised 12 percent to 14 percent of Embassy Church's total income in 2020 and 2021.

Embassy, the court said, argued that “secondary uses of space predominantly used as a place of public worship is essential in modern times for religious organizations to remain financially viable.”

Mayer said about 220 to 250 people belong to Embassy Church, which was founded by her father. The organization, she said, would struggle if it had to pay the full tax bill.

“We wouldn't be able to offer services to our community and operate as a church,” she said.

Embassy Church first appealed the assessment at the city level, then to the Assessment Appeals Committee of the Saskatchewan Municipal Board, which ruled largely in Embassy's favour. Prince Albert then turned to the Court of Appeal.

In a decision released in early February, Justice Tholl rejected the appeal from the City of Prince Albert to restore its initial assessment, upholding a ruling from the Saskatchewan Municipal Board exempting all but the daycare from property tax.

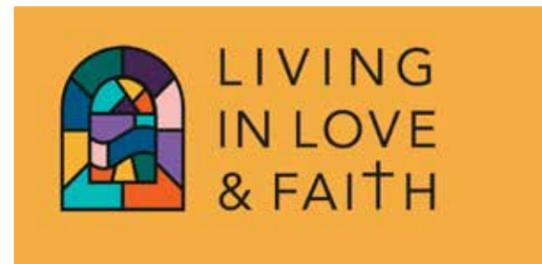
Tholl cited an earlier decision from the appeal court that describes a broad definition of public worship—one not solely limited to formal church services. His definition includes both the church and the public hall.

The court, while dismissing the city of Prince Albert's appeal, rejected Embassy Church's assertion that it should not have to pay property taxes on the portion of the building that operates as a daycare.

Oakbridge Law & Mediation, which operates out of the Embassy Church property and represented the religious organization, said the overall decision underlines that the tax exemption is not a favour but a policy instrument advancing community well-being.

“Churches across Canada, especially in Saskatchewan, can take confidence: principal worship spaces remain protected, even in multi-use buildings, because the exemption serves the public good,” the firm said in a statement. **TAP**

—Sources: The Globe and Mail and CTV News



Church of England ends LLF

(Staff) On Feb. 12, after a marathon debate, the General Synod of the Church of England formally ended Living in Love and Faith (LLF), the nine-year project that some had hoped would fully authorize same-sex blessings. But with the ending of LLF, formal, standalone services for blessing same-sex relationships are not permitted, and clergy living in same-sex civil marriages technically remain barred from new appointments.

The House of Bishops had announced last October that LLF would be winding down. First started back in 2017 with a promise of seeking a “radical new Christian inclusion,” the project has floundered in recent years.

Last autumn, after seeking legal and theological advice, the bishops concluded they could not progress any further without undergoing full synodical procedures that require a two-thirds supermajority. As such, a majority did not exist for further liberalization in the current synod.

Some bishops insisted this was not a total failure – they had still managed to introduce for the first time official prayers of blessing for LGBT couples to be used during regular parish church services.

After nearly five hours of debate – and no less than eight failed amendments from both the conservative and liberal wings – members voted 252-132 in favour of a motion from the Archbishop of York Stephen Cottrell to conclude LLF.

The motion included an apology for the “distress and pain” many had suffered during the LLF process, and approved the bishops' decision to establish two new working groups – the Relationships, Sexuality and Gender Working Group, and the Relationships, Sexuality and Gender Pastoral Consultative Group – to continue the work started by LLF. **TAP**

(Staff) SASKATCHEWAN's highest court has issued a ruling that should please congregations across the country.

Churches know they must give unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, but just how much tax is fair?

Embassy Church Inc. and the City of Prince Albert have been sparring over taxes for years, but on Feb. 5 the Court of Appeal for Saskatchewan ruled in favour of the non-denominational place of worship.

The building, dubbed Plaza 88 in downtown Prince Albert, is used for multiple purposes, including as a church, a registered independent school, a daycare and as an event space rented out to the public.

The church will be required to pay property tax on its in-house daycare but won't be charged for its commercial event venue, following a recent court decision.

The Court of Appeal largely sided with Embassy Church, a decision its lawyers said affirmed that a building owned by a religious organization and used primarily as a place of public worship should not be stripped of its tax exemption for generating occasional rental revenue. The exemption, the court said, removes a financial barrier that allows religious organizations to work for the good of the community.

“It would be incongruent with this purpose to demand exclusive use to qualify for exempt status,” Justice Jerome Tholl wrote in the decision. “If such exclusivity were required, a single bake sale by a community group held in a church basement, for which the

Killings Continue in Nigeria

BY K.C. NWAJEI

IT IS A sobering season in Nigeria. On Feb. 4, Islamic extremists killed 177 villagers in Kwara State, mostly moderate Muslims, and 35 in Katsina State.

Further, 166 hostages were seized during an evangelical church service on Jan. 18 in Kurmin Wali, Kaduna State, and remained in captivity for the third week, despite reports by some news agencies of their safe return.

Across the West African country's media outlets – broadcast, newspapers, and social media – news anchors and commentators are lamenting that life has become so cheap, and people are being killed in unprecedented numbers.

Luke Binniyat, former spokesman of the Southern Kaduna People's Forum, condemned claims that 80 of the Kurmin Wali victims had been released by their captors as “fake news” on his Facebook page.

“The truth is that some Kurmin Wali villagers who were not kidnapped, but had escaped and fled the village during and after the mass abduction, are the ones returning,” he said.

“They are returning based on perceived or real improvement in security around Kurmin Wali. After all, they have nowhere to go, that is why they had to endure 22 previous spates of kidnapping over the past few years. But no single person among the 166 hostages is known to escape as at the time of making this post. Not one.”

He added: “Today marks 15 days of their captivity, yet there is silence from authorities who ought to brief Nigeria on the true situation, even as more kidnappings rage across Kajuru [Local Government Area].

“The press must not be misled into blunting public

outrage and the pressure on government to rescue these poor, innocent citizens who must be going through hell right now.”

On Feb. 2 in nearby Taraba State, the Rev. David Tanko, a Catholic priest, was reportedly burned alive in his car by armed bandits. A report monitored on social media said that Tanko was attacked and burned beyond recognition on his way to mediate a dispute between the region's Tiv and Jukun tribes.

Meanwhile, many have continued to express outrage over the audacity of the terrorists. Many are also questioning why the killings have not received sustained international attention, and why there have been no arrests or prosecutions.

“I hope the government is now happy that there is balancing of the genocide for Christians and Muslims,” said Dr. about the killings in his native state of Kwara.

“When the U.S. was talking about it last year, the government in its defense said, not only Christians were killed. So maybe the federal government is happy, so that they can have a very good story to tell.”

