



Not all angels are in heaven



Photos (clockwise from upper left): Ruth Ballah holding one of her angels, a close-up of an angel and its message, Harold and Lorraine Irving greet Bishop Sue and Bruce Moxley and Bishop Ron Cutler during the Bishop's Levee on New Year's Day. One of the decorated angel trees can be seen behind Bishop Sue.

AT THE CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF ALL SAINTS, there were several hundred angels on the two Christmas trees in the transept thanks to long-time Cathedral parishioner Ruth Ballah. To add a festive religious spirit to the trees, Ruth hand-crafted nearly two hundred individual angel ornaments, each with its own message. The angel

decorations were meant to be taken away by parishioners and visitors to the Cathedral during the Christmas season. Although each angel took nearly an hour to make, Ruth said it was a joy to be able to do something special to decorate the Cathedral during Advent.

C O L U M N I S T

Just say 'Yes!'

In preparing for the 'annual' Annual Meeting here at St. Bart's, the hardest part comes weeks before we actually meet. The real work is done by the nominating committee who struggle to find willing people to hold an office in the Parish. We are a small congregation with lots of grey heads and wrinkles sitting in the pews. We have a few willing souls who will say the usual 'if you can't find anyone else...' but really, they deserve a rest so we do try to find new blood so to speak.

Rev Billie would like to take a back seat when it comes to nominations but she is the one person who has a handle on who is who in the parish and who might be willing to serve on Parish Council.

We met around her kitchen table on a cold grey morning in early January. Her Mother-in-Law had a huge pot of coffee brewing and a basket of warm corn bread muffins plunked in the middle of the table; (her southern roots were showing!) She had pots of homemade jams and soft butter out for us. If word got around about these treats we might have more folks willing to serve on the committee.... or not!



ST. BART'S BY THE BOG

Sarah Neish

I think the truth is that people have no idea how a small parish is run until they agree to sit on Council; I didn't. My Orin would moan a bit on the first Wednesday of every month and ask if we could have supper a bit early because it was Council night. It was not until I allowed my name to stand as Guild Representative that I saw how the parish worked so to speak. It was an experience that has led me to admire some very quiet folks in our midst. Our Treasurer who does his job on a weekly basis, making sure that the fuel company is paid on time... that the lights stay lit and the

other bills are covered. My Orin has been on the Property Committee since 'Hector was a pup' (one of my Father's sayings) so I do understand who makes sure that the place stays standing. I have fielded a few calls from the Rectory telling of a failed hot water heater or a new leak around the large window in the parlor. All I did was pass them on to Orin who wrote himself a note on the palm of his hand ... a habit he has developed since he gave up smoking many years ago, the inside of his cigarette package used to be the place for such reminders! He and his buddies on Property would see that the work was done.

When I was asked to be on the nominating committee I said "yes, sure". Oh how green was I? We spent the best part of that cold grey January morning looking at the parish list and making phone calls to people who we felt might be willing to serve on Council. The first three calls I personally made were met by an answering machine or a very quick "No!". My fourth call was very interesting. I was asked to call a person who was not new to our parish but was now more active in attending

Sunday worship. My request to allow their name to stand as a member of the council was met with silence for what seemed to me to be forever but was probably less than ten seconds ... then I heard the sweet words "Yes I would be pleased to serve on Council".

I think the grin on my face let the other members of the nominating committee know the result. It seemed to break the ice and we went on from there to fill our needs for the year.

I guess I am sharing this with you because I know at some time your phone will ring or your answering machine will carry the request to volunteer in your parish. Remember that the person doing the asking is also a volunteer and the job they have agreed to do is not an easy one and remember how happy I was when I heard the magical "Yes".

I think it was Nancy Reagan who coined the slogan "Just say No" .

Well Aunt Madge is coining a new one "Just say YES!"

I'll keep you posted,
Aunt Madge



THE DIOCESAN TIMES

VOLUME 66 NUMBER 2

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Published monthly except in July and August by The Diocesan Times Publishing Company. Available electronically at: www.nspeidiocese.ca/times/times.htm

Printed by and mailed from Signal Star Publishing Ltd., Goderich, Ontario.

Opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect the views of the editor, the management board of The Diocesan Times, the diocese of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island or any representative thereof, except where expressly stated. All material subject to editing.