“The federal government should stop talking about security strategies on the pages of newspapers. We don't want to hear that you are putting ‘boots on ground,’ we don't want to hear that you are deploying tactics – whether kinetic or otherwise. Just make sure that you prevent these things from happening, and when and if it prevents, make sure you brutally and clinically decimate the people behind these things. The Defense Minister should please concentrate on the task and do less of talking,” he said.

The Supreme Council for Shariah in Nigeria, a prominent conservative Muslim body, has also called for the removal of Professor Joash Amupitan, chairman of Nigeria's Independent National Election Commission, in response to

research the legal scholar recently published about Christian genocide in the country.

The Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria issued a statement affirming Amupitan's leadership: “We must resist the temptation of profiling or judging people based on their religious beliefs or positions. Prof. Amupitan has a right to bear his mind, and this should not be at the cost of his job.”

Shehu Sani, a former senator from the Kaduna Central district and a member of Nigeria's ruling party, similarly cautioned the Supreme Council on X: “Threats, mistrusts and casting aspersions on the INEC Chairman is unconscionable and not the way to go.”

The exchange about Amupitan's leadership has sparked intense reactions on social media, with many expressing concerns about the implications of the Supreme Council's statements on Nigeria's fragile religious diversity, especially amid the countdown to next year's general election.

K.C. Nwajei is a freelance journalist based in Nigeria. This article first appeared in The Living Church Magazine and is reprinted with their permission and the author's.

Editor's note: On Jan. 15, Religious News Service reported:

“Nigeria is widely considered one of the most dangerous countries in the world for Christians. The International Society for Civil Liberties and Rule of Law, a religious-violence watchdog group, reports that more than 7,000 Christians were killed and an additional 7,800 abducted because of their faith in the first seven months of 2025 alone.

“The Observatory for Religious Freedom in Africa says nearly 56,000 people died in broader ethnic and religious violence between October 2019 and September 2023, with Christians disproportionately affected.” – RNS **TAP**

“Behold, we go up to Jerusalem”: The Psalms of Ascent and Pilgrimage



Christ as a Pilgrim, by an unknown medieval sculptor working in stone c. 1150, found in the Monastery of Santo Domingo de Silos, Spain.

BY ELIZABETH KING

THE PSALMS flow all around us, in the Offices of Morning and Evening Prayer, in the Introits, Graduals, and preparatory prayers of the Eucharist. The Gospels and Epistles are shot through with the Psalms like so many rays of light. They exceed our capacity for attention. They flow over our heads and into our hearts in mysterious ways, beyond the understanding, beyond control or self-conscious awareness. And yet, in the midst of that flow, you might find yourself dashed up against some verse, suddenly pierced, enlightened, convicted.

Henri Nouwen, discovering the psalms during a visit to a Trappist monastery, wrote in his diary: “Slowly these words enter into the centre of my heart. They are more than ideas, images, comparisons: They become a real presence.”

“The voice we hear in the Psalms,” says St Augustine, “is that sweet voice, so well known to the ears of the Church, the voice of our Lord Jesus Christ, the voice of the church toiling, sojourning upon earth.” *Semper in ore psalmus, semper in corde Christus*. Always a psalm in the mouth, always Christ in the heart.

Psalms 120–134, called variously the ‘songs of ascents’ or ‘the pilgrim psalms’, are eminently worth carrying close to the heart. They are named for their inscription. They may have been sung by Jewish pilgrims travelling to Jerusalem for the annual feasts of Passover, Booths or Weeks. And so, too, by Jesus, we may reasonably assume, in his goings up to Jerusalem.

‘Slowly these words enter into the centre of my heart. They are more than ideas, images, comparisons: They become a real presence.’

Exile, Return and Willing the Good: Psalms 120-122

Psalms 120-122 form a subset within the larger group, tracing the movement from exile to return in miniature. The psalmist moves through a landscape. Longing for peace, he leaves behind the place of violence and deceit, the “tents of Kedar” (120), journeys through the wilderness (121), and approaches Jerusalem itself (122). The images of physical pilgrimage in these first few psalms draw the psalmist toward an inner, moral landscape, and culminate in a cry for the peace of Jerusalem that wills the good of city and people: *for my brethren and companions’ sakes...for the sake of the house of the Lord our God, I will seek to do thee good* (122:8, 9).

Towards the Fullness of Charity: Psalms 123-134:

The motion inward in these psalms is also a motion upward, and concerns the growth and ordering of love. It continues to unfold in the twelve remaining pilgrim psalms. We can roughly trace the outlines of this story by taking the psalms in groups of three.

In Psalms 123-125, the imagery continues to be inspired by the landscape, but there is a crucial move: Jerusalem becomes identified with all those who look to and place their complete trust in the Lord (125:1). This identification means that the physical

pilgrimage achieved in Psalm 122 is meant to reshape the pilgrim at the core of his being, to conform his heart to the contours of that unified city that is both centred on and surrounded by the love of God.

In Psalms 126-128, the pilgrimage and its inward turn require a consideration of all the soul’s everyday activities – labour, childbearing, waking, sleeping – all these things are set before the Lord to be ordered by Him. *Except the Lord build the house, their labour is but lost that build it* (127:1).

St Benedict (480-547 AD) set Psalms 126-128 for the daily office of None, or mid-afternoon prayer (the first six pilgrim psalms are set for the little offices of Terce and Sext). This liturgical use of the psalms recognises their place in pilgrimage. Every day, every week and, indeed, the whole of life, is a pilgrimage. Pilgrimage requires that all the goings-out and comings-in of daily life be conformed to the pattern of ascent.

Psalms 129-131 involve, first, a final dismissal of *as many as have evil will at Sion* (129:5), then a thorough-going act of repentance that plunges the penitent into the very depths of his being to root out what separates him from the Almighty (130). Finally, all self-reproach is stilled in the image of the quiet trust of a child resting with his mother (131). This last psalm has often been linked to the mystery of the Incarnation (for instance, it features as the Gradual Psalm for the Feast of the Annunciation in the Book of Common Prayer).

The final triad, 132-134, concludes the pilgrimage with imagery of vigil and Sabbath rest. In Psalm 132, there is an approach of man to God and God to man through the Davidic covenant: *we will go into his dwelling-place...arise, O LORD, into thy resting-place*. And the Lord declares: *[Sion] shall be my rest for ever*. In this dialogue, St Benedict’s contemporary, Cassiodorus, hears Jesus speaking of his Passion, of his obedience to the Father in the accomplishment of the work of reconciliation of man to God.

The theme of vigil culminates in the last pilgrim psalm. Psalm 134 enters the midnight vigil of the saints, the vigil of unending praise. For Cassiodorus, Psalms 133 and 134 bring us to the very fullness of charity found in the life of God:

There is awakened in the course of the Lord’s praises that perfect charity than which nothing greater can be expressed, and nothing more splendid discovered.

Singing these fifteen psalms on the road to Jerusalem year by year, Christ sang of His Incarnation, His own humility and love, His Passion. Says Cassiodorus, “These steps are set on the path where the King Himself is known to have shown us the way to the Fatherland.” St Jerome likens these psalms to Jacob’s ladder, with the Lord stooping down from the top to pull the pilgrim up. They are now sung in His body, the sojourning Church.

In the Psalms of Ascent, then, we have a particularly precious gift from the Great Pilgrim, Jesus Christ, who is Himself the Way. **TAP**

Elizabeth King has a background in the liberal arts and classics. She lives in rural Nova Scotia with her husband Evan and three young children.

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Mere Anglicanism Panel



Justin Earley, Carl Trueman, Michael Nazir-Ali, Vaughan Roberts, Stephen Presley and moderator John Dickson. The theme of the conference was "You Are Not Your Own: Gospel Identity in an Age of Expressive Individualism," which comes from 1 Corinthians 6:19.

A panel discussion concluded the Mere Anglicanism conference held Jan. 22-24 in Charleston, S.C. This is an abbreviated version, edited by Sue Careless. The theme of the conference was "You Are Not Your Own: Gospel Identity in an Age of Expressive Individualism." The title comes from 1 Corinthians 6:19. The term Expressive Individualism was understood as excessive or extreme individualism at the expense of community.

Two of the conference speakers had to leave early but five were available for the panel discussion: The Rev. Dr. Carl Trueman, Professor at Grove City College, Pennsylvania; Dr. Michael Nazir-Ali, President of the Oxford Centre for Training, Research, Advocacy and Dialogue (OXTRAD); Rev. Vaughan Roberts, Rector of St. Ebbe's Church, Oxford; Dr. Stephen Presley, Associate Professor at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary; and Justin Earley, a Virginian lawyer and author. The moderator was Dr. John Dickson, Professor at Wheaton College, Illinois.

Moderator: *Is there anything good in Expressive Individualism?*

Trueman: Our feelings are important. One of the gains the Church has made in my lifetime is understanding that psychological illnesses are illnesses. Expressive Individualism also captures what we see in the psalms of the inner life. In Ps. 73 the psalmist is wrestling with why does bad stuff happen to good people? Why do they die young while the wicked live happy lives and die old? It's ok in the fallen world to feel emotional distress and honestly express it. Where Expressive Individualism goes wrong is where it terminates that emphasis. Rousseau in his *Confessions* says [in effect], "All I really need to do is go inside and reflect on how I felt in any given situation." Contrast that with the psalmist who says, "My feet had almost slipped until I went into the sanctuary, then their end became plain to me." The psalmist is not denying the legitimacy or the reality of his feelings; he's bringing them into the context of the external actions and revelations of the covenant God. Augustine's *Confessions* compare very favourably to the psalmist. He's going inward and exploring his psychological feelings. Our feelings, desires and our wills are important; we need to take them into account. Where it gets it wrong is, it doesn't go far enough. It doesn't set those feelings in the objective actions and revelations of God. The heresy of Expressive Individualism is not setting these feelings in the Lord Jesus Christ.

The heresy of Expressive Individualism is not setting these feelings in the Lord Jesus Christ.

[Moderator comments]: This reminds me of the discussions that the Christians had with Stoics in the third and fourth centuries. The Stoics crushed all emotions, from anguish to ecstasy, whereas the Christians said the emotions are wonderful if schooled by Jesus Christ.

Moderator: *You said in your talk, Michael, that Christians in Iran who are willing to go to prison for reading the Bible enhance the credibility of the Gospel. How can we [in the West] enhance the credibility of the Gospel?*

Nadir-Ali: Continue being present in the public square and not to opt out despite all the challenges, to continue to make a contribution. We're hearing so many testimonies that the Christian case is being given more of a hearing. That wouldn't have happened ten years ago. Tom Holland [who wrote *Dominion: How the Christian Revolution Remade the World* (2019)] and other scholars are now taking account of the weight of the Christian contribution to the emergence of Western society. We should take advantage of that.

Moderator: *Vaughan [Roberts] you spoke of a thick – not a thin – Gospel. Could you explain what you meant?*

Roberts: It is helpful to learn a simple gospel outline, encapsulated in a few sentences so you could explain to someone the way of salvation. And the gospel is personal. But the gospel is not just personal but universal in scope. It's a big gospel and you'll find it in the whole of the scriptures. So the gospel is not just the salvation of your soul. It has implications for the whole self: body-soul and body-soul in community. This has implications not just for relating me to God but to other human beings, and ultimately to putting the whole Creation right. We need God's big picture. The gospel is in every part of the Bible.

Moderator: *Why is Christianity good for our society?*

Roberts: We're in a mess. We're not integrated with ourselves. We don't know who we are. We're deeply divided with one another. There is a disconnection. There is so much anxiety, division, the sense of lostness in the universe. Christianity has great good news. It says "You are not just an accident. You are deeply loved. You were loved into existence. The ultimate reality behind the universe is not impersonal stuff but the loving, personal God." Christianity brings us together because it's founded

on grace. There is something beyond us, there is a sense of right and wrong that it is not purely subjective. Behind the universe there is a loving, moral God and he has come near us in Jesus Christ. We can find reconnection.

Nazir-Ali: The Anglican sociologist David Martin has done research on why Pentecostalism has grown so rapidly. When the man converted, he is no longer out drinking with the boys; he is not beating his wife. Since the parents are at home helping their children with homework, the children are doing better at school. Because the man is honestly employed, he is trusted and gets on in his job. There was a cycle of virtue that is created because of this conversion.

The Nadars were an outcast group in India, despised by the higher castes. Many of them came to faith in Christ about 200 years ago and now they are the most respected community in the area with doctors, teachers, nurses, dentists. When higher castes need something, they come to the Nadars.

Moderator: *How bold the first-century Christians were. They did not shy away from controversial topics. They embraced persecution with joy, gentleness and love. How did they hold boldness and love together?*

Presley: Our first citizenship is to Christ. Even in the early Church some did burn incense to the Emperor. The [Roman officials] burnt the martyrs' bodies and spread their ashes so that the Christians couldn't bury them. Even the Romans knew that Christians were offering hope. I look back at their fortitude and as C.S. Lewis said, "Fortitude is all the virtues at their testing point," but walk in hope, for your citizenship is in heaven.

Earley: Most people I meet feel their way to their world view. I have a friend who self-identifies as a Stoic pagan. I gave him a great book [on Stoicism and Christianity], which he thought was garbage. But a year ago when his world began to fall apart, when his wife was about to leave him, we hung out more. Now, I had shared the gospel with him several times in the past. And two months ago, he asked me in so many words, "Can you give me a reason for the hope that's within you?" And when I did, he said, "Gosh, I want to believe that!" I explained the Resurrection. I explained that the Stoics can't bring it far enough. We are to remember not just our death, *memento mori* [Remember you must die], but also our resurrection.