SUBSCRIPTION RATE FOR THE DIOCESAN TIMES and ANGLICAN JOURNAL: \$20 per year Single copies: \$2

SUBMISSIONS DEADLINE: The first week of the month preceding the month of publication: e.g., the deadline for the February edition is the first week of January.

Speaking against injustice: educating for prevention

WHAT IS A PAYDAY LOAN?

BY SUE MOXLEY

What would you do if you had a financial emergency? If you are like most Canadians, you would face financial difficulty if your pay cheque was even one week late. Where would you go if your pay cheque was late – to family, to friends, to a pawn shop, ask for a payroll advance, use an overdraft or go for a payday loan? If you have ever considered getting a payday loan to tide you over, think again! If you have had to resort to a payday loan, you know why it is a bad choice.

In Nova Scotia, you can get a payday loan for \$100 for twelve days and then pay back \$131. That works out to an annual interest rate of 808% or 943% depending on which report you read. In either case, that is usury. The Criminal Code of Canada defines it so. However, the Nova Scotia government, for whatever reason, saw fit

to exempt the payday loan industry from the Criminal Code!

This industry in Nova Scotia was recently reviewed by the Utility and Review Board (UARB). Rev. Kees Zwanenburg researched the available material and prepared a paper which Bishop Sue and he presented to the Board. We argued, along with others, our preference that payday loans should be eliminated; that if they continue, the industry should not be exempt from the Criminal Code of Canada; that fees and interest be capped and monitored and that the industry be reviewed regularly.

The UARB has made its report. The Board accepted some of the recommendations that we made including the following:

- 1) Maximum cost of borrowing reduced to \$25 per \$100;
- 2) Maximum cost of borrowing to include any cost for

insurance;

- 3) Board will recommend to the Minister that online payday loans be regulated;
- 4) Board will recommend to the Minister that lenders disclose the cost of payday loans in their advertising; and
- 5) Board orders that the next review occur in three years.

Why should the church care about this? This an industry that appears to target those with few options, those we might call "the least of the brothers and sisters." Scripture has some clear statements against charging interest and usury and clear statements about caring for the least of the brothers and sisters. Our church has a tradition of advocating for change to those in power on behalf of those whose voice is not heard.

We also need to consider how our parishes can help people to understand their options with regard to money. For

those with a debt crisis, we can make people aware of Credit Counseling Services of Atlantic Canada (www.solveyourdebts.com) and of the services offered by financial institutions for orderly payment of debt. Perhaps your parish has people who are experts in this field and would be willing to assist those who come to a crisis point with debt.

We can also educate to prevent the accumulation of debt. Our parishes can offer the course called "Living Wisely", a program designed to help people learn to manage their money well. Rev. Matthew Sponagle is a trained leader for this program. Lay people with interest and skills in money management could also do this training. (Funding to help with the cost of training would be available through the Lay Leadership Legacy Fund.)

EDUCATE FOR PREVENTION. SPEAK AGAINST INJUSTICE.

BISHOP'S MESSAGE

Holy manners matter



*The Right Reverend Ron Cutler,
Suffragan Bishop of Nova Scotia
and Prince Edward Island*

FOR A LONG TIME it has seemed evident to me that we have a special 'church season', at this time of year, that doesn't show up in any prayer book. Somewhere in the midst of Epiphany is the season of Annual Meetings. It is a church season rather than a one day event because it tends to consume a significant amount of energy in the life of most congregations and parishes in the diocese in: preparing for, conducting and in the follow up. Our diocesan Canon 35 provides a detailed agenda for the annual meeting of a congregation and a parish but if you wanted to describe an annual meeting in a few words you could say that it is the opportunity for the parishioners to review the past year of the ministry of the parish (or church) and to look to the year just begun for where God will call them in mission. There are reports of the rector, wardens, committees, groups and other associated ministries. There will be financial statements and a budget, the election of officers and possibly some discussion about a special project.

What makes a parish or congregational annual meeting different from the business meeting of any other organization is the reason why any of us are there in the first place. The congregation exists to advance the mission of God. I recently heard one rector in our diocese say: "we look for Christ at the center of all we do, including our decision-making".