Moderator: *What does Christian friendship offer this weird world?*

Earley: The best analogy for what a Church should look like is an AA [Alcoholics Anonymous] meeting, where we come together and speak openly and honestly about our shortcom-

ings and our sins. That allows us to look up and say that is why God is so good. Only against the dark of ourselves is the light of God revealed. When relationships are continually subtracted, your identity contracts. The mood of Christian friendships ought to be this authentic brokenness held up to the light that lets people in. They see we have nothing to hide. It looks outward. We're not stuck in our darkness. That mood of being truly known is so attractive to people who are stuck in the technological loneliness of the modern world.

Moderator: *Can the three of you from Britain reflect on what secularism is like in Britain. The UK is 20 years ahead of the US in secularism.*

Trueman: I've been away for 25 years but I read the British press regularly. In Britain you have an embarrassment about its Christian heritage. That is not to say that every person in Britain 200 years ago was a faithful, believing Christian. But the culture was profoundly shaped by Christianity, for instance common law. What we see today is the result of guilt, often played out through institutions of higher education that is then percolated down. It seems odd that legislation against Islamophobia is being considered while Christianity has been for many generations mocked and reviled. There is a desecration of values. Much is rooted in the idea that Britain should be guilty for its past unconditionally and that pulls Christianity in.

Roberts: With most op-ed writers and the cultural elite, some things are just assumed. Christianity is an embarrassment. Yet as is becoming increasingly clear, there are two Britains. You get a cultural elite that is only relating to one another. Yet quite a large number in the country are not deeply opposed to Christianity, or even traditional values and are deeply concerned about some of the things that have resulted from the rejection of Christianity. You see it in the US. Where it will go, I don't know. There are aspects that are really encouraging; there are aspects that are quite concerning – a populism that could be expressed in extreme divisiveness. There is a longing for something more, that maybe Christianity has some answers. The Church of England to my horror has bashed that. Rather than thinking maybe there's a seed here and we could meet that need, they've smashed it and said this [populism] is a terrible thing. Typically, populism has leaned to the right and the British elite and the Church of England has leaned to the left. There are failures on both sides. The Church of England is very good at pointing out the dangers on the right and not challenging but adapting to the dangers on the left. Some think secularism didn't go as deep as we thought and others are thinking it's gone further than we ever wanted and maybe there is more to Christianity. But that is hidden behind the cultural elite who tend to get the air time.

Nazir-Ali: There are two phases to secularization: gradual and fast. The English in particular have the capacity to keep the husk of a Christian nation: constitutionally, the king, Parliament, and yet nobody actually believes it [Christianity]. There is the long drawn-out process of secularization that Owen Chadwick looks at in *The Secularization of the European Mind in the Nineteenth Century*



PHOTO: SUE CARELESS

Carl Trueman: Expressive Individualism captures what we see in the psalms of the inner life.

(1990). Certain kinds of questions were allowed to be asked: "What kind of thing is this?" "How does this work?" These questions are encouraged. But the "why" questions are discouraged. Instead, description [the answers to what and how] are treated as explanation. The teleological question, "What is this for?" is absent from public discourse. This went on for 200 years.

Then there is the sudden death of Christian discourse [described in] Callum Brown's *Death of Christian Britain* (2009). It happened in the 1960s suddenly when women stopped passing on the faith to their children and their grandchildren. The faith, in Britain, was passed not primarily by the church nor the schools but by mothers in the home. That stopped for various reasons having to do with the changing role of women in society. Now we can debate all that but that is one of the things Brown says. [Then there was] the mutation of political and economic Marxism into cultural Marxism. [British sociologist] Anthony Giddens, who advised Prime Minister Tony Blair, decided that political and economic determinism wasn't possible in Britain, but cultural Marxism was. So we saw in Britain the demise of the family, the destruction of motherhood. However this has happened, I feel in a section of the population, something has died inside them, that faculty which enables people to believe.

With emerging Christian nationalism, we ought to engage positively with some of that. There are dangers. In the past, Christianity has been used for programs of fascism. We don't want to go in that direction. When I asked a cabinet minister why he'd allowed a particular extremist Imam to enter the country, he replied, "A lot of his followers are in my constituency. What am I to do?" Without Christianity, Britain will not have the wherewithal to confront this new comprehensive ideology.

Moderator: *Why is Orthodox Christianity mainly associated with conservatism? And is this a good thing for the Gospel?*

Presley: There is a tendency to conflate one's heavenly citizenship with one's earthly citizenship to the degree that it takes on the mirror of active political maneuvering so that it will lead to some kind of human flourishing. That is always a caution. Robbie George has written extensively on human dignity, family, religious liberty, just laws (Tom Holland has too) – ideas that have emerged out of a Christian disposition and mores. And conservatives seem to be holding the lines on these things of a rightly ordered society. As conservatives we don't always agree on how to apply these principles on the ground. I don't want to lose the church in any of this. Without strong churches, none of this even matters. A faithful church, a strong catechizing community is essential. We also need virtuous political leaders.

Earley: Back up five decades and Christianity has been deeply intertwined with both sides of the American political spectrum. I like the phrase liquid modernity. [Zygmunt Bauman argues in *Liquid Modernity* (2000) that what used to be stable and pre-

dictable – work, relationships, life paths – is now flexible, uncertain, and in constant flux. Individuals are increasingly left to navigate life on their own.] Things are changing so fast and we are trying to play catch-up. On the left, the Democratic platform is, to Christian eyes, a culture of death platform. On the right, we have a leadership problem, leaders who are acting in a very unChristian way. So Americans are rightly confused. Christianity has had a great variety of applications to the state. We have to work on recovering one that works well for now. There isn't going to be any simple answer. But we have to stand up against the insidious idea that secularism is neutral. We have to take a stand. But it can't just be orthodox beliefs that we bring to bear. It has to be lived out in an orthodox way.

Moderator: *Can you each give us one thing to think about on how to engage the secular world?*

Trueman: Given the chaos of the world we live in, I think there is a real danger Christians can be paralysed in the headlights. First, what is your sphere of primary influence? Prioritize your time where you have the most influence, with those you encounter day by day in real time. Second, realize that the problem is the desecration of humanity. Humanity needs to be consecrated. It is consecrated through the proclamation and internalization of the whole counsel of God, through gathered public worship that follows an intelligent, structured liturgical form that reflects the gospel. That is not a one-size fits all. There are various liturgies out there. But every liturgy you use must follow the dynamics of the gospel. Third, live in vibrant, hospitable community. Most of us are not called to refute French deconstructionists. We are called to be bearers of God's image to those around us. Don't panic. Focus your attention on the spheres where you can have an influence.