At least that is the hope. The reality is that sometimes it is hard to see Christ in the midst of our meetings. Calling a group of people with different points of view together to discuss anything means that there will be differences of opinion and disagreement. While scripture holds up the goal of finding a common mind in Christ Jesus, it also witnesses to the fact that there were disagreements about many issues in the church right from apostolic times. There is absolutely nothing wrong with debate and disagreement as long as there is commitment from all participants to listen to the others in the room at least as much as you listen to yourself. It was pointed out to me a long time ago, that we have two ears and one mouth – so we should listen at least twice as much as we talk!

The other thing that we need to keep in mind is the need to respect those with whom we are in dialogue. Sometimes the behavior at church meetings falls far short of the standards expected of the 'children of light'. There are other members of the congregation who are every bit as faithful as we are and yet have opinions that are contrary to ours. This is not a reason to demonize or condemn others. Many organizations or groups have 'group norms' – guidelines for conduct when the group is in session. These are not the same as the 'rules of order' which govern the process of meeting. These norms are designed by the group in an attempt to encourage productive work and at the same time guard the safety of its members. It is not the goal of group norms to cut off debate. Sometimes these group norms for parishes have been described as 'Holy Manners'. If you search 'Holy Manners' on the internet you will come up with thousands of references and some very good examples of documents that congregations use to govern themselves. The Archdeacons have examples of Holy Manners documents and are available to help start the discussion in your parish. Another good resource is the Alban Institute publication: "Behavioral Covenants in Congregations" by Gil Rendle. The author shows how we grow by "valuing our differences rather than by trying to ignore or blend them."

One of our former diocesan bishops once commented that rather than complaining about church meetings we needed to value them. "Just remember" he said "the Holy Spirit came to the church in the midst of a church meeting". I pray that you will have (Or have already had) an annual meeting where God's Mission has been at the centre of your discussion. We need to share differences of opinion, even as we search for the mind of Christ for our congregations and for the wider church. How we engage in discussion and debate must not betray the point of our gathering or the reason that the decisions are important to us.

+ Ron

LETTER

January, 2011

Dear Editor:

The Diocese has asked for input toward a pastoral response for Anglican Christians around the subject of human sexuality, especially in same-sex relationships.

I respond as a 50+ Christian Anglican Lay Reader, married in a Baptist Mission 28 years ago. A marriage not blessed in an Anglican Church. This is not a problem. While experience does not make me a sexuality expert, reflecting Christ's love in my life to others is a Christian priority.

In God's evolving tapestry of humanity, each of us is a uniquely created thread woven into relationship with one another. This becomes apparent when living in a small community. If non-heterosexuals were excluded, my life would be bereft of some well loved family and friends, including: teachers, priests, librarians, dental hygienists, bankers,

store clerks, real estate agents, art gallery workers, firefighters, doctors, hair stylists, bartenders, research analysts, homemakers, police, entrepreneurs, retirees, entertainers, lab technicians, chefs, resort owners, innkeepers, military personnel, artists, and questioning teens. The human diversity in my life would be severely impacted.

God created everything; Christ died once for all; God loves unconditionally - or so we say. Debating inherent human traits created by God reflects a condescending and adversarial attitude toward God. We are what we are - made by God in God's image, ruled by God. Ministering to others as representatives of Christ begins with loving people influenced by God's presence in, and impact upon, our lives.

Life can be tough. Folks expect to find loving acceptance in God's house. Churches are meant to mirror Christ's teachings of love

and acceptance. There is no healthier way to live our lives aside from welcoming who we are as created by God. Through faith we accept God's blueprint for our life.

Not all same-sex couples are concerned with human sexuality. A person should be treated no differently based on the gender of their partner. Family structures have transformed into various socially acceptable combinations. As God's human tapestry evolves, so the church should also change to extend into the community it exists to serve. Christians should not allow couples or family units to be bullied or made to feel inferior. There is no second class Christian.

Same gender couples in my life want respect and acceptance. They want a legal contract to protect their financial assets and obligations for/to each other. Those couples open to a blessing of union do so from the viewpoint they should

be treated no differently than other couples in their church family. Blessing marriages or unions and acknowledging the integrity of all relationships should be available for all.