Presley: Catechesis, discernment and hope. Hold those three together. That is, disciple, disciple; discern, discern, discern. And live in hope.

Earley: I look at our cultural landscape, our politics, our philosophies and our communities. I see our churches rising to the occasion. I am very excited about how the Spirit will lead the church to solve these problems. Hope. Hope that the Lord will prevail and he will use his church to do it. [Said earlier] In the darkness of

our secular age, the fire of friendship in the church may be the greatest sermon that we preach.

Nazir-Ali: First, uphold human dignity in every possible way, both at the beginning and the end of life. Support racial and disability justice. It is an important witness Christians have. Secondly, selflessness, sacrifice and service should mark every Christian's witness in this world. Thirdly, the witness and practice of the church. The church should be seen as a community that does not exist for itself but for the sake of its mission in the world. It should be seen as sacrificial in the use of its resources and its people, seen as serving the wider community not being the holy huddle.

Roberts: Pray big. The Gospel has to go deep in our lives individually and communally. It is not shaping us enough. It's got to shape our imaginations, our hearts, our thoughts so we live it out. TAP

There are two phases to secularization: gradual and fast.

EARLY CHURCH from page 1

always agree about prudential decisions of how these things work out in the public square. . . But the first step is to find some essentials upon which we agree – basic Christian doctrine and morality.

Second, what is the content of early Christian catechesis? What did they give to new members? They gave them doctrine, morality and liturgical instruction. First, doctrine was about teaching the story of the Bible and the basic convictions of the Church or what the Church called the rule of faith. Augustine, in his work called *On the Catechizing of the Uninstructed*, says that the first thing you do with the new catechumen is sit down and tell them the story of the Bible: begin with God created the heavens, the earth, and then tell them the story down to the present age.

This is exactly what Augustine does in the second half of *The City of God*. He begins as Rome is collapsing, as is being pillaged. Augustine steps back and says, "Let's look at the story of God's work of salvation." In the second century, Irenaeus's catechetical manual does the exact same thing. In the New Testament, you can see it in Stephen's sermon in Acts 7. Hebrews 11 and 12 actually tell the whole story of creation to the coming Kingdom of God.

In my latest book, *Biblical Theology and the Life of the Early Church*, I open with a story of entering the church of Saint Germain in Paris. In the nave are a series of frescoes that tell the biblical story. It was so

beautiful. It was Christ's life from his birth all the way to his ascension. And every moment of Christ's life was tied to an Old Testament scene. I found myself worshiping in the midst of the beautiful story of God, and I found myself in it. Then I walked around the church and found myself staring at the grave of René Descartes. And I thought about the tension that that church embodies: the story of salvation versus the dualism that paved the way for an expressive individualism that will come later. And I immediately left Descartes' grave and sat back down in the nave and stared at the story of God.

Not only did the early Church hand [new converts] the story of God, they gave them a rule of faith. This was a basic summary of the church's teaching that was confessed at baptism. You stood before the community of faith and said, "This is what I believe." And in a world of religious diversity, the rule of faith brought clarity on the essential principles and convictions of the faith. The rule of faith emerged out of scripture, Matthew 28: 19. And it paved the way for the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds. The rule of faith became, to use Charles Taylor's phrase, the "social imaginary," the way they perceived their social existence.

They also needed moral instruction. In the early Church, there was something called a two-ways tradition. That language comes from Jeremiah or the Sermon on the Mount. Broad is the way that leads to destruction. Narrow is the way that

leads to life. Listen to these words of a second-century text called the *Didache*, the earliest church manual we have: "There are two ways, a way of life and a way of death, and a great difference between them. The way of life is this, love God who made you, love your neighbour as yourself. Bless those who curse you. Pray for your enemies. Fast for those who persecute you. For what reward is there if you love only those who love you?... Abstain from fleshy and worldly lust. If someone gives you a blow on the right cheek, turn to him the other also."

These are the kinds of imperatives that help the church navigate the pagan world around them. The last and final piece of catechesis is liturgy. The early Church understood they needed a vision of life that orders one's day, one's week, one's month, one's year. Baptism and the Lord's Supper become essential and distinctively Christian sacraments. Listen to the words of Justin Martyr, a second-century father, who gives us this early description of the church's liturgy: "The wealthy among us help the needy, and we all keep together. On a day called Sunday, all who live in the cities gather in one place, and the memoirs of the Apostles are read with the prophets, as long as time permits, and then the pastor verbally instructs us to imitate these good things. Then we rise together and pray. When our prayer is ended, bread and wine are brought

out. And then all who are well to do and willing give what each think fit for the orphans, the widows, for those who are sick."

This was actually written to a pagan audience to explain to them: Look at this incredible and beautiful community. This is what we do. We love one another. If you want to find

The church is not just another cultural institution like a philosophical school or a civic club.

true community, you find it in the church. In his book *The Rise and Triumph of the Modern Self*, Trueman explains why the church grew. He concludes it was because the religion's particular doctrines permitted Christianity to be among the most sweeping and

successful revitalization movements in history. And it wasn't just the doctrines, but it's the way the doctrines took on flesh. So, what does catechesis or discipleship look like in your life?

The second peg of early Christian cultural engagement is citizenship. In Augustine's classic definition, we are citizens of the city of God, embedded in the city of man, trying to figure out how to live. We have a rightly ordered love: love of God, love of neighbour, love of country. And the early Church knew that this ordering made them better citizens because they were actually free to love, free to serve, free to give.

Christians are not distinguished from the rest of humanity by country, language or custom. They live in Greek and barbarian cities – wherever God has placed them. They

follow the local customs of food and of dress. The Epistle of Diognetus states: "They [Christians] live in their own countries, but only as aliens; they participate in everything as citizens, and endure everything as foreigners." They marry like everyone else, and they have children, but they don't expose their offspring [to the elements to die]. They share their food, but not their wives. They have a particular morality, a particular sexual morality that holds them fast. They are in the flesh, but they don't live according to the flesh. They live on earth, but their citizenship is in heaven. They obey established laws; by their private lives they transcend those laws. They love everyone, and by everyone, they are persecuted.

To sum it up, what the soul is to the body, the church is to the world. The church in the second century was small and insignificant yet God was at work through them. The church is not just another cultural institution like a philosophical school or a civic club. The church is a gathering of those from every walk of life who have been formed by the gospel of Jesus Christ, saved and redeemed and sealed for resurrection. There are so many wonderful accounts in the early church of how the church changes lives. Just listen to this second-century apologist: "Look at the church. We who formerly delighted in fornication, now embrace chastity. We who used to dabble in magical arts, now dedicate ourselves to God. We who valued wealth above all things, now bring what we have to common stock."