Life threatening global problems demands our common energies, resources and attention. Working to eradicate starvation and poverty, violence and abuses, global footprints and corrupt governments should unite all Christians. Debating what should not be issues of division amongst Christians can dilute our focus and result in disappointing exclusionary exercises. Surely we want to do better than that.

Celebrate the diversity of God, respect all people, and most importantly - love one another.

Faye Tetford,
Parish of Yarmouth and
Tusket,
Nova Scotia



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Rev. Tricia Ingram resigned as archdeacon of the Eastern Shore in order to concentrate on being the team leader for the new ministry team for the parishes of Musquodoboit and Ship Harbour who are embarking on a new model of ministry together.

Rev. Debra Burleson appointed archdeacon of the Eastern Shore effective January 1, 2011.

Rev. Kevin Frankland appointed regional dean of the Eastern Shore Region January 15, 2011.

Rev. Elliott Siteman resigned as rector of St. George's, New Glasgow in order to take a position as assistant to the director of Youth and Family Ministry at St. Luke's Church, Burlington, Ontario. Rev. Lori Ramsey is serving as priest in charge of St. George's while they work through the Canon 25 process.

Rev. Fred Krieger is assisting with the work of executive secretary of Synod while Rev. Janet Hatt is on sick leave.

Rev. Irving Letto will serve as priest in charge of the parish of Blandford beginning February 1, 2011 while the parish works through the Canon 25 process following the resignation of Rev. Laura McCue to become rector of the Parish of the Resurrection.

Rev. Stephen Laskey, rector of Christ Church, Dartmouth, appointed as the diocesan representative for the Anglican Fellowship of Prayer.

Rev. John Morrell appointed rector of St. Mark's Church, Halifax, effective March 15, 2011.

Rev. Tricia Ingram appointed priest-in-charge of the parish of Ship Harbour, January 1, 2011.

Janice Roby appointed as the new registrar following the resignation of Kelly Appleton. As part of this new appointment an assessment is taking place to determine how best to keep the records required by Canon law with current technology.

Rev. Dr. Robert Crouse died peacefully at his home in Crousetown, Lunenburg County this past Saturday. On Wednesday, January 19th at 2 pm, the King's and Dalhousie community held a Requiem Eucharist at the King's Chapel. A Requiem Eucharist and

Celebration of Father Crouse's life, to which all are invited, will take place at St. George's (Round) Church in Halifax, 2222 Brunswick Street on Sunday, June 26th at 7 pm, just before the Atlantic Theological Conference. This service will provide an opportunity for all of Father Crouse's friends, musical, academic and church colleagues and others to come together, remember him, and give thanks for his life.

When Archbishop Fred was here to speak to the Friends of the Bishop Dinner in November, he talked about our relationship with the Anglican Church in Cuba. For years the Anglican Church there was unable to elect their own bishop. The church was administered by a Council of the Primates from Canada, US and South America. For the first time in many years they have elected a bishop, Griselda Delgado Di Capiro. Archbishop Fred participated in her consecration as bishop. In his speech, Fred spoke of the spiritual strength of the people of the church there as well the poverty. He gave the example that the bishop does not have a car to travel to support the congregations of the diocese. The Friends of the Bishop at that meeting agreed to undertake the project of raising \$13,000 to allow the new bishop to get a car! So far they have raised \$8,325 toward the goal. Archbishop Fred will be participating in their Synod which begins the first weekend in February. We are told that the safest way to get money to people in Cuba is to hand it to them! So Archbishop Fred has offered to take our gift when he goes.

Would you be willing to help us to get to the full amount of \$13,000? You can contribute in these ways:

- Send your cheque to Car Fund, Ms Jana O'Neil, Diocese of NS & PEI, 6017 Quinpool Rd, Halifax, B3K 5J6
- You can go to the website www.nspeidiocese.ca and click on Canada Helps then choose the Car Fund option.
- You can phone Jana O'Neil at 902 420 0717 with your credit card and make your donation.

Although the deadline for Archbishop Fred's trip to Cuba on February 2 has passed, we will send more at a later date with someone traveling to Cuba.

A fond farewell for Kelly



Above: After 17 years in the synod office, Kelly Appleton left to pursue another career. Well-wishers came by the synod office on December 23 to wish her the best on her new journey. The camera-shy Kelly (l) was only partially captured as she hugged Heather MacEachern.