You want to see beauty and good- See **EARLY CHURCH** p.7

Twenty Years of Ordained Ministry:

A Retrospective

BY **TERENCE CHANDRA**

THIS PAST November – on the feast day of the Reign of Christ – I celebrated twenty years of ordained ministry in the Anglican Church of Canada. The word “celebrated” suggests a party, with good friends sharing good food, raising glasses of champagne as they toast to my honour: “Here’s to another twenty years!” Caught up, however, in the busyness of ministry and family life, I didn’t organize anything like that. The most I had time to do was rummage around in my crawlspace in search of an old article from the city section of our local paper – an article reporting on my ordination. (Clearly, it must’ve been a slow news day.)

The clipping in question features a grainy, black-and-white photo of my 26-year-old self, staring blankly off into the future of a vocation which, to be honest, I entered into naively. The frank, no-nonsense headline simply reads “Fredericton Man Ordained” (a headline which I vastly prefer to “Fredericton Man Taken into Police Custody” or “Fredericton Man Missing”).

Naive, though, is an appropriate word to describe this “Fredericton Man.” What I was naive about, specifically, was just how secular Canadian culture was becoming and how this rapid secularization was sending the churches (particularly those in mainline denominations) into numeric free fall. I was also naive about the psychological toll that the threatened loss of these churches was having on those who had, over the years, found purpose and belonging there – particularly seniors who had sacrificed so much to keep their buildings heated and their communities alive. Finally (and most detrimentally of all) I was naive about my own ability to lead such communities through the necessary process of change and adaptation, grief and loss.

Indeed, it wouldn’t be an exaggeration to say that the first two congregations that I served were profoundly frightened of loss. Just as significantly, they were frightened of the things they might have to let go of in order to forestall or prevent that loss. And so, unwilling to make any big decisions, unwilling to lose their lives in order that they might save it (cf. Mark 8:35), I watched as my church boards agonized instead over the most trivial of changes – Whether or not parishioners should have the option of making donations via e-transfer; whether or not to remove a small row of pews to make room for a play space; or whether or not to replace the chipped cups and saucers in the kitchen with new china. (“Ethel’s grandmother donated that dishware in ’38 – we can’t throw it out!”)

After roughly five years of this, I began to feel what I can only describe as a sense of claustrophobia. It was as if my whole world had been shrunk to the size of a walk-in closet and my daily life reduced to the pointless management of minutiae. This feeling of mental – indeed spiritual – suffocation was made vividly clear to me in a dream that I had while serving in my second parish.

In my dream, I was touring something like the Smithsonian Museum – a network of sprawling hangars filled with countless technological relics from the modern, industrial age. As I wandered about these legendary but now retired aircrafts and space vessels, I came upon the mock-up of a cockpit module from a 1960s era rocket-ship. I somehow discerned that, if I climbed into this cockpit, I would be treated to a highly realistic simulation of a space launch – a thrilling experience that would be narrated (for some inexplicable reason) by former American president, George W. Bush. Wanting to experience the exhilaration of being rocketed into orbit, I crawled into the confined space of the module, shut the door behind me and pressed the button to activate the simulation. But just as the gears upon which the module was mounted began to turn, just as the high-definition screens that formed the windows began to brighten, the whole machine

came to a jerking halt. Hunched in the darkness and silence of this cramped space, I found myself consumed by a growing sense of dread. For I realized (in the horrible logic of nightmares) that the door had somehow been sealed, locking me inside a tiny cockpit that had now become my tomb.

It didn’t take me long to figure out what this dream was all about. I had entered my priestly vocation expecting it to be a vessel to the stars – a chance to shatter boundaries and do ministry in new and innovating ways. Instead, it had become a kind of tiny prison – a prison fashioned from the fear and grief of my church communities (not to mention my own).

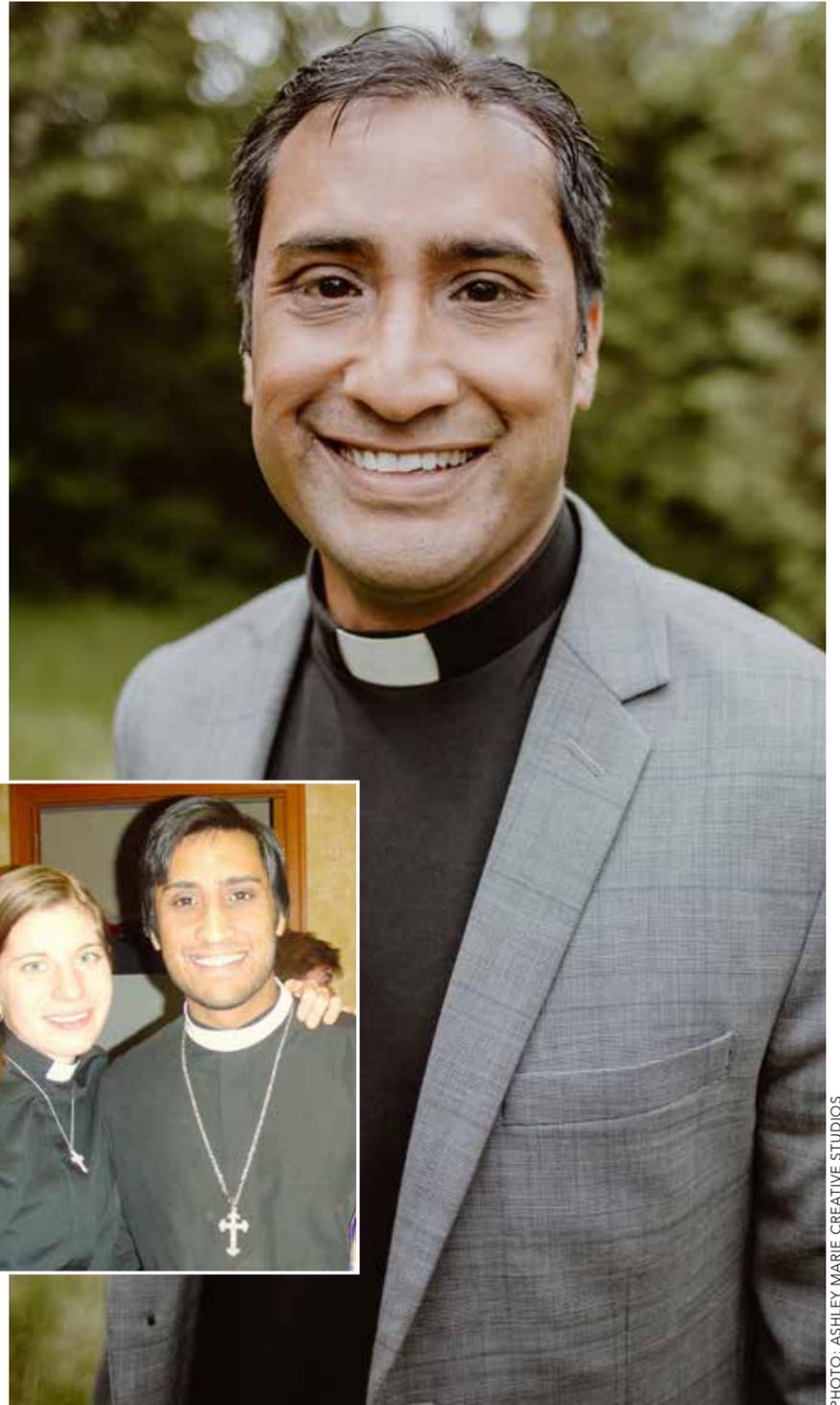
Around this time, I concluded that my calling to the priesthood had been wrongly discerned and that, for the sake of my wellbeing, I needed to leave the ministry. But what would I do next? Too weak to dig ditches and too proud to beg, I contemplated going back to school and acquiring new skills – perhaps ending up in the funeral business or non-profit work. Consulting with a job counsellor, I even filled out a lengthy online multiple-choice questionnaire designed to highlight the career that would best suit my interests, personality type and aptitudes. Imagine my irritation when the program spat out the following response: “The survey has indicated your interests are similar to those of people in religious careers.”