PEI Youth Retreat



LAST MARCH, young people from all over PEI and their leaders gathered for a retreat at Belcourt Centre. Two groups from Nova Scotia, whose clergy had roots on the Island, joined the Island youth and Archdeacon Mark Kingsbury was the guest speaker. It was a worthwhile time of learning and sharing together. Thanks to the Diocesan Church Society, young people will once again have the opportunity to gather on March 18 and 19th for an overnight youth retreat. The event will be held at Canoe Cove Christian Camp. The new lodge is a fantastic site for a youth retreat. It is an accessible facility with bunk beds, showers, a worship space,

and dining hall all right on the Northumberland Strait. The band, "For His Name's Sake" will lead us in worship and be the guest speakers. They will share songs from their new album, "Be My Life" and will share their stories as young people living out their lives for Christ. Check them out on Facebook and YouTube. Some of the other activities that are planned include a night game, campfire, and creative worship workshops. All students in grades six through twelve are welcome to participate. Registration forms and \$25 per youth need to be received by February 28th. For more

information, contact the Rev. Cathy Pharo, Regional Dean, or Shelly Molyneux, registrar. Adults without a Care 2 Screen card are asked to contact Susan Naylor, Youth Ministry Coordinator at youth@nspeidiocese.ca. The Care 2 Screen ID is issued to all adults who have completed a safety screening. This includes providing a NS/PEI Diocese record form, a police record check, a child abuse registry check (NS), a vulnerable sector check (PEI), demonstrates that they are active in a local parish and have taken part in safety training.

Calling all campers!

Did you go to a Christian camp last summer? What was the best part about camp for you? Take some time to draw a picture or write in and tell us why you love to go to camp. Pictures and letters from children and youth may be sent to: Youth Ministry Coordinator, Diocese of NS and PEI, 6017 Quinpool Road, Halifax,

Nova Scotia B3K 5K6 Were you a counsellor or leader at a Christian camp or vacation Bible school? Why do you volunteer and what do you love about the experience? Send a short letter to youth@nspeidiocese.ca. We would love to hear about your ministry!

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Bumblebees, a snow mountain and an upside down cake — being the church in 2011

Surprise, surprise, God is a surprise. Right before your eyes, it's baffling to the wise. Surprise, surprise, God is a surprise, open up your eyes and see. Harry Pritchett Jr.

CANON BILL CLIFF SPEAKS about the Gospel in terms of three basic rules. His first is that the Gospel is always astonishing and if it's not, then you are not reading it correctly. On a recent Saturday afternoon, the people of the Parish of New London gathered to be the church and to learn and experience some astonishing

things. They were taking part in their third experience of "Messy Church". The theme for the day was the Beatitudes from the Sermon on the Mount. The announcements in the bulletin had encouraged people to come and see how the Beatitudes are blessings that God gives to those who really need a blessing. Things got underway with the church organist, reviewing the music for the worship time later on. The theme for the day was the Beatitudes from the Sermon on the Mount. Things got underway with the church organist,

reviewing the music for the worship time later on. The theme was introduced and people were given several options for participation. Some made a bumble bee toy, some made a craft, and some built a giant snow mountain. Everyone was busy as a bee learning and doing. When the activities were winding down, a lovely scent wound its way through the hall. It was a cake! Rev. Cathy Pharo taught about each of the Beatitudes and reminded everyone that God's ways are surprising. A cookie sheet was produced and that perfectly ordinary cake was turned upside down to

reveal the delicious pineapple and cherries that had been lending the fragrance all along. What a surprise! Everyone joined into a time of worship led by one of the teenagers and then enjoyed a delicious supper together. Messy Church is a new way of being together as God's people. All ages participate as they are able and everyone learns and worships with understanding. It's a great way to grow and taps into a variety of learning styles. One of the best parts is seeing all ages engaged and excited about the Bible and about their faith. Experiences like this are happening in several

parishes. The Parish of Wilmot in Middleton has a weekly after school gathering called J.A.M. Families for Faith, Fun and Food, a ministry of the Parish of St. John's in Fairview meets at the Rockingham Community Centre on the second Saturday of each month. The Fun Time Church meets at the Parish of St. Andrews, Locks Road in Dartmouth. Have you been finding the Gospel astonishing lately? If not, you'll receive a warm welcome at a Messy Church near you!