In the end, I chose to continue in my priestly vocation, the aforementioned survey being only one of the many factors leading to this decision. However,

I knew I had to do things differently. For one thing, I knew that I could no longer allow the collective grief and fear of a congregation to define the way I served. Secondly, I knew that I had to lead a church in forward advance – out towards a hurting world – and not in small retreats, each meant to conserve resources and protect the congregation.

It was around this time that my wife (also an Anglican priest) and I began to explore the possibility of launching a new and risky ministry. The ministry we dreamt of would be rooted in

the urban core of our city – a cluster of neighbourhoods with a high rate of poverty, homelessness, drug addiction and mental



Terence Chandra and (inset) shortly after his ordination with his wife, Jasmine.

Our team ... has offered a variety of programs and services to some of the most vulnerable people of our community...

LORD, FOR THY TENDER MERCIES’ SAKE, LAY NOT OUR SINS TO OUR CHARGE; BUT FORGIVE THAT IS PAST, AND GIVE US GRACE TO AMEND OUR SINFUL LIVES; TO DECLINE FROM SIN, AND INCLINE TO VIRTUE, THAT WE MAY WALK WITH A PERFECT HEART BEFORE THEE, NOW AND EVERMORE.

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Christ in the desert (detail), by Ivan Nikolayevich Kramskoy; 1872

illness. Set free from traditional parish responsibilities, our hope was to embed ourselves within one of these neighbourhoods as community priests, ministering to those least likely to ever darken the doors of a church. We took our idea to our bishop and, after a full year of prayerful discernment, were given permission to launch a ministry that we call Pennies and Sparrows.

Twelve years later, by the grace of God, we continue in this work – work that is, although difficult, deeply rewarding. Over the years our team (now expanded to five staff) has offered a variety of programs and services to some of the most vulnerable people of our community – the poor, isolated seniors, at-risk youth, immigrants and refugees.

Eventually, Jasmine and I both found our way back to traditional parish ministry. While continuing to run Pennies and Sparrows, we were hired on as priests-in-charge at Stone Church – an Anglican community rooted in the same impoverished neighbourhood within which our outreach ministry currently operates.

Today, we find our work to be immensely satisfying – so satisfying that I believe I have a sense of what the Lord meant when he told his disciples: “I have food to eat that you do not know about” (John 4:32). That food, as the Lord explains to his perplexed followers, is “to do the will of him that sent me and to complete his work” (John 4:34). In short, work done in holy obedience was what fuelled our Lord and gave him life. By the grace of God, my wife and I believe that we are also doing such work – work that is fulfilling in the literal sense of the word.

But I won’t lie: ordained ministry remains difficult. I continue to work with people who struggle with fear and grief. I myself continue to struggle with fear and grief. But through the work of the Spirit, I’m far less bound by it. The Lord, in his mercy, has opened the door of that suffocating capsule, setting me free to love and to serve in the vast, sun-drenched country that is his vineyard. **TAP**

Terence and his wife Jasmine Chandra both serve as priests-in-charge at Stone Church in Saint John, New Brunswick. They also run Pennies and Sparrows, an organization which ministers to some of the most marginalized people in their community (www.penniesandsparrows.org). They have two children, Sam, 14 and Naomi, 8.

Tribute:

Bp Paul Idlout 1935-2025

Bishop Paul Idlout is seen in 2017 teaching the Inuktitut Book of Common Prayer to Inuit theological students (including future bishop Ann Martha Keenainak, standing) in Saint Simon's Anglican Church in Apex, just outside of Iqaluit.

PHOTO: JOEY ROYAL

BY SUE CARELESS

RT. REV. PAUL Idlout, the first Inuit bishop in the world, died on New Year's Eve at the age of 90.

A teenaged Idlout, with his father and four other traditional Inuit hunters, was famously featured on the Canadian two-dollar bill in the 1970s, in a print made from a 1951 photograph taken near Aulatsiivik in northern Baffin Island. The image captured an era that was rapidly giving way to social change frequently imposed by government policies.

His diocesan bishop, the Rt. Rev. Chris Williams, remembers Idlout as "a very loving person and perhaps one of the few remaining Inuit to grow up on the land. I found him to be a tremendous support to me and a wonderful colleague."

"Bishop Paul was a real servant, a gentle and kind man with a good sense of humour," said Joey Royal, himself once a suffragan bishop in the Arctic and former director of the Arthur Turner Training School in Iqaluit. "Paul and his wife Abigail were wise elders and mentors to the Inuit theological students in Iqaluit. Although he was accomplished in so many ways, he wore it all with winsome humility and joy."

Paul Ullatitaa Idlout was born on April 21, 1935 in Mittimatalik (Pond Inlet) on the top of Baffin Island, the oldest of nine children. His paternal grandfather had been a successful hunter and Anglican lay minister while his father, Joseph Idlout, was a well-respected Inuit hunter and leader, as well as a skilled photographer. In 1952 Joseph Idlout starred in the 1952 National Film Board production, *Land of the Long Day*.

One of the still images from the film was of Joseph and Paul and some other hunters preparing for a hunt. It circulated widely as the featured image on the Canadian \$2 bill.

The film's director Doug Wilkinson gave Joseph Idlout a Kodak Duaflex camera. The Nunavut Archives has about 300 images credited to him.

In 1955, Joseph Idlout, his wife Rebecca Qillaq and three of their children Paul, Moses and Leah were relocated along with other members of their community by the federal government from their home in Mittimatalik (Pond Inlet) to Qausuittuq (Resolute Bay) in the High Arctic. Paul would have been about twenty. Another group was relocated from northern Quebec.