Above: Some of the children working on their Beatitudes Paper Crafts in PEI.



Above: Proudly displaying her Bumblebee toy made at Messy Church.

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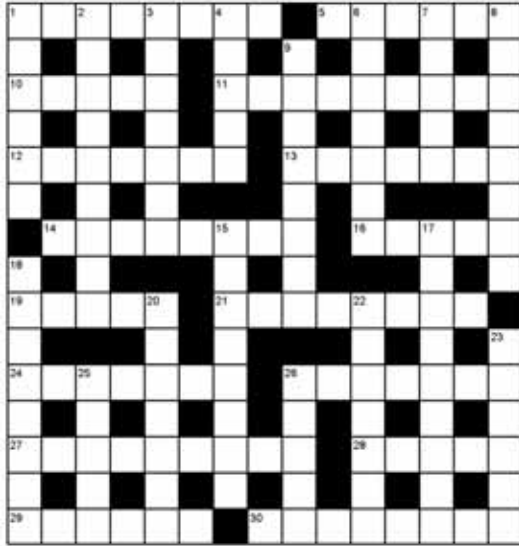
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Bible crossword

by Maureen Yeats



FEBRUARY Puzzle Clues

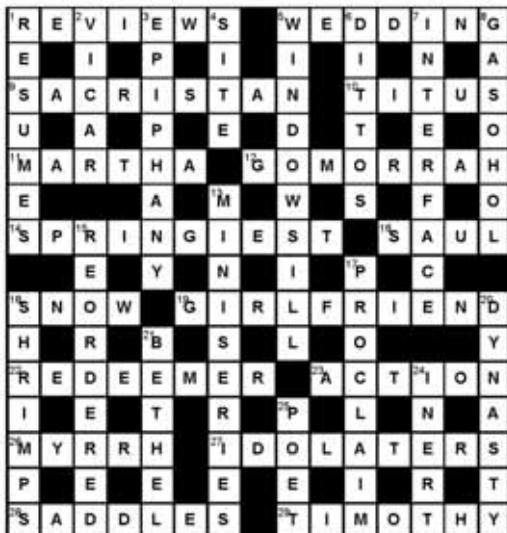
ACROSS:

- 1 – "You shall be the _____ of a multitude of nations" (Gen.17:4) (8)
- 5 – _____ the Bruce, Scottish king (6)
- 10 – Sister of Reuben, Simeon, et al (Gen. 34) (5)
- 11 – Held (9)
- 12 – British coal miner (7)
- 13 – Personal view or attitude (7)
- 14 – Title used for Roman Catholic Cardinal (8)
- 16 – Chops irregularly (5)
- 19 – Refrains from eating (5)
- 21 – Complete obscurity in an eclipse (8)
- 24 – Prohibition (7)
- 26 – "_____ of Days", a name for God (7)
- 27 – "...rebellious people, idle talkers and _____" (Titus 1:10) (9)
- 28 – Strong forward movement (5)
- 29 – An Old Testament prophet (6)
- 30 – "The _____ gathered around Jesus" (Mark 6:30) (8)

DOWN:

- 1 – One who has yielded to a habit-forming drug (6)
- 2 – Ecclesiastical festival on February 2 (9)
- 3 – Brand name of bicycles (7)
- 4 – Nickname of Academy Award statuette (5)
- 6 – A minor Old Testament prophet (7)
- 7 – Boredom (5)
- 8 – State of being neat (8)
- 9 – "...be wise as serpents and _____ as doves" (Matt.10:16) (8)
- 15 – An elemental gas, a component of air (8)
- 17 – The Bishop's church (9)
- 18 – "An ally _____ is stronger than a city" (Prov.18:19) (8)
- 20 – "...they have devoted themselves to the _____ of the saints" (1Cor.16:15) (7)
- 22 – The eighth Plague (Exod.10:1-20) (7)
- 23 – Emphasis (6)
- 25 – Tasty salted and smoked pork slices (5)
- 26 – Ancient Greek teller of fables (5)

January Solution



*Church-bells beyond
the stars heard,
the souls blood,
The land of spices,
something understood.*

Prayer – George Herbert

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I have always thought the actions of men the best interpreters of their thoughts.

~ John Locke

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GLOBAL

Food crisis: threat to global stability & Canadian agricultural interests

Canada can play a role in stabilizing food prices, Foodgrains Bank says.

BY EMILY CAIN
COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER
CANADIAN FOODGRAINS BANK

FOR THE PAST COUPLE OF YEARS, governments have been focused on the financial crisis. But there's another crisis heading our way: The food price crisis. And that, says Stuart Clark, Senior Policy Advisor for Canadian Foodgrains Bank, also has the potential to threaten global stability and security—and Canada's agricultural trade interests, too.

"Canada has made major investments to ensure that Canadian agricultural products are some of the best in the world," Clark says. "But the wild and rapid fluctuation in world food prices is threatening

those investments."

If customers who buy Canadian food can't be assured of predictable prices, they may try to make other arrangements such as renting or buying agricultural land in nearby developing countries, he says, adding that while this hasn't happened to Canadian exports yet, "several North African customers are doing that now with land purchases in Mali, Ethiopia and elsewhere."

Today's food prices are a reflection of what people think will happen to food availability in the future, Clark notes.

"When a crop failure is foreseen in one place, the market, through rising futures prices, will appropriately send a signal to other producing areas to make up the deficit," he says, noting that's what happened following last summer's Russian drought and crop failure.

But, he goes on to say, "if there is an element of panic among buyers, combined with excessive speculative activity, the signal will be too strong and will result in a price spike. In response, farmers in Canada and elsewhere may overreact and make large investments to increase their production, only to face a long price slump when they overproduce for the real demand."

The challenge facing Canada, and other countries, is to bring stability to food prices, he says. But how to do that?

Making agriculture more resilient in the developing world in the face of more unreliable weather patterns is part of the answer, Clark states.

"Many organizations, including the Canadian Foodgrains Bank, are working on locally adapted methods of drought proofing and increasing the amount of

carbon stored in the soil," he says, adding that "the results are promising, showing that yields can be increased and, as important, protected during droughts."

But helping farmers in the developing world adapt to changing climate is only one part of the solution, he says.

"We also need a reliable world food reserve that is available to the international market," he says. "Such reserves would be an important way of calming fears when food prices begin to rise, thereby preventing sudden spikes."

If there is a real global food shortage, he notes, such a reserve can "provide a quick response, something that can't be done by the normal market mechanism of stimulating next year's production."

Another part of the solution to price rises is to create ways for governments to adjust biofuel production, he says.

In June, the G20 agriculture ministers will meet in Paris to address this problem. "As a major exporter, Canada has a strong reason, and a good opportunity, to support moves that ensure reliable global food supplies at predictable prices," Clark says. "At the same time, Canada would also be contributing to reducing the threat of increasing hunger, something all Canadians would support."

THE CANADIAN FOODGRAINS BANK IS A PARTNERSHIP OF 15 CHURCHES AND CHURCH-BASED AGENCIES WORKING TO END HUNGER IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES.

www.foodgrainsbank.ca

Earth economist: the food bubble is about to burst

REPRINTED FROM NEW SCIENTIST
<http://www.newscientist.com/article/mg20927986.400>

BY ALISON GEORGE

We're fast draining the fresh water resources our farms rely on, warns Lester Brown, president of the Earth Policy Institute.

What is a food bubble?

That's when food production is inflated through the unsustainable use of water and land. It's the water bubble we need to worry about now. The World Bank says that 15 per cent of Indians (175 million people) are fed by grain produced through overpumping - when water is pumped out of aquifers faster than they can be replenished. In China, the figure could be

130 million.

Has this bubble already burst anywhere?

Saudi Arabia made itself self-sufficient in wheat by using water from a fossil aquifer, which doesn't refill. It has harvested close to 3 million tonnes a year, but in 2008 the Saudi authorities said the aquifer was largely depleted. Next year could be the last harvest. This is extreme, but about half the world's people live in countries with falling water tables. India and China will lose grain production capacity through aquifer depletion. We don't know when or how abruptly the bubble will burst.

With population rising, a fall in grain production would spell big trouble.