It is thought that the government ordered these relocations to establish Canadian sovereignty in the Arctic during the Cold War. The Inuit were promised plentiful wildlife and improved living conditions, but soon discovered that they had been misled, and endured terrible hardships. The effects have lingered for generations. The Inuit High Arctic relocations are often referred to as a dark chapter in Canadian history.

In 2013, Bp Idlout recalled that traumatic time: "...there were no houses and it was fall and very cold. We lived in a tent and the tent was very cold. We did not go to a warm place for a long time.

"Those of us who were relocated, it could not be helped,

we were not from the same community the Quebec people and us and there was an obstruction as we did not speak the same dialect and our lifestyles were different and we had to get used to each other.

"These were hardships we faced, not having nurses and trying to get accustomed to something we weren't used to."

The family eventually returned to their original community.

Paul Idlout served as an RCMP Special Constable and translator before entering the Arthur Turner Training School in 1986. At that time the Anglican theological college was located in Pangnirtung. Today it is based in Iqaluit.

Idlout was ordained in 1990 and served in several communities across Baffin Island.

In 1996 the Diocese of the Arctic elected 62-year-old Idlout, then living in Cape Dorset, (Kinngait), as their suffragan bishop. He was the first Inuk bishop in any church in the world, and at that time, only the third Indigenous bishop to serve in the Anglican Church of Canada.

The election itself was a lengthy one that required 29 ballots. The 31 members of the clergy voted consistently for Idlout while the 43 lay members voted for Rev. Benjamin Arreak, from Kuujuaq, Quebec. Both Inuit men were originally from Pond Inlet.

By the evening of the second voting day, Idlout was elected and Arreak went on to distinguish himself on the Inuit team translating the Bible into modern Inuktitut. (Bishop Arreak was also eventually consecrated as a suffragan in 2002.)

Idlout was consecrated at St. Jude's Cathedral in Iqaluit on

June 2, 1996. The Book of Common Prayer service was fully bilingual Inuktitut and English, with some Gwitchin and Cree spoken.

"I felt this should have happened three or four years ago, when at that time I felt that the Inuit were ready then," Idlout said. "We can be involved with the servicing of a huge territory by Inuit people."

"[The consecration ceremony] was a great thing," Idlout said. "It was wonderful. It was really nice with all the people there. I think that it was the first time the people had seen themselves [in a place of authority] in their own land."

Since it made more sense for Idlout to live in Iqaluit, his diocesan bishop, Chris Williams, returned to his home and the diocesan offices in Yellowknife. The vast diocese of the Arctic the largest in the world has its offices in Yellowknife on Great Slave Lake and its cathedral thousands of kilometres northeast on Baffin Island.

Idlout served as Suffragan Bishop for eight years, from 1996 until 2004.

In retirement, he remained active as a hunter and teacher of traditional skills for many years. He helped out at the cathedral but also provided pastoral care and Sunday services to the people of nearby Apex on Baffin Island.

On Epiphany Idlout's funeral service was held at the place of his consecration, St. Jude's Cathedral in Iqaluit.

Just before the service began, Bishop Ann Martha Keenainak read a statement from Canadian Governor General Mary Simon, who expressed her condolences and regret that she could not be there in person.

Simon, herself an Inuk, called Idlout "a remarkable spirit" and a "prominent elder who championed peace, reconciliation and love."

"Despite a youth marked by hardship the relocation of his family to Resolute in the 1950s she chose collaboration over anger, love over isolation," she wrote.

"As the first Inuk bishop in the world, he strengthened reconciliation and created lasting bonds between the Anglican Church and the Arctic."

In his sermon, Diocesan Bishop Alexander Pryor said Idlout "paved the way" for many Inuit faith leaders, and that he was committed to his family and culture. "He was a humble, honest and faithful man who stayed close to God and produced much good fruit."

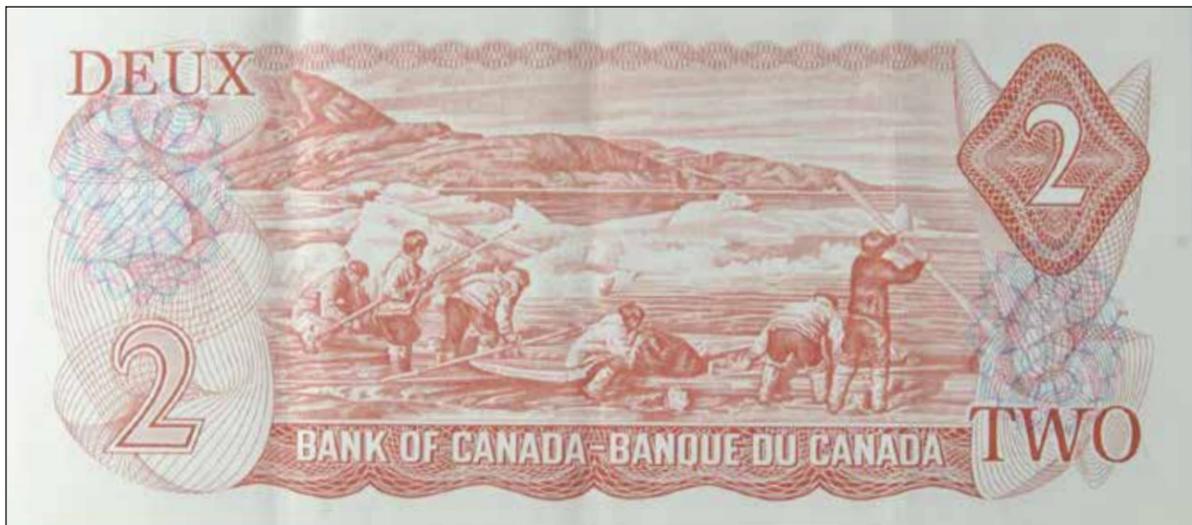
... Idlout 'paved the way' for many Inuit faith leaders, and he was committed to his family and culture.

Mourners included politicians, RCMP officers and members of the Anglican community. During the service Idlout's coffin was draped in a Canadian flag. Afterwards, RCMP officers folded it and Nunavut commanding officer Chief Supt. Kent Pike presented it to Idlout's family.

Bp Idlout is survived by his wife Abigail and their children and grandchildren. "He's going to be missed," his son Joshua Idlout said after the funeral. "He made a lot of friends from all of Nunavut, all of Canada. Looks like all over the world because they remembered him. I'm thankful they were given the opportunity to meet him the father we had."

In the past 30 years the igloo-shaped cathedral has witnessed the consecration of five more Inuit bishops: diocesan Andrew Atagotaaluk; and suffragans Annie Ittoshat, Lucy Nester, Benjamin Arreak and Ann Martha Keenainak. But Paul Idlout was the first. **TAP**

—With a file from Jeff Pelletier of Nunatsiqa News.



Bank of Canada Museum.