Yes. Tonight at the dinner table there will be 219,000 people who weren't there last night. But that's not all: we also have maybe 3 billion people moving up the food chain, consuming more grain-intensive livestock products. Then there is the conversion of grain into ethanol for cars, mainly in the US, where last year 119 million tonnes went to distilleries out of a harvest of just over 400 million tonnes.

What will happen if we carry on as we are now?

Civilisation as we know it can't withstand the stresses of continuing with business as usual. We've got to move, almost on a war footing, to cut carbon emissions, eradicate poverty, stabilise population. We must also restore the economy's natural support

systems: forests and aquifers and soils. No civilisation ever survived that kind of destruction; nor will ours. We haven't gone over the edge, but we're much closer than most people think. If the heatwave that hit Moscow in 2010 had been centred on Chicago instead, we would be in deep trouble. The Russians lost 40 per cent of their 100-million-tonne grain crop, but we would have lost 40 per cent of our 400-million-tonne crop - a massive global setback.

How can we avert a disaster like this?

In many countries, irrigation water is free or comes at a low price, so it's treated as an abundant resource. In fact it's scarce and should be priced accordingly. We must also redefine what we mean by

"security". The real threats are not some armed superpower but water or food shortages, climate change and the rising number of failed states.

Can individuals make a difference?

The question I get asked most is "What can I do?" People expect me to say change your light bulbs, recycle newspaper, but I say we must restructure the world economy, especially in energy. It's about becoming politically active. If there's a coal-fired power station near you, organise to close it down. Profile

Lester Brown has a background in agricultural science and economics. In the 1970s he founded the Worldwatch Institute and The Earth Policy Institute.

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PARISH NEWS

Walking the walk

WHAT WAS JESUS ALWAYS DOING?

He was eating in community. St. Nicholas is trying to live that example through its new outreach program called the Supper Club. This is a monthly gathering of people from the parish and beyond, who come together to cook culturally inspired meals, and who then sit and eat together before all returning to the kitchen for clean up. The ministry opportunities that have arisen since Supper Club began four months ago have been even richer than we could have dreamed! Not only is it a night of teaching the essential life skills of cooking, but it has become an evening where the whole community can gather. Singles, couples, old and young; everyone has an important role to play at Supper Club. The youth are responsible for preparing dessert and they sometimes even beautify the tables. Some adults work on the tables and set up while the majority go into full production in the kitchen.

The group decided to "cook their way around the world", and on January 29th the community of St. Nicholas Westwood Hills had a particularly enriching experience by inviting our new Ethiopian friends from the St. Gabriel's congregation to join us. St Gabriel's Ethiopian Orthodox church just recently entered into a ten year lease agreement for our old St. Nicholas building on the Hammonds Plains Road so it been returned to use as an active worship space. We at St. Nicholas have been very excited about the opportunity for our two churches to grow together in friendship and in ministry to one another.

At the Ethiopian Supper Club three women, Sewalem, Nana, and Elizabeth came together to head the kitchen as they taught our St. Nicholas community to make Doro Wat (a spicy chicken stew) with hard boiled eggs, numerous salads, lentil dishes and Ethiopian bread ... some of which takes three days to make, and even how to make fresh cheese. The evening was filled with spice and laughter and the exchange of story, and the 46 people gathered felt blessed and closer together. Our children played together, we cooked together, we sat and ate together, and most importantly, we started to build those bridges that form community and friendship by sharing our life stories. Nana shared an Ethiopian coffee ceremony with us, showing us how the raw beans are roasted until smoking and dark and then served as thick and hot coffee three times a day. Stories were shared about the Ethiopian faith tradition: their service usually lasts for three hours on a Sunday! The women and men sit on separate sides of the church so that they will not be distracted from their worship of God. They shared how their worship is based on Jewish rituals dating back thousands of years and is filled with chanting and the music of the drum.

Our two communities hope that by building relationship we might transcend the barriers between race and culture and enter the sweet communion of love and full acceptance which Christ was, and is, all about.



PHOTOS (from top right):

Food preparation in St. Nicholas kitchen.

A very active grace before dinner.

Sharing the special foods with diners.

Explaining the history and significance of the food.

Some of the many hands that helped prepare the Ethiopian dinner.

